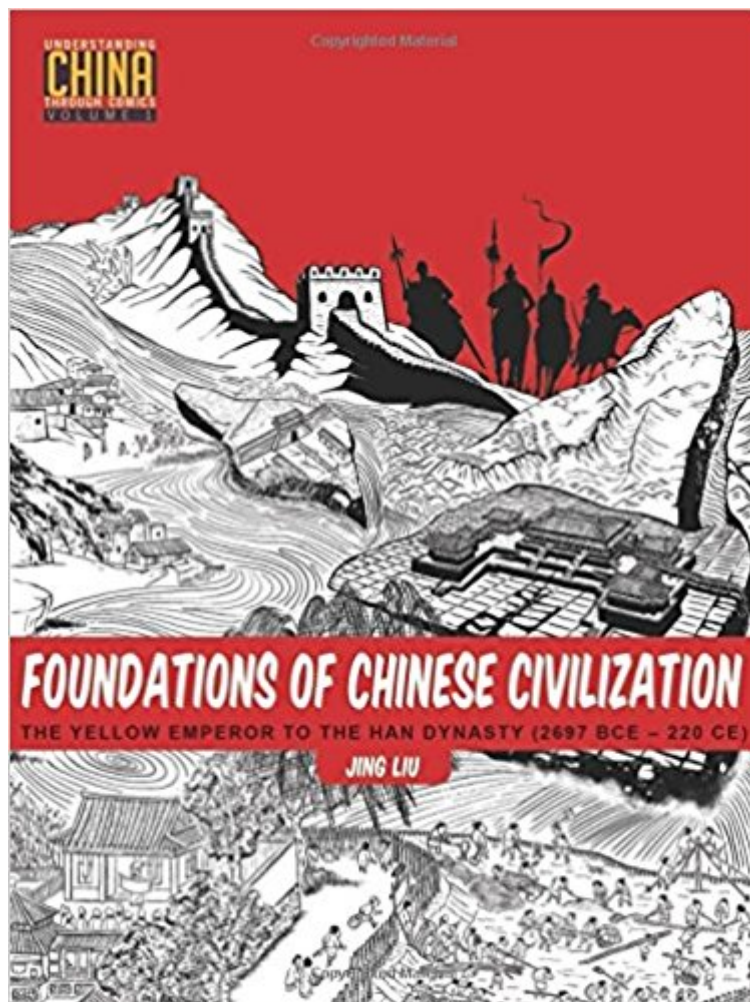




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Foundations Of Chinese Civilization: The Yellow Emperor To The Han Dynasty (2697 BCE - 220 CE) (Understanding China Through Comics)





Synopsis

Who founded China? Are Chinese people religious? What is Chinese culture and how has it changed over time? The accessible and fun Understanding China Through Comics series answers those questions and more. For all ages, Foundations of Chinese Civilization covers China's early history in comic form, introducing philosophies like Confucianism and Daoism, the story of the Silk Road, famous emperors like Han Wudi, and the process of China's unification. Includes a handy timeline. This is volume one of the Understanding China Through Comics series. Jing Liu is a Beijing native now living in Davis, California. A successful designer and entrepreneur who helped brands tell their stories, Jing currently uses his artistry to tell the story of China.

Book Information

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Series: Understanding China Through Comics (Book 1)

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Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars 40 customer reviews

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Age Range: 11 - 17 years

Grade Level: 6 - 12

Customer Reviews

Gr 5 Up • This new, revised edition will help bring this award-winning series, which was originally independently published, to a much wider audience. After an introduction, which covers the major dynasties, how they rose and fell, and geography, the author provides a brief overview of the Yellow Emperor and Xia Dynasty before launching into an exploration of the Shang Dynasty (1600–1050 BCE). Liu then examines the Zhou (1046–256 BCE), Qin

(221 BCE – 206 BCE), and Han (202 BCE – 220 CE) dynasties. The uncluttered black-and-white cartoon drawings, coupled with clear and concise explanations, are an excellent primer to early Chinese history. Focusing on broad trends, political philosophy, and the causes of each dynasty's rise and fall, this broad work is easy to understand but never oversimplified. Interested readers have a great jumping-off point for exploring more in-depth materials. Liu especially excels at clarifying the often-confusing transitional periods between dynasties. VERDICT An excellent introduction to the large trends of early Chinese history; ideal for those new to the subject. • Jennifer Rothschild, Arlington County Public Libraries, VA

