

世纪中国语言文学通用教材

A SURVEY OF CHINESE CULTURE

(中国文化读本)

李萧红 主编



中国人民大学出版社

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前 言

Preface

随着中国经济的快速发展，跨文化交际活动日益频繁，国际学术交流与合作也日益加深，越来越多的外国人对中华民族博大精深的文化内涵产生了浓厚的兴趣，高等院校进一步重视培养学生跨文化交流能力。英语作为国际通用语言，是连接中国与世界的重要媒介，是中国人获取和传递信息、表达自己民族思想和文化的重要工具和手段。因此，英语教学不仅要传授英语国家的文化内容，还应培养学生用英语表达中国人自身的思想和文化的能力。

在全球多元文化交融的大背景下，中西文化在相互尊重、相互平等的原则上进行双向交流才是真正有意义的交流。通过英语对中国文化进行饶有趣味的介绍，既可以让世界更深刻地认识华夏文明及其古老的民族文化，也可以提高学生语用能力和跨文化交际的能力。用英语正确表述中国文化的思想精髓不仅是英语语言学习，也是中国文化的學習，是提高中国学生自身人文素质和文化修养的有效途径。让世界了解开放和谐的中国，对弘扬中华文化、加强中国与世界各国之间的沟通与合作起着积极的作用。

本书专为高等院校的本科生编写，全书共分四个章节，涵盖了31个精选的中国文化知识板块，内容涉及中国文化的起源、语言文字、哲学思想、宗教信仰、建筑特色、民族艺术、科学发明、文学成就以及社会民俗文化等。读者在获得中国文化知识的同时，还可以感受到中国文化的内涵和精神，感受到中华民族的强大生命力、创造力和凝聚力，感受到中国人特有的性格、灵魂和情趣。本书的编写，是作者对中国文化学习的一次宝贵的经历，也力图使英语成为中国人与世界沟通的桥梁和展示华夏文明和民族自身文化身份的有效工具。

本书的编写力图摆脱传统的机械性词汇学习，依托语言教学的理论指导，注重知识与趣味相结合，激发学生浓厚的英语学习兴趣，语言简洁规范、通俗易懂，既适合课堂英语教学，又能满足学生自主学习的需要。本书精选涉及学生进行语言交流并能充分表达中国文化特色的主题素材，以英语为媒介，为学生提供语言表达和交流的热门话题，重在提高学生的语用能力和跨文化交际能力。同时在使用英语语言的过程中，扩展学生的知识面，提高民族文化的认同感，树立正确的人生观和价值观。在培养学生民族自豪感的同时，注重培养和树立多元文化的观念，帮助学生补充自身文化的不足，培养学生学习和传承文化的自觉意识，提高学生的思辨能力、审美能力和综

合人文素质。

在本书的编写过程中，美籍专家 Ron Losey 审阅了全书，并提出了许多宝贵的意见和建议，在教材出版之际，谨向他表示衷心的感谢。

由于作者水平有限，疏漏之处在所难免，敬请广大读者批评指正。

编者

2014年4月10日

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Chapter 1

Origin and Development of Chinese Culture

Unit 1 Overview of Chinese Civilization

Section A Development

China is a country with a very early civilization and a long and rich history. Archaeologists and anthropologists agree that Chinese civilization is the only major ancient civilization that develops independent of the other major civilizations, and managed to survive throughout the human history. The origin, development process, context and mechanism of ancient Chinese civilization are the most important subjects for archaeologists and historians to explore.

However, civilization does not appear instantly. The continual process of development is the significant issue. It is not merely a list of the great accomplishments but a product of a long development process. Like all other peoples on earth, the Chinese have passed through the primitive, matriarchal and patriarchal communes and the slave and feudal systems.

Man has lived for a very long time in what is now China. According to archaeological finds, in many parts of China, for instance, fossil remains of primitive ape men have been unearthed. Among them are the fossil remains of the Yuanmou Ape Man who lived in Yunnan Province some 1.7 million years ago. Archaeological findings show that the Peking Man, who lived about 500,000 years ago, was able to make and use simple implements and knew the use of fire.

Chinese people take pride in calling themselves the offspring of Huang Di (Yellow Emperor), a tribal chief who dwelled in the Yellow River Valley more than four millenniums ago. Ancient Chinese literature describes the period of Huang Di and Yan Di (Emperor Yan) as the dawn of Chinese history. Today both two emperors are regarded as the ances-

tors of the Chinese people, who call themselves the descendants of Yan Di and Huang Di.

