

Chapter 5: Ancient China to 221 B.C.E. Chapter Introduction
Book Title: World Civilizations
Printed By: Colin Morris-Moncada (006279659@coyote.csusb.edu)
© 2018 Cengage Learning, Cengage Learning

Chapter Introduction

*The people of our race were created by Heaven / Having from the beginning
distinctions and rules*

Our people cling to customs / And what they admire is seemly behavior.

—The Zhou Book of Songs

Oracle Bone.

Next to agriculture and metallurgy, the development of writing had the greatest impact on the early development of civilizations in Africa, Asia, and southern Europe. In China, on the flat surfaces of bones like this, Shang sages incised the earliest surviving examples of Chinese ideographs. The messages were questions addressed to the gods, and the priests read the answers by examining the patterns of cracks in the bones after hot stones or bronze wands had been pressed against them.



The British Library/Heritage-Images/Glow Images, Inc.

Chronology	
c. 2200–c. 1700 B.C.E.	Xia Dynasty
c. 1700–1045 B.C.E.	Shang Dynasty
1045–771 B.C.E.	Western Zhou Dynasty: unified empire, capital at Xian

771–256 B.C.E.	Eastern Zhou Dynasty: new capital at Loyang
<hr/>	
551–479 B.C.E.	Life of Confucius
<hr/>	
c. 400–221 B.C.E.	Era of the Warring States
<hr/>	

The most stable and in many ways the most successful civilization in history began in China in the second millennium B.C.E. It continued with its essential characteristics intact through many changes in political leadership, meanwhile subjecting an enormous region and many different peoples to “the Chinese way.” The Chinese educated classes, who considered themselves the hub of the universe, formed the most cohesive ruling group the world has ever seen. They combined scholarship and artistic sensitivity with great administrative abilities. Most of the classic elements of China’s culture were firmly established by about 500 B.C.E.; thereafter they changed only very slowly.

Chapter 5: Ancient China to 221 B.C.E. Chapter Introduction

Book Title: World Civilizations

Printed By: Colin Morris-Moncada (006279659@coyote.csusb.edu)

© 2018 Cengage Learning, Cengage Learning

© 2020 Cengage Learning Inc. All rights reserved. No part of this work may be reproduced or used in any form or by any means - graphic, electronic, or mechanical, or in any other manner - without the written permission of the copyright holder.