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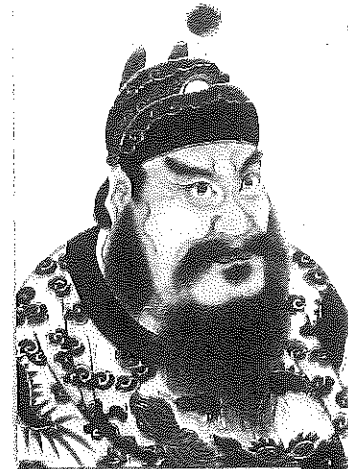
BIOGRAPHY


SHI

HUANGDI

259 B.C. – 210 B.C.

The flames rise higher as officials toss more books onto the fire. Their emperor, Shi Huangdi, has ordered them to burn any writing that contains ideas he doesn't like. High on the list is anything to do with Confucianism. Shi Huangdi is a cruel but skilled ruler—and he intends his dynasty to last for 10,000 generations.



 **Job:** First emperor of China

 **Home:** Kingdom of Qin

FINEST HOUR

After unifying and expanding China, he became its first emperor.

WORST MOMENT

He supposedly died after taking pills he thought would keep him alive forever.

HOBBIES

He built a huge tomb for himself filled with life-size statues of warriors and horses.

GREATEST FEAR

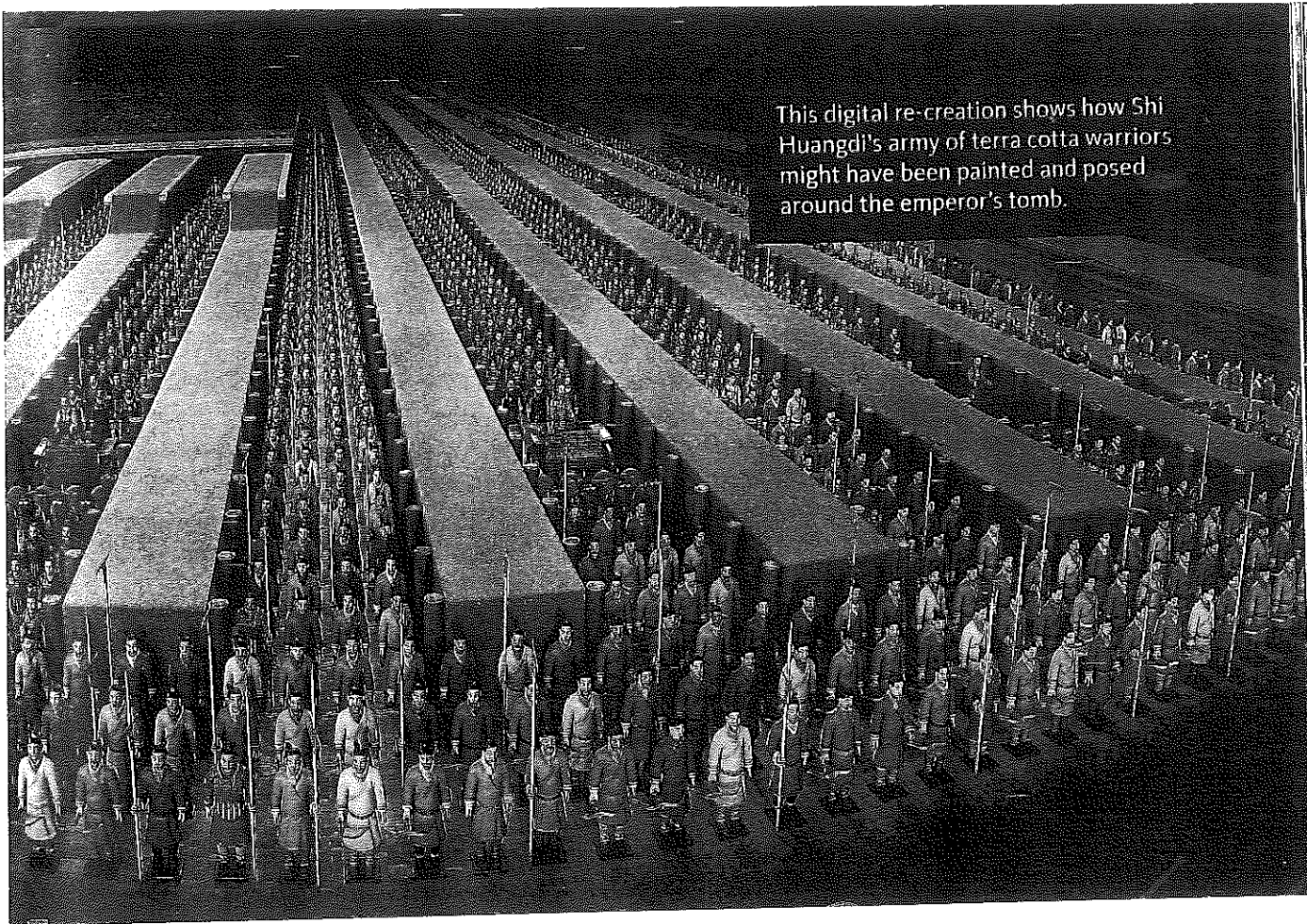
Convinced that his enemies wanted to kill him, he slept in a different apartment in his palace every night.

