

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM, CONTINUED

GO BACK TO THE PREVIOUS PERIOD



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

9 CE

From this year into 23 CE, Wang Mang, a Confucian chief minister, would be emperor of [China](#). The new emperor set free China's [slaves](#).

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



CHINA

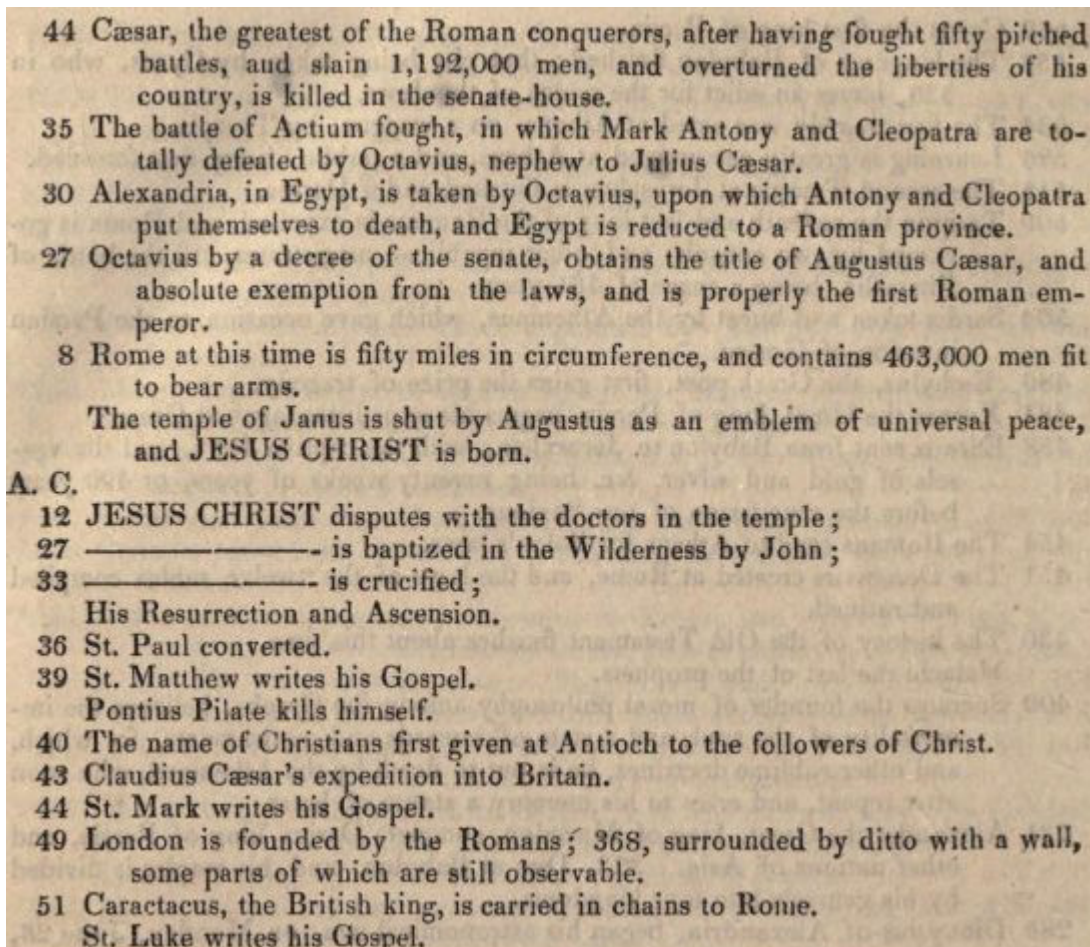
THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

12 CE

Germanicus Caesar became consul to the Emperor [Augustus Caesar](#).

From about this point until 15 CE, Annius Rufus would be the Roman Prefect of Iudaea (that is, of Samaria, Judea, and Idumea).

The [Chinese](#) Emperor Wang Mang repealed his reforms, which had created widespread protest. Maybe freeing all [slaves](#) had not been such a hot idea, after all.





THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

17 CE

In [China](#), there being more than one way to skin a cat, a tax was imposed upon the ownership of [slaves](#).

Hippalus, a Greek sea captain, discovered a method of employing monsoon winds in sailing, a finding that would open direct sea trade between the Eastern Mediterranean and [India](#).

SPICE

“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

22 CE

From this year until 220 CE, the later (Eastern) Han dynasty in [China](#).

NOBODY COULD GUESS WHAT WOULD HAPPEN NEXT





THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

23 CE

Wang Mang, the emperor of [China](#), was executed by the triad or secret society known, because of their battle facial paint, as *Chi Mei* or “Red Eyebrows.”

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



25 CE

In about this year the Eastern Han dynasty began its rule over [China](#).¹
Here is Gao Zu, an emperor of this dynasty:



1. The Eastern Han Dynasty (25-220 CE) began incorporating central Asia and much of what is now Russian central Asia as far west as the Caspian Sea.



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

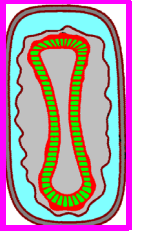
CHINA

48 CE

This time, when the [Thames River](#) in England overflowed, the waters extended through 4 counties and more than 10,000 of the sort of people who were in that vicinity on that island at that time (whoever they may have been) were drowned. They may have been your relatives — or maybe not.

During this year and the following one, the 1st victims of the [small pox](#) virus were being noted in [China](#).

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





CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

50 CE

Buddhism was reaching [China](#) from [India](#).

From this year until about 200 CE, Christian pacifism would be typical among early Christian communities, with many recorded instances of Christians who were encouraged to make a vow of nonviolence.

CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE

HISTORY'S NOT MADE OF WOULD. WHEN SOMEONE REVEALS, FOR INSTANCE, AS ABOVE, THAT CHRISTIAN PACIFISM WOULD BE TYPICAL AMONG EARLY CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES, WITH MANY RECORDED INSTANCES OF CHRISTIANS WHO WERE ENCOURAGED TO MAKE A VOW OF NONVIOLENCE, S/HE DISCLOSES THAT WHAT IS BEING CRAFTED IS NOT REALITY BUT PREDESTINARIANISM. THE HISTORIAN IS SETTING CHRONOLOGY TO "SHUFFLE," WHICH IS NOT A PERMISSIBLE OPTION BECAUSE IN THE REAL WORLD SUCH SHUFFLE IS IMPOSSIBLE. THE RULE OF REALITY IS THAT THE FUTURE HASN'T EVER HAPPENED, YET. THERE IS NO SUCH "BIRDS'EYE VIEW" AS THIS IN THE REAL WORLD, FOR IN THE REAL WORLD NO REAL BIRD HAS EVER GLIMPSED AN ACTUAL HISTORICAL SEQUENCE.

Possibly the earliest reference to [China](#) under that name in European literature appeared as part of a description of "Khruse," the Roman name for South-East Asia, in Chapter 64 of PERIPLUS OF THE ERYTHAEAN SEA: "Beyond this country, now under the very north, the sea outside coming to an end somewhere, there lies a very great inland city called Thina, from which raw silk and silk yarn are brought overland to Barugaza through the Baktrians, and again to Limurike by way of the river Ganges. This Thina is not easy to reach. People seldom come from it, and not many go there...."² It is on the basis of records such as this that we infer that the name "China" probably was taken from the name of the short-lived "Ch'in" dynasty.³

China

"Stack of the Artist of Kouroo" Project

2. PERIPLUS OF THE ERYTHAEAN SEA, ed. G.W.B. Huntingford (London 1980).

3. Refer to Donald Lach's ASIA IN THE MAKING OF EUROPE, Volume I, Book 1 (Chicago 1965).



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

57 CE

According to tradition, Hyokkose, the founder of the [Korean](#) Silla kingdom, was born. His title would be “Great Chieftain” and his responsibilities would include placating the gods. The Silla kingdom would be organized into a system known as kolpum, or “blood status”: the high-status people were all surnamed Pak, Sok, or Kim and could only marry within their kinship group. To the horror of the Confucians, females could become rulers, and were active in religious leadership. Although we do not know the relative status of the commoners (farmers, artisans, merchants, slaves) it would appear that some upward mobility was possible, through marriage.

[Japan](#) was mentioned for the initial time in [Chinese](#) records.

CHANGE IS ETERNITY, STASIS A FIGMENT



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

JAPANESE EMPERORS

50CE	Jimmu	587CE-592CE	Sushun	967CE-969CE	Reizei
?CE	Suizei	592CE-628CE	Suiko	969CE-984CE	Enyu
?CE	Annei	629CE-641CE	Jomei	984CE-986CE	Kazan
?CE	Itoku	642CE-645CE	Kogyoku	986CE-1011CE	Ichijo
?CE	Kosho	645CE-654CE	Kotoku	1011CE-1016CE	Sanjo
100CE	Koan	655CE-661CE	Saimei	1016CE-1036CE	Go-Ichijo
?CE	Korei	662CE-671CE	Tenji	1036CE-1045CE	Go-Suzaku
?CE	Kogen	671CE-672CE	Kobun	1045CE-1068CE	Go-Reizei
200CE	Kaika	673CE-686CE	Kemmu	1067CE-1072CE	Go-Sanjo
219CE-249CE	Sujin	690CE-697CE	Jito	1072CE-1086CE	Shirakawa
249CE-280CE	Suinin	697CE-707CE	Mommu	1086CE-1107CE	Horikawa
280CE-316CE	Keiko	707CE-715CE	Gemmei	1107CE-1123CE	Toba
316CE-342CE	Seimu	715CE-724CE	Gensho	1123CE-1141CE	Sutoku
343CE-346CE	Chu'ai	724CE-749CE	Shomu	1141CE-1155CE	Konoye
346CE-395CE	Oojin	749CE-758CE	Koken	1156CE-1158CE	Go-Shirakawa
395CE-427CE	Nintoku	758CE-764CE	Junnin	1159CE-1165CE	Nijo
427CE-432CE	Richu	764CE-770CE	Shotoku	1166CE-1168CE	Rokujo
433CE-438CE	Hanzei	770CE-781CE	Konin	1169CE-1180CE	Takakura
438CE-453CE	Ingyo	781CE-806CE	Kammu	1181CE-1183CE	Antoku
453CE-456CE	Anko	806CE-824CE	Heizei	1184CE-1198CE	Go-Toba
456CE-479CE	Yuryaku	823CE-842CE	Saga	1199CE-1210CE	Tsuchimikado
480CE-484CE	Seinei	833CE-840CE	Junna	1211-1221	Juntoku
485CE-487CE	Kenzo	833CE-850CE	Nimmyo	1221-1221	Chukyo
488CE-498CE	Ninken	850CE-858CE	Montoku	1222-1232	Go-Horikawa
498CE-506CE	Buretsu	858CE-876CE	Seiwa	1233-1242	Shijo
507CE-531CE	Keitai	877CE-884CE	Yozei	1243-1246	Go-Saga
531CE-535CE	Ankan	884CE-887CE	Koko	1247-1259	Go-Fukakusa
535CE-539CE	Senka	887CE-897CE	Uda	1260-1274	Kameyama
539CE-571CE	Kimmei	897CE-930CE	Daigo	1275-1287	Go-Uda
572CE-585CE	Bidatsu	930CE-946CE	Suzaku	1288-1298	Fushimi
585CE-587CE	Yomei	946CE-967CE	Murakami	1299-1301	Go-Fushimi



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

58 CE

Ming-Ti, emperor of [China](#), introduced [Buddhism](#).

DO I HAVE YOUR ATTENTION? GOOD.



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

100 CE

From this year into 190 CE, Alexander, a Greek merchant, was traveling by sea to the south of [China](#).

In [China](#), the first insecticide was invented and used. This was powdered dry chrysanthemum flowers, whose active ingredient (Pyrethrum) is widely used to this day, especially on vegetables, because it is harmless to mammals and is biodegradable.

THE FUTURE CAN BE EASILY PREDICTED IN RETROSPECT



In [China](#), invention of the multitube seed drill.

At about this point, in [China](#), Ch'ang ch'un-ch'ing was writing his Commentary on the *CHOU'PEI*.



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

105 CE

It was in this year, according to tradition, that the first [paper](#) was made — in [China](#). The maker, the eunuch Ts'ai Lun (born *circa* 50 in Kueiyang, Kweichow; died *circa* 110-119), was experimenting with the inner bark of what we now know as the paper mulberry (*Broussonetia papyrifera*), as well as with hemp, tree bark, rags and fishnets, and was finding possibilities that would quickly supersede both silk and bamboo strips.⁴

PLANTS

The likelihood per the archeological evidence is that the materials with which he was experimenting had been available for at least 250 years (since *circa* 150 BCE), but for mundane uses such as packing.

4. [Francis Bacon](#) would characterize the origin of [paper](#) as “obscure and inglorious” because of course it was something that had originated in obscure and inglorious [China](#). (Anyone who has ever inspected a huge gray wasp’s nest would of course concur with this evaluation by Sir Francis.)



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

120 CE

In [China](#), Chang Heng created the first seismograph, a device which was able to indicate the direction from which the primary shock-wave of an earthquake had arrived by dropping a ball, from the mouth of a bronze dragon, into the mouth of a bronze frog.

THE FUTURE IS MOST READILY PREDICTED IN RETROSPECT



132

In [China](#), Chang Heng added a water clock to the armillary, creating an invention which could keep track of where stars would be seen in the heavens at a given time, similar to a 20th-Century planetarium.

140 CE

It having become a practice among [Jewish](#) young men, to dangle a small weight from the remaining foreskin of their penis (to lengthen the foreskin so that in the gymnasium they might appear more similar to their uncircumcised Gentile friends), the rabbis resorted to an alteration of the Mosaic circumcision procedure. Whereas before only the foreskin was removed and the knob of the glans penis not exposed, from this point forward the skin would be stripped from around the knob of the glans penis — so that Jewishness could not ever be concealed.



Old-Style Circumcision

It was at about this point that [Taoist](#) alchemists began to attempt to transmogrify base metals into gold. They frequently experimented with cinnabar ore (mercury sulfide, or HgS, easily found due to its bright transparent red color).

[Claudius Ptolemy of Alexandria](#) created a 13-volume astronomical and mathematical encyclopedia that 9th-Century Arabs would name “[Almagest](#).” Ptolemy’s observations and mathematics were excellent, so excellent in fact that his error that the sun circled the earth would go unchallenged for 14 centuries. However, to the horror of many medieval Christians and modern Muslims, the purpose of his encyclopedia was to provide students with the background they needed to work with his 5-volume astrological text “[Tetrabiblos](#).”

[Justin Martyr](#) viewed a gladiatorial contest at Rome, noting that spectators went wild when a defeated gladiator defiantly stuck out his neck to receive his deathblow, but hooted and jeered whenever a defeated fighter bolted in panic. Commonly, the gladiators of this era were laborers who had sold themselves to avoid starvation. These desperate men would then be pitted against professional fighters whose managers would select their victims with an eye toward inflating their champions’ reputations (the big money is not in the prizes, but in the side betting).

During this year and the following two the [Emperor Antoninus Pius](#) would be having a wall built between the

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

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

Forth River and the Clyde River in Britain as protection against incursions from Scotland.



The Roman Paulist Church is becoming fragmented over the Jewish issue. Some believed the Roman Paulist Church should reject all Jewish tradition while others held that Jesus is Jewish and followed Jewish tradition. The Roman Paulist Church as a compromise became committed to the concept that Jesus is the Jewish Messiah. Most Jews didn't accept Jesus as the Messiah because Jewish tradition foretold that the Messiah would be a political King who would free the Jews. They also claimed that Jesus never claimed to be the Jewish Messiah. The Roman Paulist Church branded all Christian sects as heretics who didn't follow this Roman interpretation. This proclamation clearly defined Jews versus Roman Paulist Christians and clearly established the basis for the persecution of the Jews. Interestingly the Marshinites who proposed this theology are excommunicated yet the Church incorporated some of their principles.

Letters of Marcion, produces his own canon without Old Testament and using only a heavily edited Luke + 10 Pauline Epistles, cites "Western" Gospel text-type.

Apocalypse of Peter, written in Greek [New Testament Apocrypha, Schneemelcher, v. 2].

Suetonius, born 70, Roman historian: "de Vita Caesarum."



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

141 CE

March 27: There is a [Chinese](#) record of an observation of [Halley's Comet](#) on this date. The [comet](#) was said to be of a bluish white color and to be spanning about nine degrees.

ASTRONOMY



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

150 CE

The Buddhist monk An Shih-kao (147-170 CE) showed up in the eastern Han capital of Loyang and would translate numerous scriptures. After this, the first Buddhist community in [China](#) would be formed by Tao-an (312-385 CE), a scholar of the Prajna Paramita sutras and a follower of the Amitabha Buddha, and his student, Hui-yuan (334-416 CE), who would go on to create the Chinese Pure Land sect on Lushan Mountain. In addition an [Indian](#) monk named Kumirajiva (343-413 CE) would establish at the western Han capital of Chang-an a translation institute in which Buddhist scripture would be translated and reproduced in quantity (his students Seng-chao and Tao-sheng would carry on after him).

**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.**

166 CE

The Parthians invaded Syria. Yet another battle involving our favorite pushy people, the [Romans](#): at Ctesiphon and Seleucia the legions of Gaius Avidius Cassius defeated the Parthians, creating [the Pax Romana](#). During the Roman Triumph celebration after defeating the Parthians, Commodus (5-year-old son of Emperor [Marcus Aurelius](#)) was proclaimed a Caesar.



Soter, an Italian from the Campania, was listed as Papa of Rome (until 174 CE). As a compromise, Easter would become firmly established during his reign as had been previously recommended by the Asia Minor Churches, albeit not on Nisan 14 during Passover as they had recommended per the Jewish tradition but on the Sunday following. Soter papa of Rome dispatched a letter with gifts to the Corinthian Church, Dionysius papa of Corinth agreed to read his letter at service.

[Roman](#) merchants in search of a better price for spices and silk (then worth at least more than their weight in gold) sailed east from Sri Lanka to reach south [China](#) and the Mekong Delta. Marcus Aurelius sent an embassy to [China](#). Meanwhile, other Romans returning home from wars against the Sassanid Persians introduce smallpox into Italy (a quarter of the Imperial Roman population would die within the decade). As if that were not bad enough, Roman soldiers and merchants also spread rubella along the Mediterranean littoral during the 250s. Deaths from this disease in the city of Rome alone were credibly reported at 5,000 persons per day. These body counts are mentioned as a reminder that disease may have hurried the collapse of late Roman civilization more than the military invasions so gleefully described by 18th- and 19th-Century historians.

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

Speaking of invasions, however, hordes of Marcomanni and kindred tribes from Bohemia were crossing the Danube River and attacking in Austria, locally disrupting [the Pax Romana](#).

GERMANY



What goes around keeps coming around and around and around...



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.



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

**THERE EXISTS NO SUCH THING AS A MOMENT. NO INSTANT HAS EVER
FOR AN INSTANT EXISTED.**



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

178 CE

For 80 days there appeared in the skies above [China](#) a great [comet](#), the reddish tail of which spanned 70 to 70 degrees.

ASTRONOMY

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.



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

180 CE

At about this time, in what eventually would become [China](#), Chang Ling, the head of the Taoist Five Pecks of Rice sect, took the title *t'ien shih*, or “Heavenly Master.” From 184 CE to 215 CE, these priests would lead major peasant uprisings in Shantung and Szechwan provinces. Known collectively as the Yellow Turban revolts, these were peasant rebellions associated with the collapse of the Later Han Dynasty. While remembered today mainly for their use of group sex as a recruiting tool, in their own time, they were notable mainly for their belief in the impending end of the world. The color symbolism has astrological roots, and represents the Saviors of the Ten Directions. In 1019 CE this title *t'ien shih*, or “Heavenly Master” would be awarded to some priests claiming descent from Chang. These priests’ descendants would retain it until 1927, when Chinese warlords would chase them out of Kiangsi and into Fukien and Taiwan.

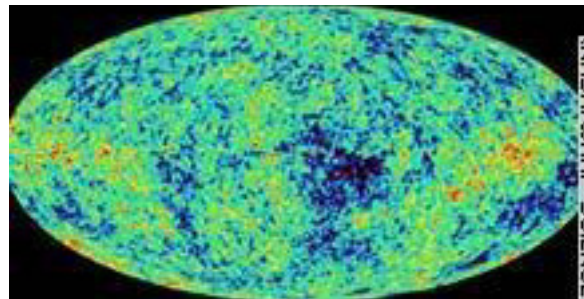
MILLENNIALISM

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.

185 CE

There are [Chinese](#) records of a nova in this year, a “guest star” in the constellation *Centaurus* which remained visible to the naked eye for some 20 months. Chinese astrologers claimed the sight foretold insurrection. However, one hardly needed to read the stars to see that, only pay attention to Later Han politics. Some now suppose that this nova actually was a supernova, while others suppose that there was no supernova, but that instead we have confused together some records of the nova of this year with records of the visit of the comet Swift-Tuttle in 188 CE. It is of some importance to cosmologists whether the event of this year actually was a nova or actually was a supernova, because the data has been being used in some of their calculations of the age of the universe.

ASTRONOMY



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

191 CE

A white comet appeared over China and Korea, its tail stretching across 100 degrees of the sky.

SKY EVENT

196 CE

Earliest presently known record of medicinal use of [ginseng](#), in the *MATERIA MEDICA* of Shen Nung. However, ginseng (or *Ren Shen* “man root”) had been known in [China](#) as far back as 2,000-3,000 BCE. Recent Chinese studies have identified the Chinese character *Shen* as having been inscribed on scapulae and tortoise carapace. Ginseng was apparently being mentioned as early as 48 and 33 BCE. After these millennia of collection, all wild species of *echinacea* are threatened. That includes wild goldenseal *Hydrastis canadensis*, and *Echinacea purpurea*, as well as both varieties *Panax quinquefolius* and *Panax schinseng* as they are in some places still growing in the wild.





THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

200 CE

The Anglo-Saxon Chronicles and also, the 1st sushi on record.

ANGLO-SAXON CHRONICLES



A news item relating to the development of ELECTRIC WALDEN technology: The saun-pan computing tray was being used in [China](#), while the soroban computing tray was being used in [Japan](#).

ELECTRIC
WALDEN



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

JAPANESE EMPERORS

50CE	Jimmu
?CE	Suizei
?CE	Annei
?CE	Itoku
?CE	Kosho
100CE	Koan
?CE	Korei
?CE	Kogen
200CE	Kaika
219CE-249CE	Sujin
249CE-280CE	Suinin
280CE-316CE	Keiko
316CE-342CE	Seimu
343CE-346CE	Chuai
346CE-395CE	Oojin



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

220 CE

The [Chinese](#) emperor commissioned a comprehensive reference that would come to be known as EMPEROR'S MIRROR, for use by his civil servants.

Between this year and 280CE, the triad or secret society known as *Chi Mei* or “Red Eyebrows” overthrew the *Han* dynasty. At the end the generals would divide [China](#) among themselves into Three Kingdoms: the Kingdom of *Wei*, the Kingdom of *Shu-Han*, and the Kingdom of *Wu* (after several centuries the *Han* dynasty would be nominally “restored” by a general who would consider himself a descendant of the *Han* rulers; in later literature and in many, many movies this period would be romanticized as a time of chivalry and heroism, grass usually seeming greener on the other side of the fence).

At about this point, as a way to recruit the best fighters for his bodyguard, the Chinese warlord Liu Pei began to sponsor fencing tournaments. During one of these a man with an iron rod knocked down a saber fencer but then the fencer's tempered blade, one fabricated by swordsmith Pu Yuan, severed that iron rod. A poem by Chang Hua (232CE-300CE) describes such fighters, whose weapons included curved knives, swords, halberds, and spears, as notorious for killing people in the marketplace.

The Hsiungnu Tartars regained control of trade routes in Turkestan that linked East and West.

During the reign of Callistus I (217 CE-222 CE) as Papa of Rome, the apostle Peter would be coming to be credited as having been the initial Papa of the Roman Church, supreme, rather than merely the initial Papa in Rome, one among a number of such leaders in various cities (this shifting of attitudes would require some 2 or 3 decades).

Bishop Clement of Alexandria (who had been born in about 150CE and who had cited an “Alexandrian” New Testament text-type and a Secret Gospel of Mark and a Gospel of the Egyptians, and had written “Exhortations to the Greeks,” “Rich Man's Salutation,” and “To the Newly Baptized”) died in this year in Caesarea.

Sextus Julius Africanus created an Encyclopedia which included a History of Mathematics.

Goths invaded Asia Minor and the Balkans.



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

239 CE

The initial visit by a [Japanese](#) envoy to [China](#). Hi there, neighbor-san!



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

240 CE

In this year a [comet](#) was recorded in [China](#). It was visible for 40 days.

ASTRONOMY

November 10: The first sighting of the [comet](#) of this year, in [China](#). At this point it measured 30 degrees and was in Scorpio, heading toward Sagittarius.

ASTRONOMY



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

245 CE

Wang Pi wrote on the *I-CHING*.

CHINA



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

250 CE

In [Japan](#), the Shinto shrine of Ise was originated.

At about this point, in [China](#), Siu Yo wrote a book on arithmetic and Hsu Yueh was preparing a commentary on Siu Yo's work.



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

260 CE

Ma Chun, using differential gears, built a “south-pointing carriage” (the magnetic compass was initially used in [China](#) not to point North but to point South — hey, that’s just a convention!)



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

263 CE

Liu Hui's *HAI-TAU SUAN-KING*.

CHINA



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

265 CE

Making use of a rule-of-thumb approximation to pi, $\pi = 142/45$, Wang Fan wrote on [astronomy](#).

CHINA

The Western Jin: [China](#) united briefly under one Emperor. The imperial capitals were at Luoyang and at Changan.



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

287 CE

A comet seen in this year from the Orient had a 100-degree tail, but was visible in Sagittarius for only ten days.

SKY EVENT
CHINA



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

289 CE

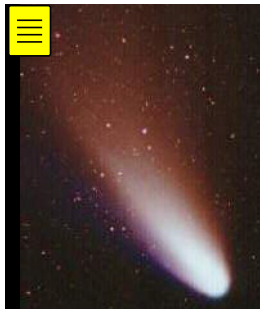
Liu Chih may have been the [Chinese](#) writer who gave the approximation $\pi = 3.125$.

295 CE

April 20: [Halley's Comet](#) whipped around the [sun](#). On this visit to our solar system it would be recorded by the [Chinese](#) but not by the Romans.

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



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

300 CE

This was the beginning of the Yamato period in [Japan](#).

At this point the [Chinese](#) were discovering that cast iron could be created, using for fuel coal rather than wood (the sky was the loveliest blue color, you can't imagine).

[Chinese](#) development of the abacus may have been already underway at this point, although the 1st preserved printed reference would not occur until 1593 CE.

From this year until 309 CE, the [astronomer](#) Chen Zhuo of [China](#) would be making a single star map by combining the 4th Century BCE star maps of Shih Shen, of Gan De, and of Wu Xien.



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

302 CE

May or June: Possible translations of [Chinese](#) and [Korean](#) records are “A broom star appeared in the day” or “A broom star was visible in the morning.” It is difficult to determine whether what was being recorded was that the [comet](#) was so bright that it could be seen during the daylight, or that the comet appeared in the pre-dawn sky.

SKY EVENT



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

317 CE

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

[China](#) was divided into Southern and Northern Dynasties.

There was a succession of dynasties –including 24 short-lived ones– on the north and south sides of the Yangtze River. This was a developing period for Buddhism. Cave temples were created at Dunhuang, Yungang, and Longmen.

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

335 CE

On the far side of the earth, [cloves](#) were delivered to [Constantine](#) — this is the first record of this [spice](#) having reached so far. The source, flower buds of *Syzygium aromaticum*, had of course been known for centuries in the civilized world, for in the Han court etiquette demanded that a person being received by the [Chinese](#) emperor hold a clove in his mouth to sweeten the breath.⁵



PLANTS

5. History is silent as to whether these people began to put a clove in their mouth before approaching their Emperor Constantine.



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

336 CE

February: There are records of a “broom star” that appeared in the western sky, in the constellation of Andromeda. Later it would be recorded, in the West, that a “hairy star of unusual size” had presaged the May 337 death of the Emperor [Constantine](#), and it is likely that this Occidental “hairy star” was in fact this Oriental “broom star.”

ASTRONOMY

CHINA

COMET



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

360 CE

About this time [Japanese](#) Empress Jingo took over at the death of her husband, Emperor Chuai.

At about this point, Japanese adventurers occupied large portions of the [Korean](#) coastline (they would enjoy this country so well that they would not be successfully ejected until 562 CE). Perhaps in response to these Japanese invasions, the Korean Silla kingdom began to adopt [Chinese](#) bureaucratic practices.

The beginning of the reign in [Rome](#) of the emperor known as Julian the Apostate — a believer in the old-time religion.



An embassy from King Meghavarna of Sri Lanka reached the Gupta court; a religious monument for Sri Lankan visitors was built.

The scroll begin to be replaced by the book (i.e., the “codex”).

**HISTORY OF
THE BOOK**



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

371 CE

At the age of perhaps 17, [Aurelius Augustinus](#) moved from Madaura to Carthage, which had at this point been firmly within the Roman Empire for something like twenty generations of human life, and there took up with a young woman whose name is not of record with whom he would live for over a decade and who would bear him a child.

[China](#)'s Chien Wen emperor was relying upon Buddhist monks to exorcise the influence of evil stars over his empire.



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

385 CE

Following the death of the Gautama Buddha in 483 BCE, Buddhism had developed along two major lines – the Hinayana (“lesser vehicle”) and the Mahayana (“greater vehicle”), and it had been this Mahayana version that had found its way along the trade routes of Central Asia into [Tibet](#) and then [China](#). There had already been a few monks in China before, but the first real Buddhist community there had been formed by Tao-an (312-385 CE), a scholar of the Prajna Paramita sutras and a follower of the Amitabha Buddha, and his student, Hui-yuan (334-416 CE), who would go on to create the Chinese Pure Land sect on Lushan Mountain. In addition an Indian monk named Kumirajiva (343-413 CE) had appeared at the western Han capital of Chang-an to establish a translation institute in which Buddhist scripture would be translated and reproduced in quantity (his students Seng-chao and Tao-sheng would carry on after him). In this year Tao-an died.




CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

386 CE

This was the beginning of the era of north-south division in [China](#) (to 589 CE). From this year until 535 CE, Bohidarma (TaMo) was arriving. The Shaolin Monastery was being built and Shaolin boxing was developing in the temples. The period until 534 CE would be known as the Northern Wei period in Chinese civilization.

The explosion of a massive star was noted by the [Chinese](#) as a brilliant new point of light in the constellation that Westerners refer to as Sagittarius. Early in the year 2001, astronomers using the Earth-orbiting Chandra X-Ray Observatory revealed that they had discovered that this explosion in 386 CE had created the sort of extremely dense object known as a pulsar, about 15,000 light years away from us, spinning at the rate of 14 times per second and emitting flashes of X-radiation “like an overcharged lighthouse beacon.” (Before this announcement we had known of only one such object, the pulsar in the Crab Nebula, spinning at about 30 times a second, that originated in a supernova of July 4, 1054 CE  that was some 7,000 light years away and also had been observed by Chinese astronomers.)

ASTRONOMY



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

390 CE

August 7: A [comet](#) which appeared on this night in the constellation of Gemini would be observed for thirty days in [China](#), in [Korea](#), and in [Rome](#).

SKY EVENT

August 18: The [comet](#) on this day passed within a tenth of an astronomical unit of Earth.

SKY EVENT

September 5: The [comet](#) on this day was at perihelion, whipping around the sun at 0.92 astronomical units.

SKY EVENT

September 8: Entering the northern part of the constellation of Ursa Major, the tail of the [comet](#) was white and was over 100 degrees long.

SKY EVENT

September 18: The [comet](#) disappeared over the northern horizon of temperate-land observers.

SKY EVENT



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

397 CE

Ching Ling-pao's treatise on [Taoist](#) philosophy known as the Book of the Sacred Jewel.

CHINA
LAO-TZE

LIGHT FROM CHINA



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

399 CE

[Chinese](#) Buddhist historian Fa-hien began a journey through [India](#).

The 4th and 5th Centuries CE seem to have been the time of the [Indian](#) poet and dramatist [Kalidasa](#) at the court of the monarch Candragupta II, who reigned from *circa* 380 CE to *circa* 415 CE (his name merely indicates “Kali’s slave,” and the earliest date we can assign for his life and works would be *circa* 170 BC because he used Agnimitra, the 2d Shunga king, as the hero of one of his dramas, while the latest date we can assign is 634 CE because his poems are praised in the Aihole inscription of that date).

[Henry Thoreau](#) would, however, accept the account Alexander von Humboldt provided in his *COSMOS*, where, following another tradition, he would assign this early author to the 1st-Century CE era of Virgil and Horace:

The name of Kalidasa was early and widely known among the Western nations. This great poet flourished in the highly cultivated court of Vikramaditya, and was consequently the contemporary of Virgil and Horace. The English and German translations of the *Sacountala* have added to the admiration which has been so freely yielded to this poet, whose tenderness of feeling and richness of creative fancy entitle him to a high place in the ranks of the poets of all nations. The charm of his descriptions of nature is strikingly exemplified in the beautiful drama *Vikrama and Urvashi*, where the king wanders through the thickets of the forest in search of the nymph Urvashi; in the poems of *The Seasons*; and in that of *The Messenger of Clouds* (*Meghaduta*). This last poem describes with admirable truth to nature the joy with which, after long drought, the first appearance of a rising cloud is hailed as a harbinger of the approaching season of rain.

SACONTALÁ; OR, THE FATAL RING is a story in which a king is wedding a girl of lowly birth whom he has impregnated. Unintentionally the pregnant bride offends a saint, who erases her entirely from the royal bridegroom’s memory. She can restore the king’s memory only by returning to him a ring he had presented to her — but while bathing she lost that ring. A fisherman finds it, the king recognizes it, and the play arrives at its happy ending. [Thoreau](#) would make use of a speech by the monarch in the 5th act.

[WALDEN](#): The sulphur-like pollen of the pitch-pine soon covered the pond and the stones and rotten wood along the shore, so that you could have collected a barrel-ful. This is the “sulphur showers” we hear of. Even in Kalidasa’s drama of *Sacountala*, we read of “rills dyed yellow with the golden dust of the lotus.” And so the seasons went rolling on into summer, as one rambles into higher and higher grass.

PEOPLE OF
WALDEN

KALIDASA



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

400 CE

On the [Japanese](#) islands, the Yamato culture, modeled after [China](#), ruled from Kyushu to the Kinai plain, centered around the town of Naniwa in the Yamato plain ([Osaka](#)). Korean monks introduce the Chinese syllabary into [Japan](#).

At about this point Chinese Buddhists described “the five elemental configurations,” or ping an hsing. These were moving meditations designed to merge the psychological and physical aspects of the human existence, and their practice was particularly associated with the T’ien Ta’i school of Buddhism.

The Chinese learned to make weapons-grade steel. Their process involved mixing different grades of cast and wrought iron.

The [Indian](#) poet Vatsyana writes the Kama Sutra, or “Aphorisms on Love.” While the poet’s frank descriptions of erotic activity are sometimes claimed to have Roman or Taoist roots, his emphasis on acrobatic love between consenting adults of the opposite sex was clearly a local invention. The Kama Sutra is mentioned partly because it taught Indian courtesans that the way to captivate men included “practice with sword, single-stick, quarter-staff, and bow and arrow,”⁶ partly because its arcane breathing methods subsequently got tangled up with martial art practice, and mainly because it helped create the concept of romantic love between men and women, an idea the Arabs borrowed in the eighth century and the Normans took to Europe in the eleventh.

Indian merchants divide their cannabis into bhang (marijuana) and ganja (hashish). Their wrestlers then ate bhang mixed with almonds as a way of curbing their strength-sapping sexual desires. Arguments about the perils of drug abuse aside, I think that the Indian gurus had it wrong. That is, to my mind a fighter’s abstinence from sex is less important to his chances of winning than his abstinence from love, as love has a way of satisfying that hunger in a fighter’s soul, while sex is simply sex.

