WEEK 1
HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY OF CHINA

CHINA’S EARLY HISTORY

THE SHAMAN, XIA AND SHANG DYNASTIES
BEGINNINGS OF I CHING YIN/YANG CULTURE

THE WESTERN AND EASTERN ZHOU DYNASTY
SPRING AND AUTUMN PERIOD

WARRING STATES PERIOD
The beginnings of ancient China lie some 5,000 years ago, when a tribal people settled along the banks of the Yellow River -- its source high on the Tibetan plateau, its mouth at the Yellow Sea. These people were hunters-gatherers, and farmers. Millet was most likely their first grain cultivated; rice and corn and wheat coming later. Evidence exists that they were also potters and musicians, and that they produced the world’s first wine.
The *Wu* – Shaman of Ancient China

Their relationship to the cosmos was a shamanic one. At least some among them were able to communicate directly with plants, minerals, and animals; to journey deep into the earth, or visit distant galaxies. They were able to invoke, through dance and ritual, elemental and supernatural powers, and enter into ecstatic union with them. The class of people most adept at such techniques became known as the *wu* – the shamans of ancient China.

- Early China was developed mostly along the Yellow River and the Yangtze River delta around current City of Shanghai. The Yellow River that divided China north and south that played a major role in clan and major family development. And it was the shaman of the various clans who served as the glue who ultimately made sense of it all and pulled it all together.
What was the role of the Shaman?

1. Inviting the spirits – The shaman was to invite the spirits to visit the mortal realm and offer themselves as a place for them to stay.
2. Interpreting dreams – Dreams were considered the carriers of omens, the shaman’s task is to interpret the messages of the spirit.
3. Reading omens – to observe the changes in nature, predict the course of events, and decide whether it was auspicious or not to engage in a certain activity.
4. Rainmaking – It was the task of the shaman to pray for rain.
5. Healing – The task of healing fell to the shaman who could deal with both good and bad spirits. The Shamaness (women proved to be best at this) and many early shaman were women.
6. Celestial divination – The key to peace and prosperity was following the Celestial Way, or way of Heaven. It was this desire to look to the stars and planets that led to a name for this. This name would one day be known as the Tao, and man could relate to this through the I Ching.
7. Developing symbols and reading cracks that developed on pieces of tortoise shells, and later writing on strips of these shells led to development of a written language. This was first done by the shaman.
### Outline of Shandong’s Early Pre-History

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<td>2. Beixin culture</td>
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<td>3. Dawenkou culture</td>
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<td>4. Dongyi or Eastern Yi</td>
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<td>5. Longshan culture</td>
<td>3000 to 2000 BC</td>
<td>Jinan</td>
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<td>6. Yueshi Culture</td>
<td>1900 to 1500 BC</td>
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Shandong’s Early History - The Houli Culture

The **Houli culture** (6500-5500 BC) was a Neolithic culture in Shandong, China. The people of the culture lived in square, semi-subterranean houses. Archaeological evidence shows that domesticated dogs and pigs were used. The type site at Houli was discovered in the Linzi District of Shandong and was excavated from 1989 to 1990. The culture was followed by the Beixin culture. The Houli culture is currently the earliest known fully developed Neolithic culture in the Haidai, or eastern seaboard, area of China.

**Linzi**, originally called **Yingqiu**, was the capital of the ancient Chinese state of Qi during the Zhou Dynasty. The ruins of the city lie in modern day Linzi District, Shandong, China. The city was one of the largest and richest in China during the Spring and Autumn Period. While occupying Linzi in **221** BC, King Zheng of Qin completed his conquest of the Chinese rival states and declared himself the first emperor of China shortly afterwards. The ruins of the ancient city were excavated in 1926 by Japanese archaeologists and in 1964 by Chinese archaeologists.

Model of ancient Linzi is now Zibo
Shandong’s Early History - The Dawenkou culture

The Dawenkou culture is a name given by archaeologists to a group of Neolithic communities who lived primarily in Shandong, but also appeared in Anhui, Henan and Jiangsu, China. The culture existed from 4100 BC to 2600 BC, co-existing with the Yangshao culture. Turquoise, jade and ivory artifacts are commonly found at Dawenkou sites. The earliest examples of alligator drums appear at Dawenkou sites.