Archaeological findings also show that Chinese civilization grew from its embryonic phase represented by the Yangshao Culture and Longshan Culture, went through a rather complex social development period from the Xia Dynasty, and gradually emerged as a highly developed class society. Oracle bones with ancient Chinese inscriptions from the Shang Dynasty have been radiocarbon-dated to as early as 1500 BC. The written history of China can be found as early as the Shang Dynasty (1600 BC—1046 BC). The origins of Chinese culture, literature and philosophy developed during the Zhou Dynasty (1046 BC—256 BC) .

During the Han Dynasty (206 BC—220 AD) agriculture and handicraft made remarkable progress along with the flourishing of science, culture and the arts. Links between the different ethnic groups in the country were strengthened and exchanges with the outside world broadened. Zhang Qian, a diplomat of that time, who was dispatched as envoy to the Western Regions, opened the world-famous Silk Road.

It was the Tang Dynasty that saw a period of economic and cultural boom in China. China was then a powerful prosperous nation and ranked among the most advanced countries in the world. Its foreign relations were broader than ever before. It established friendly relationships with Japan, Korea and many countries in West Asia, Europe and Africa, with its capital Chang'an serving as center of cultural exchange between various countries.

In Chinese history, the word "civilization" also invokes thoughts of the arts and literature in prosperous Han and Tang dynasties, and the "Four Great Inventions" —the compass, gunpowder, the art of paper-making and block printing invented by the ancient Chinese have contributed immensely to the progress of mankind. The Great Wall, Grand Canal and other projects built by the Chinese people are regarded as engineering feats in the world.

During the Ming Dynasty (1368—1644) the growth of agriculture and handicraft production brought an expansion to the commodity economy. From the middle of the Ming Dynasty onward, capitalism began to burgeon in some handicraft industries in certain coastal regions. Meanwhile, overseas contacts further increased. The Ming emperors sent seven maritime expeditions probing down into the South Seas and across the Indian Ocean. Emperor Yongle strenuously tried to extend China's influence beyond her borders by encouraging other rulers to send ambassadors to China to present tribute. A notable example is provided by Zheng He, a noted navigator, who was sent overseas as envoy at the head of a large fleet on seven voyages, the longest of which took him to the equator on the eastern African coast. Despite their formidable and unprecedented strength, Zheng He's voyages were not intended to extend Chinese sovereignty overseas, but promoted business and friendship between China and the outside world.

Though Chinese civilization is primarily a product of its unique geography and isolated

origins, the development of the Chinese civilization shows great diversity as well as unity. The mainstream population of the Chinese nation is the result of the convergence of many independent ethnic groups through a long process of contact, mixing, uniting and merging to become an integral whole consisting of many elements that are intermingled. The course of the evolution of Chinese civilization has primarily been one of melting different civilizations into one through mutual accommodation instead of mutual elimination. China with its vast land area and many ethnic groups and the handicaps of many local dialects has succeeded in maintaining its cultural pattern of unity in diversity primarily by relying on the people's ties with the Chinese culture and ideology and a uniform written language.

Chinese civilization is obviously a source of pride for modern China, as well as a significant factor in world history. The traditional Chinese culture has enjoyed continuous development throughout its history, despite numerous hardships and trials. The people of the Chinese nation have common cultural roots, a common ethnic background and a common official written language all based in the Chinese civilization which has lasted to this day—a unique phenomenon in the history of humankind.

Section B Understanding Chinese Civilization

Civilization has broad cultural implications—material, spiritual and institutional civilization and occasionally, archaeological culture. In the narrow sense, it specifically implies a sophisticated state of social growth. Generally, civilization refers to a society where the family clan dissolved with the growth of the organized state.

According to *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, civilization means “an advanced state of intellectual, cultural, and material development in human society, marked by progress in the arts and sciences, the extensive use of writing, and the appearance of complex political and social institutions.” *The Oxford English Dictionary* defines civilization as “the action or process of civilizing or being civilized; a developed or advanced state of human society.”

In ancient Chinese literature, Wen Ming (civilization) first appeared in *I Ching* (*Classic of Changes*): “the dragon in the field, civilization under the sky,” very unlike today's Western meaning as “civilization” from the Latin *Civitas* (*city*). This is believed to be a reference to the appearance of the Chinese emperor bringing the light of civilization, particularly literature. *The Classic of History* also mentions “civilization” as bringing the light of literature. One allusion in *The Classic of History* also made mention of “civilization” to the effect that the civilized and illuminated society boasts literary grace.

