

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

On the authority of China's first historian, Sima Qian of the Han (206BCE-CE24) dynasty, the conventional assertion has always been that China has been civilized for 5,000 years, far longer than any other area of the earth. That claim being insufficiently outrageous, a group of historians from China and Taiwan is currently setting out to rewrite their history according to a boast that they have been maintaining a "high level of civilization" twice as long as they previously had alleged – taking the matter back about 10,000 years. Historian Shi Shi, president of the Research Society on the History of the Chinese Nation, is leading this effort. According to this new approach to cultural pride, the Yellow River basin, long thought to have been the cradle of their earliest civilized culture, actually was very much a latecomer.

The Romans knew about silk, which came to them by way of the regular trade traffic of the Silk Road. In Late Latin they referred to the Far Eastern makers of this silk by a word *Sinae* which had come to them by way of Arabic and derived originally from the name of the *Qin* dynasty. It is by way of this Silk Road therefore, that the English language has been supplied with its prefix "Sino-".



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

1,600,000 BCE

At about this point evolutionary change was producing our long legs and bare skin.

From this point until *circa* 500,000 BCE, the existence of *Homo erectus*, the direct human ancestor.

“Then, about 1.8 million years ago, *Homo erectus* came: mighty warrior, skilled hunter, inventor, far-ranging explorer and king of all he surveyed. The size of a modern human and standing as straight, he developed a 1250cc brain, very close to modern man. Along the way he developed many new tools and weapons, invented clothing, and traveled out of Africa, the first hominid to do so. He went across southeast Asia, into northern [China](#) and south to Java. He was now an omnivore who ate mostly meat, both animals and fish. He cooked his food. Evolution had noted the softer food, and degraded his magnificent chewing apparatus. By the end of his reign, his molars and jaw had shrunk to almost that of modern man.”

“*Homo erectus* lived between 1.8 million and 300,000 years ago. It was a successful species for a million and a half years. Early examples had a 900cc brain size on the average. The brain grew steadily during its reign. Toward the end its brain was almost the same size as modern man, at about 1200cc. The species definitely had speech. *Erectus* developed tools, weapons and fire and learned to cook his food. He traveled out of Africa into [China](#) and Southeast Asia and developed clothing for northern climates. He turned to hunting for his food. Only his head and face differed from modern man. Like *Habilis*, the face had massive jaws with huge molars, no chin, thick brow ridges, and a long low skull. Though proportioned the same, he was sturdier in build and much stronger than the modern human.”

**“NARRATIVE HISTORY” AMOUNTS TO FABULATION,
THE REAL STUFF BEING MERE CHRONOLOGY**



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

500,000 BCE

Several variants of hominids expanded into temperate Europe — some 20,000 years after some of them had settled in [China](#).

NO-ONE'S LIFE IS EVER NOT DRIVEN PRIMARILY BY HAPPENSTANCE





THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

12,600 BCE

An artist made record of the “Irish elk,” a species of deer that was ranging throughout Europe and Western Asia, with closely related species in Siberia and in [China](#). This Megalosaurus was neither Irish nor an elk, although we have dug most of the evidences for it out of Irish peat bogs. It had not only humongous antlers (on the male only) which fossilized well, but also a pronounced camel-like fatty hump above its shoulders which did not fossilize at all but which was most clearly depicted in these cave paintings.

EXTINCTION

NOBODY COULD GUESS WHAT WOULD HAPPEN NEXT





CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

10,000 BCE

From about this point until 4,000 BCE, painted pottery bowls ([China](#)).

Jared Diamond's Domesticated Animal Species

Era	Plant	Name	Place
10,000BCE	dog		Southwest Asia, China, North America
8,500 BCE	goat		Southwest Asia
8,500 BCE	sheep		Southwest Asia
by 7,500 BCE	pig		China, Southwest Asia
by 7,500 BCE	silkworm		China
7,000 BCE	humped cattle		Indus Valley
6,000 BCE	donkey		Egypt
6,000 BCE	cow		Southwest Asia, India, (?)North Africa
6,000 BCE	cat ^a		Egypt
by 5,000 BCE	guinea fowl		Sahel?
4,000 BCE	horse		Ukraine
4,000 BCE	water buffalo		China?
by 3,500 BCE	turkey	<i>Meleagrididae</i>	Mesoamerica
by 3,500 BCE	guinea pig		Andes of South America
by 3,500 BCE	llama / alpaca		Andes of South America
2,500 BCE	Bactrian camel		Central Asia
2,500 BCE	Arabian camel		Arabia

a. In regard to the domestic cat: This was Jared Diamond's info, but a more recent genetic study indicates that the cat that domesticated itself was the *Felis silvestris lybica* (Near Eastern subspecies of wildcat), and that it had domesticated itself by 8,000 BCE, presumably in Turkey and the Middle East rather than in Africa, in Egypt. That 6,000 BCE is much too late is shown by evidence of a cat buried with a human on the island of Cyprus where there were no wildcats, which grave dates to 7,500 BCE.

THE TASK OF THE HISTORIAN IS TO CREATE HINDSIGHT WHILE INTERCEPTING ANY ILLUSION OF FORESIGHT. NOTHING A HUMAN CAN SEE CAN EVER BE SEEN AS IF THROUGH THE EYE OF GOD.



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

6,200 BCE

At about this point the pig and the water buffalo were being domesticated in eastern Asia and [China](#).

The chicken was domesticated in southern Asia.

Flax was cultivated in southwestern Asia.

Sugar cane was being grown in New Guinea.

Yams, bananas, and coconuts were being grown in Indonesia.

“HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE” BEING A VIEW FROM A PARTICULAR POINT IN TIME (JUST AS THE PERSPECTIVE IN A PAINTING IS A VIEW FROM A PARTICULAR POINT IN SPACE), TO “LOOK AT THE COURSE OF HISTORY MORE GENERALLY” WOULD BE TO SACRIFICE PERSPECTIVE ALTOGETHER. THIS IS FANTASY-LAND, YOU’RE FOOLING YOURSELF. THERE CANNOT BE ANY SUCH THINGIE, AS SUCH A PERSPECTIVE.



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

6,000 BCE

Modern type domesticated bread wheat and lentils were beginning to be cultivated in southwestern Asia.

Citrus fruit was beginning to be cultivated in Indochina.

Bullrush millet was beginning to be cultivated in southern Algeria.

Finger millet was beginning to be cultivated in Ethiopia.

Foxtail millet and peaches were beginning to be cultivated in central [China](#).

In [China](#), the beginning of the village of Ban Po.

Squash was beginning to be cultivated in Mexico.

Irrigation was coming into use in Mesopotamia.

Chili peppers and beans dating to this period have been discovered in a Peruvian highland valley. Both regular beans (*Phaseolus vulgaris*) and lima beans (*Phaseolus lunatus*) are known archaeologically from Peru.

PLANTS

**WHAT I'M WRITING IS TRUE BUT NEVER MIND
YOU CAN ALWAYS LIE TO YOURSELF**



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

5,000 BCE

We can roughly position the “Garden of Eden” mythology, for what it’s worth, in Mesopotamia in the timeframe 6,000-4,000 BCE, because during that time period the temperature was warming, culminating in an era somewhat warmer than present, in which equatorial weather patterns may have reached farther north than they do now and westerly storms may have been confined to latitudes higher than at present. During the following period, until 2,700 BCE, the YangShao culture would be flourishing in farming villages in various valleys of the [Yellow River](#)¹ of [China](#), from which sites we have collected pottery that had been painted.

PLANTS

Domesticated rice (*Oryza sativa*) is reported from the Ho-mu-tu site in what is now Chekiang province of [China](#). Cabbage seed from this period has been uncovered, in earthen jars, in Shensi Province — cabbage today makes up fully 1/4 of all expenditures for vegetables among Chinese families!

1. The [Yellow River](#) could not have been as yet referred to as the Yellow River, because back then its waters were still clear. It would be during the Qin and Han dynasties that the Chinese central government would promote farming along the upper reaches of the river’s watershed and the flow of sediments would begin. Now, of course, a very dangerous situation exists downstream, because the years of deposit of sedimentation have raised the riverbed until it is held in its channel only by enormous man-made dikes along each side of the flow. The bottom of the river can now be higher, rather than lower, than surrounding fields!



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

4,000 BCE

At about this point, northern [China](#) began to have villages, mostly occupied by farmers of surrounding fields.

At about this point King Menes was having a [canal](#) dug in Upper [Egypt](#).

The process for manufacturing ale was spreading through [China](#), Iraq, [Egypt](#), and sub-Saharan Africa. As the development appears to have been a spin-off of bread-making technology, it is more affirmatively linked to women than most early social developments.

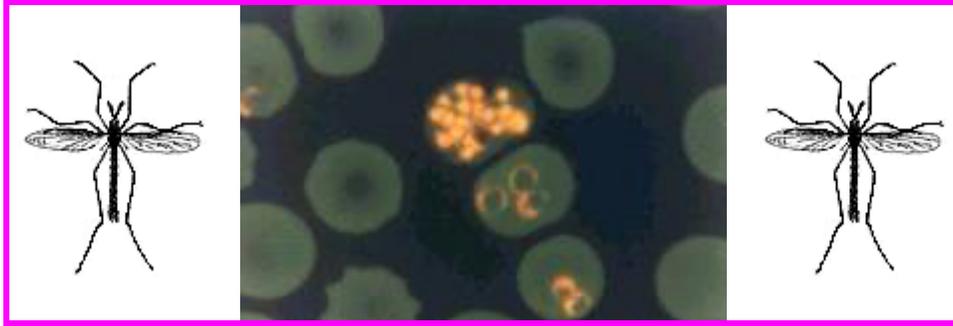
Already, in Persia and in [Afghanistan](#), copper was being extracted from ores. At this point the [Egyptians](#) also were coming to mine and smelt such copper ores.

THE FUTURE CAN BE EASILY PREDICTED IN RETROSPECT



3,727 BCE

Chinese folklore attributes to this fantastically early year the description by “Shen Nung” of [cannabis](#) (hemp) as a “superior herb” for treatment of [malaria](#), female disorders, etc. (Presumably this folklore actually has arisen at some considerably later point, perhaps during the 1st millennium of our common era.)