Archaeologists commonly divide the culture into three phases: the early phase (4100-3500 BC), the middle phase (3500-3000 BC) and the late phase (3000-2600 BC). Based on the evidence from grave goods, the early phase was highly egalitarian. The phase is typified by the presence of most notable design features include the rimmed lip and the slightly serrated edge around the middle girth.

Graves built with earthen ledges became increasingly common during the latter parts of the early phase. During the middle phase, grave goods began to emphasize quantity over diversity. During the late phase, wooden Coffins began to appear in Dawenkou burials. The culture became increasingly stratified, as some graves contained no grave goods while others contained a large quantity of grave goods. The type of site at Dawenkou, located in Tai'an, Shandong, was excavated in 1959, 1974 and 1978.
Dawenkou culture in early Shandong Province

The figure on the bottom right is an ancient sunrise painting. The painting was a design inscribed on a big-mouthed pottery jar—a sacrificial vessel to the sun by primitive Chinese forebears in Shandong during the period when the Dawenkou culture thrived (4000-2000 BC). This painting, or design, consists of three parts: upper, middle and bottom. The upper part is a round sun. Below it is a moon. A huge mountain with five peaks is at the bottom.

Some experts think this might be the original of "sunrise", with the sun above a cloud (or perhaps above the setting moon), on top of a mountain. The same character appears in inscriptions on bone or tortoise shell, on ancient bronze vessels, in lesser seal characters, in official script and in regular script in later times. The origin of the character is shown in the picture. From the angle of calligraphy we might regard the sun in the picture as round as a circle. The moon is a bit wavelike. The mountain is drawn with the brush exerting strength.
The Dongyi or Eastern Yi

The Dongyi or Eastern Yi; literally "Eastern Barbarians" was a collective term, referring to ancient peoples who lived in eastern China during the prehistory of ancient China and in lands located to the east of ancient China. People referred to as Dongyi vary across the ages. They were one of the Siyi (Four Barbarians) in Chinese culture, along with the Northern Di, the Southern Man, and the Western Rong; as such, the name "Yi" was something of a catch-all and was applied to different groups over time. According to the earliest Chinese record, the Zuo Zhuan, the Shang Dynasty was attacked by King Wu of Zhou while attacking the Dongyi and collapsed afterwards.

Dongyi culture was one of the oldest neolithic cultures in China. Some Chinese scholars extend the historical use of Dongyi to prehistoric times, according to this belief, the neolithic culture correlates to Houli culture, Beixin culture, Dawenkou culture, Longshan culture and Yueshi culture, five evolutionary phases. Deliang He, thinks that Dongyi culture used to be one of the leading cultures in neolithic China.
Shandong’s Early History - The Longshan Culture

The Chengziya Archaeological Site, also spelled Chengziyai, is the location of the first discovery of the neolithic Longshan culture in 1928. The discovery of the Longshan Culture at Chengziya was a significant step towards understanding the origins of Chinese civilization. Chengziya remains the largest pre-historical settlement found to date. The site is located in Shandong province, China, about 25 kilometres (16 mi) to the east of the provincial capital Jinan. It is protected and made accessible by the Chengziya Ruins Museum.

The distinctive feature of the Longshan culture was the high level of skill in pottery making, including the use of pottery wheels. The Longshan culture was noted for its highly polished black pottery (or egg-shell pottery). This type of thin-walled and polished black pottery has also been discovered in the Yangtze River valley and as far as today's southeastern coast of China. It is a clear indication that neolithic agricultural sub-groups of the greater Longshan Culture had spread out across ancient boundaries of China.

