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CHINA

from Earliest Times to 1840

中国(上古时期——1840年)

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内 容 简 介

本书简述了中国四千年来（上古时期——1840年）的历史，主要介绍了中国劳动人民几千年来所创造的物质和精神文明，各个朝代的政治、经济、文化状况以及一些统治阶级的主要代表人物。

本书作者 Jock Hoe 是新西兰学者，曾在中国任教，对中国历史很有研究。在本书中作者比较客观地叙述和评论了中国的历史事实。

本书文笔流畅、浅明易懂，适合稍具英语基础的读者阅读。现在加上中文注释，作为高等学校文科英语泛读教材，也可供其他英语学习者使用。

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1. Earliest Times to Shang Dynasty¹

It is not possible in this booklet to give anything like a satisfactory account of Chinese history. But I hope that the bare outline which I am going to give you will be enough to encourage you to try to find out more for yourselves.²

At the start, you should know something about the Chinese attitude to history. There is a tendency in the West to believe that since 1949, with the establishment of the People's Republic of China, China has completely rejected her past. Some scholars have gone to the other extreme, and see "New China" as merely "Old China" in a new dress. For them, all that has happened is that Confucian ortho-

1. Earliest Times to Shang Dynasty: 从远古至商朝。 2. But I hope...to find out more for yourselves. 但我希望我要给你们叙述的这一梗概足以鼓励你们自己去作进一步的探索。

doxy¹ has been replaced by Communism, with the new political cadres taking the place of the old bureaucracy of scholar-gentry.² The truth is that China today does not reject her past, but neither does she accept it uncritically. In fact, the past is studied to see how it can be made to serve the present. As in the past, history is a mirror into which the Chinese gaze in order to examine critically their past failures and achievements, in the hope of finding in them lessons for the present and the future.³ For more than 2000 years, Chinese archivists carefully noted down the facts of history, in the belief that these would provide future generations with lessons on which to act.⁴ Today, the Chinese believe that the true lessons of history are to be found in

1. Confucian orthodoxy: 儒家的正统观念。 2. the old bureaucracy of scholar-gentry: 旧式士绅官僚。 3. As in the past, ... for the present and the future. 如同过去一样, 中国人把历史看作一面镜子, 通过它来批判地观察他们过去的成败, 希望从中为现在和将来吸取教训。

(into which the Chinese gaze 是定语从句, 修饰 mirror; in order to examine 是目的状语, 修饰 gaze; in the hope of finding 是目的状语, 修饰 gaze; in them 指 past failures and achievements.) 4. For more than 2000 years, ... on which to act. 两千多年来, 中国的史官把历史事实详细地记录下来, 相信这些史料能作为后代行动的借鉴。

the story of their people's revolutions. Thus, their history has always served, and still serves, a strong moral and instructive purpose. For a Chinese, it is not so much the facts of history that are of primary interest, as the interpretation of these facts.¹ I cannot go into² this important interpretative aspect of Chinese history. All I can do is to mention one or two ideas, while giving you a very rough outline of the more basic historical facts.

Chinese recorded history begins with a mythological period, followed by the Xia dynasty, which is traditionally dated from 2033—1562 BC. This in turn is followed by the Shang dynasty, traditionally dated from 1562—1066 BC. Until early this century, most Western scholars took the view that these two dynasties were mythical, and much time and effort were spent by reputable scholars in trying to prove that the Chinese must have

1. For a Chinese, ... as the interpretation of these facts. 对于一个中国人来说, 最关心的不是历史事实, 而是如何来解释这些事实。(not so much...as...: 与其……不如……) 2. to go into: 探讨。

come from Egypt, Babylon or Sumeria.¹ However, since 1928, the existence of the Shang dynasty has been confirmed by numerous archaeological finds. And, although no positive archaeological evidence of the Xia dynasty has yet been uncovered, there is now no doubt that China has been continuously inhabited by human creatures since the old stone age. For example, the skull of a human creature, dating back some 600,000 years, was found at Lantian in 1964, and already in 1921 remains of the culture of what has come to be known as Beijing man (Peking man), dating back 500,000 years, were discovered in a cave at Zhoukoudian, near Beijing.² This cave seems to have been inhabited right down to³ the new stone age period. Many other new stone age