CHANGE IS ETERNITY, STASIS A FIGMENT

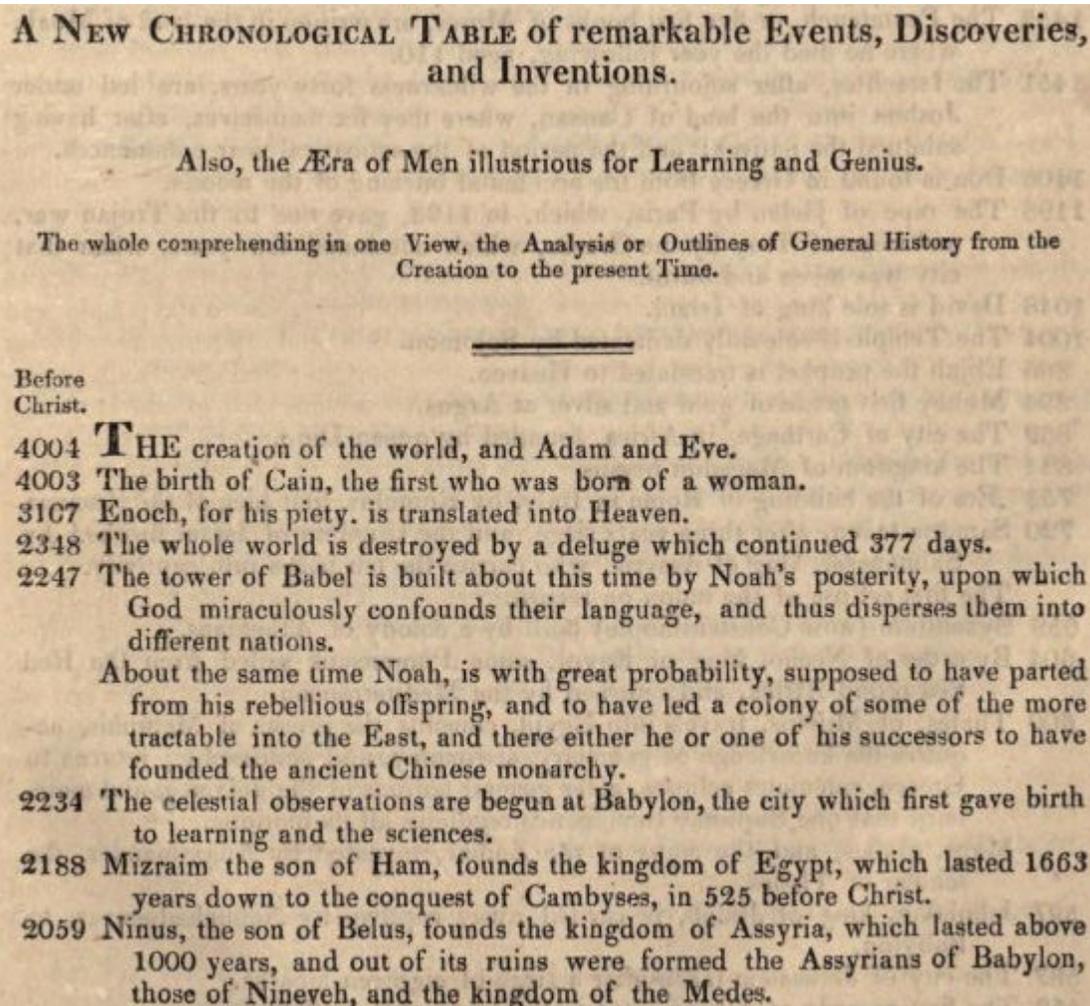


CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

3,110 BCE

Measurements of the sediment beds of the Yangtze river delta on the coast of [China](#) indicate that over the following millennium and a half there would be a very high sedimentation rate accompanied by a major change of flow into a new subdelta and followed by a period of deep water with clay deposition.



DO I HAVE YOUR ATTENTION? GOOD.



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

3,000 BCE

At about this point the Aleut and the Inuit were venturing into the North American landmass.

In the region that is now [Tibet](#), Sumxi Lake rose during a wet period. Subsequently, experiencing an “abrupt disequilibrium,” it would in 2,300 BCE fall into a great drought.

THE FUTURE CAN BE EASILY PREDICTED IN RETROSPECT





CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

2,900 BCE

Fuxi (Fu Hsi), the 1st [Chinese](#) ruler, presumably mythological as his claim to fame is having taught how to domesticate animals.

BETWEEN ANY TWO MOMENTS ARE AN INFINITE NUMBER OF MOMENTS, AND BETWEEN THESE OTHER MOMENTS LIKEWISE AN INFINITE NUMBER, THERE BEING NO ATOMIC MOMENT JUST AS THERE IS NO ATOMIC POINT ALONG A LINE. MOMENTS ARE THEREFORE FIGMENTS. THE PRESENT MOMENT IS A MOMENT AND AS SUCH IS A FIGMENT, A FLIGHT OF THE IMAGINATION TO WHICH NOTHING REAL CORRESPONDS. SINCE PAST MOMENTS HAVE PASSED OUT OF EXISTENCE AND FUTURE MOMENTS HAVE YET TO ARRIVE, WE NOTE THAT THE PRESENT MOMENT IS ALL THAT EVER EXISTS — AND YET THE PRESENT MOMENT BEING A MOMENT IS A FIGMENT TO WHICH NOTHING IN REALITY CORRESPONDS.



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

2,852 BCE

From this year, supposedly, to the year 2,205 BCE, supposedly, the mythical Three Rulers and Five Emperors of once-upon-a-time [China](#), credited with the invention of farming, building, medicine, silk culture, yada yada yada. In your dreams.

THE FALLACY OF MOMENTISM: THIS STARRY UNIVERSE DOES NOT CONSIST OF A SEQUENCE OF MOMENTS. THAT IS A FIGMENT, ONE WE HAVE RECOURSE TO IN ORDER TO PRIVILEGE TIME OVER CHANGE, A PRIVILEGING THAT MAKES CHANGE SEEM UNREAL, DERIVATIVE, A MERE APPEARANCE. IN FACT IT IS CHANGE AND ONLY CHANGE WHICH WE EXPERIENCE AS REALITY, TIME BEING BY WAY OF RADICAL CONTRAST UNEXPERIENCED — A MERE INTELLECTUAL CONSTRUCT. THERE EXISTS NO SUCH THING AS A MOMENT. NO INSTANT HAS EVER FOR AN INSTANT EXISTED.



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

2,800 BCE

The *FAH SHEN-CHIH SHU* detailed the five “sacred crops” of [China](#), soybeans, rice, wheat, barley, and millet.

PLANTS

FIGURING OUT WHAT AMOUNTS TO A “HISTORICAL CONTEXT” IS WHAT THE CRAFT OF HISTORICIZING AMOUNTS TO, AND THIS NECESSITATES DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN THE SET OF EVENTS THAT MUST HAVE TAKEN PLACE BEFORE EVENT E COULD BECOME POSSIBLE, AND MOST CAREFULLY DISTINGUISHING THEM FROM ANOTHER SET OF EVENTS THAT COULD NOT POSSIBLY OCCUR UNTIL SUBSEQUENT TO EVENT E.



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

2,737 BCE

Allegedly, the brewing of [tea](#) was discovered by the emperor Shen Nung. [Tea was not the product of a bush, but of a tree that can grow up to 60 feet high. The reason that it is always now considered a bush is that by constant pruning we keep it in bush form, and the reason that we keep it in bush form is for convenience in constant pruning of the new crops of young and tender leaves. This plant is a kind of camellia, named the *Camellia sinensis*. The *Camellia* genus itself was so named in honor of a Moravian Jesuit missionary named Kame, one of the great early white plant collectors. All of the 240 species of this *Theacea* family of plants are native to western China and northern [India](#), but, historically, only in western [China](#) was an infusion made of the leaves, as cited in the above legend about the year 2737 BCE. In the earliest times, we know from archaeology, the infusion of the leaves was sometimes salted, sometimes mixed with boiled shallots, and sometimes spiced with dried orangepeel, dates, etc. The *Camellia sinensis* tree also was growing, unnoticed and unutilized, all over northern India, so it is appropriate that the legend cite a Chinese emperor as its discoverer.]

PLANTS

THE FUTURE IS MOST READILY PREDICTED IN RETROSPECT





CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

2,600 BCE

To estimate time of day, the [Chinese](#) were using a vertical pole to project the shadow of the Sun.

At about this period, Cylinder A of Gudea was inscribed with a reference to the heliacal rising of a star marking the month (possibly that star was Aldebaran, rising in the constellation Taurus). This cylinder also indicated a system of named stars (possibly a recognition of *Nidaba mul ku-ba* as the constellation of the “corn-goddess”).

At about this period, Cylinder B of Gudea was inscribed with a reference to celestial positioning of [moon](#) by use of lunar “houses.”

At about this period in Elam, a cylindrical stone jar was created that is still in existence, and shows a bestiary and pantheon iconography that we can infer, from later Cassite kudurru, to probably have been related to the stars.

ASTRONOMY

**LIFE IS LIVED FORWARD BUT UNDERSTOOD BACKWARD?
— NO, THAT’S GIVING TOO MUCH TO THE HISTORIAN’S STORIES.
LIFE ISN’T TO BE UNDERSTOOD EITHER FORWARD OR BACKWARD.**



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

2,500 BCE

The LongShan Culture of East [China](#) and the central river valleys in which pottery was made on wheels — divination, ancestor worship, the sorts of thing you would expect. Some things were happening also, however, that you might not have factored into your calculation — for instance, the “A” variety of [influenza](#) virus in wild duck populations mutated and began to infect domesticated ducks.



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

2,297 BCE

1st recorded flood of the Huang Ho in [China](#).



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

2,296 BCE

The earliest presently known record of a [comet](#) sighting — it goes without saying, by the [Chinese](#).

ASTRONOMY

On the other side of the globe what goes around came around: Akkadians conquered Sumerians.



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

2,205 BCE

Until 1,766 BCE, the Xia or Hsia Dynasty of [China](#), the legendary 1st dynasty in which horses came to be domesticated, and rice and millet came under cultivation. An emperor named Yu, otherwise unattested, is credited with flood control on the course of the [Yellow River](#), and with irrigation systems, as well as with fighting mythical monsters. (Well, **somebody** had to do it.)

What seems to have happened is that a landslide created a temporary dam some 200 meters high that choked off the [Yellow River](#) for some 6 to 9 months. When the rising water behind this pile of rubble finally overtopped its brim, it quickly washed away, creating a surge that might well be among the largest of the [Holocene epoch](#). Jumbled human remains found at Lajia downstream have now been radiocarbon-dated, and indicate that this happened in about 1900BCE.



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

2,136 BCE

October 22: The [Chinese](#) made their 1st presently known record of an [eclipse](#) of the [sun](#).

ASTRONOMY

NEVER READ AHEAD! TO APPRECIATE OCTOBER 22, 2,136 BCE AT ALL ONE MUST APPRECIATE IT AS A TODAY (THE FOLLOWING DAY, TOMORROW, IS BUT A PORTION OF THE UNREALIZED FUTURE AND IFFY AT BEST; POSSIBLY AT THIS POINT NO-ONE KNEW THAT THIS WAS EVEN POSSIBLE, FOR THERE TO BE AN ECLIPSE OF THE SUN, AND POSSIBLY AT THIS POINT NO-ONE THOUGHT TO PREDICT THAT THERE WOULD EVER AGAIN OCCUR A REPETITION OF SUCH AN UNSETTLING EVENT).



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

2,000 BCE

Before this point in time, peach, which was known as “the prune of [Persia](#)” (*Prunus persica*) and apricot, which was known as “the prune of Armenia” (*Prunus armeniaca*) had been mentioned in [Chinese](#) literature. It is supposed that *Prunus armeniaca* was transported to Greece by Alexander the Great. We have evidence that the Greeks would be consuming this “prune of Persia” by 332 BCE. Publius Vergilius Maro ([Virgil](#)) would note the *persica* fruit in [Rome](#) circa 50 BCE, and by 1571 the Spanish would have introduced 3 types of it into Mexico.

PLANTS

The 1st zoo in [China](#), the Park of the Intelligence, was founded.



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

1,900 BCE

A landslide near a gorge in the upper [Yellow River](#) seems to have created a temporary dam some 200 meters high that choked off the river's flow for some 6 to 9 months. When the rising water behind this pile of rubble finally overtopped its brim, it quickly washed away, creating a surge that might well be among the largest of the [Holocene epoch](#). We now have a radiocarbon date for the jumbled [Chinese](#) remains found at Lajia downstream.

During this century, Mesopotamian mathematicians would discover what we now consider the “Pythagorean” theorem (Pythagoras at this point wasn't even a gleam in his daddy's eye).

The Manapuri ancient scripture Puyus were written during this century – some depicted polo and [hockey](#) being played by deities.

During this century a British culture known as the Wessex People were building Stonehenge IIIB on Salisbury Plain. The most recent speculation is that the structure was designed to measure the 19-year cycle of lunar eclipses (although often called a Celtic construction, the Gallic Celts would not be arriving in southern England until the 6th Century BCE; the story about this being a Druid temple only dates to the 17th Century CE — before then the Brits had considered this to have been some Roman or Saxon construction).

During this century an unidentified culture placed 167 large stones in an ellipse at Mzoura, Morocco southwest of Tangier. Prehistorians speculate that the construction served astronomical functions, as the stones do align with the setting sun in the spring and fall and their placement required considerable knowledge of right angles.

CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

During this century [Egyptian](#) sappers used portable huts made out of reed frames covered with animal hides, to protect engineers from arrows and hot oil while they used spades to dislodge bricks from the walls of enemy cities that were under siege.

The earliest example of an inscription that seems to have been at least “on its way toward” alphabetic writing was inscribed during this century, at Wadi el-Hol between Luxor and Abydos.



