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Chinese Culture: An Introduction

中国文化通览

主编 杨敏 王克奇 王恒展
主审 辜正坤



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内容提要

中国文化是人类文明宝库中的瑰宝。《中国文化通览》力求撷取其中些许精华表现中国的深层文化、高雅文化,同时反映民间艺术、地理文化、建筑文化,内容丰富,适于当前中外文化的交流传播。

本书包括英、汉两大部分,每部分分为九个单元,每一单元包括若干章节、条目;英汉两大部分相对独立但又大致吻合,文字表达均以英汉两种语言各自的规范和文体要求为基本参照。本书可供英语专业学生和具有较高公共英语水平的大学生使用,同时可供知晓英语、略晓汉语或正在学习汉语的外国读者学习、了解中国文化使用。本书配有多媒体学习课件。

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前 言

中国文化是人类文明的重要组成部分。学习、传播中国文化就是让世界人民都能领悟到优秀的中国文化的精神，并将她发扬光大。这是本书编写的初衷。在今日全球化背景下，传播中国文化对于实现世界范围内的多元文化共享无疑具有特别重要的意义。

本书定名为《中国文化通览》，可与《中国传统文化通览》称为姊妹篇。前者较之于后者，选材范围更加宽一些：既涵盖古代文化，又涵盖近代文化的范畴；既包括深层文化、高雅文化的层面，又包括民间艺术、地理文化、建筑文化的层面；既反映了主流文化，又反映了不同领域中的次文化。内容更加丰富，更适合当前中外文化的交互传播。

本书包括英、汉两部分，每部分九章，章下有节；英汉两大部分相对独立又大致吻合；文字表达以英汉两种语言各自的规范和文体要求为基本参照，同时关照到具备一般英语专业水平和较高公共英语水平的中国大学生的英语阅读要求以及知晓英语、略晓汉语或正在学习汉语的外国读者对于中国文化的學習要求。

中国文化是人类文明宝库中的瑰宝，我们力求撷取其中些许精华在本书里表现出来，以满足广大读者学习中国文化并向往用英汉两种语言对外介绍中国文化的需要。中国文化博大精深，本书的介绍只能是挂一漏万，希望读者能够把它作为一部入门教科书，并由此踏入中国文化殿堂。

本书作者是山东师范大学、山东大学、北京外国语大学、山东财经学院、青岛大学的教授、副教授、博士以及中青年学术骨干，大家多年来一直从事中国文化与跨文化交际及翻译的教学和研究工作，书中内容是多年来教学、科研成果的结晶。我们真心希望本书能够传达出我们与读者共同体会优秀的中国文化的的心声。

本书编写分工如下：杨敏负责制定全书的编写纲要及体例，全书的统稿、修改和英语部分的审改，王恒展、王克奇负责汉语部分的统稿、审阅、修改，第一章由王克奇、杨敏、张积模执笔，第二章由徐文军、宋玮执笔，第三章由宋瑞彩、贾磊、宋玮执笔，第四章由王恒展、张京生、贾磊执笔，第五章由王恒展、徐文军、张京生、杨敏、侯萍萍执笔，第六章由徐文军、杨惠琴、张峰执笔，第七章由徐文军、侯萍萍执笔，第八章由李东成、王淑琴、张峰执笔。思考题由徐文军、杨敏执笔。本书配有多媒体学习课件。

本书在编写过程中承蒙许多专家、学者不吝赐教，外籍专家 K. Hatch、S. Michael Ferrero 认真审读了英文部分，在此诚表谢意。书中引用的许多文学名著、古籍、古迹名称的英语译文等参照了 Rewi Alley、杨宪益、许渊冲、孙大雨、丁祖馨、徐忠杰等译作中的译文，在此一并表示诚挚的谢意。

杨 敏
2006年3月

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Chapter One

The Basic National Conditions of Ancient China

The Chinese culture can be defined as a cultural system rich in distinct national style which took shape within the terrain of China. The culture includes the spiritual culture and behavioral culture as well as their materialized presentations. It is these cultural forms that typify the fundamental features of the Chinese culture. It belongs to the historical category, having undergone 5 000-year development before it turns into today's splendid sight, both extensive and profound. To some extent the Chinese culture indicates the Chinese tradition. Meanwhile it can be relegated to the national category. After a long process of relatively independent development followed by the collision and exchange afterwards between China and foreign countries, the Chinese culture assumed unique characteristics, became an outstanding member in the brilliant global family of national cultures, and grew to be a main representative of Oriental national cultures.

