



**Big Era Four**  
**Expanding Networks of Exchange and Encounter**  
**1200 BCE-500 CE**



**Landscape Teaching Unit 4.2**  
**Emergence of Complex Society in East Asia**  
**1200 to 200 BCE**

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## Why this unit?

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Many teachers discuss modern China in their world history courses. They may mention that the Chinese style of statecraft began more than three millennia ago in the Shang period and continued to the twentieth century. It also spread in some measure to other parts of East Asia, including Japan and Vietnam. This unit explores this formative period when “big government” became an enduring characteristic of mainland East Asia. The unit will help teachers explain more fully how the early Chinese rulers used technologies in ways that differed from those in early complex societies in the Nile, Tigris-Euphrates, and Indus valleys. The centralized authority created by the Shang dynasty encouraged innovation in tools for both military power and agriculture. The Shang period also laid the foundation for the “Mandate of Heaven,” which is a concept that most teachers use to show the unbroken style of statecraft practiced by rulers of China. Shang monarchs used prescribed ritual sacrifices to ask their ancestors to relay messages to Di, their central deity. During the Zhou dynasty that followed, Di became a more abstract idea of moral order in the cosmos. The Zhou concept led to the formalized idea of the “Mandate of Heaven.”

This unit will also introduce the historical debate over how the relationship between predominantly sedentary, agricultural states in East Asia and predominantly pastoral nomadic tribes in Inner Asia affected the style of centralized states in both regions.

Historians also rely on evidence from un-looted tombs to interpret how early complex societies looked and worked. Teachers can build on students’ interest by showing them pictures of the interesting treasures that were found in ancient Egypt in the tomb of King Tut or in the Jade burial site of Qin China. Students will see the important role that royal tombs played in the social hierarchy of complex society in East Asia.

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## Unit objectives

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*Upon completing this unit, students will be able to:*

1. Compare early complex society in East Asia with those in Mesopotamia and ancient Egypt.
2. Categorize data about social class stratification, labor specialization, ancestor worship, and technology in the Shang and Zhou dynastic periods in China.
3. Describe how pastoral nomadic groups in Inner Eurasia might have regarded early complex society in East Asia.
4. Use primary accounts from the writings of Confucius to match what he thought about the role and historical significance of burial and sacrificial rituals during the Shang and Zhou periods.

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## Time and materials

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Teachers will need about one week to complete all of the lessons in this unit. Teachers with limited time should only use the first lesson to give students the landscape view of the

emergence of complex society in East Asia.

- An outline map of East Asia.
- Access to Patricia Buckley Ebreys web site, “A Visual Sourcebook of Chinese Civilization,” University of Washington, <http://depts.washington.edu/chinaciv/>. Or alternatively look at books on the Shang and Zhou tomb excavations.
- Some large paper and drawing materials for students to draw the tombs.
- Excerpts from the Confucian classics.
- Copies of the readers’ theater script.

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## Authors

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## The historical context

This unit addresses all Three Essential Questions. Humans and the Environment, Humans and Other Humans, Humans and Ideas. First, by their nature the earliest complex societies are rooted in a specific environment that enabled the growth of settled agricultural communities. Second, the increasing complexity of political and economic interactions is the focus of study. And third, the ideas developed in this specific complex society in East Asia are part of what made it unique.

The earliest settled agricultural communities in what is now known as northern China arose about the same time as early agricultural communities elsewhere in the Eastern Hemisphere, by approximately 2,000 BCE. The growth of these communities into early civilizations can be seen in their writing systems, walled cities, centralized governments, militaries, trade systems, rivalries among political powers, and religions that included public rituals based on a written calendar. There also is evidence of similar civilizations in central and southern China with elaborate tomb burials full of beautifully crafted masks and items of personal adornment. The civilization that arose in northern China came to dominate all of mainland East Asia, especially after the development of Confucian ideas.

The most well known and best documented of the early civilizations in northern China was the Shang Dynasty, a family that ruled in northern China from about 1750 to 1040 BCE. The military rulers of the Shang used land as a way to reward their followers and attempted to dominate their agricultural and nomadic neighbors. The Shang left many inscriptions on turtle or cattle bones. These oracle bone inscriptions, as they were known, show the concerns the monarchs had about their world.

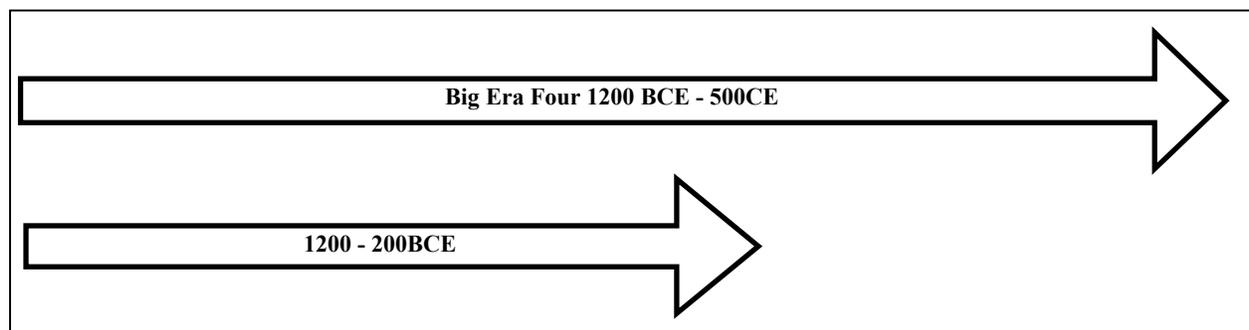
In the twelfth century BCE, the Zhou dynasty defeated and replaced the Shang. This new