We speculate that this may be the record of a “tailgate party” or worship at which a roast ox was consumed along with considerable inebriation. Only a few of the marks are arguably alphabetic, that is, translatable as spoken syllables of the words of a language.



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

1,766 BCE

Until 1,122 BCE, the Shang Dynasty, the 1st verifiable dynasty of [China](#), from which we have many ritual bronze vessels and “oracle bones” displaying calligraphy. There is evidence of a relatively sophisticated medical system using acupuncture needles and recordings of medical observations.

According to a Chinese history written during the ninth century CE, the Shang Dynasty was established near Anyang in Honan Province (according to twentieth century archaeological findings, the Shang Dynasty is more firmly linked to a northern Chinese victory over an equivalent southern Chinese army in 1523 BCE). Either way, Shang armies, like those of the Eastern Mediterranean, consisted of several dozen chariot-mounted aristocrats and some unarmored servants. Offensive weapons included composite recurved bows and copper-tipped spears and axes, while defensive weapons included palisaded walls, leather-and-bone armor, and moats.



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

1,600 BCE

At about this point the [Chinese](#) were beginning to raise ducks near chickens, pigs, and humans — setting the stage for viral jumping. Soon, of course, swine and avian strains of [influenza](#) would mix and mutate, and create strains of influenza that would infect humans.



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

1,554 BCE

The plain of the [Yellow River](#) of [China](#) was united under a series of 28 or 29 kings of the Shang dynasty, lasting until 1,045 BCE.



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

1,523 BCE

Until 1,027 BCE, the Xia dynasty in [China](#). Also called the Shang dynasty, with a high culture of writing, money, and ancestor worship.

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

1,500 BCE

News items relating to the development of ELECTRIC WALDEN technology:

- Near the Black Sea, Hittites were referring to iron as “metal from heaven,” that is, from meteorites.
- During the Shang Dynasty in China, divination inscriptions were being made on the bottom carapaces of turtles and on the shoulder blades of domestic animals. One such fragment indicates that the Chinese already knew the length of the solar year to be $365\frac{1}{4}$ days.

ELECTRIC WALDEN



“History is the why of now.”

– Austin Meredith



no credit



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

1,468 BCE

The Sumerians invented a single-tube seed drill.

Archaeological evidence such as the distinctive axes and swords of [China](#), found at various Middle Eastern sites, indicate there to have been considerable contact and trade between the Far East and the Middle East. Liquor was distilled in parts of Asia. The soybean was cultivated in Manchuria. Bone inscriptions in [Chinese](#) ideograms refer to the making of [beer](#).

PLANTS

**ESSENCES ARE FUZZY, GENERIC, CONCEPTUAL;
ARISTOTLE WAS RIGHT WHEN HE INSISTED THAT ALL TRUTH IS
SPECIFIC AND PARTICULAR (AND WRONG WHEN HE CHARACTERIZED
TRUTH AS A GENERALIZATION).**



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

1,400 BCE

Multiple cropping within the same year became an agricultural practice in [China](#).



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

1,350 BCE

A news item relating to the development of ELECTRIC WALDEN technology: Decimal numbers were in use in [China](#).

ELECTRIC
WALDEN

“MAGISTERIAL HISTORY” IS FANTASIZING: HISTORY IS CHRONOLOGY



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

1,275 BCE

[Chinese](#) astrologers began to add intercalary months to their lunar calendars, in an effort to keep them aligned with the seasons of the solar year. This is a difficult calculation, so even into the 17th Century periodic adjustments would need to be made (it seem that no-one has kept track of these periodic adjustments, and as a result many of the early dates historians copy from Chinese records, unless they have been carefully verified by the use of external data, must be understood to be merely approximate).²

An army commanded by [Pharaoh](#) Ramesses II battled the Hittites near Hatti, Syria. The Egyptian army was made up of hundreds of chariots and tens of thousands of soldiers, plus support personnel. Charioteers, chariot-borne archers, and aristocrats comprised 15% of the total force. Another 10% were “shooters” (dismounted archers used to protect horse remudas or pursue guerrilla skirmishers through the mountains), “runners” (infantrymen who followed the chariots to dispatch enemy charioteers who had fallen or whose chariots had broken down), or “strong-arm boys” (the men who protected noblemen and supplies in camp). The remainder would have been engineers, support personnel, and camp followers.

2. Western historians acknowledge that they have trouble keeping track of which historical sources are using the Julian calendar and which are using the Gregorian calendar, where a date cited on a document is an Old Style date and when it is a New Style date, when a document dated February 15, 1522 is to be included in our account of the year 1523, etc. — but the difficulties inherent in “transposing” historical lunar dates into equivalent solar dates is, because of this intermittent calendar adjustment, considerably more intractable than this acknowledged new-calendar problem.



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

1,200 BCE

In the Late Bronze age, bells cast in bronze appeared in [China](#).



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

1,122 BCE

There has been a claim that the 1st [Jews](#) to reach [China](#) were arriving via [India](#) early during the Zhou dynasty.

The Zhou Dynasty, with its capital near Xian. “Eunuch” typically indicates that a boy or man has been castrated as part of preparing him for a particular occupation. Such castrations may have been partial, removing only the testicles, or complete, removing also the penis and leaving only a hole through which to urinate, and may have been either voluntary or involuntary. The 1st record we have of eunuchs in [China](#) dates to this period. Chow Kung, the monarch’s younger brother, prescribed castration as a punishment intermediate between the amputation of a limb and decapitation — and those who had been so punished were often allowed to hang around the imperial palace in the role of servants.



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

1,100 BCE

Soybean (*Glycine max*) long had been domesticated in [China](#). By 300 BCE it is thought to have become one of two major food crops for northern China; by 100 CE it would have become common throughout China and Korea. By this time the lotus was also being used as a crop.

PLANTS



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

1,059 BCE



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

According to Ho Peng Yoke's "Ancient and medieval observations of comets and novae in Chinese sources," Vistas in Astronomy 5(1964):127-225, while King Wu-Wang was pressing a punitive war against King Chou, there appeared a *hui-xing* broom star (comet) in the skies over China with its handle pointing toward the east.³

ASTRONOMY

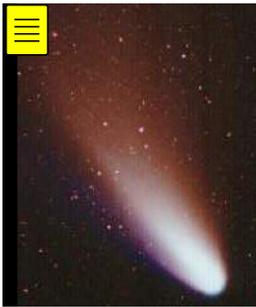
3. According to Xi Ze-zong's "The cometary atlas in the silk book of the Han tomb at Mawangdui," Chinese Astronomy and Astrophysics 8(1984):1-7, a book of silk pages found in a Han tomb dating to circa 168 BCE, first opened in 1973, indicates that this is what a *hui-xing* broom comet looked like. The army that gained the direction in which such a comet pointed would win. (According to Joseph Needham, Arthur Beer, and Ho Ping Yü's "Spiked comets in Ancient China," Observatory 77(1957):137-8, there is a text by Li Chung-feng dating to about 635 CE during the Chin dynasty, saying that "Brooms govern the sweeping away of old things and the assimilation of the new.")

1,057 BCE

December 3: [Halley's Comet](#) whipped around the sun while, in [China](#), the Shang dynasty was veering toward its collapse.

ASTRONOMY

This is what Halley's Comet looked like, the last time it passed us. We have records of the appearances of this comet on each and every one of its past 30 orbits, which is to say, we have spotty records of observations before that, in 1,404 BCE, 1,057 BCE, 466 BCE, 391 BCE, and 315 BCE, but then on the 240 BCE return the sightings record begins to be complete. The Babylonians recorded seeing it in 164 BCE and again in 87 BCE, and then it was recorded as being seen in 12 BCE, 66 CE, 141 CE, 218 CE, 295 CE, 374 CE, 451 CE, 530 CE, 607 CE, 684 CE, 760 CE (only by Chinese), 837 CE, 912 CE, 989 CE, 1066, 1145, 1222, 1301, 1378, 1456, 1531, 1607, 1682, 1758, 1835, 1910, and 1986 - and we are confidently awaiting sightings in 2061 and 2134 even though due to a close conjunction with the earth we are presently unable to calculate what orbit it will have by the date of that approach. Each time P/Halley orbits in out of the Kuiper belt beyond the planets Neptune and Pluto and whips around the sun, it has been throwing off about one 10,000ths of its mass into a streaming tail, which means that this comet which we know to have been visiting us for at the very least the past 3,000 years or so is only going to be visiting us for perhaps another half a million years or so!



HALLEY'S COMET



EDMOND HALLEY

1,027 BCE

The Shang Dynasty was overcome by the Chou (from what are now Kansu and Shensi provinces). This would bring what later would be known as the “Classical Age” of [China](#), renowned for:

- The Five Classics:

The *SHIH-CHING* or BOOK OF POETRY

The *SHU CHING* or BOOK OF HISTORY

The *LI CHI* or BOOK OF RITES

(a work which contains, incidentally, the first written description of *kuai zi* or “chopsticks”)

The *CH’UN-CH’IU* or SPRING AND AUTUMN ANNALS

The *I CHING* or BOOK OF CHANGES



- the teachings of [Confucius](#)



- the teachings of [Mencius](#)

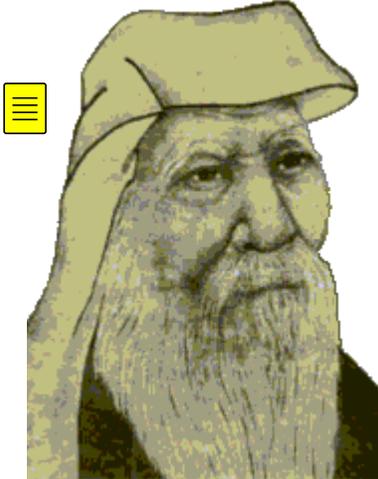
In this case, not even an **inauthentic** image is available.

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

- the teachings of [Lao-tze](#)

LIGHT FROM CHINA



It would be the Duke of Chou who would have created for him an early “south-pointing carriage” complete with magnetic compass (in Chinese, a compass is referred to as a “south-pointing needle”; this south-pointing carriage used a differential gear to keep a part of the carriage superstructure pointing in the same direction no matter how the carriage beneath it turned).⁴

THOREAU AND CHINA

4. Francis Bacon would characterize the origin of the magnetic compass as “obscure and inglorious,” either because it had originated in obscure and inglorious China or because the Neapolitans were claiming that one of their own, Flavio of Malphi, had invented it in the early 14th Century (tour guides on the Amalphi coast southwest of [Naples](#) point out a statue of this Flavio).



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

1,002 BCE

It is possible that in this year the [Chinese](#) observed a [comet](#) in the constellation Leo, with a perihelion passage time of 251 units.

ASTRONOMY

- 1198 The rape of Helen by Paris, which, in 1193, gave rise to the Trojan war, and siege of Troy by the Greeks, which continued ten years, when that city was taken and burnt.
- 1048 David is sole king of Israel.
- 1004 The Temple is solemnly dedicated by Solomon.
- 896 Elijah the prophet is translated to Heaven.
- 894 Money first made of gold and silver at Argos.
- 869 The city of Carthage, in Africa, founded by queen Dido.
- 824 The kingdom of Macedon begins.
- 753 Æra of the building of Rome in Italy, by Romulus, first king of the Romans.
- 720 Samaria taken, after three years siege, and the kingdom of Israel finished by Salmanasar, king of Assyria, who carries the ten tribes into captivity.
- The first eclipse of the moon on record.
- 658 Byzantium (now Constantinople) built by a colony of Athenians.
- 604 By order of Necho, king of Egypt, some Phœnicians sailed from the Red Sea round Africa, and returned by the Mediterranean.
- 600 Thales, of Miletus, travels into Egypt, consults the priests of Memphis, acquires the knowledge of geometry, astronomy, and philosophy; returns to Greece, calculates eclipses, gives general notions of the universe, and maintains that one Supreme Intelligence regulates all its motions.
- Maps, globes, and the signs of the Zodiac, invented by Anaximander, the scholar of Thales.
- 597 Jehoiakin, king of Judah, is carried away captive, by Nebuchadnezzar, to Babylon.
- 587 The city of Jerusalem taken after a siege of eighteen months.
- 562 The first comedy at Athens acted upon a moveable scaffold.



