Ancient China to 1912







BEACON MEDIA

Timeline of Ancient China – major events

2242 BC - The Tower of Babel – People started to migrate from the Babylon, (Iraq) to China.

Approx. 2200 – 1575 BC:

- Early Chinese settlers build small villages and farm along the major rivers including the Yellow River and the Yangtze River.
- Rule of the legendary Yellow Emperor. His wife Leizu invented the process of making silk cloth.
- The Chinese learn how to make bronze.
- The Xia Dynasty becomes the first dynasty in China.

1570 - 1045 BC: Shang Dynasty

1045 - 256 BC: Zhou Dynasty

771-500 BC: End of the Western Zhou and beginning of the Eastern Zhou. The Spring and Autumn period begins.

- 551 BC: Philosopher and thinker Confucius is born.
- 544 BC: Sun Tzu the author of the Art of War is born.
- 500 BC: Cast iron is invented in China around this time. The iron plough was likely invented shortly after.

403 - 221 BC: The Warring States period. During this time leaders from different areas were constantly fighting for control. In 342 BC: The crossbow is first used in China.

221 - 206 BC: Qin Dynasty. Qin Shi Huangdi becomes the first Emperor of China. He has the Great Wall of China built by extending and connecting existing walls to protect the people from the Mongols.

220 BC: The writing system of China becomes standardized by the government.

210 BC: The umbrella is invented.

206 BC - 220 AD: Han Dynasty

207 BC: Emperor Gaozu establishes the Chinese Civil Service to help run the government.

104 BC: Emperor Wu defines the Taichu calendar which will remain the Chinese calendar throughout history.

8 - 22 AD: The Xin Dynasty overthrows the Han Dynasty for a short period of time.

2 AD: A government census is taken. The size of the Chinese Empire is estimated at 60 million people.

105 AD: Paper is invented by Imperial court official Cai Lun.

222 - 581: There are six Dynasties during this time.

250: Buddhism is introduced to China.

589 - 618: Sui Dynasty

609: The Grand Canal is completed.

618 - 907: Tang Dynasty

868: Wood block printing is first used in China to print an entire book called the Diamond Sutra.

907 - 960: Five Dynasties during this time.

960 - 1279: Song Dynasty

1041: Moveable type for printing is invented.

1044: This is the earliest date that a formula for gunpowder is recorded.

1088: The first description of the magnetic compass.

1200: Genghis Khan unites the Mongol tribes under his leadership.

1271: Marco Polo begins his travels to China.

1279 - 1368: Yuan Dynasty

1279: The Mongols under Kublai Khan defeat the Song Dynasty. Kublai Khan establishes the Yuan Dynasty.

1368 - 1644: Ming Dynasty

1405: Chinese explorer Zheng He begins his first journey to India and Africa. He will establish trade relationships and bring back news of the outside world.

1405: The Chinese begin construction on the Forbidden City.

1420: Beijing becomes the new capital of the Chinese Empire replacing Nanjing.

1517: Portuguese traders first arrive in the country.

1644 - 1912: Qing Dynasty

1912: The Qing Dynasty comes to an end when the Nationalist Party take over, (The Republic of China)

What is a dynasty?

A dynasty is when one family rules a country or region over a long period of time. Generally, the head of the family will be the ruler of the land, like an emperor or king. When that ruler dies, another member of the family will take power, usually the oldest son. When a new family takes control, then a new dynasty begins.

Mandate of Heaven

The Mandate of Heaven is what the Chinese people believed gave their rulers the right to be king or emperor. It meant that the gods had blessed that person with the right to rule. A ruler had to be a good and just ruler to keep the Mandate of Heaven. When a ruler or dynasty lost power, this meant that they must also have lost the Mandate of Heaven.

The Qing Dynasty 1644 – 1912

Let's take a look at China under the last Dynasty before being taken over by the Nationalist Party.

The Outside World

Under the Qing Dynasty, China remained somewhat isolated from the outside world. They traded some items such as tea and silver, but had little else to do with foreign countries. For many years, foreign ambassadors were not even allowed to approach the Chinese capital. In order to keep out European influence, Christianity was outlawed in the 1800s.

Culture

The three main philosophies followed by the Chinese during the Qing Dynasty included Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism. The Qing leaders were generally strong followers of Buddhism. Art flourished under the Qing including painting, sculpture, poetry, opera, and porcelain.

In society, the Manchu people were considered at the top of the social class. The majority of the people, the Han Chinese, were generally discriminated against. For example, Han Chinese and Manchu were not allowed to marry. This created discontent among the people and eventually led to the downfall of the Qing.

Opium Wars

In the 1800s, the British began selling opium in China. Many Chinese people became addicted to opium and the government soon made the drug illegal. The British, however, continued to smuggle in opium. When the Chinese government boarded British ships and dumped their opium into the ocean, a war broke out.

At the time, China had a small and outdated navy. The British ships defeated the Chinese in both the First and Second Opium Wars. By the end of the Opium Wars in 1860, the British gained control of Hong Kong, Christianity was legalized, and all of China was opened to British merchants.

Fall of the Qing

In the early 1900s, the Qing Dynasty began to crumble. Multiple natural disasters, internal rebellions, and war with Japan all led to famine and a poor economy. Finally, in 1911, a group of revolutionaries overthrew the Qing government. The last emperor, a six-year-old boy named Puyi, officially gave up his throne in 1912 and the Republic of China took over.

Self-Test

Answer the questions, then check your answers. Give yourself a score out of 10.

1) What dynasty ruled before the Qing Dynasty?

2) What is another name for the Qing Dynasty?

3) What religion was outlawed in China in order to keep out European influence?

4) Who did the Chinese fight in the Opium Wars?

5) What led to the fall of the Qing Dynasty?

6) True or False: The Qing Dynasty remained isolated from the rest of the world.

7) Who was the longest ruling emperor of the Qing Dynasty?

8) True or False: The Qing Dynasty was the last dynasty of Ancient China.

9) What group took control after the downfall of the Qing Dynasty?

10) Who was the last emperor of China?

Answers

1. 1.Ming Dynasty
2. Manchu Dynasty
3. Christianity
4. Great Britain
5. Famine. War with Japan. Internal rebellion
6. TRUE
7. Kangxi Emperor
8. TRUE
9. Republic of China
10. Puyi

Geography of Ancient China

The geography of Ancient China shaped the way the civilization and culture developed. The large land was isolated from much of the rest of the world by dry deserts to the north and west, the Pacific Ocean to the east, and impassable mountains to the south. This enabled the Chinese to develop independently from other world civilizations.