Roadside marker of the site of the Chengziya Ruins
Ancient wall of Longshan
The Longshan Culture – Shandong and Taosi

The Longshan culture, sometimes encountered as Lungshan after its previous romanization was a late Neolithic culture in China centered on the central and lower Yellow River and dated from about 3000 to 2000 BC. The Longshan culture is named after the town of Longshan ("Dragon Mountain") in the east of the area under the administration of the city of Jinan, Shandong Province, where the first archaeological find (in 1928) and excavation (in 1930 and 1931) of this culture took place at the Chengziya Archaeological Site. Early studies indicated that the Longshan and Yangshao cultures were one and the same. It is now widely accepted that the Longshan culture is in fact a later development of the Yangshao culture.

The Taosi site, dated back to 4,300 years ago, is located in Xiangfen County, Linfen City of Shanxi Province, and covers an area of 3 million square meters. It is believed to be a settlement of the period of the five legendary rulers (2,600-1,600 BC) in Chinese history. A historical document says that China had special officials in charge of astronomical observation as early as the 24th century BC. The discovery of the ancient observatory in Taosi confirmed the records.
Shandong’s Early History - The Beixin Culture

The **Beixin culture**, 4300–4100 BC) was a Neolithic culture in Shandong, China. It was the successor of the Houli culture (6500–5500 BC) and precursor of the Dawenkou culture (4100–2600 BC). The type site at Beixin was discovered in Tengzhou, Shandong, China. Sites of the Beixin culture are primarily found in southern Shandong, particularly the valleys of the Xue and Wensi rivers.

Rice and millet cultivation at Yuezhuang site in Jinan

Evidence of the earliest rice cultivation in the Yellow River basin came from carbonized rice grains from the Yuezhuang site in Jinan, Shandong. Archaeologists also excavated millet from the Yuezhuang site. Research at the Yuezhuang and Xihe sites of the Houli culture in the Lower Yellow River has found abundant plant remains, including rice and millet (7800–7000 BC). Although studies of the diverse economic practices of the Houli people have begun, issues such as ecological diversity and relationships between site formation processes with environmental changes are still poorly understood.
The Three Sovereigns & Five Emperors

The leaders of this pre-dynastic era were the legendary Three Sovereigns, or “August Ones,” and the Five Emperors – morally perfected sage-kings who used their magical powers to protect their people and to create conditions for peaceful and harmonious living. The wisdom, compassion and enlightened power of these beings was considered beyond mortal comprehension; and the benefit they bestowed upon those they governed, immeasurable.

• The Heavenly Sovereign, Fu Xi, is said to have discovered the eight trigrams – the *bagua* – which is the foundation of the I Ching, Taoism’s most well-known system of divination.

• The Human Sovereign, Shennong, is credited with the invention of farming and the introduction of herbs for medicinal purposes.

The Yellow Emperor, Huangdi, who is known as father of the Chinese medicine.
The Dragon in Chinese Culture

Dragons are deeply rooted in Chinese culture. The Chinese sign for the dragon first appeared upon turtle shields as a tribal totem ages before the Xia and Shang dynasties, and was eventually emblazoned on the national flag during the Qing Dynasty [1644-1911AD]. Chinese mythology is rich with the artwork, tales and depictions of dragons. Equating figures such as Fu Xi, Shennong, and the Yellow Emperor with the dragon gave them heavenly and mystical qualities as the sage.

Later, especially the Taoist figures Lao, Chuang and Lieh Tzu, Confucius, Mencius among others were said to achieve immortality as the dragon, a celestial being who rests on clouds in the sky. The emperor later became the “Son of Heaven” as the dragon. Dragons are thought to give life; hence their breath is called "sheng chi" or divine energy. They are essentially benevolent and associated with abundance and blessing, helpful, wise and generous with their gifts when people encountered them.
Connections between the shaman, sage, Tao and I Ching

Over time the early shaman, the sage, felt the need to convey the secrets of cosmology, the universe, so the Book of Changes was created. From the use of turtle shells came the yarrow-stalk oracle in order to lend aid in a mysterious way to the light of the Gods. To heaven they assigned the number three and to earth they assigned the number two, from these they computed the other numbers. They contemplated the changes in the dark and the light and established the hexagrams in accordance with them. They brought about movements in the firm and yielding, and thus produced the individual lines.

