

## China - Ancient Times through the Dynasties

### Prehistoric and Ancient History (1.7 million years ago-476 B.C.)

China's earliest primitive human discovered so far is known as "Yuanmou Man," a fossil anthropoid unearthed in Yuanmou in Yunnan Province who lived approximately 1.7 million years ago. The better-known "Peking Man," discovered in the Zhoukoudian area in the suburbs of Beijing, lived about 600,000 years ago. Peking Man was able to walk upright, make and use simple tools, and make fire. By the start of the Neolithic Age in China about 10,000 years ago, people were cultivating rice and millet with farming tools, something revealed by relics found in the ruins of Hemudu in Yuyao, Zhejiang Province, and Banpo, near Xi'an City, Shaanxi Province. The Hemudu site, about 7,000 years old, was one of the earliest New Stone Age locations along the lower reaches of the Yangtze River. Archaeologists have unearthed in the area of Hemudu piles of rice grains, husks, stalks and leaves — and other indications of abundant rice cultivation. The rice grown at Hemudu was long-grained non-glutinous rice, and is the earliest example of artificially cultivated rice that has been found in China to date. The relics are also the oldest rice found so far in Asia.

The Xia Dynasty started in 2070 B.C. The center of Xia was the western section of modern Henan Province and the southern section of modern Shanxi Province with a sphere of influence that reached the northern and southern areas of the Yellow River. It was in this period that the slave society began to appear. The Xia Dynasty was overthrown by Shang. The Western Zhou (1046-771 B.C.) Dynasty saw further development of slave society. This era was followed by the Spring and Autumn (770-476 B.C.) and Warring States (475-221 B.C.) periods when silk production advanced and steel production started. This era also produced the philosophers Lao Zi, Confucius, Mencius and Mo Zi, as well as the military scientist Sun Wu, author of the Art of War.

## THE DYNASTIES

Dynasty	Date
Prehistoric Times	1.7 million years – 21st century BC
Xia	2070-1600 B.C.
Shang	1600-1046 B.C.
Western Zhou	1046-771 B.C.
Eastern Zhou	
Spring and Autumn Period	770-476 B.C.
Warring States Period	475-221 B.C.
Qin	221-206 B.C.
Western Han	206 B.C.-A.D. 24
Eastern Han	25-220
Three Kingdoms (Wei, Shu and Wu)	220-265
Western Jin	265-316
Eastern Jin	317-420
Southern and Northern Dynasties	420-589
Sui	581-618
Tang	618-907
Five Dynasties	907-960
Northern Song	960-1127
Southern Song	1127-1279
Yuan	1271-1368
Ming	1368-1644
Qing	1644-1911