A RUTHLESS RULER

China's Warring States period finally ended when the leader of the **Qin** (chin) kingdom defeated all other kingdoms around 221 B.C. The leader's name was Ying Zheng, and he united the kingdoms to form an empire. He would come to call himself **Shi Huangdi** (shee hwahng-dee), meaning "first emperor." An **emperor** is the ruler of an empire.

Shi Huangdi established his government based on Legalist ideas. He set up his capital in Xianyang (shee-ahn-yang) and built magnificent palaces in the city to demonstrate his power. The emperor then forced thousands of China's most powerful families to relocate to the capital so he could keep an eye on them.

In addition, Shi Huangdi divided his empire into 36 areas governed by officials he himself had selected. He also followed Legalist ideas by punishing anyone who disagreed with or criticized him. Shi Huangdi is said to have put to death hundreds of Confucian scholars.



This digital re-creation shows how Shi Huangdi's army of terra cotta warriors might have been painted and posed around the emperor's tomb.

A UNIFIED EMPIRE

Although his methods were cruel, Shi Huangdi brought order to China. He made sure units used to weigh and measure items throughout the empire were standardized, or the same, to ensure that buyers were not being cheated. He also brought a single writing system and currency, or form of money, to China.

As Shi Huangdi conquered new lands and expanded his empire, he made further improvements that united his territory. He had thousands of miles of roads built to link different parts of the empire. These roads were all constructed at the same width. He also built canals and irrigation systems. Shi

Huangdi's most famous construction project was the **Great Wall** of China, which you will learn more about in the next lesson. Many historians believe these structures were built by forced labor and funded by high taxes.

Shi Huangdi's rule came to an end when he died in 210 B.C. Throughout his reign, the emperor had feared being murdered by assassins. It seems he believed evil spirits could also attack him in the afterlife. As a result, Shi Huangdi had an army of **terra cotta**, or baked clay, warriors buried beside his tomb to protect him. The burial site probably forms his greatest legacy—an odd twist of fate for a man who spent much of his life trying to cheat death.

REVIEW & ASSESS

1. **READING CHECK** How did Shi Huangdi link the new lands of his empire?
2. **DRAW CONCLUSIONS** What are the benefits of using a single currency within a country?
3. **FORM OPINIONS** What do you think was Shi Huangdi's greatest achievement? Why?

2.2

The Great Wall



Groaning under the weight of another brick, you set it in place on the wall. You didn't volunteer for this work, and you won't be paid very much for it either. It's possible you'll even die working on the wall. But under Shi Huangdi's rule, you do as you're told.

