

Follow-up Activities

- The 1987 film "The Last Emperor" (PG-13) is the *Academy Award*-winning true story of Pu-Yi, the last emperor of China. Much of the epic movie was filmed in the Forbidden City, and it was the first feature film ever to contain scenes shot from inside this remarkable cultural heritage site. Share "The Last Emperor" with students to provide your class with a unique historical look at a 50-year period of great upheaval in China. As a follow-up, ask students to write reviews of "The Last Emperor," discussing the film's themes, analyzing how the film expresses the feelings of people who lived during this period and summarizing what the film teaches about modern Chinese history.
- In defiance of a ban placed on opium by the Chinese government, British traders fought for the right to sell the dangerous narcotic, leading to the First Opium War fought between 1839 and 1842. Ask groups of students to read and discuss the terms of the 1842 Treaty of Nanking which ended the First Opium War, opened China up to foreign domination and resulted in the creation of millions of Chinese opium addicts. As an extension, students may recreate negotiations between British and Chinese officials on issues such as trade barriers, the opium trade and the status of Hong Kong. The full text of the treaty may be found at the following web site: web.jjay.cuny.edu/~jobrien/reference/ob24.html
- The Silk Road was a vast trading network made up of several branches connecting Central Asia with the West. Ask students to draw on historical information and write travel journal entries as Chinese merchants using the Silk Road during the Tang Dynasty, the period that signifies the height of the Silk Road's importance. Entries should include details such as routes taken, difficulties and peoples encountered, descriptions of goods that were traded and ideas that were exchanged. Excellent background information on the Silk Road may be found at the following web site: www.ess.uci.edu/~oliver/silk.html
- Following the partition of Africa in the late 19th century, European colonialists set their sights on carving up China. Tsu Hsi, the Empress Dowager and various secret societies were determined to resist foreign intervention. One secret society, the Boxers, led a limited but violent attack on foreign influence in China, and focused their fury on foreign missionaries and Chinese Christians, which resulted in the deaths of thousands. Ask students to read a primary source account of the Boxer Rebellion from Fei Ch'i-hao, a Chinese Christian who fled the vicious attacks. Students should summarize this account in their own words and research and create detailed time lines about the incident. www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1900Fei-boxers.html

Suggested Internet Resources

Periodically, Internet Resources are updated on our web site at www.LibraryVideo.com

- pasture.ecn.purdue.edu/~agenhtml/agenmc/china/scengw.html
Purdue University provides a brief historical introduction to the Great Wall of China and several photographs of this ancient structure.
- cgee.hamline.edu/rivers/Resources/river_profiles/Yangtze.html
Hamline University's Center for Global Environmental Education gives a detailed look at China's mighty Yangtze River, the longest river in Asia.
- academic.brooklyn.cuny.edu/core9/phalsall/texts/chinhist.html
CUNYBrooklyn's "Chinese Cultural Studies" offers an extensive political history of China.

Suggested Print Resources

- Hanes, William Travis. *The Opium Wars: The Addiction of One Empire and the Corruption of Another*. Sourcebooks, Naperville, IL; 2002.
- Schwartz, Daniel. *Great Wall of China*. Thames and Hudson, New York, NY; 2001.
- Stewart, Stanley. *Frontiers of Heaven: A Journey to the End of China*. Lyon's Press, Guilford, CT; 2004.

TEACHER'S GUIDE

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Wonders of the ANCIENT WORLD™

ANCIENT CHINA

Grades 7 & up

Wonders of the Ancient World transports viewers to ancient civilizations of the Americas, Asia, Africa and Europe and provides a firsthand look at the magnificent achievements and contributions of a wide range of cultures. Through the study of ancient peoples, students will understand the diversity of the human experience—the contrasts between settled and nomadic lifestyles, the characteristics of different religions and belief systems and the development of large cities and powerful empires—which provides a solid basis for the understanding of civilization today.



Program Overview

Spanning a period of over 4,000 years, China is considered to be the world's oldest continuous civilization, with a political history that has been characterized by long periods of isolation and stability coupled with long periods of foreign intervention, occupation and upheaval. Famous Chinese monuments, such as the Great Wall and the Summer Palace, and old urban areas such as the Forbidden City and Pingyao, offer a glimpse into the roots of ancient Chinese traditions and provide a greater understanding of the development of modern Chinese political culture. Through the study of these sites, many aspects of the sweeping history of China, from its unification in 221 BCE to the Cultural Revolution in the 1960s, can be revealed.

Episode 1: The Great Wall

Under the Qin dynasty in the second century BCE, disparate fortifications were merged to form the Great Wall of China with the goal of protecting the country against foreign invasion. The Great Wall evolved over the centuries, and most of what we see today was built during the Ming Dynasty. One of the largest construction projects ever undertaken, the Great Wall winds its way through the Chinese countryside, stretching to a total length of over 4,000 miles. Although lengthy sections of the Great Wall are now in ruins or have disappeared completely, it is still considered one of the most incredible monuments on earth and is the most popular tourist attraction in China.

