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Activity #1

China used tactics such as farming and religion to develop their culture and master their surroundings.

Like many civilizations at the time, ancient China settled near rivers or sources of water for food subsistence. The Yellow River and Yangzi River proved to be important in China's history. Villages elevated their buildings above the flood plain, digging ditches or building palisades to keep the water from intruding into their building. This is crucial because when seasonal rain comes it erodes the loess soil. If houses were built level with the soil, they would lose their foundation in the newly formed gullies. Chinese civilization near the rivers evolved and the development of wet rice farming emerged, which could grow despite the high level of rainfall that destroyed other crops such as millet. "... and the rice grown along the Yangzi became even more important to their food supply than the millet cultivated in the areas drained by the Yellow River" (Adler & Pouwels 2018 55). If this technique did not develop many people would have starved since other crops were drained by the rain. China to this day uses wet rice farming in rural villages and it is a big industry for other cities since population is constantly rising.

Religion and spiritual ways of thought allowed China to bring order to their dynasties and without it chaos and war would have been more prevalent. A shift in the spiritual belief system began with the Mandate of Heaven during the Zhou Dynasty. If a ruler ineffectively controlled the land it gave others the ability to overthrow the oppressive king and restore virtue and wisdom. Therefore, it was in the interest of the current king to have all of the people in his mind when making decisions. This contributed to their success because it encouraged cohesion between the classes. Balance of power is seen in many democratic societies today, where leaders are curbed of acting out of their bounds. During the Warring States period Kong Fuzi taught his view and understanding of virtues that he thought should be implemented and is known as Confucianism. "This philosophy of public service by scholarly, virtuous officials was to have enormous influence on China" (Adler & Pouwels 2018 61). Confucius's principle virtues were benevolence and righteousness which was a nice change after the turmoil brought on by the war of the states. Revolt and change were condemned in this new society, a drastic change from the old Mandate of Heaven where revolts could be justified and change was necessary. China today still views these ideas with condemnation as leaders lose their grip on citizens and are slowly embracing capitalism and the ways of the west in order to survive.

An anthropological framework is essential when working with ancient civilizations because it can help make sense of these mysterious and forever lost places. If one did not have an anthropological view as an archaeologist it would be difficult to make sense of the artifacts in their possession. Discovery and interpretation are very different and archaeologists must do both.