Turkish astrologers living in Afghanistan combined Babylonian and [Iranian](#) lunar calculations with Greek zodiac lore to create the Vedic religious calendar.

The Polynesian kings of Samoa began building heavily fortified villages on top of hills. These included hill-top defenses made from logs and packed earth, and were at the time among the most sophisticated on earth.

March 31: The perigee of the [comet](#). This was a very close miss, as the comet passed us by with a mere 0.08 astronomical units gap. We have reports on this comet from [China](#), from [Korea](#), and from [Rome](#). It was described as sword-like.

SKY EVENT

6. The 4th-Century Indians divided their weapons into distinct classes (like 18th-Century Europeans, they liked to classify things). Throwing weapons included missiles thrown by machines, by hand, and by magic spells, while hand-held weapons included swords, spears, knives, and body parts. In total, Indian scholars identified over 130 thirty different kinds of weapons!



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

413 CE

Kumarajira, [Chinese](#) Buddhist philosopher born in the year 334, died.



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

414 CE

Seng-chao, born 384, [Chinese](#) Buddhist philosopher, “Book of Chao.”



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

417 CE

Hui-yuan, a [Chinese](#) Buddhist philosopher born in 334 CE, died.



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

418 CE

June 24: We don't know whether there were one or two or three comets during this year. The first sighting of a [comet](#) occurred in [China](#) on this date, a "bushy star" appearing in the constellation of Ursa Major.

SKY EVENT

September 15: [Chinese](#) records indicate a [comet](#) from this point forward, in the constellation of Leo, with "rays" extending more than 100 degrees toward the north, reaching the constellation of Ursa Major.

SKY EVENT

HDT

WHAT?

INDEX

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

453 CE

February/March: Both in [China](#) and in Rome, a [comet](#) was seen in the western portion of the heavens. (Since a comet would be said to have preceded the death of [Attila the Hun](#), this one was presumably the dude that done that dirty deed.)



SKY EVENT

456 CE

In two herbs of the *Araliaceae* family, the *Panax schinseng* of the Asian continent and the *Panax quinquefolius* of the North American continent, the root contains some sort of tonic stimulant with a bittersweet aromatic flavor (the Greek root of the term “panax” means “panacea”). The North American variety is native to rich, cool woods from Quebec and Manitoba down to the Gulf Coast. The Asian variety is native to [Manchuria](#) and [Korea](#), although now it is also cultivated in [Japan](#). The 1st record of prescription of [ginseng](#) as a medicinal herb appears in *SHEN-NUNG PEN-TSAO-CHING* (*SHEN-NUNG PHARMACOPOIEA*), the most highly regarded book in oriental medicine. Shi-Zhen Li’s book *PEN TS’AO KANG MU* (*ENCYCLOPEDIA OF HERBS*) describes ginseng from Koryo and Paekche, and indicates that ginseng was being cultivated as early as the ancient Three Kingdom era of Korea. Refer to *TALES OF THE GINSENG* by Andrew C. Kimmens.



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

472 CE

Olybrius was [Roman](#) Emperor for the year. Yet another battle involving our favorite pushy people, the [Romans](#): at [Rome](#) the Vandal legions of Ricimer defeated the defending Romans, disrupting [the Pax Romana](#).



At about this point [Chinese](#) monks were describing the [Indian](#) meditation practices that subsequently would become known as Ch'an (Zen) Buddhism.



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

500 CE

[Japan](#) began a [Chinese](#) style of inscription.

At about this point Tamo brought [tea](#) from [India](#) to [China](#).⁷

PLANTS

The Hindus of [India](#) were beginning to stop eating the beef of cows, and were beginning to stop killing their cows (this may actually have had more to do with the value of cows as a source of labor pulling plows to turn the soil and as a source of fertilizer for the fields than with abstract theology).⁸

From about this point in time until 515 CE the Huns, a nomadic central Asian people, would be destroying the powerful Gupta empire of [India](#).

During this 6th Century CE, [Indian](#) mathematicians would be introducing the zero token (0).

7. It would be an enormous discovery for the Brits, more than a millennia later, when they would come belatedly to the recognition that this bush growing in [China](#) the leaves of which were so valuable to them was also growing, as a tree, in India — and that one of the sources of revenue of their British East India Company could therefore be the production of [tea](#) leaves in [India](#)! Big duh.

8. In the 2002 news, we learn that there is a Hindu historian who needs to go between lectures with an armed bodyguard, because he acknowledges that once upon a time Hindus ate cows. The political reality is that it is non-PC to admit this in India. Hindu PCness requires that it is Muslims who eat cows — and that therefore India's Muslims deserve to be killed. (You can put your life at risk, nowadays, by suggesting that nobody deserves to be killed.)





THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

520 CE

After the Buddhist monk Tao-an's death in 385 CE, Buddhahadra (359-429 CE) had come from India and caused Chinese Buddhism to begin to focus primarily upon reflection rather than on ritual recitation. The religion had split between sutra-oriented followers of Kumirajiva and meditation-oriented followers of Buddhahadra. It was into this environment that Bodhidarma (470-532 CE), generally identified as the founder of Ch'an Buddhism, in this year came from India into southern [China](#). Bodhidarma has been regarded, probably in error, as a patron of martial arts. There would follow almost 500 years of development in the Chinese culture, producing Hui-neng (638-713 CE), the 6th patriarch whose temple in Canton legitimized Ch'an Buddhism, Ma-tsu Tao-I (709-788 CE), the creator of what is known today as Rinzai Zen, and Pai-chang Huai-hai (720-814 CE), who would formulate a monastic system for the emerging Ch'an communities with rules of conduct and discipline for Zen monks.

We don't know whether or not the [comet](#) of this year was an especially bright one, or instead a very ordinary one, since we don't know whether to translate the [Chinese](#) to have meant "day," meaning so bright as to be visible during the day, or to have meant "dawn," meaning before sunrise.

SKY EVENT



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

550 CE

When the Sun (Soga) dynasty ascended to the throne, the capital of [Japan](#) was relocated to their home lands, which were in the Asuka valley in the central Yamato plain.

The term “Shinto” was introduced to differentiate the native religion of the [Japanese](#) from Buddhism and Confucianism.

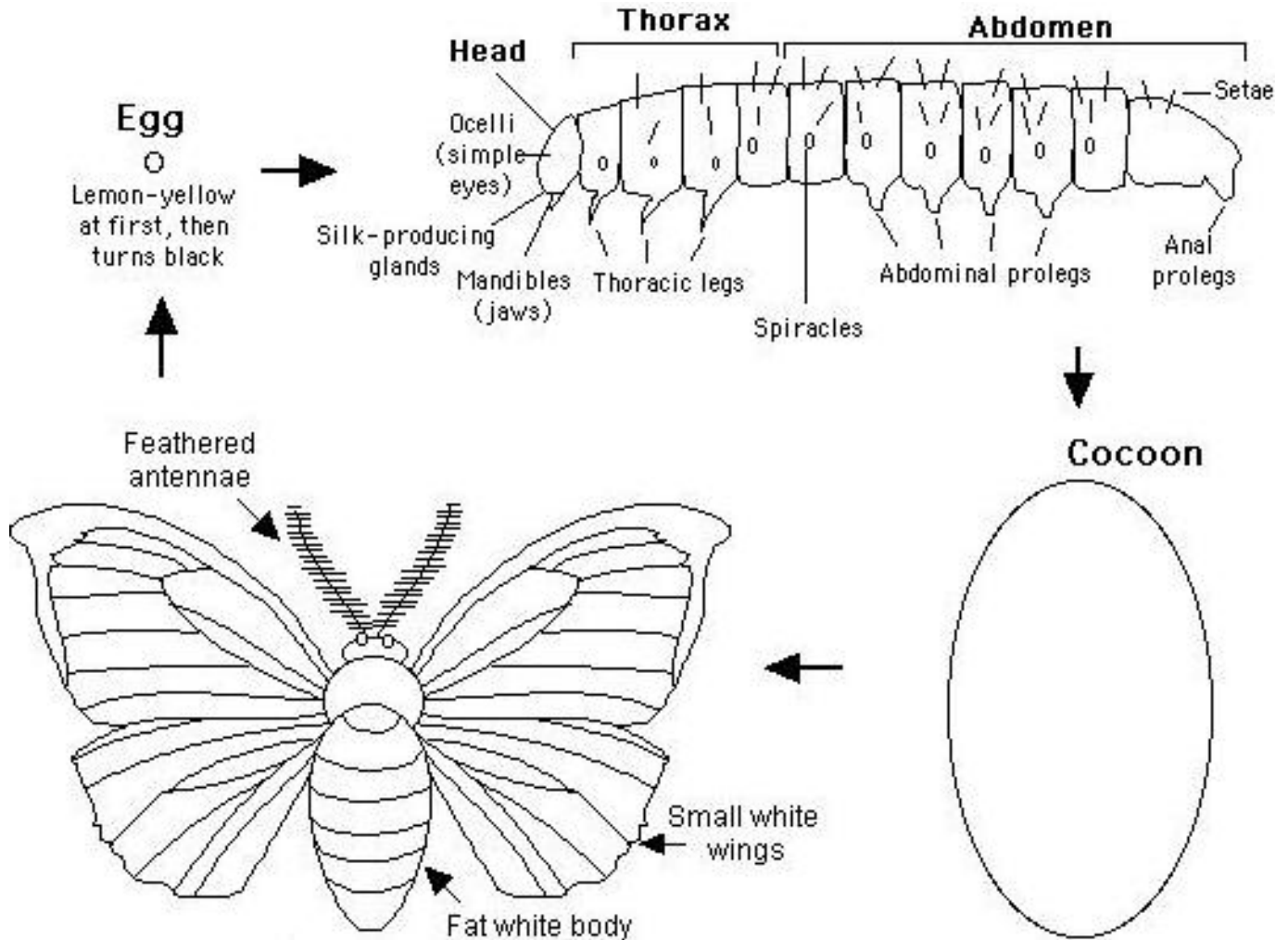
At about this point at the court of the Liang Dynasty Wu Ti emperor the Buddhist monk *Tung Ch’uan* (“Eastern Fist”) demonstrated techniques by which he was able, unarmed, to disarm armed attackers. We don’t know what these techniques amounted to so this record is not enough to substantiate the early existence of Shaolin temple boxing. Meanwhile, in Western [China](#), artists were commemorating Chinese victories over Avars, Uighurs, Mongols, and other nomad “bandit” groups by painting murals on the walls of Dunhuang Cave 285. The story of the 500 Bandits’ conversion to Buddhism would come to be a popular theme in later Chinese theatricals.

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

552 CE

In this year and the following one, the emperor Justinian would be sending Christian monks as “missionaries” to [China](#) and Ceylon, in order to smuggle live domesticated silkworm-moth cases *Bombyx mori*⁹ to set up a domestic [silk](#) industry in the Middle East in competition with the East (this marks the start of the important monopolistic Byzantine silk industry).



9. Originally native to Northern [China](#): Class *Insecta* (insects), Order *Lepidoptera* (butterflies and moths), Suborder *Ditrysia* (Moths, Butterflies, Skippers), Superfamily *Bombycoidea*, Family *Bombycidae*, Genus *Bombyx*, Species *B. mori*.



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

570 CE

From this year until 687 CE, warfare between the emperors of Constantinople and the kings of [Persia](#) was going to be just continuous and chronic.

At about this point the T'ien T'ai school of Master Chih introduced Theravada Buddhist moving meditations into [China](#). Known as the Tendai school in [Japan](#), Master Chih's school was noted for its enthusiastic use of the sudden realization method of enlightenment. The master's name indicates that he was a Scythian — which would have meant that he was a Turk or Afghan.



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

574 CE

Fu Yi, a [Chinese](#) scholar of the Tang period, would base a version of the [Tao Tê Ching](#) on a text that had in 574AD been found in a Han tomb.



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

575 CE

Saint Columba held a convention at Gortinanima, near Limavady, to determine the future of Scotland (a region then known then as Caledonia).

From this year until 579 CE the Pope would be Benedict I, who had been authorized by Justin II.

At about this point the [Chinese](#) invented kitchen matches, something that would not become popular in Europe until the 19th Century.



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

580 CE

Wen Di, the first Sui emperor, reunited the divided [Chinese](#) empire.

581 CE

The beginning of the Sui Dynasty in [China](#).

- 446 The Britons, now left to themselves, are greatly harassed by the Scots and Picts, upon which they once more make their complaint to the Romans, but receive no assistance from that quarter.
- 447 Attila (surnamed the Scourge of God) with his Huns, ravages the Roman empire.
- 449 Vortigern, king of the Britons, invites the Saxons into Britain against the Scots and Picts.
- 455 The Saxons having repulsed the Scots and Picts, invite over more of their countrymen, and begin to establish themselves in Kent, under Hengist.
- 476 The western empire is finished, 523 years after the battle of Pharsalia; upon the ruins of which several new states arise in Italy and other parts, consisting of Goths, Vandals, Huns, and other Barbarians, under whom literature is extinguished, and the works of the learned are destroyed.
- 496 Clovis, king of France, baptized, and Christianity begins in that kingdom.
- 508 Prince Arthur begins his reign over the Britons.
- 516 The computing of time by the Christian æra is introduced by Dionysius the monk.
- 529 The code of Justinian, the eastern emperor, is published.
- 581 Latin ceased to be spoken about this time in Italy.
- 596 Augustine the monk comes into England with forty monks.
- 606 Here begins the power of the popes, by the concessions of Phocas, emperor of the east.
- 622 Mahomet, the false prophet, flies from Mecca to Medina, in Arabia, in the 44th year of his age, and 10th of his ministry, when he laid the foundation of the Saracen empire; and from whom the Mahometan princes to this day claim their descent. His followers compute their time from this æra, which in Arabic is called Hegira, i. e. the Flight.
- 637 Jerusalem is taken by the Saracens, or followers of Mahomet.

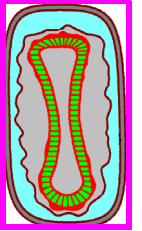


THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

583-585 CE

At this point the [small pox](#) was spreading from [China](#) into [Korea](#) and [Japan](#).





CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

589 CE

From this year into 618 CE, North [China](#) conquered South China so that the land again was united.

The Sui Dynasty made its capital at Changan.



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

593 CE

Tea was taken from China to Japan, where it would assume a major role in Buddhist ritual.

PLANTS

600 CE

Construction began on China's Grand Canal.



CANALS

Prince Shotoku sent the first official Japanese mission to China.

ELECTRIC WALDEN

News items relating to the development of ELECTRIC WALDEN technology:

HISTORY OF THE BOOK

- In China, books were being printed.
- Although there is a specific reference to a quill used as a pen in the 7th-Century writings of St. Isidore of Seville, surely use of pens fabricated from bird feathers began much earlier despite our lack of documentation for that fact. From this point forward, at least, quills would be the writing instrument of choice all the way into the early years of the 19th Century. It is said that Monticello slaves kept geese specifically to supply Thomas Jefferson with quills for his writing. The best feathers were taken from the bird in the spring. It was the five outer or pinion feathers of the wing that were pulled. The feathers of the right wing were less desirable because they curved inconveniently inward toward the writer when used by a right-handed person. Such a quill might last Jefferson as much as a week, with careful trimming by pen-knife. At one point Saint Petersburg in Russia would be sending 27,000,000 quills per year into the English market. Swan feathers would be considered a premium grade. For making fine lines crow feathers would be used. The feathers of eagles, owls, hawks, and turkeys would occasionally be used.



YOUR GARDEN-VARIETY ACADEMIC HISTORIAN INVITES YOU TO CLIMB



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

**ABOARD A HOVERING TIME MACHINE TO SKIM IN METATIME BACK ACROSS THE GEOLOGY OF OUR PAST TIMESLICES, WHILE OFFERING UP A GARDEN VARIETY OF COGENT ASSESSMENTS OF OUR PROGRESSION. WHAT A LOAD OF CRAP! YOU SHOULD REFUSE THIS HELICOPTERISH OVERVIEW OF THE HISTORICAL PAST, FOR IN THE REAL WORLD THINGS HAPPEN ONLY AS THEY HAPPEN. WHAT THIS SORT WRITES AMOUNTS, LIKE MERE “SCIENCE FICTION,” MERELY TO “HISTORY FICTION”:
IT’S NOT WORTH YOUR ATTENTION.**

During this century the last of the three great southern mouths of the Yangtze River would silt up, leaving this enormous river to discharge its mud-laden waters into the sea only from its northern branch where recently has been constructed the great port city of [Shanghai](#). The bight of Hangzhou of [China](#), into which most of these waters had been being dumped, would be left isolated.

Christianity spread into [China](#).



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

604 CE

Prince Shotoku issued a [Chinese](#)-style constitution (*KENPO JUSHICHUO*) based on Confucian principles — which *de facto* inaugurated the [Japanese](#) empire.



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

605 CE

[China](#)'s Sui rulers completed the Yung-Chi Canal.

CANAL

Prince Shotoku declared Buddhism and Confucianism the state religions of [Japan](#).



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

606 CE

Standardized examinations for public office in [China](#).

607 CE

March 15: [Mohammed](#) was a young man who had not yet begun to have his religious experiences.



NEVER READ AHEAD! TO APPRECIATE MARCH 15TH, 607 CE 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).

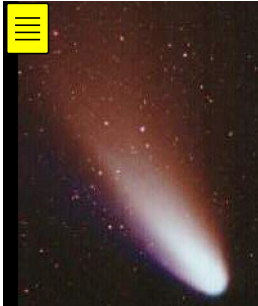
On this date [Halley's Comet](#) whipped around the [sun](#) during what was probably its 2d-brightest recorded appearance. It was in a different constellation almost every night. If this [comet](#) had been about five days earlier in its passage through the orbit of the Earth, it might have dived by us at about 2/3ds of the distance of the Moon, but instead it passed the planet behind it in its orbit, at 0.09 astronomical units. Surprisingly, the only records of observation we have of this visit are from [China](#).

SKY EVENT

CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

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

609 CE

At about this period the Pien section of [China](#)'s Grand Canal was opened for traffic.

[CANAL](#)

A Buddhist priest named Wongwang described the laws of war for the [Korean](#) soldiers Kwisan and Ch'uhang. These were loyalty to the king, piety toward parents, sincerity toward friends, courage in battle, avoiding combat on holy days, and killing as few people or animals on either side as possible.

610 CE

In [China](#), the Grand Canal project was complete and functional.



On the first day of the lunar New Year religious sectarians dressed as Buddhist monks attacked the [Chinese](#) Imperial Palace (three years later, other sectarians would plot an attack on the carriage in which an imperial prince was riding; in both cases the overriding concept was that, ordained monks being hypocrites and governments being exploitative, it would be considered the duty of an upright man to lay them low).



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

611 CE

A four-gate pagoda was erected on the grounds of a monastery in Shandong province. Facing in each of the four cardinal directions was a massive imperturbable seated statue of the [Akshobhya Buddha](#).



(In 1997  the Buddha facing east, the best preserved of the four, would be assaulted twice by a gang who would swaddle the head in blankets and attempt to cut it free with a diamond saw. On their 2nd attempt they would succeed in knocking the head from the torso with a sledgehammer. When the [Chinese](#) police would catch up with these people, several local government officials would become suddenly unemployed, and their ringleader would be sent to prison for life, which in China, which has a plenty of people, actually does mean for-life-and-be-grateful-we-didn't-just-shoot-you-in-the-back-of-your-neck-and-harvest-your-warm-kidneys. However, the imperturbable 159-pound head would be nowhere to be found, presumably having been spirited out of the country via [Hong Kong](#). In 2002  the head would turn up, as a gift to a Buddhist master on the island of Taiwan, and he would cause it to be returned to the Shandong monastery, where it would be reconnected with its torso by means of an iron rod down the neck.)

CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

618 CE

It would be during the Tang Dynasty in [China](#) that the [Taoist](#) text that had been being referred to as the *Daode* or the *Laozi jing* would come to be widely referred to as the “canonical text or *jing* on the Way (*Dao*) and virtue (*de*),” rather than simply being known by the name that had been assigned to its putative author, *Laozi* — “the words of Master *Lao*.”

The silk road trade to Europe would thrive.

Gunpowder would be invented. Block (movable type) printing would be invented.¹⁰

Here is the emperor Tai Zu from this period:



10. Francis Bacon would characterize the origin of gunpowder and of paper and printmaking as “obscure and inglorious” because they had originated in obscure and inglorious China.

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THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

And here is the empress Wu Zetian 武則天 from this period:



In this early Wǔdé period (618-626 CE) General Yáo Jūnsù of Suí was guarding Púzhōu when it was observed that what was described as a “white rainbow” descended into that city — nobody was quite sure what that portended, but for sure they paid attention.

SKY EVENT



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

619 CE

Origin of the “Suan-Ching” or Ten Classics, textbooks used for [Chinese](#) exams.



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

626 CE

In [China](#), the Tang court adopted Buddhism.

In Scotland, King Edwin of Northumbria founded Edinburgh and initiated a process of Christianization.

In Europe/Asia, at a siege of Constantinople, the Byzantines under Heraclius defeated the Avars, recreating [the Pax Romana](#).



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

627 CE

Battle of Brae Slieve; Cruithnic dynasty of Coleraine overthrown. Congal Clane (One-Eye) became King of the Old Scots.

IRELAND

In about this year the T'ang Dynasty T'ai Tsung emperor was establishing a **Chinese** military training standard that required crossbowmen to hit a man-size target two times out of four at a range of 300 yards.



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

629 CE

Between this year and 645 CE Hsüan-tsang, a Chinese scholar, took 600 *Yogacara* “Unifying Practice” texts from North India to China by way of Katmandu. The doctrine offered in these texts was that we perceive the world to be as we believe it to be rather than as it really is. Logic is without significance, sin and goodness without significance, and both faith and works without significance — whatever significance anything originated in one’s own heart and nature. This attitude would provide the basis for the Ch’an (Zen) Buddhism of [China](#), [Korea](#), and [Japan](#).

Heraclius recovered Jerusalem from the Persians.

Pope Honorius I sided with Emperor Heraclius and the Monothelites who had been condemned in 622 CE.

Congal Clane killed the King of Dalriada.

At the battle of Dun Ceithirnn, O’Neill under Domnall defeated Congal and Congal fled to Scotland.

[IRELAND](#)



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

636 CE

The southern portion of the Irish Church submitted to Roman [Catholicism](#).

[IRELAND](#)

At about this point the 81st chapter of a Sui Dynasty history called the Sui Shu mentioned the Eastern Barbarians, meaning [Koreans](#), Japanese, and either the Taiwanese or the Okinawans. Regarding the Taiwanese or Okinawans, the chroniclers wrote, “There are villages here and there, each with a headman called wu-liao. Invariably a good fighter becomes the wu-liao and controls the village... There are knives, pikes, bows and arrows, and things like swords. There is little iron there, and their blades are all thin and small. Bone and horn are generally used, to make up [for the lack of iron]. For armor they use plaited hemp or the thin skins of bears or leopards... The people of this country like to attack one another. They are strong and robust, and they run well. They do not die easily and bear their wounds well. The various districts live unto themselves and do not succor one another. When two bands of fighters face each other, three to five brave men come forward and leap and dance about, yelling and hurling insults at each other. Then they fight, shooting arrows at each other. If neither side can vanquish the other, they all run away.” During the late 19th Century, European scholars would theorize that this passage had referred to Taiwan and after the [Japanese](#) occupied that island in 1895, this attitude would become the prevalent one in Japan (20th-Century [Chinese](#) scholars, on the other hand, would determine that this had been a reference to Okinawa, and most US scholars now accept the Chinese interpretation).



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

645 CE

In Japan, Shotoku was succeeded by Kotoku Tenno, who would strengthen imperial power over the aristocratic clans in what would come to be known as the Taika Reform, transforming their feudal states into provinces. From this year into 784 CE, the [Japanese](#) court would be beginning to model itself upon the [Chinese](#) form of government.



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

646 CE

From this year, for the balance of the century, a set of political and social reforms with which the name Taika is associated would be taking place in [Japan](#).

At about this point the world's oldest surviving astronomical observatory was entering use at Chomsongdae, near Kyongju in South [Korea](#). The twelve stones of its base symbolize the months of the year, and from top to bottom, other stones represent the days of the months. The best guess is that the original purpose for this structure was the creation of Chinese-style horoscopes for the Silla Queen Sondok.

According to tradition the Taoist saint known as Ancestor Lü was born in this year in [China](#). This figure is popularly credited with establishing the "Complete Reality" school of Taoism as an integration of Confucianism with Buddhism. He is said to have been a disciple of Chung-li Ch'üan, the Taoist internal alchemist credited with creating the Chinese calisthenics known as pa-tuan-chin, or the Eight Pieces of Brocade (however, pa-tuan-chin is likely of more recent origin, while the "Complete Reality" teachings are more concretely datable to the teachings of Chang Po-tuan during the late 11th Century).

Yet another battle: at Alexandria the Saracens under Amr defeated the Byzantines, destroying [the Pax Romana](#).



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

648 CE

Upon the request of Srong-btsan sgam-po the king of [Tibet](#), to his father-in-law the emperor of [China](#), Chinese workmen capable of manufacturing [paper](#) and [ink](#) were dispatched to Tibet.



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

680 CE

On the Spice Island of [Sumatra](#), and in Cambodia, would be appearing during this decade the first use of 0, our modern symbol for zero.¹¹

11. Prior to this, in [China](#), a blank space had been being used as a placeholder, and in this the Mesopotamians had been copying the Chinese. We have not yet established, precisely when and where this symbol “0” would first come to be understood as itself a number, rather than merely as a placeholder within tables of numbers (and if we ever do establish precisely when and where zero came to be understood as itself a number — we’ll need to ask ourselves just how this makes a rat’s ass worth of difference).



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

682 CE

In an essay called THE CANON ON THE PHILOSOPHER'S STONE, the [Chinese](#) alchemist Sun Si-miao is the first person known to have written that saltpeter, charcoal, and sulfur are explosive when mixed.¹² The optimum mixture of these ingredients has been found through centuries of subsequent experimentation to consist of 75% potassium nitrate, 15% carbon, and 10% sulfur. The oxygen required for combustion is contained in the potassium nitrate, and the propellant gases generated include carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide, and nitrogen. What would keep people from making the stuff in large quantity in antiquity was the difficulty they encountered in refining saltpeter, a substance traditionally made from urine and collected from, say, pigpens. Of the three kinds of saltpeter (potassium nitrate, sodium nitrate, and calcium nitrate), the first works best in gunpowder and the second is merely a salt substitute. It took chemists centuries to determine this, however, and then it required more time before would-be gunners learned to appreciate the difference.

The petty nobles of [Korea](#)'s Silla kingdom advocated the adoption of Confucian bureaucracies. This was partly to counter the preaching of the Pure Land Buddhist monks who were ranging the country saying that Paradise was not just for rich men but for everyone, partly to continue limiting the power of females, and partly to challenge the path to power enjoyed by Silla's "true-bone" aristocrats.

12. Francis Bacon would characterize the origin of gunpowder as "obscure and inglorious" because it had originated in obscure and inglorious [China](#).



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

695 CE

The [Thames River](#) in England was frozen so hard for 6 weeks that many booths were built on it at London, and a market held upon the ice. It was cold all over Europe.

The kingdom of Srivijaya in the valley of the Palembang River in Sumatra sent ambassadors to [China](#).

**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

700 CE

The [poppy](#) of [China](#) and [India](#) was introduced to the Arabs, who would inherit and expand the classical medical legacy and knowledge of [opium](#). At first use of *Papaver somniferum* would be limited to medicinal purposes, and the plant would be favored as a beverage made from the seeds (nowadays even the seeds are contraband in Saudi Arabia, even when destined for use in cooking Indian foods).



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

In [China](#), Hung Pei-size described an esoteric Buddhist movement arts using the phrase *ch'uan fa* (this term, which now means “boxing,” probably at the time referred to the teachings of the Buddha and his followers and described Buddhist gesture dancing, since *ch'uan* means “hand” while *fa* means “method” or “law”).

In Korea, Buddhist monks living near Kyongju produced a woodblock print of the *Dharani Sutra* (this was a century and a half before the publication of the Diamond Sutra, “the world’s 1st book,” in northwestern China in 868 CE).

The 1st Polynesians arrived in the Cook Islands.

Easter Islanders began to build stone platforms as part of ceremonial enclosures.

The rise of a culture in the Mississippi river basin involving flat-topped mounds, used as temple bases.

Brehon Laws — rights and status of all defined based on tribal hierarchy.

IRELAND

During the following century Irish monasticism would reach its zenith.

Plant	Name	Place
Tomato	Lycopersicon esculentum	South Central America



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

710 CE

[Japan](#)'s capital was moved from Asuka to Nara, south of present-day [Kyoto](#), where it would be modeled after [China](#)'s capital Xian. To provide Nara, which would endure as the Yamato imperial city until 784 CE, with a prehistory, and therefore with legitimacy, a chronicle would be produced in 712 CE known as Kojiki or "Record of Ancient Matters," and in 720 CE a supplement would be produced, known as Nihongi or "Chronicles of Japan." These government documents began with a tracing of the genealogies of current clan leaders all the way back to their ancestor deities. The texts borrowed liberally from Chinese classics as well as Japanese folktales, and in addition devised fresh tall tales. Nothing succeeds like success, and for the following 1,200 years this stuff would be presumed to constitute the historical record.

During this period Turkish merchants and soldiers were spreading curved sabers through West Central Asia. Although such a blade would have been better-suited for equestrians than a straight blade, this design may have been occasioned in part by a development in quenching techniques, one that tended to produce a blade that arced as it cooled.

Christian Serbs were reported to be using toxic arrows against Bosnian Muslims (the English term "toxin" comes from *toxikon pharmakon* or "bow poison" because that was how the Byzantines described this new military technology).

July 9,: There is a [Chinese](#) record of what was characterized as an "unusual rainbow," one that filled up the heaven. Since such a rainbow was considered to be a spirit of the Plough, the fortunetellers opinioned that "The Empress secretly scares the ruler." Also they said, most terrifyingly, "When five colors arrive one by one and illuminate a palace, then wars break out."

SKY EVENT

HDT

WHAT?

INDEX

CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

712 CE

In [Japan](#), the collection of tales “Kojiki” (record of ancient times).

At a siege of Constantinople the Byzantines under Philippicus defeated the Bulgars, restoring [the Pax Romana](#).



What
goes
around
keeps
coming
around
and
around
and
around...



July: Sūn Quán, a governor-general of Yōuzhōu in [China](#), was leading his army in an attack on Xī when, about to enter this hostile territory, what was described as a “white rainbow” descended to the gate of their camp. His fortunetellers cautioned him: “Below, it bleeds.”

SKY EVENT

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

713 CE

At about this point the [Japanese](#) chronicle *HITACHI FUDOKI* described a shell mound — which is perhaps one of the oldest descriptions of prehistoric remains in medieval writings.

Turkic merchants introduced Islam to the T'ang court at [Ch'ang-an](#).

Saracens conquered Spain.

- 640 Alexandria in Egypt is taken by the Saracens, and the grand library there burnt by order of Omar, their caliph or prince.
- 653 The Saracens now extend their conquests on every side, and retaliate the barbarities of the Goths and Vandals upon their posterity.
- 664 Glass invented in England by Benalt, a monk.
- 685 The Britons after a brave struggle of near 150 years, are totally expelled by the Saxons, and driven into Wales and Cornwall.
- 713 The Saracens conquer Spain.
- 726 The controversy about images begins, and occasions many insurrections in the eastern empire.
- 748 The computing of years from the birth of Christ began to be used in history.
- 749 The race of Abbas became caliphs of the Saracens, and encourage learning.
- 762 The city of Bagdad upon the Tigris is made the capital for the caliphs of the house of Abbas.
- 800 Charlemagne, king of France, begins the empire of Germany, afterwards called the western empire; gives the present names to the winds and months; endeavours to restore learning in Europe; but mankind are not yet disposed for it, being solely engrossed in military enterprises.
- 826 Harold, king of Denmark, dethroned by his subjects, for being a Christian.
- 828 Egbert, king of Wessex, unites the Heptarchy, by the name of England.
- 836 The Flemings trade to Scotland for fish.
- 838 The Scots and Picts have a decisive battle, in which the former prevail, and both kingdoms are united by Kenneth, which begins the second period of Scottish history.
- 867 The Danes begin their ravages in England.
- 896 Alfred the Great, after subduing the Danish invaders (against whom he fought 56 battles by sea and land), composes his body of laws; divides England into counties, hundreds, and tithings; erects county courts, and founds the university of Oxford about this time.
- 915 The university of Cambridge founded.
- 936 The Saracen empire is divided by usurpation into seven kingdoms.
- 975 Pope Boniface VII. is deposed and banished for his crimes.
- 979 Coronation oaths said to be first used in England.
- 991 The figures in arithmetic are brought into Europe by the Saracens from Arabia. Letters of the alphabet were hitherto used.
- 996 Otho III. makes the empire of Germany elective.
- 999 Boleslaus, the first king of Poland.



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

720 CE

The “Nihon shoki” (history of [Japan](#)).

In about this year [Chinese](#) monks were introducing Buddhism into Yunnan Province, and Indochina (their local converts were not yet known as Thais, as the word “Thai” meaning “free men” relates to the Nanchao kingdom’s resistance to Sung Chinese aggression — something that would be occurring way, way into their future, during the 11th Century CE).



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

730 CE

The Venerable Bede recorded an epigram about [Rome's Colossus Solis](#), *Quandiu stabit coliseus, stabit et Roma; quando cadit coliseus, cadet et Roma; quando cadet Roma, cadet et mundus* “as long as the Colossus stands, so shall Rome; when the Colossus falls, Rome shall fall; when Rome falls, so falls the world” (this is commonly taken to be a reference to the [Amphitheatrum Flavianum](#), but since it was the masculine form of the noun that was applied, is a reference instead to the nearby enormous bronze statue).

[China's](#) Ming Huang emperor proclaimed polo to be one of the arts of war. If it was this, it would prove not to be very effective for troop training, as the Ming Huang emperor would be deposed in 756 for his inability to stop the Turkish warlord An Lu-shan who had established himself as the “Heroically Martial Emperor” in Lo-yang. While An was cruel and would be murdered by a eunuch in 757, his invasion had effectively terminated T'ang Dynasty control over its northern and western frontiers.



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

751 CE

After a military victory at the Talas River in Central Asia, the Arabs found among their prisoners of war some expert makers of paper. Not only would there soon begin an intrusion of Islam into [Chinese](#) territory, but also, a [papermaking](#) industry would be being set up, in Samarkand.



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

757 CE

February 20, night: A total of 4 “white rainbows” were observed in Nányáng in [China](#); they extended more than 100 zhàng in length.

SKY EVENT



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

758 CE

Stela 14, at Piedras Negras in what is now the central lowlands of [Guatemala](#).

In what is now Armenia, a region of Turkey, the Abbasid Caliph Abdullah al-Mansur obliged the military governor Yazid ibn Usayd al-Sulami to make peace, and as witness to this take a royal Khazar as his bride. He chose a daughter of Khagan Baghatur, the Khazar leader, but then she died, perhaps in childbirth. When her attendants returned to their home, they spread the interesting notion that maybe some Arab faction had poisoned her, and in consequence (what goes around comes around) the Khazar general Ras Tarkhan went on a plundering expedition into what is now northwestern [Iran](#).

Meanwhile, Arab and Persian raiders were sacking the city of [Guangzhou](#).

In what has since become Italy, King Desiderius of the Lombards captured Spoleto and Benevento.

In the English game of chairs, Sigeric succeeded Swithred as king of Essex. Meanwhile, in [Japan](#), the end of the reign of the Empress Kōken.

JAPANESE EMPERORS

758CE-764CE	Junnin
764CE-770CE	Shotoku
770CE-781CE	Konin
781CE-806CE	Kammu
806CE-824CE	Heizei
823CE-842CE	Saga
833CE-840CE	Junna
833CE-850CE	Nimmyo
850CE-858CE	Montoku
858CE-876CE	Seiwa
877CE-884CE	Yozei
884CE-887CE	Koko
887CE-897CE	Uda
897CE-930CE	Daigo
930CE-946CE	Suzaku
946CE-967CE	Murakami



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

763 CE

An army from [Tibet](#) sacked the capital of [China](#).