1. ...most Western scholars...~~are~~ Sumeria, 大多数西方学者认为这两个朝代均属神话。许多著名学者曾花了最多时间和精力设法证明中国人起源于埃及、巴比伦或苏美尔。(...took ~~the view~~ that..., 由 that 引入的从句是 view 的同位语从句。Babylon ['bæbəlɒn] 巴比伦, Sumeria [su(:)-'miəriə] 苏美尔, 二者是先后出现在幼发拉底和底格里斯两河流域的两个古代国家。) 2. ...and already in 1921...near Beijing, 1921 年在北京附近周口店的洞穴里就已经发现了具有五十万年历史的, 现在通称为北京人的文化遗迹。(remains 是主语, were discovered 是谓语。) 3. right down to: 一直到。

sites have since been uncovered throughout China. The beginnings of agriculture and of the domestication of animals, which were collective activities, are now dated at about 4000 BC. It was also during this period that dams and irrigation canals were built for controlling rivers and preventing floods. Other developments also took place, such as the manufacture of pottery, the discovery of silk, and the construction of carriages and boats. The legendary deeds of the culture heroes¹ of the mythological period and of the Xia dynasty, as recorded in the Chinese annals, appear to be based on the activities of this new stone age period.²

The Shang dynasty which followed was a bronze age culture.³ Western scholars had thought it to be purely legendary as well, until the excavations of 1928 uncovered royal tombs dating back to the fifteenth century BC. Even so, the bronze sacrificial vessels discovered there, ranging from small cups to

1. culture heroes: 创造文化的著名人物。 2. new stone age period: 新石器时期。 3. bronze age culture: 青铜期文化。

gigantic cauldrons, showed such technical skill and artistry, that at first many scholars thought that the Shang rulers must have been invaders from Central Asia, who brought their bronze skills with them.¹ But more recent excavations indicate that the transition from stone to bronze was a gradual one, and almost certainly took place in China itself.

One of the major effects of the development of bronze techniques was to bring about a separation of Chinese society into town and country dwellers. The nobility and their specialised craftsmen lived in the towns, supported by the produce of the peasants living in the countryside. The peasants, who had previously been involved in² both hunting and agriculture, now devoted themselves almost entirely to³ agriculture, while living in conditions which were little different from those

1. Even so, ...brought their bronze skills with them. 即使如此, 在当地发现的青铜祭器, 从小小的酒杯一直到巨大的鼎, 其铸造技艺之精湛, 起初曾使许多学者认为商朝的统治者一定是来自中亚的入侵者, 是他们带来了青铜冶铸技艺。(such...that...: 如此……因而……; that 引起结果状语从句; must 加完成时态表示对过去事物的推测。) 2. to be involved in: 致力于, 参加。 3. to devote oneself to: 献身于, 致力于, 专心于。

of the new stone age. Hunting, however, was now left to the nobles, who lived in walled towns together with their servants and craftsmen. When they were not on hunting expeditions, they were at war with one another. The main purpose of war was to acquire additional slaves and labourers for supplying the nobles' extravagant needs.

Regular religious rites also played an important part in the life of the Shang nobles. In addition to a supreme deity, called Shangdi,¹ they also worshipped the spirits of their ancestors. The ceremonies involved the sacrifice of hundreds of animals, domestic as well as those obtained from the hunt, and often involved the sacrifice of prisoners of war. The lavish quantities of alcohol which were consumed during these ceremonies were made from cereal produced by the peasants, and the Shang rulers have gone down in Chinese history² as dissolute drunkards. In addition, their tombs were filled with

1. Shangdi: 上帝 (指中国古代最高天神的名称)。 2. to go down in history: 载入史册。

hundreds of objects made of gold, jade, bronze and stone, for their use in the after life, and in many cases, their slaves were buried with them as well. Tombs have been found in which the slaves appear to have been buried alive,¹ and others in which they have been found beheaded² in groups of ten. In one tomb alone, some 300 skeletons have been found.

Our knowledge of the Shang period comes not only from the excavations, but also from the inscriptions on the oracle bones and tortoise shells³ which have been found. Questions were inscribed on the bones, which were then heated until they cracked. The cracks were then interpreted by diviners, and the answer of the oracle inscribed. These are the clearest and so far the best attested examples of early Chinese writing which have come down to us,⁴ and they confirm, among other things, the list of the thirty Shang kings which had been handed down by later Chinese

1. to be buried alive: 被活埋。 2. beheaded: 被斩首 (过去分词作主语补足语)。 3. the inscriptions on the oracle bones and tortoise shells: 甲骨文。 4. have come down to us: 流传下来。

historical tradition. And, according to historical annals, the dissoluteness and extravagance of the Shang rulers led to the revolt of the people against them, and the establishment of the Zhou dynasty.