Rivers

Perhaps the two most important geographical features of Ancient China were the two major rivers that flowed through central China: the Yellow River to the north and the Yangtze River to the south. These major rivers were a great source of fresh water, food, fertile soil, and transportation. They also were the subjects of Chinese poetry, art, literature, and folklore.

Yellow River

The Yellow River is often called the "cradle of Chinese civilization". It was along the banks of the Yellow river where the Chinese civilization first formed. The Yellow River is 3,395 miles long making it the sixth longest river in the world. It is also called the Huang He River.

Early Chinese farmers built small villages along the Yellow River. The rich yellow coloured soil was good for growing a grain called millet. The farmers of this area also raised sheep and cattle.

Yangtze River

The Yangtze River is south of the Yellow River and flows in the same direction (west to east). It is 3,988 miles long and is the third longest river in the world. Just like the Yellow River, the Yangtze played an important role in the development of the culture and civilization of Ancient China.

Farmers that lived along the Yangtze River took advantage of the warm climate and rainy weather to grow rice. Eventually the land along the Yangtze became some of the most important and wealthy land in all of Ancient China.

The Yangtze also served as a boundary between northern and southern China. It is very wide and difficult to cross. The famous Battle of Red Cliffs took place along the river.

Mountains

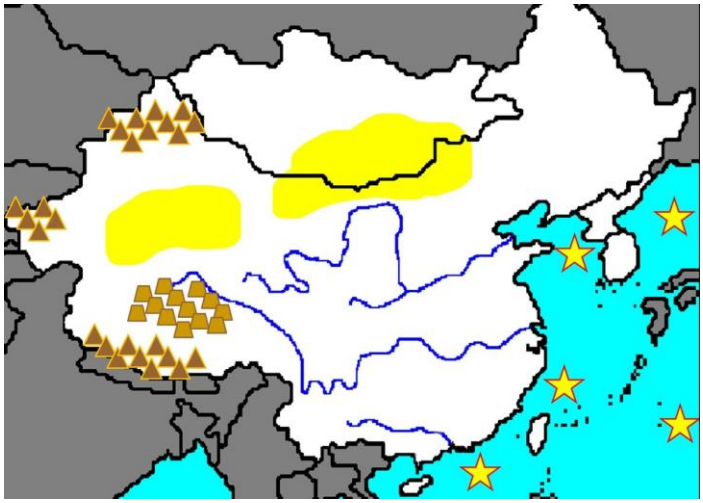
To the south and southeast of China are the Himalaya Mountains. These are the highest mountains in the world. They provided a nearly impassable border for Ancient China, keeping the area isolated from many other civilizations. They were also important to Chinese religion and were considered sacred.

Deserts

To the north and west of Ancient China were two of the world's largest deserts: the Gobi Desert and the Taklamakan Desert. These deserts also provided borders that kept the Chinese isolated from the rest of the world. The Mongols, however, lived in the Gobi Desert and were constantly raiding cities of northern China. This is why the Great Wall of China was built to protect the Chinese from these northern invaders.

Interesting Facts about the Geography of Ancient China

1. Today the Three Gorges Dam on the Yangtze River serves as the world's largest hydro-electric power source.
2. The Yellow River also has the name "China's Sorrow" because of the terrible floods that have occurred throughout history when its banks overflowed.
3. The Taklamakan Desert has the nickname of the "Sea of Death" because of its temperature extremes and poisonous snakes.
4. Much of the Silk Road travelled along the deserts to the north and west of China.
5. The religion of Buddhism is closely associated with the Himalaya Mountains.







Self-Test

Answer the questions, then check your answers. Give yourself a score out of 10.

1) What geographical feature is sometimes called the cradle of Chinese civilization?

2) What major crop was grown in the south along the banks of the Yangtze River?

3) Ancient China was surrounded by desert, mountains, and ocean. What impact did these natural borders have on the culture?

4) What major geographical feature served as the southern border of Ancient China?

5) What peoples lived in the Gobi Desert to the north and raided Ancient China throughout much of its history?

6) What served as a border between southern and northern China?

7) What resource did the rivers provide to the early settlers of China?

8) What were the two major rivers of Ancient China?

9) True or False: Geography played an important role in the development of the civilization of Ancient China.

10) What aspect of Chinese culture was the Himalaya Mountains most associated with?

Answers

1. Yellow River
2. Rice
3. They isolated the Chinese civilization allowing it to develop independently
4. Himalaya Mountains
5. Mongols
6. Yangtze River
7. Fertile Soil, Transportation, Fresh Water
8. Yangtze and Yellow
9. TRUE
10. religion

Biography: Marco Polo

Marco Polo was a merchant and explorer who traveled throughout the Far East and China for much of his life. His stories were the basis for what much of Europe knew about Ancient China for many years. He lived from 1254 to 1324.

Where did he grow up?

Marco was born in Venice, Italy in 1254. Venice was a wealthy trading city and Marco's father was a merchant.

The Silk Road

The Silk Road referred to a number of trade routes between major cities and trading posts that went all the way from Eastern Europe to Northern China. It was called the Silk Road because silk cloth was the major export from China.

Not many people traveled the entire route. Trading was mostly between cities or small sections of the route and products would slowly make their way from one end to the other trading hands several times.

Marco Polo's father and uncle wanted to try something different. They wanted to travel all the way to China and bring the goods directly back to Venice. They thought they could make their fortune this way. It took them nine years, but they finally made it home.

When did he first travel to China?

Marco first left for China when he was 17 years old. He traveled there with his father and uncle. His father and uncle had met the Mongol Emperor Kublai Khan during their first trip to China and had told him they would return. Kublai was leader over all of China at the time.

Where did he travel?

It took Marco Polo three years to get to China. Along the way he visited many great cities and saw many sites including the holy city of Jerusalem, the mountains of the Hindu Kush, Persia, and the Gobi Desert. He met a lot of different types of people and had many adventures.

Living in China

Marco lived in China for many years and learned to speak the language. He traveled throughout China as a messenger and spy for Kublai Khan. He even traveled far to the south to where Myanmar and Vietnam are today. During these visits he learned about different cultures, foods, cities, and peoples. He saw many places and things that no one from Europe had ever seen before.

Marco was fascinated by the wealth and luxury of the Chinese cities and of Kublai Khan's court. It was nothing like he had experienced in Europe. The capital city of Kinsay was large, but well organized and clean. Wide roads and huge civil engineering projects like the Grand Canal were well beyond anything he had experienced back home. Everything from the food to the people to the animals, like orangutans and rhinos, were new and interesting.

