

Name: _____

Date: _____

AIM: To what extent is the nickname "Rivers of Sorrow" appropriate for China's Yellow River and Yangtze?"

CHINA'S SORROW

The early Chinese on the Yellow Plain found it difficult to live in an area where the river kept changing its course. So they built dikes of earth, one on each side of the river, to keep the Hwang Ho [Huang He or Yellow River] in place. Building these dikes solved one problem for the farmers. But it created another problem for them.

The Hwang Ho was no longer able to spread its load of mud in a thin layer over a large area. Instead, it spread its mud in a thick layer over a narrow area. This raised the river bed so that when a great flood came the river flowed over the dikes and across the farmers' fields. The farmers built the dikes higher. After a while the river again raised its bed and overflowed. The farmers built the dikes higher still. And so it went, on and on and on, through the centuries...

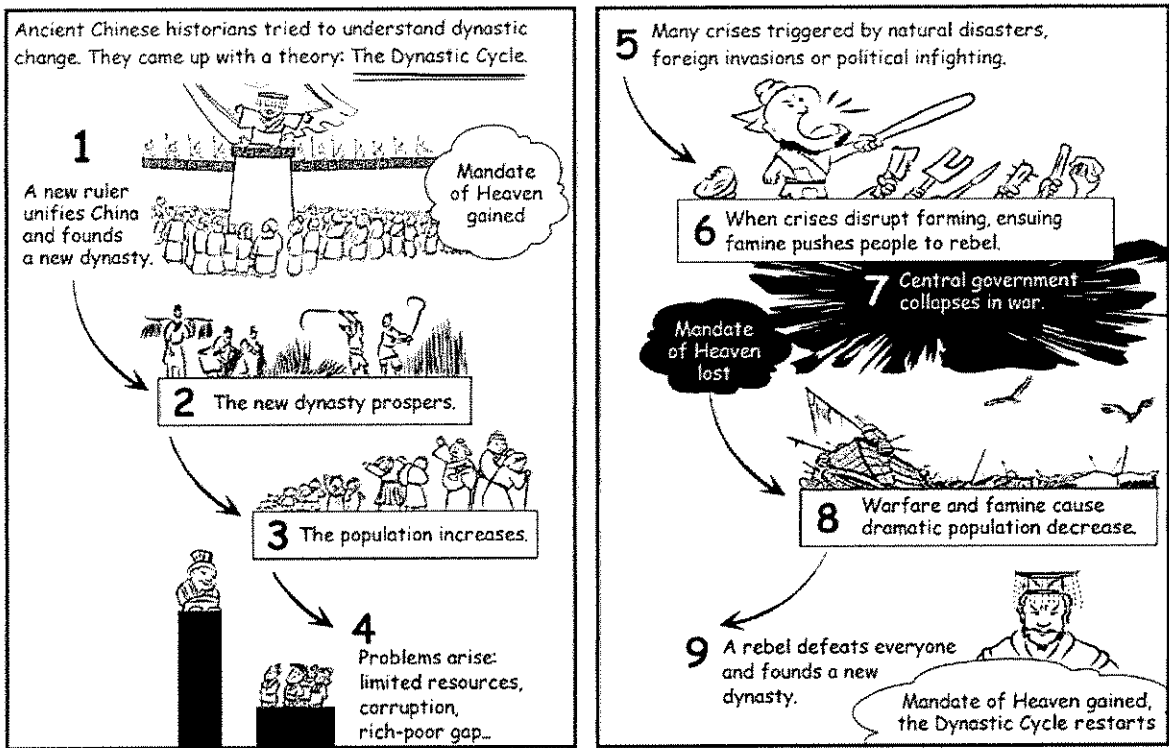
Another problem arises when the Hwang Ho breaks through the dikes in one spot or another as it does about every second year. Because the river flows on a ridge, the water cannot drain back. Instead it remains on the land until it evaporates. This sometimes takes as long as three years. So in addition to destroying growing crops, a Hwang flood prevents farmers from planting new crops. Is it any wonder that the river is known as "China's Sorrow"?

-from *The Story of China*, Greenblatt and Chu

1. Explain the problems the Ancient Chinese faced when living near the Yellow River.
2. Discuss the effectiveness of the Ancient Chinese solution to this problem.



Part II:



- 1. Define Dynastic Cycle.
- 2. What role, if any, did the river play in this cycle?

Part III: Application to the Present

Directions: As we watch “Yellow River China’s Environmental Sorrow” fill in the graphic organizer below.

Positive (+)	Negative (-)

Name: _____

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AIM: To what extent did the Ancient Chinese create a *successful* civilization?

Directions: Read "The Secrets of a Successful Ruler." Fill in the report card for Pan-keng below, using a U (unknown), (fail), S(satisfactory) and P (pass). Be sure to justify each grade you assign.

