



# Science and Civilisation in China: Volume 6, Biology and Biological Technology; Part 2, Agriculture

*Joseph Needham, Francesca Bray*

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This second part of the sixth volume of Joseph Needham's great enterprise is the first to be written by a collaborator. Francesca Bray, working closely with Dr Needham, has produced the most comprehensive study of Chinese agriculture to be published in the West. From a huge mass of source material, often confusing and obscure, and from first-hand study in China, she brings order and illumination to a crucial area of Chinese technological development. The main body of the book is an account of the technological history of agriculture, with major sections devoted to field systems, implements and techniques (sowing, harvesting, storing) and crop systems (what has grown and where and how crops rotated). The concluding section contrasts Europe's Agricultural Revolution with agrarian change in North China in the Han and with the 'Green Revolution' in South China in the Sung. In the theoretical analysis which concludes this section we find a vital contribution to the elucidation of the main question posed by Dr Needham's work: why did the Scientific Revolution which transformed the world take place in Europe and not in China?

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