

China's  
Imperial Past

*An Introduction to Chinese History and Culture*

CHARLES O. HUCKER



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For  
H. G. Creel, E. A. Kracke,  
and all my many other teachers  
through the years

Nothing benefits learning more than being associated  
with the right people. HSÜN-TZU

## Preface

**T**HIS BOOK is of course not the only way in which the history of traditional Chinese civilization can be presented. But its approach is the most satisfactory way I have found, in a quarter century of teaching and writing, to do justice to the myriad complexities of Chinese history—by giving balanced attention to all the major elements that constituted Chinese civilization in any period, to their interrelationships, and to their changes over time.

My emphasis is on patterns and themes rather than factual data. Unfortunately for the nonspecialist reader, however, no treatment of China can avoid distractingly strange names and terms. I have tried to keep them to an irreducible minimum. As a further convenience, I have generally referred to Chinese places only by their modern names, ignoring their historic mutations.

It would be impossible for me to give proper credit to all my professional peers and all my students whose analyses, interpretations, and insights have shaped and reshaped my understanding of Chinese civilization and who have thus contributed to this book. I hope the dedication page will acknowledge, even if it cannot discharge, my heavy obligation to all those from whom I have learned, and especially my obligation to the two distinguished University of Chicago scholars, now retired, under whose guidance I am proud to have begun my study of China.

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C.O.H.

*Ann Arbor*  
*May 1975*

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# CHINA

*in the Nineteenth Century*

