



CHINA



Juyongguan section of the Great Wall
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Map of China
CIA/The World Factbook

Chapter 1 | Geography



Zhangjiajie National Park, Hunan Province
Flickr/Alex Berger

Introduction

China is the fourth-largest country in total area after Russia, Canada, and the United States. Its 9,596,960 sq km (3,705,407 sq mi) include the highest point in the world (Mount Everest in the Himalayas on the border with Nepal) and one of the lowest (the Turfan Depression in the northwestern basins).^{1, 2, 3} Nearly 70% of the country is covered by mountains, hills, or plateaus. Basins and plains make up the remainder.⁴

China was governed for centuries by an imperial leadership system, and the early seat of power was based in the interior, around present-day Xian in Shaanxi Province. For this reason, roads (e.g., the Silk Road) were initially more important than rivers or canals as transportation modes.⁵ Political boundaries have been repeatedly redrawn throughout China's long history. Today, administrative divisions within the People's Republic of China (PRC) reflect the distinctiveness of the geographical regions. Large "megacities" such as Beijing, Shanghai, Tianjin, Chongqing,

1 Central Intelligence Agency, "China," World Factbook, 9 November 2021, retrieved on 16 November 2021, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/china/>.

2 Norgay Tenzing et al., "Mount Everest," Encyclopædia Britannica, 13 May 2021, retrieved on 16 November 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Mount-Everest>.

3 Encyclopædia Britannica Online, "Turfan Depression," 14 November 2021, retrieved on 16 November 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Turfan-Depression>.

4 Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, "Country Profile: China," August 2006, <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/China.pdf>

5 Robert W. McColl, "Understanding the Geographics of China: An Assemblage of Pieces," Education about Asia 4, no. 2 (Fall 1999), <http://www.asian-studies.org/ea/mccoll.htm>

and Hong Kong have separate administrative statuses; they are not part of their surrounding provinces.⁶ Geographic regions such as Xinjiang, Tibet, Ningxia, Inner Mongolia, and Guangxi that are considered the historic homeland of ethnic minorities have been given the special status of “autonomous regions,” which nonetheless privilege national territorial integrity over resident self-determination.⁷

Geographic Divisions

The broadest division of China is between east and west. Inner China (or China Proper) encompasses approximately the eastern third of the modern nation. It is populated by the Han, whose lineage dates back to imperial China’s second dynasty (206 BCE). Outer China, home to China’s non-Han ethnic minorities—Mongols, Tibetans, Uighurs, and others—encompasses the remaining western regions.^{8, 9, 10}

The distinctions between Inner and Outer China go beyond ethnicity. Inner China has gentler terrain, is heavily populated and settled, and its historical land use is based on agriculture. Outer China has spectacular but largely inhospitable terrain: high rugged mountains and vast deserts. Its sparse population is pastoral.¹¹ The Great Wall was built to keep nomad warriors out of settled agricultural Han Chinese communities.¹²

Inner China is subdivided into three regions from north to south: Manchuria; North China, from Beijing to the Yangtze River; and South China, below the Yangtze. In North China, dry-field farming (e.g., wheat and millet) predominates. South China is dominated by wet-field farming (e.g., rice).^{13, 14}

Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region

Xinjiang, in the northwest, is China’s largest political subdivision.¹⁵ Extremes characterize its geography. The Junggar Basin to the north and the Tarim Basin to the south are primarily uninhabited and extremely dry, with minimal rainfall.^{16, 17}

- 6 Matt Hartzell, “China’s Crazy Administrative Divisions....or, When Is a ‘City’ not a ‘City’?” Matt Hartzell’s China Blog, 16 March 2013, <http://matthartzell.blogspot.com/2013/03/chinas-crazy-administrative-divisionsor.html>
- 7 Gardner Bovingdon, “Autonomy in Xinjiang: Han Nationalist Imperatives and Uyghur Discontent,” Policy Studies 11, East-West Center Washington, 2004, 2, <http://scholarspace.manoa.hawaii.edu/bitstream/handle/10125/3492/PS011.pdf?sequence=1>
- 8 Hoklam Chan et al., “China,” Encyclopædia Britannica, 9 November 2021, retrieved on 12 November 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/place/China>.
- 9 Central Intelligence Agency, “China,” World Factbook, 9 November 2021, retrieved on 12 November 2021, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/china/>.
- 10 Robert L. Worden et al., eds., China: A Country Study (Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1987), retrieved on 12 November 2021, <http://countrystudies.us/china/>.
- 11 Tim Cooke, ed., The New Cultural Atlas of China (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish, 2010) 14–18. http://books.google.com/books?id=oPbbaJOpWLwC&dq=New+Cultural+Atlas+of+China&source=gbs_navlinks_s
- 12 Encyclopædia Britannica, “Great Wall of China,” 4 August 2021, retrieved on 16 November 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Great-Wall-of-China>.
- 13 William A. Joseph, ed., Politics in China: An Introduction (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 7.
- 14 Tim Cooke, ed., The New Cultural Atlas of China (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish, 2010), 18.
- 15 Victor C. Falkenheim et al., “Xinjiang,” Encyclopædia Britannica Online, 2 November 2021, retrieved on 16 November 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Xinjiang>.
- 16 Encyclopædia Britannica, “Junggar Basin,” 29 December 2019, retrieved on 16 November 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Junggar-Basin>.
- 17 Encyclopædia Britannica, “Tarim Basin,” 22 February 2011, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Tarim-Basin>, retrieved on 16 November 2021.

Within the Tarim lies the Takla Makan Desert, one of the world's largest sand deserts.¹⁸ The east-west Tien Shan Range separates the basins.¹⁹ The Bogda Mountains at the eastern end have a peak of 5,445 m (17,864 ft); only a few miles to the south, the Turfan Depression lies at 155 m (508 ft) below sea level, one of the lowest dry spots on earth.^{20, 21} Although Xinjiang encompasses one-sixth of China's land area, its population is only 20 million and comprises 13 ethnic minority groups. The Uighurs are the largest group, at 8 million.²² Han Chinese migration has shifted the demographic center of Xinjiang north, where major cities such as Urumqi are located and where Uighurs are now a minority.²³

Tibet Autonomous Region

To the south of Xinjiang is an even more inhospitable region. Tibet is a high plateau ringed by massive mountains—the Himalayas to the south, the Pamirs to the west, and the Kunlun to the north. The plateau's northern part, the Qiangtang, is more than 1,300 km (800 mi) wide, with an average elevation of 5,000 m (16,500 ft). The world's highest point, Mount Everest (8,849 m; 29,032 ft), is located at the edge of the Tibet Autonomous Region on the China-Nepal border; Mount Muztagh, on the Tibet-Xinjiang border, measures 7,723 m (25,338 ft).²⁴

The climate of Tibet is characterized by extreme cold and high winds. The Himalayan wall blocks the southern monsoon winds that might otherwise bring in moisture; thus, the Tibetan climate is dry, receiving only 46 cm (18 in) of annual precipitation. Nevertheless, the plateau is the source of the major rivers of South and East Asia. The region covers one-eighth of China's landmass, but, due to the challenging conditions, the population is a mere 3.6 million.²⁵

²⁶ The population has increased in recent years because of the completion of a railway to the Tibetan capital of Lhasa and extensions linking China with Nepal.^{27, 28}

Gobi Desert

Another of China's desolate frontiers is the Gobi. It is the world's third-largest desert: 1,300,000 sq km (500,000 sq mi) in area and 1,600 km (1,000 mi) in length.²⁹ Only the southern half is in China, while the rest lies above Mongolia's irregular border. The Tarim Basin lies to the west of China's Gobi; to the east is the Da Hinggan Range. The desert forms a major portion of the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region. Apart from a few scenic patches of shifting dunes, the Gobi is bare rock. Vegetation is rare because the Gobi is nearly waterless. Annual precipitation ranges from less

18 Guy S. Alitto et al., "Takla Makan Desert," Encyclopædia Britannica, 18 December 2019, retrieved on 16 November 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Takla-Makan-Desert>.

19 Solomon Ilich Bruck et al., "Tien Shan," Encyclopædia Britannica, 28 January 2019, retrieved on 16 November 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Tien-Shan>.

20 Peakware: World Mountain Encyclopedia, "Bogda Peak," 2012, <http://www.peakware.com/peaks.html?pk=32>

21 Encyclopædia Britannica, "Turfan Depression," 14 November 2011, retrieved on 16 November 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Turfan-Depression>.

22 Preeti Bhattacharji, "Uighurs and China's Xinjiang Region," Council on Foreign Relations, 29 May 2012, <http://www.cfr.org/china/uighurs-chinas-xinjiang-region/p16870>

23 Anthony Howell and C. Cindy Fan, "Migration and Inequality in Xinjiang: A Survey of Han and Uyghur Migrants in Urumqi," *Eurasian Geography and Economics* 52, no. 11 (2011): 119–39, <http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/geog/downloads/597/403.pdf>

24 Norgay Tenzing et al., "Mount Everest," Encyclopædia Britannica, 13 May 2021, retrieved on 16 November 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Mount-Everest>.

25 Tsepon W.D. Shakabpa et al., "Tibet," Encyclopædia Britannica, 3 May 2020, retrieved on 16 November 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Tibet>.

26 Tibetan Review, "PRC Census Puts Tibet Autonomous Region Population at 3.65 Million," 12 May 2021, retrieved on 12 November 2021, <https://www.tibetanreview.net/prc-census-puts-tibet-autonomous-region-population-at-3-65-million/>.

27 Joseph Kahn, "Last Stop, Lhasa: Rail Link Ties Remote Tibet to China," *New York Times*, 2 July 2006, <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/07/02/world/asia/02tibet.html>

28 Economist, "Mount Everest Is Singing for Joy: Everyone Else Is Worried (Railways in Tibet)," 7 October 2010, <http://www.economist.com/node/17204635>

29 Vaughn's Summaries, "World's Largest Deserts," 18 July 2012, <http://www.vaughns-1-pagers.com/geography/largest-deserts.htm>

than 5 cm (2 in) in the west to more than 20 cm (8 in) in the east. Temperatures range widely from average lows of -40°C (-40°F) in January to highs of 45°C (113°F) in July.³⁰

The desert has been expanding because of population increases and inappropriate farming techniques on the grasslands at its fringes.³¹ In 2010, high winds exacerbated this desertification to create a dust storm that turned “day into night” in Beijing. The storm moved hundreds of kilometers eastward to become the worst dust storm ever recorded on the Korean Peninsula.³²

Manchuria

Manchuria is the historical name for the northeast of China. From north to south, it includes the provinces of Heilongjiang, Jilin, and Liaoning, as well as the northern portion of the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region.^{33, 34, 35} During the first half of the 20th century, the region included the southeast corner of Russia and was the cause of a territorial dispute between the Soviet Union and Japan. The Northeast Plain dominates the Chinese portion. A major agricultural area, the plain is surrounded on three sides by medium-sized mountain ranges.³⁶ The region is noted for bitterly cold winters, especially in the north. The Heilongjiang winter lasts from five to eight months, with below-zero temperatures and wet weather.³⁷ Liaoning experiences milder winters and torrential summer rains, with up to 100 cm (39 in) of annual precipitation.³⁸

Sichuan Basin

Located directly east of the Tibetan Plateau is the Sichuan Basin, also called the Red Basin for its underlying red sandstone. The basin is a large circular area of 229,500 sq km (88,610 sq mi) rimmed to the west and north by forested mountains, which are home to most of the giant panda population.³⁹ The basin is rippled with hills and plains; its many rivers drain into the Yangtze River, which runs through the basin's south. The mountains trap the

30 John P. Rafferty, ed., *Deserts and Steppes* (New York: Britannica Educational Publishing, 2011), 67–76.

<http://books.google.com/books?id=45htKs4GNi0C&pg=PA67&lpg=PA67&dq=%22physical+features%22+gobi&source=bl&ots=NqXTM44S-3&sig=dqPAAmFYBQ70JGf9YQonA-LR4Vo&hl=en&sa=X&ei=vFI-XULo1ye2JAtvAgKAD&ved=0CDQQuwUwAQ#v=onepage&q=%22physical%20features%22%20gobi&f=false>

31 Martin Patience, “China Official Warns of 300-Year Desertification Fight,” BBC News, 4 January 2011, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-pacific-12112518>

32 Michael Reilly, “Desert Dust Storm Roars through China, Blankets Korea,” Discovery News, 22 March 2010, <http://news.discovery.com/earth/desert-dust-storm-roars-through-china-blankets-korea.html>

33 Victor C. Falkenheim et al., “Heilongjiang,” Encyclopædia Britannica, 25 November 2019, retrieved on 16 November 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Heilongjiang>.

34 Frank Andrew Leeming et al., “Jilin,” Encyclopædia Britannica, 14 April 2016, retrieved on 16 November 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Jilin-province-China>.

35 Frank Andrew Leeming et al., “Liaoning,” Encyclopædia Britannica, 2 November 2021, retrieved on 16 November 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Liaoning>.

36 Encyclopædia Britannica, “Manchuria,” 5 February 2021, retrieved on 16 November 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Manchuria>.

37 Victor C. Falkenheim et al., “Heilongjiang,” Encyclopædia Britannica, 25 November 2019, retrieved on 16 November 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Heilongjiang>.

38 Frank Andrew Leeming et al., “Liaoning,” Encyclopædia Britannica, 2 November 2021, retrieved on 16 November 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Liaoning>.

39 Sara Naumann, “The Giant Panda Breeding Research Base in Chengdu,” About.com, n.d., <http://gochina.about.com/od/chengdu/p/PandaBase.htm>

moist air that blows in from the southeast, creating a mild, humid climate. The climate and the rich soil make the basin one of China's key agricultural areas.^{40, 41, 42}

The Southeast

The vast southeastern area is a land of countless mountains and hills, with few level places. The eastern Himalayans and China's borders with Burma (Myanmar), Laos, and Vietnam are on the west. To the northwest is the Sichuan Basin; to the northeast are the eastern lowlands.⁴³ The long and irregular eastern coastline fronts the two sections of the China Sea. One of the largest flat areas is the Pearl River Delta. At the mouth of the delta are the two special administrative regions of Hong Kong and Macau. The coast region is the site of China's booming manufacturing sector.⁴⁴

Rain-bearing monsoon winds blow westward from the sea across the region; precipitation is abundant, and agriculture dominates the fertile valleys and plains interspersed in the rippled terrain.^{45, 46} The presence of soluble limestone in the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, one of China's southernmost areas, leads to bizarre and scenic formations of pinnacles, caves, and strangely shaped hills that rise straight up.^{47, 48}

North China Plain

The North China Plain is an immense, flattish triangle with an area of 409,500 sq km (158,109 sq mi). Most of it lies below 50 m (164 ft) in elevation.⁴⁹ The corners of the triangle touch Beijing in the north, Shanghai in the southeast, and Zhengzhou in the west. Along the eastern coastline are the Shandong Peninsula (which juts toward the Korean Peninsula across the Yellow Sea) and the East China Sea.⁵⁰

To the south lie the mountain ranges of the southeast. To the northwest lie the Yan Mountains, and across those ridges zigzags the Great Wall of China.⁵¹ The fertile environment is characterized by an alluvial plain—formed by the

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- 40 Charles Y. Hu et al., "Sichuan," Encyclopædia Britannica, 2 November 2021, retrieved on 16 November 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Sichuan>.
- 41 Encyclopædia Britannica, "Sichuan Basin," 16 March 2007, retrieved on 16 November 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Sichuan-Basin>.
- 42 Lydia Mihelič Pulsipher and Alex Pulsipher, "Central China: Sichuan Province," in *World Regional Geography: Global Patterns, Local Lives*, 5th ed. (New York: W.H. Freeman and Company, 2011), 534–535, http://books.google.com/books?id=E9ffmJ_0A1cC&printsec=frontcover&dq=Alex+Pulsipher,+World+Regional+Geography&source=bl&ots=plotLsV2dw&sig=BOCZ-Nu4uFpphLKxn4bOH9ag95k&hl=en&sa=X&ei=c49YULqhPMGtiQK6yIGIDQ&ved=0CDMQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=Alex%20Pulsipher%2C%20%20World%20Regional%20Geography&f=false
- 43 Ping-chia Kuo et al., "Yunnan," Encyclopædia Britannica, 2 November 2021, retrieved on 16 November 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Yunnan>.
- 44 Lydia Mihelič Pulsipher and Alex Pulsipher, "Southern China," in *World Regional Geography: Global Patterns, Local Lives*, 5th ed. (New York: W.H. Freeman and Company, 2011), 535–536, http://books.google.com/books?id=E9ffmJ_0A1cC&printsec=frontcover&dq=Alex+Pulsipher,+World+Regional+Geography&source=bl&ots=plotLsV2dw&sig=BOCZ-Nu4uFpphLKxn4bOH9ag95k&hl=en&sa=X&ei=c49YULqhPMGtiQK6yIGIDQ&ved=0CDMQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=Alex%20Pulsipher%2C%20%20World%20Regional%20Geography&f=false
- 45 Victor C. Falkenheim et al., "Guangdong," Encyclopædia Britannica, 28 October 2021, retrieved on 16 November 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Guangdong>.
- 46 Frederick Fu Hung et al., "Fujian," Encyclopædia Britannica, 2 November 2021, retrieved on 16 November 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Fujian>.
- 47 Ping-chia Kuo et al., "Guangxi," Encyclopædia Britannica, 14 September 2020, retrieved on 16 November 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Guangxi>.
- 48 Encyclopædia Britannica, "Karst," 18 May 2016, retrieved on 16 November 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/science/karst-geology>.
- 49 Encyclopædia Britannica, "North China Plain," 16 March 2007, retrieved on 16 November 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/place/North-China-Plain>.
- 50 Baruch Boxer, "Shandong," Encyclopædia Britannica, 26 November 2019, retrieved on 16 November 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Shandong-province-China>.
- 51 Encyclopædia Britannica, "Great Wall of China," 4 August 2021, retrieved on 16 November 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Great-Wall-of-China>.