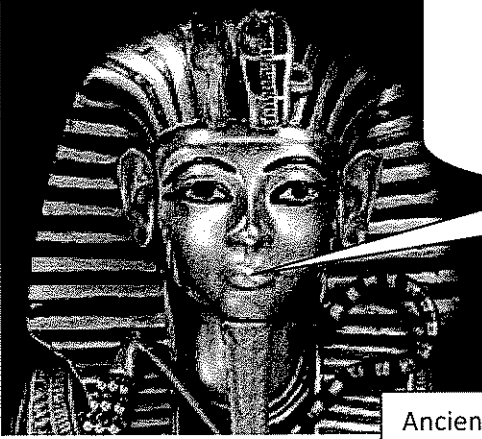
Category	Grade	Justification
Technology		
Writing		
Institutions		
Cities		
Specialization		



Part II:

Consider the achievements of the Ancient Chinese. Then in each speech bubble write a comment about how that individual's civilization compared to or was different than Ancient China.

✓
F11

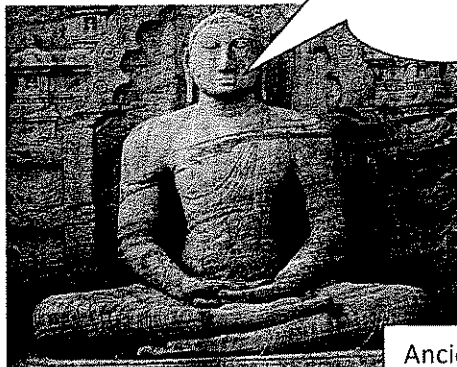


Ancient Egypt

Speech bubble for Ancient Egypt.



Hammurabi



Ancient India

Speech bubble for Ancient India.

6. The Secrets of a Successful Ruler

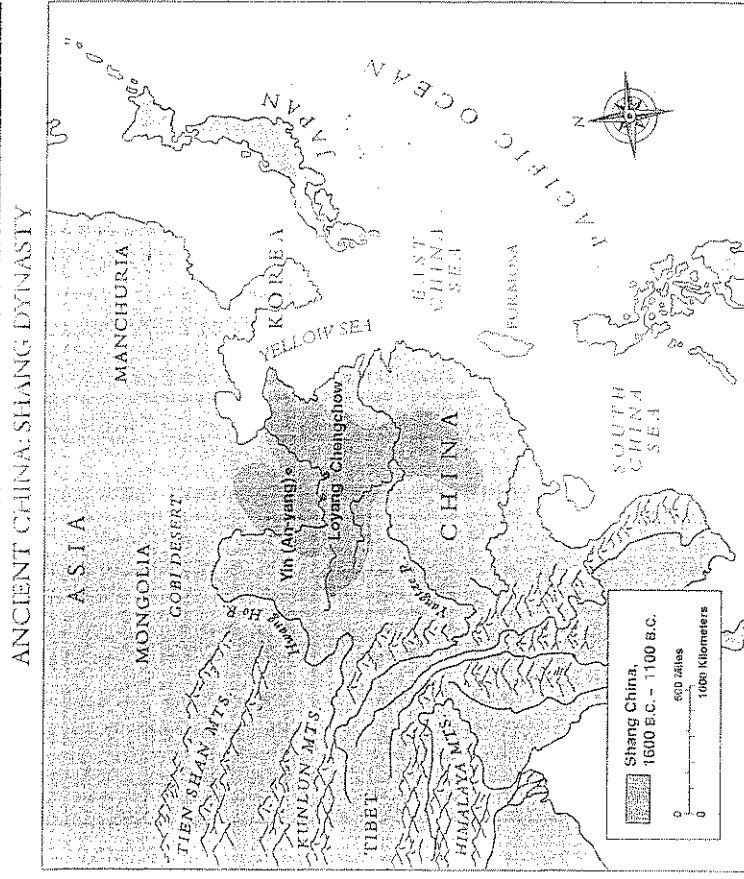
Archeologists are uncertain about the origins of Chinese civilization. They know that around 3000 B.C. people lived in the river valley of the Hwang Ho in northern China. These people made excellent ceramics. Later people, known as the Lung-shan, lived in walled villages that were spread along the great rivers of northern China. These people were farmers as well as hunters. They grew crops of millet and rice and kept livestock (cattle and sheep). The Lung-shan people also made fine ceramics.

These early Chinese people developed a calendar that helped farmers know when to plant their crops. This calendar had ten-day weeks, and three weeks made one month. The symbol for one month was a moon.

As in Sumer and Egypt, writing in China began with the use of picture signs. Writing developed about 1,500 years later in China than in these other regions, however. Some people believe that the Chinese borrowed the idea of writing from Sumer and Egypt.