The term “civilization” appeared in English in about the 18th century and was used widely in the latter half of the 19th century. In this period of more than a century its meaning was well established. Different schools of Western social scientific thought propose various understandings, but “civilization” generally refers to a sophisticated state of human

society.

As society develops, people's understanding of civilization becomes increasingly complex. In the *Philosophy Section of the Chinese Encyclopedia*, "civilization" refers to the overall fulfillment of human beings in material and spiritual creations; it symbolizes the extent of the progress of the human society. According to *The Comprehensive Chinese Lexical-Encyclopedic Dictionary*, "civilization" has layers of meaning as follows: (1) It is equivalent to cultures including the material and spiritual ones; (2) It refers to the degree of advancement of the human society, opposite to "barbarism"; (3) It means the illuminative state boasting literary grace. According to *The Chinese Etymology Dictionary*, civilization has two facets of meaning: One is the integration of ability and integrity, and the other is the civilized state, opposite to "barbarism."

These references show the increasing complexity associated with the modern use of the term "civilization."

In summary, "civilization" can be interpreted in the following ways:

(1) Culture: Civilization and culture overlap for the most part, so actually many people consider civilization equivalent to culture. When they are not being used interchangeably, they differ in that the former emphasizes fulfillment while the latter stresses the way of life.

(2) Morals: Civilization can be considered from the perspective of morality. In this case, it represents a society's constant process of assessing and revising their standards of morality.

(3) Progress: Civilization can refer to any general advancement, as the opposite of primitive and barbaric. In this case, it refers to a society becoming more organized and urban.

Most scholars hold the view that civilization is the most sophisticated form of culture, stressing cultural enlightenment and refinement. Civilization represents advances, the process of humans moving beyond the state of primitive survival after the emergence of languages, cities and divisions of labor. It separates people from animals, because people move on to create the world that they want. Science and technology, and all the inventions are the products of civilization.

From the various definitions of civilization, we shall adopt the least disputable one: civilization refers to the advanced stage of human development where the nation has been established amidst related cultures. It represents an advancement from prehistorical society, in terms of more complex social structures, comparatively high level of material and cultural development, and a unique framework of organization and institutions. None of these traits appear suddenly. They all gradually take shape as the result of long-term social progress. Therefore, any civilization is rooted in the pre-historical cultures from which it emerges, and in the developmental process which shapes it. Presently, most literature in archaeology, history, anthropology and ethnography treats the appearance of cities, writ-

ten characters, metalware, ceremonial construction, etc., as concrete signs of civilization.

The Chinese Civilization refers to the material, spiritual and institutional civilization created so far by the people on the Chinese territory through their labor and wisdom. The Chinese ancestors created one age civilization after another, as well as varied, colorful materials and intellectual cultures, covering fields ranging from metallurgy, papermaking, printing, gunpowder, compass, astronomy and mathematics to costume, tea ceremony and cuisine, and from philosophy, institutions and systems to ethics, morals and social customs. The thousands-of-year-old history of Chinese culture is replete with splendid achievement, clearly showing China's contributions to world civilization and its friendship contacts with other peoples. From it we seem to be able to hear the clear and melodious sound of camel bells on the "Silk Road" and catch glimpses of the sails gliding on the vast expanses of green water.

Unit 2 Early Chinese Civilization

Section A Origin of Chinese Civilization

Ancient Chinese civilization covers every aspect of Chinese people's life earlier on and it is a kind of history of extensive and profound anthropology study. Social progress is achieved on the basis of the development of productive forces, so this extensive anthropology is first of all a history concerning the ancient Chinese economic development. Chinese ancestors in the remote antiquity at length developed farming and stock-raising after a prolonged arduous struggle, thus bade farewell to the life of fishing and collecting. So from then on Chinese people stopped living at the mercy of the God and they could plan their own life. The exploration of farming and animal husbandry was the first significant milestone in the economic development of the whole society. The development of agriculture satisfied people's essential needs in life. With the material foundation and more spare time, people began to switch their attention to the handicrafts and literary arts.