"A great way to learn about China's vast history!" – Amy Tan, author of *The Joy Luck Club* "Excels at clarifying the often-confusing transitional periods between dynasties" | An excellent introduction to the large trends of early Chinese history. – School Library Journal 5/5 Stars "An invaluable source... Chinese history is a vast subject, but Jing Liu has a skillful ability to condense it all into an interesting and manageable narrative." – Kids' Book Buzz "Combines breezy style with historical rigor to strike just the right gong-tone for a middle school audience approaching the vast scope of Chinese history." – Education About Asia "The combination of silhouettes – often threatening, martial ones – with open-faced, expressively individualized figures of many social classes adds dramatic tension while neatly balancing the big-picture narrative. There's a lot to absorb even in this abbreviated form, but the visual approach lightens the load considerably." – Kirkus Reviews "The lucid, economical text makes one eager for successive volumes." – Booklist "Simple and effective" | This direct, appealing introduction to the foundations of one of the world's oldest civilizations is recommended for teens and adults. – Library Journal "The book does what it says it does: a child will come away with a basic understanding of early Chinese history, what makes the Chinese tick as a people and culture." – Asian Review of Books "This book is – 'The Magic School Bus' – for those starting to explore Chinese culture." – Dan Cao, Instructor at Confucius Institute at UC Davis "An excellent history that clearly explains the great (and ordinary) people who have made China what it is and the conflicts and debates that have shaped Chinese history. There is nothing else like it in English or Chinese." – Alan Baumler, Professor of History at Indiana University of Pennsylvania "No more burying yourself in text-heavy history books to learn about China, this comic-style book manages to be rich in information and bring Chinese history to readers in a more clear, fun, and accessible way than it's ever been done before. Easily integrated into a social studies or Chinese culture curriculum, I can't wait to get a

copy for my class." — Grace Zeng, Chinese Teacher and Middle School Chinese Curriculum Area Leader at International School of Beijing

Jing Liu has brought to life the long and complex early period of Chinese history in this wonderful graphic novel. Foundations of Chinese Civilization is a delight to read; humorous, informative, and truly captivating.

— Alexandra Pearson, Founder of The Bookworm Literary Festival

Since the 1990s, Jing Liu has been entertaining and informing foreigners about China with his cartoons. His new series of comic books is a fun, easy, accessible way to gain a basic understanding of Chinese history and culture.

— Jeremy Goldkorn, Founder of Danwei

A great way to learn about China's vast history!

— Amy Tan, author of The Joy Luck Club

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— Grace Zeng, Chinese Teacher and Middle School Chinese Curriculum Area Leader at International School of Beijing

It is certainly a fascinating look at Chinese history, and doing it in comics has certainly made it more accessible to people, especially for the Western world.

— Radio Australia

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I'm impressed by this book. I've read some Chinese history books before and found it fairly impossible to remember significant names and events and dynasties. Nearly 5000 years of history--how to process even a small part of all that? So I was very happy with this book which you can read in 2 - 3 hours (the longer time if you stop to look things up along the way). I finished it in one sitting and wasn't at all bored by it. I bought another copy to give to a friend who is interested in China (mainly through kung fu movies and literature like "Romance of Three Kingdoms"). He liked it, too (the next volume will begin with the "Three Kingdoms" history. I think one or more of Jet Li's movies involve that period so if you know someone interested in movies from China, about that time period, s/he may like this book, too). This is not the typical "comic book" style of drawing. It's not 6-10 small panels per page and with characters saying silly/funny things to liven it all up. But, since I find that style of writing very difficult to actually concentrate on and sift through (and, personally, don't want to waste time with the "funny" asides which most of the time aren't really that funny), this was perfect. The text--concise and to the point--is the main thing, but the illustrations (either a full page or 2 to a page) help you picture and remember what you're reading. The artwork, like the text, isn't very ornate, but I found it pleasing to look at and felt it went well with the material. In my opinion, this book was a lot of work for just one person. I'm impressed by both the writing and the art and find it an ambitious--and successful--presentation. Who is this for? That's a difficult question. The vocabulary, sentence length and level of detail is probably about a middle school reading level. However, it would probably be an unusual middle school student with the interest level in China to read through this. For "interest level needed", I would think it would more likely be "high school to