Yellow and Huai Rivers and their tributaries. Though this area was once prone to flooding, investment in flood control and irrigation since 1949 has significantly increased the agricultural yield. The plain is one of the most densely populated areas in the world.⁵²

Climate

Although most of China is located in the temperate zone, the climate throughout the country is diverse, ranging from cold and temperate in the north to tropical on the southern island of Hainan. In Heilongjiang Province in the northernmost part of the country, the mean annual temperature is 0°C (32°F), compared to 22°C (72°F) in Guangdong Province in the south. In summer, temperature disparities between north and south are significantly reduced, with only a 3°C (5°F) difference between Beijing in the north and Guangzhou in the south. Mountain ranges block the advance of the northern air masses during winter, keeping southern China significantly warmer than the north.^{53, 54, 55}

Most rainfall in China occurs during the summer monsoon season. Annual precipitation decreases from the southeast to the northwest. Elevation also affects differences in temperature and rainfall.^{56, 57}

Bodies of Water

The Yangtze River

Two of China's rivers are noteworthy because of their great lengths and their central roles in the development of Chinese civilization. The Yangtze—the “long river” at 6,300 km (3,915 mi)—is Asia's longest river and the third-longest in the world. Its drainage basin is 1,808,500 sq km (698,266 sq mi) and encompasses most of South China.⁵⁸ Three of China's 10 largest cities (Shanghai, Chongqing, and Wuhan) lie on the Yangtze or its delta.⁵⁹ Some of the most agriculturally productive areas in China are found on the river's lower reaches.⁶⁰

Like many major Chinese rivers, the Yangtze originates in the Tibetan Plateau. It generally flows eastward to the plateau's eastern edge, where it turns to the south and descends rapidly within a narrow valley.⁶¹ The river loops around mountain barriers and through narrow gorges before turning northeast. From there, it forms 800 km (500

52 Encyclopædia Britannica, “North China Plain,” 16 March 2007, retrieved on 16 November 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/place/North-China-Plain>.

53 Robert L. Worden et al., eds., *China: A Country Study* (Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1987), retrieved on 12 November 2021, <http://countrystudies.us/china/>.

54 Hoklam Chan et al., “China,” Encyclopædia Britannica, 9 November 2021, retrieved on 12 November 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/place/China>.

55 Candice Song, “Guangdong Weather—Best Time to Visit Guangdong,” *China Highlights*, 2 October 2021, retrieved on 12 November 2021, <https://www.chinahighlights.com/guangdong/weather.htm>.

56 Oregon State University Spatial Climate Analysis Service, “PRISM 1961–1990 Mean Annual Precipitation: Mainland China,” *The Climate Source*, November 2002, http://www.climatesource.com/cn/fact_sheets/chinappt_xl.jpg

57 Robert L. Worden et al., eds., *China: A Country Study* (Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1987), retrieved on 12 November 2021, <http://countrystudies.us/china/>.

58 Charles E. Greer et al., “Yangtze River,” Encyclopædia Britannica, 10 November 2020, retrieved on 16 November 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Yangtze-River>.

59 Amanda Briney, “Largest Cities in China: List of China's Twenty Largest Cities,” 30 January 2011, <http://geography.about.com/od/chinamaps/a/largest-cities-china.htm>

60 Asia for Educators, Columbia University, “Chinese Geography: Readings and Maps,” 2009, <http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/china/geog/maps.htm>

61 Charles E. Greer et al., “Yangtze River,” Encyclopædia Britannica, 10 November 2020, retrieved on 16 November 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Yangtze-River>.

mi) of the boundary between Yunnan and Sichuan provinces.⁶² It eventually enters the Sichuan Basin, where, at Chongqing, it becomes a major transportation artery connecting the interior to Shanghai.⁶³

The Three Gorges Dam, on the Yangtze in the mountains east of the Sichuan Basin, is 183 m (600 ft) high and 2.3 km (1.4 mi) wide, making it the largest dam in the world. The 600-km (373-mi) reservoir required the relocation of 1.23 million people and the submerging of 13 major cities and hundreds of smaller towns. Finally completed on July 4, 2012, it was designed to improve navigation, control flooding, and generate hydroelectricity. But the dam's flood reduction capabilities have been called into question, as studies reveal that while it can help reduce flooding during years of normal rainfall, it is too small to make a difference in years of heavy rain. In the summer of 2020, the heaviest rainfall in six decades in the Yangtze River Basin caused the river to overflow, leading to the deaths of 158 people and the displacement of 3.67 million. Additionally, experts fear that the massive quantity of water atop a seismic fault will trigger earthquakes.^{64, 65, 66, 67}

The Yellow River

The Yellow River plays as central a role to northern China as the Yangtze does to the south. The river is the world's seventh-longest, stretching for 5,464 km (3,395 mi).⁶⁸ The river is named for the yellow silt that clouds its waters. People have lived, farmed, and raised animals on the riverbanks since at least 3000 BCE. Like the Yangtze, its headwaters lie in the central regions of the Tibetan Plateau. The river empties into the Gulf of Bo Hai in the north Yellow Sea.⁶⁹

Although extensive systems of levees have been built to keep its course under control, the river is considered by locals "an untamed dragon."⁷⁰ When it overflows, the floods are devastating, with the potential for large losses of life in the highly populated region.⁷¹ While millions rely on the river for drinking and agriculture, it flows through areas with increasingly high concentrations of industry. Factory discharges and urban sewage have turned the Yellow River into one of the world's most polluted.^{72, 73}

62 Discover Yangtze Tours, "The Source to Yichang," 2012, http://www.discoveryangtze.com/yangtzediscovery/the_source_to_yichang.htm

63 Tourism Jiangsu, "Yangtze River," 2010, <http://tastejiangsu.com/yangtze.html>

64 Lydia Mihelić Pulsipher and Alex Pulsipher, "Three Gorges Dam: The Power of Water" in *World Regional Geography: Global Patterns, Local Lives*, 5th ed. (New York: W.H. Freeman and Company, 2011), 497–498. http://books.google.com/books?id=E9f_fmJ_0A1cC&printsec=frontcover&dq=Alex+Pulsipher.+World+Regional+Geography&source=bl&ots=plotLsV2dw&sig=BOCZ-Nu4uFpphLKxn4bOH9ag95k&hl=en&sa=X&ei=c49YULqHPMGtiQK6yIGIDQ&ved=0CDMQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=Alex%20Pulsipher%2C%20%20World%20Regional%20Geography&f=false

65 BBC News, "China's Three Gorges Dam Reaches Operating Peak," 5 July 2012, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-china-18718406>

66 Nectar Gan, "China's Three Gorges Dam Is One of the Largest Ever Created. Was It Worth It?" CNN, 31 July 2020, retrieved on 12 November 2021, <https://www.cnn.com/style/article/china-three-gorges-dam-intl-hnk-dst/index.html>

67 Encyclopædia Britannica, "Three Gorges Dam," 27 September 2021, retrieved on 12 November 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Three-Gorges-Dam>

68 Matt Rosenberg, "Longest Rivers in the World: The 10 Longest Rivers on Earth," About.com, n.d., <http://geography.about.com/od/lists/a/longestivers.htm>

69 Mary McPeak, "China: The Yellow River," National Geographic, 3 June 2008, <http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/geopedia/China>

70 Mary McPeak, "China: The Yellow River," National Geographic, 3 June 2008, <http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/geopedia/China>

71 Charles E. Greer et al., "Yellow River," Encyclopædia Britannica, 28 October 2021, retrieved on 16 November 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Yellow-River>

72 Tania Branigan, "One-Third of China's Yellow River 'Unfit for Drinking or Agriculture,'" Guardian (UK), 25 November 2008, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2008/nov/25/water-china>

73 Rob Gifford, "Yellow River Pollution Is Price of Economic Growth," National Public Radio, 11 December 2007, <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=16951806>

Major Cities

City Name	Population ^{74, 75}
Shanghai	21,000,000
Beijing	18,900,000
Shenzhen	17,400,000
Guangzhou	16,000,000
Hong Kong	7,500,000

China is the world's most populous country, with 1.39 billion people as of July 2021.⁷⁶ The population density is heavily skewed toward certain regions, especially the North China Plain, the Sichuan Basin, and the southeast coast.⁷⁷ The urban population has been increasing for the past three decades. In 2011, urban populations passed 50% of the country's total for the first time in history.⁷⁸ In 2021 China had 93 cities with populations of over 1 million.⁷⁹ Plans are being floated to turn coastal southern China, including Guangzhou and Shenzhen, into one megacity with 42 million residents.⁸⁰

Shanghai

A millennium ago, Shanghai emerged as a small fishing village on the Yangtze River Delta. Today, it is one of the world's major seaports and China's most populous city.⁸¹ During the 19th century, foreign powers—the British, French, Americans, and Japanese—turned Shanghai into a major commercial center. Today, it is a manufacturing hub and an industrial center for iron and steel production, chemicals and petrochemicals, and textiles. A large and skilled workforce facilitates an atmosphere of scientific research and technological innovation.⁸²

The densely packed city is divided east from west by the Huangpu River, which empties into the Yangtze, and north from south by Suzhou Creek. The central city surrounds the bends of the Huangpu.⁸³ In the Lujiazui district sits the

- 74 City Population, "China: Provinces and Major Cities," 26 August 2021, retrieved on 12 November 2021, <https://www.citypopulation.de/en/china/cities/>.
- 75 World Population Review, "Hong Kong Population 2021," n.d., retrieved on 12 November 2021, <https://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/hong-kong-population>.
- 76 Central Intelligence Agency, "China," World Factbook, 9 November 2021, retrieved on 16 November 2021, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/china/>.
- 77 China Tourist Maps, "Population Density Map of China," December 2008, <http://www.chinatouristmaps.com/china-maps/population/full-population-map.html>
- 78 Population Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations, "World Urbanization Prospects, the 2011 Revision," 26 April 2012, http://esa.un.org/unup/Country-Profiles/country-profiles_1.htm
- 79 Steven Lee Myers et al., "As China Boomed, It Didn't Take Climate Change into Account. Now It Must," New York Times, 28 October 2021, retrieved on 16 November 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/26/world/asia/china-climate-change.html>.
- 80 Malcolm Moore and Peter Foster, "China to Create Largest Megacity in the World with 42 Million People," Telegraph (UK), 24 January 2011, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/china/8278315/China-to-create-largest-mega-city-in-the-world-with-42-million-people.html>
- 81 Liu Dong, "Shanghai Population Surges to 23.47 Million," Global Times (China), 5 May 2012, <http://www.globaltimes.cn/NEWS/tabid/99/ID/707874/Shanghai-population-surges-to-2347-million.aspx>
- 82 Baruch Boxer, "Shanghai," Encyclopædia Britannica, 14 September 2021, retrieved on 16 November 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Shanghai>.
- 83 Baruch Boxer, "Shanghai," Encyclopædia Britannica, 14 September 2021, retrieved on 16 November 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Shanghai>.

futuristic Oriental Pearl Tower, the fifth-highest tower in the world.^{84, 85, 86} Shanghai, with more skyscrapers than New York, is one of the most built-up cities in the world.⁸⁷

Beijing

China's capital city of Beijing (formerly spelled in the West as "Peking") has a shifting population that comprises permanent residents and migrants. The combined population exceeded 20 million for the first time in 2011.^{88, 89} Beijing is situated at the northern apex of the roughly triangular North China Plain. Except for two brief periods, the city has been the capital since 1267 CE, when it was established by Genghis Khan's grandson, the Mongol general Kublai Khan.⁹⁰ It became the capital of the PRC in 1949.⁹¹

Beijing is rich in Chinese cultural history, although much of its older character has been destroyed in the drive to modernize.⁹² The most important historical sites lie in the centrally located Forbidden City built in the early 15th century—the palace of the emperors of the Ming and Qing Dynasties. The Palace Museum consists of some 10,000 rooms filled with furniture and art.⁹³ Tiananmen Square, a short distance south, is the site of parades and rallies.⁹⁴ Newer Beijing attractions include the sites constructed for the 2008 Summer Olympics, including the National Stadium (the "Bird's Nest") and the National Aquatics Center (the "Water Cube"). Although most Olympic sites are underutilized now, they fascinate tourists as architectural curiosities.⁹⁵

Shenzhen

After the death of Chairman Mao Zedong in 1976 and the end of the Cultural Revolution, China began to transition from a planned economy to a market-based system. The first experiment began in 1978 with the traditional fishing village of Shenzhen, just north of Hong Kong.^{96, 97} In addition to its proximity to Hong Kong, Shenzhen was chosen because of its access to the South China Sea and rich land resources. In 1980, the Shenzhen Special Economic Zone was created. The city soon developed a frontier reputation as a place to "get rich quick."⁹⁸ Hong Kong businesses seeking cheaper labor relocated manufacturing production to Shenzhen, drawing migrant workers searching for

84 BBC News, "High Winds Mar Opening of Tokyo's Skytree Tower," 22 May 2012, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-18141311>

85 New York Times, "Oriental Pearl Tower," 2012, <http://travel.nytimes.com/travel/guides/asia/china/shanghai/25948/oriental-pearl-tv-tower/attraction-detail.html>

86 Candice Song, "The Oriental Pearl TV Tower—The Centerpiece of Modern Shanghai," China Highlights, 13 October 2021, retrieved on 12 November 2021, <https://www.chinahighlights.com/shanghai/attraction/oriental-pearl-tv-tower.htm>

87 Steve Schifferes, "Shanghai: Creating a Global City," BBC News, 7 May 2007, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/business/6618163.stm>

88 China Daily, "Beijing's Temporary Population Fell in 2011," 20 August 2012, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-08/20/content_15690763.htm

89 National Geographic, "Beijing, China," 2012, <http://travel.nationalgeographic.com/travel/city-guides/beijing-china/>

90 Carrie Gracie, "Kublai Khan: China's Favourite Barbarian," BBC News, 8 October 2012, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-19850234>

91 Sen-dou Chang et al., "Beijing," Encyclopædia Britannica, 31 May 2021, retrieved on 16 November 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Beijing>

92 Sen-dou Chang et al., "Beijing," Encyclopædia Britannica, 31 May 2021, retrieved on 16 November 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Beijing>

93 UNESCO World Heritage List, "Imperial Palaces of the Ming and Qing Dynasties in Beijing and Shenyang," 2012, <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/439>

94 BBC News, "On This Day: 4 June 1989: Massacre in Tiananmen Square," n.d., http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/june/4/newsid_2496000/2496277.stm

95 Xinhua, "Beijing Is the Leader of China's Tourism Industry," 28 May 2012, <http://www.eturbonews.com/29443/beijing-leader-chinas-tourism-industry>

96 Jeremy Page, "China Tests New Political Model in Shenzhen," Wall Street Journal, 18 October 2010, <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB1001424052702304250404575558103303251616.html>

97 CNN, "Flawed Icon of China's Resurgence," 2001, <http://www.cnn.com/SPECIALS/1999/china.50/inside.china/profiles/mao.tsetung/>

98 Mark Mackinnon, "A Chinese Boomtown Tests Drives the Concept of Charity," Globe and Mail (Canada), 30 October 2011, <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/life/giving/a-chinese-boomtown-test-drives-the-concept-of-charity/article559822/>

employment. Over time, costs increased, and the city reinvented itself as a financial capital, home to South China's stock exchange.⁹⁹

Guangzhou

Guangzhou (Canton) is China's fourth-largest city and the heart of the southern region.¹⁰⁰ Its location at the top of the Pearl River Delta—90 miles upstream from Macau, Hong Kong, and the South China Sea—has made it one of China's leading commercial and trading centers. Before 1920, when it was home to the first provisional president of the Republic of China, Guangzhou was a city of narrow streets and alleys. Since then, it has steadily modernized and expanded. Today, modern high-rises follow the banks of the Pearl. The Chow Tai Fook Center (116 floors) and the International Finance Center (103 floors) are among the world's tallest buildings.^{101, 102} The city also is one of China's biggest automobile manufacturing centers.¹⁰³

Hong Kong

Hong Kong is one of the most densely populated cities in the world. Located on a mountainous island southeast of the Kowloon Peninsula, Hong Kong has one of the busiest deep-water ports in the world. Once a small farming and fishing community, Hong Kong today is a center for international banking and a hub for Chinese exports, with a strong and expanding services sector.^{104, 105}

British merchants began to use the area in 1821 to support the opium trade. Conflict with the Chinese, including the two Opium Wars (1839–42, 1856–60), ultimately led to the British gaining a 99-year lease to the territory (1898–1997).^{106, 107}