The origin of science and technology and that of culture and art constitute an important component of the Chinese civilization's origin. Through their diligent observation, contemplation and production practice, people have accumulated a wealth of knowledge about the nature and made a string of inventions. They made crude tools out of the stones, then ground the stones or animal bones into ingenious tools and later progressed to make devices from the bronze, all of which were marvelous progress. The invention of ceramics offered people a big array of daily utensils including the ritual articles; the delicate shapes and novel handcraft embodied in the ceramics were even more valuable. The invention of metallurgy, signaling the dawn of a brand new era or the early phase of the civilized socie-

ty, also laid a material foundation for the social progress along with the development of the lacquer, jade and textile industries. In addition, the knowledge about the astronomy and meteorology was accumulated through their observations and production activities. Every change was a step forward of the Chinese ancestors in their arduous struggle.

The history of Chinese civilization is the history of assimilation of the ethnic groups in China as well as the history of cultural exchanges. It has been proved by archaeologists that the Chinese nation was seldom affected by the outside world while domestically constant communication and assimilation occurred among different ethnic groups from different regions. The cultural communications and the assimilation among various ethnic groups in the middle and lower reaches of the Yellow River and the Yangtze River were most prominent, and of top significance in the origin of Chinese civilization, as the two waters were the very cradles of the Chinese civilization.

The history of the Chinese civilization is also the process of class differentiation, exploitation and oppression. The emergence of the private ownership led to the polarization of and confrontation between classes, which gave rise to the first class society—the slave society. In the latter stage of the slave society, the development of productive forces complicated by the intensifying class conflicts pushed people ahead into the feudal society which lasted for as long as over 2,000 years with continuous, moderate or intensified class conflicts.

The evolution of civilization is an accumulation of human wisdom by odds and ends. The evolution of the Chinese civilization in the initial stage can be divided as follows: The Paleolithic Period saw the budding of Chinese civilization; the early phase of the Neolithic Period witnessed that the cornerstone of the Chinese civilization was laid while its later phase witnessed the breeding and shaping of the Chinese civilization which grew mature in the Xia Dynasty and thrived in the Shang Dynasty. That Chinese civilization has a history of 5,000 years has been confirmed by more and more archaeological findings.

Section B Characteristics of the Early Civilization

The distinctiveness of the Chinese civilization fashioned in the long course of 5,000 years has a lot of bearings on the uniqueness of its origin:

Firstly, the Chinese civilization is native by origin and develops in the uninterrupted sequence. China is situated on a continent separated by the high seas, towering mountains and thick jungles from the rest of the world, so in the remote days it is hardly influenced by the outside cultures and the cultural elements were born on the native land. These elements eventually evolve to be the Chinese civilization through accumulation and sublimation. That is why the Chinese civilization boasts a solid and resilient foundation which promises ever-lasting endurance and sustainability. According to archaeology, the Chinese civilization was diverse at its birth. Central plains civilization and Yangtze River Delta civilization have passed on and spread to the far South, North, and West of China. Generally

speaking, architecture, clothing, food and drink, living appliances and art forms have not changed and have continued to form a unique feature and enormous ancient civilization that is full of vitality that can be touched upon. The Chinese cultural elements, i. e. typography, gunpowder, the compass, papermaking, tea, the magnet, silk, drawing, writing, opera, etc., are used, enjoyed and inherited by us now. The incredible continuity and succession is the grandness and characteristic of Chinese civilization.

Secondly, the Chinese civilization has witnessed the convergence of various cultures. Ever since the ancient times it has been an ingrained belief that the culture in the central plains is the only origin of the Chinese civilization. Since 1980s, more and more archaeological findings in the areas beyond the central plains have evidenced the existence of well-developed pre-historical culture in places that used to be thought as backward in pre-historical civilization. Examples include the Liangzhu culture in the lower reaches of the Yangtze River and the Hongshan culture in the reaches of the Liaohe River. These findings speak eloquently that in the vast land of China, many places witnessed fire sparks of civilization in the very beginning. In other words, culture centers of unique local flavor had been formed before the core of the Chinese civilization was shaped through combining different cultures. Thus the Chinese civilization has the qualities of being extensively-based, cohesive and inclusive.

