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# China: From Past to Present

## Part Two: Life in the Ancient Capital Cities

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## Pre-Test

**Directions: Answer each of the following either True or False:**

1. In China, the New Year's festival is a more important holiday than Christmas. \_\_\_\_\_
2. For a large part of its history, China did not have extensive contact with people from the other great civilizations of the world. \_\_\_\_\_
3. Chinese emperors were carried about in portable chairs. \_\_\_\_\_
4. Throughout most of history, the emperors of China ruled more people than the most powerful European kings. \_\_\_\_\_
5. Confucius was the first emperor of China. \_\_\_\_\_

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**True or False**

**Directions: Answer the following either True or False.**

1. China's population has never exceeded that of the United States. \_\_\_\_\_
2. Mao Zedong was the last emperor of China. \_\_\_\_\_
3. In ancient times, the government of China was based on the ideals of the famous Greek philosopher, Aristotle. \_\_\_\_\_
4. In ancient China, imperial examinations had to be passed in order to obtain a job in the imperial government. \_\_\_\_\_
5. Shanghai was the capital city of China before the emperor and his government moved to Beijing. \_\_\_\_\_

**Fill in the blanks:**

1. The \_\_\_\_\_ Desert and the \_\_\_\_\_ Mountains physically isolate China from much of the rest of Asia
2. In Beijing, the emperors lived and worked in a vast complex of buildings called the \_\_\_\_\_.
3. The emperor's highest-ranking wife was called the \_\_\_\_\_.
4. In ancient China, the \_\_\_\_\_ was known as the "Son of Heaven."
5. The most important holiday in China is the \_\_\_\_\_ festival.

**Short Answer**

Describe some typical features (buildings, defenses, etc.) of the great cities of ancient China. Use the back of this sheet if necessary.

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## Video Quiz

Answer each of the following questions either True or False:

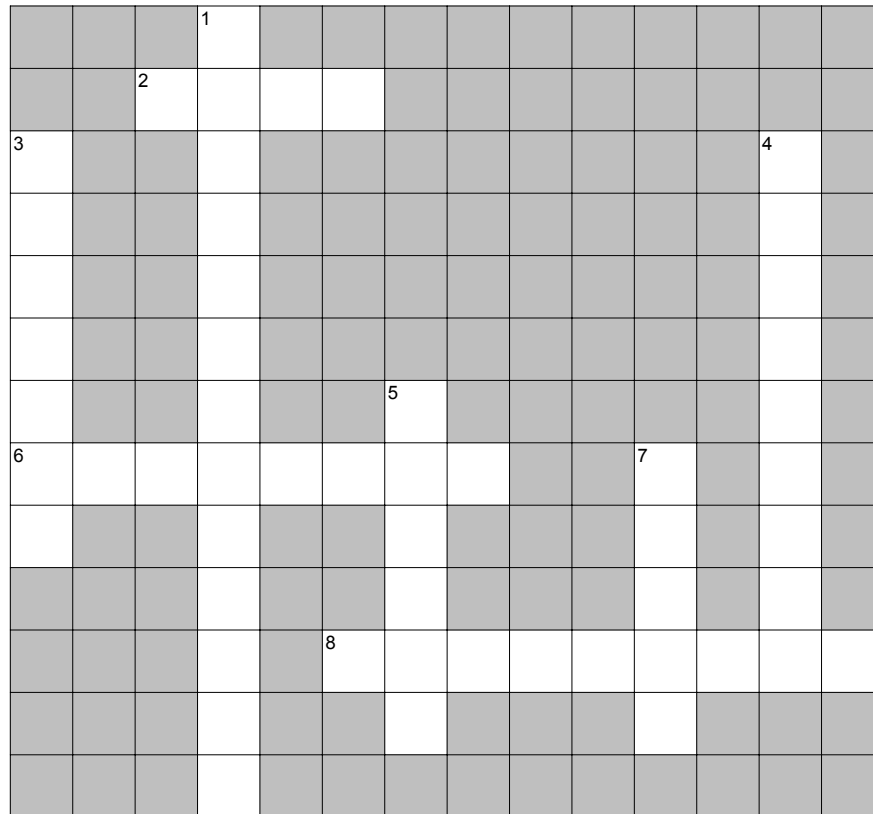
1. True or False? China was never very isolated from the other great civilizations of the world. \_\_\_\_\_
2. True or False? In ancient China, the activities that took place in the bell and drum towers were related to time of day. \_\_\_\_\_
3. True or False? Elderly people have traditionally been treated with great respect in China. \_\_\_\_\_
4. True or False? For centuries the emperors of China were the most powerful rulers on Earth. \_\_\_\_\_
5. True or False? In ancient China, imperial examinations had to be passed in order to obtain a job in the emperor's government. \_\_\_\_\_

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## Crossword Puzzle

**Across:**

2. This desert is in the north of China.
6. These men ruled the empires of China.
8. The People's Republic of China has this form of government.