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

1,000 BCE

The seas were being dominated by Phoenicians, who were sailing as far north as Cornwall (for tin) and far down the west coast of Africa.

The Etruscans were using a form of false teeth, mostly for cosmetic purposes.

The [Chinese](#) use of counting boards originated.



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

985 BCE

In [China](#), the Emperor Mu-wang reigned but the central authority of his Chou court was being threatened by surrounding feudal states. Nonetheless he was able to enlarge the crown lands and consolidate his power, and the western Chou dynasty experienced its great and final flowering. Mu-wang's military exploits extended along the Huang-ho River, into central Asia all the way to [Tibet](#).



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

974 BCE

Spring: According to Ho Peng Yoke's "Ancient and medieval observations of comets and novae in Chinese sources," Vistas in Astronomy 5(1964):127-225, an *po* or "bushy star" comet appeared in the north polar region and was observed by astrologers in China. According to a private communication by David W. Pankenier to Donald K. Yeomans in January 1983, the date of this ought to be 963 BCE rather than 974 BCE, and also, since there seems to have been a systematic 4-year error in the reporting of events during this period, the date of this comet ought actually to have been 959 BCE rather than 963 BCE.

SKY EVENT



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

852 BCE

Natural gas from wells was being used in [China](#).



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

811 BCE

From this year until 757 BCE, Sian-Chien, Prince of Chin, successfully defended the Chinese retreat from northern Huns. In reward, Sian-Chien received from the emperor the state of Chin, assuming the title “Prince of Chin.” He was thus the first ruler of the state from which the empire of [China](#) got its name.



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

775 BCE

September 6: In [China](#), another eclipse of the [sun](#).

ASTRONOMY

This is the initial astronomically verifiable date in Chinese history (another solar eclipse on March 10, 721 BCE serves the same function in Babylonian history).



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

770 BCE

The Eastern Zhou period in [Chinese](#) civilization.



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

722 BCE

The Spring and Autumn period in [Chinese](#) civilization.



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

720 BCE

Thorough Chinese records of eclipses of the sun begin at this point.

ASTRONOMY



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

613 BCE

There is a good record from [China](#), that in this year a broom star, which is to say, a [comet](#), entered the Great Bear constellation.

ASTRONOMY



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

604 BCE

The person we refer to as [Lao-tze](#), who is attributed as the founder of the way known as Taoism, was presumably born at about this point in [China](#). The name we use is actually a description, as it means “Old Master,” and “Tao” means “the Way” — at least in the sense in which “DI DAO” on a current road sign in the city of Shanghai means “UNDERPASS.” A librarian at the court of Chou, when he began to detect in that kingdom uncorrectable aspects of corruption, he took his leave for parts unknown. The legend is that he rode off on a water buffalo and that, reaching a police checkpoint on the road, the custodian urged him to delay long enough to record the principles of his philosophy, the 81 epigrams of the [TAO TÊ CHING](#).

[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)**CHINA****THE CENTRAL KINGDOM****LIGHT FROM CHINA****TAOISM**

- 1198 The rape of Helen by Paris, which, in 1193, gave rise to the Trojan war, and siege of Troy by the Greeks, which continued ten years, when that city was taken and burnt.
- 1048 David is sole king of Israel.
- 1004 The Temple is solemnly dedicated by Solomon.
- 896 Elijah the prophet is translated to Heaven.
- 894 Money first made of gold and silver at Argos.
- 869 The city of Carthage, in Africa, founded by queen Dido.
- 824 The kingdom of Macedon begins.
- 753 Æra of the building of Rome in Italy, by Romulus, first king of the Romans.
- 720 Samaria taken, after three years siege, and the kingdom of Israel finished by Salmanasar, king of Assyria, who carries the ten tribes into captivity.
- The first eclipse of the moon on record.
- 658 Byzantium (now Constantinople) built by a colony of Athenians.
- 604 By order of Necho, king of Egypt, some Phœnicians sailed from the Red Sea round Africa, and returned by the Mediterranean.
- 600 Thales, of Miletus, travels into Egypt, consults the priests of Memphis, acquires the knowledge of geometry, astronomy, and philosophy; returns to Greece, calculates eclipses, gives general notions of the universe, and maintains that one Supreme Intelligence regulates all its motions.
- Maps, globes, and the signs of the Zodiac, invented by Anaximander, the scholar of Thales.
- 597 Jehoiakin, king of Judah, is carried away captive, by Nebuchadnezzar, to Babylon.
- 587 The city of Jerusalem taken after a siege of eighteen months.
- 562 The first comedy at Athens acted upon a moveable scaffold.



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

600 BCE

At about this point [Chinese](#) engineers began using irrigation canals to facilitate their farmers' wet-rice cultivation.

[China](#)'s 260-mile Wild Goose Canal linked the [Yellow River](#) (not then so called) to the Huai River.

[CANALS](#)

Scholars began compilation of a text ultimately known as the *Shih Ching*, or “The Book of Songs.” The work would include many oral traditions and would become the source of much ancient [Chinese](#) history.

Mongol and Tungu tribes were moving into Mongolia (out of Siberia).

THE TASK OF THE HISTORIAN IS TO CREATE HINDSIGHT WHILE INTERCEPTING ANY ILLUSION OF FORESIGHT. NOTHING A HUMAN CAN SEE CAN EVER BE SEEN AS IF THROUGH THE EYE OF GOD. IN A BOOK THAT IS SUPPOSED TO BE ABOUT HISTORY, ISSUED BY RANDOM HOUSE IN 2016, I FIND THE PHRASE “LOOKED UPON FROM THE BIRD’S-EYE VIEW OF HISTORY,” ONLY A MERE STORYTELLER, NEVER A HISTORIAN, COULD HAVE PENNED SUCH A PHRASE — BECAUSE NO BIRD HAS EVER FLOWN OVER HISTORY.



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

551 BCE

[Confucius](#) was born in about this year into a family with pretensions to the nobility, in Ch'ü-fu in the small feudal state of Lu in what is now the Shandong province of [China](#), during the 22d year of the reign of Duke Hsiang. Although an allegation that he was born on the 27th day of the 8th lunar month is regarded by historians as unsubstantiated, for our purposes one day will of course do quite as well as another and so he is widely honored in East Asia each September 28th. His tomb there in Ch'ü-fu has now been desecrated by the Red Guard. He would not have recognized this name "Confucius," as it is merely our archaic pseudo-Latinate transliteration of the respectful form of address *K'ung-fu-tzu*, Master *K'ung*, his family's name having been *K'ung* and his personal name *Ch'iu*. Throughout Chinese history he has been referred to affectionately as *K'ung-tzu*, Old K'ung, in precisely the same manner in which [Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi](#) is being referred to affectionately throughout [India](#) as [Gandhiji](#).⁵

5. There are not and there never have been and there never will be any Confucians in [China](#). The 18th-Century terms "Confucian" and "Confucianism," which have been coined on the basis of the Latinized name-form "Confucius," have been entirely descriptive terms coined by outsiders, and nothing similar to this coinage has ever been used in the Chinese language, which relies upon the term *Ruxue* meaning very precisely "the teachings of the literati."



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

549 BCE

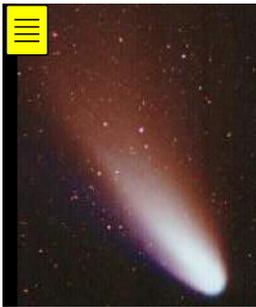
In [China](#), the father of [Confucius](#), a state commander who presumably was a member of the aristocracy but so poverty-stricken as to risk being taken for a commoner, at this point died. The three-year-old boy would be raised, and educated, by his mother.

540 BCE

May 10: [Halley's Comet](#) whipped around the sun while in [China](#), [Confucius](#) was a youth.

SKY EVENT

This is what Halley's Comet looked like, the last time it passed us. We have records of the appearances of this comet on each and every one of its past 30 orbits, which is to say, we have spotty records of observations before that, in 1,404 BCE, 1,057 BCE, 466 BCE, 391 BCE, and 315 BCE, but then on the 240 BCE return the sightings record begins to be complete. The Babylonians recorded seeing it in 164 BCE and again in 87 BCE, and then it was recorded as being seen in 12 BCE, 66 CE, 141 CE, 218 CE, 295 CE, 374 CE, 451 CE, 530 CE, 607 CE, 684 CE, 760 CE (only by Chinese), 837 CE, 912 CE, 989 CE, 1066, 1145, 1222, 1301, 1378, 1456, 1531, 1607, 1682, 1758, 1835, 1910, and 1986 - and we are confidently awaiting sightings in 2061 and 2134 even though due to a close conjunction with the earth we are presently unable to calculate what orbit it will have by the date of that approach. Each time P/Halley orbits in out of the Kuiper belt beyond the planets Neptune and Pluto and whips around the sun, it has been throwing off about one 10,000ths of its mass into a streaming tail, which means that this comet which we know to have been visiting us for at the very least the past 3,000 years or so is only going to be visiting us for perhaps another half a million years or so!



HALLEY'S COMET



EDMOND HALLEY



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

536 BCE

In [China](#), at the age of 15, a later generation of Confucians would learn, [Confucius](#)'s heart had become set upon learning. He would, however, need for the time being to labor in minor government posts, for instance the managing of stables, and keeping the accounts for granaries.

At 15 I set my heart on learning; at 30 I firmly took my stand; at 40 I had no delusions; at 50 I knew the Mandate of Heaven; at 60 my ear was attuned; at 70 I followed my heart's desire without overstepping the boundaries of right.

LIGHT FROM CHINA



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

532 BCE

In [China](#) at the age of 19 [Confucius](#) took a wife of a background similar to himself. For the first four years of his marriage he would need to find work as a laborer in order to provide for this family. The couple would produce two daughters and one son.



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

527 BCE

It was after the death of his mother in this year that [Confucius](#) would become free to begin his teaching, traveling the district of [China](#) in which he lived and speaking of the ancient values the people had begun to overlook. He taught from ancient sources, and demonstrated his teachings daily in his own conduct and demeanor, for he believed that rulers could achieve personal greatness and success for their states only if they themselves achieved exemplary lives. His desire to be construed as reviving rather than originating is reflected in the fact that he would never put into writing any of the principles that he was espousing; such traditions would be created only by disciples, in such texts as the ANALECTS (the *LUN-YÜ*, one of THE FOUR BOOKS).

LIGHT FROM CHINA

[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)**CHINA****THE CENTRAL KINGDOM****521 BCE**

The ascetic Siddhartha, who would be known as [Gautama Buddha](#), began his decade-long journey to the holy city of Benares on the River Ganges in [India](#) (now Varanasi, in southeast Uttar Pradesh) where he would deliver his first sermon underneath a banyan or pipal or bo tree (*Ficus religiosa*) in the deer park of Sarnath.

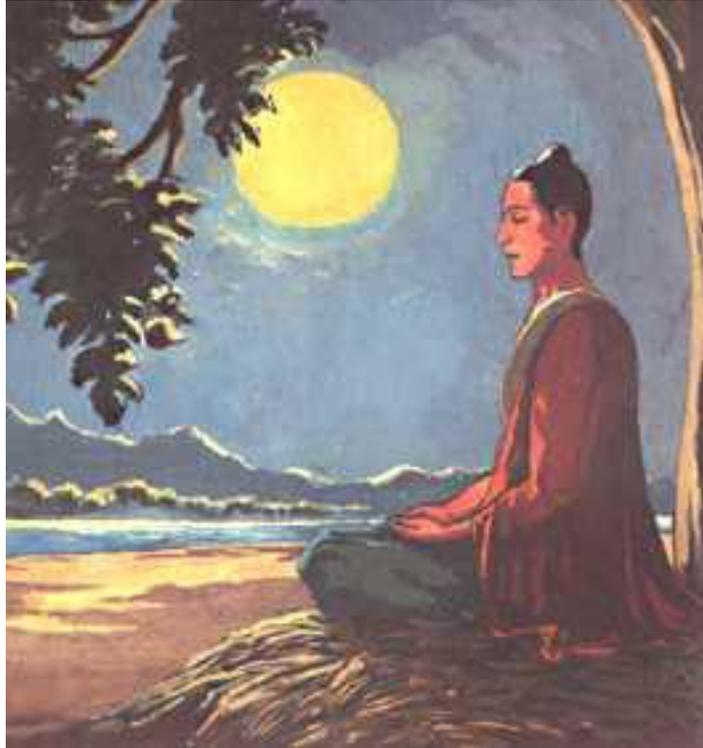


In the illustration above, what he is sitting on is a pile of kusa grass. For the uses of kusa grass, such as for dry sitting, refer to the [LAWS OF MENU](#). Even a sage needs to keep his butt dry and warm.