How do we know about Marco Polo?

After twenty years of traveling, Marco, along with his father and uncle, decided to head home to Venice. They left home in 1271 and finally returned in 1295. A few years after returning home, Venice fought a war with the city of Genoa. Marco was put under arrest. While he was under arrest, Marco told detailed stories of his journeys to a writer named Rustichello who wrote them all down in a book called The Travels of Marco Polo.

The Travels of Marco Polo became a very popular book. It was translated into multiple languages and read throughout Europe. After the fall of Kublai Kahn, the Ming Dynasty took over China. They were very wary of foreigners and little information about China was available. This made Marco's book even more popular.

The Silk Road

The Silk Road was a trade route that went from China to Eastern Europe. It went along the northern borders of China, India, and Persia and ended up in Eastern Europe near today's Turkey and the Mediterranean Sea.



Why was the Silk Road important?

The Silk Road was important because it helped to generate trade and commerce between a number of different kingdoms and empires. This helped for ideas, culture, inventions, and unique products to spread across much of the settled world.

Why is it called the Silk Road?

It was called the Silk Road because one of the major products traded was silk cloth from China. People throughout Asia and Europe prized Chinese silk for its softness and luxury. The Chinese sold silk for thousands of years and even the Romans called China the "land of silk".

What goods did the Chinese trade?

Besides silk, the Chinese also exported (sold) teas, salt, sugar, porcelain, and spices. Most of what was traded was expensive luxury goods. This was because it was a long trip and merchants didn't have a lot of room for goods. They imported, or bought, goods like cotton, ivory, wool, gold, and silver.

How did they travel?

Merchants and tradesmen travelled in large caravans. They would have many guards with them. Traveling in a big group like a caravan helped in defending from bandits. Camels were popular animals for transport because much of the road was through dry and harsh land.

History

Although there was some trade between China and the rest of the world for some time, the silk trade was significantly expanded and promoted by the Han Dynasty which ruled from 206 BC to 220 AD.

Later, under the rule of the Yuan Dynasty set up by Kublai Khan of the Mongols, trade from China along the Silk Road would reach its peak. During this time the Mongols controlled a significant portion of the trade route, enabling Chinese merchants to travel safely. Also, merchants were granted more social status during the Mongol rule.

Fun facts about the Silk Road

- It was over 4,000 miles long.
- Marco Polo traveled to China along the Silk Road.
- Not all that was traded along the Silk Road was good. It is thought that the bubonic plague, or Black Death, traveled to Europe from the Silk Road.
- Very few merchants traveled along the entire route. Goods were traded at many cities and trade posts along the way.
- There wasn't just one route, but many routes. Some were shorter, but more dangerous. Others took longer, but were safer.

Self-Test

Answer the questions, then check your answers. Give yourself a score out of 10.

1) Which of the following statements best describes the Silk Road?

2) During what Ancient Chinese dynasty did the Silk Road reach its peak?

3) About how long was the Silk Road?

4) True or False: Most merchants traveled the entire distance of the Silk Road, carrying their goods from one end to the other.

5) What was the most popular way to travel along the route?

6) What sorts of things were traded along the Silk Road?

7) Where did the Silk Road get its name?

8) What deadly disease is thought to have traveled to Europe along the Silk Road?

9) What Ancient Chinese Dynasty significantly expanded the silk trade during their rule from 206 BC to 220 AD?

10) What famous explorer is thought to have traveled along the Silk Road on his way to China?

Answers

1. A number of trade routes that went between China and Eastern Europe
2. Yuan Dynasty
3. Over 4000 miles long
4. FALSE
5. In a caravan of camels
6. Silk, Spices, Porcelain, Salt
1. 7.From the silk that China sold to the rest of the world
7. The bubonic plague
8. Han Dynasty
9. Marco Polo

The Great Wall of China

What is it?

The Great Wall of China is a wall that covers much of the northern border of China. The length of the Great Wall built by the Ming Dynasty is around 5,500 miles long. If you take the length of all the portions of the wall built by every Chinese Dynasty, plus various branches, the total comes to 13,171 miles long! No wonder they call it the Great Wall.



Why did they build the wall?

The wall was built to help keep out northern invaders like the Mongols. Smaller walls had been built over the years, but the first Emperor of China, Qin Shi Huang, decided that he wanted a single giant wall to protect his northern borders. He ordered that a single strong wall be built with thousands of lookout towers where soldiers could guard and protect his empire.

Who built it?

The original Great Wall was started by the Qin Dynasty and following dynasties continued to work on it. Later the Ming Dynasty rebuilt the wall. Much of the Great Wall that we know today was built by the Ming Dynasty.

The wall was built by peasants, slaves, criminals, and other people that the emperor decided to punish. Soldiers were involved in building the wall and in managing the workers as well.

It is estimated that millions of people worked on the wall over the course of over 1000 years. Some scientists think that up to 1 million people died while building the wall. People building the wall were not treated very well. Many people were just buried under the wall when they died.

What did they build it with?

Generally the wall was built with whatever resources were available nearby. The earlier walls were built with compacted dirt surrounded by stone. Much of the later Ming wall was built with bricks.

Was it just a wall?

The wall was really a fortification to protect the northern border. It was a wall, but also had watchtowers, beacon towers to send signals, and blockhouses to house soldiers. There were soldiers guarding the walls and towers. There were also towns built along the wall to garrison soldiers so they could quickly get to the wall in case of a large attack. It is estimated that over 1 million soldiers guarded the great wall during the height of the Ming Dynasty.

Fun Facts about the Great Wall of China

- There are over 7,000 lookout towers that are part of the Great Wall.
- Today the walls continue to erode, however historians are trying to protect what sections they can.
- The height and width of the wall varies over its length. The current wall built by the Ming Dynasty averages around 33 feet tall and 15 feet wide.
- It is the longest man-made structure in the world.
- Wide moats were often dug outside the wall in flat areas to make an enemy's approach more difficult.

- Smoke signals were used to indicate an attack. The more enemies that were attacking, the more smoke signals they would make.
- It was named one of the New Seven Wonders of the World.
- Many people say that the Great Wall can be seen from the Moon without aid. However, this is just a myth.
- The wheelbarrow, which the Chinese invented, no doubt was a great help in building much of the wall.
- The wall extends through all sorts of terrain, even into the mountains. Its highest point is over 5,000 feet above sea level.

Self-Test

Answer the questions, then check your answers. Give yourself a score out of 10.

1) The Great Wall of China was built to keep out what invaders?