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

794 CE

The Emperor Kammu moved the [Japanese](#) capital to Heian-kyo (which is to say, to Kyoto). This marked the beginning of the Heian period which would endure until 1185 CE and would involve the island chain achieving more independence from [China](#).



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

795 CE

Viking invasions begin — mostly coastal towns.

IRELAND

At about this point, as the Muslims spread [Chinese](#) techniques of papermaking, and the [hemp](#) it required, throughout the Middle East, Islamic law begins to be promulgated by writing as a supplement to memory. The four orthodox schools of Islamic jurisprudence, all created during the 8th and 9th Centuries of the Common Era, would discourage sectarianism by encouraging legal rather than military solutions to problems, and as such would be one of the more important creations of early Islam.



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

817 CE

An observer in [China](#) claimed to have sighted a [meteor](#) which was making a sound. He alleged that the sound it made was “like a flock of cranes in flight.”

SKY EVENT



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

819 CE

January 6: What was described as a “white rainbow” filled up the heaven in [China](#) as wide as 5 chǐ, lying across between east and west.

SKY EVENT

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

CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

838 CE

The emperor of [Japan](#) forbade contacts with [China](#).

- 640 Alexandria in Egypt is taken by the Saracens, and the grand library there burnt by order of Omar, their caliph or prince.
- 653 The Saracens now extend their conquests on every side, and retaliate the barbarities of the Goths and Vandals upon their posterity.
- 664 Glass invented in England by Benalt, a monk.
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THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

843 CE

Islam began to supplement Buddhism throughout north [China](#).

The accession of [Charlemagne](#) (742 CE-814 CE) had brought prosperity to [Lyon](#), but in this year at the Treaty of Verdun, the sons of Louis the Débonnaire parceled out the empire among themselves, breaking it apart. The [German](#) portion was given to Louis the Pious but would soon be divided into five duchies. Until 879 CE, Lyon would be part of the domain that had been assigned to Lothair.

Kenneth MacAlpin, a warrior from Dalriada who may have had Pictish blood, became ruler of the Picts and Scots. This event traditionally marks Scotland's birth as a unified country — though its southern border would undergo many changes before reaching a stable condition. Up to this point northern Britain had been loosely divided into:

- **Alba**, a highland region inhabited by Celtic-speaking Picts (the Romans coined this name because of their body painting)
- **Dalriada**, a kingdom first established in Argyll in the 5th Century by the Scots, a tribe who came from Ireland and spoke a Celtic language (Gaelic) distinct from that of the Picts. Their kingdom would expand largely at the expense of the Picts.
- **Strathclyde**, a territory in the southwest extending at one time from Dumbarton to Cumbria. It was occupied by Britons who were related to the Welsh and shared with them the Celtic language.
- **Northumbria**, inhabited by the Angles and covering what is now northeast England and southern Scotland. These lands had been left vulnerable to occupation after the departure of the Romans in the fifth century.

Further complicating these matters, after this century the Vikings would begin occupying parts of Scotland (including Shetland, Orkney, Caithness and Sutherland).

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



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

844 CE

February 17: In [China](#), what was described as a “white rainbow” was observed in the western sky.

SKY EVENT



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

845 CE

An effective persecution of the branch of Chinese Buddhism that had been based on scripture and societal context began at this point. Only Ch'an Buddhism, with its tradition of rural locations and self-reliance, would remain as the sort of Buddhism that would persist in [China](#) during the Sung Dynasty.



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

861 CE

June: On one occasion during this month, in [China](#), what was described as a “white rainbow” was observed lying across westward.

SKY EVENT



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

863 CE

Yet another battle: at Poson the Byzantines under Petronas defeated the Saracens under Omar, Emir of Melitene, maintaining [the Pax Romana](#).

The [Chinese](#) storyteller Tuan Ch'eng-shih died. His works included a text called Yu-yang Tsa-tsu ("Miscellaneous Fare from Yu-yang," the latter being a mountain in Hunan where great masters had hidden books containing great knowledge). One story described a young man who learned that a prospective knight-errant needed to master swordsmanship as well as archery, and another an old sword-dancer who whirled two swords as if pulling silk, then planted them in the ground in the manner of the seven stars of the Big Dipper.



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

868 CE

The Diamond Sutra, the oldest printed book still in existence, was produced by wood block printing in [China](#). This wood block printing, which amounted to an early form of re-usable [type](#), was so widespread that the Chinese officials tried to discourage its use in the preparation of astrological calendars.

HISTORY OF
THE PRESS

HISTORY OF
THE BOOK

July 29 A [Chinese](#) source records what it characterized as a “white rainbow,” lying across the westward sky.

SKY EVENT



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

882 CE

It would be reported by the merchant Buzurg Ibn Shahriyar in his *KITAB 'AJA'IB AL-HIND* (BOOK OF THE WONDERS OF INDIA), *circa* 950, that a Jewish merchant seaman, Ishaq bin Yahuda, visited China between the years 882 CE and 912 CE. After a quarrel with a Jewish colleague, it was reported, Ishaq had left Sohar (in Oman) in poverty to seek his fortune in [China](#), and when he returned 30 years later he was in possession of marvellous wealth. After a disagreement with the emir, it was reported, this traveler again sailed for China — but this time his ship and its contents were seized by the ruler of a port of Sumatra and he was murdered.

OctoberA [Chinese](#) source records what it characterized as a “white rainbow,” in the westward night sky.

SKY EVENT



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

886 CE

October: In [China](#), what was described as a “white rainbow” was observed in the western sky.

SKY EVENT

November 16: On this night the 2d [comet](#) of this year was 1st observed, over [China](#). It was described as a “long path” comet, and as white in color, 21 degrees in length, bent at an angle (modern astronomers suggest that the comet may have had 2 tails, one directed toward the sun as well as another directed away from it). The Chinese thought later that they observed this comet to fall like a meteor.

SKY EVENT





THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

892 CE

A number of comets were seen this year. In Europe during the winter, one was seen to appear in the tail of the constellation of Scorpius for a period of eighty days, after which the months of March and April were markedly droughty. In [China](#) in June, a [comet](#) was observed that was like a white banner and was shaped like hair, initially three degrees in length but after a few days stretching “from the midheaven to the horizon.”

SKY EVENT

December 28: According to a [Chinese](#) record, a [comet](#) of the type termed a “celestial magnolia tree” appeared to the southwest (perhaps in the constellation of Sagittarius).

SKY EVENT

December 31: The [comet](#) which a few days before had appeared to be like some sort of “celestial magnolia tree” on this night “turned into a cloud and faded away.” (Another report indicates that the sky was cloudy in [China](#) on this night, so this may have been merely a remark about difficulties of observation.)

SKY EVENT



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

896 CE

There was either a [comet](#) or some sort of nova event toward the close of this year, continuing into the following year. The Chinese report of it was that during November and December, one large and two small “guest stars” moved eastward together through the constellation of northern Aquarius — “they sometimes approached one another, then separated, giving the illusion that they were fighting among themselves. After three days the two smaller ones disappeared while the larger one faded away in northern Aquarius.”

ASTRONOMY

CHINA



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

902 CE

The 1st preserved account of the Leonid meteor shower, observed by [Chinese](#) astronomers. There would be numerous accounts in the succeeding centuries, amounting in general to remarks such as “Stars fell like rain.”¹³

The Vikings abandoned the longphort they had established at Dublin.

[IRELAND](#)

13. The Leonids occurred in mid-October during the 10th century, late October during the 16th century, and mid-November during the 20th century.



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

906 CE

Collapse of Tang dynasty in [China](#) after many years of war; for the next two generations of human life, China would be divided into many warring states.



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

907 CE

At a siege of Constantinople there was a drawn battle between the Byzantines and the Russians under Prince Oleg, fought to exhaustion without a winner, disrupting [the Pax Romana](#).

From this point until 926 CE, the Khitan Mongols under Ye-lu a-pao-chi would be conquering inner Mongolia and several districts of northern [China](#).

Following the collapse of the once-mighty T'ang Dynasty, many [Chinese](#) refugees would be resettling in Japan (the Togakure Ryu ninjutsu system claims these refugees as its founders).

This was a period of war and fragmentation as North and South [China](#) divided into smaller kingdoms. From this point until 960 CE there would be Five Dynasties in the north, and Ten Kingdoms in the south.



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

939 CE

[China](#) ended its rule over the [Vietnamese](#) and an independent state was established.

CHANGE IS ETERNITY, STASIS A FIGMENT



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

940 CE

In [China](#), the Dunhuang star map was being produced. This map utilized what –nevermind that Mr. Mercator would not come along until six centuries later– we now refer to as a “Mercator projection.”

ASTRONOMY



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

960 CE

The first mention of Chinese [Jews](#) in European literature is found in the records of Jesuit missionaries in Peking,¹⁴ but this first mention is such as to indicate that these Tiao-kin-kiao had already been in [China](#) for a very long time as they had lost virtually all recollection of their homeland, and even had little idea precisely where in the world might be. It is generally presumed that the first Jewish families had arrived in China via India during the Northern Song period in Chinese civilization (960 CE-1127 CE) — although there is also a claim that because of the capture of Jerusalem by Titus they had begun to arrive via Persia as early as the 1st Century, and a claim that the first Jews had arrived via India during the Chou dynasty (1122 BCE-955 BCE).

14. There is an allusion to Chinese Jews in a letter Francisco Xavier wrote in Cochin on January 29, 1552.

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

With the reunification of [China](#) under the Sung dynasty came Neo-Confucianism, integrating [Buddhism](#) into Confucianism (*Ruxue*)¹⁵ after [Confucius](#) himself had become a figure out of the dim recesses of the past.



15. Since Confucius himself had not claimed to be a creator, but merely a transmitter of traditional teachings, even to ascribe these teachings to him as we do in the West by using a form of his name is fundamentally un-Confucian. The word that is used in Chinese means merely “the teachings of the literati” and makes no explicit reference to Master K’ung.

HDT

WHAT?

INDEX

CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

Here is the emperor Ren Zong 宋仁宗 from this period:





THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

970 CE

Paper money was introduced by the [Chinese](#) government. The brave new world of “This has value because we say it has value” had arrived.



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

983 CE

The 1,000-chapter encyclopaedia known as the Taiping Yulan was created in [China](#).

For [China's Grand Canal](#), Chhaio Wei-yo invented the chambered lock.

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

989 CE

September 5: Although Eric the Red was already in Greenland, at this point probably only Bjarni Herjolfsson had



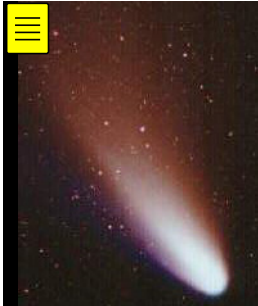
sighted America, and Eric probably would not land on an America continental shore until about 1000 CE. Hugh Capet was on the throne of France. Prince Vladimir of Kiev was becoming a Christian, for what that's worth. On this date [Halley's Comet](#) whipped around the [sun](#), and as the [comet](#) had recently plunged past the earth some [Chinese](#) had seen it with the naked eye as blue-white, which means that it had been still mostly gas without as yet much dust having been expelled from its nucleus.

ASTRONOMY

CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

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

1000 CE

At about this point the [Chinese](#) were perfecting black gunpowder and beginning to use it in warfare. Arrows might be tipped with such materials, as combustibles rather than as explosives.

By about this point in [China](#), the Sung dynasty, the medicinal use of the seeds of the [opium poppy](#) *Papaver somniferum* had become widespread (by 1100, the more potent capsule would also be coming into use, but pure [opium](#) would not yet be extracted from that capsule).



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

1041 CE

By about this point, Pi Sheng had invented moveable [type](#). In [China](#), instead of metal, he had been able to make use of an amalgam of baked clay and glue.



"Among all the manufactures which -for the mental and mechanical skill required in their prosecution, the remarkable steps by which they have attained their present rank, and the influence which they exert on society generally- claim our attention and admiration, none perhaps is more striking than the **manufacture of a book.**"



- George Dodd's DAYS AT THE FACTORIES





THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

1054 CE

July 4: An exceedingly bright supernova was noticed, which would persist for 23 days (actually, the event had probably begun weeks or months before its first observation but had been concealed in the glow of the nearby sun).¹⁶ Astronomers in [China](#), receiving the light from this event, would record its brightness as about six times the brightness of the planet Venus.¹⁷ We now know that the supernova star had been about 7,000 light years away. The explosion created an extremely dense pulsar that is still spinning at the rate of about 30 times a second and still is emitting X-rays like crazy.¹⁸

ASTRONOMY

16. There is a suspicious lack of recordings of sightings in Europe, which has sometimes been accounted for by the supposition of a spell of bad weather, and sometimes as due to sensitive Papal negotiations that were at that point being consummated. For more on this controversy, refer to <http://www.journals.uchicago.edu/PASP/journal/issues/v111n761/990049/990049.web.pdf>.

17. The pulse of gamma radiation that swept across the planet Earth was strong enough to noticeably, temporarily alter the atmosphere. In an Antarctic ice-core column, we have found a spike dating to this year in the concentration of nitrate ions trapped in air bubbles in the ice then newly forming.

18. This was until recently the brightest on record: it has formed what today we refer to as the Crab Nebula. However, there was a report in the paper the other day, that an even brighter supernova has been found, one for which there now exists only astronomical evidence. In evaluating some electronic photos of the Veil nebula (Cygnus Loop, which extends for about three degrees across the northern sky) taken by the Hubble Space Telescope, and comparing them with earlier records of this wispy on a photographic plate exposed at the Palomar Mountain observatory in southern California in 1953, astronomers have been able to calculate from the movement of the strands across the background of stars that the wispy originated in a star some 15 times the mass of our Sol, that had been about 1,400 light years away and that the light from the explosion had arrived in the skies of the planet Earth *circa* 1,600 BCE. Such a supernova, at such a distance, must have produced in our night sky an event at least as noticeable as the full moon.



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

1057 CE

King Macbeth of Scotland died in battle at Lumphanon, three years after the battle at Dunsinane depicted in Shakespeare's famous play (Shakespeare was writing a play, after all, and in a play, story is everything).

The Tibeto-Mongol kingdom of Pagan conquered the Khmer-Mon kingdom of Thaton (this marks the establishment of modern Burmese culture).

The [Chinese](#) Emperor Jen Tsung ordered the creation of a new national pharmacopoeia. More than a thousand drawings would be received in Hangchow and the text would cover more than a thousand different plants.

PLANTS

1000 Paper made of cotton rags was in use; that of linen rags in 1170; the manufactory introduced into England at Dartford, 1588.

1005 All the old churches are rebuilt about this time in a new manner of architecture.

1015 Children forbidden by law to be sold by their parents in England.

1017 Canute, king of Denmark, gets possession of England.

1040 The Danes, after several engagements with various success, are about this time driven out of Scotland, and never again return in a hostile manner.

1041 The Saxon line restored under Edward the Confessor.

1043 The Turks (a nation of adventurers from Tartary, serving hitherto in the armies of contending princes) become formidable, and take possession of Persia.

1054 Leo IX. the first pope that kept up an army.

1057 Malcolm III. king of Scotland, kills the tyrant Macbeth at Dunsinane; and marries the princess Margaret, sister to Edgar Atheling.

1065 The Turks take Jerusalem from the Saracens.

1066 The battle of Hastings fought between Harold and William (surnamed the bastard) duke of Normandy, in which Harold is conquered and slain; after which William becomes king of England.

1070 William introduces the feudal law.
Musical notes invented.

1075 Henry IV. emperor of Germany, and the pope, quarrel about the nomination

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

1071 CE

The Seljuk Turks under Alp Arslan defeated a Byzantine army under Romanus IV Diogenes at Manzikert, disrupting [the Pax Romana](#); they would capture Jerusalem in 1076 CE:



(The above looks like something out of LORD OF THE RINGS, doesn't it? –But wherever the hell this was, they were struggling to kill one another in very earnest.)

In this year, also, the 1st Saxon revolt.

Toward encouraging the enemies of their enemies, the [Sung Dynasty](#) rescinded its standing orders against the trading of iron tools and weapons to the Outer Barbarians. This would rapidly increase the military potency of the West Siberian Tatars and the Far Eastern Mongols.



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

1090 CE

At about this point a mechanical clock, driven by water, was built in Kaifeng, which was the capital city of [China](#).



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

1106 CE

February 9 and 10: Folks in the Orient were observing this comet in the west. It appeared to them to be about the size of “the mouth of a cup.” Its tail was perhaps 90 degrees in length and 5 degrees in width. They would leave a report that the rays from this object “scattered in all directions as if broken into fragments.” 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. The comet would remain visible for a total of about a month, and may have been the Kreutz sungrazer that split and whose two main pieces would come back as the Great Comet of 1882 and as the Ikeya-Seki comet of 1965.

ASTRONOMY
CHINA



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

1117 CE

A flood along the Yellow River of [China](#) may have killed more than 1,000,000 humans.



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

1120 CE

By about this point, the [Chinese](#) were playing card games by the use of painted cards.



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

1127 CE

Until 1279 CE, the Southern Song period of [Chinese](#) civilization.



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

1130 CE

October 18: The neo-Confucian scholar Chu Hsi was born.

CHINA



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

1132 CE

At about this point a [Chinese](#) text described a firearm made using bamboo tube reinforced on the inside with clay, and on the outside with iron bands. The device was attributed to a soldier named Gui Ch'en, commander of a Southern Sung garrison in Hopei Province.

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

1133 CE

The *YÜN LIN SHI P'U*, a treatise on economic mineralogy by Tu Wan (pseudonym Yün-lin, the name of a city in [China](#)), offered a recipe for the manufacture of ink which may well date back to the 3rd Century:¹⁹

Under the term *shi mo* quite a number of different minerals appear to be confounded. *Shi mo* is also a synonym of *shi tan* ("mineral coal"), and Li Shi-chen [Li Shih-chen (*florut* 16th Century), in the *PEN-TS'AO KANG-MU* or GREAT PHARMACOPOEIA completed in 1578] affirms that in times of antiquity bituminous coal was utilized for writing. The possibility of this cannot be denied. Incidentally, one Chinese author declares that lead was anciently used for writing. Several minerals were formerly utilized as substitutes for ink. The *YÜN LIN SHI P'U*, a treatise on economic mineralogy written by Tu Wan (pseudonym Yün-lin) in AD 1133, says that in Kwei-chou (prefecture of I'ch'ang, Hu-pei Province) there are black stones appearing in the water of the Yangtse River, of coarse substance, which can be ground and which will yield an ink. This stone is called *ta t'o shi* ("stone of the great river"), *t'o* being the local name for the Yangtse among the inhabitants of the gorges near I-ch'ang, who prize this tone very highly.... There is another kind of *shi mo*, which is identified with *hei shi chi* ("grease of black stone"), described as sticking to the tongue when licked and used for writing, as well as for painting the eyebrows (much practised in ancient China). This is doubtless graphite.... Now the term *shi mo* in the sense of graphite occurs for the first time in the early work *PIE LU*, the foundation of which goes back to at least the Han period, and possibly even to an earlier date. This would well indicate that graphite was one of the substances enlisted



as writing material in the epoch of the Han.... The oldest recipe
 19. Wiborg, Frank Bestow (1855-1930). PRINTING INK: A HISTORY WITH A TREATISE ON MODERN METHODS OF MANUFACTURE AND USE. NY and London: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1926, pages 14-15:



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

for the preparation of an ink that has come down to us is contained in the *TS'I MIN YAO SHU*, a work in practical husbandry, written by Kia Se-hie, who lived in the fifth or sixth century A.D. Unfortunately this important work is handed down in mutilated form. The original was in 92 sections, part of which were [sic] lost long ago, and much additional matter has been interpolated by subsequent editors. The recipe for ink, entitled "Method of mixing ink," is apparently incomplete, since the substance from which the lampblack is derived is not even mentioned; in some places the text is enigmatic and evidently corrupt. Ch'ao Shwo-chi, an author of the Sung period, who wrote a very interesting treatise on the manufacture of ink, quotes three passages from the recipe of Kia, but his text is different from that found in the present editions of the *T'SI MIN YAO SHU*. The principal points of the formula are as follows: Good and pure lampblack is to be pounded and strained through a sieve of fine pongee, which is placed in a vat of stoneware. The object of this process is to free the lampblack of any adhering vegetable substances so that it becomes like fine sand and dust; but as it is so light in weight, great care must be exercised in preventing it from being scattered around. Five ounces of glue are required for one pound (catty) of ink, and the sap of the bark of the *ts'in-p'i* tree (*Fraxinus pubinervus* [a type of ash tree]) is dissolved in the glue. This bark is green in color like water, and contains a glutinous substance which also improves the color of the ink. The white of five hen's eggs, one ounce of cinnabar, and the same amount of musk may likewise be added, after being well strained. All these ingredients are mixed, and the paste thus obtained must be beaten in an iron mortar with a stick thirty thousand times; the more frequently it is beaten, the better the quality of the ink.... However imperfect this formula may be, it leaves no doubt that it carries the directions for a real ink, and that in principle it is identical with the process still in vogue.... It is obvious that the formula divulged by Kia Se-hie did not spring up spontaneously, but that it presents the result of long experiences and experiments conducted during several generations. In fact, he had predecessors, as we see from the *MO KING* of Ch'ao Shwo-chi of the Sung period, who quotes the "ink method" of Wei Tan or Wei Chung-tsiang of the Wei dynasty (220-265 CE); this author has also the thirty thousand beatings – doubtless an exaggeration. Coming down to the T'ang dynasty, Wang Kiün-te, an ink manufacturer, who used a stone mortar, speaks more moderately of from two to three thousand beatings. Under the Ming, toward the end of the sixteenth century, a wooden mortar with a metal pestle was employed, and one was satisfied with several hundred beatings. There is every reason to believe that Wei Tan is the first originator of an ink-formula, as handed down in the *TS'I MIN YAO SHU*, and to a certain degree may be regarded as the real inventor of ink as still manufactured.



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

1155 CE

A Papal Bull “Laudabiliter” by [Adrian IV](#) authorized Angevin Norman [King Henry II of England](#) to subdue [Ireland](#) for the greater glory of God.

READ THE FULL TEXT

Early in this year [Frederick I \(Barbarossa\)](#) contaminated water wells with human bodies and the bodies of animals at [Tortona, Italy](#), and razed the town — and would soon be acclaimed by [Pope Adrian IV](#) as the [Holy Roman Emperor](#) for the greater glory of God.

BIOTOXINS

Wace, an Anglo-Norman scholar, dedicated a poem in French, “Brut,” to Eleanor of Aquitaine. His poem recounted the story of Britain’s Trojan founder—a myth borrowed from Virgil— and introduced “Round Tables” and other Celtic imaginations into the Arthurian legend.

This planet’s oldest surviving terrain map produced by the use of printing was produced under the rule of the Shang dynasty monarch [Yang Jia](#) in [China](#). The map extended all the way to India, at a scale of 1:900,000.



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

1181 CE

The [Chinese](#) and [Japanese](#) noted a stellar explosion in the constellation Cassiopeia. We now know the object that was produced by this sky event as 3C58, about 10,000 light-years away. If this is a neutron star, it is strangely cool for an object that had come into existence only 821 years before. The speculation now is that at least the core of this object is constituted of something other than densely packed neutrons, perhaps, astronomers have suggested, “a new kind of exotic material.” That substance may be densely packed quarks rather than neutrons, since the calculation is that this would result in more rapid cooling.

ASTRONOMY



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

1189 CE

The 700-foot Marco Polo bridge was built across the Yung-ting river. (This is still in use by trucks and buses.)


CHINA



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

1190 CE

Chu Hsi (October 18, 1130-April 23, 1200) grouped the *TA-HSÜEH* (THE GREAT LEARNING), the *LUN-YÜ* (THE ANALECTS), the *MENG-TZU* (the book of [Mencius](#)), and the *CHUNG-YUNG* (THE DOCTRINE OF THE MEAN) together for the first time as THE FOUR BOOKS, significantly altering the flow of [Chinese](#) literature. Previously the *LUN-YÜ* and the *MENG-TZU* had been merely two of a set of thirteen books five of which (known as the FIVE CLASSICS²⁰) had been more heavily emphasized, while the *TA-HSÜEH* and the *CHUNG-YUNG* had been merely a couple of the chapters in the *LI CHI* (THE BOOK OF RITES, one of the other volumes of that set of thirteen). This would reach a Western audience as of 1840  with [M.J. Pauthier](#)'s *CONFUCIUS ET MENCIVS*, a complete French version of the FOUR BOOKS along with Chu Hsi's 12th-Century commentaries.

LIGHT FROM CHINA

Where [Henry Thoreau](#) in 1848 would add certain quotes from [Confucius](#) to his draft chapter on "Solitude," he would be transliterating this not directly from the [Chinese](#) of THE DOCTRINE OF THE MEAN (of course not, he could not read Chinese) but from [Pauthier](#)'s rendering of this into the French language:

WALDEN: Any prospect of awakening or coming to life to a dead man makes indifferent all times and places. The place where that may occur is always the same, and indescribably pleasant to all our senses. For the most part we allow only outlying and transient circumstances to make our occasions. They are, in fact, the cause of our distraction. Nearest to all things is that power which fashions their being. Next to us the grandest laws are continually being executed. Next to us is not the workman whom we have hired, with whom we love so well to talk, but the workman whose work we are.

"How vast and profound is the influence of the subtile powers of Heaven and of Earth!"

"We seek to perceive them, and we do not see them; we seek to hear them, and we do not hear them; identified with the substance of things, they cannot be separated from them."

"They cause that in all the universe men purify and sanctify their hearts, and clothe themselves in their holiday garments to offer sacrifices and oblations to their ancestors. It is an ocean of subtile intelligences. They are every where, above us, on our left, on our right; they environ us on all sides."

PEOPLE OF
WALDEN

CONFUCIUS

20. The *I CHING* or BOOK OF CHANGES, the *SHIH-CHING* or BOOK OF POETRY, the *SHU CHING* or BOOK OF HISTORY, the *LI CHI* or BOOK OF RITES, and the *CH'UN-CH'IU* or SPRING AND AUTUMN ANNALS.





THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

Catholic scholars such as [Pauthier](#) have consistently emphasized the “transcendental” interpretation of this passage, the one which in China had been favored by the neo-Confucian scholar Chu Hsi in this new edition of the FOUR BOOKS. Protestant scholars such as James Legge have preferred on the other hand to interpret this passage as having to do with the later Taoist credulity about ghosts, the ubiquitous spirits of the dead. Thoreau would side with the Jesuits and their “transcendental” reading of this passage, thus following Chu Hsi. Whichever is the more accurate reading historically of this [Taoist](#) inclusion in the [Confucian](#) materials, the reading preferred by [Thoreau](#) is to all accounts clearly the far more interesting one.

1191 CE

[Tea](#) bushes were planted as Korean Buddhists introduced [Chinese](#) tea-drinking ceremonies, and Zen paradoxes, into [Japan](#).

PLANTS

At this point [Chinese](#) mathematicians were beginning to experiment with the Indo-Arabic [zero](#) placeholder notation (“[gap](#),” they termed it). The transmitters were more likely Indo-Iranian merchants than Zen Buddhist monks, for had it been Zen Buddhists who transmitted this from India, then Chinese mathematicians would already for 3 centuries have been toying with such a notation.



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

1194 CE

The Yellow River of [China](#) changed its course, beginning to flow to the south of the Shandong massif rather than to the north. It would retain this new course until 1853.

1200 CE

At about this point the [opium poppy](#) *Papaver somniferum* was being introduced into [China](#).



PLANTS

The neo-Confucian scholar Chu Hsi died.



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

1201 CE

The two most deadly earthquakes on record are a quake of this year in Upper [Egypt](#) that was estimated by chroniclers to have killed 1,000,000 people, and a quake in Shansi Province, [China](#) in 1556 which would kill around 830,000.



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

1247

Ch-in Kiu-shao, a soldier who had by 1244 made himself the governor over two provinces in [China](#), wrote about numerical higher equations in “The Nine Sections of Mathematics,” almost, applying [algebra](#) to trigonometry, using “O” for zero, and variously calculating pi as 3, as $22/7$, and as the square root of 10. He came close to devising something we now term “Horner’s Method,” which would come into use in algebra as of 1819.



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

1249

In [China](#), Li Yeh (1178-1265), governor of Chun Chou, wrote “The Sea Mirror of the Circle Measurement.” He would produce other books but would order his son to burn all but this one. Although he had a talent for representing complicated problems as equations in [algebra](#), we don’t know for sure that he was able to solve these equations.



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

1257

Chinese silk was for the first time traded in Geneva.²¹

21. Refer to J.R.S. Phillips's THE MEDIEVAL EXPANSION OF EUROPE (Oxford/NY: Oxford UP, 1988).



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

1260

Between this year and 1269 CE, the well-known voyages of the [Polos](#).²²

CHINA

22. Refer to J.R.S. Phillips's *THE MEDIEVAL EXPANSION OF EUROPE* (Oxford/NY: Oxford UP, 1988).

1267

In the strained circumstance of the Pope having asked to see something that did not exist, that had been merely a proposal and a request for funding/support, in this year and the following one, Franciscan friar [Roger Bacon](#), a follower of Grosseteste at Oxford, extended Grosseteste's work on optics. He would be writing his *OPUS MAJUS* (GREAT WORK), which would not see print until 1733 — nearly four and a half centuries after his death (he had named experimentation as the best way to advance science). This writing would include the 1st European mention of [Chinese](#) gunpowder, and the first description of spectacles for the farsighted. He praised a Master Nicholas about whom we have no information. In this work he considered that the speed of light was finite and that it was propagated through a medium in some manner analogous to the manner in which sound was propagating itself. He described how he had magnified small objects by the use of convex lenses, and suggested that that this sort of apparatus might find a useful application in the correction of deficient eyesight. He inferred that the phenomenon of the rainbow must be due to the reflection of sunlight within individual raindrops.

For we can so shape transparent bodies, and arrange them in such a way with respect to our sight and objects of vision, that the rays will be reflected and bent in any direction we desire, and under any angle we wish, we may see the object near or at a distance.... So we might also cause the Sun, Moon and stars in appearance to descend here below....

HISTORY OF OPTICS

He would then create the *OPUS MINUS* (SMALLER WORK) and something we have titled the *OPUS TERTIUM* (THIRD WORK).



Since Bacon's superiors in his monastic order were hostile, he had to do all his writing in complete secrecy.



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

1271

[Marco Polo](#) departed Venice for the Mongol court. He wouldn't be home until 1295.²³ During this year and the following one, it now appears, the Jewish merchant Jacob D'Ancona was also doing business in [China](#), and he eventually would report that there were many tens of thousands of people recognizable to him as Jews throughout China, some 2,000 of them in the port of Zaitun (Quanzhou) alone. He would report that these Jews had been in China already so long that only their rabbis still read Hebrew, their prayers and their scriptures having been transformed into an unintelligible mixture of Hebrew and Chinese.

23. Refer to J.R.S. Phillips's *THE MEDIEVAL EXPANSION OF EUROPE* (Oxford/NY: Oxford UP, 1988).



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

1274

When the Mongols tried to invade [Japan](#) (Kublai Khan had ordered his puppet government in Korea to mount this invasion as part of his process of isolating southern [China](#)'s Southern Sung Dynasty) they were repelled fortuitously by a typhoon. (Seven years later they would try again, but again the Korean/Mongol forces would be destroyed by a *kamikaze*, a “divine wind” — Japanese historians would of course be relentlessly exaggerating the significance of this through downplaying contemporary and analogous Mongol defeats in Burma, Java, Syria, and Vietnam.)



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

1276

The Mongol rulers of northern [China](#) began to exert influence over the southern regions of China.



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

1279

The period from 1279 to 1368 CE would be known as the Mongol, or Yuan Dynasty period in Chinese civilization. Kubla Khan conquered [China](#). A new capital was established at Peking (Beijing) and the Grand Canal was extended to supply the capital. [Marco Polo](#) served the Khan in China as the Mongol rulers of the north completed their conquest of China's southern regions.



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

1288

[Marco Polo](#) returned to Venice after apparently having toured in the northern regions of [China](#), the Mongol-dominated regions. He had not noticed footbinding because that practice has never been typical of the dominant Mongol culture there and because it had not yet become fully developed among the upper classes of the Han (footbinding really didn't develop until the Ming Dynasty and then didn't become overwhelmingly practiced until the Ch'ing Dynasty — it was not yet a major facet of the Chinese scene even during the 14th Century). Polo also failed to notice the Great Wall of China, or rather, the Great Walls as there were a number of them and the ends were not in a line and they did not connect with one another. We note, as below, that that wall system was still being added to and therefore was still in use as a series of military installations. Neither of these 2 not-noticeings constitutes any evidence at all that his tales of travel in the region amount to mere invention. Polo was never in any place where he might himself have glimpsed any portion of any of these military walls. There was no reason for any Chinese to brag to him about these military walls, as they were at that time evidence of a Chinese problem rather than evidence of any Chinese strength. No Chinese official



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

would have mentioned these military installations to a foreigner, for reasons of national security, since they were military defensive installations in active use against foreigners. Odoric, who would notice footbinding, would come to China during a later period when South China had become more firmly integrated into the cultural context. Thus it should come as no surprise, and as no evidence against Polo, that Odoric would notice footbinding that the previous visitor had failed to report.

PERIOD	WALL BUILT	LOCATION	KILOMETERS	DATES
Spring and Autumn (770-476 BCE)	Wall of Qi	South bank of the Yellow River in Pingyin County (Western Shandong) -northern slopes of Mount Tai-Yimeng Mountain area-seaboard in Jiao County	Over 500	<i>circa</i> 685-281 BCE
Warring States (475-221 BCE)	Wall built under the Jianluo reign of Qin	West bank of Luo River in Shaanxi	Unknown	461-409 BCE
	Wall built under the reign of King Zhao of Qin	Tao River in Min County (gansu)-Ningxia-Northern Shaanxi-eastern part of Ordos Plateau in Inner Mongolia	Unknown	<i>circa</i> 287 BCE
	Wall of Wei, west of the Yellow River	East bank of Luo River in Shaanxi-east bank of Yellow River on Ordos Plateau, called “the wall west of the Yellow River”	About 700	361-352 BCE
	Wall of Zhao	Yu County, Hebei-southern slopes of Yinshan Mountains, Inner Mongolia-Langshankou Pass, also in Inner Mongolia	About 1000	<i>circa</i> 299 BCE
	Wall of Yan	Southeastern Inner Mongolia-northern slopes of Yanshan Mountains-Liaodong	About 1000	<i>circa</i> 311-279 BCE
Qin Dynasty (221-207 BCE)	The Great Wall of Qin	Upper reaches of Tao River Gansu-bank of the Yellow River-northern slopes of Yinshan Mountains-Liaodong, called the 10,000-li wall of Qin	5,000	214 BCE



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

PERIOD	WALL BUILT	LOCATION	KILOMETERS	DATES
Western Han Dynasty (206 BCE-CE 24)	Wall of Han	A reinforced version of the wall of Qin, with deviation to the north or south at certain points all the way to Liaodong	5,000	205-127 BCE
	Wall west of the Yellow River	Lanzhou, Gansu-Yumen Pass-Lop Nor in Xinjiang	1250	121-101 BCE
	Guanglu Castle in central Inner Mongolia	Wuchuan County, Inner Mongolia-Urad Rear Banner, also in Inner Mongolia-People's Republic of Mongolia	About 1,000	102 BCE
	Juyan Castle in northwestern Inner Mongolia	Jiayu Mountain, Gansu-Ejun Banner, Inner Mongolia-People's Republic of Mongolia	About 750	102 BCE
Northern Wei (CE 386-534)	Wall of Northern Wei	Chicheng, Hebei-Urad Banners, Inner Mongolia	1,000	CE 423
Northern Qi (550-577)	Wall of Northern Qi	Luliang Mountain, Shanxi-Hengshan Mountains-Yanshan Mountains-Juyong Pass near Beijing	About 1,500	552-565
Sui Dynasty (581-618)	Wall of Sui	Yellow River Bend in Ningxia-Inner Mongolia-Shanxi-Hebei-coast of the Bohai Sea, where Yu Pass was built	About 1,500	581-608
Liao Dynasty (916-1125)	Wall of Liao and ditches	Present-day Heilongjiang and Jilin, characterized by ditches in front of the wall	About 1,000	From 908, before inauguration of the dynasty, to 1058
Jin (Jurchen) Dynasty (1115-1234)	Ditches of Jin	Morin Dawa Banner in Hulun Bair League (Inner Mongolia)-southwestern slopes of Greater Hinggan Mountains-northern slopes of Yanshan Mountains-western slopes of Yinshan Mountains, also characterized by ditches in front of the wall	5,000	1200
THE POLOS VISITED CHINA WHILE THE VARIOUS WALLS WERE IN ACTIVE MILITARY USE AND EXPANDING.				
Ming Dynasty (1368-1644)	The Great Wall of Ming	Yalu river in Liaoning-Hebei-Shanxi-Inner Mongolia-Shaanxi-Ningxia-Jiayu Pass in Gansu	7,300	1368-1644

(Polo is also faulted for having failed to mention Chinese printing. But, why would he have mentioned this? Such a practice, to be of cultural significance, requires a large audience of people who already know how to read, and such a large audience of people who already know how to read would have been inconceivable in the context of the Europe of that era.)