For anyone to understand the basic national conditions of ancient China, the Chinese culture is a must, and vice versa. The basic national conditions in China owed its formation to the development of the Chinese culture in the specific historical background and geographical surroundings. Grasping the basic national conditions promises an indispensable channel to the Chinese culture. The following is an introduction of the Chinese culture from the perspectives of the geographical surroundings, economic structure, and historical development and traits.

Section 1

The Geographical Surroundings and the Economic Structure of the Chinese Culture

■ The Geographical Surroundings

China is a unitary multinational country with a vast territory and a large population. The geographical surroundings play a vital role in the formation and development of the Chinese culture. Situated in the continent of East Asia, China is located in relatively enclosed geographical surroundings. In the north stretches the vast

desert and prairie; in the west, the vast expanse of Gobi and desert and Qinghai-Tibet plateau; in the southwest, Yunnan-Guizhou mountainous region and boundless tropical rain forests; in the east and southeast, the ocean. The relatively enclosed geographical surroundings provided exceptional natural advantages for the ancient Chinese culture to develop independently, for a fairly long period free from the impact of foreign cultures, especially those powerful ones. These facilitated the Chinese culture to evolve into a stable and independent system with distinctive regional features.

Since the terrain of China is high in the west and low in the east, several long rivers running from west to east are distributed evenly to form the valleys of Liaohe River, Yellow River, Yangtze River and Pearl River. The large rivers and their tributaries facilitate the agricultural development and transportation as well as the growth of regional cultures. Chinese cultural system is an organic unity with multi-elements. Different styles of regional cultures enrich the connotation of the Chinese culture. Meanwhile, conflicts among different regional cultures came into being between various nationalities as well as regional regimes, due to the difference in geographical surroundings and the regional cultures arising therefrom. The general trend, however, is cultural fusion and political unity.

With the territory in the temperate and subtropical zones, the natural resources such as light, heat, water and soil are fit for the development of agricultural economy. Especially in the Yellow River Valley and the Yangtze River Valley, farming is the major economic mode. Ancient Chinese civilization is of agricultural nature, which is an early-maturing type of human civilization. Hence, China's ancient civilization originated mainly in the Yellow River Valley and the Yangtze River Valley. Agricultural civilization developed early in the Yellow River Valley. People here enjoy seasonal climate of temperate zone. Besides, the thick and fertile layer of loess, and the water resources provided by the river and its tributaries also contribute to its development. For quite a long period, the Yellow River Valley has been the major birthplace and base of the ancient civilization. Agricultural civilization plays a decisive role in forming and promoting the Chinese culture, which constitutes its fundamental differences from Western culture.

■ The Economic Structure

Chinese economic structure has undergone a process of change from the ancient pattern composed mainly of agriculture to that of technology in a modern industrial society. The agricultural society, which lasted for several thousand years, with the small-scale peasant economy in the leading position, exerted a strong influence on the development of the Chinese culture.

In ancient China, the natural economic pattern went like this: farming was the major mode of production and family, the basic unit. In primitive society, three types of regional economy — farming, pasturage and fishing — gradually came into existence because of the discrepancies in natural geographical surroundings. After the Xia, Shang and Zhou dynasties, some relatively stable economic zones developed: the farming zone in the middle and lower valleys of the Yellow River and the Yangtze River, the nomadic zone in the northern and northwestern frontiers and the fishing and hunting zone in the northeast. However, due to the early-maturing prosperity and wide dispersion, the agricultural economy always had a leading role in ancient China. The mainstream of the ancient Chinese culture was based on the agricultural civilization. The nationalities engaged in pasturage or fishing and hunting in the north mounted large-scale offences southward many times by taking

advantage of their military might, and managed to establish their political power successively, but each time they were brought under the control of the agricultural civilization of the Central Plains. Assimilated by and integrated with the Hua Xia and Han nationalities, they reverted to the traditional social pattern with Han nationality as its main body and agricultural economy as its foundation.