After occupation by the Japanese in World War II, Hong Kong developed as a manufacturing center. However, today more than 90% of the labor force is employed in the services sector. Much of the manufacturing base has moved across the border. Hong Kong passed to the Chinese in 1997 under a “one country, two systems” policy. Hong Kong Chinese cling firmly to an identity distinct from mainland China.¹⁰⁸ In recent years, Beijing has asserted its control over Hong Kong politics and has used a restrictive new security law to suppress popular demonstrations and detain pro-democracy politicians and activists.¹⁰⁹

99 Paola Subacci et al., “Shifting Capital: The Rise of Financial Centres in Greater China,” Chatham House (Royal Institute of International Affairs, UK), May 2012, <http://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/public/Research/International%20Economics/r0512shiftingcapital.pdf>

100 eChinacities.com, “Guangzhou’s Population Exceeds 16 Million: Way Over Target,” 13 April 2012, <http://www.echinacities.com/guangzhou/city-in-pulse/guangzhou-s-population-exceeds-16-million-way-over-target.html>

101 SkyscraperPage.com, “Chow Tai Fook Centre,” 2012, <http://skyscraperpage.com/cities/?buildingID=39970>

102 SkyscraperPage.com, “Guangzhou International Finance Center,” 2012, <http://skyscraperpage.com/cities/?buildingID=39966>

103 Keith Bradsher, “A Chinese City Moves to Limit New Cars,” New York Times, 4 September 2012, http://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/05/business/global/a-chinese-city-moves-to-limit-new-cars.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0

104 BBC News, “Hong Kong Profile,” 2 October 2012, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-pacific-16517764>

105 Central Intelligence Agency, “Hong Kong,” World Factbook, 5 November 2021, retrieved on 16 November 2021, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/hong-kong/>

106 BBC News, “Hong Kong Profile,” 2 October 2012, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-pacific-16517764>

107 CNN, “1840–1860: Opium Wars (Hong Kong History),” 24 June 2002, <http://edition.cnn.com/2002/WORLD/asiapcf/east/06/20/hk.history.01/>

108 Andrew Higgins, “Hong Kong and China: Former British Colony Clings to Separate Identity,” Washington Post, 7 October 2012, http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2012-10-07/world/35501659_1_chinese-rule-hong-kongers-chen-zuoer

109 BBC News, “Hong Kong Profile—Timeline,” 24 June 2019, retrieved on 16 November 2021, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-pacific-16526765>

Environmental Issues

In addition to being the most populous country, China is among the most polluted places on earth, primarily because of its rapid population growth and economic expansion in recent decades.¹¹⁰ Each year, air pollution in China kills 1 million people and costs the economy USD 900 billion. As the economy expands, more workers are drawn into the cities. Thus, a more significant percentage of the population is exposed to the risks.^{111, 112, 113}

Air Pollution

In 2007, China overtook the United States as the world's leading emitter of carbon dioxide. Carbon dioxide is produced by the combustion of fossil fuels such as coal, of which China is the world's biggest producer.^{114, 115, 116} Other major sources of air pollution include factory emissions, vehicle exhaust, and dust from the Gobi Desert. China's major cities have experienced severe levels of air pollution in recent decades. On bad days, seeing the sky is considered a luxury. Lung cancer and cardiovascular illnesses are on the rise.^{117, 118} Pollution in eastern China, where most agriculture is located, has reduced light rainfall by 23%, potentially affecting agricultural yields.¹¹⁹

Since the turn of the millennium, China has implemented air pollution control measures such as restricting the number of cars in cities, using electric buses for public transportation, and planting billions of trees. Air quality improved significantly between 2013 and 2017—by as much as 33% in Beijing. One of the country's most noted pollution control measures was a 2016 ban on the construction of new coal-fired power plants. But after that ban expired two years later, construction of the plants resumed at a higher rate than before.^{120, 121, 122}

Water Pollution

Water pollution in China is considered just as dire as air pollution, if less visible. Some 90% of the country's groundwater is contaminated, and about half of the population does not have access to safe water for consumption. Causes include fertilizers and pesticides, leaking landfills, and industrial wastewater. High levels of agricultural

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- 110 Christine Lagorio, "The Most Polluted Places on Earth," CBS Evening News, 8 January 2010, <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2007/06/06/eveningnews/main2895653.shtml>
- 111 Vicki Ekstrom, "China's Pollution Puts a Dent in its Economy," MIT News, 13 February 2012, <http://web.mit.edu/newsoffice/2012/global-change-china-air-economy-0213.html>
- 112 Niall McCarthy, "This Is the Global Economic Cost of Air Pollution," World Economic Forum, 18 February 2020, retrieved on 12 November 2021, <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/02/the-economic-burden-of-air-pollution>.
- 113 Ernest Kao, "Air Pollution Is Killing 1 Million People and Costing Chinese Economy 267 Billion Yuan a Year, Research from CUHK Shows," South China Morning Post, 2 October 2018, retrieved on 15 November 2021, <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/science/article/2166542/air-pollution-killing-1-million-people-and-costing-chinese>.
- 114 U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, "Greenhouse Gas Emissions: Carbon Dioxide," 14 June 2012, <http://www.epa.gov/climatechange/ghgemissions/gases/co2.html>
- 115 Elisabeth Rosenthal, "China Increases Lead as Biggest Carbon Dioxide Emitter," New York Times, 14 June 2008, <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/06/14/world/asia/14china.html>
- 116 Jonathan Watts, "The Two Faces of China's Giant Coal Industry," Guardian (UK), 15 November 2009, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2009/nov/15/china-coal-industry-mongolia-shaanxi>
- 117 Jonathan Watts, "Air Pollution Could Become China's Biggest Health Threat, Expert Warns," Guardian (UK), 16 March 2012, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2012/mar/16/air-pollution-biggest-threat-china>
- 118 China Power, "How Is China's Energy Footprint Changing?" 30 January 2021, accessed 12 November 2021, <https://chinapower.csis.org/energy-footprint/>.
- 119 UPI, "China's Air Pollution is Reducing Rainfall," 18 August 2009, http://www.upi.com/Science_News/2009/08/18/Chinas-air-pollution-is-reducing-rainfall/UPI-63481250606377/
- 120 Tyler Vanzo, "25 Most Polluted Cities in the World (2021 Rankings)," Smart Air, 1 November 2021, retrieved 15 November 2021, <https://smartairfilters.com/en/blog/25-most-polluted-cities-world-2021-rankings/>.
- 121 Lindsay Maizland, "China's Fight against Climate Change and Environmental Degradation," Council on Foreign Relations, 19 May 2021, retrieved on 15 November 2021, <https://www.cfr.org/background/china-climate-change-policies-environmental-degradation>.
- 122 Felix Leung, "How China Is Winning Its Battle against Air Pollution," Earth.org, 30 July 2021, retrieved on 15 November 2021, <https://earth.org/how-china-is-winning-its-battle-against-air-pollution/>.

waste toxins such as arsenic, fluorine, and sulfates in water have been linked to increased rates of liver, stomach, and esophageal cancer. The government has set clean water goals but often takes no action when cities and local governments don't meet those goals. By one estimate, it would take USD 148 billion to build the water treatment infrastructure needed to significantly reduce water pollution caused by rivers in urban areas.^{123, 124, 125}

Soil Pollution

Large areas of Chinese soil are contaminated with heavy metals from factories and the country's thousands of mines. The primary polluters are pesticides, chemical waste, heavy metals, and mining residues. According to a 2014 government estimate, about 20% of the country's farmland is contaminated. The government has devoted fewer funds toward ameliorating soil pollution than toward fixing air and water pollution. Instead of following rules for treating contaminated land, local governments often turn over the contaminated land to developers as is for quick profits.^{126, 127, 128, 129}

The consequences for food production and human health are severe. The processes used to mine zinc, lead, and copper cause radioactive cadmium (a known carcinogen) to be released into wastewater, from which it enters the soil. Rice, a staple of the Chinese diet, ranks high among the crops that readily absorb cadmium. The chemical accumulates in the liver and kidneys, damaging the organs and creating various harmful and painful conditions.^{130, 131} Randomly conducted tests routinely reveal levels of cadmium in Chinese-grown rice that exceed national safety standards.¹³²

Climate Change

China has pledged to make its economy carbon neutral by 2060, and Chinese media often portray climate change as a phenomenon that affects other parts of the world. But the world's top greenhouse gas emitting country is increasingly faced with the implications of climate change on its own territory. The Pearl River Delta region, a major population and manufacturing center, is the world's most at-risk urban area for rising sea levels; the North China Plain is vulnerable to heat waves that would make it uninhabitable. Over two-thirds of China's most populous cities

123 Carolyn Gibson, "Water Pollution in China Is the Country's Worst Environmental Issue," Borgen Project, 10 March 2018, retrieved on 15 November 2021, <https://borgenproject.org/water-pollution-in-china/>.

124 Deng Tingting, "In China, the Water You Drink Is as Dangerous As the Air You Breathe," Guardian, 2 June 2017, retrieved on 15 November 2021, <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2017/jun/02/china-water-dangerous-pollution-greenpeace>.

125 Reuters, "China Needs Nearly \$150 Billion to Treat Severe River Pollution: Official," 25 July 2018, retrieved on 15 November 2021, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-pollution-water/china-needs-nearly-150-billion-to-treat-severe-river-pollution-official-idUSKBN1KG091>.

126 Jonathan Watts, "The Clean-Up Begins on China's Dirty Secret—Soil Pollution," Guardian (UK), 12 June 2012, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2012/jun/12/china-soil-pollution-bonn-challenge>

127 David Stanway, "China Soil Pollution Efforts Stymied by Local Governments: Greenpeace," Reuters, 16 April 2019, retrieved on 15 November 2021, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-pollution-soil/china-soil-pollution-efforts-stymied-by-local-governments-greenpeace-idUSKCN1RT04D>.

128 Joe Zhang, "Cleaning Up Toxic Soils in China: A Trillion-Dollar Question," International Institute for Sustainable Development, 10 September 2018, retrieved on 15 November 2021, <https://www.iisd.org/articles/toxic-soil-china>.

129 Hang Bao, "If China Is Serious about Food Security, It Must Tackle Soil Pollution More Seriously," South China Morning Post, 14 October 2020, retrieved on 15 November 2021, <https://www.scmp.com/comment/opinion/article/3105496/if-china-serious-about-food-security-it-must-tackle-soil-pollution>.

130 Gong Jing, "China's Tainted Rice Trail," Century Weekly (China), 14 February 2011, <http://www.chinadialogue.net/article/show/single/en/4197>

131 Argonne National Laboratory, "Human Health Fact Sheet: Cadmium," August 2005, <http://www.ead.anl.gov/pub/doc/cadmium.pdf>

132 Didi Kirsten Talow, "'Cadmium Rice' Is China's Latest Food Scandal," New York Times, 20 May 2013, <http://rendezvous.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/05/20/cadmium-rice-is-chinas-latest-food-scandal/>

have seen alarming increases in average temperatures in the past two decades. Increased heatwaves from global warming are expected to exacerbate the effects of air pollution in much of the country.^{133, 134, 135, 136}

Natural Hazards

Earthquakes

China lies in an area prone to earthquakes caused by friction between the Indian and Eurasian tectonic plates.^{137, 138} China's most severe earthquakes tend to occur near the eastern edge of the Tibetan mountains, along the western rim of the Sichuan Basin, and northeast toward Beijing. This was the case with China's deadliest quake, which occurred in Shaanxi Province in 1556. Estimated at 8.0 magnitude, it destroyed an area about 805 km (500 mi) wide, claiming 830,000 victims.¹³⁹

In recent history, the Great Tangshan Earthquake of 1976 struck about 150 km (93 mi) east of Beijing, killing 250,000.¹⁴⁰ On May 12, 2008, a 7.9-magnitude quake in Sichuan killed about 70,000 people and left thousands missing or homeless.^{141, 142} The tendency of builders to cut corners during the fast-paced economic boom came to light when many new structures, including schools, collapsed.¹⁴³ As many as 10,000 students may have died, and 1,000 schools suffered severe damage.^{144, 145}

Floods

China's floods have been far more devastating than its earthquakes.¹⁴⁶ The geography of eastern China makes the lowland region especially prone to flooding during the summer monsoon. The human cost can be high because

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- 133 Johannes Friedrich et al., "This Interactive Chart Shows Changes in the World's Top 10 Emitters," World Resources Institute, 10 December 2020, retrieved on 16 November 2021, <https://www.wri.org/insights/interactive-chart-shows-changes-worlds-top-10-emitters>.
- 134 John Liu and Karoline Kan, "China's Extreme Weather Warnings Avoid Talk of Climate Change," Bloomberg, 12 July 2021, retrieved on 16 November 2021, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-07-12/china-s-extreme-weather-warnings-avoid-talk-of-climate-change>.
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- 136 Phil McKenna, "Global Warming Is Worsening China's Pollution Problems, Studies Show," Inside Climate News, 14 August 2019, retrieved on 16 November 2021, <https://insideclimatenews.org/news/14082019/climate-change-china-pollution-smog-soot-jet-stream-global-warming/>.
- 137 U.S. Geological Survey, "Earth's Tectonic Plates," 19 September 2011, <http://pubs.usgs.gov/gip/dynamic/slabs.html>
- 138 California Institute of Technology: Tectonics Observatory, "The Science Behind China's 2008 Sichuan Earthquake," 26 November 2008, <http://www.tectonics.caltech.edu/outreach/highlights/2008MayChinaEQ/>
- 139 Dan Fletcher, "Top 10 Deadliest Earthquakes: 1556: Shaanxi, China," 13 January 2010, http://www.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,1953425_1953424_1953496,00.html
- 140 Dan Fletcher, "Top 10 Deadliest Earthquakes: 1976: Tangshan, China," 13 January 2010, http://www.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,1953425_1953424_1953505,00.html
- 141 New York Times, "Sichuan Earthquake," 6 May 2009, http://topics.nytimes.com/topics/news/science/topics/earthquakes/sichuan_province_china/index.html
- 142 New York Times, "Sichuan Earthquake," 6 May 2009, http://topics.nytimes.com/topics/news/science/topics/earthquakes/sichuan_province_china/index.html
- 143 Louisa Lim, "Five Years after a Quake, Chinese Cite Shoddy Reconstruction," NPR, 13 May 2013, <http://www.npr.org/blogs/parallels/2013/05/14/183635289/Five-Years-After-A-Quake-Chinese-Cite-Shoddy-Reconstruction>
- 144 Jeanna Bryner, "Why the China Quake Was So Devastating," LiveScience, 14 May 2008, <http://www.livescience.com/2527-china-quake-devastating.html>
- 145 Andrew Jacobs and Edward Wong, "China Reports Student Toll for Quake," New York Times, 7 May 2009, <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/05/08/world/asia/08china.html>
- 146 EM-DAT: The International Disaster Database, "Database: Country Profile: Natural Disasters: China," Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters (CRED), 26 September 2012, <http://www.emdat.be/country-profile>

flooding often occurs in agricultural areas where hundreds of millions of people live.¹⁴⁷ Many Chinese cities, developed rapidly and often hastily, lack drainage systems capable of absorbing rainfall from major storms, leading to deadly flash floods.¹⁴⁸

The worst flood in recorded Chinese history happened in the summer of 1931 when both the Yangtze and the Yellow Rivers overwhelmed their flood-control devices and flooded several cities. More than 140,000 drowned, and 3.7 million died over the next nine months from disease and starvation.¹⁴⁹ Although most of the worst floods occurred before 1950, they continue to be a problem. In July 2012, Beijing had its worst rainstorms in 60 years, leading to flooding, death, and destruction and repeating a pattern set in numerous other Chinese cities in recent years.¹⁵⁰ In 2013, 2016, 2020, and 2021, major rain-triggered floods displaced tens of millions of people and caused hundreds of billions of dollars in damage.^{151, 152}

147 Zhang Hai-lun, "China: Flood Management," World Meteorological Organization, Associated Programme on Flood Management, January 2004, http://www.apfm.info/pdf/case_studies/china.pdf

148 Steven Lee Myers et al., "As China Boomed, It Didn't Take Climate Change into Account. Now It Must," New York Times, 28 October 2021, retrieved on 16 November 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/26/world/asia/china-climate-change.html>.

149 Steve Harnsberger, "The Great Floods of 1931 at Gaoyou," 25 September 2007, http://www.aboutgaoyou.com/history/floods/the_floods.aspx

150 Dexter Roberts, "Giant Beijing Rainstorm Triggers Citizens' Anger," Bloomberg Businessweek, 23 July 2012, <http://www.businessweek.com/articles/2012-07-23/giant-beijing-rainstorm-triggers-citizens-anger>

151 BBC News, "China Floods: Nearly 2 Million Displaced in Shanxi Province," 11 October 2021, retrieved on 15 November 2021, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-58866854>.

152 CGTN, "China's Five Major Floods Since 1997," 10 September 2020, retrieved on 15 November 2021, <https://news.cgtn.com/news/2020-09-10/China-s-five-major-floods-since-1997-TFd4eAmaLC/index.html>.