Thirdly, the Chinese civilization is rooted in the extensive plains around the major rivers, depending agriculture in the main as economic foundation and with the stock-raising as a supplement. Compared with the life of tradesmen and herdsmen, a farmer's life is relatively fixed, settled, and relaxedly permanent. This is commonly referred to as "the lack of mobility." Because this style of life is more settled and at rest, it is easier for a farmer to raise children, and to develop a family up to a large population under one roof. Due to the lack of mobility, a farmer's life is relatively free from risk and adventure. This kind of "attached to earth" and "dependent on land" attitudes also account for some moral qualities of the Chinese people, particularly, the virtue of patience. A farmer's efficient production very much depends on the cooperation of nature. The process of the growth of a plant, from seed to full maturity, needs a certain period of time which can hardly be speeded up by human effort. The pre-historical grand buildings and city walls were mainly built of earth, which reflected that the Chinese civilization enjoyed a solid and profound foundation.

Unit 3 Civilization in Legendary Period

Section A Three Sovereigns

Three Sovereigns and Five Emperors were mythological rulers of China during the period from 3000 BC to 2070 BC, which was the time preceding the Xia Dynasty.

Three Sovereigns, known as the Three August Clan Rulers, were said to be god-kings or demigods who used their magical powers to improve the lives of their people. Because of their lofty virtue, they lived to a great age and ruled over a period of great peace. The Three Sovereigns were ascribed various identities in different Chinese historical texts. The *Records of the Grand Historian of China* by Sima Qian, in a chapter added by Sima Zhen, states that they were: The Heavenly Sovereign, The Earthly Sovereign, The Human Sovereign. The *Chunqiu Yundou Shu* and *Fengsu Tongyi* identify them as: Fuxi, Nüwa, and Shennong.

Fuxi was born on the lower-middle reaches of the Yellow River in a place called Chengji (possibly modern Lantian, Shaanxi or Tianshui, Gansu). According to legend, the land was swept by a great flood and only Fuxi and his sister Nüwa survived. They retired to Kunlun Mountain where they prayed for a sign from the Emperor of Heaven. The divine being approved their union and the siblings set about procreating the human race. It was said that in order to speed up the procreation of humans, Fuxi and Nüwa found an additional way by using clay to create human figures. And with the power divine being entrusted to them, they made the clay figures to come alive. Fuxi then came to rule over his descendants although reports of his long reign vary between sources from 116 years (2952 BC—2836 BC) to 115 years (2852 BC—2737 BC).

Fuxi was considered the first real ruler. He taught people how to devise tools, kindle fire and cook food, how to fish with nets, how to domesticate animals and tend flocks, and how to hunt with weapons made of iron. He instituted marriage and devised the mysterious Eight Trigrams which were used for divination.

Nüwa was referred to in many books of songs. Qu Yuan (340 BC—278 BC), author of the book *Elegies of Chu* (*Chuci*, also *Songs of Chu*), wrote in Chapter 3 “Asking Heaven” about “Nüwa Mends the Firmament”. The name Nüwa first appeared here. This story states that Nüwa molded figures from the yellow earth, giving them life and the ability to bear children. Demons then fought and broke the pillars of the heavens. Nüwa worked unceasingly to repair the damage, melting down the five-coloured stones to mend the heavens.

By the Han Dynasty, she was described in literature with her husband Fuxi as the first of the San Huang, and was often called the “parents of humankind.” However, paintings depicting them joined as half people-half snake or dragon date to the Warring States Period.

Shennong (meaning Emperor of the Five Grains; also Yandi Shennong) was a ruler of China and culture hero who lived some 5,000 years ago, and taught ancient Chinese the practices of agriculture. Appropriately, his name means “*the Divine Farmer*.” Considered to be the father of Chinese agriculture, Shennong taught his people how to cultivate grains as food, so as to avoid killing animals.

Yandi Shennong, also known as Chidi, one of the three legendary august figures and

the god of agriculture, was the famous leader of the tribe in the ancient legends. It was said that he had a figure with an ox head and a human body, so it was possible that the tribe he led had ox as their totem. He invented farming tools *lei* and *si* with wooden trunks and taught people to farm. As he discovered that herbs had medical effect, he made medicine with them to cure disease, for which he was worshipped as the creator of medicine and agriculture.

Shennong is said to have tasted hundreds of herbs to test their medical value. The most well-known work attributed to him is *The Divine Farmer's Herb-Root Classic*. This work is considered to be the earliest Chinese pharmacopoeia. It includes 365 medicines derived from minerals, plants, and animals. Shennong is credited with identifying hundreds of medical (and poisonous) herbs by personally testing their properties, which is crucial to the development of traditional Chinese medicine. Legend has it that Shennong had a transparent body and thus could see the effects of different plants and herbs on himself. Tea, which acts as an antidote against the poisonous effects of some seventy herbs, is also said to be his discovery. This discovery was in 2737 BC, according to which Shennong first tasted tea from tea leaves on burning tea twigs, which were carried up from the fire by the hot air, and landed in his cauldron of boiling water. Shennong is venerated as the Father of Chinese medicine. He is also believed to have introduced the technique of acupuncture.

