

英文读本

Reader of Chinese Culture

中国文化掠影



当代大学生优秀读物

上

张蓓 韩江 编著

华南理工大学出版社

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内 容 简 介

《中国文化掠影》(上、下)分30个单元,每个单元围绕1个主题,用英文从各个侧面系统、完整和客观地介绍了当代中国文化的方方面面。全书融知识性、趣味性和时代性为一体,能激发读者的跨文化联想和批判性思维,各个单元后还配有一、两段中国古代典籍选读,将现代文化沉浸与传统文化熏陶完美结合,是当代大学生提高人文素质、拓展知识面和培养英文沟通能力的优秀读物。

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Reader of Chinese Culture

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Glossary

1. Geography and Climate

Geography

Situated in the southeastern part of the Eurasian Continent, the People's Republic of China has both marine and land boundary line of more than 20,000 kilometers and a coastline of 18,000 kilometers, with a total land area of 9.6 million square kilometers, next only to Russia and Canada. Its territory extends over 50 **latitudes** from north to south, embracing the **equatorial belt**, the tropics, the subtropics, the moderate temperate zone and the cold temperate zone. And from east to west, it covers over 62 **longitudes**, and has longitudinal regular divisions of forests, grasslands, deserts, plains, hilly lands and high lands.

Physical Features

China is a mountainous country. Hills, mountains and **plateaus** cover two-third of the territory. More than half of China's counties have mountainous areas. With its vast mountainous regions—high in the west and low in the east—China has a varied **topography** and diverse physical features. Plains are mainly in the east; in the southeast are mainly hills; plateaus and **basins** join the other topographical forms scattered over wide areas or **intermingling** with each other to provide favorable conditions for developing a diversified economy of agriculture, forestry, animal husbandry and mining. The proportion of plains, hills, mountains, plateaus and basins in the country's total area is 12, 10, 33, 26 and 19 percent respectively.

The land surface of China slopes down from west to east in a three-step staircase.

The top of the staircase. The *Qinghai-Tibet* Plateau in southwestern China, known as "the roof of the world", is composed

- **latitude** *n.* the distance north or south of the Equator measured in degrees 纬度
- **equatorial belt** *n.* the area near the Equator 近赤道地带
- **longitude** *n.* the position on the earth east or west of a Meridian measured in degrees 经度
- **plateau** *n.* a large stretch of level land much higher than the land around it 高原
- **topography** *n.* the character of a land in detail, esp. as regards the shape and height of the land 地形
- **basin** *n.* a circular or egg-shaped valley or low land 盆地
- **intermingle (with)** *v.* intermix with 混合



Glossary

• **elevation** *n.*

height above the
sea-level 海拔

• **continental shelf**

n. 大陆架

of high and super - high mountains and massive highlands and averages 4,000 meters or more above sea level. Mount Qomolangma, the world's highest, is situated on the southern rim of the plateau, on the Sino-Nepalese border.

The second step of the staircase. Going north from the *Qinghai-Tibet* plateau across the *Kunlun* and *Qilian* ranges and east across the *Hengduan* Mountains, the land abruptly drops to plateaus, mountains and basins on an altitude of 2,000 to 1,000 meters, forming the second step down the staircase, which consists of the *Yunnan-Guizhou*, *Loess* and *Inner Mongolia* plateaus and the *Tarim*, *Junggar* and *Sichuan* basins.

The third step of the staircase. The bulk of China's population lives in the third or lowest step down the staircase, east of the line from the *Greater Da Xingan*, *Taihang* and *Wushan* ranges and eastern rim of the *Yunnan-Guizhou* Plateau to the sea coast. Here are hills less than 1,000 meters and plains less than 200 meters in **elevation**. Lying from north to south are the Northeast Plain, the North China Plain, the Middle-Lower *Changjiang* (Yangtze River) Plain and the hills and foothills south of the Yangtze River. With superior geographical conditions and a large concentration of big cities, these are the leading farming and industrial areas of China.

To the east of the third step is the **continental shelf** formed by the shallows, which are an extension of the land into the ocean.

Size

It is difficult to really experience or "feel" the size of China, even when you know the actual number of miles from north to south, from west to east. To get the full impact you should realize, for example, that it takes seventy-two hours (three entire days and three long nights) to travel by train from *Guangzhou* to *Urumqi*, rolling along hour after hour across wheat fields, mountains, and deserts. Another way to think about it is to compare distances in China with other countries more familiar to you. For example *Beijing* to *Haikou*

is about the same as *London to Warszawa* or *Shanghai to Xi'an* is about the same as *Berlin to Paris*. The whole territory of China is almost equal to that of Europe as a whole.