China in Perspective

Geography Assessment

Read the following statements and answer True or False

- | | | | |
|----|--|------|-------|
| 1. | Beijing is China's most populous city. | True | False |
| 2. | The Gobi Desert has been shrinking as agriculture expands along its fringes. | True | False |
| 3. | China is the world's leading emitter of carbon dioxide. | True | False |
| 4. | Han Chinese outnumber ethnic Uighurs in the capital of the Xinjian Uighur Autonomous Region. | True | False |
| 5. | Floods have had a more devastating effect on China's population than earthquakes. | True | False |

China in Perspective

Geography Assessment Answers

1. False:
With 21.9 million people, Shanghai is the most populous city in China. Beijing's population is 18.9 million.
2. False:
Because of population increases and inappropriate farming techniques on the grasslands at its fringes, the desert has been expanding. In 2010, high winds exacerbated this desertification to create a dust storm that turned "day into night" in Beijing.
3. True:
In 2007, China overtook the United States as the largest emitter of carbon dioxide.
4. True:
Although Uighurs are the region's largest group, Han Chinese migration has shifted the demographic center of Xinjiang north, where major cities such as Urumqi are located and where Uighurs are now a minority.
5. True:
The geography of eastern China makes the lowland region especially prone to flooding during the summer monsoon season. Because the flooding often occurs in agricultural areas, where hundreds of millions of people live, the human cost can be high.

Chapter 2 | History



Xi'an terracota warriors, 210 BCE
Flickr/Pedro Vásquez Colmenares

Introduction

The Chinese claim to be the oldest continuous civilization with a written history, dating back 4,000 years. A centralized state was introduced in the early imperial era. Though dynasties came and went, the system remained intact (with brief interruptions) until 1911.¹ For the Chinese, the emperor ruled everything under heaven (*tian xia*). Surrounding states paid tribute to him as the ruler of the Middle Kingdom (Zhongguo), which was the center of the universe. To govern, the emperor relied on a staff of scholars who had passed rigorous examinations requiring years of study. Their advancement was determined by a complex set of grades and ranks. In addition to organizing the world's first bureaucracy, the Chinese are credited with inventing gunpowder, paper, printing, and the magnetic compass.^{2, 3}

Emperors did not answer to the people but to a celestial god, referred to as Heaven. In the early 15th century, a temple was constructed where the emperor offered sacrifices and prayers for abundant harvests.⁴ Natural disasters were interpreted as a sign that Heaven had withdrawn its mandate to rule because the emperor had failed to

- 1 Robert L. Worden et al., eds., *China: A Country Study* (Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1987), retrieved on 12 November 2021, <http://countrystudies.us/china/>.
- 2 Asia for Educators, Columbia University, "Key Points in Development in East Asia, 4000 BCE–1000 CE," 2009, http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/main_pop/kpct/kp_qinhan.htm
- 3 BBC News, "China Profile," 25 April 2013, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-pacific-13017877>
- 4 United Nations Educational, Social, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), "Temple of Heaven: An Imperial Sacrificial Altar in Beijing," 2013, <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/881>

look after the well-being of the people (through excessive taxation, corruption, oppression, or other types of poor governance). Peasant-led rebellions occurred throughout Chinese history—sometimes toppling dynasties. Some view the government led by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) as a modern dynasty founded by Mao Zedong.⁵ His death shortly after the deadly Tangshan earthquake in 1976 enabled his successor, Deng Xiaoping, to lead the country in a different direction.⁶

The Ancient Dynasties

Historians generally consider the Xia Dynasty (2100–1600 BCE) the beginning of Chinese civilization.⁷ ⁸ Writing was invented during the Shang Dynasty (1700–1040 BCE).⁹ During the Zhou Dynasty (1027–221 BCE), the concept of a “mandate of heaven” was enunciated to legitimize the imperial leaders.¹⁰ Culturally, two of the great strains of Chinese religion and philosophy—Daoism and Confucianism—were products of this period and the preceding years. Laozi (Lao Tzu), the author of the *Tao-te Ching*, and Kong Fu Zi (Confucius) are thought to have been contemporaries during the decline of the Zhou Dynasty.¹¹ ¹²

The Early Imperial Era

Moving beyond the feudal system, rulers of the Qin Dynasty (221–206 BCE) administered the local regions of China through a structure of counties and prefectures that still exists in modified form today.¹³ In this way, the Qin created China’s first empire—bringing its core territory under unified rule.¹⁴ ¹⁵

Fear of invading tribes from the north, east, and west caused the Qin emperor Qin Shi Huang to begin the construction of fortified protective walls. Hundreds of thousands of laborers died building these precursors to the Great Wall of China. Highways also were constructed to better link the emperor and his capital of Xianyang (near the modern city of Xian in present-day Shaanxi Province) with the remote outposts of the empire.¹⁶ ¹⁷

- 5 Anita M. Andrew and John A. Rapp, *Autocracy and China’s Rebel Founding Emperors: Comparing Mao and Ming Taizu* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000), https://books.google.com/books?id=YQOhVb5Fbt4C&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&hl=en#v=onepage&q&f=false.
- 6 Erza Vogel, “China under Deng Xiaoping’s Leadership,” *East Asia Forum*, 27 September 2011, <http://www.eastasiaforum.org/2011/09/27/china-under-deng-xiaopings-leadership/>
- 7 Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, “Country Profile: China,” August 2006, 2, <https://www.loc.gov/rr/frd/cs/profiles/China.pdf>
- 8 Department of Asian Art, Metropolitan Museum of Art, “Shang and Zhou Dynasties: The Bronze Age of China,” in *Heilbrun Timeline of Art History*, 2000, http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/shzh/hd_shzh.htm
- 9 Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies, Stanford University, “The Shang Dynasty, 1600 to 1050 BCE,” *Spice Digest*, Fall 2007, <http://iis-db.stanford.edu/docs/117/ShangDynasty.pdf>
- 10 Yang Lu, “The Zhou Dynasty,” n.d., http://polaris.gseis.ucla.edu/yanglu/ECC_HISTORY_ZHOU%20DYNASTY.htm
- 11 Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, “Country Profile: China,” August 2006, 2, <https://www.loc.gov/rr/frd/cs/profiles/China.pdf>
- 12 Christopher Majka, “Lao Tzu: Father of Taoism,” Empty Mirrors Press, n.d., <http://www.chebucto.ns.ca/Philosophy/Taichi/lao.html>
- 13 Robert L. Worden et al., eds., *China: A Country Study* (Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1987), retrieved on 12 November 2021, <http://countrystudies.us/china/>.
- 14 Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, “Country Profile: China,” August 2006, 2, <https://www.loc.gov/rr/frd/cs/profiles/China.pdf>
- 15 Tony Perry, “The Terra-Cotta Warrior,” *Los Angeles Times*, 4 August 2008, <http://articles.latimes.com/2008/aug/04/entertainment/et-china4>
- 16 Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, “Country Profile: China,” August 2006, 3, <https://www.loc.gov/rr/frd/cs/profiles/China.pdf>
- 17 Division of Religion and Philosophy, University of Cumbria, “Overview of World Religions: Legalism,” July 1999, <http://philtar.ucsm.ac.uk/encyclopedia/china/legal.html>

By most historical accounts, Qin Shi Huang was ruthless in squelching dissent and rebellion. Using Legalist philosophy, which developed during the late Zhou period, he aggressively punished crimes of any degree.¹⁸ When he died in 210 BCE, his second son was made emperor through court intrigue. The son proved to be ineffectual, and the end of the dynasty soon came.¹⁹ The Army of Terracotta Warriors, constructed by 720,000 conscripted laborers over 38 years around Qin Shi Huang's tomb, remains a legacy of the Qin Dynasty.²⁰

The Han kingdoms (206 BCE–220 CE) emerged victorious in feudal fighting following the demise of the Qin Dynasty and began an ethnic dominance over China that has continued to this day. A period of territorial expansion as far as present-day Uzbekistan and Afghanistan also began during this time, when rulers established trade routes to the west (now known as the Silk Road). As the routes developed, the Great Wall was extended west to repel Turkic invaders from Central Asia.^{21, 22}

Four centuries of disunity followed the collapse of the Han Dynasty as warlords fought for control, beginning with the relatively brief Three Kingdoms period (220–280) when the empire was effectively split into three kingdoms (the northern Wei, the southwestern Shu, and the southeastern Wu).²³ The Wei briefly overcame the Shu kingdom before the Wei was internally overthrown and transformed into a new dynasty.²⁴

China was briefly united during the early years of the Jin Dynasty (265–420). But the reunited empire soon plunged into civil war and quickly splintered into a series of dynasties from 304–589. This period was marked by several technological advances, including the invention of gunpowder for use in fireworks.²⁵ The period from 420–589 is known as a golden age for Chinese literature and arts.²⁶

The Middle Dynasties

Burdensome taxes and compulsory labor programs were implemented during the Sui Dynasty (581–617) to reconstruct the Great Wall and build the Grand Canal, which connected China's two most important rivers. But these unpopular projects, combined with costly and unsuccessful military campaigns against Korea, led to "popular revolts, disloyalty, and assassination."²⁷

18 Division of Religion and Philosophy, University of Cumbria, "Overview of World Religions: Legalism," July 1999, <http://philtar.uconn.ac.uk/encyclopedia/china/legal.html>

19 Hoklam Chan et al., "China," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 9 November 2021, retrieved on 12 November 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/place/China>.

20 Stanley Stewart, "The Secret Tomb in the Heart of China," *Times Online* (UK), 16 September 2007, <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/travel/destinations/china/article2452334.ece>

21 Brook Lamer, "The Great Wall of China is Under Siege," *Smithsonian*, August 2008, <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/people-places/great-wall.html>

22 Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library, "From Three Kingdoms to Disunion," n.d., http://www.fordlibrarymuseum.gov/museum/exhibits/China_exhibit/three%20kingdoms.htm

23 Rinn-Sup Shinn and Robert L. Worden, "Chapter 1: Historical Setting: Era of Disunity," in *China: A Country Study*, 4th ed., ed. Robert L. Worden, Andrea Matles Savada, and Robert E. Dolan (Washington, DC: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1988), <http://memory.loc.gov/frd/cs/cntoc.html#cn0019>

24 Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library, "From Three Kingdoms to Disunion," n.d., http://www.fordlibrarymuseum.gov/museum/exhibits/China_exhibit/three%20kingdoms.htm

25 Erik Zürcher and Denis C. Twitchett, "China: The Six Dynasties: The Shih-liu Kuo (16 Kingdoms) in the North (303–439)," *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, 2007, <http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-71668/China>

26 Ulrich Theobald, "China History—Southern Dynasties (420–589)," 31 October 2011, <http://www.chinaknowledge.de/History/Division/nanchao.html>

27 Rinn-Sup Shinn and Robert L. Worden, "Chapter 1: Historical Setting: Restoration of Empire," in *China: A Country Study*, 4th ed., ed. Robert L. Worden, Andrea Matles Savada, and Robert E. Dolan (Washington, DC: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1988), <http://memory.loc.gov/frd/cs/cntoc.html#cn0019>

In the Tang Dynasty (618–907), territorial expansions and advances in technology rivaled the accomplishments of the earlier Han period. During this time, which is regarded as a “high point of Chinese cultural development,” block printing was invented, making the written word available to more people.^{28, 29}

Economic instability and military defeat led to the end of the Tang Dynasty and the fragmentation of China into 5 northern dynasties and 10 southern kingdoms. These were mostly reunited during the rule of the Song Dynasty (960–1279), which is considered a period of Chinese renaissance. Confucianism replaced Buddhism as the dominant philosophy during this time. A wealthy mercantile class arose from the growth of private trade and the early forms of a market economy.^{30, 31}

The Late Dynasties

Having subjugated Central Asia, Korea, and North China, Mongol invaders led by Kublai Khan conquered the Southern Song Kingdom and established the Yuan Dynasty (1279–1368). As “the first alien dynasty to rule all China,” the Mongols attempted to rule the kingdom through existing Chinese institutions. They rebuilt Beijing and improved roads and waterways, leading to “the first direct Chinese contacts with Europe.” Marco Polo traveled east to China during this time. Muslims from Central Asia also began converting many Chinese in the northwest and southwest to Islam during Mongolian rule.^{32, 33}

A former Buddhist monk led an invasion that overthrew the Mongols and established the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644), the last dynasty to be governed by native Chinese. Expansion of the Grand Canal promoted domestic trade. At the same time, naval expeditions in the China seas and the Indian Ocean as far as East Africa brought foreign envoys bearing tribute for the Chinese emperors. The decline of the Ming Dynasty followed a familiar pattern. Weak or disinterested emperors allowed court intrigues to preoccupy the government. Meanwhile, taxes were increased to pay for the lavish needs of the court and finance military actions against the Mongols and Jurchens in Manchuria. Eventually, rampant banditry throughout the country developed into active rebellions, exacerbated by severe economic conditions in the wake of devastating droughts and floods in northern China.^{34, 35}

As rebellion swept through China during the late stages of the Ming Dynasty, a Ming general stationed in the northeast allowed the Manchu army to pass through the Great Wall. He requested their help suppressing a rebel leader who had marched into Beijing, deposed the Ming emperor, and declared a new dynasty. The combined Ming and Manchu forces were able to put down the rebellion, after which the Manchu leader declared himself emperor of the new Qing

28 Rinn-Sup Shinn and Robert L. Worden, “Chapter 1: Historical Setting: Restoration of Empire,” in *China: A Country Study*, 4th ed., ed. Robert L. Worden, Andrea Matles Savada, and Robert E. Dolan (Washington, DC: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1988), <http://memory.loc.gov/frd/cs/cntoc.html#cn0019>

29 Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, “Country Profile: China,” August 2006, 3, <https://www.loc.gov/rr/frd/cs/profiles/China.pdf>

30 Robert L. Worden et al., eds., *China: A Country Study* (Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1987), retrieved on 12 November 2021, <http://countrystudies.us/china/>.

31 Asia for Educators, Columbia University, “The Song Dynasty in China,” 2008, <http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/song/>

32 Robert L. Worden et al., eds., *China: A Country Study* (Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1987), retrieved on 12 November 2021, <http://countrystudies.us/china/>.

33 Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, “Country Profile: China,” August 2006, 3, <https://www.loc.gov/rr/frd/cs/profiles/China.pdf>

34 Richard Hooker, “Ming China: The Decline of the Ming,” Washington State University, 1996, <http://www.wsu.edu/~dee/MING/MING.HTM>

35 Hoklam Chan et al., “China,” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 9 November 2021, retrieved on 12 November 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/place/China>.

Dynasty. In the next 40 years, the last pockets of Ming resistance to the new dynasty were extinguished, leaving all of China under Qing control.³⁶

Early in the Qing Dynasty the economy flourished and China saw a period of rapid population growth. But the increasing demands of a growing population led to economic challenges, particularly because the Qing leaders were forced to invest more of the empire's wealth into military actions against rebellions in central China. The most well known was the White Lotus Rebellion, which lasted 9 years around the beginning of the 19th century.³⁷

Opium Wars

Meanwhile, China faced a new threat from foreign powers in its southern port of Guangzhou (Canton). During the late 1700s and early 1800s, the British East India Company shipped thousands of tons of opium from India into China in exchange for Chinese tea and other goods. This not only created social problems for the Chinese, but it also became an economic issue as the silver payments for opium began to drain China's reserves. Despite imperial bans on the opium trade in the 1830s, British traders pursued the lucrative business and still found Chinese merchants willing to import the opium.³⁸

Eventually, confrontation over the opium shipments led to war. Chinese military forces were ill-prepared to fight the modern British forces, which had cannons and muskets. The Chinese defeats during the First Opium War in 1839 and the Second Opium War in 1856 resulted in a series of one-sided or "unequal" treaties that granted numerous trade concessions to the British, French, Russians, and Americans.³⁹

During the 1850s and 1860s, rebellions grew in southern China and spread north, while most Chinese Muslims in the western provinces clashed with non-Muslim Chinese. Adding fuel to the growing domestic fire was a terrible drought in 1877–78, which caused great suffering for millions of people in the northern provinces. As discontent grew, attempts by the Chinese government to industrialize and modernize the military were hindered by general corruption and mismanagement.⁴⁰

Imperial Breakdown

As the 19th century drew to a close, Chinese rulers became increasingly dominated by the colonial powers that had established trading and missionary activities throughout China. In 1895, the rulers ceded Taiwan to the Japanese, and in 1898 they were forced to grant the British a 99-year lease on Hong Kong. They also had to confront rising internal conflicts and discontent with Qing rule. Furthermore, the emperors of this time often came to the throne while young children; in these cases, power was transferred to regents, the most notable of whom was the Empress

36 Hoklam Chan et al., "China," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 9 November 2021, retrieved on 12 November 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/place/China>.

37 *Encyclopædia Britannica*, "White Lotus Rebellion," 5 July 2019, retrieved on 18 November 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/event/White-Lotus-Rebellion>.

38 Hoklam Chan et al., "China," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 9 November 2021, retrieved on 12 November 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/place/China>.

39 T. Walter Wallbank et al., "Chapter 29: South and East Asia, 1815–1914: A Short History of the Opium Wars," in *Civilization Past and Present* (New York: Longman, 1992), Schaffer Library of Drug Policy, <http://www.druglibrary.org/Schaffer/heroin/opiwar1.htm>

40 Hoklam Chan et al., "China," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 9 November 2021, retrieved on 12 November 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/place/China>.