According to Chinese historical tradition, the early mythological rulers had, on their death, handed the succession on, not to their sons, but to¹ the ablest of their ministers. One of these, Yu,² whose major achievement according to the legends was the controlling of the Yellow River floods, reversed the non-hereditary principle³ and became the founder of the Xia dynasty. From then on, the hereditary principle was maintained right up to 1911, although it was not always strictly followed. This was due, in part, to⁴ the development of a concept known as the 'Mandate of Heaven'⁵ or Tianming. The

1. handed the succession on, not to their sons, but to...: 不把继承权传给他们的儿子, 而传给…… 2. Yu: 禹 (传说中古代部落联盟领袖。原为夏后氏部落领袖, 奉舜命治理洪水。后以治水有功, 被选为继承人, 舜死后担任部落联盟领袖。) 3. reversed the non-hereditary principle: 改变了禅让 (非世袭) 制度。 4. to be due to: 由于。 5. Mandate of Heaven: 天命。

oracle bone inscriptions made frequent reference to¹ Shangdi or Lord on High,² often translated into English as God. Shangdi was a divine ruler who watched over³ human society and regulated the working of the universe.⁴ Later, the word for Heaven came to⁵ be used as synonym and eventually, the 'di' of Shangdi came to represent the supreme ruler of all creation.⁶ Thus, Heaven to the Chinese was not just the material heavens, but was an intelligent power which guided men's destiny. Heaven, said the Zhou rulers, chose certain men to be rulers, but they and their descendants could continue to rule only as long as they governed wisely and justly. Once they forsook the way of virtue, Heaven would withdraw its mandate from them, and this would be shown by the appearance of moral and physical disorder throughout the country. When this happened, it became not

1. to make reference to: 提到。 2. Lord on High: 上帝 (英文释义)。 3. to watch over: 监视, 看护, 照顾。 4. regulated the working of the universe: 主宰乾坤。 5. to come to: 表示“结果”, 此处可译为“逐渐”。 6. all creation: 天地万物。

just a right, but a duty, for the people to revolt (in modern Chinese, 'geming' or 'change the mandate'). In other words, there were times when it was right to rebel. The Chinese were, of course, well aware of the effects of frontier policies¹ and of economic and social factors in bringing about the fall of a dynasty, but the most important factor for them was the moral qualification of the ruler. Thus, a state might be the most powerful in existence, but if its ruler was cruel and unjust, Heaven would withdraw its mandate. On the other hand, a state might be weak and small, but if the ruler was wise and benevolent, Heaven would look on him with favour. Today the Chinese are taught that the mandate is granted not by Heaven, but by the masses of the people. Mao Zedong, speaking of Shangdi, says:

Our God (Shangdi) is none other than²
the masses of the Chinese people.

1. frontier policies: 边疆政策。 2. none other than: 不是别人), 正是; 就是。

Chinese thinkers throughout the ages have been preoccupied with the problem of the moral responsibilities of the ruler, and the way in which he should carry them out in order to retain Heaven's mandate.¹ In the next chapter, I will begin with some indication of how the Zhou rulers carried out their mandate.

1. Chinese thinkers...to retain Heaven's mandate. 多少世纪以来,中国的思想家们一直在专心研究统治者的道德职责以及为了维持天命应当如何履行其职责。(with 带两个宾语: 1. the problem, 2. the way)

2. Zhou Dynasty to Qin Dynasty

The Zhou dynasty, which overthrew the Shang dynasty in 1066 BC, lasted for over 800 years. This long period was not by any means as stable as its length might suggest.¹

The new Zhou ruler established his capital near present-day Xian in north-west China, and gave large estates to the royal princes. These feudal princes contributed troops to the ruler's army, and local products to his treasury, but otherwise they were independent within their own estates. Their ministers and counsellors were drawn from the hereditary nobility, since these were the only people with access to education.² The ordinary people

1. This long period...might suggest. 这一朝代时间之长决不说明它是稳定的。(by any means: 决; 无论如何。) 2. Their ministers and ...with access to education. 他们的大臣和谋士从世袭的贵族中选拔, 因为只有这些人才能受到教育。(to be drawn from 被选拔。)