**Down:**

1. This complex of buildings and its nearly 9,000 rooms is where the emperors of China once lived.
3. These are good qualities.
4. The government of ancient China was based on the principles of this ancient philosopher.
5. This mythical beast was associated with thunder and rainfall in ancient China.
7. Statues of these animals acted as gatekeepers in China.

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**5000 B.C.** - Rice is cultivated in southern China.

**3000 B.C.** - Plows are used in China for the first time.

**1766 B.C.** - Shang Dynasty begins.

**1600 B.C.** - Chinese priests inscribe special signs on "oracle bones" that are used to look into the future. The practice of coin tossing or drawing straws associated with the *I Ching* probably developed from this.

**1122 B.C.** - The Zhou people of western China overthrow the Shang Dynasty and establish a new dynasty.

**551 B.C.** - Confucius is born.

**500 B.C.** - Lao-tzu, founder of Taoism, is active.

**500 to 400 B.C.** - Buddha is born in what is now southern Nepal.

**221 B.C.** - Qin Dynasty begins, time of the first emperor and first strong central government.

**214 B.C.** - Construction of the Great Wall of China begins.

**202 B.C.** - Beginning of Han Dynasty. China becomes a powerful empire and Chinese culture flourishes.

**200 B.C.** - *Tao-Te-Ching*, the *Book of Tao*, begins to be compiled.

**105 A.D.** - Paper is invented in China.

**581 to 618** - Reunification of China during the Sui Dynasty. Grand Canal is built for transportation.

**618 to 907** - Tang Dynasty; literature, and arts flourish in China.

**960 to 1279** - Song Dynasty. China's population exceeds 100 million people. Neo-Confucianism becomes the official state philosophy.

**1275** - Marco Polo arrives in China from Venice, Italy. He remains in China for 17 years. His reports stimulate Europeans' interest in China.

**1279** - Mongols (people from Mongolia) under Kublai Khan defeat the Song Dynasty and take control of China. The Mongols found the Yuan Dynasty.

**1368** - Chinese drive out the Mongols. Ming Dynasty begins.

**1420** - Construction begins on the Forbidden City in Beijing.

**1644 to 1912** - Qing Dynasty. Manchu emperors rule China.

**1842** - Hong Kong becomes a British colony.

**1851 to 1864** - Millions die in bloody warfare of the Tai-ping Rebellion.

**1912** - End of the Qing Dynasty as the Republic of China is founded for govern China. Sun Yat-sen is the first president, but only serves for six weeks.

**1928** - The Nationalist Chinese, under Chang-Kai-shek, unify China under one government.

**1934** - Communist rebellion, led by Mao Zedong, begins.

**1937 to 1945** - War with Japan shatters China.

**1949** - Chinese communists defeat the Nationalist Chinese and establish the People's Republic of China.

### Timeline Activity

**By looking at the Timeline, fill in the correct year:**

1. Construction on the Forbidden City began in the year \_\_\_\_\_.
2. The Communist Revolution began in China in the year \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Invaders from Mongolia conquered China in the year \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Rice was first cultivated in China in the year \_\_\_\_\_.
5. The first emperor began to rule China in the Qin Dynasty that began in the year \_\_\_\_\_.

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**Beijing** - The capital city of China since the 1300s.

**bell tower** - A large tower found in ancient Chinese cities that housed a bell that was rung at dawn each day to signal that the city gates were opening.

**capital** - A city where a government's headquarters are located. Beijing is the present capital city of the People's Republic of China.

**communism** - A form of government based on principles of communal, or public, ownership of land and factories. The Communist Party (whose members are not elected by a vote of the people) runs governments in communist countries.

**concubine** - A secondary wife. Chinese emperors had many concubines.

**Confucianism** - One of the three traditional religions of China. Confucianism is based on the teachings of a philosopher named Confucius. He came up with a system of rules for proper behavior and for good government that played an extremely important role in shaping the civilization of China.

**Confucius** - An ancient Chinese philosopher (551-479 B.C.) who developed rules for personal behavior that promoted mutual respect, generosity, honor, strong family bonds, and a deep sense of duty to society.