It is difficult for those people who come from smaller countries to realize how important this matter of size is in the lives of Chinese. Not only is the country vast, it also contains million people. These two factors affect every phase of life, not only creating a highly competitive domestic market for goods, which gives rise to constant advertising and marketing, but also causing an equally competitive political **arena**. Wide geographic differences make for profound differences in attitudes and values. A *Cantonese*, for example, is often quite different in point of view from a *Beijing* resident, and a *Tibetan* may not understand the values of a *Shanghai* citizen. Marked differences in geography or weather and widely dispersed ethnic heritages naturally affect people's attitudes, but in China such differences occur within the same nation. An overseas visitor once remarked, "No wonder many Chinese travel a lot, but have never been out of the country; they constantly experience culture shocks, but all these occur in their own nation. In a place that size you almost inevitably have them."

Climate

China's climate varies from bitter coldness in winter to unbearable heat in summer. The *Yangtze* River serves as China's official dividing line between north and south. Given the size and varied landscape of the country, there is no one time in the year when Chinese weather is ideal. Of course, the warmest areas in winter are to be found in the South and Southwest, such as *Sichuan*, *Banna Yunnan*, and *Hainan* Island. In summer the coolest spots are in the far northeast.

China has a climate dominated by dry and wet **monsoons**, which make clear temperature differences in winter and summer. In winter, northern winds coming from high latitude areas are cold and

Glossary

- **arena** *n.* a place of activity, esp. of competition or fighting 竞技场
- **monsoon** *n.* the period or season of heavy rains and winds 季风; 季雨



Glossary

- **precipitation** *n.*
the amount of rain, snow, etc. 降雨量; 降雪量
- **sync** *n.*
synchronization 同步; 协调

dry; in summer, southern winds from sea areas at lower latitude are warm and moist. Besides, climates differ from region to region because of the country's extensive territory and complex topography. In the south of the *Nanling* Mountains, rains are plenty and the temperature is high all year round. In the *Yangtze* and *Huaihe* river valleys in the central part of China, there are four distinctive seasons. In northeast China, summer is short but there is much sunshine, while winter is long and cold. **Precipitation** is limited in northwest China where it is cold in winter and hot in summer. In southwest China of low latitudes, the land is elevated high, and has characteristically vertical seasonal zones.

Time Zone

GMT +8 hours

There is only one time zone in China. No matter where you are, from the east most *Shanghai* to west most *Xinjiang*. All of China observes *Beijing* Time, GMT +8. Even though China is across 4 physical time zones, only the (*Beijing*) time zone was recognized.

China is roughly the same size as the United States, yet has only one time zone. When it's 6 p. m. in *Beijing* in the east, it's 6 p. m. in *Urumchi* in the west. When you fly anywhere in China, you don't have to set watches ahead or back. The entire country feels as though it's in **sync**. One time zone fits all. If one time zone fits all, we can forget about daylight-saving time. After all, if one time zone fits all, it fits all 12 months a year.

Daylight Saving Time

China doesn't observe daylight saving time in the summer as some countries do. There is a short period of time when China apply daylight saving time from 1986 - 1991 though. This adjustment is abandoned in the year of 1992.



Glossary

Standard Time in Major Cities Throughout the World

Throughout China, there is only one time zone. That is *Beijing* time. Below is a reference showing the time difference between China and other parts of the world. The fact of daylight-saving time observed in other parts of the world is not taken into consideration.

Beijing Time 12:00

| | | | | | | | |
|---------------|-------|---------------|------|--------------|-------|------------|-------|
| Irkoutsk | 12:00 | Algiers | 5:00 | Santiago | 14:00 | Karachi | 9:00 |
| Ulan Bator | 12:00 | Bucharest | 6:00 | Buenos Aires | 1:00 | Bombay | 9:00 |
| Manila | 12:00 | Cairo | 6:00 | London | 4:00 | NewDelhi | 9:00 |
| Pingyang | 13:00 | Ankara | 6:00 | Accra | 4:00 | Colombo | 9:00 |
| Osaka | 13:00 | Damascus | 6:00 | Paris | 5:00 | Dacca | 10:00 |
| Tokyo | 13:00 | Moscow | 7:00 | Geneva | 5:00 | Rangoon | 10:00 |
| Melbourne | 14:00 | Baghdad | 7:00 | Rome | 5:00 | Bangkok | 11:00 |
| San Francisco | 20:00 | Addis Ababa | 7:00 | Vienna | 5:00 | Phnom Penh | 11:00 |
| Washington DC | 23:00 | Nairobi | 7:00 | Stockholm | 5:00 | Hanoi | 11:00 |
| New York | 13:00 | Dar-es-salaam | 7:00 | Belgrade | 5:00 | Singapore | 11:00 |
| Lima | 13:00 | Teheran | 7:00 | Warsaw | 5:00 | | |