Agriculture was fundamental to the development of ancient China. Farming, the origin of which can at least be traced back to 8 000 years ago, has been instrumental in molding the basic social outlook of ancient China. Agriculture shaped the political system and ideology. In ancient China, rulers of each dynasty happened to coincide in their policy of protecting agriculture, i.e. encouraging farming but limiting commerce. Incentive measures were adopted to develop farming. With the beginning of the Western Zhou Dynasty, emerged the system of household land. Every year at the Beginning of Spring (first solar term) of each year, a grand ceremony would be held. The Emperor, as well as dukes and princes would plough their own household land, setting a model for the common people to follow, and conveying the message that the government attached high importance to agriculture. Later, this became a conventional practice. The government also commended those who had scored outstanding achievements in the area of farming. In order to discourage the development of the craft and commercial sector, measures were taken to punish and restrain those handicraftsmen and businessmen. The punishments were sometimes very stern, such as forbidding businessmen to wear silk clothes, carry swords or use a chariot and even to confiscate their property. All these measures guaranteed the dominant role of agricultural economy in the ancient society.

The economy of ancient China, no matter which type it took, suzerain economy, landlord economy or owner-peasant economy, judging from the nature and mode, belonged to the category of a small-scale economy. This kind of economy had the following characteristics.

Firstly, the family was the basic unit. In ancient China, farming was conducted for thousands of years with each household as a productive unit. Originally each family was fairly large with a complex structure. During the three dynasties of Xia, Shang and Zhou, the extended families consisting of three or four generations were the basic cells of the social economy. Since then, it became popular to divide the family property and to live apart, which led to a trend of reducing the size and structure of the family. During the Warring States Period and the Qin Dynasty, a nuclear family of five members became the most common pattern, and this continued to the present.

Secondly, the major productive mode was the natural family economy with the man cultivating the land and the woman weaving at home. This type of economy and the simple division of labor were sufficient to meet people's needs. Therefore, it was a type of self-sufficient natural economy, with limited reliance on the market economy. As a result, the market economy in ancient China was not flourishing and the society was loosely organized, just like a sheet of loose sand in a state of disunity.

Thirdly, the scale of production was small. Because of the family management and self-sufficiency, the productive scale of small-scale farming by individual owners was restricted to be inherently narrow and small. This economic form in a fairly long period in history effectively kindled the peasants' enthusiasm for production. A brilliant ancient civilization was created.

Fourthly, the economy was under the strict control of the nation. In ancient China, the central government

put the small-scale peasant economy within a tightly knit network through the organizations of political power at the grass-roots level. The monarch had jurisdiction over each peasant household through the *bao-jia* system (an administrative system organized on the basis of households, with each *jia* made up of 10 households, and each *bao* of 10 *jias*, and all the *baos* and *jias* responsible for public security, tax-collection and control of the people within their jurisdiction), levying all kinds of taxes and making requisitions for various military services to ensure a smooth operation of the regime. An important feature was the poll tax. In this way people were tightly bound to the land. Politics exerted tremendous and profound influences on the economy. Sound rule led to times of peace and prosperity, in which common people were bestowed with great bounties; despotic rule led to times of storm and stress, in which the people were plunged into an abyss of misery. The peasant problem has been a concern for the rulers and government throughout the ages. The proverb that “the water that carries the boat can also overturn it — a warning to the ruler that he should heed the voice of the people” is an expression of this political approach. Finding the correct solution to the problems of the countryside, the agriculture and the peasants provides the key to a successful government of the nation.

Section 2

The Historical Development of the Chinese Culture

China has a 5 000-year history of the development of civilization. The Chinese culture is one of the most ancient cultures in the world, and the only one that has lasted for thousands of years without suspension. The strong vitality could be attributed to its innate structure and essential quality. The structure of the Chinese culture is typical of integrated pluralism. “Pluralism” refers to the fact that the Chinese culture is a blending of so many different cultures and it displays strong tolerance to embrace the cultures of ethnic groups and those from extraneous places. “Integrated” means various cultures melt into a unity, forming a distinctly Chinese culture with common values. The integrated pluralism has developed a self-confident magnanimity so that the Chinese culture, which gives priority to itself, can absorb foreign cultures constantly, thereby getting revitalized in the process of discarding the old and embracing the new. Throughout the history, the Chinese culture has survived all kinds of ordeals and turmoil. Confronted with today’s challenges, it is sure to face them calmly, revealing its fascination and keeping its youthful vigor in the process of remolding itself and transforming the world.