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

Here is another, slightly more realistic, presentation of the kusa-grass pad:



The title “Buddha” that is applied to him is never a proper name but literally means “awakened one” or “enlightened one.” The Pali Tipitaka is presently presumed to be the earliest still-extant record of his discourses.



[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)

CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

At about this point the person we refer to as [Lao-tze](#), to whom we attribute the 81 epigrams of the [TAO TÊ CHING](#) (well, it was in fact written by somebody), has been traditionally reputed to have died in [China](#) (well, in fact he died sometime somewhere).

[TAOISM](#)

At some point during his 30s [Confucius](#) would begin to accept as his pupils various *chün-tzu* (male children of noble family); that is, he would transform himself into what we would today refer to as a schoolmaster.



Tseng-tzu was born.⁶ He would be a disciple of [Confucius](#), and is considered to be the author of the *TA HSÜEH* (GREAT LEARNING). In this part of the *LI CHI* (RECORD OF RITES), one of THE FOUR BOOKS, he would declare the great importance of *chung* and *shu* (loyalty and reciprocity).

[LIGHT FROM CHINA](#)

6. In the Pinyin notation, *Zengzi*, in the Wade-Giles notation, *Tseng Ts'an*.

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

501 BCE

In [China](#) by this point [Confucius](#), in his late 40s or early 50s, was serving as a magistrate. He would become an assistant to the minister of public works, and eventually during his 50s would become the minister of justice for the state of Lu, attempting evidently with considerable success to lower its crime rate. (It appears that he accompanied King Lu as chief minister on one diplomatic mission, but after awhile fell out of favor.)





CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

500 BCE

The oldest known [Chinese](#) herbal, the CLASSICAL PHARMACOPOEIA of Tzu-I was written. Although no version of this book has survived since 500 CE, a copy was available to Shen Nung, the writer of the CLASSICAL HERBAL, which was produced as early as 100 BCE.

The [Chinese](#) started dividing their days and nights into 12 watches of 2 hours apiece. Although the practice is associated with the night watches of Turkish merchants and Mongolian soldiers rather than the studies of Chinese court astrologers, these double hours would subsequently be incorporated into both Chinese astrology and martial arts. In astrology they would be used to provide astrologers with a guide to the inner person and in the martial arts they would be used to suggest the best times for using various striking techniques.

A [Chinese](#) text described siege weapons that could heave a 50-pound projectile a distance of 400 yards.

It is supposed that the radish was introduced to [China](#) from Europe.

PLANTS

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

495 BCE

[Confucius](#), accepting at the age of 56 that he was not in favor and was not going to be in favor in the government of Lu, traveled through [China](#) searching for a government to which he might be of service. During a self-imposed exile of almost a dozen years he would be followed from place to place by a number of faithful students.



His search for a posting would be in vain.

484 BCE

[Confucius](#), at the age of 67, abandoned his long search for a new government posting and returned to Lu in [China](#) to teach and to write commentaries on classic texts. He would also, it seems, create a history of that district covering the two and a half centuries from 722 BCE to 481 BCE.



Confucius say...

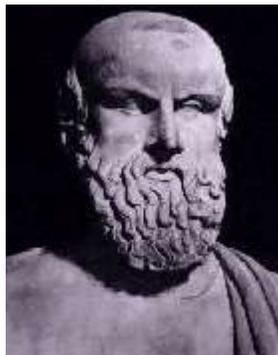
子曰：

“學而時習之，不亦悅乎？

有朋自遠方來，不亦樂乎？

人不知而不慍，不亦君子乎？”

On the far side of the world, the Persians recovered [Egypt](#), and for the first time [Æschylus](#) won a prize in the competition for producing the best trilogy of dramas. (Æschylus's plays were usually performed to celebrate Dionysus at the festival in Athens. A number of his tragedies were performed in Syracuse, Sicily for King Hiero. He reduced the chorus from about 50 singers to about a dozen, adding a second actor to enable the use of dramatic dialogue. These innovations would permanently change the manner in which tragedies were performed. Æschylus's only surviving trilogy is the *ORESTEIA*, consisting of *AGAMEMNON*, *THE LIBATION BEARERS*, and *THE EUMENIDES*.)





THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

479 BCE

[Confucius](#) died at the age of 73 and was buried at Ch'ü-fu in the Shandong province of [China](#). The record has it that 72 of his students were credited with having mastered the "six arts," and that those who at this early point were honoring his memory numbered some 3,000 persons. The ANALECTS (the *LUN-YÜ*, one of THE FOUR BOOKS) would probably be compiled during the 2nd generation of these disciples.

LIGHT FROM CHINA

A most persuasive personal description of spiritual development, presumably somewhat idealized, is to be found in these early records:

At 15 I set my heart on learning; at 30 I firmly took my stand; at 40 I had no delusions; at 50 I knew the Mandate of Heaven; at 60 my ear was attuned; at 70 I followed my heart's desire without overstepping the boundaries of right.

This teacher most definitely had never embraced the missionary position:

I do not enlighten anyone who is not eager to learn, nor encourage anyone who is not anxious to put his ideas into words.

What this generation of followers recorded of him, instead, was that he had been in the habit of making strenuous demands not only of them but also of himself:

It is these things that cause me concern: failure to cultivate virtue, failure to go deeply into what I have learned, inability to move up to what I have heard to be right, and inability to reform myself when I have defects.

When one of his students had difficulty describing him, Confucius had reportedly sprung to the rescue:

Why did you not simply say something to this effect: he is the sort of man who forgets to eat when he engages himself in vigorous pursuit of learning, who is so full of joy that he forgets his worries, and who does not notice that old age is coming on?



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

When his life was threatened in the district of K'uang, Confucius said:

Since the death of King Wen [founder of the Chou dynasty] does not the mission of culture (*wen*) rest here in me? If Heaven intends this culture to be destroyed, those who come after me will not be able to have any part of it. If Heaven does not intend this culture to be destroyed, then what can the men of K'uang do to me?

His recommendation for goals in life was that we strive to bring comfort to the old, to have trust in friends, and to cherish the young. He had no delusion that this might be accomplished by one person acting in isolation, and to achieve such aims he sought the creation of a scholarly community which he referred to as the fellowship of *chün-tzu* or “noblemen”:

A man of humanity, wishing to establish himself, also establishes others, and wishing to enlarge himself, also enlarges others. The ability to found one's inferences upon what is near at hand can be called the method of humanity.

THOREAU AND CHINA



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

467 BCE

From [China](#), and from Greece, a [comet](#) was observed — Plutarch would record that afterward a giant meteorite fell at Aegospotami.

ASTRONOMY



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

436 BCE

In [China](#), in about this year, Tseng-tzu died.



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

403 BCE

The Warring States period of [Chinese](#) civilization, and would continue until 221 BCE.



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

400 BCE

During the 4th century BCE, the *CHOU PEI SUAN CHING*, or ARITHMETIC CLASSIC, would be appearing in [China](#). In this treatise, a Chinese prince and his astrologer discuss the manufacture of [calendars](#) and the properties of right triangles and fractions. Because their system relied on knowledge of base-five and base-ten instead of base-sixty, the Chinese mathematics appears to have been free of much, perhaps of any, Greek or Babylonian or Egyptian influence.⁷

The astronomer-priests of the Maya began to record Long Count dates on stone steles. Mayan arithmetic was base-20 and did include a notation for zero (not less than five centuries later, Indian arithmetic would also develop a zero notation).

The building of the Han-kou (Han Ditch) connecting [China](#)'s Huai River to the Yangtze as well as a [canal](#) south of the Yangtze toward Soochow and Hangchow.

**“NARRATIVE HISTORY” AMOUNTS TO FABULATION,
THE REAL STUFF BEING MERE CHRONOLOGY**

During this century, [Chinese](#) iron would begin spreading through northern [Korea](#). The Chinese Wei History described the people of that region as quick-tempered and violent, and remarked that their men held daily military training. Their ancestor was called Chumong, a Tungus word meaning “the best archer.”

China

“Stack of the Artist of Kouroo” Project

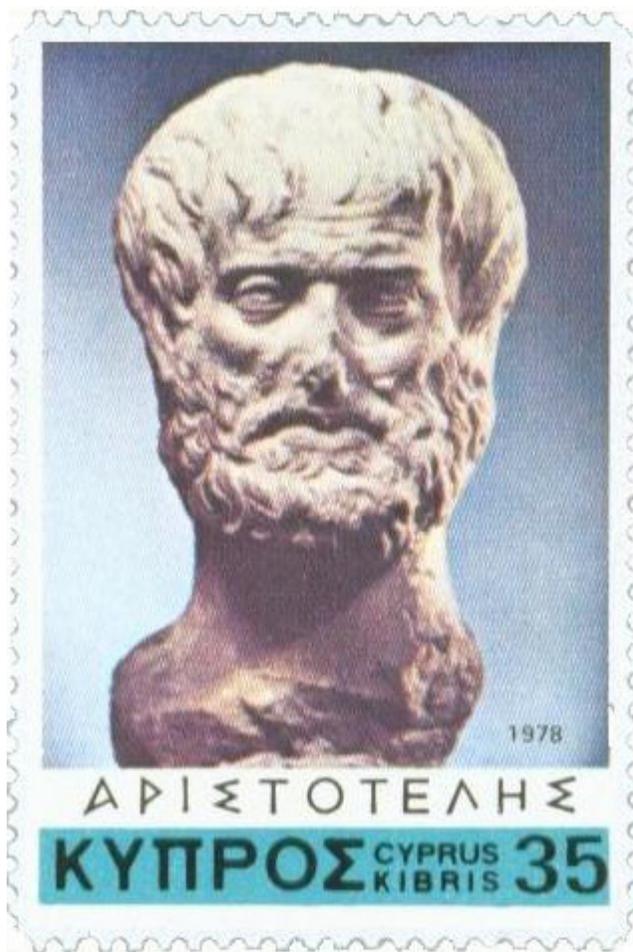
7. Although the ancient Babylonians had known about fractions well before the Chinese, and the Chinese had known about fractions well before the Greeks, Morris Kline, an American historian of mathematics, has derided the mathematical knowledge of the ancient Egyptians and Babylonians as “the scrawling of children just learning how to write”!

372 BCE

Meng-tzu or, in Latinized form, [Mencius](#), was born.

During this year, or the following year, or the year following that, a great Kreutz sungrazing [comet](#) made its appearance. This comet may have been one of the two largest pieces of the hypothetical body referred to as the “parent of the sungrazers,” later disintegrated, which may still have been in one large chunk during a visit to the inner solar system sometime between 18,000 BCE and 8,000 BCE.  This 373 BCE sungrazer is also the comet which we suppose may later have split further, to produce the major 1843 comet and possibly also the major comet of the year 1580.

Observers in Greece noted that it was seen in the west during about the period in which a great earthquake and tidal wave were occurring at Achaea. [Aristoteles](#) of Stageiros later recorded that the [comet](#) had first been observed in the west near the sun, and that at that point its tail was extending a third of the way across the earth’s sky, which would be about 60 degrees (if [ΑΡΙΣΤΟΤΕΛΗΣ](#) himself made this observation, he was at the time twelve years of age).