dynasty lasted from 1122 to 256 BCE. The Zhou, originally a vassal state of the Shang, expanded their territory. The Zhou claimed in their official written histories that the decadent corruption of the Shang caused that ruling elite to lose the approval of Shang Di, the supernatural power that later became identified with the distinctly Chinese idea of the “Mandate of Heaven.” The Zhou leaders made the moral argument that the cosmic power had passed its mandate, or consent to them. Although the Zhou dynasty hung on to at least some ceremonial power until the third century BCE, its life as a territorially and economically strong dynasty lasted only around 300 years, about the length of most dynasties in the history of China.

After the dynasty weakened in the eighth century, China fell into more than 500 years of political instability and turbulence. The later part of this era of trouble was called the Warring States Period (403-221 BCE). During these centuries, competing schools of philosophy arose to offer solutions to the political problems of the day. One of them was Confucianism. In the fifth century BCE, Confucius, or Master Kung, developed a series of arguments in favor of government leaders that provided a moral example to their people. Master Kung did not write any books that we know of. We associate his fundamental teachings with the *Analects*, or “Sayings,” which were compiled long after his death. The other principal classics of Confucianism are the Four Books—the Book of Rites, the Book of Songs, the Book of History, and the Book of Changes. Mencius (371-289 BCE), one of Master Kung’s followers, continued to edit and write books, contributing a substantial body of texts on Confucian thought. The whole corpus of Confucian texts became the basis of the civil service examinations which the Chinese imperial government offered to aspiring candidates for public office. This exam system started in the Han dynasty (third century BCE – second century CE) but gained prominence in the Tang period (sixth-eighth centuries CE).

## This unit in the Big Era time line

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## *Lesson One*

### *Emergence of Complex Society in East Asia*

#### **Introduction**

In this lesson students will compare the functions and significance of tombs in China from the second and first millenniums BCE. They will analyze data and artifacts associated with tombs from the Shang and Zhou dynasties in order to understand something of the character of early complex society in East Asia.

In doing this lesson, students should use the electronic resource “A Visual Sourcebook of Chinese Civilization” developed by Prof. Patricia Ebrey. This web site provides detailed information on early complex society in East Asia, including information and visual images on ancient tombs. Go to Patricia Buckley Ebrey, “A Visual Sourcebook of Chinese Civilization.” University of Washington. <http://depts.washington.edu/chinaciv/>. Click on “Teachers’ Guide,” then on “Teachers’ Guide for Ancient Tombs.”

#### **Preparation**

Questions to ask students at the beginning of the lesson:

1. Why do you think that archaeologists have found large, elaborate tombs in the world of Big Era Four?
2. What do you already know about the settlements of humans near river valleys?
3. What might you expect to learn about early complex society in East Asia that would make it similar to or different from early complex society in Mesopotamia or Egypt?

Students should record their answers and then check them against the new information they learn in Student Handouts 1.1 and 1.2.

#### **Activities**

##### Lesson One

1. Have students compare their initial answers to the preparatory questions with the information in Student Handout 1.1. A brief discussion of the comparisons should follow.

Extension activity: Ask students to compare their answers along with the information in Student Handout 1.1 and the material on the subject in their textbook (if they are using one). Students often question the use of artifacts taken from tombs, so the class might want to debate the ethics of scholars removing, analyzing, and displaying artifacts from burial sites.

2. Referring to Student Handout 1.2, students should consider the items found in the three tombs described. They should then analyze what the contents of the tombs might tell us about the character of early complex society in East Asia. Students will most likely focus on the large number of luxury items and question which objects were used in public and private settings.

What items found in these tombs are likely also to be discovered in tombs in ancient Egypt? What items would not likely be found in Egypt? How do these comparisons help analyze what might be unique to early complex society in East Asia?

If the class has time, ask students to work with Student Handout 1.3 to create a tomb for a member of the Shang royal family. Students may use clay or other material, draw the tomb on paper, or find images of the artifacts in the tombs. Students may also discuss the ways in which different types of laborers and supervisors involved in the construction process reveal aspects of social stratification in Shang society.

Give groups of students one of the “action cards” in the Student Handout. Then ask them to role play the tasks and point of view of the social-occupational group represented on the card.

