

The Song of Mulan

Book, Music and Lyrics by Paul Deiss



Classroom Study Guide

Student Pages



History of a Legend

The story of Mulan was first told in a poem written between 420 and 589 A.D. Over one hundred years later, a song about Mulan was included in imperial court writings. The story of this brave woman has inspired poets, storytellers, moviemakers, and artists since it was first told so many years ago.

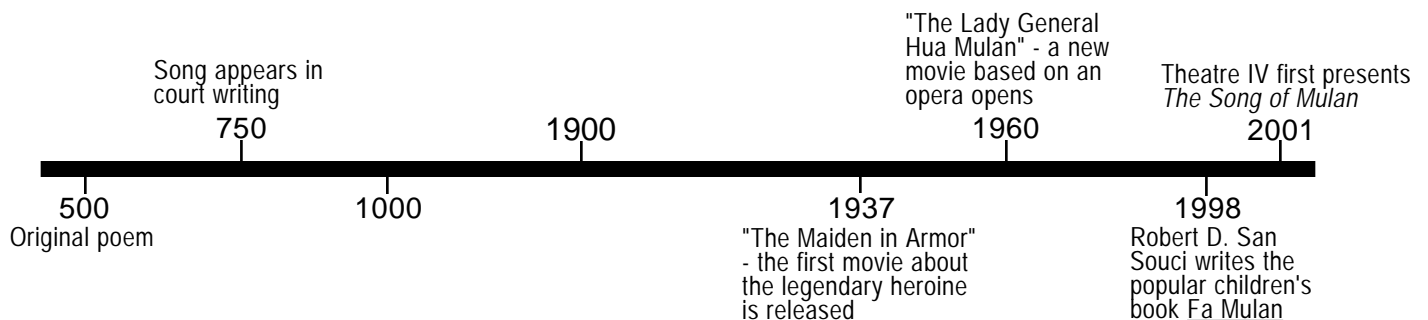
According to legend, the story is set during actual battles that took place between the Chinese and invaders, known as the Tartars. Mulan's father was ordered to serve in the army. He was old and weak, so Mulan disguised herself as a man and fought in place of her father. Upon her return home, her fellow army men learned that she was a woman. Many call Mulan's story a **folk tale** because there is no proof that it truly happened.

*A **folk tale** is a story or legend about the customs, beliefs and lives of ordinary people. These stories are passed on from one generation to the next. Most folk tales are not factual, although many are based on real events.*



You can read the story of Mulan by visiting www.chinapage.com/mulan.html.

A Mulan Timeline



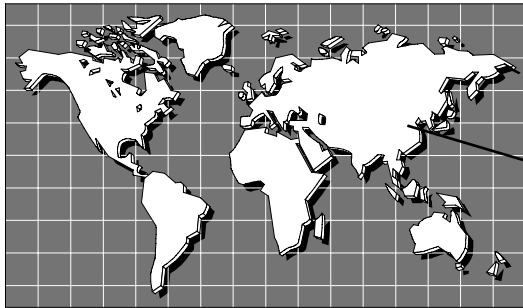
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CHINA

China is believed to be between 4,000 and 10,000 years old! In its long history, it has helped advance the world in the arts, science, language, and in business. The Chinese call their country Chung-Hua, which means middle country, because the ancient Chinese believed that they were at the center of the world. China is the biggest of all countries in Asia with land covering about 3.5 million square miles, and has the largest **population** of any country in the world.

The land in China is varied from the highest place on Earth (Mt. Everest) to one of the lowest. It has dry, desert-like areas and and tropical areas with colder temperatures in the north; warmer temperatures in the south. It has so many mountains it is estimated that about one-third of the land in China is mountainous!

Population: the total number of people that live in a country or area.



Map 1



Map 2



Map 3



1. Circle the continent Asia (Map 1)
2. Draw a line around the borders of China (Map 2)
3. Color the northern part of China blue (Map 3)
4. Color the southern part of China red (Map 3)
5. Put an x on one of the rivers in China (Map 3)
6. Circle the capital city of Beijing (Map 3)

CONTRIBUTIONS OF CHINA



Ancient China in Today's World

How can people who lived over 2,000 years ago make a difference in your life today? The **Ancient** Chinese invented many things that we still use daily. They invented paper, gunpowder, matches, umbrellas, the compass, and even the eating utensils we use in Chinese restaurants - chopsticks!

The Ancient Chinese also influenced other things of today. Their system of government, called dynasties, was one of the earliest forms of organized government. Their written language is one of the earliest forms of written language.

Ancient means a long, long time ago.



Learn more about their contributions below and online at www.chinapage.org or www.historyforkids.org



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Laws and Government

In Ancient China, families called dynasties ruled the people by making and enforcing laws. The heads of the dynasties were considered to be very wise men and leadership would stay within the family for many, many years. The earliest dynasties are known to have been in power about 4,000 years ago, though it is believed that other dynasties existed before that time.

Written Language

The original poem of the Legend of Mulan was written in Chinese calligraphy. This written Chinese language developed as early as 3000 B.C. using pictures and symbols to represent entire words. China was one of the first civilizations to use written language to record their history, laws, and to tell stories. Many of the earliest pictures in Chinese calligraphy evolved into the modern Chinese writing we see today. This picture writing is different than the English language where a series of letters are connected to create a word.

空 光 女 男



What other inventions and contributions created by the Ancient Chinese people are still used today? Read a book and make a list! Two books you might want to try are *The Ancient Chinese: History Opens Windows* by Shuter (Grades K-4) and *Ancient China (Nature Company Discoveries)* by Simpson (Grades 3-7).

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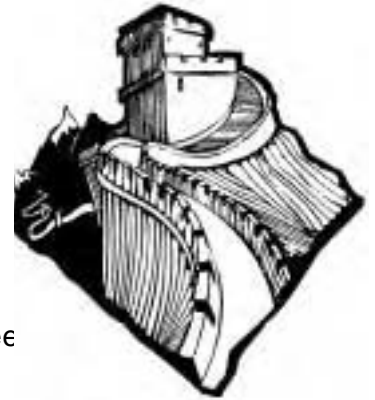
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THE GREAT WALL OF CHINA

Fast Facts

- ✦ More than 2,500 years old.
- ✦ Built over a period of 1,000 years.
- ✦ Over 4,000 miles long.
- ✦ Average height of 25 feet.
- ✦ The base is between 15 and 30 feet wide and the top is about 12 feet wide.



Fun Facts

- ✦ When under attack, guards would send smoke signals indicating the size of the attacking army: one column of smoke meant an army of less than 500 while four columns of smoke meant that the country was under attack by up to 10,000 men.
- ✦ At one time 3,000,000 people were involved in building the wall.
- ✦ The first section of the wall took ten years to build at a rate of about one mile per day.
- ✦ Most of the Wall is made of brick and stone, but some of it is only made of mud.
- ✦ More than 1,000,000 people died building the first 3,000 mile section of the wall.
- ✦ The Wall is one of the largest construction projects ever built - you can even see it from space!



For more information about the Great Wall of China and to see pictures of the Wall from space go to www.discovery.com/stories/history/greatwall.

Stranger things have happened...

While the story of Mulan is one of the earliest stories about a woman going to war dressed like a man, many other women have really done just that. Deborah Samson of Plymouth, Massachusetts fought in the American Revolutionary war as "Robert Shurtliffe." "Mr." Shurtliffe went on to serve in the American army for three years. She was wounded twice, but her true identity wasn't discovered until she was treated for a fever and the doctor treating her realized that she was really a girl.



To learn more about Deborah Samson go to www.factmonster.com and do a search for "Deborah Samson."

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