It is possible that this is the same [comet](#) which [Seneca the Younger](#) alleged that Ephorus had described as splitting into two pieces (Seneca regarded the idea that a comet could fall apart as ridiculous).



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

371 BCE

It seemed clear even to the naked eye that the [comet](#) that filled the skies, its tail stretching a third of the way across the heavens, had somehow split in two.⁸

ASTRONOMY

8. Brian Marsden has hypothesized that it was this comet that would become the progenitor of what he refers to as “Sub-group I” of Kreutz sungrazers (the Great Comet of 1843 being in this sub-group) — and that the sungrazer which would appear in 1106 CE would be the progenitor of what he refers to as “Sub-group II” of Kreutz sungrazers (the Great Comet of 1882 and the comet Ikeya-Seki of 1965 being in this group).



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

356 BCE

During this year the [Chinese](#) were beginning the construction of one or another Great Wall.

WALDEN: The religion and civilization which are barbaric and heathenish build splendid temples; but what you might call Christianity does not. Most of the stone a nation hammers goes towards its tomb only. It buries itself alive. As for the Pyramids, there is nothing to wonder at in them so much as the fact that so many men could be found degraded enough to spend their lives constructing a tomb for some ambitious booby, whom it would have been wiser and manlier to have drowned in the Nile, and then given his body to the dogs. I might possibly invent some excuse for them and him, but I have no time for it. As for the religion and love of art of the builders, it is much the same all the world over, whether the building be an Egyptian temple or the United States Bank. It costs more than it comes to. The mainspring is vanity, assisted by the love of garlic and bread and butter. Mr. Balcom, a promising young architect, designs it on the back of his Vitruvius, with hard pencil and ruler, and the job is let out to Dobson & Sons, stonecutters. When the thirty centuries begin to look down on it, mankind begin to look up at it. As for your high towers and monuments, there was a crazy fellow once in this town who undertook to dig through to China, and he got so far that, as he said, he heard the Chinese pots and kettles rattle; but I think that I shall not go out of my way to admire the hole which he made. Many are concerned about the monuments of the West and East, -to know who built them. For my part, I should like to know who in those days did not build them, -who were above such trifling.

PEOPLE OF
WALDEN

MARCUS VITRUVIUS POLLIO
DE ARCHITECTVRA LIBRI DECEM

EGYPT



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

300 BCE

One of the three now-existing variants of the *TAO TÊ CHING*, known now as the Guodian text of [Lao-tze](#), was placed in the Warring States tomb of a royal tutor, at Guodian near the city of Ying, the capital of the southern kingdom of Chu in what is now [China](#). (This text would be recovered in 1993 and published in 1998.)

Plants known to the ancient [Chinese](#) were discussed by Erh Ya. Other treatments from the period mention cultivated crops such as yam (*Dioscorea esculenta*) and taro (*Colocasia*).

PLANTS



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

289 BCE

Meng-tzu or, in Latinized form, [Mencius](#), died.

“RESISTANCE TO CIVIL GOVERNMENT”: The authority of government, even such as I am willing to submit to –for I will cheerfully obey those who know and can do better than I, and in many things even those who neither know nor can do so well– is still an impure one: to be strictly just, it must have the sanction and consent of the governed. It can have no pure right over my person and property but what I concede to it. The progress from an absolute to a limited monarchy, from a limited monarchy to a democracy, is a progress toward a true respect for the individual. Even the Chinese philosopher was wise enough to regard the individual as the basis of the empire. Is a democracy, such as we know it, the last improvement possible in government? Is it not possible to take a step further towards recognizing and organizing the rights of man? There will never be a really free and enlightened State until the State comes to recognize the individual as a higher and independent power, from which all its own power and authority are derived, and treats him accordingly. I please myself with imagining a State at least which can afford to be just to all men, and to treat the individual with respect as a neighbor; which even would not think it inconsistent with its own repose if a few were to live aloof from it, not meddling with it, nor embraced by it, who fulfilled all the duties of neighbors and fellow-men. A State which bore this kind of fruit, and suffered it to drop off as fast as it ripened, would prepare the way for a still more perfect and glorious State, which also I have imagined, but not yet anywhere seen.



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

221 BCE

Until 206 BCE, the Qin Dynasty: Unification of [China](#). State walls were joined to form the Great Wall. Palace and mausoleum near Xian, standardization of weights, measures, calligraphy. On the following screen is one of the emperors from this period, Shi Huang Di 秦始皇帝.

HDT

WHAT?

INDEX

CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM





THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

216 BCE

The founding of the south [China](#) province of Kweilin (the word means Cassia Forest — Kwei River could be translated as Cassia River).⁹

9. Cassia is simply the bark of a laurel tree, a tropical evergreen. Nearly the same as the western [cinnamon](#) although not quite as sweet, it is sometimes called Chinese Cinnamon. It is a component of the “Five Spice” flavoring.

PLANTS



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

213 BCE

The [Chinese](#) Emperor, Qin Shi Huangdi, mandated that all books be burned.
(Fortunately, he missed a few. :-)



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

206 BCE

Until 9 CE, the Western Han period in [Chinese](#) civilization.

Capitals at Changan and Luoyang in [China](#) were directly equivalent to Rome in size and sophistication. (The beginning of the Confucian civil service.)

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

200 BCE

A modest dam was constructed on a tributary to the Yangtze River in what had become, 21 years earlier, a unified territory under the name “China.” (Before this unification under the Ch’in dynasty, from which we derive this term “China,” there had merely been scores of small and medium-sized kingdoms spread along the middle, and the eastern, stretches of the valley of the [Yellow River](#)¹⁰ and the valley of the Huai River.)

By this point the Ch’in people already had constructed a system of water-diversion and a set of canals passing into the Yangtze River through Dongting Lake was allowing small junks to sail all the way between the Yangtze and Canton. This would become known as the Miracle Canal. (Most of the cargo on this route is now carried by the railway that crosses the Yangtze at Wuhan.)



CANALS

In about this period, thumb rings were appearing in Central Asia as an aid to archery. (In the so-called “Mongol hold,” one applied the thumb to the right side of the string and locked it into place with the index finger. The arrow, meanwhile, was supported between the thumb and upper joint of the index finger. The ring helped avoid chafing of the skin.) Using the thumbing, a skilled archer could deliver five 18-inch shafts in three seconds

10. The [Yellow River](#) could not have been as yet referred to as the Yellow River, because back then its waters were still clear. It would be during the Qin and Han dynasties that the Chinese central government would promote farming along the upper reaches of the river’s watershed and the flow of sediments would begin. Now, of course, a very dangerous situation exists downstream, because the years of deposit of sedimentation have raised the riverbed until it is held in its channel only by enormous man-made dikes along each side of the flow. The bottom of the river can now be higher, rather than lower, than surrounding fields!



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

(with somewhat reduced range and accuracy). The Han cavalryman Li Kuang who flourished between 166 and 137 BCE repeatedly shattered Hsiung-nu attacks by having his cavalymen dismount, lie down behind their horses, and release their crossbow bolts when the enemy got to within twenty or thirty yards (while mounted troopers could produce rapid fire, aimed fire required dismounting). The alternative to having well-trained and disciplined soldiers would have been to shoot at long range.

[Chinese](#) historian Ssu-ma described *hsia*, “knights who wore coarse clothes” or “knights from humble alleys.” These folk heroes were notorious for altruism, courage, and a sense of justice (the emphasis being placed on individual injustices, rather than on general social conditions). They were also notorious, however, for associating with butchers and gamblers, drinking in public, and ignoring normal social courtesies.

**ESSENCE IS BLUR. SPECIFICITY,
THE OPPOSITE OF ESSENCE,
IS OF THE NATURE OF TRUTH.**

In some year between 205 BCE and 190 BCE (positioned at this round-number year for convenience), a copy of one of the three now-existing variants of the [TAO TÊ CHING](#) was placed in a Han tomb at Mawangdui in [China](#), and in 168 BCE, another of the three variants was placed in another tomb there. (These versions would be published in 1976; we’re quite certain that there must be other variants awaiting discovery.)

The contents of a tomb of a monarch of the Western Han Dynasty included a latrine featuring running water, a stone seat, and a comfortable armrest (clearly, at least one person of the period had had a sense of humor).



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

179 BCE

We believe that the 3rd Han emperor of [China](#), Wen, knew the writings of Laozi as the Tao Tê Ching.



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

156 BCE

It was probably during the reign of the 4th Han emperor of [China](#), Jing, that the work of Laozi was first referred to as a *jing*, or “canonical text,” rather than being handled as merely another *zi*, or philosophical treatise.



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

147 BCE

August 6: The [comet](#) that had passed by the sun on June 28th and had been at its closest to the earth on August 4th was observed, from [China](#), to the southwest below the constellation of Scorpius, on this evening.

ASTRONOMY

August 8: The [comet](#) that had been observed, from [China](#), to the southwest below the constellation of Scorpius, on the evening of the 6th, was observed as having traveled north of Scorpius. Its tail at this point stretched 90 degrees.

ASTRONOMY



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

124 BCE

In [China](#), the Imperial Academy was established out of which would proceed the Confucian standards for education.

[CONFUCIUS](#)

The *LUN-YÜ* (ANALECTS), the most revered sacred scripture in the Confucian tradition, was probably compiled by the second generation of Confucius's disciples. The ANALECTS has often been viewed by the critical modern reader as a collection of unrelated conversations randomly put together. This impression may have resulted from the mistaken conception of Confucius as a mere commonsense moralizer who gave practical advice to students in everyday situations. If a person approaches the ANALECTS as a communal memory, a literary device on the part of those who considered themselves beneficiaries of the Confucian Way to continue the Master's memory and to transmit his form of life as a living tradition, he comes close to what it has been revered for in [China](#) for centuries. Dialogues are used to show Confucius in thought and action, not as an isolated individual but as the centre of relationships. Actually the sayings of the ANALECTS reveal Confucius's personality — his ambitions, his fears, his joys, his commitments, and above all his self-knowledge. The purpose, then, in compiling these distilled statements centring on Confucius seems not to have been to present an argument or to record an event but to offer an invitation to readers to take part in an ongoing conversation. Through the ANALECTS Confucians for centuries learned to reenact the awe-inspiring ritual of participating in a conversation with [Confucius](#).

One of Confucius's most significant personal descriptions is the short autobiographical account of his spiritual development found in the ANALECTS:

At 15 I set my heart on learning; at 30 I firmly took my stand;
at 40 I had no delusions; at 50 I knew the Mandate of Heaven;
at 60 my ear was attuned; at 70 I followed my heart's desire
without overstepping the boundaries of right. (2:4)

Confucius's life as a student and teacher exemplified his idea that education was a ceaseless process of self-realization. When one of his students reportedly had difficulty describing him, Confucius came to his aid:

Why did you not simply say something to this effect: he is the
sort of man who forgets to eat when he engages himself in
vigorous pursuit of learning, who is so full of joy that he
forgets his worries, and who does not notice that old age is
coming on? (7:18)

Confucius was deeply concerned that the culture (*wen*) he cherished was not being transmitted and that the learning (*hsüeh*) he propounded was not being taught. His strong sense of mission, however, never interfered with his ability to remember what had been imparted to him, to learn without flagging, and to teach without growing weary. What he demanded of himself was strenuous:

It is these things that cause me concern: failure to cultivate
virtue, failure to go deeply into what I have learned, inability
to move up to what I have heard to be right, and inability to
reform myself when I have defects. (7:3)



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

What he demanded of his students was the willingness to learn: “I do not enlighten anyone who is not eager to learn, nor encourage anyone who is not anxious to put his ideas into words” (7:8). The community that Confucius created was a scholarly fellowship of like-minded men of different ages and different backgrounds from different states. They were attracted to Confucius because they shared his vision and to varying degrees took part in his mission to bring moral order to an increasingly fragmented polity. This mission was difficult and even dangerous. Confucius himself suffered from joblessness, homelessness, starvation, and occasionally life-threatening violence. Yet his faith in the survivability of the culture that he cherished and the workability of the approach to teaching that he propounded was so steadfast that he convinced his followers as well as himself that Heaven was on their side. When Confucius’s life was threatened in K’uang, he said:

Since the death of King Wen [founder of the Chou dynasty] does not the mission of culture (wen) rest here in me? If Heaven intends this culture to be destroyed, those who come after me will not be able to have any part of it. If Heaven does not intend this culture to be destroyed, then what can the men of K’uang do to me? (9:5)

This expression of self-confidence informed by a powerful sense of mission may give the impression that there was presumptuousness in Confucius’s self-image. Confucius, however, made it explicit that he was far from attaining sagehood and that all he really excelled in was “love of learning” (5:27). To him, learning not only broadened his knowledge and deepened his self-awareness but also defined who he was. He frankly admitted that he was not born endowed with knowledge, nor did he belong to the class of men who could transform society without knowledge. Rather, he reported that he used his ears widely and followed what was good in what he had heard and used his eyes widely and retained in his mind what he had seen. His learning constituted “a lower level of knowledge” (7:27), a level that was presumably accessible to the majority of human beings. In this sense Confucius was neither a prophet with privileged access to the divine nor a philosopher who had already seen the truth but a teacher of humanity who was also an advanced fellow traveler on the way to self-realization.

