**Chapter 7: Early China Lesson 1 Study Guide**

The ancient civilizations of Egypt, Mesopotamia, and India developed along large rivers. Hundreds of years later in East Asia, another civilization began along the **Huang He** (Hwang Huh), which means **Yellow River**. This civilization was China.

The Huang He stretches east across China for more than **2,900** miles. Huang He gets its nickname, Yellow River, from the **rich, yellow soil**. It is also called **China’s Sorrow** due to the river’s **many, many floods**, which have taken millions of lives. Over time, people moved south and settled near another great river, **the** **Chang Jiang** or the **Yangtze** River, which became a **key waterway for trade and transportation**.

Chinese myths were created to explain the creation of their world and to celebrate the deeds of great heroes. According to myth, **Yu the Great** dug the first channels to control the flood waters of the Huang He by chasing away the **dragon** that caused the floods. Supposedly, Yu was helped by other dragons who used their tails to dig channels so the flood waters could flow safely to the sea.

Legend says Yu founded China’s first dynasty the **Xia** (Shyah) around 2000 B.C. However, archaeologists never found any proof of this and believe China’s **first real** dynasty to be the **Shang Dynasty**, which ruled from 1750 B.C. to 1045 B.C.

The Shang built **the first cities in China** including the royal capital, Anyang. The royal palace and temple were in the center surrounded by public buildings and homes of government officials. Beyond the city’s center were workshops and other homes.

Shang Kings sent out large armies to defend the kingdom’s border. They appointed military leaders called **warlords** to govern local territories. These warlords and other royal officials formed the **upper class**. They were known as **aristocrats**, people of noble birth whose wealth came from the land they owned. Most of Shang China, however, were **farmers**.

The Shang worshipped many gods such as **Shang Ti,** the supreme god. They believed gods lived in **mountains, rivers, and seas**. The Chinese also honored their **ancestors**, long dead family members from whom they were descended.

Shang kings believed they received their **power to rule** from the **gods** and their **wisdom** from their **ancestors**.

The ancient Chinese wrote in **pictographs**, characters that represent objects, and **ideographs**, Chinese characters that link two or more pictographs to express an idea.

China’s longest dynasty was the **Zhou** (JOE), which ruled over 800 years. The king led the government, helped by a **bureaucracy**, appointed officials who run different parts of the government. The **Mandate of Heaven** is the belief that the Chinese King’s right to rule came from the gods who chose a **wise** and **good** person to rule. The Zhou Dynasty was known for developing new systems to **irrigate** the land. **Trade** also expanded as Chinese silk was traded as far away as Greece. **The Invention of the rudder helped sea shipping merchants.**

The last of the Shang rulers was an evil tyrant who was overthrown by **Wu Wang**, who started the **Zhou** Dynasty. A new period, known as **“The Period of the Warring States”** lasted for almost 200 years when Chinese territories fought each other, which is the definition of **civil** war. This was an effort to restore order in China.