After the students have had sufficient time to work together on the tomb, they should discuss the following questions:

1. How did people’s work show their status in Shang society?
2. How might different social/occupational groups have regarded the work they did on a royal tomb? Did they detest it? Feel proud of it? Believe that they would gain something from doing it?
3. The Shang included sacrificial victims in their tombs to give their dead relatives servants in the next life. What relationship might have existed between human sacrifices and the Shang’s warfare with neighboring states?
4. In what ways are archaeologists and historians limited in their historical interpretations by the objects they find in tombs? What other kinds of information do they need to help them explain the complexities of early complex societies?

## Lesson 1

### *Student Handout 1.1*

#### **The Meaning of Ancient Tombs**

Ritualistic burials are as old as humans. It is one of the behaviors that distinguish humans from other primates. In the earliest complex societies, elaborate tombs were created for the rulers in accordance with the local religion. Furthermore, rulers in early complex societies demonstrated their power through monumental architecture like tombs. In Egypt, King Tut's tomb was one of the most famous burial sites uncovered by archeologists in the twentieth century. This tomb site revealed with the burial coffin (sarcophagus) both luxury items and humans who were sacrificed to serve the king in the next world. King Tut was embalmed (preserved) with chemicals designed to preserve his body, because ancient Egyptians believed in a kind of immortality.

In the Yellow River valley in China, tombs of Shang and Zhou kings and other members of the aristocratic class were also uncovered in the twentieth century. These tombs include burial coffins, luxury items, and human sacrifices. The purpose of the Shang and Zhou tombs was to provide a level of luxury in the next life, giving the deceased all the material comforts and the servants who had assisted him or her in this world. The tombs were arranged as if they were rooms in houses or palaces. The tombs in East Asia seem to have had much the same purpose as those in ancient Egypt.

The Shang and the Zhou states were able to build elaborate tombs for rulers and nobles because of the surplus food that farmers were able to produce in the valley of the Yellow River and its tributaries. The Yellow River is 3,395 miles (5,464 kilometers) long and flows from the Tibetan plateau eastward toward the Pacific Ocean. As the Yellow River moves east, it carries eroded soil from along its steep, up-river banks and down to the flat North China plain. This soil, called loess, is silty and yellowish brown, and it is light enough to make plowing quite easy. Both the Shang and the Zhou, the two early Chinese dynasties developed in the fertile lands of the Yellow River valley. As in Mesopotamia and Egypt, domesticated plants, like wheat, grew easily but needed river water for irrigation owing to low annual rainfall. Irrigation, however, allowed farmers to produce abundant crops (at least in years when they did not face low water levels or devastating floods), which the rulers taxed, partly to build elaborate tombs for themselves.

## Lesson 1

### *Student Handout 1.2*

#### **Contents of Tombs in Ancient China**

Chinese archaeologists have uncovered many tombs for Shang royalty. Most of them were looted in the past, but the tomb of the consort (companion) Fu Hao was not. According to Patricia Ebrey, a specialist in Chinese History, “Fu Hao was mentioned in oracle bone inscriptions as the consort of King Wu Ding, and she was also a general who participated in several military campaigns. She presided over important sacrificial ceremonies and controlled her own estate.” So far, this is the only unlooted Shang tomb found that belonged to a member of the royal family. It is dated around 1250 BCE. When the archaeologists found her corpse and artifacts buried with her, they also discovered six dogs, and sixteen human skeletons, presumably people sacrificed to help her in the next world.

Patricia Buckley Ebrey, “A Visual Sourcebook of Chinese Civilization,” University of Washington, <http://depts.washington.edu/chinaciv/>.

#### Lady Fu Hao’s tomb at Anyang – consort of Shang King Wu Ding

- 468 bronze objects including 130 weapons, 23 bells, 27 knives, 4 mirrors, and 4 tigers or tiger heads
- 755 jade objects
- 63 stone objects
- 5 ivory objects
- 564 bone objects including nearly 500 bone hairpins and over 20 bone arrowheads
- 11 pottery objects
- 6,900 pieces of cowry shell

The tomb of the Count of Yu shows that he was an important nobleman during the Zhou dynasty. He was buried with his wife, Jing Ji. An adjacent tomb may have included his concubine. The rooms containing the tombs also include seven human sacrifices, luxury goods such as jade, three chariot wheels, some pottery containers, bronze vessels, weapons, and tools.

#### Zhou tomb of the Count of Yu

- Over 2,700 bronze objects, including 33 vessels and 13 weapons
- 4 musical instruments
- over 100 chariot parts
- 11 pieces of pottery
- over 280 jade and stone objects
- The tomb of his wife Jing Ji contained:
- 10 bronze vessels and over 280 jade and stone objects

Marquis Yi (“Marquis” being a noble title) was the head of the state of Zeng, a small state then under the domination of a bigger one called Chu. This was during the Warring States Period of Chinese history, from 403 to 221 BCE. The marquis’s tomb was lacquered, and his burial chamber included the coffins of eight young women, as well as a dog in its own coffin. Thirteen more young women were buried in another part of the tomb chamber, which might have served as a symbolic servants’ quarters.

