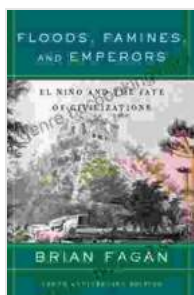


# Floods, Famines, and Emperors: Uncovering the Hidden History of Ancient China

In his groundbreaking book, *Floods, Famines, and Emperors*, renowned historian Peter Hessler takes readers on a captivating journey through the hidden history of ancient China. Through the lens of its natural disasters, Hessler reveals the ways in which floods, famines, and other natural disasters have shaped the course of Chinese history.



## Floods, Famines, and Emperors: El Nino and the Fate of Civilizations by Lara Maiklem

★★★★☆ 4.5 out of 5

Language : English  
File size : 2816 KB  
Text-to-Speech : Enabled  
Screen Reader : Supported  
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled  
Word Wise : Enabled  
Print length : 372 pages



Hessler begins his narrative with the devastating floods that plagued China during the Shang dynasty (c. 1600-1046 BCE). These floods were so severe that they forced the Shang capital to be moved several times. Hessler argues that these floods played a key role in the development of Chinese civilization, as they forced the Shang people to develop new technologies for water control and irrigation.

Hessler then turns his attention to the famines that ravaged China during the Han dynasty (206 BCE-220 CE). These famines were caused by a combination of factors, including drought, locust plagues, and warfare. Hessler shows how these famines led to widespread social unrest and political instability. In some cases, famines even led to the collapse of entire dynasties.

In the third part of his book, Hessler examines the role of emperors in responding to natural disasters. He shows how some emperors were able to use natural disasters to their advantage, while others were overthrown by their own people. Hessler argues that the way in which emperors responded to natural disasters had a profound impact on the course of Chinese history.

*Floods, Famines, and Emperors* is a masterful work of scholarship that sheds new light on the history of ancient China. Hessler's writing is clear and engaging, and he brings the past to life with vivid descriptions and firsthand accounts. This book is a must-read for anyone interested in Chinese history, natural disasters, or the human condition.

### **Praise for *Floods, Famines, and Emperors***

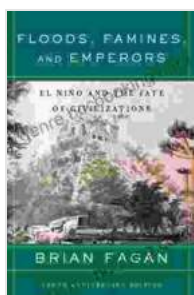
"Peter Hessler's *Floods, Famines, and Emperors* is a brilliant and original work of scholarship. Hessler has a deep understanding of Chinese history and culture, and he writes with a clarity and passion that is rare among historians. This book is a major contribution to our understanding of the Chinese past." - Jonathan Spence, author of *The Gate of Heavenly Peace*

"Hessler's book is a fascinating and important exploration of the role of natural disasters in Chinese history. Hessler shows how these disasters

have shaped the course of Chinese civilization, and he provides a fresh perspective on the relationship between humans and the environment." - Judith Shapiro, author of *Mao's War Against Nature*

## About the Author

Peter Hessler is a National Book Award-winning author and journalist. He has written extensively about China, and his work has appeared in *The New Yorker*, *The Atlantic*, and *National Geographic*. Hessler is a graduate of Princeton University and Oxford University, and he currently teaches at New York University.



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