August 6, 1851: .. A man must generally get away some hundreds or thousands of miles from home before he can be said to begin his travels– Why not begin his travels at home –! Would he have to go far or look very closely to discover novelties. The traveller who in this sense pursues his travels at home, has the advantage at any rate of a long residence in the country to make his observations correct & profitable. Now the American goes to England while the Englishman comes to America in order to describe the country– No doubt there some advantages in this kind of mutual criticism– But might there not be invented a better way of coming at the truth than this scratch-my back & I'll scratch your's method? Would not the American for instance who had himself perchance travelled in England & elsewhere –make the most profitable & accurate traveller in his own country. How often it happens that the travellers principal distinction is that he is one who knows less about a country



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

than a native. Now if he should begin with all the knowledge of a native –& add thereto the knowledge of a traveller– Both natives & foreigners would be obliged to read his book. & the world would be absolutely benefitted It takes a man of genius to travel in his own country –in his native village –to make any progress between his door & his gate. But such a traveller will make the distances which Hanno & Marco Polo –& Cook & Ledyard went over ridiculous.

So worthy a traveller as Wm Bartram heads his first chapter with the words “The author sets sail from Philadelphia, and arrives at Charleston, from whence he begins his travels.”

I am perchance most & most profitably interested in the things which I already know a little about –a mere & utter novelty is a mere monstrosity to me. I am interested to see the yellow pine which we have not in Concord though Michaux says it grows in Mass –. or the English Oak having heard of the royal oak –& having oaks ourselves Or the oriental Plane having often heard of it –& being well acquainted with its sister the occidental plane –but the new Chinese flower whose cousin I do not happen to know I pass by with indifference. I do not know that I am very fond of novelty. I wish to get a clearer notion of what I have already some inkling.



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

1291

A Genoese trader, Peter of Lucalongo, traveled to [China](#) with Montecorvino. In 1305 or 1306 he would purchase the ground for Montecorvino's church in Beijing.²⁴

24. Refer to J.R.S. Phillips's *THE MEDIEVAL EXPANSION OF EUROPE* (Oxford/NY: Oxford UP, 1988).



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

1293

Chinese mathematician Kuo Chou-king completed the Grand Canal, from Chambuluc to the Huang River.

CANALS



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

1295

[Marco Polo](#) heard about Genoese who had sailed the Caspic.²⁵

CHINA

25. Refer to J.R.S. Phillips's *THE MEDIEVAL EXPANSION OF EUROPE* (Oxford/NY: Oxford UP, 1988).



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

1298

[Marco Polo](#) returned from [China](#) (and from a [Genoan](#) prison) and described to the Europeans, in DESCRIPTION OF THE WORLD, the incredibly precious and strange locales in which their spices were originating.

[SPICE](#)



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

1299

There is a tale of a winged predatory cat known as the Cat-a-Mountain in the accounts of [Marco Polo](#) (1254-1324). This beast supposedly had the body of a leopard but a strange skin that stretched out when it hunted, enabling it to fly in the pursuit of its prey. This Cat-a-Mountain is most likely an imagined hybrid — a predatory feline imagined as a large bat or a predatory feline imagined as a large flying squirrel with flaps of skin enabling it to glide. Winged cats of myth and legend were often demonic creatures with “feathered” wings and were liable to swoop down on humans, who were liable to be terrified. Later authors would use Polo’s term to describe a wildcat and by the 17th Century it would have been abbreviated to Catamount and would be being used as a synonym for the American Mountain Lion, Cougar, or Puma.

CATS WITH WINGS

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

HDT

WHAT?

INDEX

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

1300

The rebuilding and rerouting of [China](#)'s Grand Canal was being completed.

[CANALS](#)

During this century, the [Chinese](#) would be sailing around in ships that looked like this:





CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

Chronological observations of America

Flavio of Malphi in Naples invented the Compass in our Edward the firsts time.

From the year of the World *to the year of Christ 1673.*

BY John Josselyn Gent.

NAPLES



(Actually, the compass had been invented in [China](#) some 23 centuries earlier, give or take a lifetime. Is that a long time, would you say, 2.3 millennia?)



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

1313

Chu Hsi's edition of THE FOUR BOOKS,²⁶ originally prepared in 1190,  was accepted in all [China](#) as the basis for a very elaborate and rigorous civil service examination system which could elevate the more painstaking student to the important role of Mandarin.²⁷ This literature would reach a Western audience as of 1840  with [M.J. Pauthier](#)'s *CONFUCIUS ET MENCIAUS*, a complete French version of the FOUR BOOKS along with Chu Hsi's 12th-Century commentaries.

CONFUCIUS

MENCIAUS

THOREAU AND CHINA

26. The *TA-HSÜEH* (THE GREAT LEARNING), the *LUN-YÜ* (THE ANALECTS), the *MENG-TZU* (the book of [Mencius](#)), and the *CHUNG-YUNG* (THE DOCTRINE OF THE MEAN).

LIGHT FROM CHINA

27. This examination system would persist until 1905.



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

1329

1st mention of [Jews](#) in [Chinese](#) literature. The name applied was *Chu-hu*. This appeared in the ANNALS (*YUAN-SHI*) of this year, and would appear again in the ANNALS for 1354. In such mentions the Chinese often confused Jews with Muslims (*Hwei-hwei*) — a Semite was a Semite, no subtle distinctions being required.





THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

1350

1st Half of the 14th century: All missionaries, and Ibn Batuta, were speaking about the presence of Genoese traders in India and [China](#).²⁸

28. Refer to J.R.S. Phillips's *THE MEDIEVAL EXPANSION OF EUROPE* (Oxford/NY: Oxford UP, 1988).



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

1360

Zhang Sanfeng (Chang Sanfeng) journeyed into the Wudang Mountains of [China](#), and is generally credited with inventing the 13 postures of Taijiquan (T'ai Chi Ch'uan).

Chinese authors begin writing down the oral traditions now known as Shui Hu Chuan (“The Story of the River Bank”). Such tales had originally been set near the end of the Northern Sung period, meaning the early 1100s, and had originally featured a social bandit named Sung Chiang. The writers associated with this transcription are Shi Nai-an (a possible 18th-Century forgery) and Lo Kuan-chung (pen-name of a 14th-Century romance novelist). A version running to 120 individual episodes would appear in 1614, but in 1641 literary critic Chin Sheng-t'an would edit this to a more manageable 71 and simultaneously reset the plot to the recently ended Ming Dynasty. In the process the 108 bandits of the stories would be made loyal to the old emperor, a nice touch, and would be made to ascribe to other values that the readership might consider conventional. This would become the version of the story most commonly translated into English (for instance, in “All Men are Brothers” in 1933 and “The Water Margin” in 1937).

Nota bene, the bandits’ “inaccessible mountain lair” at Liang-shan is merely 400 feet high. As for their remote mountain home, well, Shantung Province is about as flat as [Kansas](#) and is as densely populated as, say, France. But from a cultural standpoint the facts of the matter are entirely irrelevant, for these stories helped shape Chinese popular culture the same way that Shakespeare shaped English culture and Luther shaped German culture. Explains the Chinese American journalist Frank Chin, “All of Chinese literature and language, high and low culture, schooled and unschooled immigrants, the founders of the tongs and associations, the founders of the Chong Wah, the hatchet men, the Chinamen on the railroad, the gamblers, dopers, fighters, and writers in Chinatown — all swim in the scenes and strategy of heroes of The Three Kingdoms and The Water Margin.”



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

1368

In [China](#), the Ming 明 dynasty²⁹ was initiated when Chinese warlord Chu Yüan-chang seized Peking from the Mongols and established himself as the Hung-wu (“Extensive and Martial”) emperor.³⁰

Chu had been an orphan, raised at a Buddhist monastery in northern China. Chinese panegyrists would begin to attribute to all Buddhist monks nearly supernatural fighting prowess. Many 19th-Century secret societies would be asserting that the Hung-wu emperor had been their First Ancestor — which is why to this day some of these groups still use the character “Hung” from “Hung-wu” as part of the names of their senior members.

29. Ming means “Brilliant,” and the allusion was to the Indo-[Iranian](#) or Zoroastrian deity Mazda, King of Light. The suggestion in this name was that the millennium had arrived.

30. This dynasty would persist until April 1644, when the Mongols would retake Beijing.



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

1376

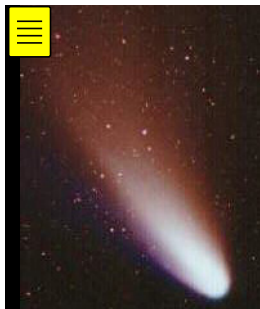
After being taught to manufacture gunpowder by a Yüan [Chinese](#) engineer, Ch'oe Mu-son, a [Korean](#) official, persuaded the Koryo court to establish a Superintendency for Gunpowder Weapons.

1378

October 2: [Halley's Comet](#) was coming down this time across the North Pole at only 0.12 astronomical units in distance. (The perennial popular perception, that this particular comet was at one time blamed for the Black Death, is surely untrue, as in the first place that great plague had already occurred some three decades earlier and as in the second place it is understood by at least some of us, at least some of the time, that while earlier events do sometimes influence later events, later events never ever have any influence on the earlier ones. :-)

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

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

CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

October 3: Still coming down from the star that marks the North Pole, [Halley's Comet](#) passed through the bowl of the Big Dipper. It is recorded in European and Asian sources. This is what Earth looked like from the comet (sort of):

[SKY EVENT](#)

November 10: We calculate that on this date [Halley's Comet](#) was whipping around the [sun](#).

[SKY EVENT](#)



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

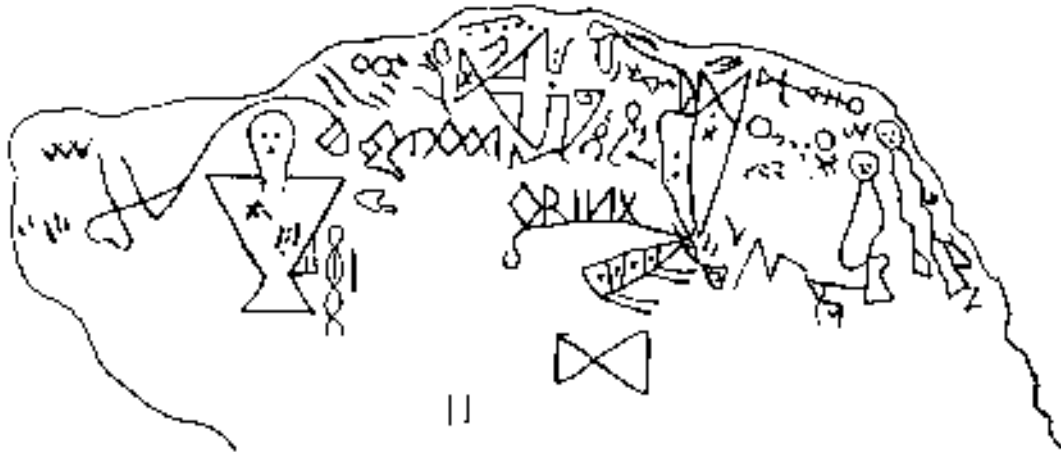
1403

From about this year, until 1409, the encyclopaedia of over 20,000 chapters, the *YONGLE DADIAN*, would be being compiled in [China](#).

HISTORY OF
THE BOOK

1405

A [Chinese](#) Muslim eunuch with a five foot girth and a voice like a bell, Zheng He, would be taking a Chinese fleet westward, seven times until 1433, to collect tribute for the Ming emperors. The westward destination seems to have been Malaya. Some have hypothesized that the sailors of this fleet, mostly Muslim, were responsible for introducing the leaping, darting martial art of cha ch'uan to Southeast Asia. If that is not merely a "just so" story, then cha ch'uan would be perhaps a Chinese root of the modern Malay martial art called berisilat, or "self-defense." (Another of these just-so stories has this Chinese fleet making chinkadink inscriptions on the [Dighton Rock](#) of New England!)





THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

1406

Because peripatetic Buddhist monks were wont to argue that the human governments were corrupt and hint of a different, better future, East Asian governments often blamed such figures for inciting local unrest. In this year the staunchly Confucian government of [Korea](#) ordered the repression of most Buddhist processions and rituals. This repression would become so thorough that by the 16th Century Buddhism would be publicly popular in Korea only with women (the stories we hear about the Korean martial arts having been created by Buddhist monks are to be taken to be fantasies).

Inside Peking, the white-marble terraces, gardens, and shrines of the Forbidden City began to be created. This complex of 250 acres would grow to over 9,000 rooms and would contain the palaces of 24 Ming and Ch'ing emperors. The walls are still red and the roofs still golden, but although it's a nice place to visit nobody dares to live there anymore. (Now, the rulers of [China](#) reside in another Forbidden City in Beijing, known as Zhongnanhai, that is very well protected but that is not ever referred to as a forbidden city, being referred to instead as a government residential compound. It belongs, of course, to the People. On April 25, 1999 some of the People, adherents of a form of meditation exercise for purposes of general health known as Falun Gong, attempted to hold one of their exercise sessions outside this Zhongnanhai government residential compound as a demonstration of their faith for the benefit of the families of the apparatchiks of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party. That was a bad mistake.)



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

1407

The most comprehensive encyclopedia in the known world was completed under the direction of the Yung-lo emperor of [China](#). Its 11,095 volumes contained a total of 22,937 chapters. A remnant of this massive work, the portion still in existence, would be republished as of 1963.



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

1410

At about this point the [Chinese](#) constructed firearms with barrels made of tropical hardwood, that could discharge arrows.



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

1416

On the Isle of [Jersey](#), the English Crown confiscated the Alien Priors.

Amadeo VII of Savoy was created a duke by Emperor Sigismund (in 1439 he would have the Anti-Pope “Felix” imposed by the council of Bâle).

Because the Taoists believed that ch’i (internal energy) developed fastest at places that were 2,000 to 4,000 feet higher than the surrounding territory, construction begins on some Taoist hermitages in Hopei Province’s Wu Tang Mountains. By the 17th Century, the Wu Tang mountains would be home to many [Chinese](#) Confucianist and Taoist monasteries (legend puts the figure at 72). 18th-Century novels and stage plays would make these monasteries to have been the homes of some famous martial art instructors. According to tradition, the Manchus reportedly hired Wu Tang Taoists to sack Buddhist temples in Hunan and Fukien provinces, although we have reasons to doubt such a story: First, monks normally didn’t attack one another; Second, no one can say which temples were destroyed; most importantly, no one has explained why Manchu generals needed help in sacking lightly defended monasteries.

Buddhist monks established the Drepung monastery in Lhasa, Tibet. (The name means “Rice Heap,” and refers to a Tantric Buddhist temple in India.) This monastery would house over 7,000 monks in 1901 and would be one of the largest Buddhist universities in the world — until Chinese Communists would destroy it in 1959.

A Crossbow Guild (Bogenschützen Gesellschaft) appeared in Dresden. (While its organization flag shows an establishment date of 1286, its written records only date back to 1416.) This was originally a municipal militia and it would still be holding contests in the 20th Century. Other long-standing urban crossbow guilds included the Brotherhood of Saint Sebastian in Bruges and the Guild of Crossbowmen in Zurich. Archers shot at popinjays (birds on poles) or at targets set up 100 paces (85 meters) beyond the toeline. Special target crossbows would begin to be manufactured during the 1880s. The most accurate of these would feature spirit-levels and optical sights and would be capable of pinpoint accuracy to 30 meters. Modern field crossbows date to the 1950s, when they would come to be used for tranquilizing animals in Kenyan game parks.

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

1418

The Portuguese Prince Henry established a navigation college to spur a worldwide [spice](#) quest.

This [Chinese](#) map bears the date 1763, and its inscription alleges that it is copied from a map made in 1418. It does not seem to depict the British Isles, but does depict Africa and [Australia](#):



Well, whaddya know!

THE AGE OF REASON WAS A PIPE DREAM, OR AT BEST A PROJECT. ACTUALLY, HUMANS HAVE ALMOST NO CLUE WHAT THEY ARE DOING, WHILE CREDITING THEIR OWN LIES ABOUT WHY THEY ARE DOING IT.



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

1420

During this year and the following one, the [Chinese](#) Ming capital was being moved from Nanjing to Beijing, where construction of the Forbidden City had been completed.



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

1431

From this year into 1433, Zheng He made his 7th and final voyage, sailing as far as the east coast of Africa (but don't believe anybody who tries to tell you that he went any farther than that).

[China](#)'s Grand Canal was carrying 450,000 tons of freight per year.

CANALS



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

1454

The growing season in the Northern Hemisphere appears to have been a predecessor of the summer of the year 1816 (“eighteen-hundred-and-froze-to-death”), for the [Chinese](#) wheat crop was destroyed by frosts after a winter in which the Yellow Sea had frozen along the coast to as much as a dozen miles out from shore. The [famine](#) that was the consequence of this bad weather—and the people who froze to death in unheated buildings in climates that were ordinarily Florida-like during the colder portion of that episode— all that is attributable to the volcanic explosion of the previous November or December in the South Pacific, and the clouds of dust and gas that had been thrown into the atmosphere.



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

1460

At about this time the imperial porcelain works at Jingdezhen in [China](#) was beginning to make worldwide distribution of its Ming ware.

By about this year the wooden swords known as *bokken* were becoming popular at the [Japanese](#) academies teaching swordsmanship (these weapons, which reduced the severity of accidents during training, were similar to the lengths of whale baleen relied upon by contemporary Europeans during tournaments and jousts).



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

1472

January 24, Friday: Observers in [China](#) described the great [comet](#) of this year as possessing as of this day rays that “stretched across the heavens from east to west.” It transited north to Ursa Major and was visible even in the noon sky. During the third week of January, however, observers in [Korea](#) were noting the presence of only 30 degrees of tail, which would suggest that a good deal of the tail may have been so tenuous as to be apparent only under very good conditions of observation.


SKY EVENT

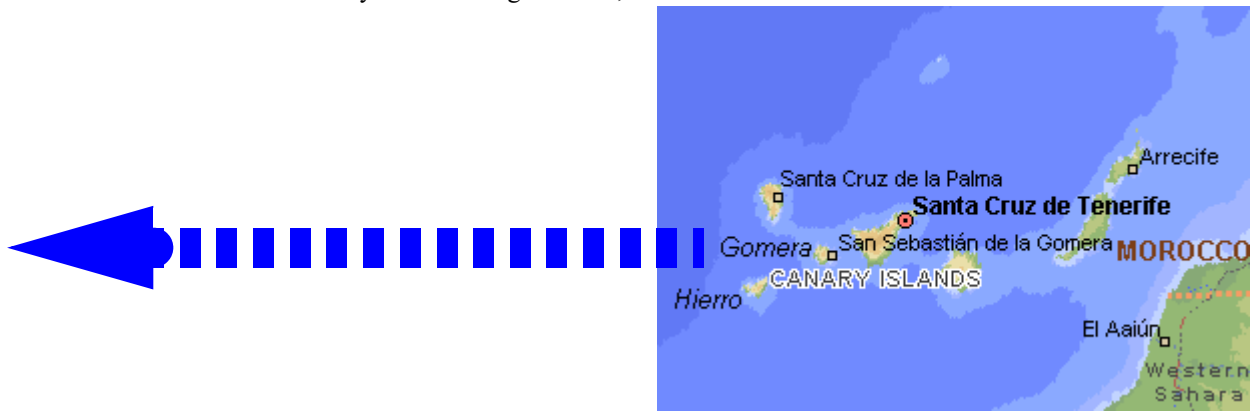
THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

1474

At about this point [Sebastian Cabot](#) was born (in Bristol, England or [Venice, Italy](#)).

Paolo Toscanelli (1397-1482) had constructed by 1440  a map of the Ocean Sea which positioned [China](#) and [Japan](#) some hundred degrees east of their correct position and thus narrowed the empty waters between Japan and the Canary Islands to but 3,000 miles. In this year he forwarded this map to the Portuguese canon [Ferdinando Martini](#), who would pass it on to [Christopher Columbus](#). On this basis Columbus, ever the optimist, ever delusional, would re-estimate that he had but 2,400 miles to travel after the Canaries dropped off the horizon behind him before he would be able to secure new supplies along the coast of Japan — rather than the correct and fatally enormous figure of 10,000 miles.



CARTOGRAPHY

CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

1488

In [China](#), the Ming emperor ordered the rebuilding of the Great Wall in order better to defend against northern intruders, or in order to give the army something to do that would keep it well away from the capital city, or something.





THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

1492

November: Rodrigo de Jerez and Luis de Torres, in [Cuba](#) searching for the Khan of Cathay ([China](#)), are credited as being the 1st white men to observe the act of smoking [tobacco](#). They reported that they witnessed natives³¹ wrapping dried leaves in palm or maize “in the manner of a musket formed of paper.” They saw them light one end, then commence “drinking” the smoke through the other (**they weren’t making this up**, Bob Newhart would insist in “Button Down Comedy”). Jerez became a confirmed smoker, and is thought to be the first outside of the Americas. When he brought the habit back to his hometown, the smoke billowing from his mouth and nose so frightened his neighbors that he would for 7 years be imprisoned for this “devilish habit” by the holy inquisitors — by the time he would be released, smoking would have become a Spanish craze (just think of how Bob Newhart would have spun that one, pretending that he’d just gotten out of jail after being there 7 years for smoking –and was noticing a bunch of people, smoking: **“Hey, excuse me, are you sure you should be doing that?”**).

31. As it would turn out, these weren’t [Chinamen](#) at all! –As it would turn out, all the Chinamen were someplace else doing something else at the time.



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

1498

June 26, Tuesday (Old Style): The [Chinese](#) tooth brush, fashioned out of stiff hog bristles attached to a handle made of bone or bamboo, was introduced into a cultural backwater known as Europe where people were having chronic problems with their teeth.

CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM





THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

THE FUTURE IS MOST READILY PREDICTED IN RETROSPECT





CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

1514

Jorge Alvarez was the first European to reach [China](#) by sea. In the region of Canton these Portuguese sailors encountered oranges superior in sweetness and fragrance even to those brought from India and Ceylon.

PLANTS



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

1518

To replace the island's fast-disappearing native population, the 28 Spanish [sugar cane](#) plantations at Santo Domingo on [Hispaniola](#) were stepping up importation of [slaves](#) from Africa, to do the cane chopping and heavy lifting.

INTERNATIONAL SLAVE TRADE

Hey, that sounds like a plan! There was a problem, however, on many of these plantations in this year. They were being devastated by an ant infestation, "as though fire had fallen from the sky and scorched them." Presumably these ants had been introduced along with some plant that the Spanish had brought in. (Professor Edward O. Wilson now indicates that the culprit introduced species was likely to have been *Solenopsis geminata*, the tropical fire ant.)

Duarte Barbosa, in AN ACCOUNT OF THE COUNTRIES BORDERING ON THE INDIAN OCEAN AND THEIR INHABITANTS described sweet oranges in Ceylon. A later book by Garcia da Orta, 1562, one of the earliest European books printed in India, would comment that the oranges of Ceylon were "the best of the whole world in regard to sweetness and abundance of juice." Prior to the discovery that [China](#) harbored sweet oranges, Europeans were less accustomed to consuming the fruit and considered citrus more valuable for its fragrance.

PLANTS



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

1520

Portuguese traders settled in [China](#).



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

1525

Portuguese navigator Estêvão Gomes (in Spanish, Estéban Gómés or Gómez, in French, Etienne or Étienne Gomez), explored in his *La Anunciada* from Cape Charles to [Cape Cod](#) and the Hudson River, Delaware River, and [Connecticut River](#). Along the coast he captured enough natives that at least 58 would survive, although the Spanish would criticize these slaves as too thin to be of much use to anyone. He sailed up the Hudson far enough to be certain that it would not lead to [China](#).

CAPE COD: The "Biographie Universelle" informs us that "An ancient manuscript chart drawn in 1529 by Diego Ribeiro, a Spanish cosmographer, has preserved the memory of the voyage of Gomez [a Portuguese sent out by Charles the Fifth]. One reads in it under (au dessous) the place occupied by the States of New York, Connecticut, and Rhode Island, Terre d'Etienne Gomez, qu'il découvrit en 1525 (Land of Etienne Gomez, which he discovered in 1525)." This chart, with a memoir, was published at Weimar in the last century.

The manuscript diary of his voyage would be published in 1529 by Diego Ribeiro of the Casa de la Contratación in Seville, with a map in which the present seaboard of [New York](#), [Connecticut](#), and [Rhode Island](#) is marked "Land of Esteban Gomez, discovered by him in 1525, by order of His Majesty; abundance of trees, game, salmon, turbot, and soles, but no gold is found."



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

1543

Portuguese landed on the island of Bermuda.

Aboard a [Chinese](#) cargo ship arriving in [Japan](#) in this year were a couple of Portuguese adventurers armed with arquebuses or snaphaunces. The warlords there, ever on the lookout for ways to improve their power over other warlords, would immediately perceive this as a weapon to hand to conscripts, who then would not need to be expensively and lengthily trained and could be considered as cannon fodder. This firearm would be put into mass production and within half a century, the Japanese islands would be sporting more high-quality firearms than all the nations of Europe together (and then, after 1600 and before 1853, Japan would determinedly render itself gun-free).

YOU HAVE TO ACCEPT EITHER THE REALITY OF TIME OVER THAT OF CHANGE, OR CHANGE OVER TIME — IT'S PARMENIDES, OR HERACLITUS. I HAVE GONE WITH HERACLITUS.



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

1550

Introduced to [China](#) by this point, corn would grow so quickly in importance that this crop would be a significant factor in the 18th-Century increase in the Chinese population, particularly in inland areas where rice was not such a good crop. (Today, China has become the world's 2d largest producer of corn.)

At about this point [Japanese](#) pirates (*waka*) were employing arquebuses during raids into [China](#) and [Korea](#). While the success of such pirate raids owed more to disciplined small-unit infantry tactics than to such firearms, in Korea the use of such weaponry would bring about the creation of new military bureaucracies, while in China the military would send acrobats and boxers to instruct peasants in self-defense (the stories of flying swordsmen which now fill our cinemas would not, however, become a staple of Chinese fiction until the late 19th Century).

The training of Ottoman Janissaries was described as including archery, musketry, javelin-throwing, and fencing. There was no pike training, though, since the Janissaries believed that pikes were useful only for men trained to fight like machines.

Spanish expeditions reported seeing American Indians living in Sonora and Chihuahua riding horses. Unbranded and branded horses and cattle spread rapidly across the Mexican plains and, said Viceroy Martin Enríquez in 1580, "Their price was no higher than the fatigue of seizing and killing them."

A former beggar named Gilpin, or "the Cork lad of Kentmere," became a royal wrestler for King Edward VI of England. Gilpin's diet consisted of "thick porridge and milk that a mouse might walk on dry shod, to my breakfast," and meat for his supper when he could get it. Other famous English wrestlers of the day included Robert Dodd of Westmoreland, John Woodall of Gosforth, and Robert Atkinson of Kendal.

Pope Julius III (Giovanni Maria del Monte).

By this year, [tomatoes](#) (introduced from the New World) were being regularly consumed by Italians.

Damiao de Goes described oranges being exported from Portugal to Spain. The tradition is that J. de Castro had recently returned from India, bringing with him a sweet orange and planting seeds from it at his country home, known as Penh Verde. From this tree all the Portugal-type sweet oranges have descended.

PLANTS



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

In Naples, Federico Grisone published *GLI ORDINI DI CAVALCARE*. This “ordering of equitation” describes the form of trained riding later known as dressage, a word itself meaning “schooling.” There was no training in jumping, but much training in the performance of intricate movements conducted at slow gaits during princely pageants.

The Muscovite government organized a corps of 3,000 musketeers. The job of these mostly German infantrymen was to deliver massed musket fire from behind breastworks, not to maneuver independently on the battlefield.

In England in the course of the following century, the Anglicans would be withdrawing their support for any festivals held on saints’ days. In Scotland, the Netherlands, and Switzerland, the Calvinists would ban sword dances, plays, and dancing around the maypole. In Germany, both Catholics and Lutherans would ban Passion plays. In Italy and Spain, Catholic reformers would burn the images of Carnival. The Russians would ban dancing, fiddlers, masks, and minstrels. In all cases, the clerics would be averring that such entertainments put undue emphasis on sex and violence, which in turn corrupted morals and led young people astray. As a result, wrestlers, fencers, bear-trainers, playwrights, and other entertainers would need to be looking for secular employment.



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

1553

In *DES MERVEILLES DU MONDE*, Guillaume Postel declared the Oriental understanding to be “the best in the world.”



DO I HAVE YOUR ATTENTION? GOOD.

CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

[Captain Sebastian Cabot](#) organized an attempt at a Northeast Passage. In the name of “The Governor of the Mysterie and Companie of the Merchants Adventurers” (later renamed “The Muscovy Company”) Sir Hugh Willoughby, Richard Chancellor and Stephen Burroughs managed to open trade with Tsar Ivan through the Russian seaport of Archangel. In the Kara Sea, struggling to find a route to Cathay ([China](#)), they discovered the Russian Arctic island of Novaya Zemlya, which they denominated “Gooseland,” and there perished.

Chronological observations of America

From the year of the World

Edward the Sixth dyed.

Mary Queen of England began to Raign.

*Sir Hugh Willoughby, and all his men in two Ships in his first attempt to discover the North-east passage, were in October frozen to death in the Haven called *Arzima* in *Lapland*.*

to the year of Christ 1673.

BY *John Josselyn Gent.*

THE FROZEN NORTH

Arctic Explorations

Date	Explorer	Nation	Discovery
1501	Gaspar Corte Real	Portuguese	Newfoundland
1536	Jacques Cartier	French	St. Lawrence River, Gaspe Peninsula
1553	Richard Chancellor	English	White Sea
1556	Stephen Burrough	English	Kara Sea
1576	Martin Frobisher	English	Frobisher Bay
1582	Humphrey Gilbert	English	Newfoundland
1587	John Davis	English	Davis Strait
1597	Willem Barents	Dutch	Spitsbergen, Novaya Zemlya
1611	Henry Hudson	English	Hudson Bay
1616	William Baffin	English	Ellesmere and Devon Islands
1632	Thomas James	English	James Bay
1741	Vitus Bering	Russian	Alaska
1772	Samuel Hearne	English	Coppermine River to the Arctic Ocean



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

Arctic Explorations

Date	Explorer	Nation	Discovery
1779	James Cook	British	Vancouver Island, Nootka Sound
1793	Alexander Mackenzie	English	Bella Coola River to the Pacific
1825	Edward Parry	British	Cornwallis, Bathurst, Melville Islands
1833	John Ross	British	North Magnetic Pole
1845	John Franklin	British	King William Island
1854	Robert McClure	British	Banks Island, Viscount Melville Sound



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

1556



During this year and the following one Stephen Burrough would be attempting the same northeastern passage as Hugh Willoughby had attempted. He landed on “Gooseland.” He would return with a conviction that there was just no way to break through the ice barrier and obtain open polar “Sea of the Midnight Sun” water, and thus reach [China](#).

Arctic Explorations

Date	Explorer	Nation	Discovery
1501	Gaspar Corte Real	Portuguese	Newfoundland
1536	Jacques Cartier	French	St. Lawrence River, Gaspé Peninsula
1553	Richard Chancellor	English	White Sea
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1845	John Franklin	British	King William Island
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THE FROZEN NORTH

January 24, Friday (1555, Old Style): The two most deadly earthquakes on record are a quake of this year in the Shansi Province of [China](#) which killed around 830,000-890,000 people, and a quake in Upper [Egypt](#) in 1201CE that had been estimated by chroniclers to kill 1,000,000.



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

1560

At about this point, [Japanese](#) sword dancers began to hold their scabbards in one hand while quickly drawing their swords with the other. Within 15 years duelists would be copying the technique and creating kata designed to teach iai jutsu quick-draw techniques (in 1932 such quick-draw techniques would become the basis for iaido, the Way of Sword-Drawing).

Construction began at the Ta Er monastery in the Nan Shan mountains of western [China](#), at which the monks would train to use swords and spears to exorcise demons, and at quarterly temple fairs would entertain crowds of visitors (this would become an important and popular Yellow Hat Buddhist temple, and in 1631 would add a “Defender of Buddhism” hall with rows of spears and swords beside its doors, in which bronze mirrors lined the walls to assist monks in their training).



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

1562

A Ming Dynasty general named Ch'i Chi-kuang started work on a book of military theory called Chi'hsiao hsin-shu, or "New Text of Practical Tactics." Although most of Chi's book was devoted to battlefield maneuver and armed techniques (moves from the northern Shaolin sword form chi men jen are among the illustrations accompanying the text), this was also the first [Chinese](#) Ming Dynasty text to provide realistic descriptions of the unarmed Chinese martial arts. The reason was that Ch'i had found that recruits handled their weapons more confidently if they were first taught to wrestle and box.



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

1566

February: This was the Ming 明 dynasty in [China](#), and an official of the Board of Revenue named Hai Rui had the defects of honesty and of diligence. He made the mistake of mentioning, in a minute to the Emperor, the extravagance, government banditry, and corruption which characterized his regime. Hai was fettered, and then suddenly the Emperor died so Hai was released from his fetters. (Hai would go on, to repeat this act twice more in his career: first he would accuse the governor of Suzhou of corruption, and then he would suggest that the death penalty was an appropriate punishment for a corrupt government official. Hai was terminally righteous. This history of the sad fate of this terminally righteous nay-sayer would, exactly four centuries later, be turned into moral drama. In 1959-1966, during Mao Zedong's "Great Leap Forward" and "Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution," a moderate named Peng Dehuai would have the audacity to criticize this madness, in a letter sent directly to Mao, and would be removed from his post and would wind up sweeping floors. A journalist and playwright named Wu Han would write about this contemporary event in allegory and at length, never mentioning the current events or the name of the disgraced Peng Dehuai but speaking with apparent innocence of the events of four centuries before, using the sad history of the disgraced Hai Rui to explore the ramifications of the current situation. Mao's wife Jiang Qing, herself an actress and a playwright, would attack Wu's play "The Dismissal of Hai Rui from Office." The former Red Army leader Peng would be arrested by Red Guard youths and would die in prison of untreated ailments, his family not being informed of his death. The journalist Wu would be arrested and brutalized and also would die. Then the wife of Mao, of course, as we all know, and the other three members of her "Gang of Four," would after Mao's death be disgraced. We notice: what goes around tends to come around.)



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

1557

The [Chinese](#) government allowed Portuguese merchants to establish warehouses at Macao, an island south of Canton on the Pearl River estuary. To maintain the status quo, the Chinese also established their own naval base at Amoy on the Fukien coast.



