

Lesson 4 The Legacy of Ancient China

MAIN IDEAS

Geography The Silk Roads brought cultural and economic changes to China.

Belief Systems Chinese philosophies such as Confucianism and Daoism had a lasting influence on East Asia.

Science and Technology During Han times, China made many advances in technology, agriculture, and trade.

The Silk Roads

ESSENTIAL QUESTION What kinds of goods moved along the Silk Roads?

A Trans-Eurasian Link

- During Han Dynasty, only Chinese knew how to make silk
 - silk opened trade, increased contact with the West
- **Silk Roads**—trade routes carried silk, other goods to and from China
 - **trans-Eurasian** trails crossed central Asia to Mesopotamia, Europe
 - caravan trails were well established by 100 B.C.
- Silk, paper, pottery went west; metals, gems, horses came east

Cultural Diffusion

- **Cultural diffusion**—the spread of ideas, customs
 - Silk Roads helped spread military methods, Buddhism, styles to China
 - Chinese art, silks, pottery influenced western cultures

The Spread of Buddhism

- During Han Dynasty, Buddhist missionaries took Silk Roads to China
 - Buddhism spread to Japan and Korea from China
- Chinese Buddhists modified the religion to fit their own traditions

REVIEW QUESTION

Why were the Silk Roads important to Chinese civilization?

Influential Ideas and Beliefs

ESSENTIAL QUESTION How important were Confucianism and Daoism?

Confucianism

- Confucius' ideas of social duty still important in Chinese villages
- Confucianism became influential philosophy in Japan, Korea, Vietnam

Daoism

- Daoism philosophy had lasting influence in China
 - by sixth century it was a religion; had priests, rituals, writings
- Unlike Confucianism, Daoism remained primarily a Chinese belief

REVIEW QUESTION

Where is Confucianism practiced today?

Chinese Inventions and Discoveries

ESSENTIAL QUESTION In which aspects of Chinese life did the Han make great advances?

Agricultural Improvements

- Chinese inventions made more grain available, farmers' lives easier
- Inventions included:
 - better plows
 - collar harness
 - wheelbarrow
 - watermill

Paper

- Chinese first made paper in A.D. 105 from rags, tree bark, hemp fibers
 - before paper, books were made of expensive silk
- Inexpensive paper made books more available
 - Chinese valued learning; government kept many records

Silk

- Silk is beautiful, long lasting, and can be dyed bright colors
- Silk's rarity made it an excellent trade product for Chinese
- Silk was traded for silver, gold from the west
 - at one point, a pound of silk was worth a pound of gold
 - China sought gold, silver because it lacked rich deposits of both

REVIEW QUESTION

Why was it necessary to make improvements in farming methods in ancient China?

Lesson Summary

- Trading routes called the Silk Roads brought goods and ideas to and from China.
- Confucianism and Daoism had a lasting influence in China.
- Chinese inventions in agriculture, paper making, and other discoveries improved daily life.

Why It Matters Now . . .

Ancient cultural patterns continue to influence life in China and elsewhere.