

WORLD HISTORY-1
MODULE II-BRONZE AGE CIVILIZATIONS



**TOPIC- CHINESE CIVILIZATION AND
ESSENTIAL FEATURES**

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- The first center of civilization in China developed in the region of the river Hwang-Ho.
- That is why this river is also called ‘the sorrow of china’.
- The earliest Chinese civilization of which archaeologists tell us in the Shang civilization. It was established by the ruler Tang
- The Shang rulers are believed to have been in power from 1765 to 1122 B.C.
- The Shang people had developed a high level of culture , comparable to the centers of the other early civilization.
- One of the primary duties of the Shang king was, therefore, to protect his people from them.
- The oldest historical classic is the Shuchung or the book of History of Confucious
- Date of composition-2205 BC



- The Shang dynasty was overthrown by the neighboring Chou dynasty.
- The Chous preserved the excellence of the Shang culture and continued to rule the land till about 250 B.C.

Social Classes in Ancient China



- Below the king in Chinese society came a number of noblemen.
- The king distributed lands among the nobles , who in return helped him in wars and conquests.
- Some scholars regard this arrangement as a kind of feudal system which will be discussed later.
- The next social class of importance was perhaps that of merchants and craftsmen.
- The bulk of the population was composed of farmers, and at the lowest end stood the slaves, who were as in other cultures of the time, prisoners of war.
- They, therefore, needed a good army, and soldieries occupied a place of importance in society.



- The soldiers wore bronze helmets and a metal body armor.
- Bronze daggers, axes, bows and metal tipped arrows have been discovered.

OCCUPATIONS, ARTS AND CRAFTS IN ANCIENT CHINA



- As in the other three cultures, the prosperity of the shang people depended on Agriculture.
- Millet was the main cereal cultivated-Wheat was introduced later
- The shang people came to cultivate rice on a large scale
- The chinese worked out an elaborate system of irrigation, which reduced the distress caused by floods
- From very early days the chinese wore linen clothing.
- There is an evidence that the shang people used silk
- Breeding of silkworms was begun, and silk production became an important Chinese industry
- The chinese made very fine pottery which they learned to glaze
- Chinese metal worker was a master of his craft

Chinese Ancestor Worship and Oracles



- Ancestor worship was the most popular practice of the ancient Chinese.
- They believed that death transformed a mortal into a spirit and that the spirit possessed great powers
- The dead person was wrapped in matting for burial in a grave.
- Furniture, pottery, bronze vessels and other objects were placed with the dead body
- The tombs of the kings were spacious and the tomb chamber was of finely carved wood
- This reminds us of the Egyptian burial customs
- The gods worshipped were as, in other civilizations, the forces
- The Chinese who believed in a Chief God called 'The ruler Above'
- They developed the practice of Oracles
- Shangti was one of the important gods

CRAFTS



- China was a land of various crafts
- Paper was first manufactured in China-made out of rags
- The Arabs took the technique of making paper to the west
- Seem to have been the first printers
- In 868 AD the 'diamond Sutra' came out-first book printed in the East
- In 1900 a copy of the book was recovered from the chinese province of Kansu
- Producers of silk-important item of the export trade of China
- The chinese porcelain was world famous from very ancient times

Trade



- Chinese had a very active trade with the countries of the west
- About 120 BC Emperor Wu-ti had opened a long trade-route which passed through the borders of india,Persia and syria to Europe.
- It came to be known as the Silk route
- The various products of china were taken into the mediteranean regions.

CHINESE SCRIPT AND WRITING SYSTEM



- Origin of writing in China was probably during the Shang dynasty
- The Chinese script was derived from the Sumerian
- It started as a pictographic script-picture standing for word
- It was independently developed as an ideographic script in which a sign represents an idea-Han dynasty
- Down through the centuries, these pictographs underwent significant changes and reforms
- Writing became an art and same techniques were followed everywhere
- Writers wrote on silk or bamboo slips with a brush
- At first the people wrote on wood, then on silk and by 150 AD, they had paper, pen and ink

Chinese Religions and Philosophy



- The two major religions of ancient china are Taoism and Confucianism.
- The teachings of two great Chinese philosophers, Lao-tse and Confucious are associated with Taoism and Confucianism
- Taoism preaches the virtues of a simple life and the denial of selfishness
- While Lao-tse was more concerned with the individual, Confucius emphasized moral and social order for society
- In course of time, Confucianism became rigid, formal and conservative. Taoism preached enlightenment and inner joy for the individual

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY



- One of the achievements of the Chinese in engineering was the building of canals
- These canals were used for navigation as well as for irrigation
- The Chinese made several contributions to science
- They compiled lists of stars and constellations and could explain many astronomical phenomena like the Eclipse.
- In Mathematics the Chinese used the decimal system
- In the 2nd century AD they invented a seismograph
- With the help of this instrument, the Chinese calculated the epicenter or the exact place where the earthquake began