

<<中国历史与文化>>

图书基本信息

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作者：旅舜 著

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前言

China enjoys a long and magnificent history and a splendid and colorful traditional culture. Therefore, it presents a great challenge to cover such a wide array of rich and colorful content in so thin a book. The best solution is to present the brightest crystals of Chinese culture and history, which occupy only a fraction of the whole, with the purpose of providing our readers with a general but initial understanding of Chinese civilization. Following a long and eventful prehistoric age, as early as in the middle of the 16th century BC China entered the earliest recorded written history and developed the earliest art of writing, i.e., inscriptions on oracle bones, and made grand bronze ware and pottery of excellent workmanship. In the following years, Chinese civilization has surprised the whole world with her great inventions and innovations one after the other. Although pottery is universal, porcelain is a Chinese invention from which people can get a glimpse of the exquisiteness of this Asian civilization. Moreover, the invention and spread of the Four Great Inventions from ancient China, i.e. the technology of papermaking, printing, the compass and gunpowder, had played a decisive role in promoting the development of the civilization of the whole world. However, the above only reflect Chinese civilization from the perspective of the material; what's more splendid lies in its spiritual contributions. As early as in the fourth or fifth century BC an unprecedented prosperity in the ideological and cultural fields of China along with the profound changes and reforms in politics and economy started to appear. Many schools of philosophy and thought came into being, and the representatives of Confucianism, Taoism, Legalism, Moism, the School of Yin and Yang, the School of the Political Strategists and others contributed books or delivered lectures to popularize their ideas, which led to a flourishing academic atmosphere and literally hundreds of schools of thought. None of the thought was superficial in any sense and each school distinguished itself and was worshiped as a classic by later generations with profound study, analyses, and interpretations. Confucianism was considered the highest standard to reach for by the ruling classes and became the philosophy ruling ancient China for around 2,000 years. Acting as an efficient coagulant, Confucianism had guaranteed the harmony and stability of this patriarchal society, and delayed considerably the destruction and collapse of the feudal system. However, it had also slowed down China's move to become a more advanced society so that China still lingered on as an agricultural society when any other countries in the world had been already industrialized. In addition to developing its philosophies, ancient China spared no effort in perfecting and developing a fairly complete set of administrative systems, among which, the imperial examination system, i.e. to choose talented people for civil service through imperial examination, has always been dwelt upon by Westerners with greatrelish. All of these have become important components of traditional Chinese culture and laid an essential foundation for the solidity of the system. However, this patriarchal clan system had its inherent disadvantages and unavoidable limitations. The system of "a wise emperor being assisted by virtuous ministers" the core of Chinese patriarchal clan system, kept being destroyed by the increasing centralization of emperor's power. The imperial examination system was full of defects because of increasingly serious fraud. All these were fatal roots threatening the development and existence of a dynasty which would have to rely on the power of others to overturn the former one, or was replaced by more advanced systems. As China steps into the 21 st century, the rich cultural heritage spanning thousands of years still possesses great value for our reference. Some will come to an end with old systems, while some others will flourish under new historical conditions, becoming even more splendid with more sparkling colors. Maybe this is where the meaning of our reevaluation of the 5,000-year Chinese history and civilization lies.

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内容概要

China enjoys a long and magnificent history and a splendid and colorful traditional culture. The book presents the brightest crystals of Chinese culture and history, which occupy only a fraction of the whole, with the purpose of providing our readers with a general but initial understanding of Chinese civilization. As early as the middle 16th century BC China entered the earliest recorded written history and developed the earliest art of writing - inscriptions on oracle bones, and made grand bronze ware and pottery of excellent workmanship. In the following years, Chinese civilization has surprised the whole world with her great inventions and innovations one after the other and rich cultural heritage. The book, divided into 12 chapters from the time of the Remote Antiquity to the Republic of China, shows the readers the vital events taking place during the past thousands of years in Chinese history.

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插图：

后记

A long with the increasing frequency of cultural exchanges, China, an ancient Asian country with a brilliant civilization of more than 5,000 years, has attracted more and more foreign friends to travel to its mysterious and numerous places of historic interest and scenic beauty as well as hear so many of the old enchanting stories behind them. To satisfy our foreign friends' curiosity and help them better understand China, we have compiled this book to introduce systematically Chinese history and civilization. To avoid it becoming a boring history textbook and thus influencing your good mood for traveling, we tried to attract our readers with many interesting historical stories as well as the lifelike historical figures in them. However, the mission of this book is to tell the history, so major points of historical development have inevitably become the basic glue connecting every story in the book. Such a narration method is not adopted in the part of the Republic of China, which focuses on the explanation of the law of the historical development instead of the depiction of the characteristics of the figures. Of course, Chiang Kai-shek and Mao Zedong, respective representatives of the KMT and the CPC, were both leader like figures with distinctive characteristics. They have both influenced the development of Chinese history in their own ways. From the point of view of historical materialism, it is the inherent law of society, not specific historical figures or leaders that decides the fate of the history. It is absolutely impossible to give a complete and thorough introduction of the grandness and profoundness of Chinese history and culture in so thin a book. Following this will be a series of books specializing in the introduction and illustration of Chinese history and culture according to subjects or categories, so as to compensate for the missing details from this book. While to those defects and errors in this book resulting from the limited time or our carelessness, your forgiveness will be greatly appreciated. And of course, your valuable criticism and suggestion are always welcome!

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