

4

An Empire Unifies China

TERMS & NAMES

- Confucius
- filial piety
- bureaucracy
- Daoism
- Legalism
- *I Ching*
- yin and yang
- Qin dynasty
- Shi Huangdi
- autocracy

MAIN IDEA

The social disorder of the warring states contributed to Chinese philosophy and unification.

WHY IT MATTERS NOW

The people, events, and ideas that shaped China's early history continue to influence China's role in today's world.

SETTING THE STAGE The Zhou Dynasty, as you read in Chapter 2, endured for at least eight centuries, from approximately 1027 B.C. to 256 B.C. For the first 300 years of their long reign, the Zhou kings controlled a large empire, including both eastern and western lands. Local rulers represented the king, but he had the ultimate power. By the latter years of the Zhou Dynasty, the lords of dependent territories began to think of themselves as independent kings. Their bloody warfare led to the decline of the Zhou Dynasty.

Philosophy and the Social Order

China's ancient values of social order, harmony, and respect for authority were put aside toward the end of the Zhou Dynasty. To restore these values, Chinese scholars and philosophers developed different solutions.

Confucius Urges Harmony China's most influential scholar was **Confucius** (kuhn-FYOO-shuhs). Born in 551 B.C., Confucius lived at a time when the Zhou Dynasty was being torn apart by warring lords. He led a scholarly life, studying and teaching history, music, and moral character.

Confucius believed that social order, harmony, and good government could be restored in China if society was organized around five basic relationships. These were the relationships between: 1) ruler and subject, 2) father and son, 3) husband and wife, 4) older brother and younger brother, and 5) friend and friend. A code of proper conduct regulated each of these relationships. For example, rulers should practice kindness and virtuous living. In return, subjects should be loyal and law-abiding.

Three of Confucius's five relationships were based upon the family. Confucius stressed that children should practice what he called **filial piety**, or respect for their parents and elders:

A VOICE FROM THE PAST

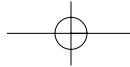
In serving his parents, a filial son renders utmost respect to them at home; he supports them with joy; he gives them tender care in sickness; he grieves at their death; he sacrifices to them with solemnity . . .

CONFUCIUS, the *Analects*

Confucius was not content to be merely a great teacher. He wanted to reform Chinese society by showing a prince or duke how to govern wisely. Impressed by Confucius's wisdom, the duke of Lu appointed him Minister of Justice. According to legend, Confucius so overwhelmed people by his kindness and courtesy that almost overnight, crime vanished from Lu. When the duke's ways changed, however, Confucius felt compelled to resign.



This 18th-century painting shows Chinese students taking an examination on the Confucian classics. They wish to advance in the government. Written tests for civil servants in China go back to the Han Dynasty.



Confucius spent the remainder of his life teaching. The only record of his ideas are the writings of his students. His students later collected his words in a book called the *Analects*. A disciple named Mencius (MEHN-shee-uhs) also spread Confucius's ideas. Both Confucius and Mencius taught that leaders should be virtuous.

Confucian Ideas About Government Confucius said that education could transform a humbly born person into a gentleman. In saying this, he laid the groundwork for the creation of a **bureaucracy**, a trained civil service, or those who run the government. According to Confucius, a gentleman had four virtues: "In his private conduct he was courteous, in serving his master he was punctilious [precise], in providing for the needs of the people he gave them even more than their due; in exacting service from the people, he was just." Education became critically important to career advancement in the bureaucracy.

Confucianism was never a religion, but it was an ethical system. It became the foundation for Chinese government and social order. In addition, the ideas of Confucius spread beyond China and influenced civilizations throughout East Asia.

Daoists Seek Harmony For Confucius, the social order of family and government was most important. For another Chinese thinker named Laozi, who may have lived

during the sixth century B.C., only the natural order was important. His book *Dao De Ching* (*The Way of Virtue*) expressed Laozi's belief. He said that a universal force called the Dao (tow), meaning "the Way," guides all things.

If you seek order and harmony, said Laozi, go up into the hills, sit by a stream, and observe a drifting cloud or a soft breeze. Observe that nothing in nature strives for fame, power, or even wisdom. The cloud, the breeze, and the stream move without effort because they follow the Dao or way.

Of all the creatures of nature, according to Laozi, only humans fail to follow the Dao. They argue about questions of right and wrong, good manners and bad. According to Laozi, such arguments are pointless.

The philosophy of Laozi came to be known as **Daoism**. Its search for knowledge and understanding of nature led Daoism's followers to pursue scientific studies. Daoists made contributions to the sciences of alchemy, astronomy, and medicine.