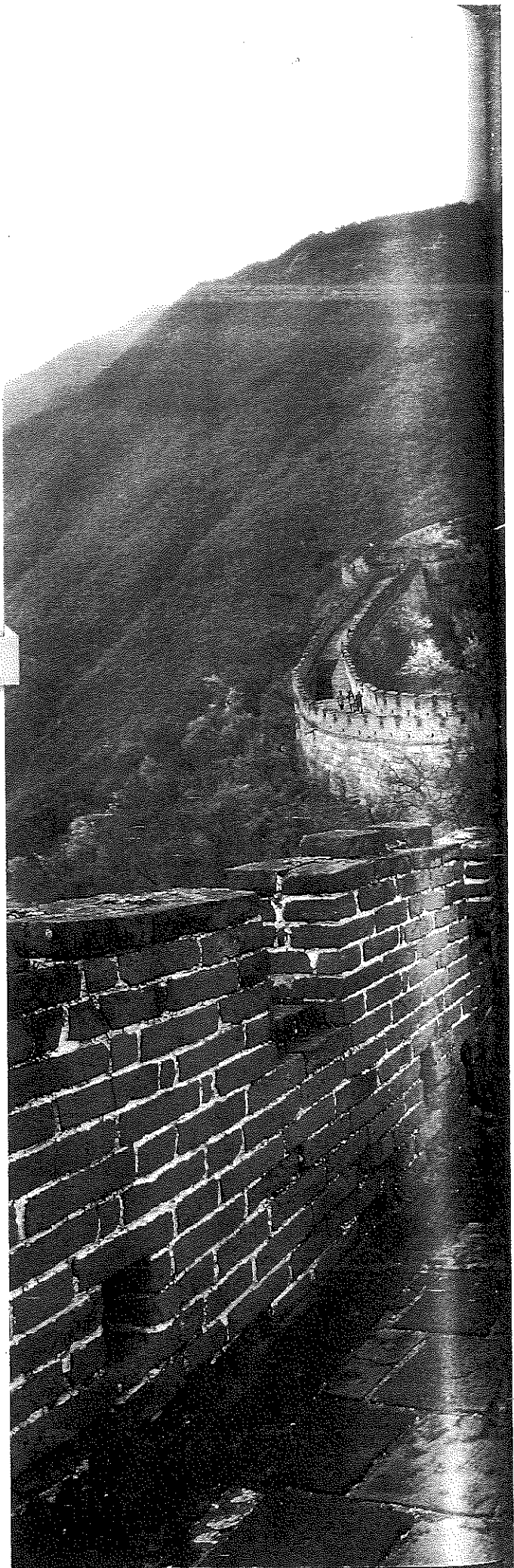
MAIN IDEA

Shi Huangdi began building the Great Wall to keep invaders out of China.

KEEPING OUT INVADERS

While mountains, deserts, and seas protected most of China, part of its northern border was vulnerable, or open to attack. Riding on horseback, nomadic tribes from Central Asia often swept over the border, destroying farms, villages, and towns. Small walls had been built along the border during the Warring States period, but Shi Huangdi decided to join them into one long wall that would stretch over 2,500 miles.

The emperor forced hundreds of thousands of **peasants**, or poor farmers, to build his wall. He also conscripted soldiers and prisoners to perform the backbreaking labor, often in extreme conditions. Many of the laborers died from exhaustion, hunger, and disease. After Shi Huangdi's death, the wall fell into disrepair. However, later rulers built and extended it. In fact, work on the wall continued into the 1600s.



2.4

The Han Dynasty



Maybe you've gotten in trouble for coming to class late, but that predicament would be nothing next to this: In 209 B.C., some farmers arrived late to sign up for their required military service, and they were sentenced to death. The farmers got away and spurred thousands of others to rebel against the Qin dynasty.

MAIN IDEA

Han dynasty rulers reformed the government, expanded the empire, and brought prosperity to China.

GOVERNMENT

After Shi Huangdi died, his son became emperor but proved to be a weak ruler. The farmers who escaped their death sentence fueled a bloody rebellion that brought about the collapse of the Qin dynasty. Rebels struggled for power until Liu Bang (lee-oo bahng), a peasant from the Han kingdom, seized control and began the **Han** dynasty in 202 B.C.

Han emperors introduced practices that were less cruel than those of Shi Huangdi. They lowered taxes and put an end to laws that were especially harsh. They also required lighter punishments for crimes.

You may recall that Shi Huangdi had forced workers to labor for years on his building projects. The Han, on the other hand, had peasants work for only one month per year to build roads, canals, and irrigation systems.

