

ANCIENT CIVILIZATIONS Need to Know

The Rise and Fall of Ancient China

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Past Meets Present

Have you ever watched fireworks light up the sky? How about used a piece of paper? These important inventions came from ancient China. Its **civilization** started as far back as 1600 BCE. But this China of the past still impacts our lives today.

The first fireworks were bamboo tubes filled with gunpowder. Paper was originally made from old rags. Over time, paper makers started using plants instead.

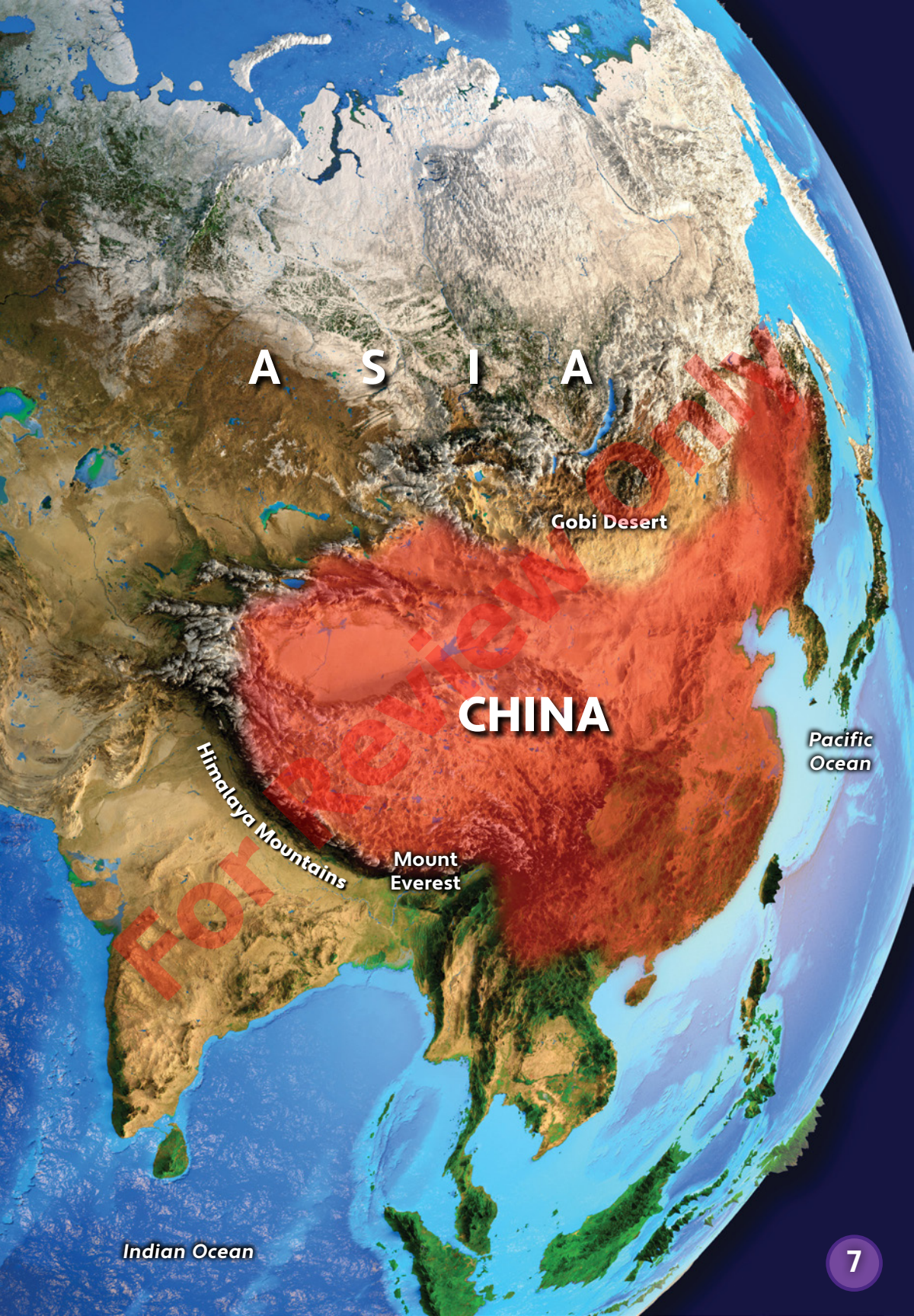




Shaped by the Land

China's geography has long kept it separate. The huge Asian country is surrounded by the Himalaya Mountains, the Gobi Desert, and the Pacific Ocean. These landforms allowed ancient China to develop without much **influence** from other countries. The harsh lands also protected China from **invaders**.