■ Culture Before the Qin Dynasty

Pre-Qin was a period of the Chinese culture starting from its embryonic stage to the stage when the basic form began to take shape. There were three main influences: the Eastern Yi culture, the Western Xia culture and the Southern Man culture. The Eastern Yi culture originated in the region of present Shandong Province and the northern part of Jiangsu Province in the lower Yellow River Valley. The leading figures were Taihao, Shaohao, Chiyou, Diku and Shun. The Western Xia culture originated in the region of present Shaanxi and Gansu provinces and the Southern Shanxi Province in the upper and middle Yellow River Valley. The renowned leaders included Yandi, Huangdi, Zhuangxi, and Yao. The Southern Man culture originated in the Yangtze-Huaihe Valley. The

leader was Panhu. The Eastern Yi and Western Xia moved in the opposite directions along the Yellow River. In a long process of alternative conflict and peace, they gradually merged, thus becoming the predecessors of Hua Xia nationality. The culture collision and assimilation between Yi and Xia laid a foundation for China's ancient civilization. After Hua Xia nationality moved southward and conquered the Southern Man, the embryonic form of the Chinese nation appeared. In honor of this, they held a memorial ceremony to enshrine their distant ancestors, Yandi and Huangdi. Thus, the Chinese nation can claim to be the descendants of Yandi and Huangdi.

The dynasties of Xia, Shang and Western Zhou are historically called "Three Dynasties", during which the unified patriarchal state, based on the autocracy of royal right, was formed and developed. The notion of great national unity, i.e. "all the land under the sky belongs to the king; all the people within this country are the king's subjects", gradually came into being. The patriarchal culture of rites and music was completed, greatly influencing the development of the Chinese culture. Hence, China is called "the land of ceremony and propriety". The ceremony and propriety have embodied the different social strata of nobles through pervasive and over-elaborate ritual formalities, their privilege and responsibility. The quintessence of material civilization of the Three Dynasties was the brilliant Bronze culture. The bronze wares, exquisite beyond compare, are the gems of ancient civilization of the world. The inscriptions on tortoise shells or animal bones of the Shang Dynasty, and the inscriptions on bronze or copper wares in the Western Zhou Dynasty demonstrated fairly mature writings. There was already evidence of what constitutes a character: pictographs, self-explanatory characters, associative compounds and pictophonetic method. Besides, literature recordings appeared using these types of characters.

The Spring and Autumn Period and the Warring States Period witnessed a strong momentum of growth of the Chinese culture. This phase was characterized by the separatist regime. All the states vied with each other for supremacy and annexed others. Nevertheless the shared consciousness of national culture determined the nature of the wars between the rival principalities; and they had the effect of unifying the nation, by way of which China was reunited. In the process of the war, more states were involved, promoting the cultural fusion in a broader realm, which laid the basis for the foundation of the unitary feudal empire of the Qin-Han dynasties. Corresponding with the political separatist regime was the contention of numerous schools of thought of ideology. At the end of the Spring and Autumn Period, Confucius initiated the privately run school, breaking the academic monopoly set up by the notion that "education occurs nowhere but in the family of officials". He founded the school of Confucianism. Confucius was a remarkable figure in carrying forward the Chinese culture and forging it ahead. He revised the cultural achievement of the Three Dynasties, i.e. *The Five Classics* — *The Book of Songs*, *Collections of Ancient Texts*, *The Rites*, *The Book of Changes* and *The Spring and Autumn Annals*. He put forward the ideology to integrate "rites" and "benevolence", thus opening up a new prospect in the Chinese culture. At that time a variety of different schools in the field of ideology and culture emerged. They were allowed to deliver freely their political opinions and academic views, thus causing disputes over academic issues. These various doctrines became inexhaustible inspiration for the development of Chinese spiritual culture. Most of the schools of thought that formed after the Qin-Han dynasties were revised; novel ideas of the doctrines of the exponents of the various schools of thought during the period from pre-Qin times to the early years of the Han Dynasties became the origins of traditional Chinese spiritual culture. In the Spring and Autumn Period, China entered the Iron Age, therefore the economy developed by leaps and bounds in the Warring States Period.