Warring States period (late/post-Zhou), Marquis Yi’s tomb

- 124 musical instruments, including bells, chimes, drums, zithers, pipes, and flutes
- 134 bronze vessels and other bronze household items
- 4,777 weapons, mostly made of bronze
- 1,127 bronze chariot parts
- 25 pieces of leather armor
- 5,012 pieces of lacquer ware
- 26 bamboo articles
- 5 gold objects and 4 gold belt hooks
- 528 jade and stone objects
- 6,696 Chinese characters written in ink on slips of bamboo

**Lesson 1*****Student Handout 1.3*****Action Cards for Role-Playing Tomb Construction in Ancient China****Peasant workers**

These workers had the job of digging a square pit 5.6 meters by 4 meters with a smaller pit in the center for sacrificed dogs. Along the perimeters they made holes for the skeletons of 16 humans. Inside the pit they built a wooden chamber 5 meters by 3.5 meters and 1.3 meters high. Then, they built a mound with a temple over the tomb to hold ritual ceremonies honoring the ancestors and asking them for their blessings.

**Artisans**

Artisans produced objects listed in tombs described in Student Handout 1.2 for placing in the coffin or burial pit. Making bronze objects (alloy of copper and tin) required copper and tin miners, refiners of the ores, potters for clay models and molds used in the casting process, supervisors to run the foundries, and artists to design and decorate the objects. The skills of scribes were used to write the names of important people on bronze ritual vessels. Artisans also created a lacquered coffin for the deceased ruler.

**Human Sacrificial Victims**

The victims were captives caught in wars, servants, slaves, or sometimes dishonored officials. For Shang burials, but not for Zhou, the victims were beheaded.

**Guards and Executioners**

Sacrificial victims had to be transported and guarded, then executed by the blows of an axe.

**Supervisors and Government Officials**

They managed the construction, supervised the workers, kept the accounts, and reported to the royal government.

**Noble Relatives of dead person**

They select the people to be sacrificed, and they commissioned the precious items to be buried with the deceased.

## *Lesson Two*

### *Reader's Theater: The One That Got Away*

#### **Introduction**

According to Nicolas Di Cosmo in his book *Ancient China and Its Enemies*, the peoples of Inner Eurasia were very diverse. Some were farmers, others were pastoral nomads, and many combined farming with stock-raising. Because of the arid climate of the eastern part of Inner Eurasia, pastoral nomads raised horses, sheep, goats, camels, and cattle on the steppes, that is, flat or rolling grass lands where annual rainfall was normally sufficient to sustain flocks and herds. Farming also flourished in Inner Eurasia, but only in oases watered by rivers or springs.

The peoples of the Yellow River Valley were also diverse in language and ethnicity, but most were settled farmers and a small percentage lived in towns. Evidence from archaeology and documents shows that the material culture of people in both the Yellow River basin and the early civilizations of India, Mesopotamia, and Egypt had similarities. Historians also generally agree that there was constant contact between peoples across the ecological frontier between the river basin and the steppe. Contact often took the form of wars and raiding expeditions, but it also involved exchanges of goods and ideas.

In some periods, the Chinese state sent armies of cavalry and infantry out into the steppe to punish or even conquer pastoral peoples. In this way they gained greater control over the flow of people and goods back and forth across the ecological frontier. Frequently, Chinese emperors gave lavish gifts in silk and grain to the leaders of pastoral tribes to help keep the frontier peaceful. In other periods, when the Chinese state was relatively weak, pastoral nomads sometimes organized in great confederations of mounted warriors, and then raided deep into China or even occupied some northern regions. (In the thirteenth century, the Mongols were the first and only pastoral nomad power to conquer all of China.)

In the first millennium BCE, Chinese dynasties began building sections of what later became the Great Wall of China. They did this, not to create an impassable barrier between China's agricultural lands and the steppe, but to more effectively manage and control relations between pastoral peoples on the one hand and the farmers and townspeople of northern China on the other.