Legalists Urge Harsh Rule In sharp contrast to the followers of Confucius was a group of practical political thinkers called the Legalists. They believed that a highly efficient and powerful government was the key to restoring order. They got their

Background

The *Analects* was compiled around 400 B.C. It became a fundamental part of traditional education in China. The word *analects* means "selections from a literary work."

Vocabulary

social order: having to do with relations between people.
natural order: having to do with relations between all living things.

Vocabulary

legend: a story handed down from earlier times, especially one believed to be historical.

HISTORYMAKERS



Confucius
551–479 B.C.

Born to a poor family, Confucius earned his living as a teacher. But he longed to put his principles into action by advising political leaders. Finally, at around age 50, Confucius won a post as minister in his home state.

According to legend, he set such a virtuous example that a purse lying in the middle of the street would lie untouched for days. As Confucius said, "If a ruler himself is upright, all will go well without orders. But if he himself is not upright, even though he gives orders, they will not be obeyed."

Driven from office by political intrigue, Confucius returned to teaching. He considered himself a failure because he had never held high office. Yet Confucius's ideas have molded Chinese thought for centuries.



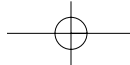
Laozi
6th century B.C.

Legend has it that Laozi's mother carried him in her womb for 62 years and that he was born with white hair and wrinkled skin. Laozi's followers claimed that he was a contemporary of Confucius.

Unlike Confucius and the Legalists, however, Laozi believed that government should do as little as possible and leave the people alone:

Therefore in governing the people, the sage empties their minds but fills their bellies, weakens their wills but strengthens their bones. He always keeps them innocent of knowledge and free from desire, and ensures that the clever never dare to act.

Laozi thought that people could do little to influence the outcome of events. Daoism offered communion with nature as an alternative to political chaos.



Chinese Ethical Systems

Confucianism	Daoism	Legalism
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social order, harmony, and good government should be based on family relationships. • Respect for parents and elders is important to a well-ordered society. • Education is important both to the welfare of the individual and to society. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The natural order is more important than the social order. • A universal force guides all things. • Human beings should live simply and in harmony with nature. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A highly efficient and powerful government is the key to social order. • Punishments are useful to maintain social order. • Thinkers and their ideas should be strictly controlled by the government.

SKILLBUILDER: Interpreting Charts

1. Which of these three systems stress the importance of government and a well-ordered society?
2. Which system emphasizes the natural order over the social order?
3. Which of these systems seems to be most moderate and balanced? Explain.

name from their belief that government should use the law to end civil disorder and restore harmony. Among the founders of **Legalism** were Hanfeizi and Li Si.

The Legalists taught that a ruler should provide rich rewards for people who carried out their duties well. Likewise, the disobedient should be harshly punished. In practice, the Legalists stressed punishment more than rewards. For example, anyone caught outside his own village without a travel permit should have his ears or nose chopped off, said the Legalists.

The Legalists believed in controlling ideas as well as actions. They suggested that a ruler burn all writings that might encourage people to think critically about government. After all, it was for the prince to govern and the people to obey. Eventually, Legalist ideas gained favor with a prince of a new dynasty that replaced the Zhou. That powerful ruler was soon to put an end to China's long period of disorder.

I Ching and Yin and Yang People with little interest in these philosophical debates consulted a book of oracles called **I Ching** (also spelled *Yi Jing*) to answer ethical or practical problems. Readers used the book by throwing a set of coins, interpreting the results, and then reading the appropriate oracle. The *I Ching* (*The Book of Changes*) helped people to lead a happy life by dispensing good advice and simple common sense.

Ancient thinkers developed the concept of **yin and yang**, two powers that together represented the natural rhythms of life. Yang represents the masculine qualities in the universe, yin the feminine. Both forces represent the rhythm of the universe and complement each other. Both the *I Ching* and yin and yang helped Chinese people understand how they fit into the world.

The Qin Dynasty

A short-lived dynasty replaced the Zhou Dynasty in the third century B.C. It emerged from the western state of Qin (chihn). The 13-year-old **Qin Dynasty** ruler who came to the throne in the third century B.C. employed Legalist ideas to subdue warring states and unify his country.

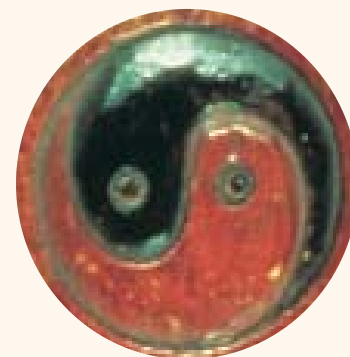
A New Emperor Takes Control After ruling for over 20 years, in 221 B.C., the Qin ruler assumed the name **Shi Huangdi** (shihr hwahng-dee), which means "First Emperor." The new emperor had

THINK THROUGH HISTORY

A. Summarizing

How did the Legalists think that a society could be made to run well?

