

Buddhism in China

- Buddhism, which originated in India around 530 B.C. with the teachings of Siddhartha Gautama, was introduced to China during the Han dynasty (206 B.C.-A.D. 200) by missionary monks.
- The form of Buddhism practiced in China was Mahayana Buddhism; its believers thought that the Buddha was a savior and that people could find salvation through faith in his words alone.
- Numerous Buddhist temples were built in China to provide a place for priests, monks, and nuns to study Buddhist scriptures and conduct worship services for believers.
- Statues and artwork of the Buddha were used to decorate shrines and temples, to display his life and teachings, to inspire his qualities in the believer, and to allow worshippers a place to make offerings of food and flowers.
- Another sect of Buddhism, called Chan, developed in China during A.D. 600s and stressed the value of meditation in a simple, cross-legged position without the study of scriptures.

Confucianism in China

- Confucius introduced his ideas to China at the end of the Zhou Dynasty (551–479 B.C.).
- The Confucian code of behavior revolved around five relationships: 1) ruler and subject, 2) parent and child, 3) husband and wife, 4) sibling and sibling, and 5) friend and friend. Confucianism taught that these relationships would be harmonious if the people involved were loyal, courteous, sincere, and respectful and obedient to those in authority.
- Filial respect—repaying a parent’s kindness during their lifetime and beyond—provides the foundation for a good society.
- Confucianism taught that if a ruler lived according to strong virtues, the ruler’s subjects would follow the example and a harmonious, stable society would be possible.
- According to Confucius, a better government will develop if its officials are required to earn their jobs through education and talent.
- Because of their devotion to learning, scholars should be considered the highest members of society; merchants, because they produce nothing themselves, should be considered the lowest members of society.
- A person should be less concerned with finding personal happiness than with the survival and welfare of his or her family as a whole. Even marriages should be considered something that serves the interests of the family as a whole, rather than those of individuals.

Government in China

- The Chinese believed that the emperor was given the authority to rule from Heaven. The emperor was expected to rule fairly.
- Chinese emperors exercised their powers through a bureaucracy, a system in which government workers were appointed to and trained for specific jobs.
- China was divided into provinces, where governors appointed by the emperor carried out the emperor's rule.
- Government officials were employed after taking a civil-service examination and promoted based on their scholarly talent (learnedness).
- The main duties of provincial officials included collecting taxes, recruiting workers for government projects, and maintaining domestic peace.
- The wealthy enjoyed special privileges, such as not having to pay high taxes.
- Peasants were expected to pay part of their crops as taxes to the government or devote their labor to public works projects, such as constructing dams or rebuilding canals.

Architecture in China

- Palaces, temples, and other large buildings in China were built on raised stone platforms.
- Wooden columns, made from the trunks of large trees, supported strong wooden brackets. These brackets were designed to distribute the weight of buildings' heavy tile roofs.
- Thin, flexible walls of brick or plaster were built between the wooden columns so they wouldn't collapse during earthquakes.
- Roofs were a prominent feature of most buildings. Some buildings even had double and triple roofs with eaves (overhangs) that swept upwards in graceful curves.
- Pagodas—towers with roofs curving upward at the division of each of several stories—were designed as symbols of faith in the greatness of the Buddha.
- Many temples and palaces were covered with vermilion (a bright red paint).
- Buildings were often surrounded by walls, which enclosed courtyards and gardens as well as the buildings themselves.

Written Language in China

- Written Chinese does not use an alphabet. Instead, characters (symbols) are used to express objects and ideas.
- Each character is made up of one or more basic strokes.
- The Chinese language has more than 30,000 different characters.
- Each Chinese character has a different sound and meaning.
- The characters use mostly straight lines so they can be written with a brush.
- Characters are drawn from top to bottom and from left to right.

City Planning in China

- The Chinese believed that cities were symbols of the physical universe and each person's place in it. Cities were square and faced south, a direction associated with strength and the positive forces of nature.
- The central and southern parts of a city were occupied by imperial palaces, along with the houses of nobles and government officials.
- Artisans lived and worked in the northern and western parts of the city; merchants, because of their low social status, usually lived outside the city walls.
- Large earthen and stone walls provided protection from outside attack.
- Buddhist temples and shrines were scattered throughout all major Chinese cities.
- The Tang capital of Changan was a checkerboard of intersecting streets wide enough to allow travelers to move about easily.

Attire (Dress) in China

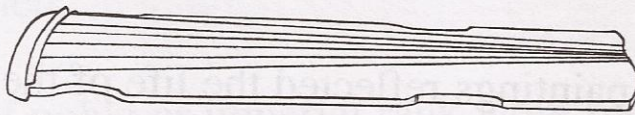
- The clothing of common citizens was usually made of cotton cloth.
- The wealthy usually wore clothing made of silk cloth. Because silk could be sold for an enormous profit to foreigners, the Chinese guarded the secret of how to make silk for hundreds of years. Rulers even threatened a horrible death to anyone who told an outsider the secret or gave away silk moths.
- In the winter the wealthy wrapped themselves in squirrel or fox furs and slipped their feet into leather slippers lined with silk.
- Fans and parasols were often carried by wealthy men and women.
- People of noble or imperial rank wore special dragon robes that were long and embroidered with elaborate patterns. Specific details of color and design indicated the wearer's rank and status.
- Poor Chinese farmers wore shirts and pants made of scratchy cloth like hemp, and their sandals were made of straw. In cold weather, they wore clothing that was padded and stuffed like a quilt to keep themselves warm.

Painting in China

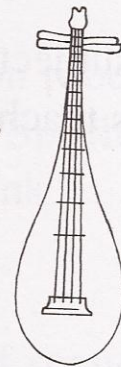
- No person could be considered well-educated without being skilled at painting.
- Ink or water color painting was often done on long horizontal scrolls of paper or silk.
- Landscape paintings were greatly admired. Artists also painted pictures of flowers, bamboo, birds, and other aspects of nature.
- Artists tried to paint the ideal world of nature, rather than an exact representation of what they saw.
- The use of monochromes, where one color is used in several shades, was popular with Chinese artists.
- The subject matter of paintings reflected the life of the Buddha or his teachings.

Music in China

- There were two major types of music in China: court music, which was played during military and civil ceremonies and at banquets, and folk music.
- Instruments were classified by the material from which they were made. They were called the earth, stone, metal, skin, wood, bamboo, gourd, and silk instruments.
- Men and women from Indonesia, Korea, and India came to the Tang dynasty court to learn how to sing, dance, and play instruments for court occasions.
- Some popular instruments played in court music were the *chin* (a zither, or long, wooden instrument with strings),



the *pipa* (a lute, or stringed guitar-like instrument),



and the *sheng* (a mouth organ).



- Chanting was taught in Buddhist monasteries. The rhythm and scales of Buddhist chants were often used in court music. The music of chants, as with other forms of Chinese music, were written on paper using symbols borrowed from the Chinese written language.

Note: Play CD Track 11 to hear the song "Etenraku."