adult". For me, this was actually rather nice. As an adult with a long-time interest in China (but very little knowledge about this time period--the "Foundations" of Chinese civilization), it was enjoyable that the reading level itself was so easy, allowing me to concentrate on the information itself. I think this is best as a very good overview and introduction to this period (2700 BCE to 220 CE, roughly) and would make it easy to then go on to read in more detail, concentrating on the things that particularly interested you (there's a lot. For me, it was the Qin dynasty and the development of government and culture including the early Chinese philosophy. Hard to believe it only lasted 30 years or so. Now I can picture that in a way I couldn't just a few hours ago. Similarly, I was interested in the Han period and the major advances China made in so many areas during that time (400 years). These, and many other facts about early China are now at my fingertips thanks solely to this book. I liked the way Jing Liu included stories here and there (the one about the man who invented paper was pretty horrific)--not a lot, but a few to suggest biographical information that would be interesting to look up (including some very powerful women--not always forces for good), and the role of the military and Chinese-style feudalism, the geography that I now know a bit more about as well. I had forgotten what a role eunuchs played in some of the ancient courts--a bit of that is mentioned here as well. What was good about the text was how the author/illustrator extracted the key points/highlights and brought them to the reader's attention--not to be comprehensive, but to whet your interest and give a bit of foundation and introductory overview. If you don't look further, you'll still come away having learned quite a bit. If you want to know more, this is a nice, fun introduction. I also liked the way the graphics were used to visualize information. A timeline, of course, but other things too, like the way populations suffered attrition from each dynasty because of war, or a little illustration for the different philosophies--Confucianism, Legalism and Taoism--just a touch, but if you don't know anything about them, you'll get a taste and can go further if you want. All in all, I think this is very well done..

I confess, I'm no expert in Chinese history. Not even remotely. I'm not even that into comics, and this is clearly a product of the world-wide manga era. However, what I am a fan of is Larry Gonick's work; I even used his "A Cartoon History of the Universe" as a reference for a paper in college. Therefore, I fully approve of what Jing Liu's doing here, and Liu certainly does the tradition justice. What do you need to know about the origins of? There's a decent treatment of Chinese philosophy -- Confucianism, Taoism, The Art of War, and a number of others. The origins of the Han Chinese as a culture are of course given the bulk of the attention here, describing how they coalesced from independent groups into one of the world's early super powers. (And there's quite a

lot of family drama among rulers -- some of it makes Egyptian history look calm and orderly.) Even food figures into it, fittingly as the Chinese are justifiably proud of their cuisines and their international reach. This looks to be an excellent series overall and China in general is a subject we in the west should understand much more completely. Grab this one and get started.

I purchased this book for reading at work when it gets slow. It rarely gets slow enough at work for a more comprehensive history text to be practical to use, but this is broken down in to easy to digest chunks. It is great for an adult to use as casual/light reading, but I would imagine it even better a tool for someone in their early teens to understand Chinese history. The illustrations are cute and fun, the text and information is not too dense or inaccessible and it is easy to just pick up and put down as needed.

An excellent intro to the basics of ancient Chinese history. For anyone who wants a basic outline for themselves with visuals this makes a great first read and is excellent for introducing kids to what can be a dense subject. For graphics though expect more along the lines of individual characters saying things rather than a more traditional paneled comic. This is more like heavily illustrated history book for kids than it is a true comic but it achieves it's goal of making what could be a dry subject to children much more palatable.

illustrious and illuminating and, most importantly, accurate. Jing Liu has done a great job introducing ancient Chinese history to the western public.

The history of early China in broad strokes, done in easy to read manner. My only grouse was that was too short.

I am fascinated by Chinese history. This graphic novel, the first of four, briefly summarizes the beginnings of Chinese civilization from 2700 BC to the end of the Han Dynasty in 220 AD. The two largest empires in the world before the British Empire were the Roman Empire and the Han Empire. Amazingly, both ruled similar amounts of land and similar populations (50 to 60 million people) and both peaked around 100 AD. This comic book starts with the possibly legendary "Yellow Emperor" and goes on to describe the Shang Dynasty, the Zhou Dynasty, the Qin Dynasty, and finally the Han Dynasty. One emperor united 10 different kingdoms. Another imposed uniform writing, money, weights, and measures. Naturally, periodic

barbarian invasions from the north ended some dynasties and caused efforts to build portions of the Great Wall. Along the way, the book describes court life where hostility and even violence often occurred between the eunuch officials and the wives and concubines of the emperors. It also briefly summarizes different philosophies such as Confucianism, Taoism, and Legalism. And how the invention of paper and gunpowder influenced the culture and warfare. This comic is ideal for introducing Chinese civilization to teens and adults. My only negative comment would be that a few of the drawings are too busy to be easily understood.

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