2) Where was the Great Wall located?

3) What Ancient Chinese dynasty first began work on the Great Wall?

4) Why were towns built along the Great Wall?

5) What were some other constructions along the Great Wall that aided in the defense against attacks?

6) If you put all of the sections of the wall together, about how long would the wall be?

7) Which Chinese dynasty re-built much of the Great Wall that still stands today?

8) Which of the following statements is not true about the Great Wall of China?

9) True or False: Smoke signals were often used to signal an attack.

10) What was the wall built out of?

Answers

1. 1.The Mongols
2. Along the northern border
3. Qin
4. To house soldiers who guarded the wall and defended against attacks
5. Lookout towers, Block houses for housing soldiers, Moats of water, Beacon towers to send signals
6. 5500 miles
7. Ming
8. Only the rich and wealthy were allowed to work on the wall
9. TRUE
10. Stone and bricks

The Forbidden City

The Forbidden City was the palace of the Chinese emperors during the Ming and Qing dynasties. It is located in the heart of Beijing, the capital city of China, and is the largest ancient palace in the world.



When was it built?

The Forbidden City was built under the orders of the powerful Yongle Emperor of the Ming Dynasty between the years 1406 to 1420. More than one million people worked on the construction of the expansive palace. The best materials were brought in from all over China including specially made "golden" bricks, logs of the rare Phoebe zhennan trees, and blocks of marble. When the palace was completed, the Yongle Emperor moved the capital of the empire to Beijing city.

How big is the Forbidden City?

The Forbidden City is enormous. It covers an area of 178 acres that include 90 palaces with courtyards, 980 total buildings, and at least 8,700 rooms. The total floor space is over 1,600,000 square feet. Imagine if it was your job to clean that floor. The emperor had an army of servants, however, to take care of his palace and all the people that lived there.

Features

The Forbidden City also served as a fortress to protect the emperor and his family. It is surrounded by a 26 feet high wall and a 170 feet wide moat. Each corner of the palace has a tall guard tower where guards used to keep watch for enemies and assassins.

Each side of the palace has a gate with the main gate being the Meridian Gate to the south. The other gates include the Gate of Devine Might to the north, the East Glorious Gate, and the West Glorious Gate.

Layout

The layout of the Forbidden City followed many Ancient Chinese rules of design. The main buildings all were aligned in a straight line from north to south. There are two main sections to the palace: the outer court and the inner court.

Outer court - The southern part of the palace is called the outer court. It was here that the emperors conducted official ceremonies. There are three main buildings in the outer court including the Hall of Preserving Harmony, the Hall of Central Harmony, and the Hall of Supreme Harmony. The largest of the three is the Hall of Supreme Harmony. It was in this building that the emperors held court during the Ming dynasty.

Inner Court - To the north is the inner court, where the emperor and his family lived. The emperor himself slept in a building called the Palace of Heavenly Purity. The Empress lived in a building called the Palace of Earthly Tranquility.

Special Symbolism

The Forbidden City was designed using Ancient Chinese symbolism and philosophy. Here are a few examples:

- The buildings all faced south which stood for holiness. They also faced away from the north which symbolized the enemies of the Chinese, cold winds, and evil.
- The roofs of the buildings in the city were made with yellow tiles. Yellow was the exclusive colour of the emperor and symbolized his ultimate power.
- The ceremonial buildings are arranged in groups of three. The number three represented heaven.
- The numbers nine and five are used often because they represent the majesty of the emperor.
- The traditional five elemental colours are used throughout the design of the palace. These include white, black, red, yellow, and green.
- The roof of the library was black to symbolize water in order to protect the writings from fire.

Is it still there today?

Yes, the Forbidden City still lies at the centre of Beijing city. Today it is the Palace Museum and houses thousands of artifacts and pieces of art from Ancient China.

Interesting Facts about the Forbidden City

- Twenty-four different Chinese emperors lived in the palace over the course of nearly 500 years.
- About 100,000 artisans and craftsmen worked on the palace.
- The last emperor of China, Puyi, continued to live in the Forbidden City for twelve years after he abdicated the throne in 1912.
- The Chinese name for the palace during ancient times was Zijin Cheng which means "Purple Forbidden City". Today the palace is called "Gugong" which means "Former Palace".
- The movie The Last Emperor was filmed inside the Forbidden City.

Self-Test

Answer the questions, then check your answers. Give yourself a score out of 10.

1) What was the Forbidden City?

2) What modern day Chinese city is the Forbidden City located at the centre of?

3) What two Chinese dynasties used the Forbidden City as the palace for their emperor?

4) What was the main function of the inner court?

5) What sort of fortifications did the palace have?

6) What direction did all of the buildings face?

7) What was the main function of the outer court?

8) What colour were the roofs of most of the buildings in the Forbidden City?

9) How many emperors ruled China from this palace?

10) True or False: The Forbidden City was completely destroyed in a fire during World War II. There is nothing left.

Answers

1. A palace for the emperor
2. Beijing
3. Ming and Qing
4. It was where the emperor and his family lived

5. A 26 feet high wall all the way around it, tall towers at each corner, a moat of water surrounding it
6. South
7. It was where the emperor held official ceremonies
8. Yellow
9. 24
10. FALSE

The Opium Wars

What were the Opium Wars?

The Opium Wars were two minor wars fought between China and Great Britain (primarily) over the opium trade in China. They took place during the middle of the 1800s near the end of the Qing Dynasty. Some historians consider the Opium Wars to be the start of the modern era in China.

What caused the wars?

During the end of the Qing Dynasty, China exported many goods to European countries including tea, silk, and porcelain. At the same time, China didn't import many goods. China mostly kept to itself and only allowed foreign traders to trade through certain ports.

In order to create a new market in China, British traders with the British East India Company started to import opium into China. The opium was grown in India. Opium is a very addictive drug and was illegal in China. However, as more and more Chinese became addicted to opium, British traders began to make a lot of money selling opium to China.

The Chinese government didn't want opium in China. Too many people were becoming addicted to the drug. In 1839, they decided to put an end to the illegal opium trade. They first sent a letter to the British government asking them to stop the traders. When the traders continued to sell the drug, the Chinese seized over 20,000 chests of opium from British traders. Soon, fighting broke out between the two sides and the First Opium War began.

First Opium War

The First Opium War lasted over three years from March 18, 1839 to August 29, 1842. The British Navy moved in and easily defeated the outdated Chinese Naval forces. They took control of the trade port Canton and reopened the opium trade. They then moved to occupy several cities along the coast of China and blockaded the Grand Canal. By 1842, the Chinese saw that they were losing the war and were ready to negotiate.

