1.  Ancient Chinese Legends: The Three Sage Kings
   1. King Yao: a virtuous ruler bringing harmony to society
   2. King Shun: regulating the four seasons, weights, measures, and units of time
   3. King Yu: rescued China from raging floods of the Yellow River
   4. Legends reflected the values of the society
2. The Appearance of Humans in East Asia
   1. Beginnings were over two hundred thousand years ago
   2. Domesticated rice around 7000 B.C.E. in the valley of the Yangzi River
   3. Millet cultivation in the valley of the Yellow River
   4. Wheat and barley became staple foods of north China by 2000 B.C.E.
3. Emergence of a Complex Society: Second Millennium B.C.E.
   1. Agricultural villages appeared in the valleys of the two rivers
   2. Cities and states appeared in north China during the second millennium B.C.E.
   3. The three dynastic states in the valley of Yellow River: Xia, Shang, and Zhou

 **Political Organization in Early China**

1. Early Agricultural Society and the Xia Dynasty
   1. The Yellow River
      1. Water source at high plateau of Tibet
      2. Loess soil carried by the river's water, hence "yellow"
      3. The river was "China's Sorrow"
      4. Loess provided rich soil, soft and easy to work
   2. Neolithic societies after 5000 B.C.E.
      1. Yangshao society, 5000-3000 B.C.E.
      2. Excavations at Banpo village: fine pottery, bone tools
   3. The Xia dynasty
      1. Archeological discovery of the Xia is still in its preliminary stage
      2. Established about 2200 B.C.E.
      3. Legendary King Yu, the dynasty founder, a hero of flood control
      4. Erlitou: possibly the capital city of the Xia
2. The Shang Dynasty: 1766-1122 B.C.E.
   1. Arose in the southern and eastern areas of the Xia realm
   2. Many written records and material remains discovered
   3. Bronze metallurgy, monopolized by ruling elite
   4. Agricultural surpluses supported large troops
   5. A vast network of walled towns
   6. The Shang capital moved six times
   7. Lavish tombs of Shang kings
      1. Thousands of objects - chariots, weapons, bronze goods
      2. Sacrificial human victims, dogs, horses
3. The Zhou Dynasty: 1122-256 B.C.E.
   1. The rise of the Zhou
      1. The last Shang king was a bad ruler
      2. The Zhou forces toppled the Shang
   2. Mandate of heaven - the right to rule
      1. The Zhou needed to justify the overthrow
      2. Ruler as "the son of heaven"
      3. Mandate of heaven only given to virtuous rulers
   3. Political organization
      1. Adopted decentralized administration
      2. Used princes and relatives to rule regions
      3. Consequence: weak central government and rise of regional powers
   4. Iron metallurgy
      1. Iron metallurgy spread in China, the 1st millennium B.C.E.
      2. Iron weapons helped regional authorities to resist the central power
   5. The fall of the Zhou
      1. Nomadic invasion sacked Zhou capital in 711 B.C.E.
      2. Territorial princes became more independent
      3. The Warring States (403-221 B.C.E.)
      4. The last king of the Zhou abdicated his position in 256 B.C.E.

 **Society and Family in Ancient China**

1. The Social Order
   1. The ruling elites
      1. Royal family and allied noble families at the top
      2. Their lavish consumption of bronze products
      3. Hereditary aristocrats with extensive landholding
   2. Specialized labor
      1. Free artisans and craftsmen highly demanded
      2. Also served the needs of the ruling elites
   3. Merchants and trade were important
      1. Jade from central Asia
      2. Military technologies came through central Asia from Mesopotamia
      3. Tin from southeast Asia
      4. A few pieces of pottery from Mohenjo-daro
   4. Peasants, the majority of population
      1. Landless peasants provided labor
      2. Lived in small subterranean houses
      3. Women's work - wine making, weaving, silkworm raising
      4. Wood, bone, stone tools before iron was spread in the 6th century B.C.E.
   5. Slaves
      1. Mostly war prisoners
      2. Performed hard work
      3. Became sacrificial victims, especially during the Shang
2. Family and Patriarchy
   1. Early dynasties ruled through family and kinship groups
   2. Veneration of ancestors
      1. Belief in ancestors' presence and their continuing influence
      2. Burial of material goods with the dead
      3. Offering sacrifices at the graves
      4. Family heads presided over rites of honoring ancestors' spirits
   3. Patriarchal society
      1. During neolithic times, Chinese society was matrilineal
      2. The rise of large states brought focus on men's contribution
      3. After the Shang, not even queens and empresses merited temples

 **Early Chinese Writing and Cultural Development**

1. The Secular Cultural Tradition
   1. Absence of organized religion and priestly class
   2. Believed in the impersonal heavenly power - *tian*
   3. Oracle bones and early Chinese writing
      1. Oracle bones
         1. Primary instruments of fortune-tellers
         2. Discovery of the "dragon bones" in 1890s
         3. Bones recorded day-to-day concerns of the Shang royal court
      2. Early Chinese writing
         1. Earliest form was the pictograph
         2. From pictograph to ideograph
         3. Absence of alphabetic or phonetic component
         4. More than two thousand characters identified on oracle bones
         5. Modern Chinese writing is direct descendant of Shang writing
2. Thought and Literature
   1. Zhou literature
      1. *The Book of Change*, a manual of diviners
      2. *The Book of History*, the history of the Zhou
      3. *The Book of Rites*, the rules of etiquette and rituals for aristocrats
      4. *The Book of Songs*
         1. The most notable of the classic works
         2. Verses on themes both light and serious
         3. Reflected social conditions of the early Zhou
   2. Destruction of early Chinese literature
      1. Most Zhou writings have perished
      2. The first Qin emperor ordered the destruction of most writings

 **The Broad Influence of Ancient Chinese Society**

1. Chinese Cultivators and Nomadic Peoples of Central Asia
   1. Steppelands
      1. Foragers domesticated herds of animals on grassy lands
      2. Became nomads, the ancestors of Turks and Mongols
   2. Nomadic society
      1. Little farming, but relied on herding animals
      2. Exchange of products between nomads and Chinese farmers
      3. Nomads frequently invaded rich agricultural society
      4. Nomads did not imitate Chinese ways
      5. Nomadism relied on grains and manufactured goods of the Chinese
2. The Southern Expansion of Chinese Society
   1. The Yangzi valley
      1. The Yangzi, the longest river of China
      2. Two crops of rice per year in ancient China
      3. The Yangzi was dependable and beneficial to farmers
   2. The indigenous peoples of southern China
      1. Many were assimilated into Chinese agricultural society
      2. Some were pushed to hills and mountains
      3. Some migrated to Taiwan, Vietnam, Thailand
   3. The state of Chu
      1. Emerged in the central region of the Yangzi during the late Zhou
      2. Challenged the Zhou for supremacy
      3. Adopted Chinese ways