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

1569

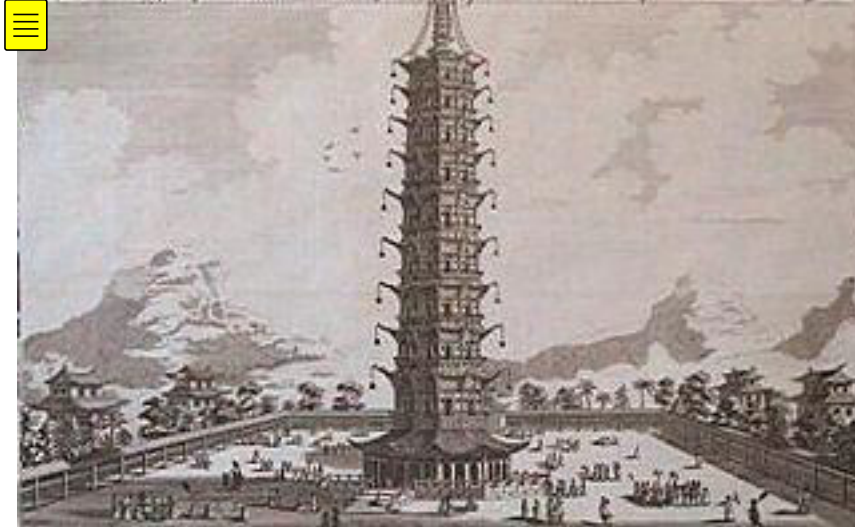
Gerhardus Mercator published his map. Based on mathematical principles, it is a flat map using the projection that still carries his name today, the “Mercator projection.”³²

32. What we know as the “Mercator projection” was old news, since it had been in use by [Chinese](#) cartographers before Gerhardus Mercator had been even so much as a gleam in his daddy’s eye.

1570

The Archbishopric of Edo was established and the first [Japanese](#) Jesuits were ordained.

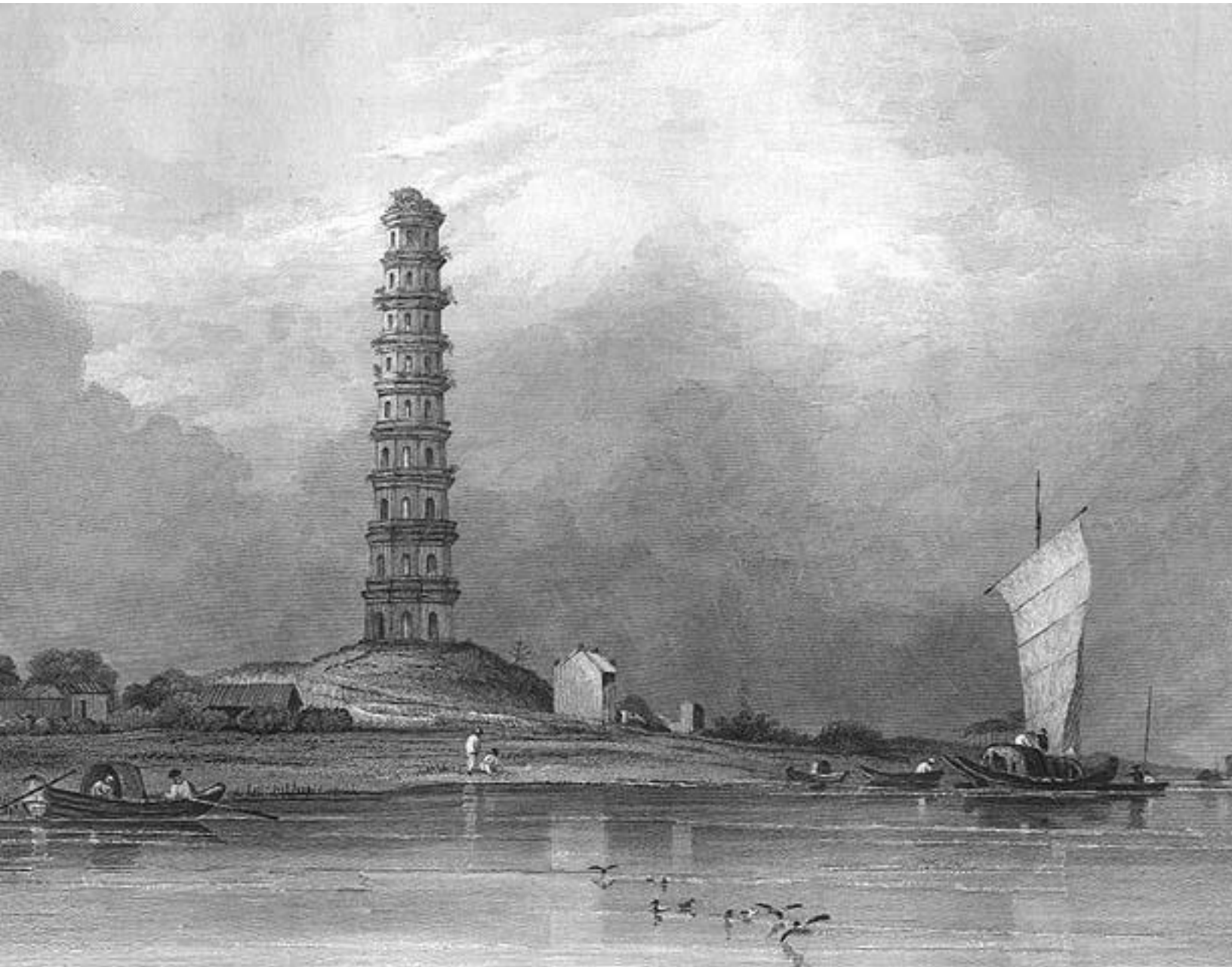
Erection in Anqing on the north bank of the Yang-tse-keang in [China](#), opposite to the canal that extends from that river to the walls of Nanking, of what has become known as the Wind-Moving Pagoda. It has eight sides and eight stories — and still stands swaying in the breezes.



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

Here is this construction as it would be depicted by Anthony Van Dyck Copley Fielding (1787-1855):






CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

1573

 The daimyo Oda Nobunaga overthrew the Muromachi bakufu and extended his control over most of [Japan](#).

From this year into 1620, Wan Li would be the Emperor of [China](#): this would be a period of great paintings and porcelain-making; the imperial kilns at Jingde zhen would produce vast quantities of “china.”

The peanut is known to have been cultivated in the Chekiang Province of [China](#) in this year, presumably having arrived on the basis of port calls that Portuguese vessels had made in Brasil en route to the Orient.

PLANTS



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

1576

During this year and the next, [Francis Drake](#) would be coasting north to approximately 48° north latitude in the Pacific Ocean. He may have sighted Vancouver Island.

Sir Humphrey Gilbert, a favorite of [Queen Elizabeth](#), published DISCOURSE to suggest a passage by the northwest to [Cathay](#) and the East Indies. Such ideas got the Queen's support. She got the court to back a voyage by Martin Frobisher. (An infamous [pirate](#) and privateer, Frobisher was turning to exploring after having committed the understandable lapse in judgment of taking an English ship as booty in the name of the Queen.) Frobisher would reach Baffin Island and return with some rocks he supposed inaccurately to contain an ore of gold. With three small ships he would continue mapping the south-east coast of Baffin Island that now bears his name, Frobisher Bay, in search for the hoped-for "Northwest Passage" into the Pacific Ocean.

CARTOGRAPHY

THE FROZEN NORTH

Chronological observations of America

Sir Humphrey Gilbert a Devonshire Knight attempted to discover Virginia, but without success.

Sir Martin Frobisher's third voyage to Meta incognita. Freeze-land now called West-England, 25 leagues in length, in the latitude of 57.

Sir Francis Drake now passed the Streights of Magellan in the Ship called the Pelican.

From the year of the World

to the year of Christ 1673.

BY John Josselyn Gent.

His "colorful" exchanges with the Eskimo natives showed him to be a formidable opponent and warrior, and he would die accordingly, mortally wounded in 1594 in sea battle against the Spanish Armada.



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

WALDEN: What does Africa, -what does the West stand for? Is not our own interior white on the chart? black though it may prove, like the coast, when discovered. Is it the source of the Nile, or the Niger, or the Mississippi, or a North-West Passage around this continent, that we would find? Are these the problems which most concern mankind? Is Franklin the only man who is lost, that his wife should be so earnest to find him? Does Mr. Grinnell know where he himself is? Be rather the Mungo Park, the Lewis and Clarke and Frobisher, of your own streams and oceans; explore your own higher latitudes, -with shiploads of preserved meats to support you, if they be necessary; and pile the empty cans sky-high for a sign. Were preserved meats invented to preserve meat merely? Nay, be a Columbus to whole new continents and worlds within you, opening new channels, not of trade, but of thought. Every man is the lord of a realm beside which the earthly empire of the Czar is but a petty state, a hummock left by the ice. Yet some can be patriotic who have no *self-respect*, and sacrifice the greater to the less. They love the soil which makes their graves, but have no sympathy with the spirit which may still animate their clay. Patriotism is a maggot in their heads. What was the meaning of that South-Sea Exploring Expedition, with all its parade and expense, but an indirect recognition of the fact, that there are continents and seas in the moral world, to which every man is an isthmus or an inlet, yet unexplored by him, but that it is easier to sail many thousand miles through cold and storm and cannibals, in a government ship, with five hundred men and boys to assist one, than it is to explore the private sea, the Atlantic and Pacific Ocean of one's being alone.-

“Erret, et extremos alter scrutetur Iberos.
Plus habet hic vitæ, plus habet ille viæ.”

Let them wander and scrutinize the outlandish Australians.
I have more of God, they more of the road.

PEOPLE OF
WALDEN

SIR JOHN FRANKLIN
DR. ELISHA KENT KANE
LEWIS AND CLARK
CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS
MUNGO PARK



Chronological observations of America

Sir Martin Frobisher the first in Queen Elizabeths days that sought for the North-west passage, or the streight, or passage to China, and meta incognita, in three several voyages, others will have it in 1577.

BY John Josselyn Gent.

From the year of the World

to the year of Christ 1673.

Arctic Explorations

Date	Explorer	Nation	Discovery
1501	Gaspar Corte Real	Portuguese	Newfoundland
1536	Jacques Cartier	French	St. Lawrence River, Gaspe Peninsula
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1576	Martin Frobisher	English	Frobisher Bay
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1772	<u>Samuel Hearne</u>	English	Coppermine River to the Arctic Ocean
1779	James Cook	British	Vancouver Island, Nootka Sound
1793	<u>Alexander Mackenzie</u>	English	Bella Coola River to the Pacific
1825	Edward Parry	British	Cornwallis, Bathurst, Melville Islands



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

Arctic Explorations

Date	Explorer	Nation	Discovery
1833	John Ross	British	North Magnetic Pole
1845	John Franklin	British	King William Island
1854	Robert McClure	British	Banks Island, Viscount Melville Sound

CONTINGENCY

ALTHOUGH VERY MANY OUTCOMES ARE OVERDETERMINED, WE TRUST THAT SOMETIMES WE ACTUALLY MAKE REAL CHOICES. "THIS IS THE ONLY WAY, WE SAY, BUT THERE ARE AS MANY WAYS AS THERE CAN BE DRAWN RADII FROM ONE CENTRE."



1580

Taking a hint from some things in a good old book, Michel Eyquem de [Montaigne](#) wrote that:³³


The thing I fear most is fear.



“Fear of Fear” Trope

Seizing upon what information was newly available in Europe about [China](#), he deployed this in a manner calculated to encourage Europeans to subscribe to his own considered attitudes — a set of attitudes which had to do with the uncertainty of our understanding, the infinite variety of the world, and the universality of moral precepts. (These attitudes of Montaigne’s may or may not demonstrably have had anything to do with an actual China, but we know that any such similarities would be entirely coincidental as they most certainly had certainly not been derived by this European essayist out of any contact with the influences of any Chinese source wisdom.)

Though all that has arrived, by report, of our knowledge of times past should be true, and known by some one person, it would be less than nothing in comparison of what is unknown. And of this same image of the world, which glides away while we live upon it, how wretched and limited is the knowledge of the most curious; not only of particular events, which fortune often renders exemplary and of great concern, but of the state of great governments and nations, a hundred more escape us than ever come to our knowledge. We make a mighty business of the invention of artillery and printing, which other men at the other end of the

33. [Michel de Montaigne](#)’s 1580 *ESSAIS*, Book I, Chapter 17. PROVERBS 3:25  records this commonplace –which must be indeed ancient– as “Be not afraid of sudden fear.”

There is a report that Saint Teresa of Ávila, baptized as Teresa Sánchez de Cepeda y Ahumada in 1515 at Gotarrendura (Ávila), Old Castile, Spain, who would die on October 4, 1582 at Alba de Tormes, Salamanca, Spain, observed at some point during her life that “Whenever conscience commands anything, there is only one thing to fear, and that is fear.” Whether this derived from the published remark by Montaigne, or Montaigne derived his remark from her, is now uncertain.



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

world, in China, had a thousand years ago. Did we but see as much of the world as we do not see, we should perceive, we may well believe, a perpetual multiplication and vicissitude of forms. There is nothing single and rare in respect of nature, but in respect of our knowledge, which is a wretched foundation whereon to ground our rules, and that represents to us a very false image of things.



1582

October: Because Caesar's [calendar](#) (that is, the "Julian" calendar) was still several minutes longer than the [solar](#) year, to keep Easter aligned with the spring equinox Pope Gregory XIII reduced this year's October by 10 days. – Hence the "Gregorian" calendar, which still remains not quite accurate since it runs 26 seconds long per year (while Jesuits would introduce the new calendar into [China](#) and [Japan](#) during the following year, its innovative leap years would not be well adopted in Protestant European countries until the 18th Century).

The new "Gregorian" [calendar](#) sponsored among Catholics by Pope Gregory XIII replaced the "Annunciation Celebration, March 25th" convention for New Year's Day with the "Circumcision Celebration, January 1st" convention (while Jesuits would introduce the new calendar into [China](#) and [Japan](#) during the following year, its designation of January 1st as New Year's Day would not be well adopted in Protestant European countries until the 18th Century).

Various Year-End Conventions

Indictio graeca end-of-year convention: The calendar year extended from September 1st of the previous to August 31st of the given year. Conventional in Byzance, South Italy, and Sicily, and until 1087 by the Papal *curia*.

Indictio romana convention: The calendar year began with New Year's day, here either A) December 25th of the previous or B) January 1st of the given year. This calendar convention was used by the Papal *curia* from 1087 on and in late medieval Germany.

Indictio Bedana Convention: The calendar year extended from September 24th of the previous to September 23d of the given year. Introduced by the Venerable Bede, later widely used, especially in Germany and by the Imperial chancellery.

Byzantine Convention: The calendar year extended from September 1st of the previous to August 31st of the given year in accordance with the Byzantine usage of dating the creation of the world.

Christmas Convention: The calendar year extended from December 25th of the previous to December 24th of the given year (the convention most widely used in the Middle Ages).

Circumcision Convention: The calendar year extends from January 1st to December 31st, as is the convention here today.

Annunciation Convention: The calendar year began with March 25th of the previous (*stilus pisanus*) or on March 25th of the given year (*stilus florentinus, mos anglicanus*).

Venezian Convention: The calendar year extended from March 1st of the given year to the last day of February of the subsequent year. This convention derived from the pre-Caesarian Roman convention used by the Merovingian Franks, and was the official convention in Venice until 1797.



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

Easter Convention: The calendar year began on the (movable) date of Easter Sunday of the given year. The Easter Convention year went from Easter Sunday (our convention) to Holy Saturday (our convention). Easter Convention was used especially in France until the 16th century (*mos gallicus*). This program calculates Easter only for the time after the Council of Nicea (325CE), assuming that Easter was the first Sunday after the first official full moon on or after the official vernal equinox (March 21st). Easter dates from 1583 on are given according to the Gregorian calendar reform of October 15, 1582, and are calculated with the official full moon. However, not all countries immediately adopted the Gregorian calendar, and some Protestant nations temporarily based their Easter computation on the actual rather than the “official” full moon.



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

1584

Europe began to learn about [China](#), in the letters home of the Jesuit missionary Matteo Ricci.



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

1585

Europe began to learn about [China](#), in Gonzalez de Mendoza's history.

Meanwhile, a ship from the West Indies arrived in Europe with the 1st cargo of Jamaican [ginger](#) — a breakthrough of great moment had been achieved, in that an oriental [spice](#) was being cultivated successfully in the New World, reducing our dependence upon a strange Other.



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

1586

The Mongol leader [Nurhaci](#) triumphed in inner Mongolia, creating the formation of Bannermen that eventually would conquer [China](#) — where they would be known and dreaded not as the Yellow Peril but as the Manchus.

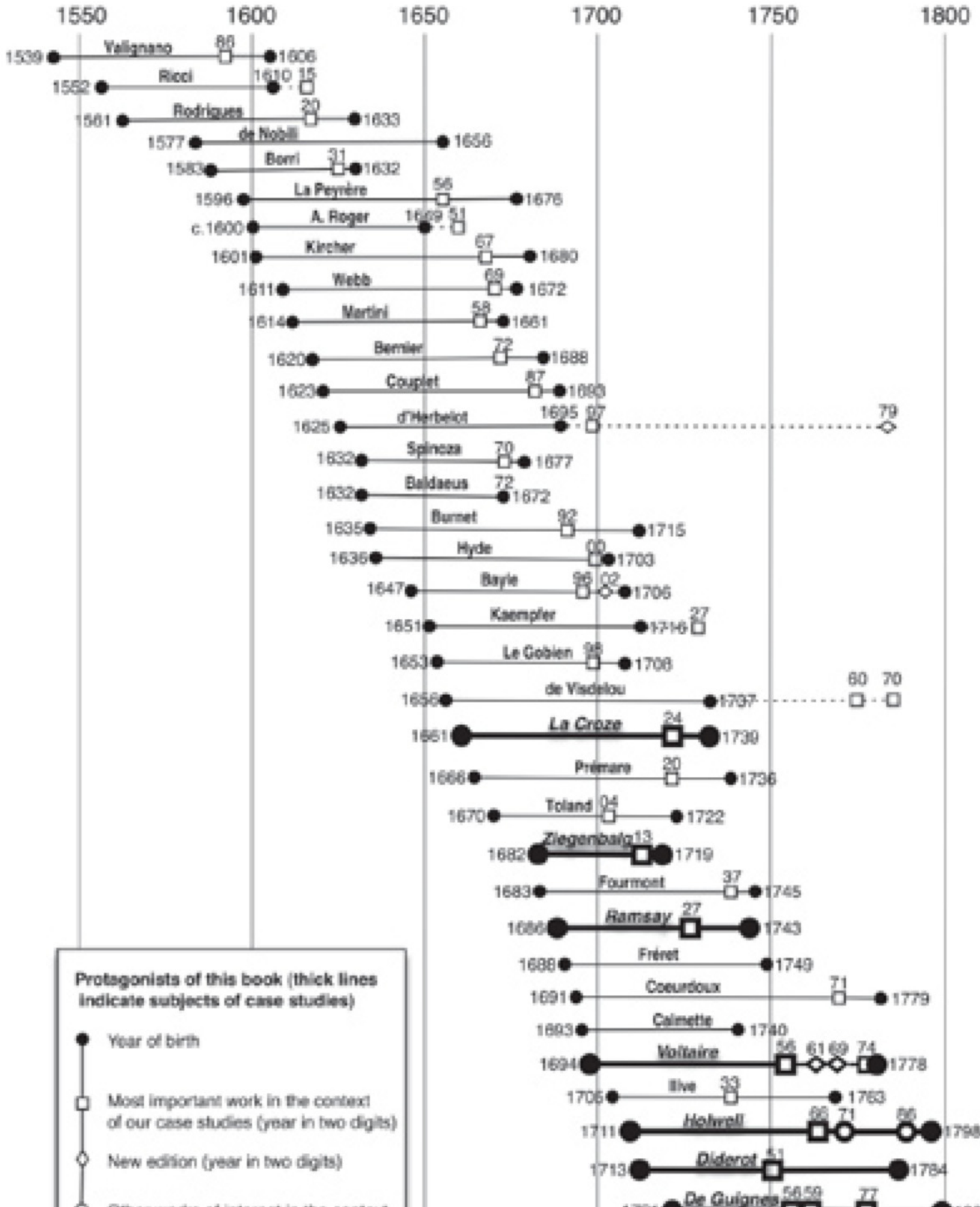
The initial publication presenting any portion of the “Orient” to the West was *CATECHISMUS CHRISTIANAE FIDEI* (Lisbon: Antonius Riberius). The Jesuit [Alessandro Valignano](#) had traveled from Goa to Macao and from there had ventured on 3 occasions to [Japan](#). He had brought back to Europe with him in this year the Japanese noblemen Itō Mansho, Miguel Chijiwa, Julião Nakaura, and Martinho Hara, along with some personal servants.

ORIENTALISM



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM



Protagonists of this book (thick lines indicate subjects of case studies)

- Year of birth
- Most important work in the context of our case studies (year in two digits)
- ◇ New edition (year in two digits)



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

1587



The Imperial [Chinese](#) bureaucracy disarmed the Wan-li emperor's personal bodyguard. Nominally, this was to prevent any rebels who broke in from overpowering the guards and using their weapons against the emperor or his family. In practice, it kept the Imperial Guard from becoming a Praetorian Guard. Gate guards, on the other hand, continued carrying weapons. There were also a few swords and firearms in the imperial chambers, that were kept for the amusement of the royal grandchildren.



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

1589

The West was beginning to learn about an Eastern temperance drink, [tea](#). A Venetian recorded that “The [Chinese](#) have an herb from which they press a delicate juice which serves them instead of [wine](#). It also preserves the health and frees them from all the evils that an immoderate use of wine doth breed in us.”

PLANTS

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





THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

1591

Toyotomi Hideyoshi reunified and pacified [Japan](#) and announced that his plan as shogun would include the invasion of the Philippines, [Korea](#), and [China](#) (Ming armies and Korean naval forces ultimately would scotch such ambitions and the primary result of them would be that the Satsuma and other smaller Japanese clans would be led into a greater reliance on firearms).

The Jesuits established the 1st printing press in [Japan](#).



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

1592

Toyotomi Hideyoshi tried to conquer [Korea](#) but was repelled by the [Chinese](#). From this year into 1598 Korea would be beating off invasions by [Japan](#). The desperate Korean government would institute a General Directorate for Military Training to transform peasants into musketeers, archers, and pikemen. This *Hullyon Togam* would derive its pedagogy came from the 1562 Chinese treatise NEW TEXT OF PRACTICAL TACTICS. An unintentional result would be the publication of some of the first detailed descriptions of the Korean martial arts, which at that point (unsurprisingly) emphasized fighting with weapons rather than fists and feet.

Meanwhile Jesuit priests were introducing Roman Catholicism into Korea. As these priests were chaplains for some Christian samurai, the Korean interest in their faith could only be characterized as minimal. Accordingly, the spread of Christianity into Korea would be deferred until the baptism of the scholar Yi Sunghun in 1784, and we may well note that the Christianity to which Yi would convert would be Chinese Catholicism rather than Roman Catholicism. This would be partly due to the unavailability of texts, but would be mainly due to the fact that Chinese Catholicism, which placed its emphasis upon redemption rather than upon the flames of punishment in Hell, was a better fit with the Korean culture.

In Kwangtung Province, north of [Canton](#), some Buddhist monks incited a gang of young toughs to stage an attack on the compound of the Jesuit priest Matteo Ricci. Their charge was that this foreigner kept mechanical clocks and other magical devices in his house and despite having no visible means of support, never ran short of money. The attackers, although armed with staves, ropes, and hatchets, were repelled.

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM**CHINA****1595**

The [Chinese](#) GREAT HERBAL, a massive work, took up the description of [ginseng](#) and published it in this year. This book is still used as a reference today. Many of the medicinal effects of the root are thought to be caused by ginsenosides which, at the molecular level, resemble steroids. Interestingly, a large amount of ginseng will not do more than a small amount.

**PLANTS**



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

1596

L. Shih Chen published *PEN TS'AO KANG MU*, the most well-known and praised of [Chinese](#) herbals.

This was a poor harvest year in Europe. Caspar Bauhin published a short notice on the [potato](#) *Solanum tuberosum*.

PLANTS

This was the 2d of the three so-called “dear years” of England, during which not only meat but even dairy products were in such low supply that they commanded such a price as to be entirely out of the reach of the poor.³⁴ In these years wheat flour would often need to be augmented by grinding and boiling the root of the cuckoopint, *Arum maculatum*, until even wheat would become too dear for regular consumption by the poor and the many would shift their menus in the direction of “Horsse corne, beanes, peason, otes, tare and lintels.”³⁵

IRELAND

34. A. Appleby, [FAMINE](#) IN TUDOR AND STUART ENGLAND (Stanford CA: Stanford UP, 1978), page 5.

35. J.C. Drummond and A. Wilbraham, *THE ENGLISHMAN'S FOOD: A HISTORY OF FIVE CENTURIES OF ENGLISH DIET* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1958), page 88.



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

1597

In [China](#), Xu Guangqi (1562-1633) failed the doctoral level of examination in the mandarin system of promotion, the *jinshi* exam. (He would be able to take the exam again, after further studies.)

Hiyedoshi of [Japan](#) invaded [Korea](#).



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

1598

At about this point several expeditions set out from the Netherlands to [China](#) and [Japan](#), by various routes. Pieter van den Hagen and Johan van der Veken sent out an expedition consisting of 5 ships and 494 men that was to reach the east by way of the Straits of Magelhaes (Magellan). The ships with their captains were: *Hoop* (“Hope”) under Captain Jacques Mahu, leader of the expedition; *Liefde* (“Love”) under Captain Simon de Cordes, the 2d-in-command; *Geloof* (“Belief”) under Captain Gerrit van Beuningen; *Trouwe* (“Faith”) under Captain Van Boekhout; and *Blijde Boodschap* (“Happy Message,” the Dutch translation of “Gospel”) under Captain Sebald de Weert.

Hideyoshi of [Japan](#) died after trying a 2d time to invade [Korea](#).

Xu Guangqi (1562-1633), who had failed in his 1st try at the doctoral level of examination in the mandarin system of promotion of [China](#), the *jinshi* exam, and was looking for a belief system that would supplement Confucianism (*Ruxue*)³⁶ while replacing Buddhism, accepted instruction by the Jesuit fathers in the Christian faith.

CHINESE CHRISTIANITY

36. Since Confucius himself had not claimed to be a creator, but merely a transmitter of traditional teachings, even to ascribe these teachings to him as we do in the West by using a form of his name is fundamentally un-Confucian. The word that is used in Chinese means merely “the teachings of the literati” and makes no explicit reference to Master K’ung.



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

1600



Shortly after meeting Matteo Ricci, Xu Guangqi (1562-1633), who had failed in his 1st try at the doctoral level of examination in the mandarin system of promotion in [China](#), the *jinshi* exam, and had accepted instruction by the Jesuit fathers in the Christian faith, had a dream in which there were 3 temples. The 1st of these temples was a shrine to God and the 2d to God's son, while the 3d was empty. After his training in Christianity, Xu would come to realize that the Sacred Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit had visited him in this vision.

CHINESE CHRISTIANITY



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

1601

In Nanjing, shortly after for a second time failing his final *jinshi* mandarin examination, Xu Guangqi saw a painting of the Madonna with Christ child and asked for Christian baptism. He would forecast that in [China](#) Christianity would be able to “supplement Confucianism and displace Buddhism” (*bu Ru yi Fo*).

CHINESE CHRISTIANITY

1602

Yang Tingyun (1557-1627) met Matteo Ricci in Beijing, [China](#), but at this initial contact was not particularly impressed by Christianity.

CHINESE CHRISTIANITY

The cornerstone of the Church of St. Paul in [Macau](#) was laid. (The church would burn in 1835, but the façade, as seen below, still survives.)



CHINESE CHRISTIANITY



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

1603

Fearing that they amounted to the advance guard of an invasion, the Spanish exterminated the 20,000 [Chinese](#) immigrants on the island of Luzon in the Philippines. Most of these people had been growing rice for Fukienese rice merchants. American cash and subsistence crops that had been introduced into south [China](#) as a result of their employment, however, had included [tobacco](#), hot peppers, and sweet potatoes.

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THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

1604

Spring: A new French attempt was made at the colonization of [Canada](#), by the [Huguenot](#) gentleman Pierre Dugua, Sieur de Mons, to whom a fur-trading monopoly had been granted. [Samuel de Champlain](#) and François Gravé or Pointgravé the Sieur du Pont went along on this one as well.



They sailed into the Bay of Fundy and landed at an islet on the southwest shore of Nova Scotia which they would name Port Royal. From this point Champlain would discover and name the “Isle des Monts Déserts.” The French, probably inspired by the Micmac name *aquoddy*, would call the region *L’Acadie*, meaning “place” or “region” but this “Acadia” had also an association with the honored name “Arcadia.” This trading post would persist until the French Catholic persecution of Huguenots began. From Champlain’s VOYAGES:

... a report had been made to the king on the fertility of the soil by him, and by me on the feasibility of discovering the passage to [China](#), without the inconveniences of the ice of the north or the heats of the torrid zone, through which our sailors pass twice in going and twice in returning, with inconceivable hardships and risks....

Champlain would map the east coast of North America from Canso to [Nantucket Island](#). He and Pierre de Monts would establish the 1st French settlement in North America at the mouth of the St. Croix River, the current boundary between [Maine](#) and the New Brunswick. Although it was close to both the Abenaki and Maliseet villages, the location proved a terrible choice, and the French would remain there only one winter.

CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

Frozen and flooded, half the party would die of scurvy, and in 1605 Champlain and the survivors would move across the Bay of Fundy to the Nova Scotia's Annapolis Basin. The new site was in Micmac territory and would become known as Port Royal. Although this gave the Micmac a definite advantage, the French continued to trade with the Abenaki, particularly the Penobscot. The Penobscot would prosper as a result, and their sachem Bashaba would be able to form a powerful alliance which would threaten the Micmac across the bay. The rivalry over the French fur trade would aggravate earlier animosities and by 1607 would escalate into the 8-year Tarrateen War between the Bashaba's Penobscot confederacy and the Micmac and their Maliseet allies.



CARTOGRAPHY

Here is some further text and context from [Samuel de Champlain's VOYAGES](#):



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

In the year 1496, the king of England commissioned [John Cabot](#) and his son [Sebastian](#) to engage in this search. About the same time, Don Emanuel, king of Portugal, despatched on the same errand Gaspar Cortereal, who returned without attaining his object. Resuming his journeys the year after, he died in the undertaking; as did also his brother Michel, who was prosecuting it perseveringly. In the years 1534 and 1535, Jacques Cartier received a like commission from King Francis I, but was arrested in his course. Six years after, Sieur de Roberval, having renewed it, sent Jean Alfonse of Saintonge farther northward along the coast of Labrador; but he returned as wise as the others. In the years 1576, 1577, and 1578, Sir Martin Frobisher, an Englishman, made three voyages along the northern coasts. Seven years later, Humphrey Gilbert, also an Englishman, set out with five ships, but suffered shipwreck on Sable Island, where three of his vessels were lost. In the same and two following years, John Davis, an Englishman, made three voyages for the same object; penetrating to the 72d degree, as far as a strait which is called at the present day by his name. After him, Captain Georges made also a voyage in 1590, but in consequence of the ice was compelled to return without having made any discovery. The Hollanders, on their part, had no more precise knowledge in the direction of Nova Zembla.

So many voyages and discoveries without result, and attended with so much hardship and expense, have caused us French in late years to attempt a permanent settlement in those lands which we call New France, in the hope of thus realizing more easily this object; since the voyage in search of the desired passage commences on the other side of the ocean, and is made along the coast of this region. These considerations had induced the Marquis de la Roche, in 1598, to take a commission from the king for making a settlement in the above region. With this object, he landed men and supplies on Sable Island; but, as the conditions which had been accorded to him by his Majesty were not fulfilled, he was obliged to abandon his undertaking, and leave his men there. A year after, Captain Chauvin accepted another commission to transport settlers to the same region; but, as this was shortly after revoked, he prosecuted the matter no farther.

After the above, notwithstanding all these accidents and disappointments, Sieur de Monts desired to attempt what had been given up in despair, and requested a commission for this purpose of his Majesty, being satisfied that the previous enterprises had failed because the undertakers of them had not received assistance, who had not succeeded, in one nor even two years' time, in making the acquaintance of the regions and people there, nor in finding harbors adapted for a settlement. He proposed to his Majesty a means for covering these expenses, without drawing any thing from the royal revenues; viz., by granting to him the monopoly of the fur-trade in this land. This having been granted to him, he made great and excessive outlays, and carried out with him a large number of men of various vocations. Upon his arrival, he caused the necessary number of habitations for his followers to be constructed. This expenditure he continued for three consecutive years, after which, in consequence of the jealousy and annoyance of certain Basque merchants, together with some from Brittany, the monopoly which had been granted to him was revoked by the Council to the great injury and loss of Sieur de Monts, who, in consequence of this revocation, was compelled to abandon his entire undertaking, sacrificing his labors and the outfit for his settlement.

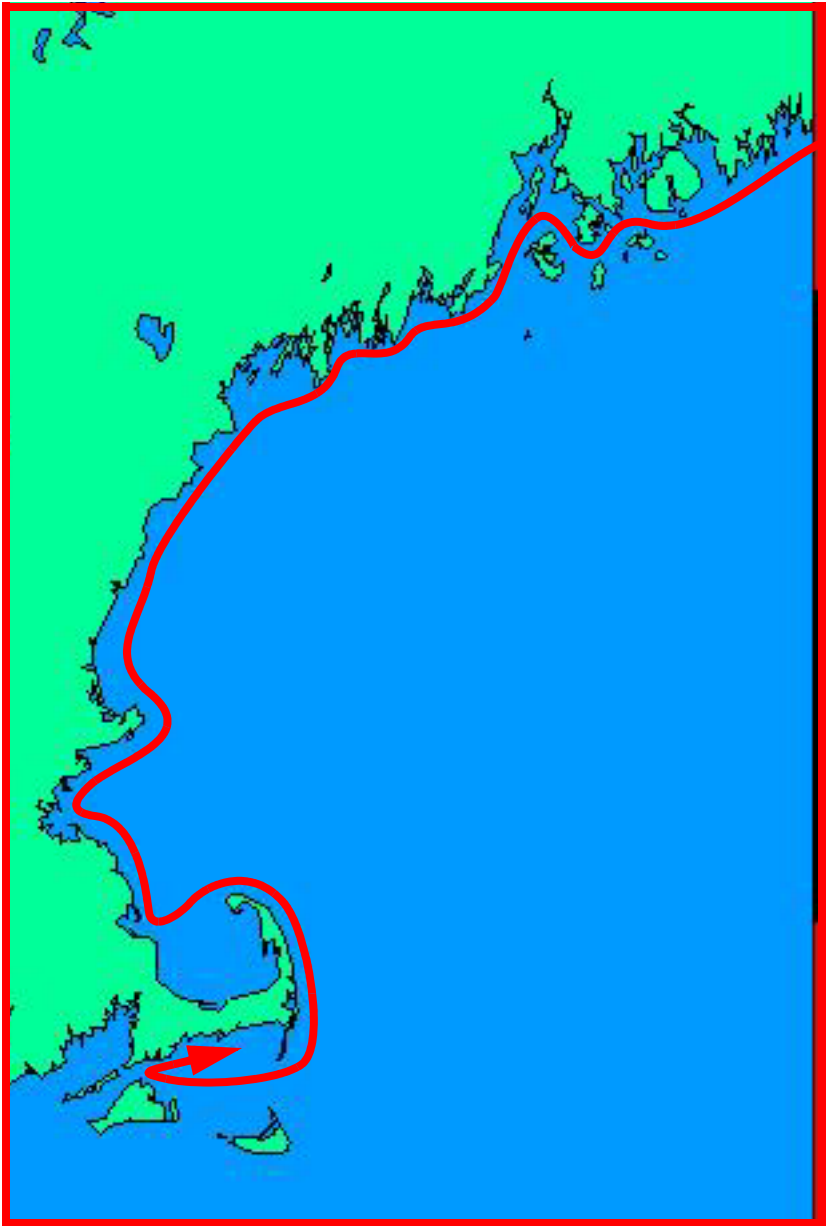
HDT

WHAT?