Dowager Cixi. In 1898, she usurped power from the reform-minded Emperor Guangxu, who was of mature age. After that, he was held in various types of palace confinement until his death.⁴¹

Almost immediately, Cixi threw her support behind yet another indigenous rebellion. This group was known as the Fists of Righteous Harmony, but foreigners referred to them as “Boxers” because of their martial arts skills.⁴² In 1899–1901, the Boxers turned their fury from the ruling Qing Dynasty to the foreign powers in China, unleashing a wave of attacks on missionaries and Chinese converts. They marched toward the capital, where foreign diplomats fought off the Boxers with a small group of military personnel until a force of international troops, including Americans, arrived, rescued the diplomats, and drove back the Boxers.⁴³

The failure of the Boxer Rebellion heralded the end of the Qing Dynasty. Although the Empress Dowager continued to rule in name, true power rapidly shifted to colonial interests, who intensely pursued “spheres of influence” within the country. In 1908, the Empress Dowager and the captive (but still titular) emperor died within a day of each other. The 2-year-old son of the emperor’s half-brother was made the new emperor, and three years later, he became China’s “last emperor.” Meanwhile, far from Beijing, plans were being hatched that would soon bring an end to centuries-old dynastic governance.⁴⁴

Republican China

Assisted by Western financial backing and motivated by nationalism, democracy, and socialism, a Chinese activist named Sun Yat-sen headed the Nationalist Party (Kuomintang or KMT). He led a revolutionary movement in the early years of the 20th century that overthrew imperial rule in hopes of establishing a republic. In reality, warlords continued to control most of the country. After World War I, when German concessions in China were awarded to the Japanese, Sun Yat-sen sought support from the Soviet Union, which provided advisers. Hedging their bets, the Soviets also cooperated with the CCP, founded by Mao Zedong and others in Shanghai in 1921. After Sun’s death in 1925, Chiang Kai-shek became the new KMT leader. His Northern Expedition forces reached Beijing in 1928 and established a national government with its capital in Nanjing, although warlords continued to hold power in many areas. Over the next 20 years, the KMT and CCP engaged in alternating periods of civil war and cooperative fronts against the Japanese.^{45, 46, 47, 48}

Nationalist–Communist Alliance

While the KMT focused on expeditions to defeat the communists, the Japanese invaded Manchuria in 1931. They established a “puppet state,” placing the last Qing emperor on the throne. Chiang paid scant attention to the growing

41 Louisa Lim, “Who Murdered China’s Emperor 100 Years Ago?” National Public Radio, 14 November 2008, <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=96993694>

42 Thayer Watkins, “The 1900 Boxer Uprising in China,” San Jose State University, <http://www.sjsu.edu/faculty/watkins/boxer.htm>

43 Hoklam Chan et al., “China,” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 9 November 2021, retrieved on 12 November 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/place/China>.

44 J. Buschini, “The Age of Imperialism: The Boxer Rebellion,” Small Planet Communications, 2000, <http://www.smplanet.com/imperialism/fists.html>

45 Robert L. Worden et al., eds., *China: A Country Study* (Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1987), retrieved on 12 November 2021, <http://countrystudies.us/china/>.

46 Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, “Country Profile: China,” August 2006, 4, <https://www.loc.gov/rr/frd/cs/profiles/China.pdf>

47 Bruce A. Elleman, “Chapter 10: The Warlord Era and the Nationalists’ Northern Expedition to Unite China,” in *Modern Chinese Warfare, 1795–1989* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 175, <http://books.google.com/books?id=Md801mHEeOkC&pg=PA175&lpg=>

48 Hoklam Chan et al., “China,” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 9 November 2021, retrieved on 12 November 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/place/China>.

Japanese presence on the northern border, opting instead to mass KMT forces for a final assault on the last, southern communist stronghold in Jiangxi Province. The communists' escape from their trapped location in the south and their brutal trek to far-north Yanan (where they established a new base) became known as the Long March. It was during this period that Mao Zedong established himself as the unquestioned leader of the CCP.⁴⁹

In 1936, Chiang was kidnapped by a former Manchurian military commander and was freed only after agreeing to set up a new front with the CCP against the looming Japanese threat in northern China. By the second half of 1937, Japan and China were involved in a full-scale war that involved terrible atrocities. By many estimates, 250,000 to 300,000 noncombatants were killed, and 20,000 women were raped when the Japanese invaded Nanjing.⁵⁰ Chiang's government moved inland and set up its new capital in Chongqing, which was bombed frequently during the war but was difficult to attack by land. By 1945, the Japanese were defeated by the Chinese National Revolutionary Army, which comprised both the CCP Red Army and KMT forces. Allied assistance also proved crucial to this victory.⁵¹

Civil War

The end of the Sino-Japanese War was followed by the resumed civil war between the KMT and the CCP. The communists had used the Sino-Japanese war to establish new bases inland, and they emerged from the conflict stronger than their rivals. They were also winning the propaganda war against the KMT, whom many viewed as corrupt. Soon the CCP began to push Chiang's forces deeper into the south. By 1949, Chiang and his remaining troops and supporters fled to the island of Taiwan, where they declared the city of Taipei the temporary capital of the Republic of China. Before the KMT exodus to their island, the people of Taiwan had just emerged from 50 years of Japanese rule. Over the next quarter-century, Taiwan was able to develop economically under tight KMT control. By the 1980s, its citizens enjoyed a far higher standard of living than their mainland counterparts.^{52, 53}

The People's Republic of China

Early Years

On 1 October 1949, CCP Chairman Mao Zedong proclaimed the founding of the new government, declaring "the Chinese people have stood up."⁵⁴ The first 7 years were marked by land-redistribution policies, inflation control, and increasing industrial production based on the Soviet model. In 1956, satisfied that things were going well, Mao directed the government to experiment with free speech and declared, "[L]et a *hundred flowers* blossom and a *hundred* schools of thought contend." Intellectuals were encouraged to offer constructive criticism of the new government's record.⁵⁵ Some offered criticism no harsher than a tepid critique of a supervisor's work style. Nonetheless, the leadership was

49 Cal Poly, "Biography of Mao Tse-tung," <http://cla.calpoly.edu/~lcall/mao.bio.html>

50 Ian Buruma, "From Tenderness to Savagery in Seconds," *New York Review of Books*, 13 October 2011, <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2011/oct/13/tenderness-savagery-seconds/?pagination=false>

51 Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, "Country Profile: China," August 2006, 5, <https://www.loc.gov/rr/frd/cs/profiles/China.pdf>

52 Hoklam Chan et al., "China," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 9 November 2021, retrieved on 12 November 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/place/China>.

53 John C. Copper, "Taiwan," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 14 November 2021, retrieved on 19 November 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Taiwan>.

54 Jerome A. Cohen, "The Chinese People Have Stood Up!" U.S. Asia Law Institute, New York University School of Law, 30 September 2009, <http://www.usasialaw.org/?p=1856>

55 Wm. Theodore de Bary and Richard Lufrano, comps., "Intellectual Opinions from the Hundred Flowers Period (1957)," in *Sources of Chinese Tradition: From 1600 Through the Twentieth Century*, 2nd ed., (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 2:466–468, http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/ps/cup/hundred_flowers.pdf

unprepared for the volume of criticism. A crackdown on “rightists” quickly followed.⁵⁶ Office managers were given a quota to meet, and anyone who had spoken up was an easy target. Rightists were denounced, demoted, and often sent to the countryside for reform through labor (*laogai*), a Maoist innovation modeled on the Soviet gulag system.⁵⁷ Their families suffered the stigma of their transgression.⁵⁸

Great Leap Forward

Perhaps no program has been as severely misnamed as the Great Leap Forward. It developed as part of the government’s Five-Year Plan for 1958–63. In an attempt to simultaneously increase agricultural and industrial production, China’s substantial rural labor force was reorganized (at Mao’s urging) into over 20,000 immense communes, with each commune receiving ownership of land and equipment. In addition to implementing questionable practices for increasing agricultural productivity, the Great Leap Forward also propagated small-scale industrial enterprises, most notably backyard steel furnaces that produced low-quality pig iron. The results of the program were disastrous. Agricultural yields plunged (despite reports of “record” harvests fabricated by communal administrators fearful of having their ideological fervor questioned), causing a famine that resulted in tens of millions of deaths.⁵⁹ By 1959, even Mao had to acknowledge failure. He was forced to step down as chairman of the PRC, although he kept his position as chairman of the CCP.⁶⁰

Cultural Revolution

During the second half of the 1960s, China was swept by a period of engineered upheaval called the Cultural Revolution. Weary of lagging revolutionary commitment within the communist leadership and his slipping hold on power, Mao conceived of drastic measures to reform the party, make Chinese society more egalitarian, and purge potential rivals. The measures were implemented by the so-called Gang of Four, including Mao’s third wife, Jiang Qing. Others were also involved in orchestrating the events, but the Gang of Four was eventually deemed responsible.^{61, 62}

Mao specified that “the four olds” (old customs, old culture, old habits, and old ideas, all of which reflected a feudal mindset or bourgeois culture) must be eradicated. The foot soldiers of cultural renewal were the Red Guards (Hong Weibing), bands of zealous youths loyal only to Mao. The guards were encouraged to denounce the complacent bureaucratic class of party apparatchiks and anyone who was not staunchly supportive of Maoist doctrine as

56 Hoklam Chan et al., “China,” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 9 November 2021, retrieved on 12 November 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/place/China>.

57 Ramin Pejan, “Laogai: ‘Reform Through Labor’ in China,” <http://www.wcl.american.edu/hrbrief/v7i2/laogai.htm>

58 Liang Heng and Judith Shapiro, *Son of the Revolution* (New York: Vintage Press, 1984).

59 Frank Dikotter, “Mao’s Great Leap Forward,” *New York Times*, 15 December 2010, http://www.nytimes.com/2010/12/16/opinion/16iht-eddikotter16.html?_r=0

60 Robert L. Worden et al., eds., *China: A Country Study* (Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1987), retrieved on 12 November 2021, <http://countrystudies.us/china/>.

61 Human Rights in China, “The Cultural Revolution as Legacy and Precedent,” *China Rights Forum*, no. 4, 2005, http://hrchina.org/sites/default/files/oldsite/PDFs/CRF.4.2005/CRF-2005-4_Revolution.pdf

62 Kenneth G. Lieberthal, “Cultural Revolution,” *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 27 March 2020, retrieved on 18 November 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Cultural-Revolution>.

“revisionists.” The targets were associated with the traditional scholar-gentry, who glorified the past to legitimize the present status quo.^{63, 64, 65, 66}

During the decade starting in 1966, millions either died or had their lives destroyed, and the party’s ranks were thoroughly purged. Red Guard factions competed intensely to best fulfill the chairman’s directives. When the Red Guards proved too unruly, the army took control of the cities and the guards were packed off to the countryside to learn from the farmers. Chinese history books refer to the era as one of turmoil but provide few details for students to appreciate the magnitude of the destruction of lives and cultural artifacts.^{67, 68, 69}

Market Reforms

Mao’s death in 1976 marked the end of the Cultural Revolution and led to the purging of the Gang of Four. Deng Xiaoping, branded a “capitalist roader” during the Cultural Revolution, maneuvered to power by 1978. Deng, then 74 years old, went on to lead China for over a decade, despite never officially holding the position of head of state. China embarked on a path in which pragmatism outweighed adherence to ideology. Deng famously declared, “It doesn’t matter whether the cat is black or white. As long as it catches mice, it’s a good cat.” He embraced the “four modernizations” (agriculture, industry, science and technology, and the military) as a blueprint for national development. Relations with capitalist nations warmed appreciably, and free markets began to appear around the country.^{70, 71, 72}

The 1989 Democracy Movement

During the 1980s, as labor protests swept through some European communist countries such as Poland and capitalist countries such as South Korea, college students in China took to the streets to demand political change. By mid-decade, there was widespread awareness within China that it was quite backward relative to some of its neighbors (which traditionally were tributary states), and the CCP was blamed.⁷³ The protests peaked in Beijing in 1989, shortly after the death of Hu Yaobang, a popular former CCP chairman who had been sacked during an earlier round of demonstrations. Paying their respects to Hu in Tiananmen Square enabled ordinary people to gather and air their complaints about corruption and the socio-economic inequalities spawned by market reform.⁷⁴ Many vented

63 Jonathan Kaufman, “Purging the Posters,” *New Republic*, 23 February 1980, <http://www.newrepublic.com/article/world/88352/mao-zedong-communist-china-posters#>

64 Elizabeth J. Perry and Li Xun, “Revolutionary Rudeness: The Language of Red Guards and Rebel Workers in China’s Cultural Revolution,” *Indiana East Asian Working Paper Series on Language and Politics in Modern China*, July 1993, 6, http://www.indiana.edu/~easc/publications/doc/working_papers/Issue%202%201993%20July%20IUEAWPS%20Perry%20and%20Xun.%20Fogel.pdf

65 Jonathan Spence, “Introduction to the Cultural Revolution,” *Spice Digest* (Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies, Stanford University), Fall 2007, <http://iis-db.stanford.edu/docs/115/CRintro.pdf>

66 Kenneth G. Lieberthal, “Cultural Revolution,” *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 27 March 2020, retrieved on 18 November 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Cultural-Revolution>.

67 Xiyuan Yang and Michael Wines, “Stitching the Narrative of a Revolution,” *New York Times*, 25 January 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/01/26/world/asia/26files.html?scp=1&sq=china%20cultural%20revolution&st=cse>

68 Kenneth G. Lieberthal, “Cultural Revolution,” *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 27 March 2020, retrieved on 18 November 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Cultural-Revolution>.

69 Howard W. French, “China’s Textbooks Twist and Omit History,” *New York Times*, 6 December 2004, <http://www.nytimes.com/2004/12/06/international/asia/06textbook.html>

70 Patrick E. Tyler, “Deng Xiaoping: A Political Wizard Who Put China on the Capitalist Road,” *New York Times*, 20 February 1997, <http://www.nytimes.com/learning/general/onthisday/bday/0822.html>

71 Ma Honghong and Hiroki Takeuchi, “Depoliticized Politics and the End of a Short Twentieth Century in China: A Talk by Wang Hui,” Asia Institute, UCLA, n.d., <http://www.international.ucla.edu/asia/news/article.asp?parentid=62482>

72 Hoklam Chan et al., “China,” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 9 November 2021, retrieved on 12 November 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/place/China>.

73 Perry Link, “Introduction,” in *Evening Chats in Beijing: Probing China’s Predicament* (New York: Norton, 1992), http://books.google.com/books?id=PWtW_sSib3QC&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false

74 Wang Hui, “Chapter 2: The Year 1989 and the Historical Roots of Neoliberalism in China,” in *The End of the Revolution: China and the Limits of Modernity* (London: Verso, 2009), 30.

frustrations over inflation, which had been unheard of during the first 30 years of CCP rule but was running as high as 30%, making it difficult to make ends meet.⁷⁵

Government leaders were initially conflicted over how to respond.⁷⁶ But by the end of May, the hardliners had won out. On 4 June, truckloads of troops and tanks using live ammunition traversed Beijing's broad boulevards to clear the square. One striking photograph—of a protester standing his ground as a column of tanks rumbled toward him—became a lasting symbol of the movement. Television footage showed that he then jumped in front of the tank as it swerved to go around him before being pulled back to safety by an onlooker. The man was never identified. (*Time* magazine later named this “unknown rebel” one of the top 20 leaders and revolutionaries of the 20th century.) Ironically, when the footage was shown on Chinese state-run TV, broadcasters cited it as evidence that the government had used the utmost restraint in dealing with “hooligans.”^{77, 78} The Chinese government estimated the death toll of the 3–5 June Tiananmen Square incident to be 241; many outside observers believe it to be much higher.⁷⁹

Post-Tiananmen China

The CCP leadership faced considerable foreign criticism and reaction over the Tiananmen Square crackdown and deaths, including strained diplomatic ties and economic sanctions. But Beijing made efforts to repair foreign relations by demonstrating a renewed commitment to economic reform. In January 1992, Deng Xiaoping embarked on a highly publicized trip to inspect foreign investment zones in the south. Later that year, at the 14th Party Congress, his initiatives for deepening the market-oriented economic reforms received official endorsement. These reforms led to a higher standard of living for many citizens through the expansion of private-sector employment opportunities and helped to legitimize one-party rule as a necessary source of stability.⁸⁰ At the same time, the process enabled corruption to flourish, which cemented the power of an emerging “red aristocracy” of hereditary elites.^{81, 82}

Recent Developments

In the 21st century, a growing public recognition emerged that the culture of nepotism and privilege evident at the top had spread to every level of government.⁸³ At the same time, the CCP's legitimization of one-party rule because