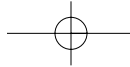
SPOTLIGHT ON



Yin and Yang

The symbol of yin and yang is a circle divided into halves, as shown in the emblem above. The circle represents the harmony of yin (earth, female, passive) and yang (heaven, male, active). Yin is represented by the tiger and the color orange; yang is represented by the dragon and the color blue.

Ancient Chinese thinkers believed that pain is caused by an imbalance in the body between the forces of yin and yang. They believed that acupuncture helped to restore this balance by releasing blocked energy.



begun his reign by halting the internal battles that had sapped China's strength. Next he turned his attention to defeating invaders and crushing internal resistance to his rule. Shi Huangdi's armies attacked the invaders north of the Yellow River and south as far as what is now Vietnam. His victories doubled China's size. Shi Huangdi was determined to unify China.

The Qin emperor acted decisively to crush political opposition at home. To destroy the power of rival warlords, Shi Huangdi instituted a policy called "strengthening the trunk and weakening the branches." He commanded all the noble families to live at the capital city under his suspicious gaze. This edict, according to tradition, uprooted 120,000 noble families. Seizing their land, the emperor carved China into 36 administrative districts. He sent Qin officials to control them.

To silence criticism, the emperor and his prime minister, the Legalist philosopher Li Su, murdered hundreds of Confucian scholars. They also ordered "useless" books burned. These books were the works of Confucian thinkers and poets who disagreed with the Legalists. Practical books about medicine and farming were spared. Through measures such as these, Shi Huangdi established an **autocracy**—a government in which the ruler has unlimited power and uses it in an arbitrary manner.

A Program of Centralization Shi Huangdi's sweeping program of centralization included the building of a highway network of over 4,000 miles. He forced peasants to work on roads against their will. He also set uniform standards for Chinese writing, law, currency, and weights and measures, down to the length of cart axles. This last standard ensured that all vehicles could fit into the ruts of China's main roads.

Under Shi Huangdi's rule, irrigation projects increased farm production. Trade blossomed, thanks to the new road system. Trade pushed a new class—merchants—into prominence. Despite these social advances, harsh taxes and repressive government made the Qin regime unpopular. Shi Huangdi had unified China at the expense of human freedom.

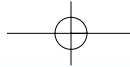
THINK THROUGH HISTORY
B. Recognizing Effects What were the positive and negative effects of Shi Huangdi's rule?



Great Wall of China Scholars hated Shi Huangdi for his book burning; poor people hated him for their forced labor in building a unified wall. Earlier, Zhou rulers had erected smaller walls to discourage attacks by northern nomads. Shi Huangdi determined to close the gaps and unify the wall 1,400 miles to the west. Now enemies would have to gallop halfway to Tibet to get around it.

The Great Wall of China arose on the backs of hundreds of thousands of peasants. The wall builders worked neither for wages nor for love of empire. They faced a terrible choice: work on the wall or die. Many of the laborers worked on the wall and died anyway, victims of the crushing labor or the winter winds. The Great Wall of China is so huge that it is one of the few human-made features on Earth visible from space.

The Fall of the Qin The Qin Dynasty proved short-lived. Though fully as cruel as his father, Shi Huangdi's son proved less able. Peasants rebelled just three