The first written records in Chinese history were made during the Shang dynasty. This dynasty rose to power in the 1700s B.C. and ruled China until the 1100s B.C. In the 1400s, the emperor Pan-keng moved the Shang capital to the city of Yin, near present-day An-yang. Many Shang treasures were discovered there in the 20th century.

Among the most fascinating examples of early Chinese writing are those that were found on bones and shells discovered at An-yang. In our story, Pan-keng tells about his military triumphs, how he kept his empire running smoothly, and how he used writing on bones and shells to foretell the future.



Yin (AN-YANG) 1380 B.C.

It was almost easy to conquer those western barbarians! Backed up by 20,000 foot soldiers, I led my 1,000 noble charioteers into battle. We slaughtered everyone in our way; no one had a chance to escape. When we arrived at the chiefs' stronghold, they surrendered at once.

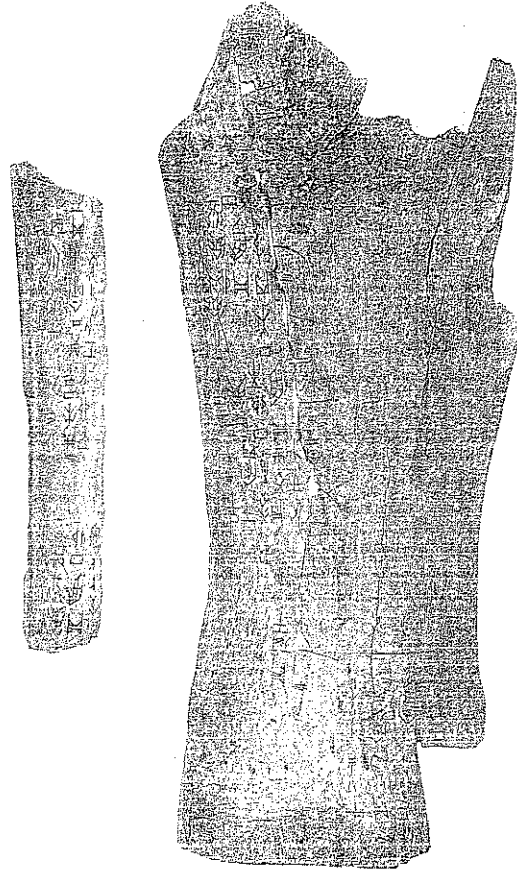
I, Pan-keng, have been criticized for not killing or making slaves of all the defeated tribal chiefs. But I had a good reason for sparing their lives. I did not want to be responsible for running local affairs. I let the chiefs rule their towns and villages, while I make decisions for the whole country. Each year, the chiefs come to my court bearing costly gifts to prove their loyalty. They do this because they fear me. They know the penalty for turning against the Shang ruler!

I have found the secret of how to maintain a successful government. I choose the smartest and most trusted people to run each division. And then I let each person do his or her job without interference. For example, a former general knows more about weapons than I do. Therefore, he supervises the making and storing of swords and armor.

I follow the same principle when selecting the officials to oversee the construction of new buildings, maintain irrigation projects, and collect taxes. My officials have special talents, and I use them.

Men and women should work at what they do best. I encourage certain farmers to cultivate the silkworm and weave its threads into fine silk cloth. Other people are skilled at making clothing. The potters make the fine white ware that we export to Egypt and Babylon, and the basketweavers and bronze casters work well at their crafts. Everyone is happy to be employed and earn good wages.

The Shang people are also skilled builders. We have made the temples, public buildings, and homes of Yin, our new capital city, the most splendid in all of China. The noble families have built great tombs for themselves. There they will be buried in splendor, with many beautiful objects of jade and bronze that will be useful to them in the next world.



Oracle bones from Shang China, such as these Pan-keng used to foretell the future and learn the gods' wishes.

Just as the farmers must use the calendar to tell them when to sow their crops, I must have a way of knowing the best time to begin new projects. What is the best month and day to start a war, build a new castle, or begin a long journey? Fortunately, I am a high priest as well as a commander. I have the power to ask our gods for the answers to these questions.

I have only to take the scabbard bone of an ox or the bottom shell of a tortoise and write my questions on it. Then I drill a small hole and apud... the cracks that form in the bone splits. The gods answer my questions in this way. The cracks are formed in the bone. But it is up to me to read and answer accurately. If I read the wrong answers, in any way lose a battle, or a journey may end in disaster. This will mean that I have lost favor with the heavenly spirits of our ancestors. Mighty ruler though I am, even I might lose their trust.

It is good to be able to speak with the spirits and ask them for guidance. But my people must continue to work hard and fight for what is theirs. Then the spirits will be pleased and on our side, and our future will be bright.

Postscript

In the 1100s B.C., people known as the Chou defeated the Shang and established their own dynasty. The great Shang capital was completely destroyed. Now, until nearly 3,000 years later, did scientists learn of the achievements of the Shang people.

