

Teaching Notes: THE ANCIENT CITY OF LIANGZHU: UNLOCKING ITS SECRETS

Written by Liu Bin & Yu Jingjing
Illustrated by Zeng Qiqi
Translated by Qin Lin
Published by Little Steps Publishing

SYNOPSIS

Five thousand years ago, an ancient civilisation rose up in eastern China, on the flood plains of the Yangtze River delta. Until recently, its history was shrouded in mystery. Who were the Liangzhu people, and how did they live? In this beautifully illustrated book, archaeologists reveal their discoveries about these inventive people and their bustling ancient city.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS & TRANSLATOR

Graduating from the Archaeology department of Jilin University, Prof. Liu Bin began to work at Zhejiang Provincial Institute of Archaeology and Cultural Relics in 1985. He is now the director of the institute. He participated in lots of important field projects in this area, such as the excavations of Fanshan and Yaoshan; he also led the excavations of Huiquanshan at Yuhang, Nahebang at Jiaxing and many other Neolithic sites. From 2006-2007, Prof. Liu Bin found the city wall of Liangzhu based on a coring survey project he conducted. Now he is leading the national project about the early civilisation models along the lower Yangtze. His main interests are prehistoric China and prehistoric jades.



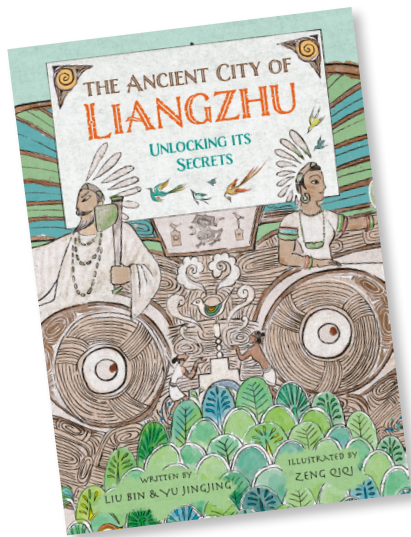
As a former Xinhua News reporter, Ms Yu Jingjing has long been interested in the field of culture and education. She has participated in the reporting of archaeological discoveries such as the Liangzhu ancient city in 2007 and the large-scale water conservancy system in 2016. She is currently the CEO of Hangzhou Uwell Technology Co. Ltd. Her recent work involves creating 'data portraits' of professional competence for scholars and journalists.

Qin Lin is an associate professor at Peking University on Archaeology and Culture, and her husband is an archaeology professor at the University of London. Her main research interests are Neolithic archaeology, archaeobotany, archaeological theory and prehistoric jade research.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Zeng Qiqi is the director of the Animation department of Zhejiang University of Science and Technology. As an associated professor, her main work focused on animation design, teaching and research on illustration and comic creation. She has been a visiting scholar at Drexel University, USA.





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EDUCATIONAL APPLICABILITY

This is a fascinating children's history book about the ancient city of Liangzhu which gives readers an incredible insight into a civilisation that, until recently, was shrouded in mystery. One of the authors, Professor Liu Bin, Director of Zhejiang Provincial Institute of Archaeology and Cultural Relics, actually helped discover the city wall of Liangzhu in 2006.

The study of ancient civilisations is very popular with children. This book goes into wonderful detail, along with traditional style artwork, about the life and times of the Liangzhu people of ancient China. Humorous quotes and drawings make this book very appealing for fans of the popular Horrible Histories series. Combining history, geography, art history and art, this book lends itself as a great resource for a school or holiday project on an ancient civilisation.



DISCUSSION TOPICS AND PROJECT WORK

Before reading the book:

1. Introduce *The Ancient City of Liangzhu* to the children and ask them what they think the book might be about. The subtitle says 'Unlocking its secrets'. What do the children think the secrets are? If they've studied other ancient civilisations - did they have any secrets? For example, the ancient Egyptian tombs.
2. What do they know about archaeology? Discuss what an archaeologist does. Why is it such an important and useful subject?
3. Have they been to museums and/or exhibitions which show archaeological artefacts? What can these tell us about a civilisation or geographical area?
4. Show the children the map on p8-9 and point out what is now called China and the Yangtze river. Ask if anyone has been to China.