They put themselves in accord with Tao and its power, and its power, and in conformity with this laid down the order of what is right. By thinking through the outer world to the end, and by exploring the law of their nature to the deepest core, they arrived at an understanding of fate.

The original purpose of the hexagrams was to consult destiny. As divine beings do not give direct expression to their knowledge, a means had to be found by which they could make themselves intelligible. Chance came to be utilized as a fourth medium; the very absence of an immediate meaning in chance permitted a deeper meaning to come to expression in it. The oracle was the outcome of this use of chance. ---from The I Ching or Book of Changes, Wilhelm/Baynes
Beginnings of the Xia Dynasty

The Yellow Emperor's tribe and the Red Emperor's tribe continually merged with surrounding tribes, forming the Yellow and Red Tribe. This tribe then combined with different tribes in the Central Plain and the middle reaches of the Yellow River to form the earliest Hua Xia nation. One of the best-known leaders of the tribal coalition after the Yellow and Red Emperors was Yao.

During his reign, the mighty Yangtze River overflowed and inundated the plains. Yao designated Gun, leader of the Xia tribe, to oversee efforts to stem the floods. When Yao became too old to preside over things, he passed his title and authority as the head of the tribal coalition to Shun. Shun went on to assign Yu, son of Gun, to take up the task of taming the floods. Yu came to realize that Gun had failed because he had been trying to contain the water. He decided to abandon this approach in favor of letting the water flow and ebb in its natural course.

Yu's contributions in harnessing the deluge and encouraging farming were well-recognized by his tribesmen. He was elected leader of the tribal coalition to succeed Shun. Since he was born in the Xia clan, he was also known as Xia Yu, and is venerated as Yu the Great.
The following table lists the rulers of the Xia Dynasty.

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<th>Order</th>
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The Xia Dynasty (c. 2070 – c. 1600 BC) is the first dynasty in China to be described in ancient historical chronicles such as Bamboo Annals, Classic of History and Record of the Grand Historian. The dynasty was established by the legendary Yu the Great after Shun, the last of the Five Emperors, gave his throne to him. The Xia was later succeeded by the Shang Dynasty (1600 –1046 BC). The only really significant rulers were Yu the Great who was the first and Jie the last one, who was very bad. His downfall led to the founding of the Shang Dynasty.
The Xia marked the transition between primitive society and class society first began with an abdication system and choosing a leader by ability. After Yu the great died, his son Qi changed to the hereditary system, i.e., choosing the leader by the bloodline. The Xia Dynasty had no written records so at times they are considered myth. Their society was based on slavery. Their culture was very into astronomy that followed the shaman. They were among the first to chart constellations and supernovas. Most of the Xia was learned from ancient records from other civilizations because the Xia themselves had no form of writing. Some of these records include the Bamboo Annals and the Records of the Grand Historian.

They lived next to the Yellow River and the Xia were very good fishermen. They established the city that six centuries later would be known as Erlitou. The Xia had descended from a wide-spread Yellow River valley Neolithic culture known as the Longshan culture. There is little written record from the Xia Dynasty. Written accounts are generally attributed to others who came in contact with them. The dynasty that followed the Xia was the Shang who overthrew Jie and took over China. They too followed the hereditary system. The Xia dynasty lasted 500 years.
The Bronze Age and Erlitou

Recent archaeological discoveries, however, are showing that the legendary Xia dynasty, or at least a Xia people with a political entity (dynasty, state, or chiefdom), was real and that it preceded the Shang dynasty. Discovered in 1959, Erlitou is a Bronze Age Xia site which was occupied by 1800 BC. The first known bronze vessels in China are found at these sites near the middle reaches of the Yellow River in northern central China. These bronze vessels were made by heating the bronze to a liquid state and then pouring it into clay molds which formed the different sections of the finished object. Erlitou seems to have monopolized the production of ritual bronze vessels at this time. These bronze vessels were made expressly for the ritual consumption of a rice and/or white grape wine.
The Early Shang Dynasty and Bronze Age