#### **Activity**

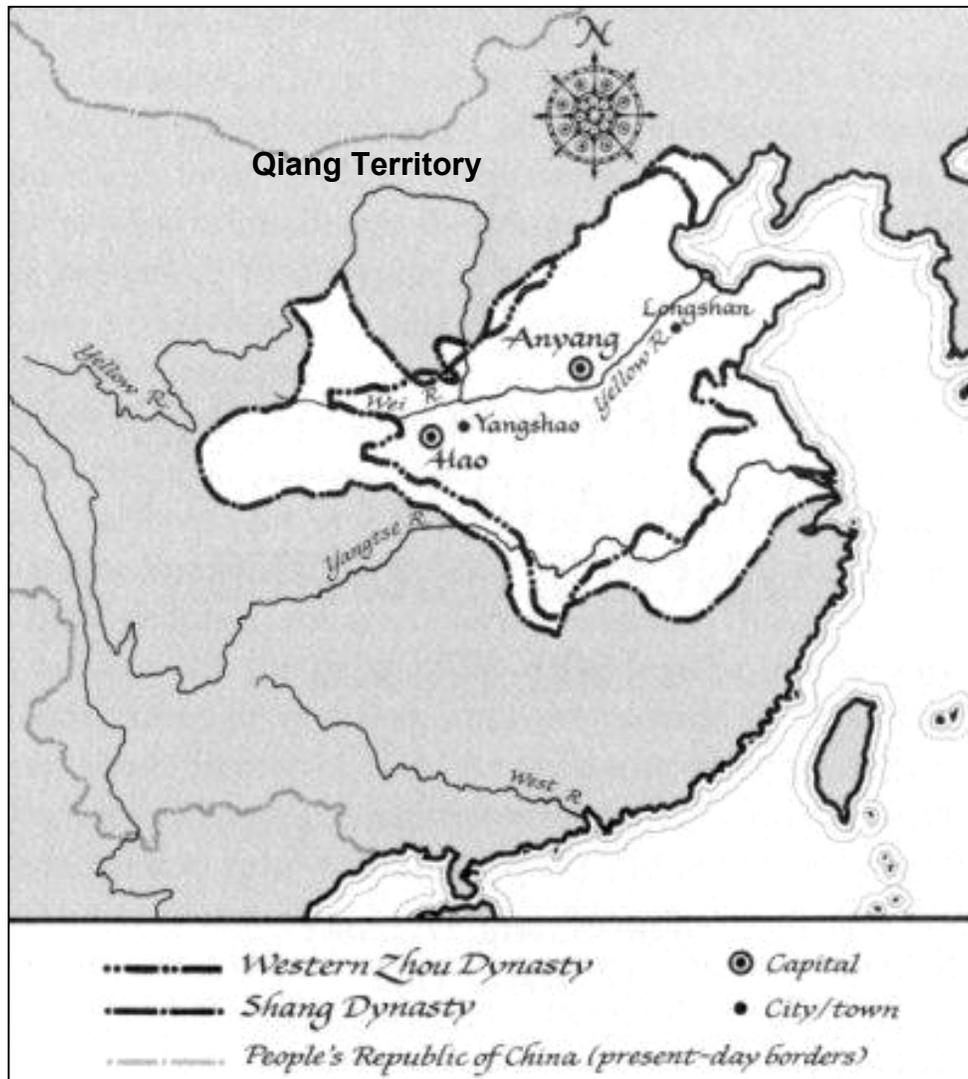
Students will read the following short play to learn more about the possible interactions between the settled farming peoples ruled by the Shang state and their pastoral nomadic neighbors to the northwest. The main character is a young girl captured in a battle between the Shang army and the Qiang (pronounced Ch-iang), a pastoral nomadic group that lived in the steppes. Both Shang and Qiang tombs show evidence of human sacrifice, probably of war captives. By reading and then discussing the play, students may imagine how the Qiang viewed the Shang rulers and settled farming peoples in general.

The play is framed by a dream that a Chinese archaeologist had after thinking about unanswered questions regarding the relationships between the Shang and its pastoral neighbors.

## Discussion Questions:

1. What explanation might there be for the constant conflicts between the Shang and their neighbors?
2. How did the Qiang girl, LiLi know that she might be killed?
3. What did the Shang king hope to gain by marrying his daughters to a neighboring ruler?
4. If LiLi's father began to use the iron plow, how could this have changed his family's life?

## Lesson 2

*Student Handout 2.1—Readers' Theater*

Map Source: Paul and Bernice Noll's Window on the World  
<http://www.paulnoll.com/China/Dynasty/dynasty-West-Zhou.html>

**A Short Play**  
**by**  
**Sharon Cohen**

Narrator: One of the new Chinese archaeologists assigned to work on interpreting the evidence found in the Shang tombs falls asleep while puzzling over the field reports. He last looked at a ceramic horse, wondering how the Shang negotiated trade deals with their neighbors who were nomadic horse herders.

The Chinese archaeologist imagined a girl riding a horse. Maybe her name was LiLi. She loved to run alongside her horse across the grassy steppe. Her family was under the control of a stronger pastoral nomadic group, the Qiang. LiLi's family herded horses, but they also grew a few crops for food.

LiLi's mother: LiLi, Lili, wake up!

LiLi: Is the battle today?

LiLi's mother: Yes, get up and help get the chariots ready.

LiLi: I need to get my horse first.

Narrator: LiLi got her horse and fitted him to a chariot. She wished she were tall enough to handle the chariot, but her older brother would drive the chariot instead. They were fighting a battle with the powerful Shang army today. During the battle, LiLi's older brother was wounded by an arrow, and, when LiLi ran out to rescue her horse, she was captured by a Shang soldier. He took her and other war captives back to the town of Anyang (see map) to be executed as human sacrifices. These victims were to be placed in a new tomb burial for the Lady Fu Hao, consort of the Shang king.

LiLi: I must escape, but how? Maybe I can run away when they bring the dinner meal.

Guard for prisoners: Here's your food. What! How did she run so fast? Oh well, there's plenty more girls for the sacrifice tomorrow.

LiLi: Now that I have escaped, how will I get back home? I wonder what that group is doing with all of those packages?