■ Culture in the Qin Dynasty and the Han Dynasty

At its peak period in ancient historical development, the Qin-Han periods witnessed significant achievements in many fields, during which the unitary multinational feudal empire was founded. In 221 B.C., the State Qin united China, thus establishing the first centralized feudal autocratic dynasty in Chinese history. The Han Dynasty followed the same system as the Qin Dynasty. The unitary multinational regime achieved further development and strengthening in the Han Dynasty. During the Qin-Han period, unprecedented achievements were made in economic development. The cultural development embraced an upsurge period.

The foundation of a unitary multinational country accelerated the birth of the unitary national spiritual culture. At the beginning of the Qin Dynasty, the ruler established a uniform national culture. In the domain of ideology and culture, the First Emperor ordered that the written language and behaviors had to be standardized, to pursue cultural unification by means of a powerful administrative force. In the spiritual culture the Legalist School was revered and the system of court academician was initiated, with a view of uniting the Legalist ideology, classical Taoist thinking and Confucianism. Due to the intolerance on the part of Legalist thought, the First Emperor ordered that books be burned and Confucian scholars be buried alive. The unification in the realm of spiritual culture turned out to be a failure. Intense cultural antinomy and conflict was one of the most important reasons for the rapid collapse of the Qin regime.

In the newly established Han Dynasty, with the broken economy due to the chaos caused by the war, the classical Taoist thought, i.e. proposing to govern by doing nothing that is against nature, was venerated. On the succession of Emperor Wudi of the Western Han Dynasty, by right of peace and prosperity during the reign of Emperors Wendi and Jingdi, he planned to realize his ambitious dream. Taoism was in contradiction with this trend, while Confucianism, by encouraging active enterprise, won favor. Emperor Wudi paid supreme tribute to Confucianism while banning all other schools of thought. The reconstructed Confucianism of the Han Dynasty overcame the restrictions and the conservatism of the pre-Qin dynasties and been the dominant ideology in the field of politics and academics. Adopting Confucianism as the official philosophy was a key measure in founding the unitary national culture. Ever since then, Confucianism has been the orthodox thought in ancient China, exerting a far-reaching influence up to the present time. Its values have become the spirit of the traditional culture.

In the Han Dynasty the native religion called Taoism came into being. In the Eastern Han Dynasty, the combination of the teachings of Huangdi and Laozi, and Fangxian sect formed Taiping sect and Wudoumi sect, the latter being the predecessor of Tianshi sect. The influence of Confucianism was mainly on the official, academic and refined level whereas that of Taoism was in the mundane society. The Confucianism and Taoism, one being refined and the other being popular, one belonging to the supreme orthodox and the other relegated to the lower stratum, echoed each other at a distance. Both persistently played an educational role in the traditional society, having great effect on the shaping of national character.

The Qin-Han was an important period during which various cultures within the country integrated and the Chinese culture mingled with the foreign ones. The first Emperor of the Qin Dynasty united China, making the communion and fusion between various nationalities and regions possible. After the foundation of the Western

Han Dynasty, especially in the Reign of Emperor Wudi, the domestic cultural integration was boosted with the expansion of the territory. What is known as the Han culture along the Yellow River and the Yangtze River valleys mixed together with the cultures of southwestern Yi, southern Guangdong, Fujian, western Qiang and eastern Hu, adding new vitality to the robust national culture. In the Eastern Han Dynasty, the northern nomadic culture also blended into this big family. As a result, the culture of the Han ethnicity was the principal part, and the cultures of other ethnic groups and regions were incorporated.

At the same time, the cultural exchange between China and foreign countries was also developing. Before the Qin-Han dynasties, the exchanges were mainly sporadic and nongovernmental. It was Emperor Wudi who ushered in an epoch in Chinese and Western cultural exchanges. He sent the ambassador Zhang Qian to the western regions to form a coalition with the states there. Zhang Qian went through misery and hardships to accomplish this historic mission. He explored the way to the west and in this way opened the trade route between China and the west, i.e. the Silk Road. Sima Qian visualized this feat as blazing the path into the west regions. The advancing Chinese culture made for the west through the Central Asia and Western Asia; meanwhile Western culture also made in-roads into China. The most influential event was the influx of Buddhism from India during the Western Han and the Eastern Han dynasties. The absorption of foreign cultures was instrumental in advancing Chinese cultural development.