Vocabulary

Qin Shi Huangdi — The first emperor of China, who built much of the Great Wall of China by connecting walls constructed by earlier rulers.

Huns — A group which originated in Central Asia and invaded and occupied China from the third century CE until 581. A term meaning “person” in Mongolian language.

Ming Dynasty — An ancient Chinese dynasty that ruled from 1368 to 1644 CE and was the last native Chinese dynasty to control the empire.

Genghis Khan — A Mongol conqueror who, in the 13th century, established one of the greatest land empires in world history.

Mongols — A nomadic people from Mongolia, a country north of China.

Juyongguan Pass — A strategic and defensive area connecting the inner land and the area near the northern border of China that is one of the three greatest passes of the Great Wall of China.

Episode 2: Summer Palace

In 1644, the Manchus stormed the Great Wall and ousted the Ming Dynasty, thereby establishing the Qing Dynasty. The capital city of Beijing remained relatively unchanged at this time, although many palaces, temples and pavilions were added on the city's outskirts — most notably the Summer Palace, a royal residence featuring beautiful gardens that was constructed in 1750. Although it was destroyed by European forces during the Second Opium War in 1860, it was rebuilt in 1888 and stands today as a fantastic example of Chinese traditional art in garden building.

Vocabulary

Buddha — A title given to Siddhartha Gautama, which means “enlightened one.”

Confucianism — A belief system based on the tenets of Confucius, a Chinese philosopher and scholar born in 551 BCE who taught respect for others and the importance of good citizenship.

Guanyin — In Chinese Buddhism, a female deity, sometimes referred to as the Goddess of Mercy or the Female Buddha.

pagoda — A tower-shaped building common in Asia that usually has a religious purpose and is mostly found near religious temples.

Yangtze — The longest river in Asia and the third longest in the world.

Manchu Dynasty — The Manchu, or Qing, Dynasty took power from the Ming Dynasty and was in control from 1644 until the formation of the Republic of China in 1911.

Episode 3: Forbidden City

The Forbidden City lies in the heart of Beijing and was the official imperial palace complex founded under the Ming Dynasty. Barred to most of the kingdom's subjects during the five centuries of Ming and Qing rule, the area features unparalleled architecture and is a center of dynastic art and history. Among the more notable landmarks are the imposing formal entrance at Meridian Gate, which served as a backdrop for imperial appearances, the Hall of Supreme Harmony, where the emperor's throne stood and the Imperial Garden, a place of relaxation for the emperor. With the Chinese Revolution of 1911, the Forbidden City ceased to be the seat of government. Although the area has sustained damage during China's tumultuous history, several of the palace buildings were restored in the 20th century.

Vocabulary

Sons of Heaven — A term used to describe the Chinese emperors.

Cixi — The powerful and charismatic dowager empress and regent of China in the 18th and 19th century.

Episode 4: Pingyao

Pingyao is a small town in China whose history goes back almost 3,000 years. Founded under the Zhou Dynasty, Pingyao was the county seat of the Ming and Qing Dynasties, and for many years was an insignificant small country town. By the end of the 16th century, the city had been discovered by prosperous craftsmen and merchants, and because of its prime location at the intersection of major trade routes, Pingyao evolved into an important commercial center. Although the city has lost its economic significance, many houses and cultural relics are still well-preserved.

Vocabulary

Taoism — The main philosophy and system of religion of China. Tao means “the way” in Chinese and is considered the source for all things in existence. It is a model for human action and behavior.

Communist — The political party led by Mao Zedong that was victorious in the 1949 Chinese Revolution.

Mandarin — A high official in imperial China.

Red Guards — Groups of armed university and high school students formed to enforce the ideals of the Cultural Revolution.

Cultural Revolution — A movement led by Mao in the 1960s to reinforce communism as the focus of Chinese society.

Follow-up Discussion Questions

- Discuss the origins of the Great Wall of China. What national emergency forced Emperor Qin Shi Huangdi to begin construction of this immense barrier?
- Why did Empress Tsu Hsi (Cixi) have a great appreciation for the “Scent of the Buddha” pagoda? Describe why she rejected Confucianism and ancestor worship.
- How did emperor Yong Le come to power? Evaluate his decision to move the capital close to China's northern border.
- Analyze the plans developed to build the Forbidden City. Discuss the social, cultural and political significance of this area to the ancient Chinese empire.
- Discuss the diverse nature of Chinese popular religion. Why does the god of wealth and gold bars aptly symbolize the city of Pingyao?