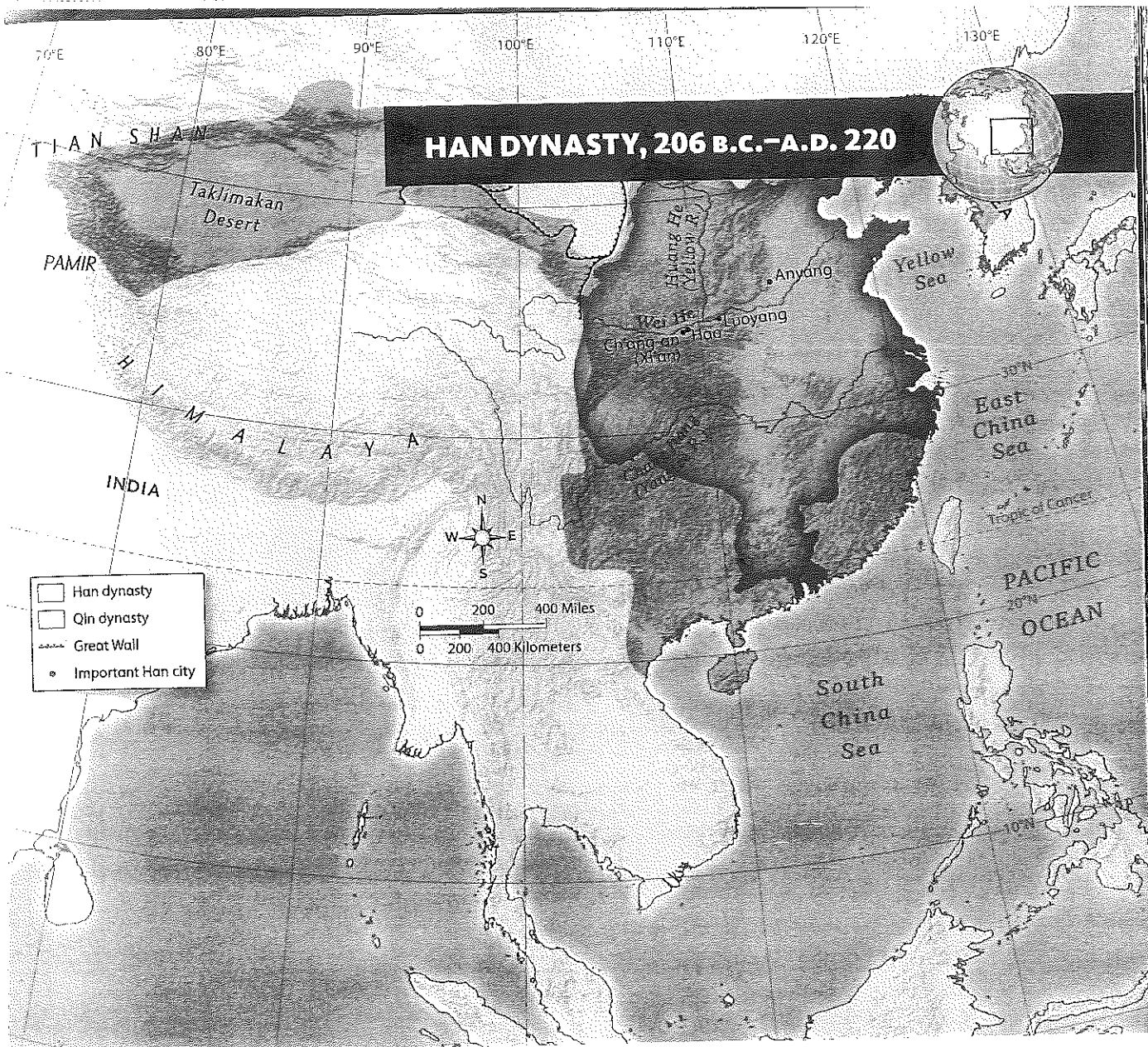
The Han rulers also replaced Legalism with Confucianism and used Confucius' teachings as a guide. Furthermore, they valued the well-educated and obedient officials Confucianism produced. As a result, the officials they appointed had to pass an examination that tested their knowledge of Confucianism. The rulers established their government based on a **bureaucracy**, in which these appointed officials ran the bureaus, or offices.