Erlitou’s power seems to have collapsed by about 1600 BC. At about the same time, a new walled town, Yanshi, was built about 6 kilometers away. There was no destruction of Erbitou, but Yanshi seems to replace Erbitou as a population center and a power center. As Erbitou was being abandoned, the Shang Dynasty (1600 to 1046 BC) was emerging. During this period, casting bronze artifacts reached new heights. The Shang Dynasty kings ruled over much of northern China. Shang was a territorial state, not a city state. One of the characteristics of territorial states is the movement of capitals. During this era, the capital moved among several different sites, with Zhengzhou and Anyang being two of the important sites. The transition from copper to bronze was a major technological advance. In China, the Bronze Age began about 2000 BC and lasted until the beginning of the Iron Age about 750 BC. Chinese bronze is an alloy of copper mixed with small amounts of tin and lead. With bronze, the Chinese were able to produce weapons on a massive scale and ritual vessels which were used by the ruling class.

Fuhao, the first woman to appear in Chinese written history, commanded an army of 10,000 soldiers during the Shang dynasty.
When these eight trigrams are arranged into their opposites, forming an octagon it is called a bagua. The use of an octagon to arrange the trigrams is in itself representative of the tension of change, as the center is struck between four polar opposites. The Chinese *I Ching*, or *Book of Changes* in English, represents sixty-four archetypes that make up all the possible six-line combinations of yin and yang, called hexagrams. Yin/yang is the fundamental duality of the Universe whose dynamic tension gives shape to all phenomena and the changes they go through. Examples of the yin/yang polarity are female/male, earth/heavens, dark/light, in/out, even/odd, and so on.

The interpretations of the sixty-four hexagrams describe the energy of human life divided into sixty-four types of situations, relationships or dilemmas. Each hexagram can be analyzed in a number of ways. Divide the six-line forms in half and you get trigrams (three yin or yang lines) that represent the Chinese version of the eight fundamental elements: sky, earth, thunder, wind, water, fire, mountain, and lake. These eight trigrams, known as "Hua," also serve as the compass points in the ancient art of placement known as Feng Shui (pronounced fung shway).
The *I Ching* and King Wen

The earliest composition of *I Ching* interpretations is attributed to King Wen. Toward the end of the Shang Dynasty, when the unjust emperor Zhou Wang imprisoned Wen, he reportedly used his confinement to meditate on the trigrams, pairing them up to produce sixty-four possible hexagrams. Each pair of trigrams took on a meaning specific to their combination. In what we might assume was an enlightened state of mind, King Wen assigned each of the sixty-four hexagrams a name, adding a few sentences to explain its meaning. It is said that his son, King Wu, added additional interpretative text, bringing the *I Ching* closer to its current form.

The *I Ching* has always been used to try to determine the best course of action, to make decisions knowing situations can often change. The problem over the centuries has been when fortune telling lacks moral significance. It’s importance comes full circle when the question becomes “What am I to do?”. Then this book of divination becomes a book of wisdom. The hexagrams could be used to counsel one’s future actions based on correct action he should take to shape his fate. The key is recognizing situations in their beginning. When things are at their beginning they can be controlled, if one waits until consequences manifest you become impotent to them. Thus *The Book of Changes*, or *I Ching* became a book of divination. It was from this the yin/yang philosophy was developed. This also fit nicely into the shamanistic traditions of ancient China.
The *I Ching* contains the measure of heaven and earth; therefore it is universal and becomes endless. This enables us to comprehend the Tao of heaven and earth and the order of each one. It is the process of continual renewal in what is known as the light and the dark as two primal powers, or the two polar opposites of the universe that continually manifest in the universe. These two later were considered as positive and negatives, or opposites that emphasize change, and more importantly that change is inevitable and must occur. Yin and yang were first seen as opposites with the ridgepole of a tent as an example. Once in place one can identify up/down, front/back, side verse side. These are opposites that can be easily identified.