After reading the book:

After reading the book altogether as a class (either the teacher reading it aloud or each child taking turns to read it), break the class into groups (so you have five or six groups).

Ask each group to create a project on a section/topic of the book. Use photocopies from the book to give to each group. Afterwards, each group could present their project to the class.

This could go as follows:

GROUP 1: FOOD SOURCES - RICE CULTIVATION, FISHING AND HUNTING

Key information to think about:

Where did rice come from?

How did the Liangzhu people grow rice? What tools did they use?

Where did they store the rice plants?

What fish did the Liangzhu eat? How did they catch them?

How did they hunt for animals?

Remember to cut out or draw lots of illustrations, label them and put in some fun and amazing facts!

GROUP 2: POTTERY, SYMBOLS AND TEXTILES

Key information to think about:

What types of pottery did they make and why?

Before writing systems were created, they made simple drawings and symbols. Can you draw the story of a tiger hunt?

How were clothes made?

Remember to cut out or draw lots of illustrations, label them and put in some fun and amazing facts!

GROUP 3: WATER AND DAMS

Key information to think about:

What did the Liangzhu invent to control the flow of water?

What are straw bags? What are they used for?

Why were reservoirs so important?

Remember to cut out or draw lots of illustrations, label them and put in some fun and amazing facts!

GROUP 4: BUILDING A CITY

Key information to think about.

Where did the Liangzhu build their city? Why?

What is a terrace? What was built on it?

What building materials were used?

What is an altar?

Write a fact file on the city walls.

You might want to draw the map on p64 to show what your city looks like.

Who lived in this city and for how long?

Remember to cut out or draw lots of illustrations, label them and put in some fun and amazing facts!

GROUP 5: JADE

Key information to think about.

What is jade? Where does it come from?

What are the three most important jade pieces?

How was it engraved?

What was jade used for? What jade objects can women wear and what can men wear?

What is the most distinctive carved motif found on jades?

Remember to cut out or draw lots of illustrations, label them and put in some fun and amazing facts!

SUPER SYMBOLS

The Liangzhu people engraved various symbols and simple drawings on the pottery they made. What symbols/drawings would you put on a pottery jar? Would you tell a story, draw one big picture or just draw some symbols? Have a go!



MAGIC MOTIFS

The Liangzhu carved sacred human/animal creatures or gods on their jade stones. In Chinese traditional legends, there are many half-human, half-animal gods, like the fuxi (a human body and a dragon's tail) and the nvwa (a human body and a snake's tail). The ancient Egyptians and Greeks had sphinxes with human heads and lions' bodies. Can you make up your own half-human, half-animal creature? Use your wildest imagination!

WORD SEARCH ACTIVITY

Find all the words below in *The Ancient City of Liangzhu* word search!

Name:

Class:

Date:

Ancient City of Liangzhu

I L H U N T I N G I Y
S P E T E C F S M G N
T E O P M I N L O E A
E O L T S T R L D S A
G C D H T Y O A G Y L
H A I R F E J W N M A
Y N M R A M R O I B I
G O N H R T M Y K O H
E E C E C A L A P L U
A R S C O G M A D R E
A A O S G O I E F I B

ALTAR
ARCHAEOLOGY
CANOE
CITY
CRAFTSMEN

DAM
FISHING
HUNTING
JADE
KINGDOM

PALACE
POTTERY
RICE
SYMBOL
WALLS

Ancient City of Liangzhu

I L H U N T I N G I Y
S P E T E C F S M G N
T E O P M I N L O E A
E O L T S T R L D S A
G C D H T Y O A G Y L
H A I R F E J W N M A
Y N M R A M R O I B I
G O N H R T M Y K O H
E E C E C A L A P L U
A R S C O G M A D R E
A A O S G O I E F I B

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