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- 75 Richard W. Wilson, “Change and Continuity in Chinese Cultural Identity: The Filial Ideal and the Transformation of an Ethic,” in *China's Quest for National Identity*, ed. Lowell Dittmer and Samuel S. Kim (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), 120, <http://books.google.com/books?id=DRpITL33tpEC&pg=PA120&lpg=>
- 76 Michael L. Evans, ed., “The U.S. ‘Tiananmen Papers,’” National Security Archive Electronic Briefing Book no. 47, George Washington University, 4 June 2001, <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB47/>
- 77 Robert Woodward, “Anatomy of a Massacre,” *Village Voice*, 4 June 1996, <http://tsquare.tv/film/voice.html>
- 78 *BBC News*, “Tiananmen ‘Tank Man’ Still at Large,” 7 April 1998, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/75679.stm>
- 79 *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, “Tiananmen Square Incident,” 20 April 2021, retrieved on 17 November 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Tiananmen-Square-incident#ref282101>.
- 80 Xiaodong Zhu, “Understanding China's Growth: Past, Present, and Future,” *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 26, no. 4 (Fall 2012): 103–124, <http://pubs.aeaweb.org/doi/pdfplus/10.1257/jep.26.4.103>
- 81 Andrew Wedeman, “Chapter 1: A Double Paradox,” in *Double Paradox: Rapid Growth and Rising Corruption in China* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012), 8–9. http://books.google.com/books?id=Pc5v1PggyusC&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false
- 82 Jonathan Turley, “Mao's Millionaires: The New Red Mobility of China Includes a Familiar Family,” 9 May 2013, <http://jonathanturley.org/2013/05/09/maos-millionaires-the-new-red-nobility-of-china-includes-a-familiar-family/>
- 83 Ronald Bailey, “China's Red Nobility and the Non-Rule of Law,” *Reason*, 21 May 2012, <http://reason.com/blog/2012/05/21/chinas-red-nobility-and-the-non-rule-of>

“life has gotten better in every way” was eroding.^{84, 85} Pollution—a consequence of several decades of breakneck economic development—outranked all other public concerns.⁸⁶ Environmental protests had ushered in democratic governance in Taiwan in the 1980s.⁸⁷

Protests (or “mass incidents” in government-speak) occurred with increasing regularity. Such incidents sometimes degenerated into violent stand-offs, often precipitated by the illegal seizure of land for commercial development purposes, involving small groups or entire villages.^{88, 89} The national leadership change in late 2012 was described as a “critical transition.”⁹⁰ Yet six of the seven men placed on the Politburo Standing Committee, the highest echelon of power in the CCP, were the sons of former leaders, members of the “red nobility.”⁹¹

In 2013, Xi Jinping became the new CCP general secretary and China’s top leader. Xi immediately launched a vast anticorruption campaign that led to the prosecution of over 1.5 million government officials and private citizens through 2018. In addition to its stated goal of reducing corruption, the campaign served the twofold purpose of removing potential challengers to Xi’s power from within the CCP and eliminating accumulations of power outside the party.^{92, 93, 94}

One of the most high-profile targets of Xi’s anticorruption purges was Bo Xilai, CCP secretary in Chongqing and the son of a famous general. Before his arrest in 2012, Bo was being groomed for a top leadership position. According to his indictment, Bo abused his authority by accepting gifts such as a villa on the French Riviera. He was sentenced to 15 years in prison. Few Chinese felt that Bo had engaged in practices that were not commonplace among the political elite.^{95, 96, 97}

Xi also implemented elements of a cult of personality reminiscent of Mao’s rule, a break with the low-key approach of his predecessors. Xi’s name and ideology were added to the constitution in 2017, putting him on par with Mao.

84 Richard A. Easterlin, “When Growth Outpaces Happiness,” *New York Times*, 27 September 2012, http://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/28/opinion/in-china-growth-outpaces-happiness.html?_r=0

85 Jeffrey Wasserstrom, “Is China’s Communist Party Choking?” *Slate*, 17 January 2013, http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/foreigners/2013/01/china_s_smog_crisis_poses_a_threat_to_the_legitimacy_of_the_chinese_communist.html

86 Bloomberg News, “Chinese Anger over Pollution Becomes Main Cause of Unrest,” 6 March 2013, <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2013-03-06/pollution-passes-land-grievances-as-main-spark-of-china-protests.html>

87 Robin Broad, John Cavanaugh, and Waldo Bello, “Chapter 26: Development: The Market is Not Enough,” in *International Political Economy: Perspectives on Global Power and Wealth*, 4th ed., ed. Jeffrey A. Frieden and David A. Lake (London: Routledge, 2000), 394. http://books.google.com/books?id=YOf00CDxwakC&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false

88 Alan Taylor, “Rising Protests in China,” *Atlantic*, 17 February 2012, <http://www.theatlantic.com/infocus/2012/02/rising-protests-in-china/100247/>

89 *Reuters*, “Police Fire Teargas on China Village after Land Grab Protest,” 10 March 2013, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/03/10/us-china-unrest-idUSBRE92909F20130310>

90 Elizabeth Economy, “China’s Leadership Transition: Three Things to Know,” Council on Foreign Relations, 16 November 2012, <http://www.cfr.org/china/chinas-leadership-transition-three-things-know/p29485>

91 Barbara Demick, “In China ‘Red Nobility’ Trumps Egalitarian Ideals,” *Los Angeles Times*, 4 March 2013, http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-china-princelings-20130305.0.2241010_story

92 BBC News, “China Profile—Timeline,” 29 July 2019, retrieved on 18 November 2021, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-pacific-13017882>.

93 Alexandra Fiol-Mahon, “Xi Jinping’s Anti-Corruption Campaign: The Hidden Motives of a Modern-Day Mao,” Foreign Policy Research Institute, 17 August 2018, retrieved on 18 November 2021, <https://www.fpri.org/article/2018/08/xi-jinpings-anti-corruption-campaign-the-hidden-motives-of-a-modern-day-mao/>.

94 Emily Feng, “How China’s Massive Corruption Crackdown Snares Entrepreneurs across the Country,” NPR, 4 March 2021, retrieved on 18 November 2021, <https://www.npr.org/2021/03/04/947943087/how-chinas-massive-corruption-crackdown-snares-entrepreneurs-across-the-country>.

95 Anne Henochowicz, “The Extraordinary Fall of Bo Xilai,” *Cairo Review of Global Affairs*, 2013, retrieved on 19 November 2021, <https://www.thecairoreview.com/book-reviews/the-extraordinary-fall-of-bo-xilai/>.

96 Matt Schiavenza, “Interview: Will the Bo Xilai Case Change China?” *Atlantic*, 16 April 2013, retrieved on 19 November 2021, <https://www.theatlantic.com/china/archive/2013/04/interview-will-the-bo-xilai-case-change-china/275026/>.

97 Pin Ho, “From Maoist Criminal to Popular Hero?” *New York Times*, 7 August 2013, retrieved on 19 November 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2013/08/08/opinion/from-criminal-to-unlikely-hero.html>.

In 2018 Xi did away with the two-term limit on the presidency, gaining the option of staying in power beyond the traditional decade.^{98, 99, 100}

Xi set out to assert China's role as an ascendant superpower. China took uncompromising stances over territorial disagreements with India and disputed maritime claims in the South China Sea. Chinese rhetoric about Taiwan, which China views as an errant Chinese province, grew increasingly bold. In Hong Kong, Beijing asserted its authority by implementing a stringent new security law that hamstrung the territory's democratic political system. Yet China's economy, the engine of its growing might, began showing signs of slowing down in 2015. Ongoing trade tensions with the United States further complicated the situation. In 2020, the city of Wuhan in the province of Hubei became the starting point of the COVID-19 global pandemic.^{101, 102, 103}

98 BBC News, "China Profile—Timeline," 29 July 2019, retrieved on 18 November 2021, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-pacific-13017882>.

99 Alexandra Fiol-Mahon, "Xi Jinping's Anti-Corruption Campaign: The Hidden Motives of a Modern-Day Mao," Foreign Policy Research Institute, 17 August 2018, retrieved on 18 November 2021, <https://www.fpri.org/article/2018/08/xi-jinpings-anti-corruption-campaign-the-hidden-motives-of-a-modern-day-mao/>.

100 Emily Feng, "How China's Massive Corruption Crackdown Snares Entrepreneurs across the Country," NPR, 4 March 2021, retrieved on 18 November 2021, <https://www.npr.org/2021/03/04/947943087/how-chinas-massive-corruption-crackdown-snares-entrepreneurs-across-the-country>.

101 BBC News, "China Profile—Timeline," 29 July 2019, retrieved on 18 November 2021, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-pacific-13017882>.

102 Paul D. Shinkman, "China Escalates War Rhetoric Over Taiwan: Do Not Test Our Determination," *U.S. News & World Report*, 29 January 2021, retrieved on 18 November 2021, <https://www.usnews.com/news/world-report/articles/2021-01-29/china-escalates-war-rhetoric-over-taiwan-do-not-test-our-determination>.

103 BBC News, "Hong Kong Security Law: What Is It and Is It Worrying?" 30 June 2020, retrieved on 18 November 2021, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-52765838>.

China in Perspective

History Assessment

Read the following statements and answer True or False

- | | | | |
|----|---|------|-------|
| 1. | During the Qing Dynasty, China was forced to become a market for opium. | True | False |
| 2. | All of China's ruling imperial dynasties were Han Chinese.. | True | False |
| 3. | The Cultural Revolution was a rediscovery and celebration of China's traditional arts and folklore. | True | False |
| 4. | Construction began on the Great Wall during the Ming Dynasty. | True | False |
| 5. | Deng Xiaoping initiated major economic reforms. | True | False |

China in Perspective

History Assessment Answers

1. True:
The British, who wanted to exploit the China market, forced the Qing Dynasty to allow opium sales.
2. False:
There were two non-Han Chinese dynasties, headed by Mongolians (Yuan) and Manchus (Qing), respectively.
3. False:
The Cultural Revolution was a time of political and social upheaval from the mid-1960s to the mid-1970s during which Mao Zedong sought to purge his political rivals and rid China of hindrances to achieving a communist state.
4. False:
Fortified protective walls were constructed as early as the Qin Dynasty (221–206 BCE), more than 1500 years before the Ming Dynasty.
5. True:
After being purged from the leadership as a “capitalist roader” in the 1960s, Deng returned to power in the late 1970s and introduced economic reforms.

Chapter 3 | Economy



The International Finance Center, Hong Kong.
Flickr/Bernard Spragg

Introduction

In 1978, the Chinese communist leadership initiated reforms to reshape a socialist command economy into a market economy and embarked on an unknown course described as “crossing the river by groping for stones.”¹ At the time, over 70% of Chinese citizens were farmers earning little more than a subsistence income. The government phased out collectivized agriculture and gradually introduced price liberalization, fiscal decentralization, autonomy for state enterprises, private sector growth opportunities, and a modern banking system. These reforms led to a tenfold increase in the gross domestic product (GDP). GDP is the overall value of all goods and services created by an economy within a certain period. The “Made in China” inscription became ubiquitous on consumer goods, and China took on the role of the world’s factory. In 2009, in response to the global financial crisis, China introduced a massive USD 575 billion stimulus that helped stabilize the economy and blunted the recession’s effect on the rest of Asia. China became the world’s second-largest economy in 2010, and between 2013 and 2017, the economy grew at an impressive rate of over 7% per year. Today, China’s economy is entering a new phase as it shifts from

¹ Mark Thoma, “Crossing the River by Groping the Stone Under Foot,” Economist’s View (blog), 5 January 2006, http://economistsview.typepad.com/economistsview/2006/01/cross_the_river.html

manufacturing to services, and the government begins to implement long-held goals of more evenly distributing the country's wealth to all of its people.^{2, 3, 4, 5, 6}

Agriculture

Overview

Over 25% of the labor force in China works in agriculture, which contributes 7.9% to GDP. About 54% of China's land surface is considered agricultural land, and 11.3% of the total surface is considered arable land. Substantial amounts of farmland are lost to industrialization, infrastructure, and urban development each year. The primary agricultural products are maize, rice, vegetables, wheat, sugar cane, potatoes, cucumbers, tomatoes, watermelons, and sweet potatoes.^{7, 8}

China has 20% of the planet's population but only 7% of its arable land. Between 1953 and 2019, the country's overall agricultural output grew an average of 4.5% per year. Yet the sector has derived the least benefit from China's economic development of recent decades. Most of the country's farmland is held by small farmers who work the land manually, using old-fashioned farming techniques. Currently, China is the world's largest importer of agricultural products. The government sees improving agricultural efficiency as a national security issue and is devoting substantial resources to the sector's modernization. Technology-driven innovations such as the use of drones and satellite-guided unmanned farming vehicles are being gradually introduced with the help of government subsidies. Chinese tech companies are training rural farmers to sell their products on e-commerce platforms.^{9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14}

- 2 Fred Gale, Agapi Somwaru, and Xinshen Diao, "Agricultural Labor: Where Are the Jobs?" in China's Food and Agriculture: Issues for the 21st Century, Economic Research Service/U.S. Department of Agriculture, n.d., http://www.ers.usda.gov/media/303382/aib775p_1.pdf
- 3 Central Intelligence Agency, "China," World Factbook, 16 November 2021, retrieved on 29 November 2021, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/china>.
- 4 Karishma Vaswani, "Why Asia Turned to China during the Global Financial Crisis," BBC News, 13 September 2018, retrieved on 10 December 2021, <https://www.bbc.com/news/business-45493147>.
- 5 Alexander Chipman Koty, "Why China's COVID-19 Stimulus Will Look Different Than in the Past," China Briefing, 6 April 2020, retrieved on 10 December 2021, <https://www.china-briefing.com/news/chinas-stimulus-measures-after-covid-19-different-from-2008-financial-crisis/>.
- 6 Andrew Mullen, "Explainer: What Is China's Common-Prosperity Strategy that Calls for an Even Distribution of Wealth?" South China Morning Post, 26 August 2021, retrieved on 8 December 2021, <https://www.scmp.com/economy/china-economy/article/3146271/what-chinas-common-prosperity-strategy-calls-even?module=inline&pgtype=article>.
- 7 Central Intelligence Agency, "China," World Factbook, 16 November 2021, retrieved on 29 November 2021, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/china>.
- 8 C. Textor, "Agriculture in China—Statistics and Facts," Statista, 22 June 2021, retrieved on 15 December 2021, <https://www.statista.com/topics/7439/agriculture-in-china/#dossierKeyfigures>.
- 9 Qin Hengde, "Smart Farming Technology Can Transform Chinese Agriculture and Help Feed the Planet," Global Times, 18 February 2021, retrieved on 15 December 2021, <https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202102/1215818.shtml>.
- 10 Wei Houkai and Cui Kai, "Agricultural Modernization on Horizon," China Daily, 18 March 2021, retrieved on 15 December 2021, <https://global.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202103/18/WS6052a4c3a31024ad0baafde1.html>.
- 11 Line Heidenheim Juul, "How Tech Is Transforming Agriculture in China," China Experience, 6 May 2021, retrieved on 15 December 2021, <https://www.china-experience.com/china-experience-insights/how-tech-is-transforming-agriculture-in-china>.
- 12 Shi Jiayi and Eliza Gkritsi, "How Tech Is Changing Agriculture in China," TechNode, 3 January 2020, retrieved on 15 December 2021, <https://technode.com/2020/01/03/video-how-tech-is-changing-agriculture-in-china/>.
- 13 C. Textor, "Agriculture in China—Statistics and Facts," Statista, 22 June 2021, retrieved on 15 December 2021, <https://www.statista.com/topics/7439/agriculture-in-china/#dossierKeyfigures>.
- 14 XinhuaNet, "Yearender: Intelligent Technologies Drive China's Agriculture Modernization," 1 January 2021, retrieved on 15 December 2021, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2021-01/01/c_139635020.htm.

Forestry

China leads the world in the consumption and trade of forest-derived products. Although the forestry sector is expanding year upon year, it cannot meet the country's growing timber needs. In 2017, China imported over 56% of its timber supply. The country's forest cover has been increasing over the past 25 years due to successful government programs to limit logging in natural forests and incentivize afforestation in rural and agricultural areas. In 2018, forest cover stood at 22.3% of the country's territory. About two-thirds of the forested area consists of natural forests, while the rest is planted forest. The primary natural tree species are oak, birch, Dahurian larch, and Masson pine. The primary plantation tree species are Chinese fir, cottonwood, and eucalyptus. Ownership of the country's commercial forests is divided among the state (42.2%), collectives (37.5%), and private entities (20.3%).¹⁵

16, 17, 18, 19

Fishing

China consumes about 36% of global fish production, the highest share in the world. The country is also the world's biggest producer of fish products, responsible for about 20% of the world's annual catch. In the 1980s, after fish stocks in its territorial waters were depleted by overfishing, China launched a massive overseas fishing fleet to meet the demands of its growing population.^{20, 21, 22}

Today, China's distant water fishing fleet is estimated at about 17,000 vessels, by far the world's largest. In addition to trawlers, known for damaging fish habitats by dragging nets on the seafloor, the fleet consists of refueling ships and freezer and transport vessels. The ships form self-sustaining armadas that venture out as far as the coasts of South America and Africa every year with the mission to catch as much seafood as possible as fast as possible. The ships are operated by private companies, but they receive heavy subsidies from the government; China is responsible for nearly half of global fishing subsidies. Chinese fishing vessels are routinely accused of destructive and illegal activity such as depleting fish stocks, targeting endangered species, violating other countries' territorial

15 Cision, PR Newswire, "China Timber Import Report 2019," 18 January 2019, retrieved on 23 November 2021, <https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/china-timber-import-report-2019-300780873.html>.