He divided his tribe into several groups and led them to migrate eastward and fight against Huangdi, another august figure and the leader of another tribe in Banquan, now southeast of Zhuolu County, Hebei Province. But he was defeated there. Then he turned to Huangdi and formed a union with him. After they defeated Chiyou, the legendary chief of a tribe, they lived and multiplied in the middle and lower valleys of the Yellow River for many years. The united tribe by Yandi and Huangdi, the two august figures of the earliest history of China, formed the main trunk of the Huaxia nationality which changed itself into Han nationality in the later times, so the later generation of Chinese nationality was called the “descendants of Yandi and Huangdi.”

Section B Five Emperors

The Five Emperors were legendary, morally perfect sage-kings. According to the *Records of the Grand Historian of China* they were:

The Yellow Emperor, Huangdi, whose family name being Ji, literary name Xuan Yuan and You Xiong, the famous chief of a united tribe living in the middle and lower valley of the Yellow River about 4,000 years ago, has been worshipped as the common ancestor of Chinese nationalities.

In the times of Huangdi's leadership, there were many inventions and creations, such as the raising of silkworms and reeling off of raw silk, building palaces and houses, invention of Chinese characters, music and rhythms, arithmetic, calendar, and making of coffins, vessels, ships and carts. The later people honored him as “the Master with 100 In-

ventions.” Since the later Spring and Autumn Periods he was dignified as the ancestor of Chinese nationality.

According to history books Huangdi had 25 sons and grandsons, among whom 14 sons and grandsons formed 12 families but had different surnames. And the great dukes like Yao, Shun, Yu and the imperial families of the three dynasties such as Xia, Shang and Zhou were all his descendants.

Zhuanxu, also known as Gaoyang, was a monarch of ancient China. A grandson of the Yellow Emperor, Zhuanxu led the Shi clan in an eastward migration to present-day Shandong, where intermarriages with the Dongyi clan enlarged and augmented their tribal influences. At age twenty, he became their sovereign, going on to rule for seventy-eight years until his death.

He was a very wise and intelligent person. He respected the gods and taught his people. He appointed one official responsible for offering sacrifices for the gods in the heaven and one official in charge of the civil affairs.

He made contributions to a unified calendar, astrology, religion reforms to oppose shamanism, upheld the patriarchal (as opposed to the previous matriarchal) system, and forbade close-kin marriage. Zhuanxu was held by many to be one of the Five Emperors.

Emperor Ku was an Emperor of China. He was the great grandson of the Yellow Emperor. According to speculative dates (from after 100 BC) he ruled from circa 2436 BC to c. 2366 BC. He established schools.

Emperor Yao (circa 2358 BC—2258 BC) was a Chinese ruler, one of the Three Sovereigns and the Five Emperors. Also known as Taotang-shi, he was born Yiqi Fangxun as the second son to Emperor Ku and Qingdu. He was also known as Tang Yao.

Often extolled as the morally perfect sage-king, Yao's benevolence and diligence served as a model to future Chinese monarchs and emperors. Early Chinese often spoke of Yao, Shun and Yu as historical figures, while contemporary historians believed they might represent leader-chiefs of allied tribes who established a unified and hierarchical system of government in a transition period to the patriarchal feudal society. In the *Classic of History* (also the *Book of History*), one of the Five Classics, the initial chapters deal with Yao, Shun, and Yu.

According to legend, Yao became the ruler at 20 and died at 119 when he passed his throne to Great Shun, to whom he gave his two daughters in marriage.

Yao made great contributions to the lunar calendar. Of his many other contributions, Yao was said to have invented the game of Go (*Weiqi*), reportedly as an amusement for his slow-witted son Dan Zhu.

Emperor Shun was a 23rd-22nd century BC leader of ancient China, among the Three Sovereigns and Five Emperors, whose half-century of rule was one of the longest in Chinese history. According to Mencius, Shun was a Dongyi that was a collective term for people in Eastern China. Shun was physically and mentally gifted and he was a man with great