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◎毛晓霞

主编

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导读

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Chief Editor: Xiaoxia Mao

Writer: Xiaoxia Mao

Xue fei Yang

Catherine Gu

Helen Yang

Li Min

Frits Buijs

Miao Zhang

Jonathan Hoddinott

Adam A. Marx

Proofreader: Joe Wagner

Frits Buijs

Dermot Stewart

Ron Lowe

Potographer: Feibao Du

Chenjie Yang

随着改革开放的不断深入，沉寂多年的东方巨龙逐渐苏醒了。一个伸开双臂拥抱世界的中国，再次吸引了全球的目光。人们热切地关注中国，希望了解发生在这古老大地上的一切事情，不仅是它的现在，也包括它的过去。人们在惊叹于中国经济高速发展的同时，也对延续几千年的传统文化充满好奇。这就提供了一个契机，全面地了解中国既然是世界的客观需要，那么真实地弘扬中华文化就是我们的历史责任。

笔者多年从事外语教学工作，并有机会参与多批外国来华研修班学生的中国历史与文化课程培训。其间感受了他们对中国历史与文化的浓厚兴趣，但也了解了他们对中国事物认知的局限及对中华文明的陌生！这种日常交往频繁而客观认知遥远的巨大反差不能不令人遗憾。究其原因，一方面是由于近代中国闭关锁国的状况而导致国力的衰败，使整个民族被世界所忽视；另一方面，则是因为国家之间意识形态的差异而造成的相互隔膜，使彼此丧失了更多交流与沟通的机会。中国历史的持续性、统一性、交融性，与其特定的人文、地理相结合，构成了其特殊的文化内涵。油然而生的责任感与使命感使笔者产生了急切想向他们介绍中国历史与文化的冲动。

考虑到来华研修学生时间短暂和边学习、边考察、边体验的实际情况，同时兼顾了不同层次学员群体的特殊需求，我们推出了不同的专题讲座，内容主要有：朝代历史纪元，民族及少数民族政策，宗教，儒家思想对中国的影响，科举与教育体制，节日与民俗，图腾，饮食文化，文学与戏剧，书法及绘画，园林与建筑，音乐，工艺品，中医药，旅游景点与世界文化遗产等等。接受培训的外国学生在亲眼看到和亲身感受到中国文化所具有的不同特点和独特魅力之时，也实际感受到世界文化的多元性，自觉增进跨文化交流的意识，从而帮助他们真切地了解中国人的观念、学习、工作和生活，进而对中国产生真实的认知。

中外学生的渴望和认可给予了我们巨大的鼓舞，它启示和激励笔者与几位中外朋友将这些专题讲座的内容整理成文，以便有机会提供给更多的有兴趣了解中国的朋友们。本书力求深入浅出，通俗易懂，为初步接触中国历史与文化的外国朋友提供一个生动有趣的读物；同时也希望成为在进一步探索中国历史与文化道路上游兴正浓的中外朋友们的一个尽职向导。

此外，由于国人在对外交流中普遍存在语言障碍，对于广泛而深入的文化交流更是如此。如果本书能为国人在对外交往中用英文表述中国文化与历史提供点滴有益的借鉴与参考，笔者将会感到莫大欣慰。

借此，还要感谢为本书的出版作出贡献的各位人士：

周维先生和张馨禾女士对本书的内容提供了宝贵的指导。韩惠鹏先生、刘荣乐先生、王秀玲女士、王春霞女士、赵庆惠先生、闫庆健先生等为本书的出版发行提供了许多建设性意见及大力支持，没有他们的帮助本书将不会呈现在大家的面前。

编者

2008年6月于北京

Preface

The genesis of this book comes from the authors teaching materials. It represents an extended and thoroughly revised version of a collection of lecture notes on Chinese history and culture as presented to English speaking undergraduate college students. The focus as well as content is academic but accessible to anyone who cares to read it. It is intended to appeal to readers and students for whom the study of Chinese history and culture is a relatively new experience.