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THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

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But since, a report had been made to the king on the fertility of the soil by him, and by me on the feasibility of discovering the passage to [China](#), without the inconveniences of the ice of the north or the heats of the torrid zone, through which our sailors pass twice in going and twice in returning, with inconceivable hardships and risks, his Majesty directed Sieur de Monts to make a new outfit, and send men to continue what he had commenced. This he did. And, in view of the uncertainty of his commission, he chose a new spot for his settlement, in order to deprive jealous persons of any such distrust as they had previously conceived. He was also influenced by the hope of greater advantages in case of settling in the interior, where the people are civilized, and where it is easier to plant the Christian faith and establish such order as is necessary for the protection of a country, than along the sea-shore, where the savages generally dwell. From this course, he believed the king would derive an inestimable profit; for it is easy to suppose that Europeans will seek out this advantage rather than those of a jealous and intractable disposition to be found on the shores, and the barbarous tribes.



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

1605

A young [Chinese](#) Jew, Ngai, during a visit to the Jesuit missionary Matteo Ricci, declared that he worshiped one God, and on seeing at the mission a picture of the Virgin and child, supposed it to be a portrait of Rebecca with Esau or Jacob. He was of the [Jewish](#) community of K'ai-feng, capital of Ho-nan province, a community which consisted of but ten or twelve families that believed they had been there for five or six centuries. The synagogue (Li-pai-sze) building in K'ai-feng was oriented toward the east, and they had many books (some of which would be published in facsimile at Shanghai in 1851 CE). A [Chinese Christian](#) convert went to K'ai-feng and verified the details of this man Ngai's story. The Jewish community in K'ai-feng was also subsequently visited by the Italian Jesuit, Niccolo Longobardo (1565-1655 CE). One tablet at K'ai-feng alleges that a total of 70 Jewish families had arrived in [China](#) during the Sung dynasty (960 CE-1126 CE), and another tablet alleges that the very first arrivals had been via India and had occurred during the Chou dynasty (1122 BCE-955 BCE).

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

1609

Tea from China was shipped to Europe for the 1st time by the Dutch East India Company.

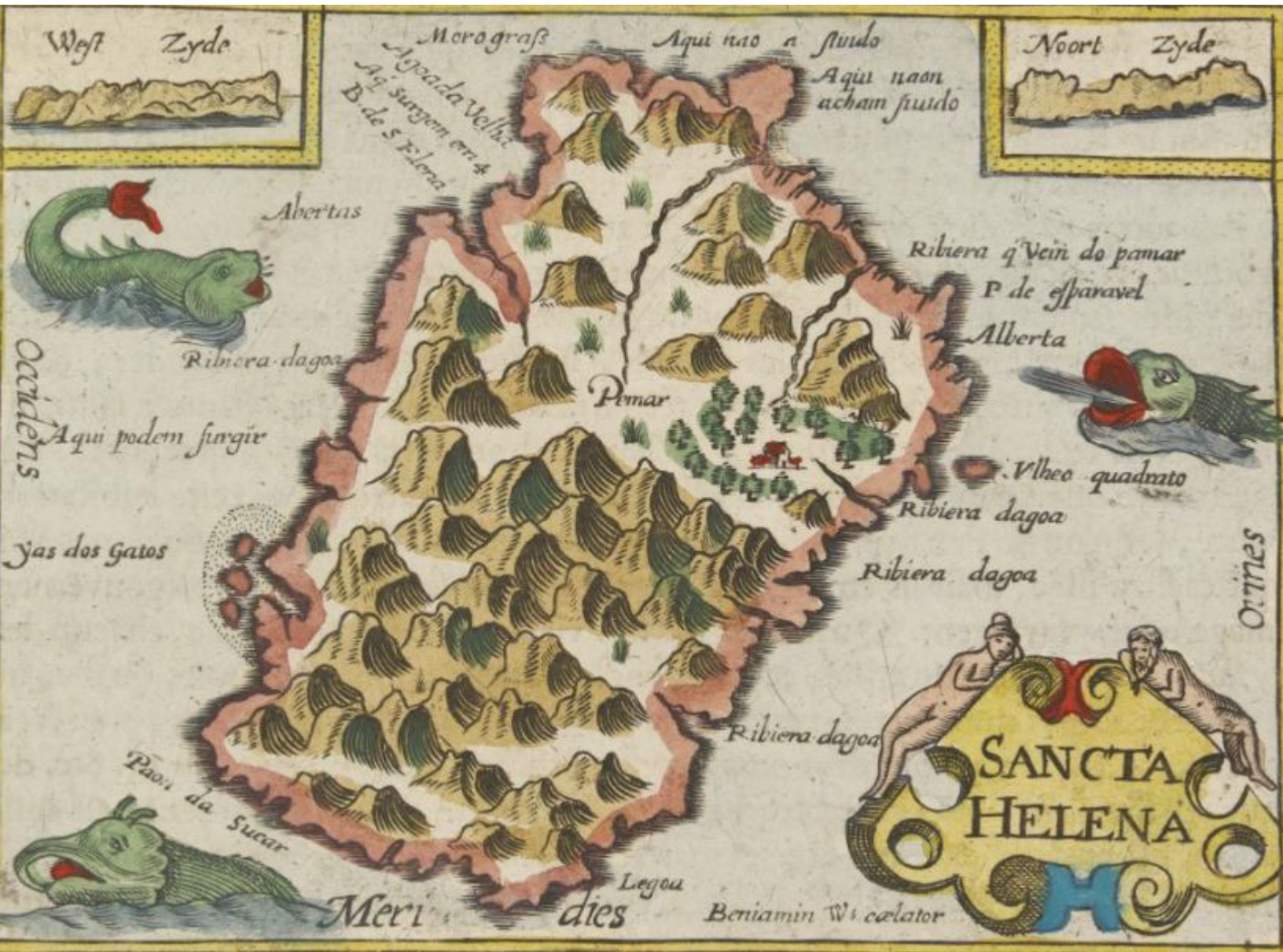
SPICE



Barent Langenes of Amsterdam presumably prepared the representation of St. Helena on the following screen from a Portuguese source:

CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM



Dutch and Swedish colonists were trading and farming along the Delaware River. It is not clear, however, that they had done anything as yet on the site that would become Philadelphia.

In his relentless search for a Northwest Passage to [China](#), [Henry Hudson](#) sailed his [Half Moon](#) into Delaware Bay. His explorations would contribute to the establishment of such colonies as the one to be designated "[Nieuw-Nederland](#)" (this Dutch colony would include not only what is now New York but also New Jersey and Delaware, down to the Delaware River which as its southern boundary would be termed "South River").



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

1610

It was at approximately this point that the 1st shipment of [Chinese tea](#) arrived in Holland (this suspicious vegetable substance would not arrive in England for another generation, in 1644).

By this year, huge [sugar cane](#) plantations in the province of Bahia, Brasil were being run by some 2,000 white settlers, assisted by some 4,000 black slaves and 7,000 red slaves.

PLANTS

Early in this year in [China](#), in Beijing, after an illness, Li Zhizao (1565-1630) put aside his concubine and allowed himself to be baptized in the Christian faith.

CHINESE CHRISTIANITY

May: In [China](#), Matteo Ricci died.



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

1611

The [Chinese](#) Christian Li Zhizao resigned from his official mandarin duties in Beijing and returned to his home in Hangzhou to care for his ailing father.

CHINESE CHRISTIANITY

In Hangzhou in [China](#), Yang Tingyun (1557-1627) was converted to Christianity by Jesuit fathers Lazzaro Cattaneo (1560-1640) and Nicolas Trigault (1577-1628). After he had sent his concubine, who had given him two sons, away to a separate dwelling, he was baptized.

CHINESE CHRISTIANITY



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

1612

March 12, Thursday (1611, Old Style): The 3d Virginia Charter. [Virginia](#) Governor Sir Thomas Dale enacted the Divine, Moral and Martial Laws, which provided [capital punishment](#) even for the pilfering of someone else's grapes, the killing of someone else's chickens — and, of course, it goes without saying, trading with the local natives.

READ ABOUT VIRGINIA

To help save the desperately struggling Jamestown settlement, [John Rolfe](#) (whose English wife and child had recently died in the New World) was experimenting with a crop of “tall [tobacco](#).”³⁷ Rolfe shunned the harsh product grown by the local Indians, *Nicotiana rustica* or “poke,” and somehow obtained seeds of the coveted *Nicotiana tabacum* strain then being grown in Trinidad and South America. Then [Pocahontas](#) (who, although

37. [Tobacco](#) is a pioneer species, and although the second crop on virgin land is better than the first, after four crops the land must be abandoned to crops such as maize that do not place such heavy demands upon the richness of the soil. Tobacco would be profitably grown only where there were vast quantities of virgin land to be wrested from nature and from the native Americans, and where great numbers of black slaves could be brought in from Africa to clear and plant these new fields and process the crop. Otherwise, white man, forget tobacco as a crop, because you're never going to become a rich planter and sit on the cool porch of a colonnaded mansion sipping mint juleps and whipping your darkies for fun — you're going to become, instead, a poor-white-trash tobacco grubber and chewer with a red neck living in an unpainted shack by the side of the road and swigging moonshine out of a Mason jar.

CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

young, already had a husband in her tribe) entered Rolfe's life. Relations with the natives had continually



plagued the settlers. While the Americans were holding several English captive, the colonists captured the chief's beloved young daughter, Pocahontas, in order to have an important hostage of their own. [John Smith's](#) later writings assure us that a few years earlier at the age of 12, Pocahontas had dramatically saved Smith from her father, the Powhattan's, wrath. The incident could more likely have been a ceremonial "saving," or nonexistent, but it is more verifiably established that in the early days she did indeed help the colony — with food or with warnings of attack. How much did Pocahontas know about tobacco? It is true that Powhattan women grew the food, while in a completely separate sector, in a sort of back area of the village, the men grew the tobacco. "Frisky," however, had a seemingly insatiable curiosity, and tended to roam where she wanted. It is likely she either already knew a great deal about tobacco cultivation, or knew how to get answers.

But, how did Pocahontas become a captive, a hostage? We can read what Sir Samuel Argall or Argoll wrote about his expedition to capture the princess Pocahontas and hold her for ransom in PURCHAS: HIS PILGRIMES (1625) Volume IV, page 1765, "A letter of Sir Samuel Argoll touching his Voyage to Virginia, and actions there. Written to Master Nicholas Hawes, June, 1613.":

Whilst I was in this business, I was told by certaine Indians, my friends, that the Great Powhatans Daughter Pokahuntis was with the great King Patowoneck, whether I presently repaired, resolving to possesse myselfe of her by any strategem that I

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

could use, for the ransoming of so many Englishmen as were prisoners with Powhatan; as also to get such armes and tooles, as hee, and other Indians had got by murther and stealing from others of our Nation, with some quantitie of corne, for the Colonies reliefe. . . . As soon as I had unladen this corne, I set my men to the felling of Timber, for the building of a Frigat, which I had left half finished at Point Comfort, the 19. of March: and returned myself with the ship into Pembrook [Potomac] River, and so discovered to the head of it, which is about 65 leagues into the Land, and navigable for any ship. And then marching into the Countrie, I found great store of Cattle as big as Kine [Eastern Wood Bison, *Bison bison pennsylvanicus*], of which the Indians that were my guides killed a couple, which we found to be very good and wholesome meate, and are very easie to be killed, in regard they are heavy, slow, and not so wild as other beasts of the wildernesses.

The dramatic success of the white settlers' tobacco crop is credited not only to Rolfe's importation of the Spanish strain, but to his finding better ways of growing and curing it, and we may only conjecture how much he was guided in this by Pocahontas. During captivity, the girl received daily bible lessons, and eventually converted to Christianity, her name becoming "Rebecca."



Jamestown would grow rich on [tobacco](#) and the import duties would alter King James I's attitude toward tobacco. In [China](#) in this year, however, an imperial edict forbade either the cultivation or the use of this plant.



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

1622

Governor Jan Pieterszoon Coen of the Dutch East India Company sent Cornelis Reijersen to attack [Macau](#) and build a fortress on the coast of Fujian. He kidnapped a number of [Chinese](#), but his attack was beaten off by the Portuguese, and he continued on to the Pescadores Islands. On Peng-hu, the main island of the Pescadores, he constructed a fort.

The Dutch from their strategic position on the Pescadores Islands were able to intercept most of Fujian's shipping. Cornelis van Nijenroode attacked the island of Gulangyu opposite Amoy, destroying buildings with cannon shot but failing to land his crew. Apparently impressed by the firepower of the Dutch ships, the Fujian provincial authorities initiated negotiations.



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

1623

February: After travelling for a month by foot from Amoy, Cornelis Reijersen reached Fuzhou for negotiations with the [Chinese](#). There Reijersen agreed to evacuate the fort on Peng-hu, but only with permission from Batavia, and again only if the Fujianese ceased trading with Manila. Significantly, at the meeting Governor Shang Zhouzo of Fujian provided the Dutch with a guide to take them to Formosa (Taiwan).



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

1624

Cheng Cheng-kung or Zheng Chenggong, who would be known to the Dutch as “Coxinga,” was born, son of Zheng Zhilong (known to the Dutch as “Iquan”), a local [pirate](#) in the service of the Dutch.

DO I HAVE YOUR ATTENTION? GOOD.

July: The Dutch having failed to keep their promise to evacuate the fort they had constructed on Peng-hu, new governor Nan Juyi set out to reconquer the Pescadores Islands by force. The [Chinese](#) landed at the northern end of Peng-hu out of range of the Dutch cannon, and besieged the fort. Marinus Sonck took over the command of the fort. Li Dan, head of the illegal Chinese traders on Taiwan, was selected as an intermediary by the Chinese and commissioned to convince the Dutch to withdraw.

August 25, Wednesday (Old Style): Marinus Sonck succumbed to [Chinese](#) demands and moved his contingent to Formosa (Taiwan), to erect there the factory of Fort Zeelandia. Since the Dutch would forbid Li Dan to trade with [Japan](#) and would monopolize the harbour, Li Dan and his sailors effectively became [pirates](#) in the Dutch service, attacking trade between [China](#) and Manila.



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

1627

The Reverend Georgius Candidius arrived on the island of Formosa (Taiwan) to preach among the people of the village of Sinkan — the only [Chinese](#) settlement close to Fort Hollandia with which the Dutch actually had contact.

Zheng Zhilong (known to the Dutch as “Iquan”), one of the local sea captains who had been serving as [pirates](#) in the service of the Dutch, shifted his allegiance to the [Chinese](#). After seeing off Simsou, he was promoted to the rank of admiral by the governor of Fujian and established for himself a monopoly on trade with the Dutch.



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

1629

July: Governor Pieter Nuyts launched an expedition against [Chinese](#) smugglers on the island of Mattau, only to discover that the smugglers were not at home. The Formosans (Taiwanese) attacked the Dutch, expelling them from Sinkan and burning their possessions.

August: Governor Pieter Nuyts was replaced by Pieter Putmans, who intended to extend Dutch interests to the rest of Formosa (Taiwan). Formosan (Taiwanese) fishermen traded local deerskins with [Chinese](#) traders for salt and iron tools. The deerskins could fetch a good price in [Japan](#). The Dutch hoped to be able to control this trade, so they could get taxation from it. Putmans also wanted to convert the Formosans (Taiwanese) to Christianity, and invited Chinese farmers to produce both food products and export products.



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

1633

Governor Pieter Putmans attempted to use force to open up trade with Amoy, just off the coast of [China](#), but was beaten off by Iquan.

In [Japan](#), the shogun Iemitsu forbade not only foreign travel but also the reading of foreign books.



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

1634

Regular trade with [China](#) was established though a monopoly by the [pirate](#) Zheng Zhilong and his traders.



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

1635

When Dutch reinforcements arrived on Formosa (Taiwan) from Batavia, military expeditions under the command of the Reverend Robertus Junius set out across the island.



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

1636

In [China](#), the beginning of the formation of the *Ch'ing* 清 Dynasty of Purity to supersede the current doomed *Ming* 明 Dynasty of Brightness. (The old dynasty would more or less persist into 1638, and the new one would achieve its consolidation in 1644.)

In Europe, the appearance of wooden [Flutes Allemand](#) having a new cylindrical bore, in the keys of D and G.

By this point all the villages of the southwestern plains of Formosa (Taiwan) had conceded to Dutch supremacy. Only the warriors of the nearby island of Lamey were still holding out, but they would be overcome with the help of Formosan allies. All villages that were conquered by the Dutch were being set up in a similar form of government, with a village council of village elders at the head. Dutch missionaries also got an important task in the villages: until the official officers would arrive, they were to be the Dutch power in the villages, and thus were responsible for collecting taxes and enforcing justice.

Governor Pieter Putmans instituted the renting of fields to [Chinese](#) workers. However, no Chinese actually settled on the island, since they were prohibited by the law of the Celestial Kingdom from residing for more than three years outside their nation. Many Formosans had by that time converted to Christianity.



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

1637

July 10, Monday (Old Style): Peter Mundy had himself a sip of “*a certain Drinke called Chaa ... which is only water with a kind of herbe boyled in itt. It must be Dranke warme and is accompted wholesome.*”

TEA
CHINA



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

1638

Becoming much more rigorous about [tobacco](#) than the Massachusetts Bay colony, the government of [China](#) forbade all distribution, possession, or use of such a narcotic substance.

The Ch'ing 清 Dynasty was intending to transform the Chinese into a regime of purity, and therefore the penalty for sale or possession or use of such an enslaving substance was going to be decapitation into the cabbage fragments and offal of the public marketplace.³⁸

HEADCHOPPING

DOPERS

38. Smoking would nevertheless spread within the imperial court, and the emperor would need again to reassert this decree in 1641. [Snuff](#), introduced by the Jesuits in the mid-17th century, soon however would become quite popular, from the court on down, and would remain so during much of the Qing dynasty, from this point until 1912.



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

1641

The shogun Iemitsu, who had previously restricted all interaction with foreigners to the single port of [Nagasaki](#), in this year banned all foreigners except the [Chinese](#) and Dutch.

The emperor of [China](#) again decreed, as he had ineffectually in 1638, that any person caught trafficking in [tobacco](#) was to be decapitated. This decree would prove ineffectual as smoking and the taking of [snuff](#) spread within the imperial court.

HEADCHOPPING

November 24, Wednesday-27, Saturday (Old Style): The Dutch (led by Governor Paulus Traudenius, accompanied by Junius) undertook a military expedition against various villages on Formosa (Taiwan), which extended their influence across the entire western plain. This started the second phase of the Dutch expansion there.



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

1642

January/February: The Dutch launched a punitive expedition against Tammacalauw on the east coast of Formosa (Taiwan).

August: Governor Paulus Traudenius captured (without any actual bloodshed) the Spanish fortress of San Salvador in Keelung on the island of Formosa (Taiwan), which had been established in 1626. The entire coastal plains of that island thus came under Dutch control (whereas the inhabitants of the Taiwanese mountain areas would remain free until in the 20th Century).



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

1644

The Manchu overlords revoked all existing bans on the smoking of [tobacco](#): [China](#) was to become the great smoking nation of Asia. The Jesuits would introduce [snuff](#).

CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

April: In [China](#), the end of the *Ming* 明 Dynasty of Brightness³⁹ as Mongol inheritors of the conqueror Nurhachi (1559-1626) took over the palace complexes of Beijing and, instituting their *Ch'ing* 清 Dynasty of Purity,⁴⁰ began their rule of the Central Kingdom (after 16 rulers including one that ruled twice, this older dynasty had simply collapsed from exhaustion).



From this point forward,⁴¹ the Mongol bannermen would control all military effort and at no point would any Han Chinese whatever his reputation for loyalty be permitted to raise troops — because a Han who could do this might be able to expel the Mongol overlord caste from the palace complexes by appeal to the race hatred and xenophobia of the masses.

39. Which had dated to 1368: 

40. Curiously, this Dynasty of Purity (*Ch'ing* 清) would begin the practices in South China which during the 20th Century have been inflicting on the world wave after wave of epidemics caused by flu viruses. Here is the manner in which this is now being explained by Professor Kennedy F. Shortridge, an Australian microbiologist at the University of [Hong Kong](#). China is the principal reservoir for [influenza](#), and southern China is the influenza epicenter, because aquatic birds are the principal hosts for influenza in nature and the duck has been domesticated since about 2500 BCE, its prime habitats involving annual migration between the lakes of far Siberia and the rice paddies of southern China. During the early years of the *Ch'ing* the Chinese peasants began keeping domesticated ducks in their rice paddies along with the wild migrating ducks, which would continually “seed” these domestic populations with viruses from the wild flocks. Although the ducks would consume the insects and crabs that were endemic in the rice paddies, they would not consume the rice. The humans lived in close proximity to both the ducks and the pigs, and the influenza viruses would move into the pigs as “mixing vessels,” become acclimated and genetically rearranged there, and then move on to infect the humans. Thus the swine flu epidemic of previous years — and thus the H5N1 epidemic that, as of 1997, killed thousands of chickens overnight in Hong Kong and caused such consternation at our Center for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta GA.

41. Until, that is, the desperate straits of the year 1862:

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

1646

The [pirate](#) Zheng Zhilong having been brought to Beijing by the Manchus as a captive, his son Cheng Chengkung or Zheng Chenggong, known to the Dutch as “Coxinga,” took control. Until 1658 he would be the de facto ruler of the southeastern part of [China](#), defying the Manchus in Beijing by pledging alliance to the superseded Ming dynasty.





THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

By 1675 there would be over 3,000 such [coffee](#) houses in England.

Rumor has it that the proprietor of this 1st coffee shop was a Jew from the Lebanon. Soon there would also be a similar outlet in Exeter in Devonshire, which would be being patronized by the spiritual descendants of [Walter Raleigh](#) not only for the consumption of the beverage from Arabia but also for the “drinking” of the smoke from the burning of the leaves of a plant from America, the [tobacco](#). Although many [coffee](#) houses would also serve [beer](#) and [wine](#), the spread of [coffee](#) use in Europe’s rapidly growing cities would be facilitated by growing resentment against the effects of [alcohol](#) and the need for a center for sober social intercourse and intellectual discussions. In general, [tobacco](#) use would begin among the upper classes and aristocrats and then, as prices declined, be copied by the lower and middle classes.

HOWEVER, HISTORY’S NOT MADE OF WOULD. WHEN SOMEONE REVEALS AS OF THE YEAR 1630, FOR INSTANCE, AS ABOVE, THAT USE WOULD BE EXPANDING AMONG THE CLASSES AS PRICES DECLINED, S/ HE DISCLOSES THAT WHAT IS BEING CRAFTED IS NOT REALITY BUT PREDESTINARIANISM. AT THIS POINT PRICES HAVE NOT YET DECLINED, AND THE RULE OF REALITY IS THAT THE FUTURE HASN’T EVER HAPPENED, YET.

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CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

1652

September 8, Wednesday (Old Style): The Jesuit Martino Martini had brought to Batavia the terrifying news that the [pirate](#) Cheng Cheng-kung or Zheng Chenggong, known to the Dutch as “Coxinga,” was planning to attack Zeelandia. On this day a ship sent by Governor-General Johan Maetsuyker arrived at Formosa (Taiwan) to warn governor Nicolaes Verburch, but was a day too late as the local peasants, led by Guo Haiyi (known to the Dutch as Fayet), revolted, and the [Chinese](#) captured the Dutch hamlet of Provintia.



September 9, Thursday (Old Style): The Dutch and their Formosan allies counter-attacked at the Dutch hamlet of Provintia on Formosa (Taiwan), and three days later the [Chinese](#) would flee from the area. In all, 4,000 farmers would be killed in the fighting. Fort Provintia would then be established near Saccam to maintain Dutch control of the Chinese population.



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

1655

Cheng Cheng-kung or Zheng Chenggong, known to the Dutch as “Coxinga,” angry that the Dutch had sent an embassy to the Manchu government of [China](#) in Beijing, forbade Fujian to trade with Formosa (Taiwan).



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

1657

By this point Governor Frederick Coyet, through intermediation of the [Chinese](#) interpreter Pinqua, had managed to obtain remission of the embargo against Fujian trade with Formosa (Taiwan).

Bags of “tay” were first offered for sale at Garway’s Coffee House in [London](#). The bags were made of a “Hessian” fabric, and all anyone there knew of the provenance of their contents was that such bags of vegetable substance were being made available to Portuguese and Dutch traders, in Canton.

TEA
CHINA

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THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

1658

During this year and the following one, the war in Fujian between the Manchu and Cheng Cheng-kung or Zheng Chenggong, known to the Dutch as the pirate “Coxinga,” would cause large numbers of refugees to flee to the relative safety of Formosa (Taiwan). Governor Frederick Coyet would subsequently discover that Pinqua was secretly levying taxes in the name of the former [pirate](#) and send a ship to Batavia, requesting help in an anticipated invasion by this “Coxinga.” Although his fears were not entirely supported by the authorities, a ship with soldiers commanded by Jan van der Laan would be despatched with instructions that if their protection turned out not to be needed on Formosa they were to alter course and attack Portuguese [Macau](#).



An advertisement for tea appeared in a [London](#) journal: “That excellent and by all Physicians approved [China](#) Drink called by the Chineans Tcha, by other nations Tay, alias [Tea](#), is sold at the Sultaness Head, a cophee-house in Sweetings Rents, by the Royal Exchange, London.”

1660

Isaac Vossius pointed out that since [Chinese](#) records went back to 2,900 BCE, the Biblical chronology accepted in Europe could only be in error.

September: Jan van der Laan arrived in Formosa (Taiwan) but, finding the situation stable, and unable to receive help in a campaign against [Macau](#), returned to Batavia. As a result of Van der Laan's complaints against Governor Frederick Coyet a new governor, Herman Klenke van Odessa, was appointed. In the meantime, Cheng Chengkung or Zheng Chenggong, or "Coxinga," had landed on Formosa with 25,000 men and, using Pinqua's knowledge of the local situation, cut off Fort Zeelandia from the rest of the island. The Dutch surrendered Proventia to Coxinga, and withdrew to Zeelandia, their last stronghold. Klenke van Odessa left Batavia for Taiwan, but on arrival was unable to land, and returned to Batavia by way of Japan. News had in the meantime reached Batavia of the plight of the Dutch on Formosa, and a military force under Jacob Cauw was dispatched to the island. However, his landing was delayed by a typhoon for a month, giving Coxinga time to prepare for the attack. Cauw left Taiwan, claiming he went to Fujian on the coast of [China](#) to get help from the Manchu empire of the mainland, but in reality setting course for Siam.



September 25, Tuesday (Old Style): [Maidstone](#) residents were advised that none of the recently-purchased high land at Montauk Point called Meantaquit (Mantack, Meantaucutt, Meantucket, Meantauk, or Munnawtawkit) was to be resold to outsiders, on pain of a fine of £30.

In [London](#), [Samuel Pepys](#) had his 1st cup of [tea](#):

"I did send for a Cupp of Tee (a [China](#) drink) of which I never had drank before."

THIS DAY IN PEPYS'S DIARY



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

1661

From this year into 1722, the reign of the Kangxi emperor; [Chinese](#) territory extended and books and scholarship developed.

1662

The 1st Western translation of a Confucian work into Latin. During the Enlightenment there would be considerable enthusiasm in Europe for [Chinese](#) thought.

CONFUCIUS

LIGHT FROM CHINA

February 1, Saturday (1661, Old Style): Governor Frederick Coyet surrendered to Cheng Cheng-kung or Zheng Chenggong, known to the Dutch as “Coxinga,” thus ending the Dutch period on Formosa (Taiwan).



The Dutch began to send fleets under Balthazar Bort to [China](#) to help the Manchu in their war against Coxinga, and they would be able to capture Amoy. Despite his defeat in Fuqian, Coxinga would remain in control on Formosa (Taiwan). This fighting would be going on until 1665.

CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

1664

November 24, Thursday (Old Style): [Samuel Pepys](#) had his 1st cup of “jocolatte” at a [coffee](#)-house (perhaps ordered by a richer man than he, as at this point it was still exceedingly expensive). He pronounced the beverage very good.

CHOCOLATE



THIS DAY IN PEPYS'S DIARY

(Pepys had already tried [tea](#). In the course of this year a sum total of 2 pounds and 2 ounces of these dried leaves would be being imported to England from [China](#). During this year, also, the Dutch were in the process of forcing the king of Thailand to grant them a monopoly over deerskin exports and over seaborne trade with [China](#).)

[John Evelyn](#)'s diary entry for this day was in part as follows:

John Evelyn's Diary

His Majestie was pleasd to tell me what the conference was with the Holland Ambassador which (as after I found) [was part of] the heads of the Speech he made at the reconvention of the Parliament, which now began: 24: I dined with the Commissioners for Sick & Wounded, & sate at Painters hall:



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

1666

The local feudal lord of Iga Province on the island of Honshu died, leaving the *samurai* [Matsuo Chūemon Munefusa](#) ([Bashō](#)) at the age of 22 in the status of a *ronin*, or warrior without a legitimate reason to threaten anyone.⁴² The young man moved to Edo, then the largest city in the Japanese islands and on its way to becoming in the next century not only the capital (under the name “[Tokyo](#)”) but also, at better than one million inhabitants, the largest city in the world. He there studied the Japanese and [Chinese](#) classics at a monastery in [Kyoto](#) and devoted himself to linked *renga* and to a 17-syllable *haikai* format which was at that time a popular literary pastime.⁴³

42. We are no doubt familiar with this predicament from countless *ronin* movies and spaghetti westerns.

43. Some of us may be familiar with that sort of pastime as the slum amusement known as “doing the numbers.”



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

1667

In London, the wife of Samuel Pepys had her 1st cup of “tee.”

CHINA
TEA



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

1668

March 18, Wednesday (1667, Old Style): Observers in [China](#) noted that the tail of the great [comet](#) of this year was stretching over 40 degrees across the constellation of Eridanus.

SKY EVENT

"Nothing was more common, in those days, than to interpret all meteoric appearances, and other natural phenomena that occurred with less regularity than the rise and set of sun and moon, as so many revelations from a supernatural source. Thus, a blazing spear, a sword of flame, a bow, or a sheaf of arrows seen in the midnight sky, prefigured Indian warfare. Pestilence was known to have been foreboded by a shower of crimson light. We doubt whether any marked event, for good or evil, ever befell New England, from its settlement down to revolutionary times, of which the inhabitants had not been previously warned by some spectacle of its nature. Not seldom, it had been seen by multitudes. Oftener, however, its credibility rested on the faith of some lonely eye-witness, who beheld the wonder through the coloured, magnifying, and distorted medium of his imagination, and shaped it more distinctly in his after-thought. It was, indeed, a majestic idea that the destiny of nations should be revealed, in these awful hieroglyphics, on the cope of heaven. A scroll so wide might not be deemed too expensive for Providence to write a people's doom upon. The belief was a favourite one with our forefathers, as betokening that their infant commonwealth was under a celestial guardianship of peculiar intimacy and strictness."

— [Nathaniel Hawthorne](#), THE SCARLET LETTER





CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

1669

Western ships were purchasing cases of [Chinese tea](#) in Java, where it had begun to be cultivated as in [Japan](#) and on the island of Formosa (Taiwan).



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

1671

Ch'en Yüan-pin, a potter from [China](#), died in Nagoya, [Japan](#). Ch'en had been one who had always enjoyed the martial arts, and evidently his discussions with three ronin named Fukuno Hichiroemon, Isogai Jirozaemon, and Miura Yojiemon would have significant impact on the development of jujutsu and related Japanese martial arts. Ch'en had also traveled through the Ryukyu Islands, and while there he had reportedly published a secret boxing text. On this basis it has been suggested that he had influenced the Okinawan royal martial art called Motobu Ryu Udun-di.

In about this year a [Chinese](#) dramatist, P'u Sung-ling, authored a pleasant fantasy about T'sui Meng and his friend Li Shen who delighted in using boxing, stick-fighting, and firearms to rectify injustices. Such a Chinese fantasy was more pleasant than the Chinese reality, for in this year two Shantung headmen named Hu attempted to testify against a corrupt landlord named Liu, and thug broke their legs.



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

1680

At about this point what is arguably the world's 1st rolling panorama was painted by Wang Hui (1632-1717). When completely unrolled, this painting stretches 53 feet. It is the *Wen Li Chang Jiang — The Ten Thousand Li Yangtze*. It fancifully depicts the entire length of by far the longest river in [China](#), which when measured in accordance with standardized railroad units of measure stretches 9,200 li (3,964 miles) from the 18,000-foot plateau of the sources of the Jinsha Jiang north of Lhasa, [Tibet](#) down past Kuming and Chongqing and Wuhan and Nanjing to the East China Sea at what eventually would be an entire new city to be known as Shanghai. One-twelfth of the human population of this planet lives off this one river basin. The panorama is presently held by Wan-go Weng of Hanover NH, a hydrologist, who removed it from China via Shanghai and a President Lines freighter during the 1949 struggle between the Chinese Communists and the Kuomintang (refer to Simon Winchester's *THE RIVER AT THE CENTRE OF THE WORLD: A JOURNEY UP THE YANGTZE, AND BACK IN CHINESE TIME*, NY: Henry Holt, 1997).

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

1683

Taiwan (Formosa, the “shapely island”) became again Manchu [Chinese](#) territory after the final defeat of Cheng Cheng-kung or Zheng Chenggong, a former [pirate](#) in the Dutch service who had been known to the Westerners merely as “Coxinga.”





CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

1686

The English began purchasing [tea](#) directly, in Canton. Since the commodity was so light, the tea clippers would need to carry lots of ballast, and so they would fill their holds with heavy Chinese pottery and porcelain before stowing the valuable boxes and bales of tea on top. This sort of “[China](#)” ballast was known as “kentledge,” and it would enable the passion for Chinoiserie in England and America.⁴⁴

Benjamin Harris came from England and opened, at the center of downtown [Boston](#) a “[Coffee](#), [Tea](#) and Chucalitto House, by the Town-Pump near the Change.”

CHOCOLATE

The Reverend [John Ray](#), in his *HISTORIA PLANTARUM* (to be published in volume after volume until 1704) was arriving at an early natural grouping of plants arrived at through looking at their many different characteristics. His study would deal with plants worldwide, establish much of our modern [botanical](#) terminology and summarize the current state of botanical knowledge. His definition of species was quite modern: “each produces only its own kind; one must distinguish between essential, accidental, and environmental characters.” The Reverend’s summary of plant physiology was so thorough that he could be as considered the founder of that field.

PLANTS

44. What, did you suppose that it made good economic sense to transport a heavy and fragile commodity such as pottery halfway around the world rather than manufacture it at home where there would be lesser haulage charges and significantly lower amounts of breakage? No, in fact the pottery was being subsidized by the tea: its weight was what held those sailing ships upright in the water.



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

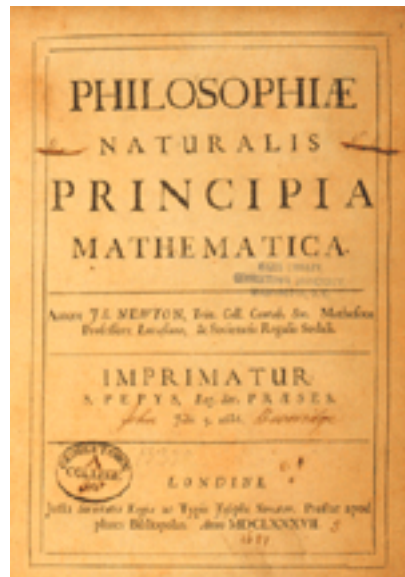
1687

Publication, in Paris, of some of the classical texts of [Confucius](#), later known as the ANALECTS, in Latin translation, under the title *CONFUCIUS SINARUM PHILOSOPHUS*, with a dedication to King Louis XIV thanking him for his help. One of the Jesuit editors of the book, Philippe Couplet, had recently returned from [China](#), bringing along a young Chinese convert to Christianity he had assigned the name of Michael Shen. Couplet had taken Shen to Versailles for an audience with the Sun King in 1684. Michael gave King Louis a demonstration of the use of chopsticks (eating off one of the king's golden plates). –Since a copy would be in the library of Bronson Alcott at the time of his death, it is quite likely that Thoreau would have accessed it.

CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

Edmond Halley corrected the proofs of Sir Isaac Newton's PRINCIPIA MATHEMATICA, which stated the law of universal gravitation that would make possible long-range eclipse prediction (he failed to catch one blunder).



ASTRONOMY

(Newton's 1st Law of Motion already had been obvious to Chinese physicists of the 3rd Century — that's the 3rd Century BCE, by the way.)

DO I HAVE YOUR ATTENTION? GOOD.



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

1689

The Dutch, having sent a few more trading embassies to Beijing, had by this point given up hope of direct trade with [China](#), and were relying for such trade on [Chinese](#) merchants operating into Batavia.



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

1691

Publication of an anonymous French treatise, translated into English by R.F. Prospero Intorcetta and Father Couplet as THE MORALS OF [CONFUCIUS](#), A CHINESE PHILOSOPHER. This would likely be the sort of version that college student [David Henry Thoreau](#) would initially encounter as he entered upon his period of learning about non-Western literatures. (At about the same period, *CONFUCIUS SINARUM PHILOSOPHUS*, that had been published in 1687 in Latin, was becoming available in English.)

Goldfish (*Cyprinus auratus*) were introduced into England from the Sea of [China](#).



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

1692

At about this point Kung Hsiang-chun, supposedly a Ming official, introduced a form of [Chinese](#) boxing to Okinawa (the present Shorin Ryu kata kusanku commemorates his instruction). Rather than actually having been a Ming official, however, it is likely that this man was a mere smuggler from Taiwan, or something like that — because actually, on the mainland, some four decades earlier the Mings had been replaced by the Ch'ings!



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

1694

[Everard Ysbrants Ides](#) was traveling in [China](#), on a journey that had begun in Moscow on a sledge on March 14, 1692 and would be completed on January 1, 1695 — by entering Moscow on a sledge. *DRIEJAARIGE REIZE NAAR CHINA* would be his only work as an author, and was based on some notes in Low German that he sent to Nicolaes Witsen, who would translate the material into Dutch and arrange it for publication by Francois Halm at Halma in 1704. The final portion of this publication was not authored by Ides but consisted of a general text by a Chinese writer, Dionysius Kao's A GEOGRAPHICAL DESCRIPTION OF THE EXTENSIVE EMPIRE OF CHINA, found by Ides during his journey and brought home with him. Here are the pages, out of A NEW UNIVERSAL COLLECTION OF AUTHENTIC AND ENTERTAINING VOYAGES AND TRAVELS, FROM THE EARLIEST ACCOUNTS TO THE PRESENT TIME, printed in 1768, that pertain to that journey.

[MOSCOW/CHINA/MOSCOW](#)

(Here, also, is the complete text of that sourcebook.)

[PERUSE THE ENTIRE BOOK!](#)

HDT

WHAT?

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THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

Engraved for Drakes Voyages



The Famous Water Castle at Canton in China.



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

1697

Leibnitz's *NOVISSIMA SINICA*. Picking up on the binary math that lay behind the 64 hexagrams of the *I CHING*, G.W. von Leibnitz hoped that [China](#) might become a key player in the internationalization of the scientific fraternity.



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

1699

J. Bouvet's *HISTOIRE DE L'EMPEREUR DE LA CHINE*.

CHINA

Gunung Awu, the volcano towering over the [spice island](#) of Banda Neira, again erupted.

1700

The state [opium](#) monopoly of the Moghul empire began to collapse. After a brief period of recreational use by the upper classes, however, the practice would soon fall into disrepute. Opium smoking was simply not destined to become the problem in [India](#) which it would become in [China](#).



In [Japan](#), Kabuki and ukiyo-e become popular.

The smoking of [tobacco/opium](#) mixtures, leading to the recreational smoking of [opium](#) by itself, was spreading from the East Indies to Formosa, Fukien, and the South China coast. At this point [China](#) began to recognize that a problem was developing in regard to this overuse of [opium](#).

Opposition in Western Europe to the use of [tobacco](#) declined as by this point all classes were smoking. The French upper classes substituted the use of [snuff](#) for smoking. Spreading from France, snufftaking was becoming fashionable among the nobility and clergy. Courtiers returning from France introduced snufftaking into England.

By this point in [China](#), [tobacco](#) cultivation and the use of [snuff](#) among the aristocracy were firmly established.

CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

Establishment of the Berlin Society of Sciences, with the involvement of Herr Professor G.W. von Leibnitz, one of its prime agendas being the "Opening up of China and the interchange of civilizations between China and Europe." Another of the projects of this group would be the exploration of a land route through Russia to [China](#), later to become the Trans-Siberian Railroad.

- 1687 The palace of Versailles, near Paris, finished by Louis XIV.
- 1688 The Revolution in Great Britain begins; November 5, King James abdicates; and retires to France, December 3.
- 1689 King William and Queen Mary, daughter and son-in-law to James, are proclaimed, February 16.
- Viscount Dundee stands out for James in Scotland, but is killed by general Mackey, at the battle of Killycrankie; upon which the Highlanders, wearied with repeated misfortunes, disperse.
- The land-tax passed in England.
- The toleration act passed in ditto.
- Several bishops are deprived for not taking the oath to king William.
- William Fuller, who pretended to prove the prince of Wales spurious, was voted by the commons to be a notorious cheat, impostor, and false accuser.
- 1690 The battle of the Boyne gained by William against James in Ireland.
- 1691 The war in Ireland finished by the surrender of Limerick to William.
- 1692 The English and Dutch fleets, commanded by admiral Russel, defeat the French fleet off La Hogue.
- 1693 Bayonets at the end of loaded muskets first used by the French against the Confederates in the battle of Turin.
- The duchy of Hanover made the ninth electorate.
- Bank of England established by king William.
- The first public lottery was drawn this year.
- Massacre of Highlanders at Glenco, by king William's troops.
- 1694 Queen Mary dies at the age of 33, and William reigns alone.
- Stamp duties instituted in England.
- 1696 The peace of Ryswick.
- 1699 The Scots settled a colony at the isthmus of Darien, in America, and called it Caledonia.
- 1700 Charles XII. of Sweden begins his reign.



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

1704

A decision was reached in the Papal city in [Rome](#) to condemn Confucian and Buddhist rites as heathen. This decision would be one ingredient of a cultural mix which would make Christians in [China](#) utterly intolerant of their neighbors, and would thus set up their *Tai-p'ing T'ien-kuo* or [Christian](#) “Central Kingdom of Great Peace” of the mid-19th Century in South China to indulge in what would become if not the longest then for sure the bloodiest civil war in the history of the world⁴⁵ — and then be utterly extirpated to the point at which today it is not even **remembered** that once upon a time there were large and influential groups of Christians in China.⁴⁶

45. The US civil war would last maybe 5 years, from 1860 into 1865, while this Taiping civil war would last 14 years, from 1850 into 1864, the Muslim rebellion in the northwest of China 16 years, from 1862 into 1878, the Nien rebellion 17 years, from 1851 into 1868, and the “Panthay” rebellion in Yunnan 18 years, from 1855 into 1873. This won't be the longest civil war on record even if it will be far longer than our own civil war — it will only be by far the bloodiest at a body count of some 25 million souls.

46. The usual story which is told, of course, is that Westerners are tolerant but Easterners intolerant. The usual story which is told, of course, is that the superstitious and chauvinist Chinese closed themselves off against us as mere foreign devils. Nobody remembers that the very first thing that happened was, that we issued a blanket condemnation of anything and everything which they happened to regard as of significance. Note carefully that both the Chinese Communists of the PRC (People's Republic of China, on the mainland) and the Chinese Nationalists of the ROC (Republic of China, on Taiwan) claim to have originated in this *Tai-p'ing* nativist resistance movement against the Manchu overlords in Beijing.





CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

1713

Herr Professor G.W. von Leibnitz's DISCOURSE ON THE NATURAL THEOLOGY [PHILOSOPHY?] OF CHINA. (It was probably Leibnitz who coined the term *philosophia perennis*, standing for the least common denominator of all philosophy, religion, and mysticism. This is the stuff we keep coming back to, in philosophy after philosophy, in religion after religion, because it is basic stuff or true stuff or relevant stuff or necessary stuff or rational stuff or something. Combine this attitude with the attitude that we need no more religion than is absolutely unavoidable, and what you get is Universalism. Combine this attitude with the attitude that whatever varies from culture to culture is irrelevant and unnecessary, and what you get is the videotapes of Joseph Campbell about universal primal mythology.)⁴⁷

47. In my raw youth I, Austin Meredith, was tempted by the colorfulness of this sort of stuff. Fortunately, afterward, I have grown less youthful and less raw.



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

1714

Alexander Pope's TEMPLE OF FAME:

“Superior and alone, [Confucius](#) stood
Who taught that useful science, — to be good.”⁴⁸

孔子
CONFUCIUS

CHINA


LIGHT FROM CHINA



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

1715

The decision which had been taken in the Papal city in [Rome](#) in 1704,  that the Confucian and Buddhist rites were mere heathenism, at this point was brought to the attention of the [Chinese](#) themselves. This would be one of the influences by which Confucians and Buddhists in China would become utterly intolerant of their Chinese Christians, known contemptuously as Longhairs, and would thus determine to exterminate the [Christian](#) *Tai-p'ing T'ien-kuo* or “Central Kingdom of Great Peace” of the mid-19th Century in South China in what would become the longest and bloodiest civil war in the history of the world.⁴⁹

49. This cultural extirpation would be so complete that today it is not even remembered, in Christendom, that once upon a time there had been large and influential groups of Christians in China.



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

1716

The *Kangxi Dictionary* (*Kangxi Zidian*) was published in [China](#) in this year as had been ordered in 1710 by the Manchu *Qing* Dynasty Emperor *Kangxi*. The dictionary included more than 47,000 entries, with its Chinese characters ordered under 214 radicals in traditional *fanqie* spelling.⁵⁰ Kangxi sent troops to expel the Junkar people from [Tibet](#); in 1720 Kangxi would enthrone the 7th Dalai Lama as his tributary ruler over Tibet.

50. Robert Cawdrey's *A TABLE ALPHABETICALL*, the first English dictionary, was written in 1604.

1717

The root of the American *Panax quinquefolium* was first exported to [China](#), where its value became well understood and highly appreciated. The trade in American [ginseng](#) would soon become one of [Canada](#)'s largest agricultural commodities, 2d only to the Canadian fur trade!





THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

1718

The [tea](#) of [India](#) began to make its way slowly into the favor and usage of the more well-off sector of the American community. A claim has been made, that the original tea plants of India were transported there by the British from upland [China](#), down the Yangtze River in closely glazed cases known by the name of the man who had devised them, Dr. Nathaniel Bagshaw Ward of London:

Literally millions of plants were ferried to and fro in Wardian cases, they eventually succeeded in establishing tea as a cash-crop in India (from China). — Lynn Barber, *THE HEYDAY OF NATURAL HISTORY* (1980)

I very much doubt this, as the *Camilla sinensis* was already abundantly present in the hills of Assam in the form of immense mature trees, and as it is very difficult to prevent plants in closed glass cases from becoming overheated in the sun during transportation. The difficulties of bulk transport of tea seedlings in glass cases from the hills of central China by sailing junk down a turbulent river to the ocean and across tropic seas are difficulties which seem to me to be self-evident.



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

1720

Because of an invitation from the 7th Dalai Lama, the Manchu emperor was able to station Chinese troops in Lhasa, [Tibet](#), thus gaining to [China](#) the opportunity to forever claim Tibet as a Chinese protectorate.



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

1721

Christian Wolff, one of Herr Professor G.W. von Leibnitz's students, lectured at the University of Halle on the natural morality of [Confucius](#), a morality he found to be based not upon any revelation but upon the light of unaided reason, just as available to those of the yellow persuasion in [China](#) as to those of the white persuasion in Europe. This professor would be dismissed from his post and banished from Prussia, then reinstated.



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

1722

From this year after the death of Kangxi until 1735, the rule of [Manchu](#) emperor Yongzheng:
Treaty of Kiakhta would be signed with Russia; Siberian-Mongolian border would be defined.



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

1725

The *Gujin tushu jicheng*, in 10,000 chapters the largest encyclopaedia ever printed, was commissioned by the Qing emperor of [China](#), Yongzheng.



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

1729

The [Chinese](#) governmental monopoly on [opium](#) restricted its recreational use to the very well-to-do. This drug was not going to become a public problem in the Central Kingdom for so long as the Chinese had any control over their own internal situation. (This ban on importation would be seriously compromised by the British East India Company until 1839. Eventually, growing, supplying, or even smoking this drug would be made, in China, capital offenses.)

Yongzheng set up his Grand Council, an informal and flexible body of military advisers.

The British Parliament passed the first [Gin](#) Act, the high duties of which would result in the production of bad, bootlegged gin, prompting widespread protests.



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

1730

Matthew Tindal alleged in *CHRISTIANITY AS OLD AS THE CREATION* that the Confucian moral teachings of [China](#) were based upon rationality rather than upon revelation:

I am so far from thinking the maxims of Confucius and Jesus Christ differ, that I think the plain and simple maxims of the former will help illustrate the more obscure ones of the latter.



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

1735

Jean-Baptiste Du Halde's four volumes on [China](#), *DESCRIPTION GEOGRAPHIQUE, HISTORIQUE, CHRONOLOGIQUE, POLITIQUE... DE LA CHINA...*, presented the reports of seventeen Jesuit missionaries in a heavily illustrated edition by P.G. Lemercier of Paris.

In [China](#), Chien Lung was positioning himself upon the dragon throne and inaugurated his long regime of selfrighteous duplicity (outward righteousness accompanied by the ultimate in secret political manipulation).



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

1736

Jean-Baptiste Du Halde's voluminous report on [China](#), published in French in the previous year, was translated into English and offered as THE GENERAL HISTORY OF CHINA.

Chien Lung had consolidated his power and from this year into 1796 would be reigning as the Qing emperor of [China](#), with the boundaries of his empire reaching their farthest limits. The Chinese population would increase greatly and there would be frequent rebellions, all of which would be crushed ruthlessly. Chien Lung was not to mess with.



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

1737

In [China](#), a Jesuit priest, Father Ignatius Kegler, was witnessing what might have been an early return of the [comet](#) Swift-Tuttle — which would be officially discovered upon its return in 1862.⁵¹

ASTRONOMY

51. The periodic comet Swift-Tuttle, not a small body at all, and with a potential impact speed of 60 kilometers per second, and with a generally intersecting trajectory, repeatedly whipping by us, has been described as the single most dangerous object known to humankind — somewhat more deadly even than your proverbial speeding bullet.



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

1740

From this year into 1756 Pierre Poivre would be traveling extensively in [China](#).

A Confucian memorialist wrote that when the people of Honan Province “are not studying boxing and cudgels, prizing bravery and fierce fighting, they believe in heterodox sects, worshipping Buddhas and calling on gods.” For this 18th-Century scholar, we can infer, ch’uan fa was not intimately related to religion — which is interesting since the famous Shaolin Monastery is in the Honan region of [China](#).

Visiting Canton in the early 1740s, Commodore George Anson would find the place to be just awesomely awful:

This much may undoubtedly be asserted, that in artifice, falsehood, and an attachment to all kinds of lucre, many of the [Chinese](#) are difficult to be paralleled by any other people; but then the combination of these talents, and the manner in which they are applied in particular emergencies, are often beyond the reach of a foreigner’s penetration.⁵²



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

1744

In Beijing, Giuseppe Castiglione was casting twelve zodiac garden fountain heads for the garden of the new Summer Palace. The ox head was to spout water from 1AM to 3AM, the monkey head was to spout water from 3PM to 5PM, et cetera ad infinitum. This garden fountain would continue to operate until its machinery would fall into disrepair in 1786. The heads cast by Castiglione would be stolen during the looting and torching of the palace in 1860 by foreign troops, and three of them would resurface in the year 2000 when they would be sold at auction in [Hong Kong](#) — bric-a-brac for millions of dollars per piece.

CHINA



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

1747

Dr. James Lind experimented with 12 sailors who had scurvy and discovered that consuming lemons and oranges for 6 days effected great improvement. Nearly 50 years passed before the British admiralty required that sailors receive daily lemon or lime juice. (Scurvy is, of course, a nutritional disease caused by lack of adequate Vitamin C, which is to say, ascorbic acid. Fresh fruits and vegetables are excellent sources of this ascorbic acid vitamin.)

PLANTS

Bernard de Jussieu received, via Moscow, seed of *Sophora japonica* from French Jesuit Father, Pierre Nicholas le Cheron d'Incarville, stationed at the mission in [Beijing](#). This shipment probably also included *Koelreuteria paniculata*.

BOTANIZING

JAPAN

CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

[William Gilpin](#) preached a sermon at Buckingham. While there he must have taken the opportunity to visit Lord Cobham's famous landscape gardens at Stowe, for he then authored an anonymous tract, A DIALOGUE UPON THE GARDENS OF THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE LORD VISCOUNT COBHAM AT STOWE. In this tract, for the first time, we find his nice ruminations on distinctions to be made between the beauty of natural scenery, on the one hand, and the beauty of this or that ruined stone tower as depicted in paint from a safe distance — theories which were to become first in England the basis for all his later writings on the "Picturesque,"



and later in America the basis for just gazillions of Kodak Kodachrome snapshots of decaying old red barns standing solemnly in clumps of weeds.



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

In that famous garden at Stowe, true fact, he would have seen famous [Chinese](#) stuffamajiggers like this:



This much may undoubtedly be asserted, that in artifice, falsehood, and an attachment to all kinds of lucre, many of the [Chinese](#) are difficult to be paralleled by any other people; but then the combination of these talents, and the manner in which they are applied in particular emergencies, are often beyond the reach of a foreigner's penetration.⁵³

53. A VOYAGE AROUND THE WORLD IN THE YEARS 1704-1744, by Commodore George Anson.



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

1748

[Voltaire](#), in *ZADIG*, used a fictionalized East to hold up a critical mirror to European customs.⁵⁴

Charles-Louis de Secondat, baron de La Brède et de Montesquieu, presumed in *L'ESPRIT DES LOIS* (THE SPIRIT OF LAWS), that [China](#) was governed though fear, and that human freedom was there unknown.

Montesquieu also described, in Book 12, Chapter 6, Section 6, [pederasty](#), primarily boy-love, as against Nature:


Of the Crime against Nature.

God forbid that I should have the least inclination to diminish the public horror against a crime which religion, morality, and civil government equally condemn. It ought to be proscribed, were it only for its communicating to one sex the weaknesses of the other, and for leading people by a scandalous prostitution of their youth to an ignominious old age. What I shall say concerning it will in no way diminish its infamy, being leveled only against the tyranny that may abuse the very horror we ought to have against the vice.

As a natural circumstance of this crime is secrecy, there are frequent instances of its having been punished by legislators upon the deposition of a child. This was opening a very wide door to calumny. "Justinian," says Procopius, "published a law against this crime; he ordered an inquiry to be made not only against those who were guilty of it, after the enacting of that law, but even before. The deposition of a single witness, sometimes of a child, sometimes of a slave, was sufficient, especially against such as were rich, and against those of the green faction."

It is very odd that these three crimes, witchcraft, heresy, and that against nature, of which the first might easily be proved not to exist; the second to be susceptible of an infinite number of distinctions, interpretations, and limitations; the third to be often obscure and uncertain – it is very odd, I say, that these three crimes should amongst us be punished with fire.

I may venture to affirm that the crime against nature will never make any great progress in society, unless people are prompted to it by some particular custom, as among the Greeks, where the youths of that country performed all their exercises naked; as amongst us, where domestic education is disused; as amongst the Asiatics, where particular persons have a great number of women whom they despise, while others can have none at all. Let there be no customs preparatory to this crime; let it, like every other violation of morals, be severely proscribed by the civil magistrate; and nature will soon defend or resume her rights. Nature, that fond, that indulgent parent, has strewn her pleasures with a bounteous hand, and while she fills us with delights, she prepares us, by means of our issue, in whom we see ourselves, as it were, reproduced – she prepares us, I say, for future satisfactions of a more exquisite kind than those very delights.

54. In 1907,  a Miss Edith Peairs would report to the PMLA that she had discovered, in *ZADIG*, the source for [Henry Thoreau](#)'s parable of the hound, the bay horse, and the turtle-dove!

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

[David Hume](#)'s PHILOSOPHICAL ESSAYS CONCERNING THE HUMAN UNDERSTANDING contained a reworking of the main points of Book 1 of A TREATISE OF HUMAN NATURE: BEING AN ATTEMPT TO INTRODUCE THE EXPERIMENTAL METHOD OF REASONING INTO MORAL SUBJECTS, with the addition of material on free will adapted from Book 2, on miracles, on the Design Argument, and on mitigated skepticism ("Of Miracles," section X of AN ENQUIRY, would frequently be separately published). In 1758 this would become AN ENQUIRY CONCERNING THE HUMAN UNDERSTANDING. Between this year and 1753, by elaborating philosophically in "Of National Characters" upon the characteristics of various sorts of human being, Hume would provide an Enlightened philosophical sanction for William Bosman's hokey myth of 1705, according to which⁵⁵

in the beginning God created Black as well as White men; thereby ... giving the Blacks the first Election, who chose Gold, and left the Knowledge of Letters to the White. God granted their Request, but being incensed at their Avarice, resolved that the Whites should for ever be their masters, and they obliged to wait on them as their slaves.

LITERACY



Hume would declare that "the only regular body of Deists in the universe" was the [Chinese](#).

During this year he was taken along as Secretary by Lieutenant-General St. Clair in the course of a diplomatic mission to Turin, [Italy](#).

55. Bosman, William. A NEW AND ACCURATE DESCRIPTION OF THE COAST OF GUINEA. 1705; London, 1967, pages 146-47.



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

1750

The [Chinese](#) captured Lhasa, taking over the nation of [Tibet](#).

In England, [tea](#) leaves from [China](#) had supplanted [coffee](#) beans from Arabia in producing the hot beverage of choice. The importation of these dried plant leaves was a monopoly of the East [India](#) Company. By this point working people in England and America were using [cane sugar](#) to sweeten their [tea](#).



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

1751

[Peter Kalm](#) sailed for Europe. His herbarium contained about 325 species, many of which [Carl von Linné](#) would subsequently describe in *SPECIES PLANTARUM*. During this year, however, [Carolus Linnaeus](#) was putting out his *PHILOSOPHIA BOTANICA* (BOTANICAL PHILOSOPHY).

BOTANIZING

Miller planted tree of heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*) seed received from French Jesuit Father, Pierre Nicholas le Cheron d'Incarville, stationed at the mission in [Beijing](#). (Once introduced to North America, this tree would escape and become quite common — even invasive. Its popular fame is as “the tree that grew in Brooklyn.”)

First printed record of Chinese cabbage and Chinese mustard in England.

PLANTS

August 25, Wednesday (Old Style): The *Prins Carl* anchored at [Whampoa](#), near [Canton](#), after having been at sea 5 months and 4 days out of Cádiz, Spain.



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

1752

June 26, Monday (New Style): [Pastor Peter Osbeck](#) had as ship's chaplain on the *Prins Carl* spent 4 months in the [Canton](#) region of China observing the local flora, the local fauna, and the local human beings. On this day he arrived back at his home in Sweden. In the following year he would provide more than 600 species for [Carolus Linnaeus](#)'s *SPECIES PLANTARUM*.

PLANTS

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

1753

[Carolus Linnaeus](#) issued *MUSEUM TESSINIANUM*, and in *SPECIES PLANTARUM* he named the plant genus of [tobacco](#), *Nicotiana*, and described two species of this genus, *Nicotiana rustica* and *Nicotiana tabacum*.



[Pastor Peter Osbeck](#) had during 1750, 1751, and 1752 traveled as chaplain on the ship *Prins Carl* to Asia and had spent 4 months in the [Canton](#) region of [China](#) studying the local flora, the local fauna, and the local human beings. Upon his return he became household chaplain, *botanicus*, and tutor for the family of count Carl Gustaf Tessin in Åkerö (until 1758). He was able to provide more than 600 species of plant to [Linnaeus](#)'s *SPECIES PLANTARUM*.

BOTANIZING

SPECIES PLANTARUM would establish a new standard for plant classification as well as nomenclature. This treatise eventually would be recognized as the beginning-point for today's binomial nomenclature.

From 1748 to 1751 [Peter Kalm](#) had collected plant specimens in northeastern North America. His [botanical](#) collections were at this point extensively accessed by this Swedish botanist Linné as nomenclatural types for many of our northeastern US and southeastern Canadian species.

Linné also classified [cannabis sativa](#).

PLANTS

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CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

[Jean-Jacques Rousseau](#) had the forest experience, near Saint-Germain, that would lead upon his return to Paris to his evening walks in the Bois de Boulogne, and to his simplistic, dichotomistic thought on the nature of human culture, that since evil was to be found in the direction of culture (the [Chinese](#), being the most cultured and artificial, therefore being also the most unnaturally wicked, even more wicked than the French), good will be located by journeying in precisely the opposite direction, the direction of nature:

Madmen who ceaselessly complain of Nature, learn that all your misfortunes arise from yourselves! ...I demolished the petty lies of mankind; I dared to strip man's nature naked, to follow the progress of time, and trace the things which have distorted it; and by comparing man as he has made himself with man as he is by nature I showed him in his pretended perfection the source of his true misery.



As evidence of sophisticated thinking, this would have been at about the level of that old thing about how northern temperaments are intellectual, southern emotional, the head being held higher than the heart. —But, never mind, there is nothing so simplistic that it can't be picked up and used in self-legitimation, when what we are groping for is some way to hurt other people and be right in hurting them, and make them be wrong in letting us hurt them!



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

1755

[Voltaire](#), in *L'ORPHELIN DE LA CHINE*, again used a fictionalized East to hold up a critical mirror to European customs.

[CHINA](#)

On the island of Okinawa, Sakugawa Satunushi was taught how to use the cudgel by a [Chinese](#) merchant living near Shuri (Sakugawa would later help to codify Okinawan Shuri-te karate).

CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

During our revolutionary struggle, what was termed “liberty tea” would be substituted by some for [tea](#) imported from [China](#). This “liberty tea” the Americans brewed from whorled four-leaved loosestrife *Lysimachia quadrifolia*. A pound of this tea would go as far as one of Souchong. It sold quickly in barter for about 6d. a pound:

1. Pull up the four-leaved loosestrife plant like flax.
2. Strip the leaves from the stalks.
3. Boil the stalks.
4. Bast the leaves in an iron kettle with the liquor of the stocks.
5. Remove the leaves into platters and dry them in an oven.





THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

1756

John Cawthorne's doggerel: "Of late, 'tis true, quite sick of Rome and Greece, / We fetch out models from the wise [Chinese](#)."

[Marie Arouet de Voltaire](#)'s *ESSAIS SUR LES MOEURS ET L'ESPRIT DES NATIONS* praised [China](#), where the history of the world begins, for its "natural" deism. (This work would see publication in 1771.)



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

1757

Sir William Chambers reported on his travels in [China](#) in *DESIGNS OF CHINESE BUILDINGS, FURNITURE, DRESSES, MACHINES, AND UTENSILS: TO WHICH IS ANNEXED A DESCRIPTION OF THEIR TEMPLES, HOUSES, GARDENS, &C.*, printed in London in English and in French.

Gamblers and grifters living in Fukien and Kwangtung Province created the crime syndicates known to outsiders as Triads, after the three dots that members used as gang signs, and to insiders as the Tian-ti Hui, or Heaven-and-Earth Societies. Regional bosses, who were usually wealthy older men, were known as sinseh (“ritual specialist”) or shifu (“teacher”). Bosses were assisted by an Elder Brother who supervised operations, a Second Brother who kept the books, and a Third Brother who led the hung-kun, or “Red Poles.” The latter were organizational fighters, the youths average age was in the late teens — that foreigners called boo how doy, a phrase meaning “bad boys” but usually translated as “hatchet men.” These youths were rarely orthodox (cheng) boxers. Instead, in the words of the nineteenth century Malay triad leader Ho Ah-kay, they were simply gangs in the employ of brothel owners and gamblers. They amused themselves by looting, fighting, and attending violent stage and puppet plays.

This wasn’t merely a [Chinese](#) problem. Comparable organizations did exist in Europe. According to an English book of 1658 called *The Devil’s Cabinet Broke Open*, London gangs were commanded by captains, novices were tested and trained, and robbers, cheats, and cutpurses all carried different signs. Like the Chinese, the English criminals fought with the authorities whenever they attempted to invade an established sanctuary such as Whitefriars, Smithfield, or the Bankside. Barring such unifying invasions, the criminals acted independently. On both sides of the globe, criminals were youthful, were organized in gangs of 20-30 members, and preyed mostly on prostitutes, shop-owners, and drunks.

The [Reverend Peter Osbeck](#), a Swedish ship chaplain formed at the Linnæan school of natural history, published the journal of his adventure to the opposite side of the earth, to the [Canton](#) region of [China](#), *DAGBOK ÖFWER EN OSTINDISK RESA ÅREN*, which would be translated from Swedish into German in 1762 and from German into English in 1771. He would also publish *A VOYAGE AUX INDES ORIENTALES FAIT DANS LES ANNÉES 1750, 51, 52, AVEC DES OBSERVATIONS SUR L’HISTOIRE NATURELLE, LA LANGUE, LES MOEURS, L’ÉCONOMIE DOMESTIQUE DES PEUPLES ÉTRANGERS* (Stockholm), and as a Fellow of the Royal Society of Sciences in Uppsala would author several dissertations and memoirs of natural history that would appear in the [Transactions of the Swedish Academy](#).



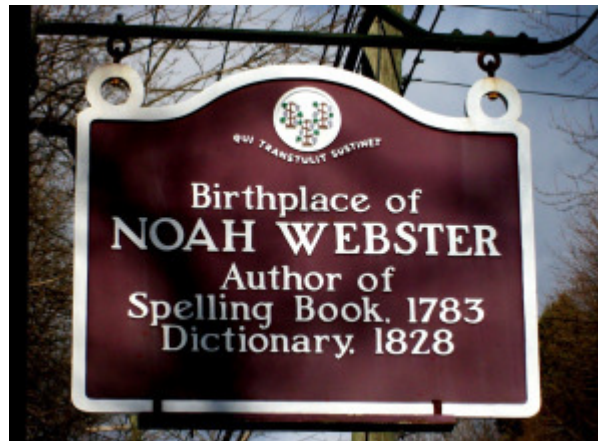
THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

1758

October 16, Monday: At the battle of Clostercamp, the French were triumphant over the combined forces of Great Britain, Prussia, Hanover, Brunswick, and Hesse-Kassel.

[Noah Webster, Jr.](#) was born in the front, upstairs bedroom (then described as “parlor”), probably in its 4-poster “guest” bed, in a square, white house on South Main Street in what is now West Hartford, Connecticut to [Noah Webster, Sr.](#) and [Mercy Steele Webster](#).⁵⁶ You can still visit the family farm where he was born, at 227 South Main Street (unless today happens to be Wednesday). It is probable that Noah initially attended South Middle School in Hartford, and Hopkins Grammar School of Hartford under Mrs. Wales. He would be one of the approximately 150 young scholars prepared for college by the Reverend Doctor Nathan Perkins, pastor of his village church, entering Yale College at the age of 14. It would be said of this lexicographer that, “if you had met him in [China](#) you would have known that he hailed from Connecticut” (also famous in West Hartford would be [Dr. Joseph Emerson Worcester](#), Webster’s lexicographic rival, who would refuse to sacrifice the tradition and elegance of language to anything so mundane as usage).



56. On his mother’s side he was a great-great-great grandson of Governor William Bradford of Plymouth Colony, a Pilgrim First Comer. On his father’s side he was a great-great grandson of a Puritan, John Webster, who had emigrated from Warwickshire settling initially near Boston and then in 1638 migrating to “Newe Towne” (Hartford, Connecticut) as part of Hooker’s band. This John Webster had become Governor of Connecticut. Noah’s father had been born at Hartford on March 25, 1722 and was a farmer, soldier, Deacon, and Justice of the Peace; he would live to the age of 91. Noah’s mother had been born in October, 1727 and would die on October 5, 1794 at the age of 67. These parents produced five children: Mercy, born November 8, 1749; Abraham, born September 17, 1751; Jerusha, born January 22, 1756; [Noah](#); and Charles, born September 2, 1762. Both elder sisters would marry early. Elder brother Abraham would become a farmer in New York State near Utica; younger brother Charles would enter business.



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

1759

By this point Europe's porcelain teacups had begun to depart from the Chinese model: instead of a lid, they had a handle.

TEA



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

1760

English pigs, slim and longlegged and mean, were crossbred with a variety from [China](#) to produce a shorter-legged, smaller, rounded, more efficiently domestic model.

[Oliver Goldsmith](#) began to publish a series of letters in the [Public Ledger](#) under the title THE CITIZEN OF THE WORLD. These were purportedly written by a [Chinese](#) traveler in England named Lien Chi, and used this fictional outsider's perspective to make ironic comment, and at times moralistic comment, on British society and manners (this echoes the defamiliarizing technique used in an essay series by Charles-Louis de Secondat, Baron de La Brède et de Montesquieu, entitled PERSIAN LETTERS.

THE CITIZEN OF THE WORLD

THE CITIZEN OF THE WORLD

A Western chart showed the west coast of the island that would become [Hong Kong](#). In a few years a Captain George Hayter of the *York* would prepare a chart of Victoria Strait which would, amazingly, present Hong Kong as if it were made up of two separate islands! (The larger of these two hypothetical islands he would mark as being known locally as “An-chin-cheo” or as “He-ong-Kong.”)



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

1761

The first full presentation in English of a [Chinese](#) novel, *HAO KIOU CHOAN*, OR THE PLEASING HISTORY. (To create this publication the Reverend [Thomas Percy](#) had heavily revised and annotated a pre-existing manuscript English translation of *HAOQIU ZHUAN* 好球傳.)

At about this point in time the Ryukyuan royal bodyguard began to refer to their style of martial art as “tode” and it is speculated that, in this naming, they were indicating something like “[Chinese](#) hands.”



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

In a novel written at Montmorency *JULIE: OU, LA NOUVELLE HÉLOÏSE* (JULIE: OR, THE NEW ELOISE), which would become so immensely popular among French women that it would not be possible to throw its author in prison, [Jean-Jacques Rousseau](#) declared [Chinamen](#) to be hopelessly decadent: “there is no sin to which they are not prone, no crime which is not common among them.”⁵⁷

They had been talking of Bonnivard, as they glided past Chillon, and of Rousseau, as they looked up at Clarens, where he wrote his HÉLOÏSE. Neither had read it, but they knew it was a love story, and each privately wondered if it was half as interesting as their own. Amy had been dabbling her hand in the water during the little pause that fell between them, and when she looked up, Laurie was leaning on his oars with an expression in his eyes that made her say hastily, merely for the sake of saying something,—

“You must be tired. Rest a little, and let me row. It will do me good, for since you came I have been altogether lazy and luxurious.”

“I’m not tired, but you may take an oar, if you like. There’s room enough, though I have to sit nearly in the middle, else the boat won’t trim,” returned Laurie, as if he rather liked the arrangement.

Feeling that she had not mended matters much, Amy took the offered third of a seat, shook her hair over her face, and accepted an oar. She rowed as well as she did many other things, and though she used both hands, and Laurie but one, the oars kept time, and the boat went smoothly through the water.

“How well we pull together, don’t we?” said Amy, who objected to silence just then.

“So well that I wish we might always pull in the same boat. Will you, Amy?” very tenderly.

“Yes, Laurie,” very low.

Then they both stopped rowing, and unconsciously added a pretty little *tableau* of human love and happiness to the dissolving views reflected in the lake.