Shang Government Official #1 (with a princess of the Shang royal family): Perhaps this Shang

princess can bring a bit of peace to the North China plain.

Shang Government Official #2: Marriage alliances with the Qiang are a good idea. Remember, our fourteenth king was a Qiang, but the current Qiang ruler seems to have a lot of support from the people in his area of the North China plain.

Shang princess: [sobbing]

LiLi [crouching nearby]: Why is she crying? Her clothes are all made of silk. What is she holding in her hand?

Servant for Shang princess: Stop crying, it'll ruin your pretty face. What are you reading?

Shang princess: It's a copy of the questions and answers the ancestors gave my father about sending me to the Qiang court.

Servant for Shang princess: What does it say?

Shang princess: I'm sending my daughter to marry a member of the Qiang court. Does the fourteenth king of Qiang agree? Will the marriage stop the battles between us? The answers to both questions were "yes".

LiLi: I must try to travel with them back home. If they're going to the Qiang court, then they'll pass near my settlement.

Narrator: LiLi managed to join the bridal party. They stopped for a day at the wall-fort (garrison) on the way to the Qiang territory. LiLi briefly stole the Shang princess' bamboo copy of the oracle bone inscription to copy some of the Chinese characters. The next day LiLi was home with her family.

LiLi: The Shang looked and acted a lot like the Qiang. See, look at the bamboo strip: The inscriptions show that they use chariots, horses, and strong bows like us.

LiLi's father: What is this other sign?

LiLi: I think it is a picture of some sort of tool used to help break up the earth for planting crops.

I saw some farmers using them near the garrison. The farmers looked sad. Their crops are taken for the soldiers and new Shang settlers coming from Anyang.

LiLi's father: How do they make this tool?

LiLi: I don't know, but it had two prongs and a crossbar for pressing down with your foot.



**A character from the Shang dynasty symbolizing “plow” or “digging stick.”**

Cecillia Lindqvist, *China: Empire of the Written Symbol* (London: Harvill, 1991), 166.

LiLi's father: Oh, it must be made of cast iron. That's heavy. Did they use oxen to pull this tool?

LiLi: I only saw one ox with the tool. The other farmers were lifting and dragging the tool by themselves. They looked strong, and the tool seemed to break up the loess soil very easily.

LiLi's father: Well, maybe in our next trade exchange, we can ask about getting one of the new tools. It would help us plant more next spring.

Narrator: The archaeologist woke up and thought it was funny how his dream used all of the latest interpretations of the elements of early complex society on the North China plain and East Asia. Who knows? Maybe a girl like Lili really did escape human sacrifice and brought back news of the cast iron plow to groups ruled by a rival of the Shang dynasty.

## ***Lesson Three***

### ***According to Master Kung***

#### **Introduction**

Master Kung (Confucius, 551- 479 BCE) lived not long before the start of the Warring States Period after the end of the Zhou dynasty. His teachings aimed to help rulers and the nobility create social order during a time of political and social chaos. He and his students are given credit for editing several books of etiquette and political theory. These became classics in Chinese literature. One of the important ones is titled the *Li Ji* or the *Book of Rites*. It describes the details of Chinese religious practices from the eighth to the fifth century BCE. Published about 200 BCE, the *Book of Rites* explains the proper behavior and rituals for funerals, including the type of clothing to be worn, the food to be served to the ancestors, the music to be played, and the punishments for misbehaving. About a hundred years after Master Kung died, one of his key followers, Mencius, prepared a book of the great teacher's sayings called *The Analects of Master Kung*.

#### **Activity**

Use the following quotes from the *Analects* and the *Book of Rites* to determine what Master Kung would have said about how well the creators of Lady Hao's tomb (presented in Lesson 1) followed the Confucian rules for burial. The class should then discuss why Confucius put so much emphasis on correct behavior for all occasions and what special cultural characteristics the Confucian texts show about early Chinese society. society? people?

Use the following questions to begin class discussion:

1. Why do you think Confucius says it is important to treat burials seriously but not with the same effort as helping living people?
2. What do you think Confucius taught respect for the dead?
3. What are the important ritual items that Confucius recommends to be buried with the dead? Are these the same items that were buried with Lady Hao, the Duke, and the Marquis? What might account for the differences?
4. Why did the *Book of Rites* include the story of the son who refused to follow his father's request to have his concubines killed and placed in his tomb? Do the tombs of Lady Hao, the Duke, and the Marquis follow the recommendations from the *Book of Rites*?

## Lesson 3

### *Student Handout 3.1—According to Master Kung (Confucius)*

#### *Analects:*

Confucius said, “In dealing with the dead, if we treat them as if they were entirely dead, that would show a want of affection, and should not be done; or, if we treat them as if they were entirely alive, that would show a want of wisdom, and should not be done. On this account the vessels of bamboo (used in connection with the burial of the dead) are not fit for actual use; those of earthenware cannot be used to wash in; those of wood are incapable of being carved; the lutes are strung, but not evenly; the pandean pipes are complete, but not in tune; the bells and musical stones are there, but they have no stands. They are called vessels to the eye of fancy; that is, (the dead) are thus treated as if they were spiritual intelligences.”

