

# Ancient China

## Geography and Early China



Wine or Water Container for a Tomb

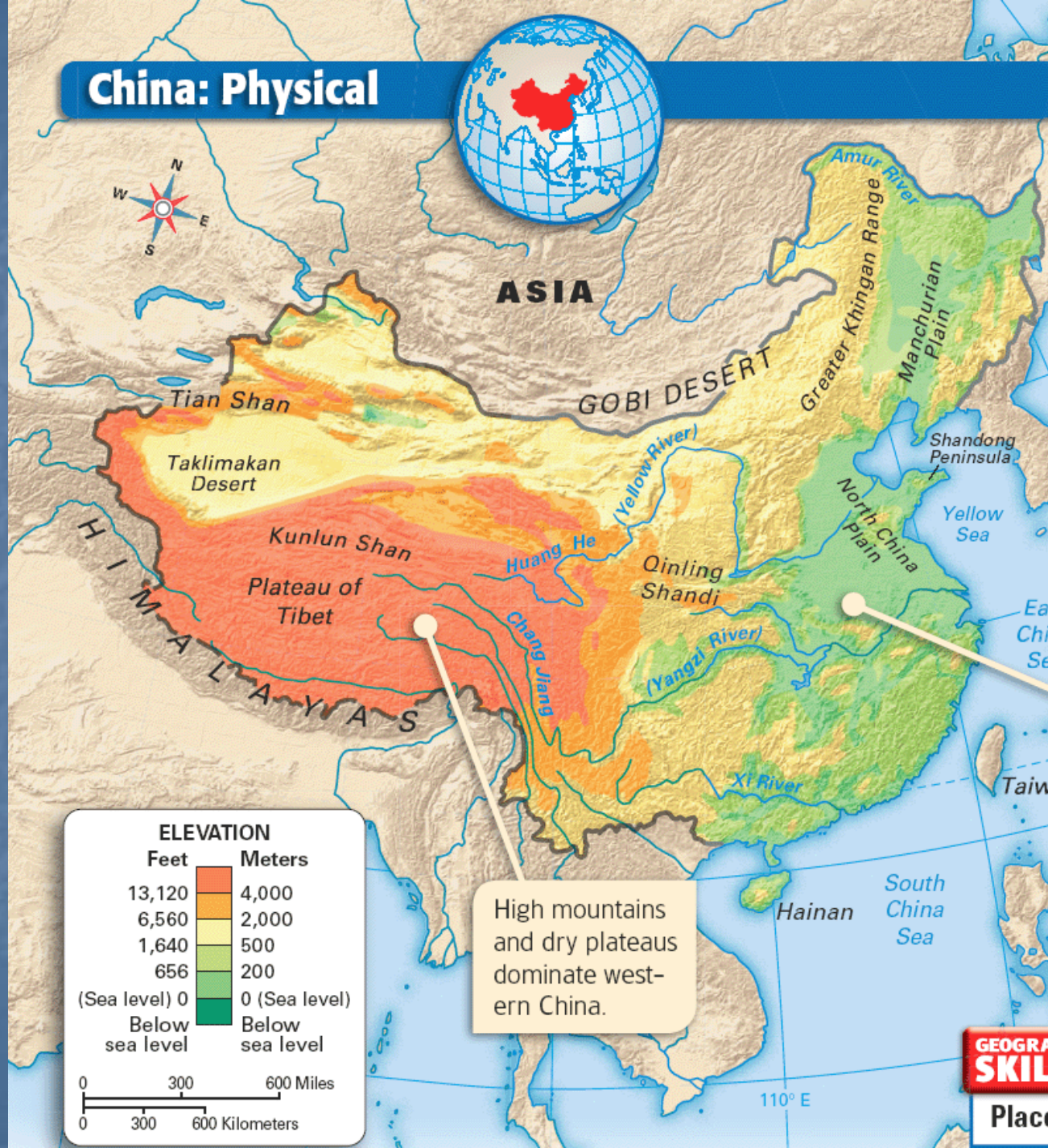
# Physical Geography



- China has geographical features that separate it from neighbors
  - And the rest of the world
- North China – mostly Gobi desert
- South China –  
Mountains/Highlands
  - Himalayas – Mountains are more than 26,000 feet!
- West China - Mountains
  - Southwest China – Plateau of Tibet
- East China – Farmland
  - Some of the best in the world



