

Ecological Civilization: Exploring China as a Model

Asian Studies Center
University of Pittsburgh
K-14 Curriculum Workshop
Saturday, May 30, 2020

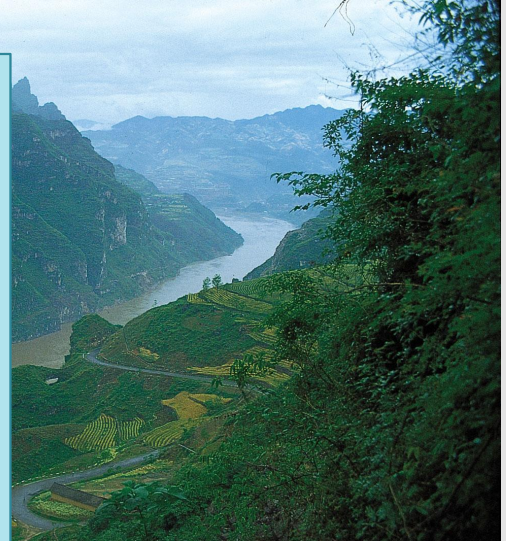


“ecological civilization”

Shentai wenming

“Taking a driving seat in international cooperation to respond to climate change, China has become an important participant, contributor, and torchbearer in the global endeavor for ecological civilization. Any harm we inflict on nature will eventually return to haunt us... this is a reality we have to face. China must develop a new model of modernization with humans developing in harmony with nature.”

– President Xi Jinping, 19th Communist Party Congress, 2017.



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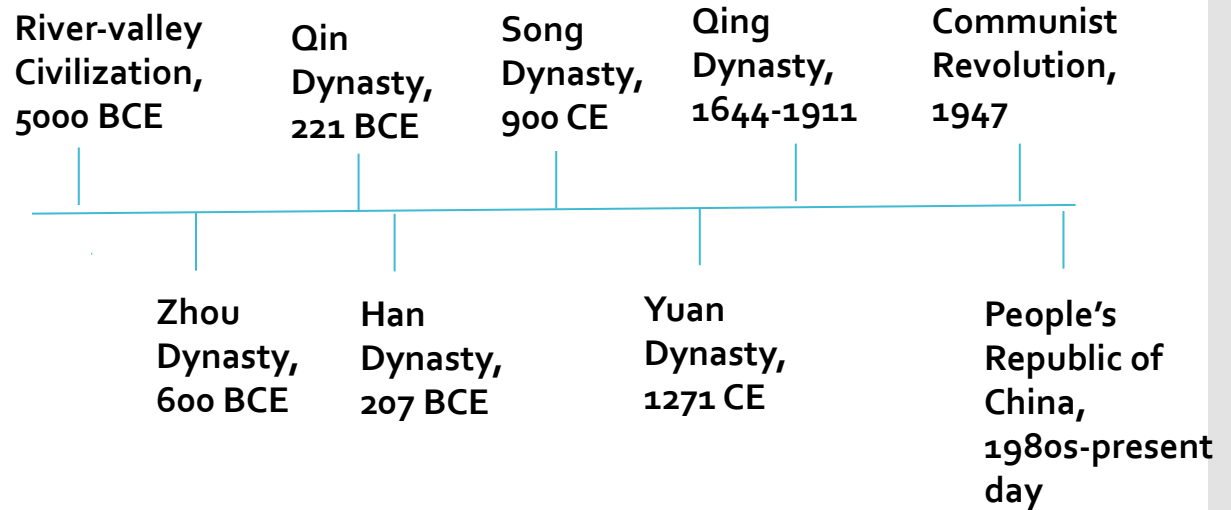
China & Ecological Civilization:

Ways to Apply These Topics into Your Classroom

*resources provided at
the end of slide show

- Teaching about **river systems**, such as ancient river valley civilizations (**Yellow & Yangtze River Valley Civilizations**)
- Teaching about **Taoism**, its beliefs and practices; impacts on China throughout its history and today, especially regarding **physical health & well-being**.
- Teaching about Chinese **geography**, the Middle Kingdom and Mandate of Heaven ideologies (Great Wall).
- Teaching about China's **agricultural history**, topics related to **agricultural science; engineering and technological innovations and infrastructure** that supported China's agricultural growth (Grand Canal).
- 21st century applications of Ecological Civilization:
 - a. **Industrialization, Economic Growth vs. Green Modernization**
 - b. **Geopolitics & the Nine Dash Line**

Highlights of China as an Ecological Civilization



The Physical Environment Impact on History: V

- Both rivers flow west to east.
- Both river valleys provide staple crops for China.