16 Timber Trade Portal, "China," 2015, retrieved on 23 November 2021, <https://www.timbertradeportal.com/countries/china>.

17 Rapid Transition Alliance, "How China Brought Its Forests Back to Life in a Decade," 2 December 2018, retrieved on 23 November 2021, <https://www.rapidtransition.org/stories/how-china-brought-its-forests-back-to-life-in-a-decade/>.

18 XinhuaNet, "China's Forestry Industry Posts Continuous Expansion: Official," 4 December 2019, retrieved on 23 November 2021, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2019-12/04/c_138603317.htm.

19 Central Intelligence Agency, "China," World Factbook, 16 November 2021, retrieved on 29 November 2021, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/china/#geography>.

20 Christopher Pala, "China's Monster Fishing Fleet," Foreign Policy, 30 November 2020, , retrieved on 29 November 2021, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/11/30/china-beijing-fishing-africa-north-korea-south-china-sea/>.

21 Sean Mantesso, "China's 'Dark' Fishing Fleets Are Plundering the World's Oceans," Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 18 December 2020, retrieved on 29 November 2021, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-12-19/how-china-is-plundering-the-worlds-oceans/12971422>.

22 Joshua Goodman, "The Great Wall of Lights; China's Sea Power on Darwin's Doorstep," Associated Press, 24 September 2021, retrieved on 29 November 2021, <https://apnews.com/article/china-oceans-overfishing-squid-294ff1e489589b2510cc806ec898c78f>.

waters, falsifying documentation, and violating the human rights of workers on board. In recent years, China has announced regulations meant to curtail illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing.^{23, 24, 25, 26, 27}

Industry

Employing about 29% of the labor force, the industrial sector contributes about 40% of China's GDP.²⁸ Manufacturing is by far the dominant segment of the industrial sector. China is the world leader in gross value of industrial output. The primary industries are mining and ore processing, iron, steel, aluminum, and coal; machine building; armaments; textiles and apparel; petroleum; cement; chemicals; fertilizer; consumer products such as footwear, toys, and electronics; food processing; transportation equipment, including automobiles, railcars and locomotives, ships, aircraft; telecommunications equipment, commercial space launch vehicles, and satellites.²⁹

In 2009, China displaced the United States as the world's biggest market for auto sales. Most cars sold there are manufactured domestically through joint ventures with major international automakers as well as under Chinese brand names.³⁰ China began exporting cars in 2005, and by 2019 it was responsible for over a quarter of the world's passenger car production. Chile, Saudi Arabia, Russia, and Australia are among the top export destination for Chinese cars. Within China, Chinese brand-name cars have captured only about 43% of the market, in part because consumers prefer foreign brands for their perceived higher quality.^{31, 32, 33, 34}

State-Owned Enterprises

About 40% of China's economic output comes from state-owned companies. Such companies were once hailed as the "commanding heights" of China's planned economy. In recent decades, many have been restructured to

- 23 Ian Urbina, "How China's Expanding Fishing Fleet Is Depleting the World's Oceans," *Yale Environment* 360, 17 August 2020, retrieved on 29 November 2021, <https://e360.yale.edu/features/how-chinas-expanding-fishing-fleet-is-depleting-worlds-oceans>.
- 24 Dan Collins, "'It's Terrifying': Can Anyone Stop China's Vast Armada of Fishing Boats?" *Guardian*, 25 August 2020, retrieved on 29 November 2021, <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/aug/25/can-anyone-stop-china-vast-armada-of-fishing-boats-galapagos-ecuador>.
- 25 Christopher Pala, "China's Monster Fishing Fleet," *Foreign Policy*, 30 November 2020, retrieved on 29 November 2021, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/11/30/china-beijing-fishing-africa-north-korea-south-china-sea/>.
- 26 Sean Mantesso, "China's 'Dark' Fishing Fleets Are Plundering the World's Oceans," *Australian Broadcasting Corporation*, 18 December 2020, retrieved on 29 November 2021, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-12-19/how-china-is-plundering-the-worlds-oceans/12971422>.
- 27 Joshua Goodman, "The Great Wall of Lights; China's Sea Power on Darwin's Doorstep," *Associated Press*, 24 September 2021, retrieved on 29 November 2021, <https://apnews.com/article/china-oceans-overfishing-squid-294ff1e489589b2510cc806ec898c78f>.
- 28 Central Intelligence Agency, "China: Economy," in *The World Factbook*, 7 May 2013, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ch.html>
- 29 Central Intelligence Agency, "China," *World Factbook*, 16 November 2021, retrieved on 29 November 2021, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/china/#geography>.
- 30 BBC News, "China Car Sales 'Overtook the U.S.' in 2009," 11 Monday 2010, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/business/8451887.stm>
- 31 Paul Gao, "A Global Road Map for China's Auto-Makers," *McKinsey Quarterly*, June 2008, http://www.mckinseyquarterly.com/Automotive/Strategy_Analysis/A_global_road_map_for_Chinas_automakers_2137?gp=1
- 32 Statista, "Number of Passenger Cars and Commercial Vehicles Exported from China from 2010 to 2020," 16 February 2021, retrieved on 10 December 2021, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/279055/number-of-vehicles-exported-from-china/>.
- 33 Zhang Hongpei, "Chinese Vehicle Exports Grow Robustly amid Global Chip Shortage," *Global Times*, 1 July 2021, retrieved on 10 December 2021, <https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202107/1227598.shtml>.
- 34 Yang Jian, "Chinese Brands Accelerate Market Share Gains amid Chip Crisis," *Automotive News China*, 14 October 2021, retrieved on 29 November 2021, <https://www.autonews.com/china-commentary/chinese-auto-brands-accelerate-market-share-gains-amid-chip-shortage>.

induce greater economic efficiency.^{35, 36, 37} In 2021, 143 Chinese companies made the Global Fortune 500 list. Most were state-owned, including China Petrochemical Corporation (Sinopec Group), Industrial and Commercial Bank of China (ICBC), and State Grid Corporation of China, the largest utility company in the world.^{38, 39} State enterprises continue to occupy sectors that the government has not opened to foreign investors.⁴⁰

Property Development

Construction cranes dot the skyline of every Chinese city.⁴¹ Between 1990 and 2004, the commercial space developed in Shanghai equaled 334 Empire State buildings.⁴² Today, housing development makes up 29% of China's GDP. The housing market is twice the size of the one in the United States.⁴³ About 53 million people are employed in the construction industry, many of them migrant males from the countryside.^{44, 45} The massive construction sector relies upon iron ore from Australia, copper from Chile, and timber from Canada.⁴⁶

In 2021, the plight of China Evergrande, the country's second-biggest property developer, brought to light the precarious state of China's real estate sector. Like other major Chinese developers, Evergrande for years followed a growth strategy fueled by cycles of borrowing and premised on ever-increasing real estate values. By 2021, Evergrande was the most indebted property developer in the world, with USD 300 billion in debt; the debt of the entire Chinese real estate industry was about USD 5 trillion, one-third of China's GDP. After a drop in home sales in 2020 and the introduction of tighter government regulations on borrowing money in 2021, Evergrande and other developers faced the inability to pay their creditors. In an effort to obtain cash for debt payments, Evergrande coerced its employees to make it short-term loans and began selling apartments at steep discounts. At least 11 developers defaulted on bond payments. In late 2021, Beijing signaled a measure of support for Evergrande with the formation of a state-backed risk committee that would help the company restructure and avoid risky behavior

35 Christopher A. McNally, "China's State-Owned Enterprises: Thriving or Crumbling?" Asia Pacific 59 (March 2002), <http://www.eastwestcenter.org/sites/default/files/private/api059.pdf>

36 Economist, "Capitalism Confined," 3 September 2011, <http://www.economist.com/node/21528262>

37 Amir Guluzade, "How Reform Has Made China's State-Owned Enterprises Stronger," World Economic Forum, 21 May 2020, retrieved on 16 December 2021, <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/05/how-reform-has-made-chinas-state-owned-enterprises-stronger/>.

38 Laurie Pearcey, "Long March to Reform: China's State-Owned Enterprises and Leadership Transition," Conversation (Australia), 15 November 2012, <http://theconversation.edu.au/long-march-to-reform-chinas-state-owned-enterprises-and-the-leadership-transition-10669>

39 XinhuaNet, "China's Fortune Global 500 Companies Rise to 143," 3 August 2021, retrieved on 29 November 2021, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2021-08/03/c_1310104838.htm.

40 Keith Bradsher, "China's Grip on Economy Will Test New Leaders," New York Times, 9 November 2012, <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/10/world/asia/state-enterprises-pose-test-for-chinas-new-leaders.html?pagewanted=all>

41 S.C. (blog), "The Most Important Sector?" Economist, 1 August 2012, <http://www.economist.com/blogs/analects/2012/08/chinese-property>

42 Thomas J. Campanella, "Rise of the Asian Megacity," BBC News, 20 June 2011, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-pacific-13799997>

43 George Magnus, "End to China's Estate Market Boom Could Spell Trouble for the Economy," Guardian, 15 October 2021, retrieved on 6 December 2021, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/oct/15/chinas-booming-real-estate-market-could-spell-trouble-for-the-economy>.

44 Thomas J. Campanella, "Rise of the Asian Megacity," BBC News, 20 June 2011, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-pacific-13799997>

45 Statista, "Number of Construction Employees in China from 2010 to 2020," 2021, retrieved on 29 November 2021, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/279243/number-of-construction-employees-in-china/>.

46 Joel Millman, "Canada's Mills Lumber Back to Life, Fueled by Chinese," Wall Street Journal, 2 November 2010, <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703673604575550140147596132.html>

in the future. The company continued to face the pressures of payments due to creditors as well as to suppliers and contractors. Some 1.6 million apartments that had been sold to customers had yet to be completed.^{47, 48, 49, 50, 51}

Energy

China's energy needs have the potential to reshape the planet's energy and hydrocarbon landscape.⁵² The PRC is already the world's largest producer and consumer of electricity. China has significant energy reserves, particularly coal, but those reserves have proven inadequate to supply the economy's needs. In the 1980s, China was the largest oil exporter in East Asia.^{53, 54, 55} It is now the second-largest consumer and largest importer of oil in the world.^{56, 57}

Coal

Coal is China's most abundant energy resource. The country's 2,990 coal-fired generators produce about 57% of its energy needs. China burns about as much coal as the rest of the world combined.^{58, 59, 60} Its coal reserves are the world's fourth-largest, behind the United States, Russia, and Australia.^{61, 62} Because of limited natural gas and oil reserves, coal will continue to be the major source of energy for the industrial sector.⁶³

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- 47 Alexandra Stevenson and Cao Li, "Evergrande Gave Workers a Choice: Lend Us Cash or Lose Your Bonus," *New York Times*, 9 November 2021, retrieved on 6 December 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/09/19/business/china-evergrande-debt-protests.html>.
- 48 Martin Farrer, "Third of Chinese Developers Could Face Debt Problems as Evergrande Contagion Grows—Report," *Guardian*, 27 October 2021, retrieved on 6 December 2021, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/oct/28/third-of-chinese-developers-could-face-debt-problems-amid-evergrande-contagion-report>.
- 49 Alexandra Stevenson and Cao Li, "China Nears a Reckoning as Property Firms Face Tough Deadlines," *New York Times*, 6 December 2021, retrieved on 6 December 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/12/06/business/china-evergrande-kaisa-property.html?searchResultPosition=2>.
- 50 Alexandra Stevenson and Cao Li, "Why China's Economy Is Threatened by a Property Giant's Debt Problems," *New York Times*, 10 November 2021, retrieved on 6 December 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/article/evergrande-debt-crisis.html?action=click&module=RelatedLinks&pgtype=Article>.
- 51 Alexandra Stevenson and Cao Li, "As China Evergrande Teeters, Beijing Steps In," *New York Times*, 7 December 2021, retrieved on 7 December 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/12/07/business/china-evergrande-kaisa-property.html>.
- 52 Mikal E. Herberg, "China's 'Energy Rise,' The U.S., and the New Geopolitics of Energy," *Pacific Council on International Policy*, April 2010, 1, <http://www.pacificcouncil.org/document.doc?id=159>
- 53 David Zweig and Bi Jianhai, "China's Global Hunt for Energy," *Foreign Affairs* 84, no. 5 (September/October 2005): 25, <http://ersaf.com/pdf/china-s-global-hunt-for-energy.pdf>
- 54 Statista, "Primary Energy Consumption Worldwide in 2020, by Country," 14 July 2021, retrieved on 30 November 2021, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/263455/primary-energy-consumption-of-selected-countries/>.
- 55 Baker Institute, "Shock Finding? China Is the World's Biggest Energy Producer," *Forbes*, 19 June 2020, retrieved on 30 November 2021, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/thebakersinstitute/2020/06/19/todays-quiz-who-is-the-worlds-largest-energy-producer/?sh=3eabee467c13>.
- 56 Zhou Peng, "China's Energy Import Dependency: Status and Strategies," Nanjing University of Aeronautics and Astronautics, 2011, <http://www.esi.nus.edu.sg/docs/event/zhou-peng.pdf>
- 57 Daniel Workman, "Crude Oil Imports by Country," *World's Top Exports*, 2021, retrieved on 30 November 2021, <https://www.worldstopexports.com/crude-oil-imports-by-country/>.
- 58 Bryan Walsh, "The Scariest Environmental Fact in the World," *Time*, 29 January 2013, <http://science.time.com/2013/01/29/the-scariest-environmental-fact-in-the-world/>
- 59 Dan Murtaugh and Krystal Chia, "China's Climate Goals Hinge on a \$440 Billion Nuclear Buildout," *Bloomberg*, 2 November 2021, retrieved on 1 December 2021, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2021-11-02/china-climate-goals-hinge-on-440-billion-nuclear-power-plan-to-rival-u-s>.
- 60 China Power, "How Is China's Energy Footprint Changing?" n.d., retrieved on 1 December 2021, <https://chinapower.csis.org/energy-footprint/>.
- 61 Energy Information Administration, U.S. Department of Energy, "Country Analysis Briefs: China: Coal," August 2006, <http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/China/Coal.html>
- 62 Mining Technology, "Countries with the Biggest Coal Reserves," 14 November 2021, retrieved on 30 November 2021, <https://www.mining-technology.com/features/feature-the-worlds-biggest-coal-reserves-by-country/>.
- 63 Energy Information Administration, U.S. Department of Energy, "International Energy Outlook 2009," May 2009, [http://www.eia.doe.gov/oiaf/ieo/pdf/0484\(2009\).pdf](http://www.eia.doe.gov/oiaf/ieo/pdf/0484(2009).pdf)

A major consequence of China's reliance on coal is its environmental effect. Some of the most polluted cities in the world are located in Shaanxi Province in northern China, the center of the nation's coal industry. Sulfuric discharge from coal-burning power plants in Northern China has been observed as far as the west coast of the United States.⁶⁴

In late 2021, high coal prices, energy demand from the resurging economy, and the onset of cold winter weather led to electricity shortages and widespread power outages. Since utility prices are regulated by the government, many power companies chose to cut back on energy production rather than foot the high costs of coal and operate at a loss. Millions of homes were left without power, especially in China's northeast. About 44% of the country's industrial activity was affected; energy-intensive industries such as aluminum smelting, steelmaking, fertilizer production, and cement manufacturing were especially hard hit.^{65, 66}

Oil

Domestic oil production in the PRC is heavily subsidized and mostly carried out by three state-owned companies: CNPC, Sinopec, and CNOOC.⁶⁷ The largest oil fields are in northeastern China but have already been heavily tapped. Other major deposits are in the northern provinces of Shandong and Shaanxi and the western autonomous region of Xinjiang. Offshore exploration is expected to fuel China's continuing growth. About 44% of China's oil supply comes from the Middle East, about 15% comes from Russia, and about 11% comes from Africa.^{68, 69} To prevent potential disruptions, Beijing has developed a strategic oil reserve system.^{70, 71}

Natural Gas

Although China historically has not been a large consumer of natural gas, its consumption of this energy resource doubled between 2000 and 2004. Today, China is the world's third-largest consumer of natural gas, behind the United States and Russia. China hopes to boost natural gas consumption partly to minimize pollution from coal.^{72, 73}

The same three state-owned companies (CNPC, Sinopec, and CNOOC) dominate the natural gas industry in China. The Chongqing Basin (Sichuan Province), Ordos Basin (Shaanxi Province), and three basins in Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region and Qinghai Province are China's chief natural gas-producing areas. These regions provide most of the country's natural gas, with the rest coming from imports. In addition to offshore natural gas fields in the

64 Keith Bradsher and David Barboza, "Pollution from Chinese Coal Casts a Global Shadow," New York Times, 11 June 2006, <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/06/11/business/worldbusiness/11chinacoal.html?ex=1307678400&en=e9ac1f6255a24fd8ei=5088partner=rssnyt&emc=rss&pagewanted=all>

65 Kristie Pladson, "China Reaches for Strategic Power Cuts amid Energy Crisis," Deutsche Welle, 18 October 2021, retrieved on 16 December 2021, <https://www.dw.com/en/china-reaches-for-strategic-power-cuts-amid-energy-crisis/a-59367176>.