This explored the idea that despite males ruling the public sphere, females should rule inside the sacred precinct of the family. We are shown a group of people able by following that principle to discover in their family home life a happiness altogether separate from the public life of the state. Saint-Preux, the point-of-view character, a middle-class preceptor, fell in love with Julie, an upper-class pupil, who reciprocated his love and yielded to his advances. The difference between the classes of their families makes marriage unthinkable and Julie had in fact been promised by the Baron d’Étange, her father, to Wolmar, a fellow nobleman, so Saint-Preux dispatched himself on an adventure around the world and was able to acquire stoicism of an English aristocrat (!). Julie found happiness as a wife and mother and, when her former lover had returned from his adventure, made him the tutor of her children.

57. *DU CONTRAT SOCIAL*, *ÉMILE*, and *JULIE: OU, LA NOUVELLE HÉLOÏSE* all appeared within the same 12-month period.

HDT

WHAT?

INDEX

CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

1762

[Oliver Goldsmith](#)'s THE CITIZEN OF THE WORLD: OR, LETTERS FROM A [CHINESE](#) PHILOSOPHER.

THE CITIZEN OF THE WORLD

THE CITIZEN OF THE WORLD

His THE LIFE OF RICHARD NASH.

THE LIFE OF RICHARD NASH

His THE MYSTERY REVEALED.

THE MYSTERY REVEALED

January England declared war on Spain. During the year the British fleet would capture Manila in the Philippine Islands. However, the British would not expand their occupation of the island of [Cuba](#) beyond the port, and would abandon the island in less than 2 years.



Between this point and 1838, about 391,000 black [slaves](#) would be brought to [Cuba](#). (That's not counting the yellow slaves, [Chinese](#) coolies who as "contract workers" lacked any prospect of return to [China](#).)

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

1763

From this year into 1765, [David Hume](#) would serve as Private Secretary to Lord Hertford, British ambassador to Paris (there he would meet and fall out with [Jean-Jacques Rousseau](#)).

[Voltaire](#) opinioned of the [Chinese](#) that “They only use speech to disguise their thoughts.” ([Michel de Montaigne](#) had insisted that the laws in [China](#) were such as to stifle rather than advancing liberty, and that their government, which ought to be ruling on the basis of the admiration of its subjects, was instead ruling them with terror. Nicholas Boulanger, in his ORIENTAL DESPOTISM, would argue alongside [Rousseau](#) that in [China](#), the dead hand of a repressive culture had entirely smothered any primitive nobility of character.)

This [Chinese](#) map bears the date 1763, and its inscription alleges that it is copied from a map made in 1418. It does not seem to depict the British Isles, but does depict Africa and [Australia](#):



Well, whaddya know!

“MAGISTERIAL HISTORY” IS FANTASIZING: HISTORY IS CHRONOLOGY



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

1767

The Burmese invade Thailand, destroying its capital, Ayudhya, and forcing the Thais to accept Burmese overlordship, but then needed to withdraw in order to repulse a [Chinese](#) invasion of Burma.

[Chinese](#) authorities complained of kai-fei, or beggar-bandits, taking what they wanted by force, and then resisting arrest using rocks, fists, and clubs. As many, perhaps most, Chinese beggars dressed like mendicant monks to improve their chances of receiving largesse, these kai-fei are a likely source of inspiration for subsequent stories about Taoist and Buddhist fighting monks, especially since most police reports talked about professional boxers teaching martial arts to priests, not priests teaching martial arts to professional boxers.

François Quesnay's "*La despotisme de la Chine*" appeared in the journal *Éphémérides du citoyen*. Looking at [Chinese](#) despotism and liking what he saw, this "European Confucius" (as he was known) would translate the Chinese *wu-wei* principle into French as *laissez-faire*⁵⁸:

I have concluded from the reports about [China](#) that the Chinese constitution is founded upon wise and irrevocable laws which the Emperor enforces and which he carefully observes himself.

The Chinese, it would seem, are profound enough to just let things that are going to happen anyway, just happen of themselves — knowing that their cabbage seedlings are going to grow, they don't go around tugging at their stems to accelerate their development. A lesson from the East for us all.

58. [Adam Smith](#) would pick up on this useful French concept, severed entirely from its [Chinese](#) roots — and the rest is (economic) history.



[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)**CHINA****THE CENTRAL KINGDOM****1768**

Since it is clear that [Henry Thoreau](#) had access to this volume: here are the pages, out of A NEW UNIVERSAL COLLECTION OF AUTHENTIC AND ENTERTAINING VOYAGES AND TRAVELS, FROM THE EARLIEST ACCOUNTS TO THE PRESENT TIME, that pertains to the journey of [Everard Ysbrants Ides](#) into [China](#), a journey which had begun in Moscow on a sledge on March 14, 1692, and had been completed on January 1, 1695 — by entering Moscow on a sledge.

**MOSCOW/CHINA/MOSCOW**

(Here, also, is the complete text of that sourcebook.)

PERUSE THE ENTIRE BOOK!



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

1769

For the benefit of Europe, Pierre Poivre, who had traveled extensively in [China](#) between 1740 and 1756, made a most pointed declaration, a declaration which was either true or false but would in any case perform its intended function:

China offers an enchanting picture of what the whole world might become, if the laws of that empire were to become the laws of all nations. Go to Peking! Gaze upon the mightiest of mortals; he is the true and perfect image of Heaven.



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

1770

Christian missionaries were expelled from [China](#). (Don't let the doorknob hit you in the butt on your way out.)

1771

[Emanuel Swedenborg](#)'s *VERA CHRISTIANA RELIGIO, CONTINENS UNIVERSAM THEOLOGIAM NOVAE ECCLESIAE* (THE TRUE CHRISTIAN RELIGION), intended to explain his teachings to the Lutherans.

[SWEDENBORGIANISM](#)

Publication of [Marie Arouet de Voltaire](#)'s 1756 *ESSAIS SUR LES MOEURS ET L'ESPRIT DES NATIONS*, praising [China](#) for its "natural" deism. His history of the world began in China. At some point, maybe not in this precise year, Benjamin Franklin contemplated sending off some commissioners to China to obtain information as to aged laws and extensive experience, for the profit of this "young people" of the new American nation.

The [Reverend Peter Osbeck](#)'s *A VOYAGE TO CHINA AND THE EAST INDIES ... TOGETHER WITH A VOYAGE TO SURATTE, BY OLOF TORREN... AND AN ACCOUNT OF CHINESE HUSBANDRY BY CAPTAIN CHARLES GUSTAVUS ECKEBERG. TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN, BY JOHN REINHOLD FORSTER. TO WHICH ARE ADDED, A FAUNA AND FLORA SINENSIS* (London: Benjamin White) First English Edition, 8vo, 2 vols, pp xx, 396; (ii), 367, (1) blank, (31) index, (1) errata; 13 engraved plates. This had been 1st published in Swedish in 1757. In Eckeberg's account there is a detailed description of the island of Fernand de Noronha. The translation of these important voyages by students of Linnaeus would lead to John Reinhold Forster's appointment as principal naturalist on Captain James Cook's 2d voyage.





CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

1775

British traders from [India](#) established depots at Canton and Macao on the coast of [China](#), and the commercial importance of [opium](#) in the British trade balance began to increase. Opium smoking would reach Peking in 1790. As [opium](#) smoking spread across [China](#), there would be imperial edicts in 1780, 1796, and 1800 prohibiting its importation, sale, and consumption.

Frederick the Great ordered Prussians to drink [beer](#) rather than [coffee](#), because he was deriving better revenue from the taxes on beer than from the taxes on coffee. He attempted to restrict coffee drinking to his court, and established a prohibitive tax.

King Louis XVI of [France](#) granted to Jews the privilege of inheritance.

JUDAISM

June 13, Tuesday: Deputy Governor Nicholas Cooke of [Rhode Island](#) wrote to Captain James Wallace of His Majesty's Frigate *Rose* demanding restoration of several American ships which the British man-of-war had captured.

On this day the Oxford parson James Woodforde happened to catch sight of a Chinaman, and pronounced the people of [China](#) to be "uncommonly ugly." To him they looked like "runabout gypsies."



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

1776

Christianity was introduced into [Korea](#), by [Chinese](#) Jesuits.

Friedric Grimm opinioned that the worship of things [Chinese](#) in Europe must have been overblown.



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

1778

Georges Louis Leclerc, [comte de Buffon](#)'s *LES EPOQUES DE LA NATURE*, asserting that the earth is a staggering 74,832 years old, and had been in existence long before the arrival of humans — or of any other form of life.

PALEONTOLOGY

[Joseph Banks](#) began his 42-year stint as president of the Royal Society.

THE SCIENCE OF 1778

John Fothergill brought *Cymbidium ensifolium* and *Phaius tankervilleae* to England from [China](#) (these were the first Asiatic orchids to appear in England).

PLANTS

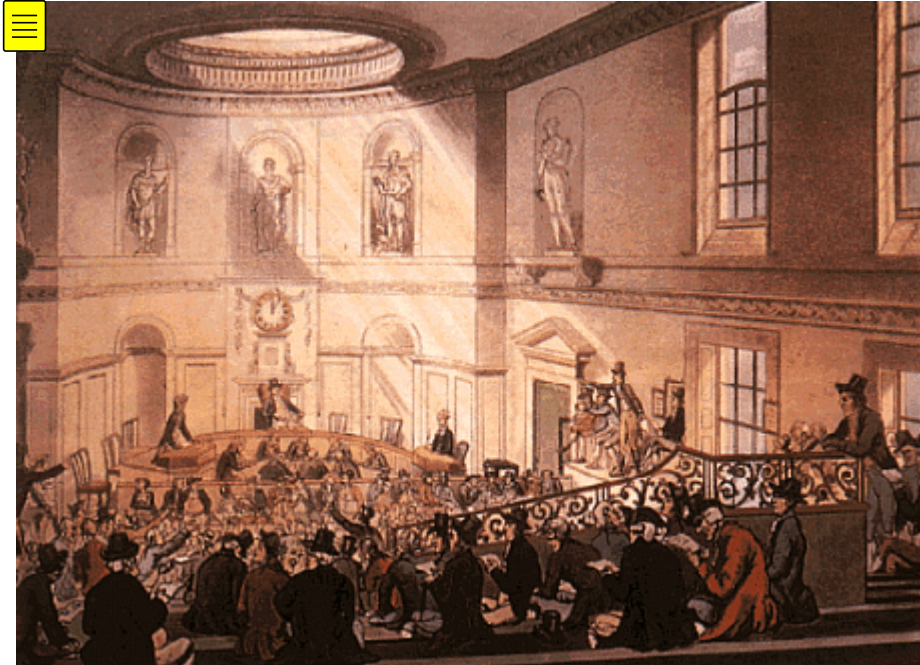
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CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

1780

At about this point Malwah [opium](#) grown in Central India was beginning to be shipped by the East [India](#) Company from the port of Bombay to [China](#) in the form of cases of 300-gram balls. Opium was hardly known in China. This inferior Malwah product could be purchased for between 20% to 50% as much per case as European-grade opium.



(In related drug-traffic news, at this point the doors of Warren Tavern in [Charlestown, Massachusetts](#) were opening to local imbibers for the first time. And these doors've been open ever since, for the establishment now lays claim to being the oldest continuously operating tavern in the US of A. The open door to China has, however, been closed for some time to the products of this East India Company.)

[ALCOHOL](#)



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

1783

Not even attempting to estimate the immense quantities being smuggled into the country without the payment of duties — we know that more than 2,600 tons of [tea](#) were lawfully imported into England from [China](#) and duty paid during this year.

1784

The Shakers crossed the White [China](#) pig from England with the American backwoods varieties, to produce the Poland [China](#) breed. This breed would become the mainstay of the American pork industry. In this year, also, the Shakers innovated the practice of selling garden seed in small, labeled paper packets.

A Ryukyuan merchant, Shionja, and a [Chinese](#) soldier, Kung Hsiang-chün, arrived together at Okinawa. The soldier would be known in the Ryukyus as Kusanku, and must have been a teacher of the martial arts as one of the oldest of the martial arts disciplines (kata) there has been named for him.

In England in this year, the Commutation Act was reducing to about $\frac{1}{10}$ th the previous high rate of taxation, of over 100%, on [tea](#) from [China](#), which had been resulting in much loss of revenue due to uncontrollable smuggling activities. We may date the American trade in Oriental goods from this as it would be in February of this year that the *Empress of China* would sail out of [New-York](#) harbor destined for the port of Canton in



order to begin our direct trade with China, and this would be also the year in which the *United States* would come to anchor off the coast of [India](#). With most foreign ports denied to them because of the revolutionary war,

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

the first American ships visited the South China seas. In that region there wasn't all that much distinction being made between an American captain and a British captain, and thus the American vessels were able to purchase [opium](#) in India and the Middle East, and distribute it along the China coast.

William Hamilton of Philadelphia imported the Chinese tree of heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*, first planted in Europe by Miller at the Chelsea Physic Garden in 1751), which has become such a hardy "problem tree weed" in many American cities (well, one can't win them all, can one? — the tree of heaven happens to be "The Tree" that grew in Brooklyn). Hamilton also introduced *Acer platanoides*, the Lombardy poplar, and the *Ginkgo biloba* to America (a ginkgo had been in cultivation in the [botanical](#) garden at Utrecht since about 1730).

PLANTS

Here is the *Empress of China* arriving in Whampoa harbor:





CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

Once the duties on [tea](#) were thus sharply lowered, its use would be much increased. People of merit in England would soon begin, it seems, to criticize the poor for using this tea, and to attribute their poverty not to exploitation by the rich but to humble people's improvident attempts to live beyond their means:

[Tea](#) has become an economical substitute to the middle and lower classes for malt liquor, the price of which renders it impossible for them to procure the quantity sufficient for them as their only drink.... In short, we are so situated in our commercial and financial system, that tea brought from the eastern extremity of the world, and sugar brought from the West Indies and both loaded with the expense of freight and [insurance](#) ... compose a drink cheaper than beer.

— MacPherson, David.
THE HISTORY OF THE EUROPEAN
COMMERCE WITH INDIA. London:
Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme
& Brown, 1812, page 132.

SWEETS
WITHOUT
SLAVERY

The Reverend David Davies, who made detailed budgetary records of the cost of keeping a cow in England during this period, concluded however that rural poor families were drinking [tea](#) rather than milk as a matter of economic necessity, and also concluded that they were neglecting “small beer” because of the stiff taxes on malt. He pointed out that the tea which the poor were drinking was not the luxury item imagined by the rich, “fine hyson tea, sweetened with refined sugar, and softened with cream,” but rather was “spring-water, just coloured with a few leaves of the lowest-priced tea, and sweetened with the brownest sugar.” Thus tea-drinking was found to be “not the cause, but the consequence of the distresses of the poor,” and the rich who were scoffing at this were merely playing their usual game of blame-their-victims:

Under these hard circumstances, the dearness of malt, and the difficulty of procuring milk, the only thing remaining of them to moisten their bread with, was [tea](#). This was their last resource. Tea (with bread) furnishes one meal for a whole family every day, at no greater expense than about one shilling a week, at an average. If any body will point out an article that is cheaper and better, I will venture to answer for the poor in general, that they will be thankful for the discovery.

— The Reverend David Davies. THE CASE
OF LABOURERS IN HUSBANDRY. London:
G.G. and J. Robinson, 1795, page 37.

February 22, Sunday: The *Empress of China* sailed from [New-York](#) harbor with a cargo of [ginseng](#), seeking to open trade with [China](#). Its cargo would sell for \$30,727.



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

1785

According to tradition, it was at about this point, in the Honan region of [China](#), that Wang Tsung-yueh, a boxer, introduced t'ai chi ch'uan. Wang is credited to be the author of the classic text T'ai Chi Ch'uan Lun.

The US adopted the decimal system and the “dollar,” in imitation of the Spanish system of silver coinage, became our monetary unit of exchange. Ah, dolor! Spain opened a trade with [China](#) by way of Manila, exchanging furs obtained from the Native Americans along the [California](#) coast for Chinese mercury to be used in the processing of the ore from the mines of Mexico and Peru. The Spanish fur agent was headquartered in Monterey. These Southern Californian furs, however, would prove to be unsatisfactory both in quantity and in quality.



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

1786

In [Beijing](#), the hydraulic machinery that drove the garden fountains of the Summer Palace was allowed to fall into disrepair. The twelve bronze zodiac heads of the garden fountain, created by Giuseppe Catiglione, stopped spouting water.

In [Korea](#), to counteract a certain unwanted influence by [Chinese](#) Jesuits, the government sponsored a persecution of Christians (this must have been more about the Chinese sponsors than about Christianity as such: Roman Catholicism itself would not create unrest on the peninsula until 1835, and American Methodism would not be perceived as a problem until 1884).

The [Reverend George Burder](#) (with Mary Luckman, James Mathews, Robert Vaughn Brooke, Champante and Whitrow)'s EARLY PIETY, OR, MEMOIRS OF CHILDREN, EMINENTLY SERIOUS: INTERSPERSED WITH FAMILIAR DIALOGUES, EMBLEMATICAL PICTURES, PRAYERS, GRACES, AND HYMNS, a small improving tract intended to be presented to children as a reward, had been printed by M. Luckman in London. This was an 107-page pocket-sized book of religious moral guidance for children, illustrated with 18 engravings (it is to be remembered that George Burder, before being converted in 1776 and becoming an open-air minister, had trained as an engraver in London). The varied contents of the tract include "The Interesting History of Master Billy and Miss Betsy Goodchild," "Of a very good Child that died very happy before she was seven years old," prayers, "Of Gods Providence, and remarkable Instances of it," and "The history of Edward the Sixth, King of England, who was a good boy, and a good king."



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

1787

Doctor William Thornton proposed that he lead a body of free black [Rhode Island](#) and Massachusetts colonists to somewhere along the west coast of Africa. (A year later Doctor Thornton would seem to be in communication with the Reverend Samuel Hopkins in regard to such a scheme, but eventually the resettlement effort would need to be abandoned, of course for want of funds.)

As part of what, in Massachusetts, was being termed “Shays’ Rebellion, there was an overt act of defiance in [Rhode Island](#). A group of citizens styling themselves “Reformation men,” living near what would later be known as the Phillips place, organized to resist state taxation. When a state officer appeared with deputies, to round up and herd off and “distrain” their farm livestock to the extent of unpaid taxes, they chased after the officers and cattle, overtaking them as they were crossing the bridge to the northeast of Pascoag village, and beyond this bridge, in a dense wood, chased off the deputies and rescued their livestock. The next day the officers returned and seized suspects, taking them to [Chepachet](#) for trial. A mob invaded the court-room and carried away the prisoners. Judge Steere, who lived nearby, rode to alert [Providence](#). Governor Arthur Fenner sent word that if the struggle came to an immediate halt, nothing further would be done to collect these back taxes or capture the citizens. Essentially, this tax revolt succeeded.

READ EDWARD FIELD TEXT

In this year [John Brown](#)’s nine years of service in the General Assembly of [Rhode Island](#) came to an end. Meanwhile his ship, the *General George Washington*, sailed from [Providence](#) for Canton in South China, captained by Jonathan Donnison. She was the 1st of our trading ships to trade with the Orient. The tiniest state of the union was going to open the giant nation of [China](#) to the West:

Hail, realm of rogues, renowned for fraud and guile,
All hail, the knaveries of yon little isle...
Look through the state, the unhallowed ground appears
A nest of dragons and a cave for bears...
The wiser race ...
Like Lot from Sodom, from Rhode Island run.

— “To Rhode Island,” 1787, anonymous

1787. The first ship, from this State, sailed for Canton - the General Washington, Captain Jonathan Donnison. The number of vessels in this port, then, exceeded that of New York, being 110, and the tonnage 10,590.

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CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM



January 6, Saturday: The American continent no longer being available for the dumping of persons not wanted in England (due to the American revolution), on this day the first boatload of convicts out of the mouldering harbor hulks of England were packed off on their long “transportation” to England’s newer penal colony, the [Australian](#) gulag.⁵⁹



THE TRAFFIC IN MAN-BODY

“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

“Stack of the Artist of Kouroo” Project

59. Although the alternative which had originally been suggested by the developers of Botany Bay had been the importation of quantities of slave labor from South [China](#), this transportation of convicts for forced labor would never be considered to be part of the [international slave trade](#)! No, it wasn’t — because we say it wasn’t, that’s why.



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

1788

At the age of 16, Rammohan Roy wrote *THE IDOLATROUS SYSTEM OF THE HINDUS*, which outraged his orthodox Brahmin father, and left Bengal with the agenda to travel and to master every language of the world's chief religious and ethical scriptures. (Within the first few years of his travels, it seems he spent some time in [Tibet](#).)

The [Reverend Professor James Legge](#), in 1890 in translating the *TAO TÊ CHING* of [Lao-tze](#) into the English language, would discover in the files of the India Office a Latin manuscript translation of this material, that had been sent to the office by a missionary organization in 1788. The document as discovered would be still "in excellent preservation." Legge would indicate that the object of the translator had evidently been to demonstrate [Chinese](#) knowledge of the Holy Trinity and the Christian God, and would dismiss this manuscript he had found as of little value. In quoting a section of it in a note he would indicate, also, that this represented "the first morsel of it that has appeared in print."

道德經

TAOISM

LIGHT FROM CHINA

(Inference: There is zero likelihood that either [Henry Thoreau](#) or [Waldo Emerson](#) ever had access to this early translation.)

THOREAU AND CHINA

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CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

Spring: After having traded extensively for sea otter pelts along the Northwest Coast, Captain [Robert Gray](#) took over



command of Captain John Kendrick's *Columbia Rediviva* and sailed it to [China](#), where he traded his cargo of



pelts for tea. Kendrick remained on the Pacific coast to obtain more pelts. At that particular point in time, he found, the market in China for furs did not happen to be good.

Summer: There was great flooding in the basin of the Yangtze River.

[CHINA](#)

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

August 16, Saturday: When the sloop *Washington* reached the haven of Nootka Sound, it found there two English vessels that had sailed out of [Macau](#) under Portuguese colors. Captain Meares and Captain Douglas came over in a boat to offer their assistance. The acquaintance proved to be friendly, although there were evidences, later on, of a disguised jealousy between them. Three days later the English launched a small schooner, named *Northwest America* — the first vessel built along the Pacific northwest coast. It was a gala day, fittingly celebrated by salutes and festivities in which the Americans cordially joined. The *Lady Washington* was hauled up on the ways for graving, and preparations began to be made for collecting sea otter pelts. One day, just a week after their arrival, they saw a sail in the distance, which by their glasses they soon were able to make out as the *Columbia Rediviva*. Captain [Robert Gray](#) immediately took a longboat and went to meet her, and shortly



before sunset she anchored within 40 yards of the sloop. It was decided to winter in Friendly Cove, Nootka Sound, and a house was built large enough for the entire crew. They shot an abundance of game, prepared charcoal for their smiths and worked their iron into chisels, which were in good demand among the natives. A large fleet of canoes came in great parade and offered some 200 sea otter pelt for one chisel each. This was the best bargain they ever made, worth from \$6,000 to \$8,000, and in the future they would seldom be able to obtain a good sea otter pelt for less than 6-10 chisels. Ordinarily you could get one sea otter pelt for a blanket, four sea otter pelts for a pistol, or six sea otter pelts for a musket. Captain Kendrick concluded to put the ship's property on board the sloop *Washington* and take her on a cruise while Gray should take the *Columbia Rediviva* to the Sandwich Islands (Hawaii), obtain provisions there, continue to the [China](#) coast, and there dispose of the sea otter pelts. And so the two vessels parted company. After a pleasant trip to resupply, Gray landed in China. It was an unfavorable season for trade and their thousand sea otter skins had to be sold at a sacrifice. The ship was repaired at great expense and made ready for a cargo of teas. As Captain Gray left China, Captain Kendrick and the *Lady Washington* sat in a nearby harbor awaiting repairs. Captain Kendrick turned the sloop into a brig while Captain Gray made his voyages to and from Boston.

1790

In 1776 but sixty tons of opium had been produced in all of India, but by this point the Indian production of opium had grown to some 300 tons. One box of 20 four-pound balls of Patna opium had become worth as much on the international market as two tons of Chinese tea.

A National Theater was established in Peking, to showcase the performances imprecisely considered by the English to amount to "Chinese opera" (actually, such performances have more in common with Elizabethan theater than with European opera, since choreographed fights are prominent in the performance). Schools were established in which training might begin at the age of four (as recently as 1985, fewer than one favored child in 10,000 might be allowed entry to such a national-level theatrical school).

THE FUTURE IS MOST READILY PREDICTED IN RETROSPECT



August 9, Monday: Captain Robert Gray's Columbia Rediviva entered Boston Harbor in triumph, back from her trip around the world, loaded with the teas of China.



This Rhode Island captain had become the first American to effect such a circumnavigation of the globe. He would be in port only a month before departing on a new voyage to Oregon. Because he had instructions from George Washington and Thomas Jefferson not to enter any Spanish port, and Nootka Island at the time was being disputed between the English and Spanish, he would do no trade in Nootka itself, but instead would stop at various points along the coast of present-day British Columbia, Washington, and Oregon.

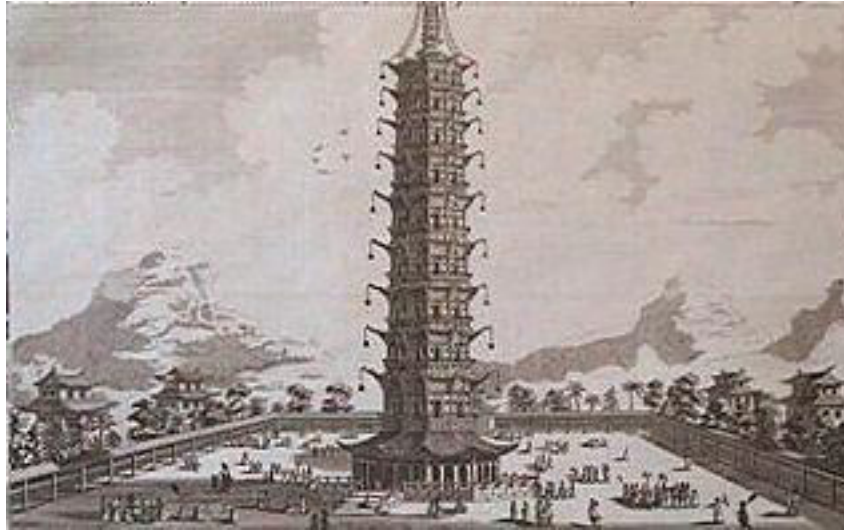
After this initial trip, there would be considerable scheming and the creation of a trade circuit in which Boston ships would sail to Oregon carrying manufactured goods, trade them for skins, sail to the Sandwich Islands, trade the skins for sandalwood, sail to China, trade the sandalwood for tea, textiles, spices, and porcelains, and return to Boston harbor.

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

November 11: [Chinese](#) chrysanthemum bulbs arrived in England.⁶⁰

In all possibility, also arriving with these chrysanthemums was this illustration of an exotic structure alongside the river leading to the capital city Nanking:



Precisely what England has ever needed, fresh fuel for the imaginations of fools!

60. Mums the word.



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

1791

September: The two ships returned to Clayoquot on Vancouver Island and Captain Kendrick set out for [China](#) with furs. Captain [Robert Gray](#) had a fort erected at Clayoquot and constructed a little sloop he named the *Adventurer*, which he put under the command of Mr. Haswell, his second officer. The Indians about Clayoquot were unfriendly, and during the winter Gray and his men would remain constantly on the alert.





THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

1792

The [Chinese](#) army marched into neighboring Nepal.

[John Barrow](#) was the mathematics tutor to Sir George Staunton's son Thomas, as well as teaching mathematics at a school in Greenwich, when Sir George set him up to be comptroller of the household to Lord George Macartney's unsuccessful embassy to [China](#). He would make himself that expedition's interpreter.

1793

During this year and the following one, Lord George Macartney traveled to [China](#) for King George III and the East [India](#) Company, checking out the prospect that illumination and human decency could become significant exports from that region of the world. [John Barrow](#) was on this expedition as comptroller of the household to Lord George and secretary to Sir George Staunton.

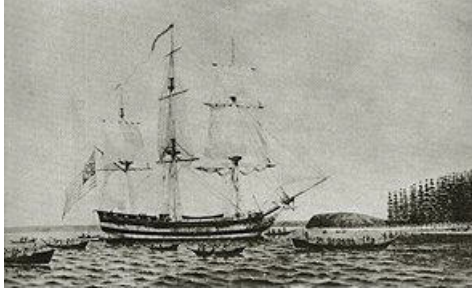


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THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA

Captain [Robert Gray](#) sold his furs in [China](#) and the *Columbia Rediviva* returned to Boston. The results must have not met expectations because he would not be sent out again. Mr. Kendrick of the *Lady Washington* was killed in Hawaii by a gun explosion. Gray's discovery apparently impressed the public little more than it had impressed Gray himself, for it was not followed up in any way for some years. Neither recognition nor wealth was in store.



September: [John Leonard Knapp](#) was with the Herefordshire militia regiment during the riots at Bristol Bridge. Later he would become a captain in the Northamptonshire Militia. Up to the death of his father, the Reverend Primatt Knapp, he would reside mainly at Powick, near Worcester.

In [France](#), the Reign of Terror began (at this point [Napoléon Bonaparte](#) was a captain, in charge of a wagon train).

In [China](#), the Qianlong Emperor prepared a letter for Lord Macartney to take to his monarch:

You, O King, live beyond the confines of many seas, nevertheless, impelled by your humble desire to partake of the benefits of our civilization, you have dispatched a mission respectfully bearing your memorial. Your Envoy has crossed the seas and paid his respects at my Court on the anniversary of my birthday. To show your devotion, you have also sent offerings of your country's produce. ... As to your entreaty to send one of your nationals to be accredited to my Celestial Court and to be in control of your country's trade with China, this request is contrary to all usage of my dynasty and cannot possibly be entertained. ... You, O King from afar, have yearned after the blessings of our civilization, and in your eagerness to come into touch with our converting influence have sent an Embassy across the sea bearing a memorial. I have already taken note of your respectful spirit of submission, have treated your mission with extreme favour and loaded it with gifts, besides issuing a mandate to you, O King, and honouring you with the bestowal of valuable presents. Thus has my indulgence been manifested. ... Hitherto, all European nations, including your own country's barbarian merchants, have carried on their trade with Our Celestial Empire at Canton. Such has been the procedure for many years, although Our Celestial Empire possesses all things in prolific abundance and lacks no product within its borders. There was therefore no need to import the manufactures of outside barbarians in exchange for our own produce. But as the tea, silk, and porcelain which the Celestial Empire produces are absolute necessities to European nations and to yourselves, we have permitted, as a signal mark of favour, that foreign hong



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

should be established at Canton, so that your wants might be supplied and your country thus participate in our beneficence. But your Ambassador has now put forward new requests which completely fail to recognize the Throne's principle to "treat strangers from afar with indulgence," and to exercise a pacifying control over barbarian tribes, the world over. ... Your Ambassador requests facilities for ships of your nation to call at Ningpo, Chusan, Tientsin and other places for purposes of trade. Until now trade with European nations has always been conducted at Macao, where the foreign hongts are established to store and sell foreign merchandise. Your nation has obediently complied with this regulation for years past without raising any objection. In none of the other ports named have hongts been established, so that even if your vessels were to proceed thither, they would have no means of disposing of their cargoes. Furthermore, no interpreters are available, so you would have no means of explaining your wants, and nothing but general inconvenience would result. For the future, as in the past, I decree that your request is refused and that the trade shall be limited to Macao.



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

1795

While in hiding to avoid the arrest warrant issued by the Jacobins, the Marquis de Condorcet had written *ESQUISSE D'UN TABLEAU HISTORIQUE DES PROGRÈS DE L'ESPRIT HUMAIN* (SKETCH OF A HISTORICAL PICTURE OF THE HUMAN MIND). He offered that [China](#) was an impediment to human political and moral progress. The [Chinese](#) as a people and as a culture were outside the general march of human progress. They were the Other that defined all our Western virtues!

The Philadelphia merchant Stephen Girard, in putting together a fleet to trade with [China](#), named his four vessels the *Voltaire*, the *Rousseau*, the *Montesque*, and the *Helvetius*.



THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

CHINA



CHINA

THE CENTRAL KINGDOM

1796

In [China](#), the emperor Chien Lung had generated his last selfrighteous duplicity, and died. The White Lotus cult of messianic vegetarians was causing no end of trouble.⁶¹

An English fleet captured Ambon in the [Spice Islands](#). Captain Jonathan Carnes of [Salem](#), Massachusetts secretly sailed his schooner *Rajah* to [Sumatra](#) to acquire bulk [pepper](#). According to Charles Corn's *THE SCENTS OF EDEN: A HISTORY OF THE SPICE TRADE* (NY: Kodansha America, 1999), pages 242-4:

The origins of Captain Carnes's voyage of 1796 may be found in an earlier expedition. In December 1785 Elias Hasket Derby, shipowner, had sent the *Grand Turk*, commanded by the twenty-seven-year-old former privateersman Ebenezer West, around the Cape of Good Hope to Île de France (Mauritius). Though she was the first American ship to stop there, her captain found little enthusiasm from the natives for his cargo of butter, fish, flour, rice, and rum, and trading proceeded slowly. Approached by a Frenchman to carry a cargo to Canton, West agreed, after establishing a base on Mauritius for future [Salem](#) expeditions. Sailing to Canton was an audacious move, for the ship was not insured beyond Île de France, and West had only crude charts for the unknown waters and the pirate-infested Straits of Malacca, through which no American ship had ever sailed. But although the shipowner, Derby, was not seaman himself, he was known for trusting the judgment of an enterprising shipmaster and giving him his head. Captain West steered northeast through unknown waters for China, dreaming of an unprecedented fortune from the East. Arriving at the mouth of South China's Pearl Rivers in September 1786, Captain West learned that the *Grand Turk* was New England's first vessel to reach [China](#). With a difficult voyage behind him, West faced another arduous task in meeting the complex trade regulations and customs of the Chinese, an elaborate ceremony of bribes and fees. The English East India Company had established a factory here a hundred years earlier, followed later by the French and Dutch; by an imperial decree of 1757, Canton had been made China's sole port for foreign trade. But there were tensions. Already the Honourable Company's exportation of [opium](#) from India to China was beginning to alarm Chinese authorities by its reversal of a trade balance hitherto favorable to them. This sinister commerce would lead eventually to the rise of Hong Kong as a deepwater port, the Opium Wars, and Lord Ashley's parliamentary denunciation in 1843 that such trade "was utterly inconsistent with the honour and duty of a Christian kingdom." Despite the frictions, however, Canton in 1785, with its coveted Chinese products of porcelains, teas, silks, and rhubarb, was the choice port of call for Western traders. A "celestial representative," or customs inspector, boarded to sail the ship upstream to Whampoa Reach, a widening in the river twelve miles south of the port proper. Here the cargo was unloaded and carried upriver in sampans threading their way through junks and tea-deckers to Canton Harbor, where the shallow-drafted vessels were unloaded at factories. "New

61. This group, led by a radical lay clergy, was something of the ilk of our Know-Nothingism or Methodism in America, and thus could prove to be quite hazardous for innocent standers-by who were not mustering a similar enthusiasm.



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people," as visitors were known, were restricted to these walled compounds of warehouses called *hongs*, where goods were stored and negotiations conducted through one of a dozen imperially appointed Chinese merchants, in this case a man known as Pinqua. William Vans was West's supercargo, or traveling business agent, and it was his responsibility to purchase goods. Soon the ship's hold was filled with diverse teas transported in boxes from eight hundred miles inland on the backs of porters, crates of porcelain, and sacks of cassia (Chinese [cinnamon](#)). With a loaded ship and the issue of the grand chop certifying that all duties and taxes were paid, the *Grand Turk* was cleared for Captain West to sail downriver. The ship returned to Salem Harbor in May 1787 to a thunderous welcome, with gun salutes and crowds cheering over the exotic cargo. Derby had tripled his investment on a pioneering voyage, and the gaze of [Salem](#) seafarers was suddenly to the Far East.

"MAGISTERIAL HISTORY" IS FANTASIZING: HISTORY IS CHRONOLOGY

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"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



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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



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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.