- **chaotic** *adj.* in a state of chaos, confused 无秩序的; 混乱的
- **pervade** *v.* get into every part of 渗透; 充满
- **gloom** *n.* semi-darkness, obscurity 阴暗; 幽暗
- **slumber** *v.* pass (time) in sleep 以睡眠度过 (时间)
- **impenetrable** *adj.* that can not be penetrated 不能透过的

Chinese Classical Legends

Pan Gu, Creator of the Universe

Long, long ago, when heaven and earth were still united, the face of nature, a **chaotic** mass in the **pervading gloom**, was in the shape of a huge egg. A giant in stature and strength *Pan Gu*, forefather of the human race, was born in the midst of the egg wherein he grew up and **slumbered** soundly for eighteen thousand years. One day, he awoke suddenly. When he opened his eyes, he found himself in an **impenetrable** darkness which made him feel



Glossary

- **smother** *v.* cause the death by keeping air from 使窒息
- **exasperate** *v.* irritate 激怒
- **snatch** *v.* put out the hand suddenly and take 夺得
- **wield** *v.* have and use 使用; 挥舞
- **vengeance** *n.* revenge 报仇
- **cleave** *v.* cut into two (with a blow from a heavy axe, etc.) (用大斧等) 劈成两半
- **preternatural** *adj.* not normal or usual 异常的; 奇特的
- **unremitting** *adj.* unceasing 不停的; 无间断的
- **solidify** *v.* make or become solid, hard 使坚固
- **physique** *n.* structure of the body 身体的构造

quite **smothered**. **Exasperated** at the annoying situation, he **snatched a broad axe from somewhere and wielded** it with a **vengeance** in the darkness. Out of the blue came an ear-splitting explosion; the immense "egg" had cracked, the light and clear part of which rose to become heaven while the heavy and cloudy substance fell to become earth where heaven was still linked with earth, *Pan Gu*, chisel in his left hand and broad axe in his right, **cleaved** and chipped away with **preternatural** might and **unremitting** effort. By and by, heaven and earth finally came apart and the state of chaos ceased to exist.

After heaven and earth were separated, *Pan Gu*, for fear of their possible reunion, stood in between with his head against the heavens and his feet on the earth. He changed his form many a time each and every day as heaven and earth changed.

Another eighteen thousand years later, the heavens were to become extremely high, the earth was to become immensely thick and *Pan Gu* was extraordinarily tall. He stood erect between heaven and earth, leaving the two no chance of meeting again.

When no one knows how many ages had elapsed and heaven and earth **solidified**, *Pan Gu* decided there was no longer a need to worry about their reunion. Completely fatigued and exhausted, he felt a great urge for a comfortable respite and, like other mortals, dropped dead at last.

When he was breathing his last, a dramatic change came over his whole body. His breath became winds and clouds and his voice, roaring thunder; his left eye was turned into the sun and his right one into the moon; his upper and lower extremities and his **physique** were transformed into the ends of the universe and the five famous mountains¹; his blood was metamorphosed into rivers and streams;

① The Five Mountains were said to be the sacred abodes of mountain gods and were deified and worshipped by emperors and kings of past successive feudal dynasties. They now refer to: *Taishan* Mountain in *Shandong* Province, *Huashan* Mountain in *Hunan* Province, *Huashan* Mountain in *Shanxi* Province, *Hengshan* and *Songshan* Mountain in *Henan* Province.



his hair and beard into multitudinous stars that dotted the sky; the skin and the fine hair on his body into grass and trees; his teeth and bones into metallic minerals and rocks; and his very perspiration was **transmogrified** into rain and dew that moistened all in the universe. By the sacrifice of his whole body, *Pan Gu*, the earliest ancestor of human beings lent beauty and splendor to the newly-born world.

Huang Di ①, the Supreme Ruler of the Universe

After *Yan Di*, another great god, *Huang Di* by name, came into existence.