Results

After winning the war, the British forced the Chinese to sign the Treaty of Nanking. The treaty reestablished trade between the countries and opened up five trade ports to Britain. It also forced China to pay $21 million in reparations and gave Britain control of the city of Hong Kong.

Second Opium War

The Second Opium War lasted from 1856 to 1860. The French joined the British in this war against China. The war began when the British placed additional demands on the Chinese including legalizing the opium trade and opening all of China for trade with British companies. When the Chinese government refused, tensions increased between the two countries.

Fighting began when the Chinese seized a British pirate ship called Arrow. The British said the Chinese had no right to seize the ship and used the incident for an excuse to attack Canton. The French soon joined in the fighting when a French missionary was executed by Chinese authorities.

The British once again took control of Canton. Fighting continued on and off for the next four years. In 1860, British and French forces approached Beijing and defeated the Qing army.

Results

At the Convention of Peking in 1860, the Chinese agreed to sign a treaty with Britain and France. The treaty legalized the opium trade, established freedom of religion in China, forced China to pay France and Britain reparations, and opened a new trade port.

Interesting Facts about the Opium Wars

Russia gained land from China as a result of the Second Opium War.

- The United States became involved in the Second Opium war after the Chinese attacked a U.S. Navy officer.
- The Second Opium War is sometimes called the Arrow War after the pirate ship the Chinese seized.
- Hong Kong was returned to China in 1997.

Self-Test

Answer the questions, then check your answers. Give yourself a score out of 10.

1) The Opium Wars took place near the end of what Chinese dynasty?

2) What nation was the main enemy of China during the Opium Wars?

3) What was the main reason for the Opium Wars?

4) Who won the First Opium War?

5) True or False: China imported goods like silk and tea, but didn't export any goods.

6) What city did the British take control of after the First Opium War?

7) Why did the French join the fighting in the Second Opium War?

8) What was the name of the British pirate ship that the Chinese captured at the start of the Second Opium War?

9) Who won the Second Opium War?

10) Why did the Chinese want to stop the sale of opium?

Answers

1. Qing Dynasty
2. Great Britain
3. Great Britain wanted to sell opium to China
4. Great Britain
5. FALSE
6. Hong Kong
7. The Chinese executed a French missionary
8. Arrow
9. Great Britain
10. Because they weren't making any money and they thought it should be free. Too many people were getting addicted.

Inventions of Ancient China

The Ancient Chinese were famous for their inventions and technology. Many of their inventions had lasting impact on the entire world. Other inventions led to great feats of engineering like the Grand Canal and the Great Wall of China.

Here are some of the notable inventions and discoveries made by the engineers and scientists of Ancient China:

Silk - Silk was a soft and light material much desired by the wealthy throughout the world. It became such a valuable export that the trade route running from Europe to China became known as the Silk Road. The Chinese learned how to make silk from the cocoons of silkworms. They managed to keep the process for making silk a secret for hundreds of years.

Paper - Paper was invented by the Chinese as well as many interesting uses for paper like paper money and playing cards. The first paper was invented in the 2nd century BC and the manufacture later perfected around 105 AD.

Printing - Wood block printing was invented in AD 868 and then moveable type around 200 years later. This was actually hundreds of years before the invention of the printing press by Gutenberg in Europe.

The Compass - The Chinese invented the magnetic compass to help determine the correct direction. They used this in city planning at first, but it became very important to map makers and for the navigation of ships.

Gunpowder - Gunpowder was invented in the 9th century by chemists trying to find the Elixir of Immortality. Not long after, engineers figured out how to use gunpowder for military uses such as bombs, guns, mines, and even rockets. They also invented fireworks and made great beautiful displays of fireworks for celebrations.

Boat Rudder - The rudder was invented as a way to steer large ships. This enabled the Chinese to build huge ships as early as 200 AD, well before they were ever built in Europe.

Other - Other inventions include the umbrella, porcelain, the wheelbarrow, iron casting, hot air balloons, seismographs to measure earthquakes, kites, matches, stirrups for riding horses, and acupuncture.

Fun Facts

- Gunpowder, paper, printing, and the compass are sometimes called the Four Great Inventions of Ancient China.
- Kites were first used as a way for the army to signal warnings.
- Umbrellas were invented for protection from the sun as well as the rain.
- Chinese doctors knew about certain herbs to help sick people. They also knew that eating good foods was important to being healthy.
- Compasses were often used to make sure that homes were built facing the correct direction so they would be in harmony with nature.
- The Grand Canal in China is the longest manmade canal or river in the world. It is over 1,100 miles long and stretches from Beijing to Hangzhou.
- They invented the abacus in the 2nd century BC. This was a calculator that used sliding beads to help compute math problems quickly.
- A clear coating called lacquer was made to protect and enhance certain works of art and furniture.
- Paper money was first developed and used in China during the Tang dynasty (7th century).

Self-Test

Answer the questions, then check your answers. Give yourself a score out of 10.

1) What are two of the great feats of civil engineering accomplished by the engineers of Ancient China?

2) What important invention did the Ancient Chinese invent before Johannes Gutenberg did in Europe?

3) What are considered the four great inventions of the Ancient Chinese civilization?

4) What did ancient Chinese chemists discover when trying to find the Elixir of Immortality?

5) What important ingredient was used by the Ancient Chinese to make silk?

6) What was the main use of the compass when it was first invented?

7) Which of the following was a use for gunpowder?

8) What invention allowed the Ancient Chinese to build huge ships well before the rest of the world?

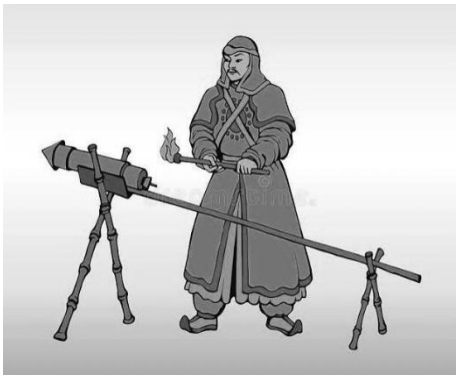
9) What invention did the Chinese keep secret from the rest of the world for hundreds of years?

10) How were kites first used by the Ancient Chinese?



Answers

1. The Great Wall and the Grand Canal
2. Printing Press
3. Gunpowder, paper, printing, and the compass
4. Gunpowder
5. The cocoons of silkworms
6. For city planning
7. Fireworks, guns, bombs, rockets
8. For city planning
9. The process for making silk
10. As signal warnings for the army



Life in Ancient China

Life as a Farmer

The majority of the people in Ancient China were peasant farmers. Although they were respected for the food they provided for the rest of the Chinese, they lived tough and difficult lives.