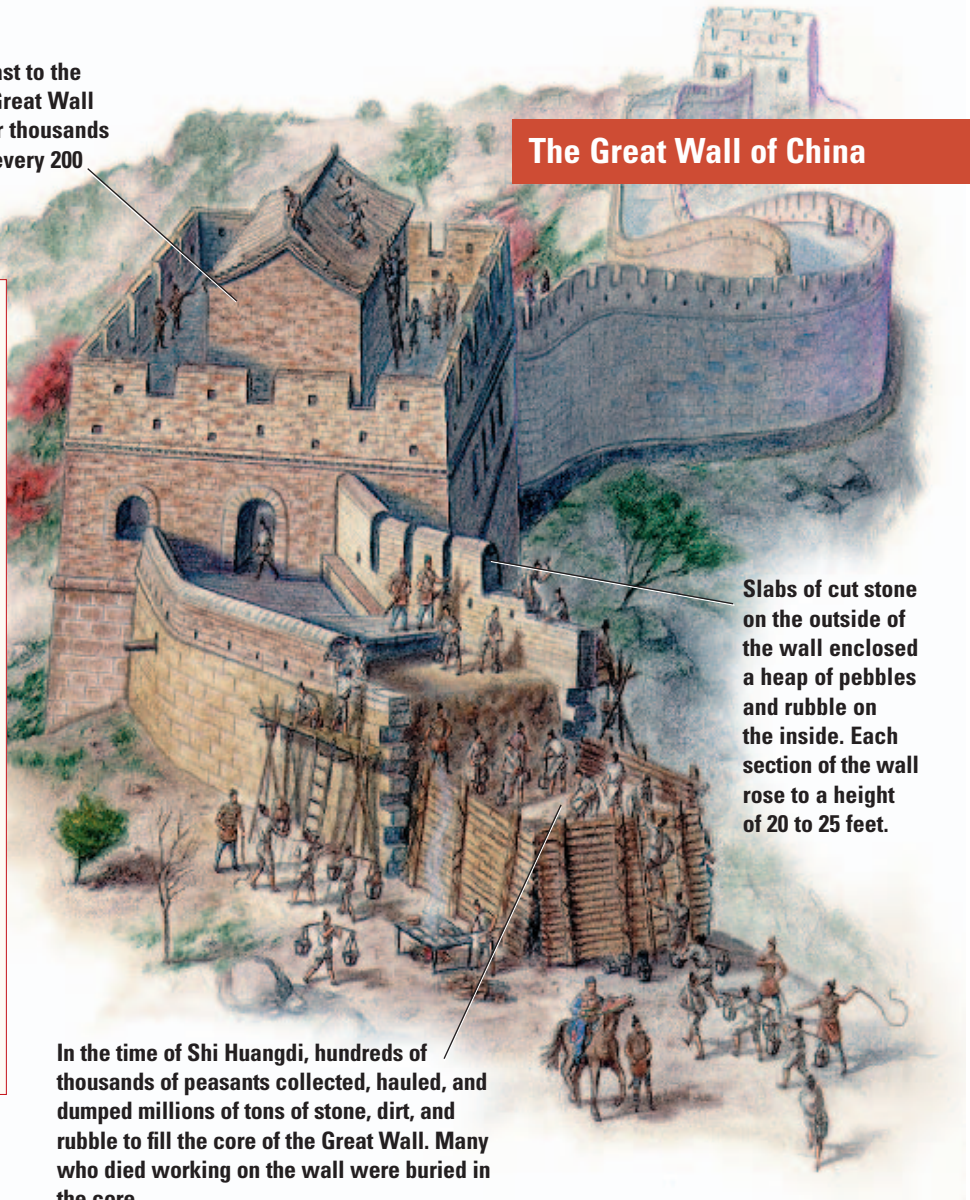


From the Yellow Sea in the east to the Gobi Desert in the west, the Great Wall twisted like a dragon's tail for thousands of miles. Watch towers rose every 200 to 300 yards along the wall.

The Great Wall of China



Although Shi Huangdi built the earliest unified wall, the wall as it exists today dates from the later Ming Dynasty (1368–1644).



Slabs of cut stone on the outside of the wall enclosed a heap of pebbles and rubble on the inside. Each section of the wall rose to a height of 20 to 25 feet.

In the time of Shi Huangdi, hundreds of thousands of peasants collected, hauled, and dumped millions of tons of stone, dirt, and rubble to fill the core of the Great Wall. Many who died working on the wall were buried in the core.

years after the second Qin emperor took office. One of their leaders, a peasant from the land of Han, marched his troops into the capital city. By 202 B.C., the harsh Qin Dynasty gave way to the Han Dynasty.

While the Chinese explored the best ways to govern, ancient Greece was experimenting with different forms of government, as you will read in Chapter 5.

Section 4 Assessment

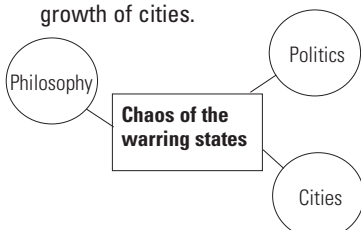
1. TERMS & NAMES

Identify

- Confucius
- filial piety
- bureaucracy
- Daoism
- Legalism
- *I Ching*
- yin and yang
- Qin Dynasty
- Shi Huangdi
- autocracy

2. TAKING NOTES

Create a web like the one below, and indicate how the chaos of the warring states affected Chinese philosophy, politics, and the growth of cities.



3. HYPOTHESIZING

In 1776, the American Declaration of Independence declared that “all men are created equal.” How would followers of the three philosophical traditions in China react to that statement?

THINK ABOUT

- their views on equality
- views on opposition to government

4. THEME ACTIVITY

Interaction with Environment

Make a chart that compares and contrasts the monumental projects of the Persian Royal Road and the Great Wall of China. Include their purposes, how they changed the environment, and how they affected the peoples living there.