# China: Physical



ASIA

Tian Shan

GOBI DESERT

Amur River  
Greater Khingan Range  
Manchurian Plain

Taklimakan Desert

Yellow River  
(Huang He)

Shandong Peninsula

Yellow Sea

H I M A L A Y A S  
Kunlun Shan  
Plateau of Tibet

Huang He

Qinling Shandi

North China Plain

East China Sea

Chang Jiang

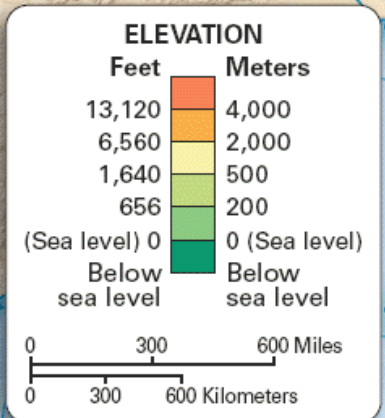
(Yangtze River)

Xi River

Taiwan

Hainan

South China Sea



High mountains and dry plateaus dominate western China.

**GEOGRAPHY SKILLS**

Place

# Rivers of China

- Two major rivers in China
  - Huang He (Yellow River)
  - Chiang Jiang (Yangzi River)
- Huang He
  - 3,000 miles long
  - Flooding – silt
  - China's sorrow
- Chiang Jiang
  - Longest river in Asia
- Rivers connected East and West China
  - Mountain range of Qinling Shandi separates North and South China



# Chinese Civilization Begins

- The Chinese began farming along Yellow and Yangzi Rivers thanks to silt
  - Grew rice and wheat
  - Hunted and fished as well
- Chinese began with small villages
  - Some had walls around them
    - Protection from floods or neighbors



# Early Chinese Civilization



- Many artifacts from early Chinese villages have been found
  - Arrowheads, fishhooks, tools, pottery
    - Suggests an advanced culture
- Burial sites have also been found
  - Provide information about culture
  - Graves contain items needed for afterlife
  - Some graves contain more stuff than others
    - Jade ornaments – hard gemstone
    - Suggests some people were richer than others - Classes