The authors' pride in their heritage and love of their country and its traditions are evident throughout. They have utilized these materials to bring aspects of China's history and culture alive for westerners with the hope that this cultural exchange of knowledge and understanding might in some way contribute to world peace. This book was not meant to provide a comprehensive treatise on the centuries of Chinese history and culture, but to bring highlights, appreciation and understanding of China's history, music, arts and crafts, social customs, religions, strengths and weaknesses and pride to students who will return home as ambassadors from their country.

The authors illuminate many of the basic aspects and activities of the Chinese way of life. They stress China as a symbol of man's capability and place in nature. They speak to the new world economy, new world politics and the modernization (not necessarily westernization) of China. Advances in travel and communication, plus increased trade and investments have opened China to the world.

Most of the writers are residents of Beijing, their descriptions capture the uniqueness, continuity, progress, richness, creativeness and diversity of Beijing. They allow the readers to visualize the Great Wall of China, Tian'anmen Square, the Forbidden City and the Summer Palace. Additionally, one can get a glimpse of the hutongs, the traditional gardens and the temples.

Readers can gain an insight into China's minorities, folk music and customs, festivals, traditional medicines, religions, philosophies, literature, poetry, martial arts, cooking, science and art. As someone who has visited China, reading these chapters brings back to me the smells of their spicy foods, the beauty of their traditional gardens, the sounds of traditional Chinese music and opera, their fine craftsmanship, their intricate calligraphy and their myriad of people.

I, along with the authors, believe if we can help others see beyond their own way of life, understand something outside their own experiences and to value diversity, world understanding and peace become real possibilities.

Joseph Wagner



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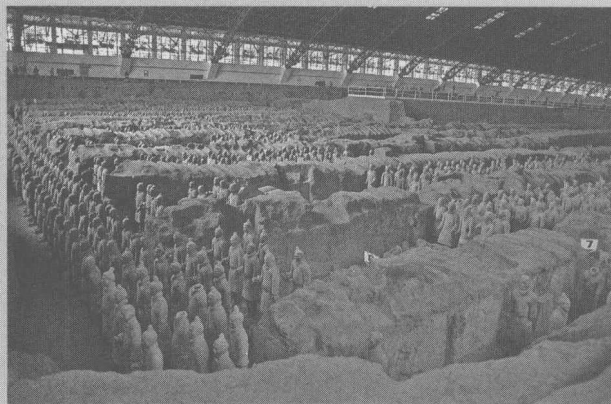


Part 1

Basic National Conditions and History

Chapter 1 Geography of China

Chapter 2 Chinese Culture's Formation and Development



Chapter 1

Geography of China

Xiaoxia Mao

Section 1 Area and Position

China's land area covers approximately 9.6 million square kilometers. It is nearly one-fifteenth of the world's land.

China is situated in eastern Asia on the west coast of the Pacific Ocean. The territory of China extends 5,500 kilometers from north to south, and it measures 5,200 kilometers from west to east. The centre line of the main navigation channel of the Heilong River, north of the town of Mohe in Heilongjiang Province, is the northern boundary of China. The territory extends to the Zengmu Reef of the Nansha Islands in the South China Sea. It stretches from the Pamirs, west of Wuqia County in the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, to the east where the main navigation channels of the Heilong and the Wushli rivers meet in Fuyuan County, Heilongjiang Province.

China is bordered by about 20 countries with a land boundary exceeding 20,000 kilometers.

The coast line of China, running 18,000 kilometers, is the longest one in the world. The eastern part is flanked by the four seas from north to south: the Bohai, the Huanghai (the Yellow Sea), the East and the South China Seas. The Bohai Sea is the maritime gateway to the nation's capital, Beijing. The Huanghai Sea is a half-closed shallow sea. It is adjacent to Liaoning, Shandong and Jiangsu provinces in the west and to the Korean Peninsula in the northeast. The Huanghe River and the Huaihe River flow into the Huanghai Sea. The Huanghai Sea gets its name because its coastal water is yellow, caused by the enormous amount of silt and mud carried by the Huanghe River (the Yellow River). The East China Sea is situated at the east of the mainland and leads the country's sea areas in resources. It is contiguous to Japan's Ryukyu Island in the east and the Taiwan Straits in the south. The Changjiang, Qiantang and the Qujiang are among the 40 rivers flowing into the East China Sea. Being a deep-sea basin, it is separated from the East China Sea at the southern tip of the Taiwan Straits. It is an approach to many of the world's key ports and is a vital seaway between China and other countries. Zhujiang, Hanjiang as well as the Honghai rivers are the principal rivers flowing into the South China Sea.