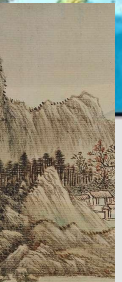
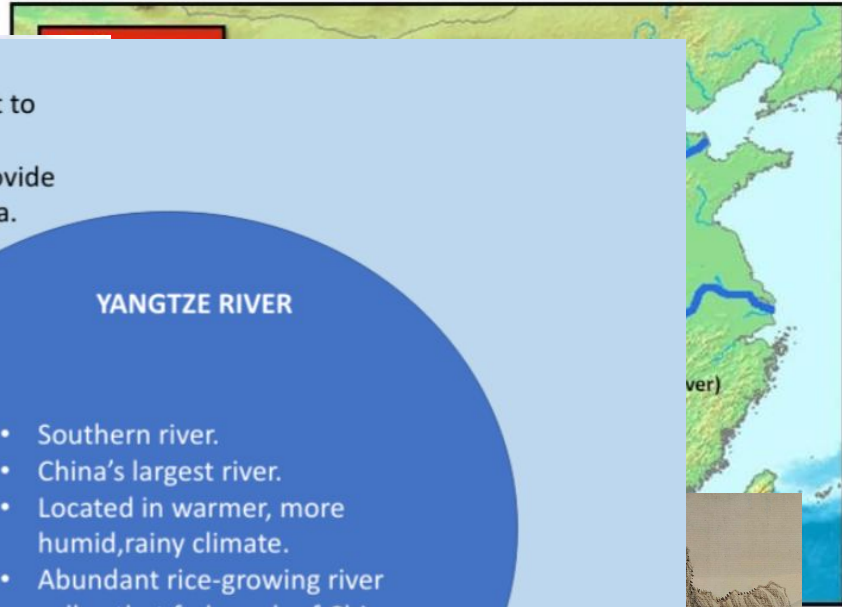
YELLOW RIVER

- Northern river.
- Site of China's first civilization.
- Known as "China's Sorrow" because it flooded frequently.
- Rich in yellow loess or silt—nutrient-rich soil.
- Silt's build-up on river's edge makes riverbed higher than land—"hanging river."
- Wheat-producing river-valley.

YANGTZE RIVER

- Southern river.
- China's largest river.
- Located in warmer, more humid, rainy climate.
- Abundant rice-growing river valley that fed much of China.
- Fluctuating water levels could be dangerous to navigate.

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/6db37638b5724257abf12afd284c9534>



DBQ on Taoism's influence on China as an aspect of Ecological Civilization

Prompt: How have the beliefs and practices of Taoism spread in China and manifest themselves as aspects of ecological civilization?

Document 1

President Xi Jinping's report at 19th CPC National Congress, 2017.

"Man and nature form a community of life; we, as human beings, must respect nature, follow its ways, and protect it. Only by observing the laws of nature can mankind avoid costly blunders in its exploitation. Any harm we inflict on nature will eventually return to haunt us. This is a reality we have to face."

Document 2

Barefoot Doctors poster, c. 1960.



Document 3

"Tao Te Ching," Lao Tzu

"Nature does not hurry, yet everything is accomplished."

Document 4

Tai Chi



Document 5, Acupuncture



The Silk Road

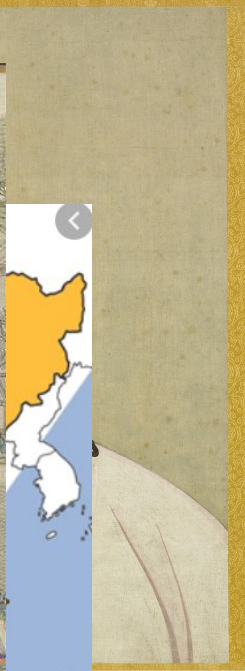
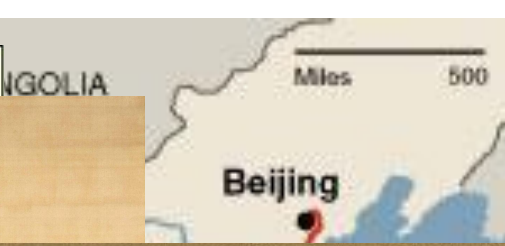
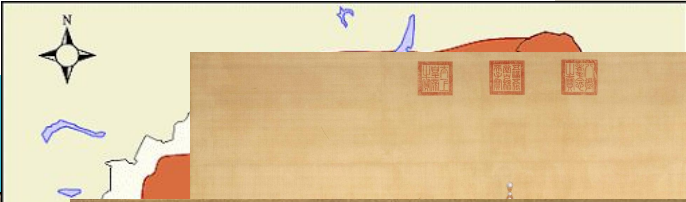


Questions for students:

1. How did the vast steppe of northern China present both a challenge and an opportunity for the emperors of China who sought to keep their Mandate of Heaven with their subjects?
2. How did Shi Huangdi and Wu Di compare and contrast in their reasons for constructing the Great Wall?
3. How was the concept of *ecological civilization* both preserved and harnessed in this context?