Yin/yang represents the struggle between two equal yet opposing forces by which their struggle creates a tension. There is no harmony in the two unless both are at rest and find their middle. It is the extremes in nature and one’s personality going too far in one direction or another that creates disharmony in our inner nature, our environment, and the universe as a whole.
Divination practices and Fu Hao, an early day Mulan

Out of early divination practices from the Shang Dynasty comes what is traditionally considered the first classic, the *I Ching*, or *The Book of Changes*. Divination utilized strips of tortoise shell, yarrow sticks and later coins; the *I Ching became* a manual on reading the various diagrams resulting on how these were read.

In 1976, archaeologists discovered the intact grave of Fu Hao, a consort of the Shang King Wu Ding and a military general. Fu Hao was buried at Anyang about 1200BC. Her tomb was of moderate size and contained 16 human skeletons, many of which were probably sacrificial victims. With regard to grave goods, the grave contained ivory goblets, several hundred jades, and more than 200 ritual bronze vessels. The total weight of the bronzes was 1.6 metric tons, which is an indication of the enormous wealth held by the elite. Additional wealth is shown in the 6,900 cowry shells—a form of Shang Dynasty currency—which were also buried with her.
The Shang move capital from Qufu to Yin

At the beginning of the 14th century BC, King Pangeng of the Shang Dynasty moved his capital from Yān (present day Qufu, in present day Shandong Province), to the site of an old village which had existed since 5,000 BC, upon the banks of the Huan River. The new city was named "Yin" (殷), and from that point on the dynasty that founded it would also be known as the Yin Dynasty. The name "Yin" is an ancient term referring to "vibrant music-making".

King Wu Ding continued to use Yin as his capital and launched numerous military campaigns from this base (many led by Fu Hao, one of his reigning wives, who was both a general and a high priest) against surrounding tribes thus securing Shang rule and raising the dynasty to its historical zenith. In ancient times Yin was also known as Běimĕng (北蒙) or Yīnyì (殷邑) whilst oracle bone inscriptions record its name as Dàyìshāng (大邑商) or Shāngyì (商邑).

As social differences increased within the slave-owning society, later rulers became pleasure-seekers who took no interest in state affairs. King Zhòu, the last of the Shang dynasty kings, is particularly remembered for his ruthlessness and debauchery. His increasingly autocratic laws alienated the nobility until King Wu of the Zhou Dynasty was able to gain the support to rise up and overthrow the Shang.
The Zhou Dynasty is divided into two periods: the Western Zhou (11th century BC to 771 BC) and the Eastern Zhou (770 BC - 221 BC). It is so divided because the capital cities in the Western Zhou of Fengyi (presently in the southwest of Chang'an County, Shaanxi Province) and Haojing lie to the west of the Eastern Zhou's capital of Luoyi (present Luoyang, Henan Province). As to the Eastern Dynasty, it is divided into the Spring and Autumn Periods (770 BC-476 BC), and the Warring States Period (476 BC - 221 BC). Each of the periods featured turbulent wars.
The **Book of Rites** (Lǐjì), literally the **Record of Rites**, is a collection of texts describing the social forms, administration, and ceremonial rites of the Zhou Dynasty were understood in the Warring States and the early Han periods. The *Book of Rites*, along with the Rites of Zhou (*Zhoulì*) and the Book of Etiquette and Rites (*Yìlì*), which are together known as the "Three Li (*San lì)*," constitute the ritual (*lì*) section of the Five Classics which lay at the core of the traditional Confucian canon. The original below pre-dates 900BC.
The Book of Documents or History

The Book of Documents or History, also known as the Shangshu, is one of the Five Classics of ancient Chinese literature. It is a collection of rhetorical prose attributed to figures of the Xia, Shang and Zhou, and has served as one of the foundations of Chinese political philosophy for over 3,000 years.