The typical farmer lived in a small village of around 100 families. They worked small family farms. Although they had plows and sometimes used animals like dogs and oxen to do the work, most of the work was done by hand.

Farmers had to work for the government for about one month each year. They served in the military or worked construction projects like building canals, palaces, and city walls. Farmers also had to pay a tax by giving the government a percentage of their crops.

Food

The type of food that people ate depended on where they were living. In the north the main crop was a grain called millet, and in the south, the main crop was rice. Eventually rice became the main staple for much of the country. Farmers also kept animals such as goats, pigs, and chickens. People that lived close to the rivers ate fish as well.

Life in the City

Life was much different for those living in the city. People in the cities worked a variety of jobs including merchants, craftsmen, government officials, and scholars. Many cities in Ancient China grew very large with some having populations totaling hundreds of thousands of people.

The cities of China were surrounded with formidable walls made from packed dirt. Each night the city gates were locked shut and no one was allowed to enter or leave the city after dark.

Family Life

The Chinese family was ruled by the father of the house. His wife and children were required to obey him in all things. Women generally took care of the home and raised the children. Marriage partners were decided by the parents and the preferences of the children getting married often had little impact on the parent's choice.

A big part of Chinese family life was the respect of their elders. Children of all ages, even adults, were required to respect their parents. This respect continued even after people were dead. The Chinese would often would pray to their ancestors and offer sacrifices to them. Respect of the elders was also part of the religion Confucianism.

School

Only wealthy boys attended school in Ancient China. They learned how to write using calligraphy. They also learned about the teachings of Confucius and studied poetry. These were important skills for government officials and the nobles.

Life of Women

The life of women in Ancient China was especially difficult. They were considered much less valuable than men. Sometimes when a baby girl was born, she was put outside to die if the family didn't want her. This was considered okay in their society. Women had no say in who they would marry.

Clothing

Clothing in Ancient China was a symbol of status. The rich and the poor dressed quite differently.

Peasants

The poor people, or peasants, wore clothing made of hemp. This was a rough material made from plant fibres. It was durable and good for working in the fields. Generally clothes made of hemp were loose fitting pants and shirts.

The Wealthy

The people of higher status wore clothes made of silk. Silk is made from the cocoons of silkworms and is soft, light, and beautiful. The Chinese were the first to make silk and kept how to make it secret for hundreds of years. Silk garments were generally long robes. They could be dyed specific colours or with fancy designs.

Hairstyles

Hair was considered important in Ancient China. Men tied their hair into a knot on top of their head and cover it with a square cloth or a hat. Women braided and coiled up their hair in various styles and then decorated it with hairpins. Girls were not allowed to curl up their hair with hairpins until they were married.

Most people wore their hair long. Short cut hair was often considered a punishment and was sometimes used for prisoners. Monks shaved their hair to show that they didn't care about looks or value of long hair.

Interesting Facts about Daily Life in Ancient China

- Merchants were considered the lowest class of workers. They were not allowed to wear silk or ride in carriages.

- Young girls had their feet painfully bound to prevent their feet from growing because small feet were considered attractive. This often caused their feet to become deformed and made it difficult to walk.
- Three generations (grandparents, parents, and children) usually all lived in the same house.
- Most homes in the city had a courtyard in the middle that was open to the sky.
- Tea became an important part of Chinese culture around the 2nd century. It was called "cha".

Self-Test

Answer the questions, then check your answers. Give yourself a score out of 10.

1) What job did most of the people in Ancient China have?

2) True or False: The life of a farmer in Ancient China was an easy and relaxed life filled with luxury.

3) What did the farmers have to do in order to serve the government?

4) What was the main food crop in southern China?

5) What type of jobs did people have in the city?

6) Who was considered the head of the house in Ancient China?

7) Which children generally attended school?

8) True or false: Women were held in high regard and were respected on the same level as men in Ancient China.

9) What class of workers were considered the lowest class?

10) Why did women have their feet bound?

Answers

1. Farmers
2. FALSE
3. Serve in the military, pay taxes, work on construction projects
4. Rice
5. Government officials, craftsmen, merchants
6. Father
7. Rich boys
8. FALSE
9. Merchants
10. Because small feet were considered attractive

Biography: Confucius

Occupation: Philosopher and teacher

Born: 551 BC in China, the state of Lu

Died: 479 BC in China, the state of Lu

Best known for: Creating the philosophy known as Confucianism

Confucius' family was part of a growing middle class of people in China called "shi." They weren't part of the nobility, but were considered above the common peasants. This gave him a different outlook on life than the majority of people. He thought that people should be promoted and rewarded based on their talents, not on what family they were born into.

Early Career

Confucius didn't start out as a wise teacher; he worked a number of normal jobs first. They included being a shepherd and a clerk. Eventually, Confucius came to work for the government. He started out as the governor of a small town and worked his way up until he became an advisor at the top levels of government.

His Philosophy

Confucius developed his own philosophy which he taught to others. Today, his philosophy is known as Confucianism. His ideas didn't become popular until years after his death when they became the basic philosophy of the Chinese culture for over two thousand years.

Here are some of the basic ideas of Confucianism:

- Treat others kindly
- Have good manners and follow daily rituals
- A man should have good morals and ethics
- Family was important and ancestors were to be respected
- A true man had the qualities of integrity, righteousness, altruism, goodness, and loyalty
- One should practice moderation in all things
- He believed in a strong and organized central government

Later Life

Confucius quit his government job at the age of 51. He was disappointed that the leaders were not following his teachings. He then traveled throughout China for many years teaching his philosophy. Some of his followers wrote down his ideas in a book that would later be called The Analects of Confucius.

Religions of Early China

Three major religions or philosophies shaped many of the ideas and history of Ancient China. They are called the three ways and include Taoism, Confucianism, and Buddhism.

Taoism

Taoism was founded during the Zhou Dynasty in the 6th century by Lao-Tzu. Lao-Tzu wrote down his beliefs and philosophy in a book called the Tao Te Ching.

Taoism believes that people should be one with nature and that all living things have a universal force flowing through them. Taoists didn't believe in a lot of rules or government. In this way they were very different from the followers of Confucius.

The idea of Yin and Yang comes from Taoism. They believed that everything in nature has two balancing forces called Yin and Yang. These forces can be thought of as dark and light, cold and hot, male and female. These opposing forces are always equal and balanced.