Huang Di and *Yan Di* were said to be full brothers, each presiding over half the universe. In the kingdom of gods there was somehow an internal strife which led to great disturbance. With tigers, **jackals**, wolves, leopards, brown bears, black bears and the like as the **vanguard**, and with vultures, **pheasants**, hawks, kites and other birds of prey as banners and flags, *Huang Di* took command of his immortal army and, on the *Zhuolu Plain* ②, fought a fierce battle against *Yan Di*'s army. In the prime of life *Huang Di*, brave and resourceful, won the battle and became the supreme ruler of the universe. However, the **senile**, physically weak *Yan Di*, who was kindhearted to a fault and indecisive to the point of cowardice, suffered complete defeat and had to retreat to the south to become God of the Southern Heavens.

The east was still under *Fu Xi*'s charge, but the west and the north were left uncared-for, so *Huang Di* **decreed** that his grand nephew should be God of the Western Heavens and his great-grandson, *Zhuan Xu*, God of the Northern Heavens. *Huang Di* himself was the central **celestial** ruler right in the middle of the universe. New order was thus established in the kingdom of gods.

Huang Di is said to have four faces looking up to the four

Glossary

- **transmogrify** *v.*
cause to change completely 使变形
- **jackal** *n.* wild dog-like animal 豺狼; 胡狼
- **vanguard** *n.*
advance party of an army 先头部队
- **pheasants** *n.*
long-tailed game bird 雉
- **senile** *adj.*
caused by old age 衰老的
- **decree** *v.* order by decree 发布命令
- **celestial** *adj.* of the sky, of heaven 天空的; 天上的

① The Yellow Emperor, a monarch (2697 BC) in China's Legendary Period.

② in the present *Zhuolu* County, *Hebei* Province.





Glossary

- **deity** *n.* god 神
- **enrage** *v.* fill with rage 激怒
- **avenge** *v.* get or take vengeance for 为……报仇

quarters. As he could clearly see what was going on anywhere, no one was able to deceive him.

For example, the mountain god, *Zhu Long* of the *Zhongshan* Mountain, had a son who, human - faced and dragon-bodied, was called *Gu*. *Gu* worked hand in glove with another **deity** called *Qin Pi* and killed a deity, *Bao Jiang* by name, in the southeast of the *Kunlun* Mountains. This incident was brought to *Huang Di*'s notice and greatly **enraged** him. He at once sent his followers down to earth, who executed the two murderers on a cliff in the east of the *Zhongshan* Mountain, and thus **avenged** the murder of poor *Bao Jiang*.

Focus

Geography

- 9,561,000sq km—the world's third largest country
- Population of about 1,400,000,000 – the most populous country in the world
- 4 Municipalities directly under the central Government
- 23 Provinces
- 5 Autonomous regions
- 2 Special zones
- Bounded by 11 countries
- A coastline of 18,000 km

Physical Features

- A three step staircase: 1st *Qinghai-Tibet* plateau;
- 2nd *Yunnan-Guizhou*, *Loess* and *Inner-mongolia* plateaus
- Tarim*, *Junggar*, *Sichuan* basins; 3rd Northeast Plain
- North China Plain
- Middle-lower *Yantze* River Plain





Pearl River Delta Plain

Main Rivers

- Yellow River in the north
- Yangtze* River in the centre

Climate

- Mainly temperate
- Cold and dry in the north
- Subtropical, warm and moist in the south

Time zone

- A single time zone
- longitude range of over 62 degree
- 4 time zones in width

Classical Legends

- Pan Gu*
- Huang Di*



Glossary

- **ethnic** *adj.* of race (the races of mankind) 种族的

2. People

China is a large country famed for its dense population and vast territory. According to official figures, in 1990 the population of China was 1,115,000,000, nearly 20 percent of the world's total population. Of these, about 20 percent lived in cities although since then this has certainly increased as peasants pouring into the coastal cities looking for work.

There are altogether 56 peoples in China, among which 55 are officially recognized **ethnic** minorities except *Han*. The defining elements of a minority are language, homeland, and social values. The 53 ethnic groups use the spoken languages of their own; 23 ethnic minorities have their own written languages.

Han Chinese

Han Chinese makes up 93 percent of the total. According to the 1995 sample survey on 1 percent of China's population, there were 1,099.32 million *Han* people (an increase of 56.84 million since the Fourth National Population Census of 1990). The *Han* people are found in all parts of the country, but mainly in the middle and lower reaches of the *Yellow River*, *Yangtze River* and *Pearl River* and the Northeast Plain. The areas inhabited by the ethnic minorities are mainly in the border regions of the north, northeast, northwest and southwest China.

The *Han* people have its own spoken and written language, known as the Chinese language, which is commonly used throughout China and a working language of the United Nations. The *Hui* and *Manchu* ethnic groups also use the *Han* (Chinese) language.