As a teacher of humanity Confucius stated his ambition in terms of concern for human beings: “To bring comfort to the old, to have trust in friends, and to cherish the young” (5:25). Confucius’s vision of the way to develop a moral community began with a holistic reflection on the human condition. Instead of dwelling on abstract speculations such as man’s condition in the state of nature, Confucius sought to understand the actual situation of a given time and to use that as his point of departure. His aim was to restore trust in government and to transform society into a moral community by cultivating a sense of humanity in politics and society. To achieve that aim, the creation of a scholarly community, the fellowship of noblemen (*chün-tzu*), was essential. In the words of Confucius’s disciple Tseng-tzu, the true nobleman

must be broad-minded and resolute, for his burden is heavy and his road is long. He takes humanity as his burden. Is that not heavy? Only with death does his road come to an end. Is that not long? (8:7)

The fellowship of *chün-tzu* as moral vanguards of society, however, did not seek to establish a radically different order. Its mission was to redefine and revitalize those institutions that for centuries were believed to have maintained social solidarity and enabled people to live in harmony and prosperity. An obvious example of such an institution was the family.

It is related in the ANALECTS that Confucius, when asked why he did not take part in government, responded by citing a passage from an ancient classic, the *SHU CHING* (CLASSIC OF HISTORY), “Simply by being a good son and friendly to his brothers a man can exert an influence upon government!” to show that what a person does in the confines of his home is politically significant (2:21). This maxim is based on the Confucian conviction that cultivation of the self is the root of social order and that social order is the basis for political stability and universal peace.

The assertion that family ethics is politically efficacious must be seen in the context of the Confucian conception of politics as “rectification” (*cheng*). Rulers should begin by rectifying their own conduct; that is, they are to be examples who govern by moral leadership and exemplary teaching rather than by force. Government’s responsibility is not only to provide food and security but also to educate the people. Law and



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

punishment are the minimum requirements for order; the higher goal of social harmony, however, can only be attained by virtue expressed through ritual performance. To perform rituals, then, is to take part in a communal act to promote mutual understanding.

One of the fundamental Confucian values that ensures the integrity of ritual performance is filial piety (*hsiao*). Indeed, Confucius saw filial piety as the first step toward moral excellence, which he believed lay in the attainment of the cardinal virtue, humanity (*jen*). To learn to embody the family in the mind and heart is to become able to move beyond self-centeredness or, to borrow from modern psychology, to transform the enclosed private ego into an open self. Filial piety, however, does not demand unconditional submissiveness to parental authority but recognition of and reverence for the source of life. The purpose of filial piety, as the ancient Greeks expressed it, is to enable both parent and child to flourish. Confucians see it as an essential way of learning to be human.

Confucians, moreover, are fond of applying the family metaphor to the community, the country, and the universe. They prefer to address the emperor as the son of Heaven, the king as ruler-father, and the magistrate as the “father-mother official” because to them the family-centred nomenclature implies a political vision. When Confucius said that taking care of family affairs is itself active participation in politics, he had already made it clear that family ethics is not merely a private concern; the public good is realized by and through it. Confucius defined the process of becoming human as being able to “conquer yourself and return to ritual” (12:1). The dual focus on the transformation of the self (Confucius is said to have freed himself from four things: “opinionatedness, dogmatism, obstinacy, and egoism” [9:4]) and on social participation enabled Confucius to be loyal (*chung*) to himself and considerate (*shu*) of others (4:15). It is easy to understand why the Confucian “golden rule” is “Do not do unto others what you would not want others to do unto you!” (15:23). Confucius’s legacy, laden with profound ethical implications, is captured by his “plain and real” appreciation that learning to be human is a communal enterprise:

A man of humanity, wishing to establish himself, also establishes others, and wishing to enlarge himself, also enlarges others. The ability to take as analogy of what is near at hand can be called the method of humanity. (6:30)



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

111 BCE

The [Chinese](#) conquered what is now northern [Vietnam](#).

THE FUTURE IS MOST READILY PREDICTED IN RETROSPECT





CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

100 BCE

In about this period in [China](#), paper was being made out of [cannabis](#) (hemp) and mulberry fibers.

Chinese monks described [tea leaves](#) (*Camellia sinensis*) as a possible elixir of immortality, although at this point they were being chewed rather than brewed. The bitter flavor would cause the leaves to be used mostly for esoteric purposes until the 6th Century CE, when the monks began putting them into water and boiling them. Merchants would gradually spread this brewing of tea into India and Iran (and it would continue on to Europe during the 18th Century).

PLANTS



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

50 BCE

In [China](#), the [Taoist](#) materials, which at that time amounted probably to as many as 120 leaves or fragments, some of only four or eight words, were recast as 81 “chapters,” probably because 9X9 makes a “perfect number.” The work falls neatly into two halves, a set of 37 stanzas beginning with the character *Tao* and a set of 44 stanzas beginning with the character *de*. It may be that this *de* part originally preceded this *Tao* part. We do not know when the *Tao* section first came to be placed before the *de* section, but it would seem that *Daode* has always been a common term meaning roughly “morality.”

44 BCE

In May and June, in [China](#) and in [Korea](#), a reddish-yellow [comet](#) had been observed, with its tail spanning some 12 degrees in the northwest. Within a few days it was near the constellation of Orion, and it had a 15-degree tail that had rotated toward the northeast. THE COMET OF 44 BC AND CAESAR'S FUNERAL GAMES was published by Scholars Press on the ides of March in 1997, the 2,040th anniversary of Caesar's demise. Written by John Ramsey of the Classics Department and Lewis Licht of the Physics Department at the University of Illinois at Chicago, this study draws upon the sources in the Orient, as well as the Greco-Roman world, to shed new light on the probable orbit of the great daylight comet seen in the north for three to seven days in July 44 BCE during the games that [Octavian](#) was holding in honor of the supposedly assassinated Gaius [Julius Caesar](#) (actually, he may merely have had one of his epileptic fits and died in a manner very much unlike what we imagine as the apotheosis of a deity, after which his political colleagues made it look like a political assassination in order to be able to legitimate their killing off of a good bunch of the opposition politicians), and on the factors that caused it in this case to be treated not as a baleful omen but as a sign of Caesar's apotheosis. For details, visit <http://www.uic.edu/las/clas/comet>; or send e-mail to comet@uic.edu.



ASTRONOMY

In this period of the earth's history, there was no "North Star" marking the direction of the North Pole.

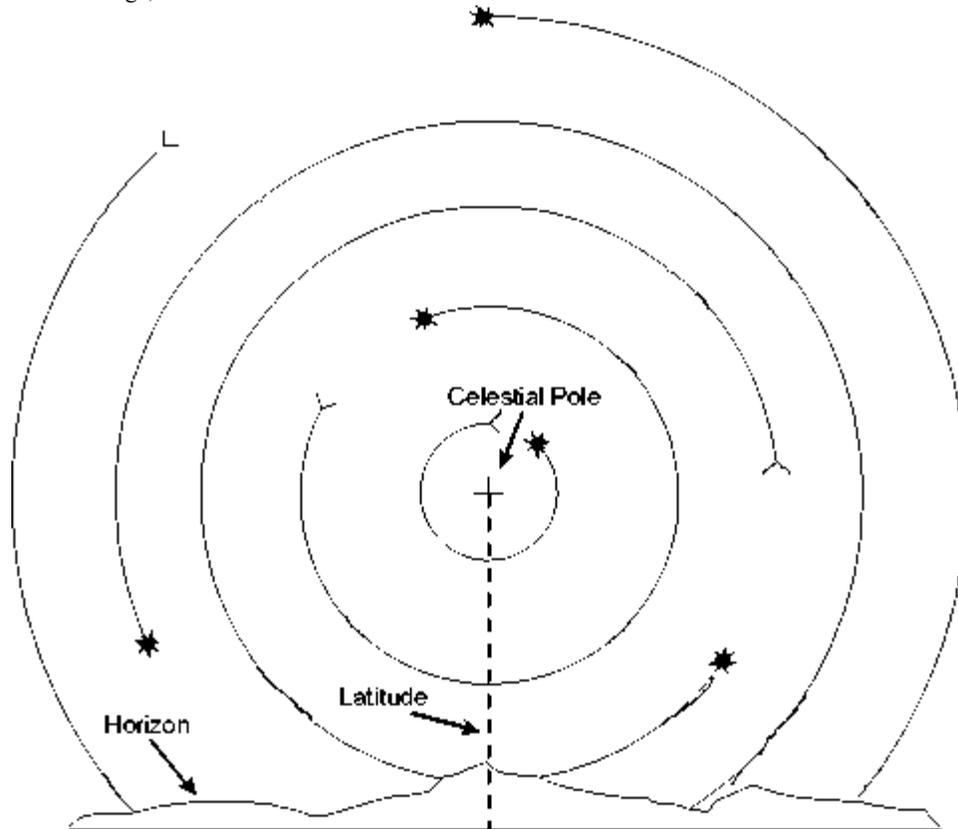
As constellations progress across the sky through the course of a single night, they change their orientation, but not their defining patterns, or their relative spacings. Waldo Emerson lauded this permanence:

“Teach me your mood, O patient stars!
Who climb each night the ancient sky,
Leaving no space, no shade, no scars,

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

No trace of age, no fear to die.”