The Himalayas stand along the southwest border of China. The mountain chain has some of the tallest peaks on Earth. Mount Everest is the tallest. It reaches heights of more than 29,000 feet (8,800 m).



ASIA

Gobi Desert

CHINA

Pacific Ocean

Himalaya Mountains

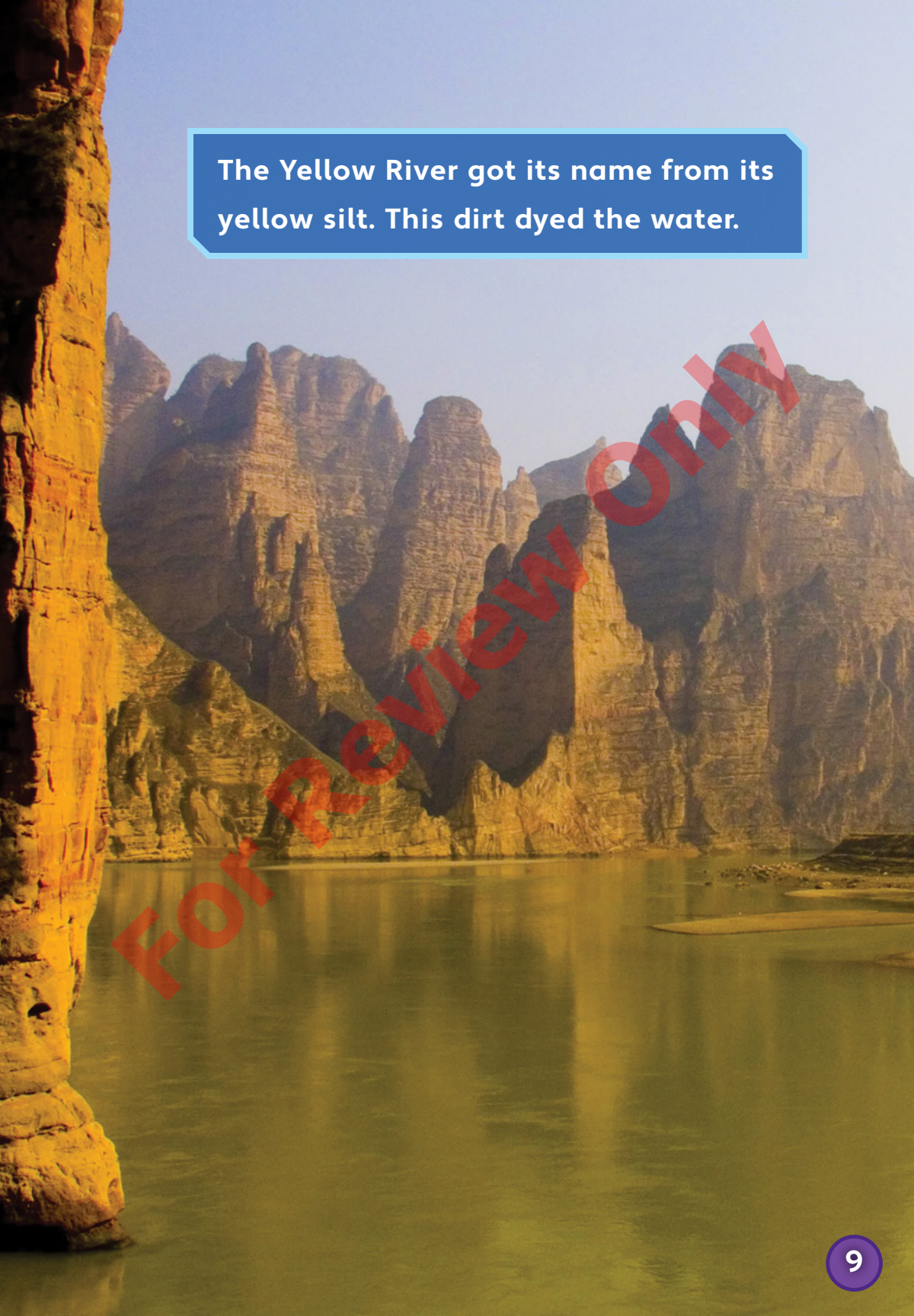
Mount Everest

Indian Ocean



Two major rivers were also important in shaping China's history. Huang He, or the Yellow River, is in the north. The Yangtze River can be found in the south. Both rivers were good for fishing. Regular river flooding made the soil good for farming. China's first villages were built along these rivers.

The Yellow River is shorter than the Yangtze. However, it is still one of the longest river systems in the world. The Yellow River Valley is widely thought of as the birthplace of Chinese civilization.



The Yellow River got its name from its yellow silt. This dirt dyed the water.