Source: Internet Sacred Text Archive, <http://www.sacred-texts.com/cfu/liki/liki02.htm>, Analects, Part III, 3.

#### *Book of Rites:*

“When new offerings (of grain or fruits) are presented (beside the body in the coffin), they should be (abundant), like the offerings on the first day of the moon. When a man dies, there arises a feeling of disgust (at the corpse). Its impotency goes on to make us revolt from it. On this account, there is the wrapping it in the shroud, and there are the curtains, plumes (and other ornaments of the coffin), to preserve men from that feeling of disgust. Immediately after death, the dried flesh and pickled meats are set out (by the side of the corpse). When the interment is about to take place, there are the things sent and offered (at the grave); and after the interment, there is the food presented (in the sacrifices of repose). The dead have never been seen to partake of these things. But from the highest ages to the present they have never been neglected; all to cause men not to revolt (from their dead). Thus it is that what you blame in the rules of propriety is really nothing that is wrong in them.

When Khan Kan-hsî was lying ill, he assembled his brethren, and charged his son Zun-ki, saying, -- ‘When I am dead, you must make my coffin large, and make my two concubines lie in it with me, one on each side.’ When he died, his son said, ‘To bury the living with the dead is contrary to propriety; how much more must it be so to bury them in the same coffin!’ Accordingly he did not put the two ladies to death.”

Source: Internet Sacred Text Archive, <http://www.sacred-texts.com/cfu/liki/liki02.htm>, The Book of Rites, Book II: The Than Kung, Section I. Part I.

## This unit and the Three Essential Questions

 <p>HUMANS &amp; the ENVIRONMENT</p>	<p>Compare the climate and geography of the Yellow River (Huang He) valley, the Tigris-Euphrates River valley (Mesopotamia), and the Nile River valley (Egypt). How might environmental factors have affected the way early complex societies developed differently in these three areas? What economic importance do great river valleys have in the United States today? Take such examples as the Hudson, the Ohio, the Mississippi, or the Columbia rivers.</p>
 <p>HUMANS &amp; other HUMANS</p>	<p>Why have most societies with resources for large-scale building constructed great public tombs for their rulers and other powerful women and men? What social and political purposes have monumental tombs served? Why have Americans built large monuments or tombs dedicated to famous leaders such as Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln, or Grant? On the other hand, why are most American leaders of the past buried in relatively modest graves rather than ornate tombs? What might the style in which leaders are buried tell us about a society's values?</p>
 <p>HUMANS &amp; IDEAS</p>	<p>Should Confucianism be classified as a religion? Why or why not?</p>

## This unit and the Seven Key Themes

Key Theme 3: Uses and Abuses of Power

Key Theme 4: Haves and Have-Nots

Key Theme 7: Spiritual Life and Moral Codes

## This unit and the Standards in Historical Thinking

Historical Thinking Standard 1: Chronological Thinking

The student is able to (F) reconstruct patterns of historical succession and duration in which historical developments have unfolded, and apply them to explain historical continuity and change.

Historical Thinking Standard 2: Historical Comprehension

The student is able to (E) read historical narratives imaginatively, taking into account what the narrative reveals of the humanity of the individuals and groups involved-their probable values, outlook, motives, hopes, fears, strengths, and weaknesses.

### Historical Thinking Standard 3: Historical Analysis and Interpretation

The student is able to (B) consider multiple perspectives of various peoples in the past by demonstrating their differing motives, beliefs, interests, hopes, and fears.

### Historical Thinking Standard 4: Historical Research Capabilities

The student is able to (A) formulate historical questions from encounters with historical documents, eyewitness accounts, letters, diaries, artifacts, photos, historical sites, art, architecture, and other records from the past.

### Historical Thinking Standard 5: Historical Issues-Analysis and Decision-Making

The student is able to (C) identify relevant historical antecedents and differentiate from those that are inappropriate and irrelevant to contemporary issues.

## Resources

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### *Instructional resources for teachers*

Christian, David. *A History of Russia, Central Asia and Mongolia: Inner Eurasia from Prehistory to the Mongol Empire*. Vol. 1. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1999. This book includes detailed discussion of peoples of the eastern steppe lands bordering China. Volume 1 ends with the era of the Mongol empire.

Di Cosmo, Nicola. *Ancient China and Its Enemies, The Rise of Nomadic Power in East Asian History*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002. A key scholarly work on relations between China and peoples of the steppe.

Ebrey, Patricia Buckley. *The Cambridge Illustrated History of China*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996. A summative history with excellent illustrations.

Hansen, Valerie. *The Open Empire, A History of China to 1600*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2000. A lively and attractively written book.

Internet Sacred Text Archive. <http://www.sacred-texts.com/cfu/liki/liki02.htm>. An excellent source of primary source documents on religion, including Confucianism.

