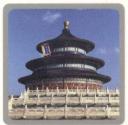
CHINA PANORAMA English Version

GUO Peng & CHENG Long















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GUO Peng CHENG Long
JIANG Xiliang WANG Qun
Translated by Luke HAMBLETON

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Preface

Preface

When we think of how the wider world came into contact with China, our minds usually cast back to Marco Polo and *The Travels of Marco Polo*. It is well known that Polo's writings caused a stir among his fellow Europeans and had many accusing him of exaggerating or even inventing the wondrous China he described. Indeed, many people past and present have always felt a sense of awe at the mere mention of China. In Marco Polo's day China enthralled the Europeans as a strange and distant land; nowadays, however, in the information era with "Made in China" seen everywhere and with people more familiar with China than ever before, the world continues to be fascinated by China—a long lasting fascination that grows with time. What could be the reason for this?

One could argue that China's continuous history of several thousand years, and the rapidly changing China of today, have combined to reinforce a longstanding feeling of wonder and curiosity. Matteo Ricci remarked: China is not simply a country but a world. In China, just when you feel you are starting to understand a certain aspect or issue you will realise just how much more there is to learn. Similar to building a jigsaw puzzle, with more pieces to match than matched the task seems impossible; or in the same way that the individual images of a kaleidoscope may appear crystal clear. However, they soon meld together to form dizzying patterns.

We are reminded of a spring lunchtime four years ago when we'd just concluded a conference on Chinese language instruction in Chicago. A group of several Chinese professors from College of Chinese Studies at Beijing Language and Culture University started out on a road trip north. Before too long we were all in need of sustenance, and as luck would have it, as we passed by a town on the banks of Lake Michigan we noticed a Chinese restaurant named "Emperor of China". We were greeted by the painting of a Chinese emperor on the front door as well as by the owner, a common American woman, who nonetheless spoke Chinese and knew all about China, and even the TV was tuned to a program about China. With our bellies sated by a delicious meal, our minds turned to the interesting choice of restaurant name and Qing emperor logo. Why was the grand name of "Emperor of China" chosen for such an ordinary restaurant? And why were the images of the Emperor Kangxi or Emperor Qianlong of the Qing Dynasty used? Maybe it was just a coincidence, but perhaps Marco Polo's descriptions of the Great Khan and the writings of the Jesuits on the Qing court had left their mark on this woman's subconscious. The history that the name evoked combined with the TV constantly broadcasting programs on Chinese silk, porcelain, "China red", the incredible mass migrations at Chinese New Year, the incessant traffic jams on China's roads, stunning new skyscrapers, sustained stable economic growth as well as the "Shenzhou" space flight, "Chang'e" moon probe, Beijing

Olympics, Shanghai World EXPO and China's purchases of US debt all mixed together. When all of that is added to the images of the China of Confucius and Mencius, the China of Khan, the China of revolution and the China of reform, the image of China truly is like a never ending jigsaw puzzle or a constantly shifting kaleidoscope.

Our experience at the dinner left us with a spark of an idea to write a book that gave readers a simple and objective overview of China. It was not our intention to try and cover everything, but instead to cover what we felt readers wanted to know and ought to know about China. In so doing we aimed to describe the fundamentals of China's past and present and to introduce key topics such as Chinese society, lifestyle changes and China's entry into the world stage, while at the same time touching on important areas of Chinese thoughts, logic and culture. We hope that as you read this book you will always bear in mind how the development of Chinese society has brought about many changes, whereas other areas have remained unchanged. We are all aware that in this day and age of globalisation and international exchange, in many respects all of our cultures seem to be growing closer. Nevertheless, in reality gaps between different countries, ethnic groups, religions and cultures are not shrinking, but rather they continue to grow. Therefore, this book was also written in order to provide topics for a dialogue that might provoke interest and discussion and thus further understanding of China.

We would like to thank our colleagues from College of Chinese Studies at Beijing Language and Culture University, who over the years have provided us with many valuable discussions and debates that greatly assisted the writing of this textbook. Warm acknowledgement is due to the many international students from dozens of countries that we have taught over the last a few years, because of whom we were able to formulate this introduction to China through our many courses on China. Our classroom interaction deepened our appreciation for the importance of inter-cultural dialogue and the significance of explaining China through frank and balanced discourse. Thanks are also due to Luke Hambleton for this translation from the original Chinese version. Finally, we would like to thank Liang Yu and Wang Qun of Higher Education Press; it was their perseverance, patience and encouragement that enabled us to turn our initial plans step by step into reality.

Guo Peng & Cheng Long 12th February, 2012, Beijing



Reader's Guide



Chinese Sentences

Key cultural concepts are also explained in Chinese to allow the reader to also pick up some useful Chinese expressions.

Tips

Detailed introductions are provided to allow the reader to fully comprehend the issues discussed.

Key Words & Expressions

Key cultural words and concepts are fully explained.

Essentials

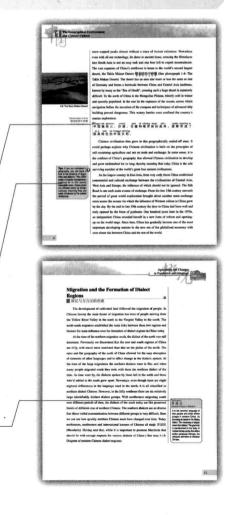
Each chapter is preceded with an outline in both English and Chinese.

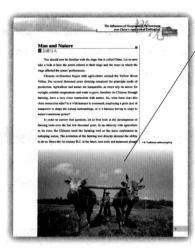
Introduction

Key background information is given in order to introduce the main themes of study.

Pre-reading Question(s)

Pre-reading questions are provided to get the reader thinking of the key concepts before approaching the main text.