Later Han rulers included Liu Bang's wife, who came to be known as Empress Lü. Women were not allowed to rule as emperor in ancient China, but Lü found a way around that restriction. After her husband died in 195 B.C., Lü placed their young son on the throne and ruled in his name. When she outlived her son, she held on to power by crowning a couple of infants emperor and ruling in their place. After Lü died in 180 B.C., all of her relatives were executed by a group of rival court officials. They made sure that no other member of her family could rule again.

Emperor Wudi (woo-dee), who ruled from 141 to 87 B.C., was another notable emperor. He used military conquests to expand the empire's boundaries—nearly to the size of present-day China. His reign lasted 54 years, which set a record that would not be broken for more than 1,800 years.

DAILY LIFE

China prospered under the Han dynasty. Many merchants, government workers, and craftspeople lived in large houses in the cities. Like modern cities, these were crowded places filled with restaurants, businesses, and places of entertainment. Some cities had populations of up to 500,000 people.



Most of the Chinese people, however, were peasants. They lived in small mud houses in villages close to their farms. Some peasants could not afford farm animals and so pulled their plows themselves. They had few possessions and barely produced enough to feed their own families. For the most part, peasants lived on the rice, wheat, and vegetables they grew on their farms.

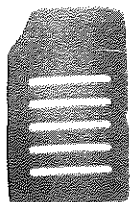
Perhaps because the Han leaders ruled more wisely than Shi Huangdi had, their dynasty lasted about 400 years—until A.D. 220. Most Chinese people today are proud of their ancient civilization and of the contributions made during the Han dynasty in particular. As a result, many Chinese call themselves “people of the Han” in recognition of the dynasty’s great achievements.

REVIEW & ASSESS

- 1. READING CHECK** What government reforms did the Han rulers put in place?
- 2. INTERPRET MAPS** How does the size of the Qin dynasty compare to that of the Han?
- 3. COMPARE AND CONTRAST** How did the lives of poor peasants and rich merchants differ?

2.5

The Legacy of Ancient China



Ancient China's contributions to world civilization are so many and so varied that it's difficult to know where to begin. But consider that whenever you read a book, you're looking at one of China's most important inventions: paper.

MAIN IDEA

Early Chinese achievements, including inventions, cultural contributions, and ideas, left the world a lasting legacy.

INVENTIONS

Although historians believe the use of paper in China goes back even further, China is officially said to have invented paper in A.D. 105. The invention transformed writing. The ancient Chinese made paper from tree bark, plant fibers, and old rags. It was cheap to produce and easy to write on. The availability of paper allowed ideas to spread farther and faster than ever.

During the Han dynasty, the ancient Chinese also invented the first compass (shown

opposite). The Chinese sometimes used the instrument to determine the best location for burials. However, this early compass would eventually lead to the development of the navigational compass, which made exploration of distant lands possible.

As you have learned, most Chinese worked as farmers. Many benefited from early agricultural inventions, such as an improved plow, a wheelbarrow, and a harness that fitted around a horse's neck.

CULTURE AND IDEAS

Not all of ancient China's contributions were strictly practical. One of its most valued inventions is the beautiful textile, or cloth, called **silk**. The Chinese developed the technique for making silk and kept it secret for thousands of years. (Hint: It had something to do with worms.) Demand for silk grew until it became China's most traded good. It is still a prized textile today.

Chinese craftspeople worked in metals as well. Remember reading about the advanced bronze sculptures developed during the Shang dynasty? Hundreds of years later, the Chinese would also teach the world to cast iron. This process involves heating iron until it becomes liquid and then pouring it into a mold to solidify into different shapes.

Finally, Chinese philosophies remain one of ancient China's greatest legacies. One of these philosophies—Confucianism—got a boost from the invention of paper. Confucian ideas were among the first spread by China's new writing material. Today, Confucianism continues to influence thinking, just as Chinese inventions make our lives easier.

REVIEW & ASSESS

- 1. READING CHECK** What were a few of the inventions that ancient China contributed to world civilization?
- 2. ANALYZE CAUSE AND EFFECT** What impact did agricultural advancements probably have on ancient China's food production and economy?
- 3. FORM OPINIONS** Which ancient Chinese invention, cultural development, or idea do you think is the most significant? Explain your reasons.