Confucianism

Not long after Lao-Tzu founded Taoism, Confucius was born in 551 BC. Confucius was a philosopher and thinker. Confucius came up with ways that people should behave and live. He didn't write these down, but his followers did.

Confucius' teachings focus on treating others with respect, politeness, and fairness. He thought that honour and morality were important qualities. He also said that family was important and honouring one's relatives was required. Unlike Taoists, followers of Confucius believed in a strong organized government.

Confucius is famous today for his many sayings. Here are a few of them:

- Forget injuries, never forget kindnesses.
- It does not matter how slowly you go so long as you do not stop.
- Our greatest glory is not in never falling, but in getting up every time we do.
- When anger rises, think of the consequences.
- Everything has its beauty but not everyone sees it.

Buddhism

Buddhism was based on the teachings of Buddha. Buddha was born in Nepal, just south of China, in 563 BC. Buddhism spread throughout much of India and China. Buddhists believe in a "rebirth" of the self. They also believe that the cycle of rebirth is complete once a person lives a proper life. At this point the person's soul would enter nirvana.

Buddhists also believe in a concept called Karma. Karma says that all actions have consequences. So actions you take today will come back in the future to help you (or hurt you) depending on whether your actions were good or bad.

Self-Test

Answer the questions, then check your answers. Give yourself a score out of 10.

1) What are the three major religions of Ancient China (Taoism, Buddhism, and Confucianism) sometimes called?

2) Which religion did Lao-Tzu found?

3) Which of the following is NOT part of the Taoist beliefs?

4) Where did the religion of Buddhism begin?

5) True or False: Confucius taught that it is okay to be rude and disrespectful.

6) Which of the Ancient Chinese religions believed that eventually your spirit can enter a place called nirvana?

7) In the religion of Buddhism there is a concept that all actions have consequences. What is this concept called?

8) Which of the following statements is part of the philosophy of Confucianism?

9) Which of the following men was not a founder of a major Ancient Chinese religion or philosophy?

10) What is something that Confucius is still famous today for?

Answers

1. The three ways
2. Taoism
3. Lots of rules and a strong government is good
4. Nepal
5. FALSE
6. Buddhism
1. 7.Karma
7. Honouring your family and relatives is an important part of life
8. Muhammad
9. His many sayings that were written down by his followers

Religion in China today

Religion in China is diverse and most Chinese people are either non-religious, or unofficially practice a combination of Buddhism and Taoism with a Confucian worldview, which is collectively termed Chinese folk religion.

Freedom of religion is substantially curtailed in China. The ruling Chinese Communist Party (CCP) officially demands state atheism, and has conducted anti-religious campaigns to this end.

The Chinese government formally recognizes five religions: Buddhism, Taoism, Christianity (Catholicism and Protestantism are recognized separately), and Islam. This formal recognition is a smoke-screen, or an attempt to show the rest of the world that the Chinese government practice freedom of religion, (when in fact it doesn't at all.) All religious institutions in the country are required to uphold the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and implement Communist Thought. Any activities of the five religious groups, such as church services, are monitored by government officials to make sure all Communist principles are upheld. Because of this, only a few "official" Christian churches operate, as the true gospel cannot be preached. Most true Christians meet secretly as "underground churches". If discovered, the penalty is imprisonment or death.

The Chinese Calendar

Versions of the Chinese calendar have been used for thousands of years. Today the Chinese calendar is still used to mark traditional Chinese holidays, but the common Gregorian calendar (the one used by most of the rest of the world) is used for daily business in China.

History

The Chinese calendar was developed by many of the Chinese dynasties of Ancient China. However, it was in 104 BC during the rule of Emperor Wu of the Han Dynasty that the current calendar was defined. This calendar was called the Taichu calendar. It is the same Chinese calendar that is used today.

Animal Years

Each year in the Chinese calendar is named after an animal. For example, 2027 is the "year of the goat". There are 12 animals that the years cycle through. Every 12 years the cycle repeats itself. The Chinese believed that, depending on which year a person was born, their personality would take on the aspects of that animal.

Here are the animals and what they mean:

Rat: charming, cunning, funny, and loyal

Ox: hard working, serious, patient, and trustworthy

Tiger: aggressive, brave, ambitious, and intense

Rabbit: popular, lucky, kind, and sensitive

Dragon: wise, powerful, energetic, and charismatic

Snake: smart, jealous, analytical, and generous

Horse: like to travel, attractive, impatient, and popular

Get along with: tigers and dogs, not with rats

Sheep/ Goat: creative, shy, sympathetic, and insecure

Monkey: inventive, energetic, successful, and deceitful

Rooster: honest, neat, practical, and proud

Dog: loyal, honest, sensitive, and moody

Pig / Boar: intelligent, sincere, perfectionist, and noble

The Five Elements

There is also an element for each year. There are five elements that cycle through each year. They are wood, fire, earth, metal, and water. For example, 2027 is the year of fire.

When the 12 animals and 5 elements are combined, the calendar runs on a 60-year cycle.

Legend of the Chinese Years

According to ancient Chinese legend, the order of the animals in the calendar was determined by a race. The animals raced across a river and their position in the cycle was determined by how they finished in the race. The rat won because it rode on the back of the oxen and jumped off its back at the last minute to win the race.

Chinese astrology

Chinese astrology is deeply tied to the traditional Chinese calendar. It integrates astronomy, seasonal cycles, and symbolic systems to interpret time, personality, and destiny.

The Bible does not mention the Chinese Zodiac or any similar astrological systems. Instead, the Bible emphasizes the sovereignty of God over creation and the futility of relying on astrology or divination for guidance.

In the Old Testament, astrology and divination are explicitly condemned. Deuteronomy 18:10-12 states: "Let no one be found among you who sacrifices his son or daughter in the fire, practices divination or conjury, interprets omens, practices sorcery, casts spells, consults a medium or spiritist, or inquires of the dead. For whoever does these things is detestable to

the LORD, and because of these abominations the LORD your God is driving out the nations before you."

The Bible teaches that God alone is the source of wisdom and guidance. Proverbs 3:5-6 advises: "Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight." This passage encourages believers to seek God's direction rather than relying on human systems of prediction or fortune-telling.

Furthermore, the Bible affirms that God has a plan for each individual, independent of astrological signs or cycles. **Jeremiah 29:11** declares: "For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, to give you a future and a hope."