The changing appearance of the earth’s moon, however, has fascinated all cultures. Some have professed to be comforted by the faithful regularity of its gentle waxing and waning, fortnight by fortnight. Others, however, have been troubled by this as it is construed to be inconstancy in the heavens, which is exactly the wrong place for there to be inconstancy. Thus in William Shakespeare’s romance, when Romeo attempts a pledge on the moon, this is a wrong move as it does nothing but distress his Juliet:

Romeo:
 Lady, by yonder blessed moon I swear
 That tips with silver all these fruit-tree tops
 Juliet:
 O, swear not by the moon, the inconstant moon,
 That monthly changes in her circled orb,
 Lest that thy love prove likewise variable. (II.2.109-111)

Eclipses are not only changes, but because they bring darkness, they are an even worse sign of disaster. Having just murdered his wife Desdemona, Othello wonders how she can look so virtuous and wonders why no disruption in nature comes as a sign of the universe being so out of order:

...She’s dead...
 Still as the grave...
 I think she stirs again...
 My wife, my wife! I have no wife.
 O insupportable! O heavy hour!
 Methinks it should be now a huge eclipse
 Of sun and moon, and that th’ affrighted globe



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

Should yawn at alteration... (V.2.115-125)

Comets show up at unpredictable times, thus upsetting the invariance of the universe, and so they obviously also are omens of evil to come. In “Henry VI,” the Duke of Bedford remarks upon the death of the greatest English hero, Henry V:

Comets, importing change of times and states,
Brandish your crystal tresses in the sky,
And with them scourge the bad revolting stars
That have consented unto Henry’s death. (I.1.2-5)

The planets are wanderers, and wandering is considered to be inherently disorderly. Disorder, in the heavens where only the perfection of order ought to appear, produces uncertainty and foretells disaster here below. As Ulysses observes in “Troilus and Cressida”:

...when the planets
In evil mixture to disorder wander,
What plagues and what portents, what mutiny,
What raging of the sea, shaking of the earth,
Commotion in the winds, frights, changes, horrors,
Divert and crack, rend and deracinate
The unity and married calm of states
Quite from their fixture! (I.3.94-101)

In contrast, the playwright has his main Roman, in his tragedy “Julius Caesar,” affirm himself to be “constant as the Northern Star, of whose true fixed and resting quality there is no fellow in the firmament.” How stalwart is this politician Julius! When the conspirators pretend to plea that Gaius [Julius Caesar](#) should pardon the exiled Publius Cimber, great Caesar is entirely unswayed:

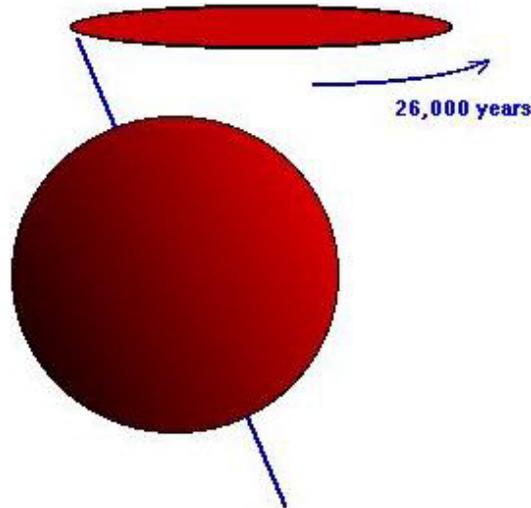
Caesar: I could be well moved, if I were as you
But I am constant as the Northern Star,
Of whose true fixed and resting quality
There is no fellow in the firmament.
The skies are painted with unnumbered sparks;
They are all fire, and every one doth shine.
But there’s one in all doth hold his place.
So in the world: ’tis furnished well with men,
And men are flesh and blood, and apprehensive.
Yet in the number I do know but one
That unassailable holds onto his rank,
Unshaked of motion; and that I am he
Let me a little show it, even in this:
That I was constant Cimber should be banished

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

And constant do remain to keep him so. (III.1.64-79)

Shakespeare was, evidently, supposing the star Polaris, marking the earth's north pole, to be, as opposed to the planet's inconstant moon, some sort of gold standard of astronomical fixity — though in fact it is variable. Astronomers have known for some time that although this object 310 light years away from us now hangs in our sky roughly above the earth's North Pole, it has not always been in such a position, definitely will not in the remote future be in that position, and anyway, is a Cepheid variable the visibility of which can be expected to change markedly from time to time. The Earth's axis precesses (it is like a wobbling top), so in about 14,000 years, Vega (the brightest star in the constellation Lyra) will be the North Star, and then in another 5,000 years it will be Alpha Cephei (the brightest star in the constellation Cepheus), but at the completion of the entire cycle of 26,000 years — it will be Polaris again. This cycle known as precession is caused by the gravitational



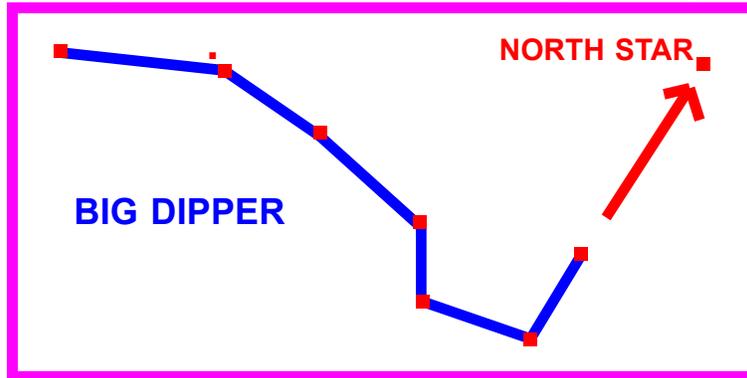
attraction of the sun and the moon, acting on the fact that the planet Earth is not quite spherical. Back in the time of the Egyptian pharaohs, however it had another star, Thuban (the brightest star in the constellation Draco), that had functioned as this planet's North Star. Over time, as the axis of our planet has tipped, the constellation Draco had been moving along, and so by the 1st Century BCE, during the reign of Julius Caesar, there was no star at all in that polar position — only a pretend Caesar with the sensibilities of Shakespeare's era could have made such a remark about stellar constancy. For, by Shakespeare's era, Polaris had wandered into the region near the pole once occupied by Thuban — and Shakespeare, no astronomer, was presuming incorrectly that this had ever been so.

A "Cepheid variable" is a type of star that has almost exhausted its hydrogen fuel and is, consequently, caught in a cycle of bloating and collapsing. Polaris brightens or dims every four days or so, and over the period of time that we have been observing it, these pulsations have been slowing, with its period of oscillation between bright and dim lengthening by about eight seconds each year. Even on average, the brightness of Polaris has historically been unstable. For instance, over the past half a century it has now brightened on average by 10%, becoming a star of the 2d magnitude of brightness (magnitude is a scale devised by [Hipparchus of Nicaea](#) around 120 BCE ranking stars from 1st-magnitude bright, very bright and noticeable in the heavens, to 6th-magnitude dim, so dim as to be next to invisible — its change from 3d magnitude to 2d magnitude would indicate that Polaris has become about 2.5 times as bright as it had been a couple of millennia ago), but during Thoreau's 19th Century, it appears to have been on average about 20% dimmer even than before it began this current brightening trend. During the 16th Century, according to Tycho Brahe, it had been even dimmer. In 140 CE, when Ptolemy of Alexandria had made a star catalog, he had listed Polaris as a star of but the 3d magnitude, and in the 10th Century, when the Persian astronomer al-Sufi had checked Ptolemy's evaluations,

CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

he had confirmed Ptolemy's evaluation of Polaris as a star of merely the 3d magnitude.



Actually, it is incorrect to refer to the Big Dipper (in England this is known as “the plough,” to American slaves it was “the drinking gourd”) as a constellation. Among the 88 groups of stars that are officially recognized and listed as constellations, there is of course the constellation Ursa Major. The Big Dipper, however, is merely a conspicuous portion of that constellation. Such a star pattern as the Big Dipper is referred to as an asterism, rather than as a constellation. This asterism is presently helpful, for it presently helps us to identify Polaris, the North Star. Two bright stars mark the outer edge of the bowl of the Big Dipper. These two stars –Dubhe and Merak– we term the Pointer Stars, due to the fact that they direct our eyes toward Polaris. Draw a line across the night sky, in your imagination, between these two stars, and then prolong this line about 5 times, and your eyes will arrive at a moderately bright star. Polaris. –But that is merely for the present, as, of the seven stars



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

that make up this asterism, five of the closer ones (78 to 84 light years from Earth) are swarming through space at roughly the same speed and in the same direction, but two of the farther away ones (Alkaid, 101 light years from Earth, and Dubhe, 124 light years from Earth) are moving at a different speed in an opposite direction. Due to these differing motions, the asterism now known as the Big Dipper will eventually tear itself apart. The bent handle will bend even more, while the spreading bowl will spread even more. In 50,000 years there will no longer be a recognizable dipper shape.

There remains an unanswered question, however. Why would it have been that, in [WALDEN](#), Thoreau identified the pole star as having the name Kalpa? –For, in Hindu cosmology, “Kalpa” is not the name assigned to any object, but instead is the name assigned to a very lengthy period of time.

[WALDEN](#): There was an artist in the city of Kouroo who was disposed to strive after perfection. One day it came into his mind to make a staff. Having considered that in an imperfect work time is an ingredient, but into a perfect work time does not enter, he said to himself, It shall be perfect in all respects, though I should do nothing else in my life. He proceeded instantly to the forest for wood, being resolved that it should not be made of unsuitable material; and as he searched for and rejected stick after stick, his friends gradually deserted him, for they grew old in their works and died, but he grew not older by a moment. His singleness of purpose and resolution, and his elevated piety, endowed him, without his knowledge, with perennial youth. As he made no compromise with Time, Time kept out of his way, and only sighed at a distance because he could not overcome him. Before he had found a stock in all respects suitable the city of Kouroo was a hoary ruin, and he sat on one of its mounds to peel the stick. Before he had given it the proper shape the dynasty of the Candahars was at an end, and with the point of the stick he wrote the name of the last of that race in the sand, and then resumed his work. By the time he had smoothed and polished the staff Kalpa was no longer the pole-star; and ere he had put on the ferule and the head adorned with precious stones, Brahma had awoke and slumbered many times. But why do I stay to mention these things? When the finishing stroke was put to his work, it suddenly expanded before the eyes of the astonished artist into the fairest of all the creations of Brahma. He had made a new system in making a staff, a world with full and fair proportions; in which, though the old cities and dynasties had passed away, fairer and more glorious ones had taken their places. And now he saw by the heap of shavings still fresh at his feet, that, for him and his work, the former lapse of time had been an illusion, and that no more time had elapsed than is required for a single scintillation from the brain of Brahma to fall on and inflame the tinder of a mortal brain. The material was pure, and his art was pure; how could the result be other than wonderful?

PEOPLE OF
WALDEN

CANDAHARS?

KALPA?

ARTIST OF KOUROO

28 BCE

When the prevailing winds carry high dust over [China](#) from the deserts of central Asia, it is possible to look directly at the darkened [sun](#) and, without the use of a telescope, detect the largest of the sunspot groups. In this year some apparent references to [sunspots](#) were made by Chinese astronomers.

ASTRONOMY



“MAGISTERIAL HISTORY” IS FANTASIZING: HISTORY IS CHRONOLOGY

CONTINUE TO READ CHRONOLOGICALLY



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA



COPYRIGHT NOTICE: In addition to the property of others, such as extensive quotations and reproductions of images, this "read-only" computer file contains a great deal of special work product of Austin Meredith, copyright ©2019. Access to these interim materials will eventually be offered for a fee in order to recoup some of the costs of preparation. My hypercontext button invention which, instead of creating a hypertext leap through hyperspace -resulting in navigation problems- allows for an utter alteration of the context within which one is experiencing a specific content already being viewed, is claimed as proprietary to Austin Meredith - and therefore freely available for use by all. Limited permission to copy such files, or any material from such files, must be obtained in advance in writing from the "Stack of the Artist of Kouroo" Project, 833 Berkeley St., Durham NC 27705. Please contact the project at <Kouroo@kouroo.info>.

"It's all now you see. Yesterday won't be over until tomorrow and tomorrow began ten thousand years ago."

- Remark by character "Garin Stevens"
in William Faulkner's INTRUDER IN THE DUST



Prepared: March 22, 2019



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

ARRGH AUTOMATED RESearch REPORT

GENERATION HOTLINE



This stuff presumably looks to you as if it were generated by a human. Such is not the case. Instead, someone has requested that we pull it out of the hat of a pirate who has grown out of the shoulder of our pet parrot "Laura" (as above). What these chronological lists are: they are research reports compiled by ARRGH algorithms out of a database of modules which we term the Kouroo Contexture (this is data mining). To respond to such a request for information we merely push a button.

Commonly, the first output of the algorithm has obvious deficiencies and we need to go back into the modules stored in



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

the contexture and do a minor amount of tweaking, and then we need to punch that button again and recompile the chronology – but there is nothing here that remotely resembles the ordinary “writerly” process you know and love. As the contents of this originating contexture improve, and as the programming improves, and as funding becomes available (to date no funding whatever has been needed in the creation of this facility, the entire operation being run out of pocket change) we expect a diminished need to do such tweaking and recompiling, and we fully expect to achieve a simulation of a generous and untiring robotic research librarian. Onward and upward in this brave new world.

First come first serve. There is no charge.
Place requests with <Kouroo@kouroo.info>. Arrgh.