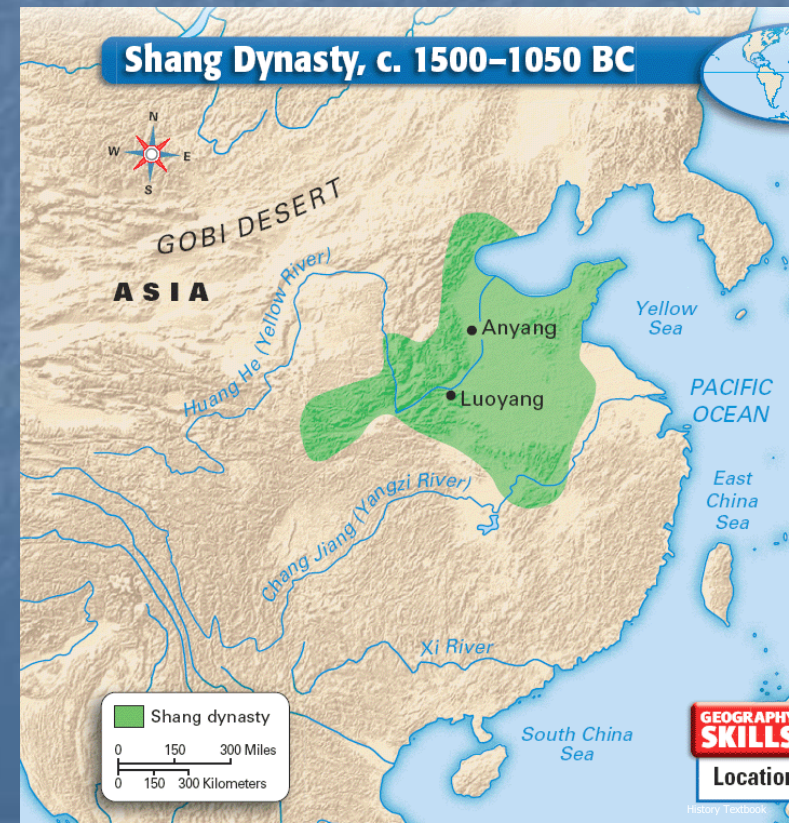
# Xia Dynasty

- 2200<sub>BCE</sub> – Yu the Great begins Xia Dynasty
  - Most information about Xia comes from legend
  - One legend:
    - Yellow River had a terrible flood
    - Yu the Great spent 13 years digging channels
    - Drain the water to the ocean
    - These channels became the major waterways of China
  - Legends may or may not be accurate
    - But they do show people working together
    - Also explained how geography influenced the people



# Shang Dynasty

- The Shang Dynasty is the first Dynasty that we have clear evidence for
  - Began in 1700's BCE
  - Huang He River Valley
- The Shang Dynasty had very organized social classes
  - Royal Family at the top
  - Nobles/Warriors second
  - Craftspeople third
  - Farmers fourth
  - Slaves last







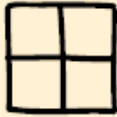





# Shang Dynasty

- Many advances made during Shang Dynasty
  - China's first writing system
    - Predecessor to today's Chinese writing
  - Oracle bones
    - Oracle – prediction about the future
  - Bronze Pottery/Tools
  - Military achievements
    - Chariot, bows, bronze armor
  - Astrologers created a calendar based on the moon





Chinese Writing		
	Writing from Shang Period	Current Chinese Writing
sun		
rain		
field		
moon		

# Zhou Dynasty

- Group of people called the Zhou come to power in 1100's<sub>BCE</sub>
- Overthrow Shang Dynasty
- The Zhou Dynasty becomes the longest dynasty in Chinese history
  - 1046<sub>BCE</sub> – 256<sub>BCE</sub>



# Zhou Ideas

- Zhou believed Kings had the Mandate of Heaven
  - Heaven approved their rule
- The Zhou used the Mandate of Heaven to take over Shang
  - And to expand their empire



# Zhou Social Order

- Land was considered as wealth
  - Land was traded for work
    - On the land or in the military
- The Zhou brought a new Social Order:
  - Kings
  - Lords and Warriors
    - Lords – people of high rank
  - Peasants – farmers with small farms
- New order provides stability
  - However, eventually this order breaks down

**Zhou Society**

**QUICK FACTS**

**King**  
The king led the government and gave land to lords.



**Lords and Warriors**  
Lords paid taxes to the king and provided warriors to protect his lands.



**Peasants**  
Peasants farmed the nobles' land.



# Decline of Zhou Power

- Lords eventually became less loyal to the king
  - Refuse to fight enemies for the king
- 771<sub>BCE</sub> – Group of invaders reach capital
  - New Zhou king put in power and capital city moved
- Now the lords begin to fight each other
- 481<sub>BCE</sub> – Warring States period begins
  - Wars grow – fights become brutal and cruel



# Internal Problems

- While Zhou declines, so does family
  - Large families had a lot of power
  - Eventually large families fight each other
    - Were not loyal to king, why be loyal to each other?
    - Fight both other families and themselves
      - Ex: Brothers fought each other over inheritances
- No strong government to help out
- Chinese society falls into disorder