Keightley, David N. *The Ancestral Landscape, Time, Space, and Community in Late Shang China (ca. 1200 - 1045 B.C.)*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000. A scholarly work.

Schwartz, Benjamin I. *The World of Thought in Ancient China*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983. Includes an introduction to Confucius.

### *Instructional resources for students*

Ebrey, Patricia Buckley. "A Visual Sourcebook of Chinese Civilization." University of Washington. <http://depts.washington.edu/chinaciv/>. This is a useful website created by

Professor Patricia Ebrey, a specialist in Chinese history. The website provides photographs of artifacts from Shang through Zhou period tombs and the relevant surrounding Yellow River Valley area.

Internet Sacred Text Archive. <http://www.sacred-texts.com/cfu/liki/liki02.htm>. An excellent source of primary source documents on religion, including Confucianism.

“Tomb Builders.” *Calliope: Exploring World History* 11, 1 (Sept. 2000). This issue of the children’s history magazine is about the construction and use of tombs in ancient Egypt.

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## **Correlations to National and State Standards and to Textbooks**

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### ***National Standards for History***

Era 2: Early Civilizations and the Emergence of Pastoral Peoples, 4000-1000 BCE. 2A: The student understands how civilization emerged in northern China in the second millennium BCE. 2B: The student understands how centers of Agrarian society arose in the third and second millennia BCE. Standard 4: The student is able to compare conditions under which civilizations developed in Southwest Asia, the Nile valley, India, China, and the Eastern Mediterranean.

Era 3: Classical Traditions, Major Religions, and Giant Empires, 1000BCE-300 CE. 3C: The student understands how China became unified under the early imperial dynasties

### ***California: History-Social Science Content Standards***

Grade Six, 6.6. Student analyze the geographic, political, economic, religious, and social structures of the early civilizations of China. 6.6.3. Know about the life of Confucius and the fundamental teachings of Confucianism and Taoism.

### ***New York State Learning Standards for Social Studies***

Unit One: Ancient World – Civilizations and Religions (4000 BC – 500 AD), A. Early peoples, 4. Migration of early human populations. C. Classical civilizations, 1. Chinese civilization.

### ***Virginia Standards of Learning***

World History and Geography to 1500 AD. Era I: Human Origins and Early Civilizations, Prehistory to 1000B.C. WHI.2 The student will demonstrate knowledge of early development of humankind from the Paleolithic Era to the agricultural revolution by a) explaining the impact of geographic environment on hunter-gatherer societies; d) explaining how archeological discoveries are changing present-day knowledge of early peoples. Era II: Classical Civilizations and Rise of Religious Traditions, 1000B.C. to 500A.D. WHI.4 The student will demonstrate knowledge of the civilizations of Persia, India, and China in terms of chronology, geography, social structures, government, economy, religion, and contributions to later civilizations by f) describing the impact of Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism.

### ***Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for Social Studies***

113.33 World History Studies. (c) Knowledge and Skills. 12) Geography. The student understands the impact of geographic factors on major historic events. The student is expected to: (A) locate places and regions of historical significance such as the Indus, Nile, Tigris and Euphrates, and Yellow (Huang He) river valleys and describe their physical and human characteristics. 19) Culture. The student understands the history and relevance of major religious and philosophical traditions. The student is expected to (B) identify examples of religious influence in historic and contemporary world events.

### ***World history textbooks***

*A Message of Ancient Days* (Houghton Mifflin). Chapter 9: Ancient China. Lesson 2: The Age of Confucius.

*Ancient World: Adventures in Time and Place* (Macmillan/McGraw-Hill). Chapter 9: Ancient China. Lesson 4: Confucius Changes China.

*World History: Ancient Civilizations* (McDougal Littell). Chapter 8: Ancient China.

*World History: The Human Experience* (Glencoe McGraw-Hill). Chapter 9: China's Flourishing Civilization. Lesson 1: Three Great Dynasties. Lesson 2: Three Ways of Life. Lesson 3: Society and Culture.

### **Conceptual links to other teaching units**

Landscape Teaching Unit 4.3 (Migration and change in Africa south of the Sahara, 1200 BCE – 200 CE) shifts from East Asia to Sub-Saharan Africa during approximately the same era. The single major river valley civilizations in Africa comparable to that of China's Yellow River basin were the societies that developed along the banks of the Nile River. These societies, however, included not only Egypt but also the region further up the valley known as Kush, where Africans built a complex society. Some of the ruins may still be seen today. In most of Sub-Saharan Africa the first millennium BCE was a time when the migration and settlement of farmers and cattle herders was producing a steady buildup of population—and with it trade, towns, and states—from the Western African rain forest belt to the southern end of the continent. Just as Chinese farmers were opening new land southward to the Yangze River valley of central China, so other pioneers speaking languages of the Bantu family were using iron tools to grow a variety of crops in the forests and southern grasslands of Africa. In the process, stone-using and cattle-raising peoples who already lived in central and southern Africa found themselves interacting with Bantu-speaking newcomers in a variety of ways. The movement that introduced iron-using technology and social ways to the southern half of Africa represents a key development in world history.