The chapters are grouped into four sections representing different eras: the semi-mythical reign of Yu the Great, and the Xia, Shang and Zhou dynasties. The Zhou section accounts for over half the text. Some of its New Text chapters are among the earliest examples of Chinese prose, recording speeches from the early years of the Zhou dynasty in the late 11th century BC. Although the other three sections purport to record earlier material, most scholars believe that even the New Text chapters in these sections were composed later than those in the Zhou section, with chapters relating to the earliest periods being as recent as the 4th or 3rd centuries BC.
The Book of Odes or Songs

The fourth Classic traditionally ascribed the ching, the Book of Odes or Songs; this book is a collection of three hundred poems from the Zhou dynasty. Traditionally considered to have been compiled by Confucius, but probably much older. This collection of 305 songs is today valued for its glimpses into ordinary life of the mid-Zhōu period, so that they would have been “old” by Confucius’ time. The text is usually divided into three parts: fēng ("winds") or folksongs, yǎ ("elegance") or songs intended to be sung at official banquets, and sòng ("praise") used in elite sacrifices.

The Book of Songs repeatedly cited Heaven, the emperor and destiny. It acknowledges Heaven’s law as the ultimate law of the universe, as the standard to “guide with virtue”, reward the kind and punish the evil, master social justice (judging the kind and evil in the human world) as the highest standard of values and moral beliefs in the Zhou Dynasty.

"Be inspired by the Songs, confirmed by ritual, and perfected by music."
(Analects VIII: 8)
The Fifth Classic - Spring and Autumn Annals

The Spring and Autumn Annals is the official chronicle of the State of Lu covering the period from 722 BC to 481 BC. It is the earliest surviving Chinese historical text to be arranged on by annual or calendar principles. The text is extremely concise and, if all the commentaries are excluded, about 16,000 words long. Because it was traditionally regarded as having been compiled by Confucius (after a claim to this effect by Mencius), it was included as one of the Five Classics of Chinese literature. However, few modern scholars believe that Confucius had much influence on the formation of the text; this is now assigned to various chroniclers from the State of Lu.

Content and context

In early China, "spring and autumn" was commonly used for the year as a whole, and the phrase was used as a title for the chronicles of several Chinese states during this period. For example, the chapter of Obvious Existence of Ghosts in the Mozi refers to numerous Spring and Autumn Annals of Zhou, Yan, Song, and Qi. All these texts are now lost; only the chronicle of the State of Lu has survived. What is important here is that Confucius was the “compiler” and “updater” of all five classics. He may not have been the originator in many cases, but he gave them context to each other and the status quo in China in his time. This is what contributed to his legacy and fame. He understood the importance of how they related to each other and what people’s relationship to the five classics should be and with each other as well.
The Warring States Period

The Warring States Period covers the period from 475 BC to the unification of China under the Qin Dynasty in 221 BC. It is considered to be the second part of the Eastern Zhou Dynasty, following the Spring and Autumn Period, although the Zhou Dynasty ended in 256 BC, 35 years earlier than the end of the Warring States period. During these periods, the Chinese sovereign the king of the Zhou Dynasty, was merely a figurehead.

The name Warring States Period was derived from the Record of the Warring States, a work historically compiled early in the Han Dynasty. The date for the beginning of the Warring States Period is disputed. While it is frequently cited as 475 BC (following the Spring and Autumn Period), 403 BC, is also considered as the beginning of the period.

The Warring States Period was an era when regional warlords annexed smaller states around them and consolidated their power. The process began in the Spring and Autumn Period and by the 3rd century BC, seven major states had emerged as the dominant powers in China. The states were Qi, Chu, Yan, Han, Zhao, Wei and Qin.
More than three thousand years of Chinese History. Capturing it’s essence while giving proper due to people and places... the role of the shaman, Fu Xi, Yu the Great, Yellow Emperor, the Xia and Shang, and the dragon... The Yellow River and Erlitou. The bronze age, Shang King Wu Ding and consort Fu Hao. Divination; first tortoise shells, yarrow sticks and then coins. King Wen, the I Ching and the hexagrams. Western Zhou, the Book of Rites, the three Li and ceremonial rituals of the Zhou. The Book of Odes and Songs citing Heaven, the emperor, destiny, dragons traveling the wind, elegance and praise. The Book of History; documents extolling famous speeches and laws - the official history of Lu. And the final Classic, The Spring and Autumn Annals with it’s concise text and commentaries – just waiting for Confucius like all the rest. Ending with the Warring States Period and the emerging power of the Qi, Chu, Yan, Han, Zhao, Wei and Qin.