The three straits from north to south off China's shores are: the Bohai, the Taiwan and the Qiongzhou straits. The Taiwan Strait controls the seaway between China's north and south. The Taiwan Strait teems with fish because it is situated at the site where the cold and warm currents meet.

China's nearshore continental shelf is very wide. It occupies a large area off China's coast. Both the Bohai and Huanghai Seas' floors are entirely on the continental shelf. At least 70% of the East China Sea and more than 50% of the South China Sea are on the continental shelf. The nearshore continental shelf is richly



endowed with oil and natural gas.

The eastern coast of Taiwan Island is bounded directly by the Pacific Ocean. Most of the coast north of the Hangzhou Bay is flat, while mountainous coasts line Taiwan's eastern shore and Hainan's southern shore. The coasts are favored with approximately 5,000 islands and large, deep natural harbors. About 60 percent of the islands are in the East China Sea. More than 90 percent of them are less than one square kilometer. More than 90% of the Chinese islands are rock islands, including Taiwan Island and Hainan. Most of the alluvial islands are at the mouths of the Changjiang, Zhujiang and other rivers—formed out of the mud and silt from these rivers. The coral islands, built from the deposits of tropical marine organisms, are the Dongsha, Xisha, Zhongsha and Nansha island groups. The South China Sea islands have been a part of China since ancient times. The area is rich in tropical resources, fish and other valuable marine products.

Section 2 Physical Features

Being a mountainous country, two-thirds of China is covered with hills and mountains. The main three groups of mountains run west-east and northeast-southwest. China has varied topography and diverse physical features such as plains, hills, plateaus and basins. The land surface of China slopes down from west to east in a three-step staircase. Plateaus cover about one-fourth of China's total area and are mainly located in the western and central parts of China. The four major plateaus are the Qinghai-Tibet, the Loess, the Yunnan-Guizhou and the Inner Mongolia plateaus. The stupendous snow mountains on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau supply headstreams to the major rivers in East, Southeast and South Asia. The melting water from the stupendous snow mountains flows into the following rivers: the Changjiang (the Yangzi River), the Huanghe (the Yellow River), the Lancang, the Nujiang, the Indus, the Yarlungzangbu and the Trim. The plateau is studded with lakes and is rich in hydro-power. Being the second largest plateau in China, the Inner Mongolia Plateau consists of three parts. The eastern part is mostly grasslands due to a semi-arid climate. Hetao Plain is the major farming area. The eastern part has a comparatively humid climate. The grasslands in the Hulunboir and Xilingol leagues rank among China's major grasslands and stockbreeding areas. The western part is desert, covered with drifting sands and poor soil. The Loess Plateau is the biggest loess plateau in the World. The greater part of the plateau once was covered with forest, lush grasslands and fertile soil. That area, the cradle of the Chinese nation, was the birthplace of ancient Chinese culture. However, the loss of soil, the sparse vegetation and the frequent rainstorms in summer have caused serious soil erosion. The yellowish-soil land is carved into gullies and the fertility of the earth is reduced. More than a billion tons of mud and silt are carried down into the Huanghe River every year. The Qinghai-Tibet Plateau is "the roof of the world," composed of high and super-high mountains and massive highlands. The highlands' altitudes average 4,000 meters or more above sea level. Most mountains in China run west-east and northeast-southwest and consist of mainly three groups; the northern group includes the Tianshan range and the Yinshan range, the middle group includes the Kunlun range and the Qinling range, and the southern group consists of the Nanling Mountains. Nine of the world's 14 mountains exceeding 8,000 meters are in China. They are geographically important to provide headwaters for major rivers and to form climatic or river basin divides. Over 100 mountains in China exceed 7,000 meters and 1,000 mountains exceed 6,000 meters. The Himalayas are the most majestic, highest and longest mountain range in the world. The main chain has an average elevation of more than 6,000 meters. Mount Qomolangma, which lies on the border of China's Tibet and Nepal, with its northern slope in China, towers 8,848.13 meters. It is the highest mountain in the world.