While the Chinese Zodiac is an integral part of Chinese culture and tradition, Christians are encouraged to discern and evaluate cultural practices through the lens of Scripture. The Bible calls believers to focus on God's Word and His promises rather than seeking guidance from astrological systems. **Isaiah 8:19-20** warns: "When they say to you, 'Consult the spirits of the dead and the spiritists who whisper and mutter,' should not a people consult their God? Should they consult the dead on behalf of the living? To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, they have no light of dawn."

In summary, while the Chinese Zodiac is a cultural phenomenon with historical significance, the Bible directs believers to seek wisdom and guidance from God alone, rejecting practices that rely on astrology or divination.

Activities

1. What could be the consequences of believing in the personality trait of the animal of your birth year?

2. What is astrology?

3. Give a brief Biblical perspective on astrology.

4. What is the difference between traditional Chinese religion and Chinese religion today?

5. Describe how your life would be as a Christian in China today.

Biography: Hudson Taylor

“God uses men who are weak and feeble enough to lean on him.” — Hudson Taylor

If you’ve ever seen a photo of Hudson Taylor, you’ve likely seen him portrayed as a rather unusual figure—a humble-looking man with a long Chinese-style ponytail and traditional Chinese dress. And yet, this unassuming, faith-filled man is often referred to as the most influential missionary of the 19th century. Known for his adoption of local customs and culture, Taylor founded the Chinese Inland Mission (CIM), a missions organization that helped reshape Christianity in China. His faith, humility, and endurance through suffering testify to the greatness of a God, the only One worthy of glory from every tribe, tongue, and nation.

Early Years

Hudson Taylor was born in England in 1832 to devout Christian parents. His father was a pharmacist and lay preacher, and his mother was a devout and prayerful woman.

When Hudson was seventeen, his sister Amelia was burdened for his salvation. She committed to pray three times a day for Hudson until he came to faith. Around the same time, Hudson’s mother felt a growing urgency to pray that God would save her son that very day. At the exact moment of her prayer, a bored Hudson wandered into his father’s study and picked up a gospel tract. Looking simply to pass the time, he began reading and was soon convicted of his sin. That day, her prayers were answered, and Hudson surrendered his life to Christ.

Shortly after, Hudson sensed God calling him to China to share the gospel with those who had never heard it. He began preparing immediately—studying Chinese, Latin, Greek, and medicine, preaching the gospel in the streets, and trusting the Lord to provide for his daily needs. By 1854, Hudson was ready to make the grueling five-month journey to China by boat. But unfortunately, Hudson’s missionary journey would prove to be far more difficult than he imagined.

Early Ministry

When Hudson arrived in China, the Taiping Rebellion was devastating China, and eventually claimed over 20 million lives. Amid the chaos, Hudson received minimal support from his missionary agency. Disillusioned and disappointed, he soon resigned, and became an independent missionary.

During these years, Hudson chose to live not like his fellow English missionaries, surrounded by Western comforts, but like the Chinese. He wore Chinese clothing and adorned his home with simple, local decor. This bold choice sparked criticism among fellow missionaries, but Taylor stood firm, insisting that cultural barriers should never hinder the gospel. If anything

were to offend or be a stumbling block, he would have it be the gospel, not a cultural preference.

A New Agency

In 1858, he married Maria Jane Dyer, the orphaned daughter of pioneer missionaries. They were married for twelve years and had eight children.

Two years later, Hudson was forced to return to England due to poor health. Even so, his passion for the Chinese people only deepened. While walking the beach in Brighton one day, Hudson felt compelled to form a new missionary organization, one that would reach all the provinces of China. So in 1865, he founded the China Inland Mission (CIM). Hudson committed to neither solicit for funds, nor engage in traditional fundraising, but to trust wholly in God's provision. He prayed for twenty-four missionaries to join him—and God faithfully supplied.

Leading CIM was no easy task. Not only was there conflict within the organization, but when China experienced political instability, supporters began to withdraw funds. Even so, Hudson's faith persevered. Hudson and Maria kept two words inscribed on plaques in their home: "Ebenezer" and "Jehovah-Jireh." God will provide. When supplies ran low, Hudson would often say, "Then the Lord's time for helping us must be close at hand."

Faith Through Suffering

Unfortunately, more suffering soon came to the Taylor home. Just a year after returning to China, Hudson and Maria lost their eight-year-old daughter, Gracie, to meningitis.

Yet even in grief, Hudson clung to God. In 1869, Hudson experienced what he called "The Exchanged Life" — a spiritual awakening in which he realized he had been striving in his own strength. Instead, God invited him to rest in the finished work of Christ. It was a profound and transformative spiritual season, preparing him for the trials yet to come.

The following year, tragedy continued. In 1870, Hudson's son Samuel died on the Yangtze River. That July, his wife Maria gave birth to another son, who died thirteen days later. Three days after that, Maria died from tuberculosis. Heartbroken and overwhelmed with grief, Hudson returned to England.

New Challenges

In 1871, Hudson married a fellow missionary named Jenny Faulding. Together, they continued to travel back and forth from China to England, both to care for their children and to recruit more missionaries. When Jenny gave birth to stillbirth twins in 1873, Hudson grieved the loss of his children, and the following year, he experienced a spinal injury, completely paralyzing him for months. Yet despite these personal sorrows, the CIM continued to flourish. Hudson continued to work for the advancement of the gospel in China until his final days.

In 1899, the Boxer Rebellion swept through China, killing 58 CIM missionaries and 28 children. Although this loss affected him deeply, Hudson did not respond with anger but continued to love and serve the Chinese people. He passed off the leadership of the CIM in 1902, and two years later, his wife of thirty years died.

In 1905, Hudson Taylor's ministry came to an end when died at age 73. He was buried in Xinjiang, China, next to his wife, Maria.

Legacy

Hudson Taylor's ministry has touched millions of lives for the gospel. At the time of his death, CIM supported 500 missionaries across all 18 provinces of China, starting 125 schools and establishing 300 stations of work. The organization sent missionaries like C.T. Studd, and inspired missionaries, such as Amy Carmichael and Eric Liddell.

Although his life was marked by hardship, Hudson Taylor continued to trust in the God who provides. He knew that suffering and tragedy were not the end of his story, discovering that God gives His children the strength to preserve—whether through conflict, stress, or sickness. Through Hudson Taylor, God spread a wave of gospel ministry throughout China that endures to this day.

"God uses men who are weak and feeble enough to lean on him." — Hudson Taylor

Activities

1. Draw up a timeline of Hudson Taylors life.

2. How did Hudson Taylor break with his European tradition? Describe his appearance in the early years of his ministry.

3. What were the greatest hardships that he endured?

