

# DAWN OF FARMING IN ANCIENT CHINA

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## **Why is the “dawn of farming” anywhere a question that interests us?**

Farming, or agriculture, can be tricky to define but it focuses our resources on organisms that are managed to increase their productivity and make their procurement predictable. Our ancestors influenced the evolution of these organisms so that they are extraordinarily successful. When did this happen and under what circumstances? It's not necessarily what common sense might suggest. I'll also examine “domestication.”

## **What is the nature of Chinese agriculture today?**

We'll take a brief look at the differences between North China and South China and review what crops and animals are part of the original Chinese farming systems. We'll also look at the risks of living in the region. Rainfall, temperature, general seasonality provide clues.

## **Early rice Farming societies**

Discussion of the Tianluoshan site: 7000-5000 BP & Kuahuqiao site: 8000 – 7000 BP

## **What is wild rice and how does it differ from domesticated rice?**

This is where it gets complicated. More than a dozen traits distinguish wild from domesticated rice.

## **Ancestors of the Kuahuqiao people (12,000-8500 years ago): The Collaborative Shangshan Culture Project**

Our team from U of T and our colleagues in China have been exploring the Shangshan culture for a few years. We'll look at our geological and archaeological research. We have been working on a ditch-like structure at the edge of a village that shows wild rice in the deepest (oldest) sediments and partially domesticated rice in the younger sediments.

## **If time permits: The Yuezuang Site Project in the north (Shandong Province).**

### **Recommended reading:**

A great web resource on Kuahuqiao: <http://factsanddetails.com/china/cat2/sub1/entry-5374.html>; An overview of early agriculture in China:

<http://factsanddetails.com/china/cat2/sub1/entry-5598.html>; The Field Museum in Chicago has the following resource. It's not particularly detailed but it has some usefulness:

<http://chinahall.fieldmuseum.org/gallery-1>; A succinct excerpt from a book on Chinese archaeology is helpful:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=oX6gs6TAZdEC&pg=PA61&lpg=PA61&dq=shangshan+site+china&source=bl&ots=SHcVmKIT6r&sig=nH85WiwNILQ9IZalxSqHNC4RzZw&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKewil-KfW2a3XAhWG8YMKHdljA-w4ChDoAQg3MAM#v=onepage&q=shangshan%20site%20china&f=false>

An original study that our group published: <https://www.nature.com/articles/srep2813>