The prosperity of the Chinese culture in the Qin-Han dynasties was closely associated with the development of science and technology. The Han Dynasty saw the invention of papermaking technology, which created outstanding conditions for cultural transmission. *Zhoubi Suanjing* was a classic work on astronomy and mathematics written in the Western Han Dynasty. *Nine Chapters on Mathematical Art* summarized the important achievements in this field during the Spring and Autumn Period and the Warring States Period. These two books proved that Chinese mathematics was in the lead in the world. In the medical field, there appeared classics in traditional Chinese medical science: *Classic of Internal Medicine* and *Febrile and Other Diseases*, which lay the theoretical foundation for the Chinese traditional medicine. Zhang Heng invented an armillary sphere (celestial globe) and invented the world's first seismograph, enhancing science and technology in ancient China to a fairly high level.

■ Culture in the Dynasties of Wei and Jin, and the Northern and Southern Dynasties

This period was important in the development of the Chinese culture. The unity of the Qin and the Han was broken. Tumultuous division was typical most of the time. Against this political background, emerged the culture of the influential and privileged families of scholar-officials, plus the cultural conflict and fusion of different nationalities.

The culture of *shizu*, the influential and privileged families of scholar-officials was the dominant ideology at that time. The founding of the system of *shizu* and *menfa*, the distinguished family of hereditary power and influence, established *shizu*'s mastery in every social sector. Profound Learning (*Xuan Xue*) was the embodiment of their academic culture characterized by the appearance of being morally lofty, aloof and proud. Profound Learning was fresh and succinct, ingenious and elegant, transcending the worldly desire and attaining sainthood.

It was the reflection of the image of *shizu* in the learning. Aloof from petty politics and material pursuits, the literati were indulged in fantasy and idle talk, i.e. philosophical disputes completely divorced from reality. They were fond of an unconventional way of life expressed in elegant, refined, carefree and witty conversations. Shaking off philistine scholasticism in the study of Confucian classics in the Han Dynasty, they entered the mysterious realm of abstract reasoning. The birth of Profound Learning greatly elevated the level of abstract thinking in Chinese ideology. The culture of *shizu* found the outward expression in the family culture. The elementary feature of *shizu* was to pass on paternal teaching and influence from generation to generation in a family. During the dynasties of Wei and Jin, and the Northern and Southern dynasties, which were plagued by internecine wars among the states, the knowledge handed down from father to son enabled the Chinese to pass on the torch of learning from generation to generation continuously. This was the ever-lasting historic contribution made by the culture of *shizu*. The eminent clans became the representatives, undertakers and defenders of the national culture at that time, for example, Wang family in Langya, Xie family in Chenjun, Xiao family in Lanling, and Yan family in Langya.

This period also witnessed in the north an upsurge of ethnic groups integrating. Due to the havoc wrought by successive wars, the northwestern nomads had been crossing the Great Wall and had been pushing on to the plains ever since the time of the Eastern Han. The wholesale migration to the hinterland of the ethnic minority groups in the northern frontier regions led to the inhabitation by both Han nationality and minority nationalities. The five major minority nationalities including Huns, Xianbei, Di, Jie and Qiang are also called “the five Hu nationalities”. During the turbulent civil strife at the end of the Western Jin Dynasty, the upper strata of the five Hu nationalities dispatched troops to set up separatist regimes by force of arms. As a result of this there emerged in the Yellow River Valley sixteen kingdoms and the large-scale contention between nationalities in the Northern Dynasty. Although the five minority nationalities conquered the Han nationality by force, they were finally assimilated by the advanced culture of Hans. The developed agricultural civilization and feudal system in the Yellow River basin gradually tamed the primitive and wild nature of the five minority nationalities. The simple customs and passionate impulse of the nomads invigorated the ancient Han civilization. The intermarriage between Han and Five Non-Han nationalities infused fresh blood into the vein of the Chinese nation’s development. The cultural collision between different nationalities was bound to realize their integration with the result that the development of Chinese civilization went a step further.