**culture** - The customs and traditions that a group of people share, such as their religious beliefs, rituals, holidays, food, music, dance, and clothing.

**dragon** - A mythical beast thought to control thunderstorms and rainfall. In China, dragons are considered to be friendly and to symbolize good luck and happiness. The emperors of China used the dragon symbol on their thrones and clothing.

**drum tower** - A tower found in the cities of ancient China that housed a huge drum (or drums) that were beaten at dusk and hourly throughout the night.

**dynasty** - A powerful family that produces a series of rulers over several generations.

**emperor** - A mighty ruler that has supreme political power over an empire.

**empire** - A huge territory governed by an emperor and often consisting of many conquered nations.

**empress** - The wife or widow of an emperor.

**eunuch** - A castrated male. (A male who has had some of his sexual organs removed). Eunuchs were important guards and servants in the Forbidden City. Many young males were sold to the emperor by their families, knowing that they would be turned into eunuchs.

**feminine** - Qualities that are traditionally associated with females. For example, motherliness and gentleness. In China, the northern direction is associated with the feminine.

**Forbidden City** - A huge collection of buildings in Beijing that housed the emperor and his family and from which the government of China was administered.

**Gobi Desert** - The Gobi and other deserts in China helped to physically isolate the country from its neighbors.

**Great Wall of China** - A stone wall more than 4,000 miles (6,450 km) in length that helped keep invaders out and to isolate the people of China.

**harmony** - A pleasant outcome resulting from non-aggression, peace, order, and balance. Traditionally in China, the achievement of harmony with nature, between the government and the governed, and within in the family was considered to be of utmost value.

**Himalayan Mountains** - The highest range of mountains in the world located between India and China. These mountains acted as a natural barrier that limited contact between the two nations.

**imperial** - A word that refers to an emperor or

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empire, e.g., imperial power, imperial examinations.

**imperial examinations** - In China, examinations were given to men wishing to get a job in the imperial government. The emperor personally oversaw the final stages of these important tests.

**lions** - Statues of lions were used as doorkeepers in ancient China because these ferocious animals were believed to drive away evil spirits.

**Lunar New Year celebration** - An important four-day celebration in China that occurs between January 21 and February 19.

**moat** - A water-filled ditch used to keep out invaders.

**Mao Zedong (1893-1976)** - Leader of the communist revolution in China, as well as the first Chairman of the People's Republic of China.

**masculine** - Qualities that are generally associated to being male, for example: fatherliness, strength.

**meridian** - Refers to an imaginary circle that passes through the North and South poles.

**Nationalist China** - The nation of Taiwan. The Chinese nationalists were defeated by the communists and set up their own government on the island of Taiwan.

**palanquin** - A portable chair. The emperors of China were carried about in palanquins.

**People's Republic of China** - The modern communist nation of China.

**philosopher** - A person who seeks wisdom, truth, and deep understanding.

**polygamous** - Having many wives.

**pronouncements** - Important formal statements,

decrees, or declarations. In Beijing, many centuries ago, the emperors made important pronouncements from the Gate of Heavenly Peace.

**proWess** - Skill, expertise, valor.

**Taiwan** - An island of the coast of mainland China; the nation of Nationalist China.

**tradition** - A well-established way of doing things; a custom.

**virtue** - A good quality, e.g., generosity, kindness, and intelligence. Five bridges in the Forbidden City symbolize different Chinese virtues.

### Vocabulary Activity:

**Directions:** By consulting the vocabulary list find the correct word (or words) to fill in the blank.

1. Kindness is a \_\_\_\_\_.
2. The emperor of China oversaw the \_\_\_\_\_ examinations.
3. The emperors of China were \_\_\_\_\_ because they had many wives.
4. The communist revolution in China was led by \_\_\_\_\_.
5. In Beijing, the emperors of China went to the Gate of Heavenly Peace to make important \_\_\_\_\_.

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**On the map of Asia (Blackline Master 7b) do the following:**

1. Label the old capital of China, Xian.
2. Label the new capital of China, Beijing.
3. Label Taipei, the capital of Nationalist China.
4. Label Lhasa, the old capital of Tibet.
5. Label the Chinese city of Shanghai.
6. Label the city of Hong Kong.
7. Label Seoul, the capital of South Korea.
8. Label Pyongyang, the capital of North Korea.
9. Label Ho Chi Minh City, the capital of Vietnam.
10. Label Ulan Bator, the capital of Mongolia.

**7a**

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Map of Asia