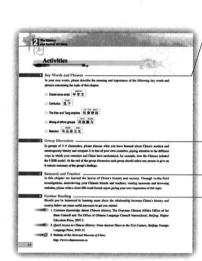


Pictures and Explanations

Pictures and diagrams, etc are provided throughout with bilingual captions to aid comprehension.

Activities

- Analysis of the chapter's keywords and phrases gives the reader a chance to recap the main points of the chapter and gain a deeper cultural understanding.
- 2. Group work allows for in-class interaction.
- In-the-field assignments allows students a valuable opportunity to discover China for themselves.
- 4. Each chapter contains a list of recommended further reading for convenient self-study.



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Chapter 1 第一章

The Geographical Environment and Chinese Culture

地理环境与中国文化

Essentials 内容提要



- 1. The Main Characteristics of China's Geographical Environment 中国地理环境的主要特点
- The Influences of Geographical Environment over China's Agricultural Civilisation 地理环境对中国农业文明的影响
- 3. Confucianism and Ancient Agricultural Civilisation 儒家文化与古代农业文明
- Agriculture and Changes in Population and Language 农业与人口变动、语言变迁

Introduction

The evolution of a country is like a play. If you just arrive at the theatre in the middle of a play, you might get confused by the characters and the relationships between them as there were surely more scenes before your arrival. In order to get to know what's happening on the stage, you should therefore get to know the previous scenes. Similarly, you should also get to know a country's history to understand its current status.

However, before you start getting to understand what has happened in the play, we strongly suggest that you familiarise yourself with the stage as it is greatly influenced by the stage's size, shape, lighting and backdrop. Usually we pay much attention to the performance rather than the stage. Actually, if you take some time to observe the stage, you will know more behind the scenes, such as why the actors stand in a curved line instead of a straight line. It might be due to the stage's curving shape. It is no exaggeration to say that the arrangement of the stage greatly determines how wonderful the show is.

Now, before reviewing the countless wonderful moments of the "China Show" which has been going on for thousands of years, let's take a look at its stage, its geographical environment.



The Main Characteristics of China's Geographical Environment

中国地理环境的主要特点

• Pre-reading Questions

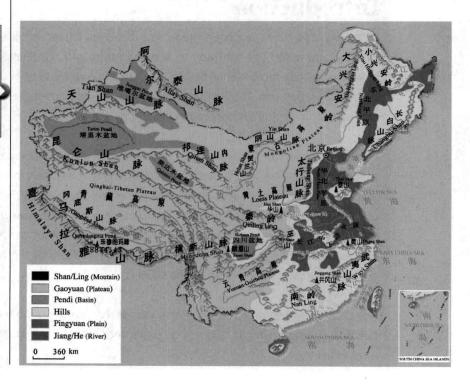
- 1. What are the main characteristics of China's terrain?
- 2. What role does the specific geographical environment play in the development of China's ancient civilisation? Please think about it in comparison with other civilisations.

Various Terrains

多种多样的地形

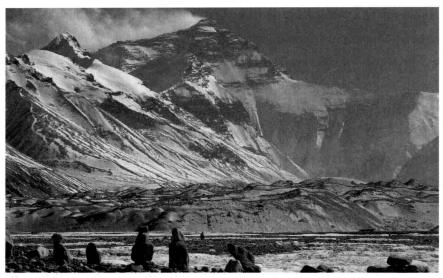
What you're looking at is a geographical map of China (See map 1-1: Geographical map of China's terrain) showing you the physical shape of the country. The outline of China is often compared with that of a rooster, with the northeast as the head, Taiwan Island as its foot facing forwards and the

Tips: In the process of studying Chinese culture, it's a good idea to have a map at hand at all times. It is a very effective way for you to know about China. China is a large country and has many different terrains. You may find all of these details in a good map.



1-1: Geographical map of China's terrain





1-2: Mount Qomolangma

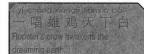
northwest as its tail. The Chinese often use the metaphor of the rooster to describe their country and Mao Zedong (1893–1976) himself used the line "Rooster's crow awakens the dreaming earth" (一唱雄鸡天下白) in one of his poems to describe the founding of the People's Republic of China.

Perhaps you've noticed the colours used on the map, indeed, the bright spectrum of colours signifies the huge variation in geographical terrain to be found in China: from oceans and lakes in blue to the green lowland areas, the yellow plateaus and certain areas in the far southwest and northwest that are home to mountains snow-capped all year round, all of which form the stage for the development of Chinese civilisation.

Overall, China's terrain descends from high altitudes in the west to sea-level flat land on the eastern seaboard. Among the long ranges of peaks in the southwest lies the familiar record breaking tallest peak in the world: Mount Qomolangma (珠穆朗玛峰) which can be found on China's southwestern border (See photograph 1-2: Mount Qomolangma).

zhōngguó de dìxíng xī gáo dōng dī, gāodà de shānmài miányán hénggèn zài xīnán中国的地形西高东低,高大的山脉绵延横亘在西南dìqū, shìjiè zuì gāofēng "zhūmùlǎngmǎ fēng" jiù zài zhōngguó xīnán biānjiè.地区,世界最高峰"珠穆朗玛峰"就在中国西南边界。

The eastern seaboard stretches from the far north all the way around to the south and is predominantly lowlands with some hilly terrain. This is an



It comes from chairman Mao Zedong's poem Huanxisha (《浣溪沙·和柳亚子先 生》), which was written in 1950.

珠穆朗玛峰 Mount Qomolangma

Qomolangma means "Mother of Earth" in Tibetan language. According-to the latest data in 2005, Mount Qomolangma reaches the height of 8844.43 metres.