Cultural integration was also embodied in the gradual integration of Buddhism into the Chinese culture. Buddhism monasteries first appeared in China at the end of the Western Han Dynasty, but it was only until the Wei-Jin period that Buddhism began to spread and flourish. The profound reasoning of Buddhism influenced Chinese traditional philosophy. At its heyday, sculptures and frescoes bearing images of Buddha and based on Buddhist tales were in vogue. Dunhuang Mogao Grottoes, Datong Yungang Grottoes and Luoyang Longmen Grottoes were all dug during this period. Each of these grottoes was decorated with exquisitely executed Buddhist images and was world-famous for their engravings. Among the eminent scientific feats during this period were the figure of π worked out by Zu Chongzhi, which, by then was the most precisely calculated figure in the world, *Qi Min Yao Shu (Important Arts for the People’s Welfare)*, an agricultural encyclopedia compiled by Jia Sixie of the Northern Wei Dynasty, and *Treatise on the Pulse* written by the noted physician Wang Shuhe.

■ Culture in the Sui Dynasty and the Tang Dynasty

The Sui-Tang period was another milestone in the development of the Chinese culture after the Qin-Han period. In terms of the flourishing age in ancient China, no one can write off the Han Dynasty and the Tang Dynasty. In 589, the unification of China by the founder of the Sui Dynasty put an end to the period of division and turmoil, which lasted more than three centuries. The foundation of the Tang Dynasty ushered in a mighty Tang empire. The Tang Dynasty was at that time the largest and, economically and culturally speaking, the most developed empire in the world. Supported by the full-fledged national strength, the culture in the golden age of the Sui and Tang dynasties saw its achievements surpassing those in the previous dynasties. The cultural progress resulted from the following factors. The economic development in the south in Wei, Jin and Southern dynasties acted as a catalyst in the leap of economic strength of ancient China. The decline of the influential and privileged families of scholar-officials and of hereditary power and the landlords made it possible for the clan commoners to enter the historical arena and for the newly-emerging forces to rise rapidly to dominance, which unleashed the social productive forces and transformed the social system. The integration of the cultures of different nationalities infused the social development with vitality.

The Sui and the Tang dynasties were magnanimous and tolerant in their academic and cultural policy. Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism were competing against each other in a bizarre and beautiful way. Integration was the result of mutual absorption and infiltration. Emperor Wen Di of the Sui Dynasty esteemed both Buddhism and Confucianism. Taoism won special royal favor in the Tang period, because Li Er (Laozi), who was supposed to be the founder of that school, had the same family name as the imperial family. In one of his edicts, Emperor Gao Zu Li Yuan explicitly said that Taoism should be given priority over all other religious faiths. Emperor Gao Zong conferred on Li Er the posthumous title of the Supreme Emperor of the Profound Heavens and on Zhuangzi the title of the True Man of Nanhua. Empress Wu Zetian promoted and popularized Buddhist doctrines. Encouraged by the monarch, Buddhism as a religious faith had a mass adherence. Buddhism started to split up into different Buddhist sects, such as the Tiantai sect, the Huayan sect and the Chan sect. In the Sui-Tang period, the process of the integration of Buddhism into the traditional Chinese culture was by and large accomplished. Confucianism remained in the dominant position in the Tang Dynasty. Together with the political unity, the northern and southern branches of the study of Confucian classics collaborated. Emperor Tai Zong of the Tang Dynasty entrusted Kong Yingda and others with a task of annotating *The Five Classics*. They completed the 180-volume *Annotations to The Five Classics*. Tai Zong also authorized Yan Shigu to collate and edit the texts of *The Five Classics*, creating *Definitive Edition of the Five Classics*. The sovereigns' tolerance of Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism was helpful for the three branches to assimilate and merge with each other, resulting in the integration of the three, on the basis of which the Confucian school of idealistic philosophy of the Song and Ming dynasties took shape.

The magnificent culture in the Sui-Tang dynasties demonstrated to the world her self-confidence, her vigor and her openness. The Tang empire developed extensive ties with many countries and regions. The golden age of Sui-Tang witnessed closer relations between China and foreign countries. Chang'an was the cosmopolitan cultural center. People of the minority nationalities in China as well as foreign emissaries, ecclesiastics and merchants came to Chang'an en masse, bringing with them exotic products, music, dance, customs and religions,