The five deep and large basins are found in the west, while the medium and small ones are mainly found in the east. More than 10 percent of the country's total area consists of plain. The main large basins are



the Tarim Basin (Xinjiang), the Junggar Basin (Xinjiang), the Turpan Depression (Xinjiang), the Qaidam Basin (Qinghai) and the Sichuan Basin (Sichuan Province). The Tarim Basin in Xinjiang is the country's largest inland basin which has an arid climate with little rainfall. Its surface structure consists of a series of concentric belts of the outer mountains, the foothills of stones area, a ring of oases and desertland with salt lakes in the center. Deep in the luxuriant forests of the Tianshan Mountains, the outermost belt dotted with snow-capped peaks, are many natural grazing grounds. The Sichuan Basin, drained by many rivers, is divided into three parts. The eastern part consists of mountains and valleys. Access to the mountain-bound Sichuan basin used to be as difficult to get to as travel to heaven in ancient times. The central part is a major farming area with numerous flat-topped hills. Chengdu Plain at its western border has fertile soil and numerous rivers. It is the most affluent area in the basin. The Sichuan Basin, green with trees and crops in all four seasons, has become a major industrial base in southwest China.

The three important plains are the Northeast, the North China and the Middle-Lower Changjiang Plains. They provide a base for China's major agricultural production and industry. The Northeast Plain, consisting of the Songnen Plain, the Liaohe Plain and the Sanjiang Plain, is the largest plain in China. Its temperature is low in winter with a long freezing period, and high in summer. The famous fertile black soil is ideal for crop growth. Prior to 1949, the plain was considered to be the "Great Northern Wilderness." It is an important commodity grain growing area and provides a well-developed heavy industry base for China. The North China Plain, the second largest plain in China, has a long history of agricultural development. The vast, flat shallows on the shores of the Bohai and Huanghai are ideal salt-fields. The easily accessible plain has a well-developed mining business and other industries. Many of its major cities, Beijing, Tianjin, Jinan, Xuzhou and Zhengzhou, are well-known. The Middle-Lower Changjiang Plain, created by mud and silt from the Changjiang River, is woven with streams, rivers and lakes. The "water country" is known for its intensive farming cultivation. It is called "a land of fish and rice" and is one of the country's major grain-producing regions. The plain has a well-developed economy, convenient communications and a dense population. Its many major cities include such well known cities such as Shanghai, Nanjing and Hangzhou.

Hilly regions are located in many regions such as plateaus, basins and coastal plains in China. Many hills are located in east China. For example, the vast areas of red hills are in the Middle-Lower Changjiang Plain. The major hilly regions in the eastern part of the country are the Liaodong and Liaoxi hills, the Shandong Hills, the Jiangnan Hills, the Zhejiang-Fujian Hills and the Guangdong-Guangxi Hills.

Deserts cover 11.4 percent of China's total land area. Most of them are found in northwestern and northern China, including Xinjiang, Qinghai, Gansu, Inner Mongolia and Shaanxi, which are situated deep in the inland. The climate there is a typical continental climate. The Taklimakan Desert (Xinjiang) is the largest desert in China. Its name means "no emergence upon entry" in Uygur. Other big deserts are the Gurbantunggut Desert, the Badinjaran Desert, the Tenger Desert and the Muus Desert.

Section 3 Climatic Characteristics

China's climate is featured by monsoonal winds and a variety of climatic types. China is world-famous for its monsoonal climate because of the difference in heat reserves between the world's largest continent and the biggest ocean. Most regions have a distinct continental climate. North winds bring dry-cold air masses from Siberia and Mongolia under high pressure across most part of China, except the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, on their way south. Most of China is colder and drier than other parts of the world on the same latitude because of the continental climate of China in winter. The winter monsoons last from October to March each