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China as an Ecological Civilization in the 21st c.?

Domestic Successes

- Doubling of solar and wind power
- Leads the world in electric cars
- Has the world's most extensive network of highspeed trains
- Supports the concept of a circular economy

Domestic Challenges

- Still the world's largest source of carbon emissions
- Yangtze possibly world's most polluted rivers today
- Human rights abuses (Uyghurs)
- Mega-industrial projects such as the Belt & Road Initiative

Sketch Map of The Three Gorges

Lesser Three Gorges Shennong Stream

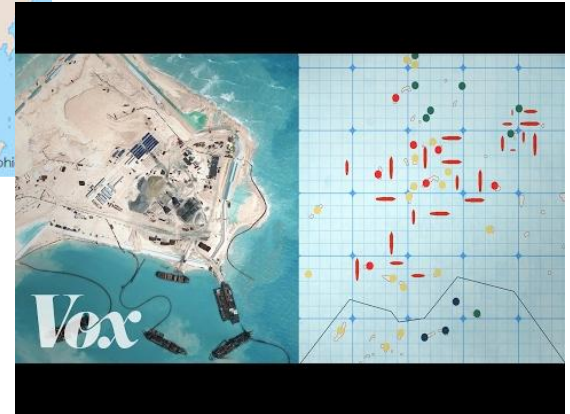
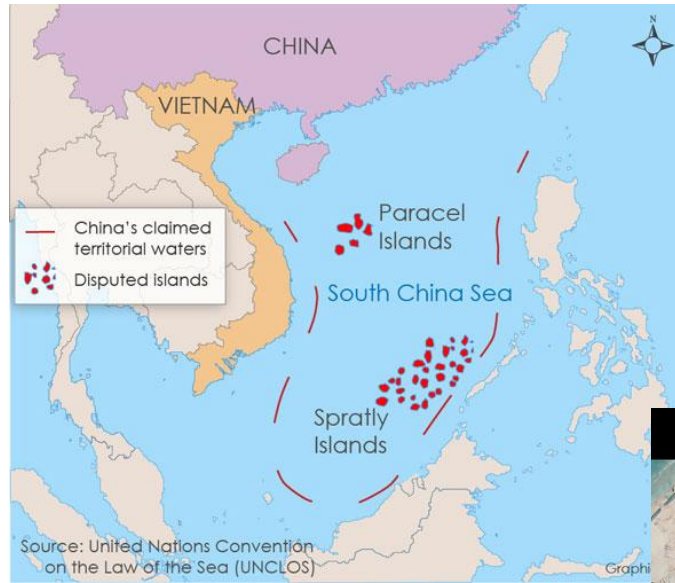


...ts were given
...e new cities. But
villagers were relocated to other parts of China.
sometimes an entire hamlet was loaded onto a boat
...ince, where the government provided small land

Change Stones: Dispatches from East and West



Ecological Civilization: Forging 21st c. Domestic and International Policy



Educator Resources

<http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/>

<https://allthatsinteresting.com/yangtze-river-pollution>

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/6db37638b5724257abf12afd284c9534>

<https://www.ibiblio.org/chinesehistory/contents/07spe/specrep01.html>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2013/06/16/world/asia/chinas-great-uprooting-moving-250-million-into-cities.html>

https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/wmr_2020.pdf

http://projects.mcah.columbia.edu/nanxuntu/html/scroll_q6.html

<https://ensia.com/voices/ecological-civilization/>

<https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/chinas-environmental-crisis>

<https://www.vox.com/videos/2017/2/17/14642818/china-south-china-sea-us-islands>

Questions?

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Break-out Room Assignments

- Having listened to this morning's presentations, has your understanding of China as a model for ecological civilization deepened or changed? Why or why not and how?
- What role do you think China will play in the 21st century's goals toward an ecological civilization?
- Which of the topics from today's presentations do you think would resonate most with your students?
- Choose one of the eras and/or topics discussed in the presentation. Discuss how you might incorporate, modify, and/or build on it for your classroom instruction.