66 Peter Hoskins, "China Power Cuts: What Is Causing the Country's Blackouts?" BBC News, 30 September 2021, retrieved on 16 December 2021, <https://www.bbc.com/news/business-58733193>.

67 U.S. Energy Information Administration, "China: Oil," 22 April 2013, <http://www.eia.gov/countries/cab.cfm?fips=CH>

68 Stephanie Hanson, "China, Africa, and Oil," Council on Foreign Relations, 6 June 2008, <http://www.cfr.org/publication/9557/>

69 Daniel Workman, "Top 15 Crude Oil Suppliers to China," World's Top Exports, 2021, retrieved on 30 November 2021, <https://www.worldstopexports.com/top-15-crude-oil-suppliers-to-china/>.

70 Oil & Gas Security, "Emergency Response of IEA Countries: People's Republic of China," 2012, http://www.iea.org/publications/freepublications/publication/China_2012.pdf

71 Frank Tang, "Explainer: How Big Are China's Crude Oil Reserves and How Do They Compare to the US' SPR?" South China Morning Post, 23 November 2021, retrieved on 30 November 2021, <https://www.scmp.com/economy/china-economy/article/3156952/how-big-are-chinas-crude-oil-reserves-and-how-do-they-compare>.

72 Worldometer, "Natural Gas Consumption by Country," n.d., retrieved on 30 November 2021, <https://www.worldometers.info/gas/gas-consumption-by-country/>.

73 Energy Information Administration, U.S. Department of Energy, "China: Natural Gas," 4 September 2012, <http://www.eia.gov/countries/cab.cfm?fips=CH>

South China Sea, new natural gas fields continue to be explored and developed, particularly in Xinjiang, which has China's largest natural gas output.^{74, 75}

Hydroelectricity

China is the world's leading producer of hydroelectric power. Since the Three Gorges Dam became fully functional in 2011, about 8–17% of China's electricity production has been generated by hydroelectric plants. Located along the Yangtze River, the Three Gorges Dam is the world's largest hydroelectric dam.^{76, 77, 78}

Nuclear Power

China has been promoting nuclear energy as a clean and efficient energy source since the beginning of its nuclear program in the 1970s. Since 1994, 11 reactors have been constructed in coastal regions. Nuclear power is especially needed in those areas because of their distance from coalfields and their rapidly expanding economies. China's nuclear development is highly advanced, with technology drawn from the United States, France, Russia, and Canada. The PRC currently has 51 nuclear reactors, with 18 more under construction and 21 more planned.^{79, 80}

Renewable Energy

China leads the world in the production, implementation, and use of renewable energy. Between 2010 and 2019, China invested nearly USD 760 billion on renewable energy, pulling ahead of Europe and doubling the investment of the United States during the same period. At the end of 2020, China had 253 gigawatts of solar energy capacity and 288 gigawatts of wind energy capacity, more than any other country. The country manufactures 70% of the world's solar panels and 30% of the world's wind turbines. China's renewable energy sector is mobilizing to meet the country's goal of reaching peak carbon emissions by 2030 and carbon neutrality by 2060.^{81, 82, 83}

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- 74 Energy Information Administration, U.S. Department of Energy, "China: Natural Gas," 4 September 2012, <http://www.eia.gov/countries/cab.cfm?fips=CH>
- 75 SIPA Center on Global Energy Policy, "Guide to Chinese Climate Policy: Natural Gas: Background," Columbia University, n.d., retrieved on 30 November 2021, <https://chineseclimatepolicy.energypolicy.columbia.edu/en/natural-gas>.
- 76 Energy Information Administration, U.S. Department of Energy, "China," 30 September 2020, retrieved on 30 November 2021, <https://www.eia.gov/international/analysis/country/CHN>.
- 77 Agence France-Presse, "China Moves Ahead with Ambitious Plan for More Yangtze River Hydro Power," Terra Daily, 13 June 2006, http://www.terradaily.com/reports/China_Moves_Ahead_With_Ambitious_Plan_For_More_Yangtze_River_Hydro_Power.html
- 78 International Hydropower Association, "China," n.d., retrieved on 30 November 2021, <https://www.hydropower.org/country-profiles/china>.
- 79 John Daly, "Will New Chinese Nuclear Reactor Design Crush Western Competition?" OilPrice, 10 January 2013, <http://oilprice.com/Alternative-Energy/Nuclear-Power/Will-New-Chinese-Nuclear-Reactor-Design-Crush-Western-Competition.html>
- 80 Dan Murtaugh and Krystal Chia, "China's Climate Goals Hinge on a \$440 Billion Nuclear Buildout," Bloomberg, 2 November 2021, retrieved on 1 December 2021, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2021-11-02/china-climate-goals-hinge-on-440-billion-nuclear-power-plan-to-rival-u-s>.
- 81 Sophia Wu, "These Are the Strategies behind China's Ambitious Clean Energy Transition," GreenBiz, 3 November 2021, retrieved on 7 December 2021, <https://www.greenbiz.com/article/these-are-strategies-behind-chinas-ambitious-clean-energy-transition>.
- 82 Henry Sanderson, "China Green Energy Stocks Clean Up after Beijing Crackdown," Financial Times, 15 August 2021, retrieved on 7 December 2021, <https://www.ft.com/content/7bdbacc1-b7bb-49f7-8d75-e833b39202f3>.
- 83 Dominic Chiu, "The East Is Green: China's Global Leadership in Renewable Energy," Center for Strategic and International Studies, 6 October 2017, retrieved on 7 December 2021, <https://www.csis.org/east-green-chinas-global-leadership-renewable-energy>.

Natural Resources

China is rich in mineral resources, with reserves of 158 different economically important minerals. China leads the world in the production of steel, coal, rare earths, aluminum, zinc, lead, magnesium, tin, and tungsten.⁸⁴ In 2021, copper ore mining was China's biggest industry by revenue.⁸⁵

Rare earth minerals are important for the production of electronics—from light bulbs and televisions to electric cars and advanced weapons systems. The PRC accounts for as much as 85% of the world's production and has the world's largest reserves at 44 million metric tons.^{86, 87, 88} When China reduced its export quota by 40% in 2010, the price of rare earth minerals surged, prompting the United States and other countries to expand their mining operations. In recent decades, China has invested heavily in research and development for applications involving rare earths. In 2021, the government announced the planned creation of a state-owned rare-earth producing company that would dominate the domestic market and compete globally with rival U.S.-dominated supply chains.^{89, 90, 91}

Services

As the costs of labor and real estate rise and the workforce becomes more educated, China is shifting from an economy dominated by manufacturing to one dominated by services. The services sector currently employs about 43% of the labor force and contributes about 51% of GDP. Key components are science and technology services, digital economy and trade services, financial services, and professional services.^{92, 93}

Beijing is at the vanguard of China's drive to become a leader in science and technology innovation. The city is home to 93 startups worth over USD 1 billion, as well as to research and development centers for over 600 foreign companies including Apple and Tesla. The city is developing a free trade zone to attract science and technology companies. Other incentives include reduced corporate income taxes for technology-intensive companies.^{94, 95}

84 U.S. Geological Survey, "2011 Minerals Yearbook: China," January 2013, <http://minerals.usgs.gov/minerals/pubs/country/2011/myb3-2011-ch.pdf>

85 IBISWorld, "Biggest Industries by Revenue in China in 2021," 2021, retrieved on 2 December 2021, <https://www.ibisworld.com/china/industry-trends/biggest-industries-by-revenue/>.

86 M. Garside, "Distribution of Rare Earths Production Worldwide as of 2020, by Country," Statista, 3 March 2021, retrieved on 1 December 2021, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/270277/mining-of-rare-earths-by-country/>.

87 M. Garside, "Rare Earth Reserves Worldwide as of 2020, by Country," Statista, 6 April 2021, retrieved on 1 December 2021, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/277268/rare-earth-reserves-by-country/>.

88 Jevans Nyabiage, "China's Dominance of Rare Earths Supply Is a Growing Concern in the West," South China Morning Post, 25 April 2021, retrieved on 1 December 2021, <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/3130990/chinas-dominance-rare-earths-supply-growing-concern-west>.

89 Brad Plummer, "China's Grip on the World Rare Earth Market May be Slipping," Washington Post, 19 October 2012, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/wonkblog/wp/2012/10/19/chinas-chokehold-over-rare-earth-metals-is-slipping/>

90 Stew Magnuson, "China Maintains Dominance in Rare Earth Production," National Defense, 8 September 2021, retrieved on 1 December 2021, <https://www.nationaldefensemagazine.org/articles/2021/9/8/china-maintains-dominance-in-rare-earth-production>.

91 Shunsuke Tabeta, "China to Create Rare-Earths Giant by Joining Three State Companies," Nikkei Asia, 24 October 2021, retrieved on 1 December 2021, <https://asia.nikkei.com/Economy/China-to-create-rare-earths-giant-by-joining-three-state-companies>.

92 Central Intelligence Agency, "China," World Factbook, 16 November 2021, retrieved on 29 November 2021, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/china>.

93 EURObiz, "China's Service Sector at a Glance," 12 April 2021, retrieved on 2 December 2021, <https://www.eurobiz.com.cn/chinas-service-sector-at-a-glance/>.

94 EURObiz, "China's Service Sector at a Glance," 12 April 2021, retrieved on 2 December 2021, <https://www.eurobiz.com.cn/chinas-service-sector-at-a-glance/>.

95 Dorcas Wong, "How Beijing Is Driving China's Services Sector Expansion," China Briefing, 22 September 2020, retrieved on 2 December 2021, <https://www.china-briefing.com/news/chinas-services-sector-expansion-beijing-9-industry-reforms/>.

Tourism

China's tourism sector has grown and flourished alongside the country's industrial development and is a major component of the services sector. In 2017, travel and tourism contributed 3.3% to China's GDP. In 2019, some 145 million tourists generated USD 36 billion in revenue. Tourism supports an estimated 28 million jobs. The top source countries for international visitors to China are South Korea, the United States, Japan, India, Germany, Malaysia, the United Kingdom, Australia, Thailand, and Singapore.^{96, 97} Tourism is bolstered by the country's highly developed transportation infrastructure, including 70 international airports and high-speed rail links between major cities.⁹⁸

China's varied geography, far-reaching history, and cultural and ethnic diversity make for a wide array of compelling tourist attractions. Among the top destinations are the 6,000-km (3,728-mi) long Great Wall of China, the Forbidden City in Beijing, the Terracotta Army in Xian, and the Giant Panda Breeding Research Base in Chengdu. The country's top tourist destination in 2019 was Hong Kong, with over 26 million visitors.^{99, 100, 101}

China's growing and increasingly affluent middle class has led to an increase in domestic tourism in recent decades. In 2019 there were over 6 billion domestic trips, up from over 2 billion in 2010. Domestic tourists are increasingly drawn to theme parks, such as the recently opened Universal Beijing Resort and Shanghai Disneyland. The three-day Mid-Autumn Festival holiday each September is one of the country's busiest travel periods. After a slump in 2020 due to COVID-19 restrictions, domestic tourism rebounded strongly in 2021.^{102, 103}

Trade

In 2020, China had a favorable balance of trade of USD 366.14 billion, or 2.49% of GDP. A favorable balance of trade means that the value of exports surpasses that of imports.^{104, 105} China's major export partners are the United States, Hong Kong, and Japan. Primary exports include broadcasting equipment, computers, integrated circuits, office machinery and parts, and telephones. The major import partners are South Korea, Japan, Australia, Germany, the United States, and Taiwan. The primary imports are crude petroleum, integrated circuits, iron, natural gas, cars, and gold.¹⁰⁶

96 World Travel & Tourism Council, "Tourism in China Contributes More to GDP than Automotive Manufacturing," 12 September 2012, <http://www.wttc.org/news-media/news-archive/2012/tourism-china-contributes-more-gdp-automotive-manufacturing/>

97 Yihan Ma, "Tourism Industry in China—Statistics & Facts," Statista, 17 November 2020, retrieved on 1 December 2021, <https://www.statista.com/topics/1210/tourism-industry-in-china/#dossierKeyfigures>.

98 Travel China Guide, "2019 China Tourism Facts & Figures," 2019, retrieved on 2 December 2021, <https://www.travelchinaguide.com/tourism/2019statistics/>.

99 Bryan Dearsley, "15 Top-Rated Tourist Attractions in China," Planet Ware, 9 March 2021, retrieved on 2 December 2021, <https://www.planetware.com/tourist-attractions/china-chn.htm>.

100 World Data, "Tourism in China," n.d., retrieved on 2 December 2021, <https://www.worlddata.info/asia/china/tourism.php>.

101 Yihan Ma, "Tourism Industry in China—Statistics & Facts," Statista, 17 November 2020, retrieved on 1 December 2021, <https://www.statista.com/topics/1210/tourism-industry-in-china/#dossierKeyfigures>.

102 Yihan Ma, "Tourism Industry in China—Statistics & Facts," Statista, 17 November 2020, retrieved on 1 December 2021, <https://www.statista.com/topics/1210/tourism-industry-in-china/#dossierKeyfigures>.

103 XinhuaNet, "China Focus: China's Tourism Industry Sees Strong Post-Pandemic Recovery," 23 September 2021, retrieved on 2 December 2021, http://www.news.cn/english/2021-09/23/c_1310203265.htm.

104 Macrotrends, "China Trade Balance 1960–2021," 2021, retrieved on 8 December 2021, <https://www.macrotrends.net/countries/CHN/china/trade-balance-deficit>.

105 Will Kenton, "Balance of Trade (BOT)," Investopedia, 12 May 2021, retrieved on 22 October 2021, <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/b/bot.asp>.

106 Central Intelligence Agency, "China," World Factbook, 30 November 2021, retrieved on 8 December 2021, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/china/>.

China joined the World Trade Organization in 2001 and has become a vital trade partner to many economies. The country has some 22 free trade agreements and over 100 bilateral investment agreements. In 2013, China overtook the United States as the largest goods-trading economy in the world. The United States and other countries have accused China of using practices such as industrial subsidies to subvert the rules-based global trading system to its advantage and the detriment of other economies.^{107, 108, 109, 110}

In 2013, President Xi Jinping launched the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), a massive international transportation, energy, and telecommunications investment project. BRI envisions a large network of highways, railways, energy pipelines, airports, ports, and shipping routes linking China to Asia, Africa, and Europe. The physical infrastructure is to be complemented by special free-trade economic zones. As of 2021, 142 countries had signed on to BRI projects or shown interest in them. The cost of BRI could reach USD 1.3 trillion. China has spent some USD 60 billion on BRI projects, mostly in the form of low-interest loans to partner countries. In addition to expanding markets for Chinese goods and developing new investment opportunities for China, the project is also meant to benefit host countries by helping address Asia's massive infrastructure funding gap. Yet BRI has been criticized for its potential to leave partner countries heavily indebted to China. Debt to China has risen significantly since 2013, and at least 23 BRI partner countries are vulnerable to debt distress.^{111, 112, 113, 114}

Banking and Finance

Banking

China's banking system has been in transition since 1995 when the Commercial Bank Law chartered China's "Big Four" state-owned commercial banks (Bank of China, China Construction Bank, Industrial and Commercial Bank of China, and Agricultural Bank of China). Also, in 1995, a new law designated the People's Bank of China as the country's central bank, with mandates to manage monetary policy and to issue currency. Since 2003, the new China Banking Regulatory Commission has served as the regulatory agency for Chinese banking.¹¹⁵ Since 1994, state spending and trade development have been the responsibility of the Agricultural Development Bank of China, the Export and Import Bank of China, and the China Development Bank.¹¹⁶

Foreign banks have been allowed to offer a limited range of services since China's entry into the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2001. As of 2016, there were 145 foreign banks with more than 1,031 branches operating

107 Doug Palmer, "WTO Members Blast China during 20th Anniversary Trade Policy Review," Politico, 21 October 2021, retrieved on 8 December 2021, <https://www.politico.com/news/2021/10/21/wto-china-20th-anniversary-trade-policy-516647>.

108 Yihan Ma, "Monthly Trade Balance of Goods in China from October 2018 to October 2021," Statista, 23 November 2021, retrieved on 8 December 2021, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/271637/monthly-trade-balance-of-china/>.

109 International Trade Administration, "China—Country Commercial Guide," 3 February 2021, retrieved on 8 December 2021, <https://www.trade.gov/knowledge-product/china-trade-agreements>.

110 Ministry of Finance, People's Republic of China, "China FTA Network," 8 December 2021, retrieved on 8 December 2021, http://fta.mofcom.gov.cn/english/fta_qianshu.shtml.

111 Andrew Chatzky and James McBride, "China's Massive Belt and Road Initiative," Council on Foreign Relations, 28 January 2020, retrieved on 14 December 2021, <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/chinas-massive-belt-and-road-initiative>.

112 John Hurley et al., "Examining the Debt Implications of the Belt and Road Initiative from a Policy Perspective," Center for Global Development, 4 March 2018, retrieved on 14 December 2021, <https://www.cgdev.org/sites/default/files/examining-debt-implications-belt-and-road-initiative-policy-perspective.pdf>.

113 Ben Mauk, "Can China Turn the Middle of Nowhere into the Center of the World Economy?" New York Times Magazine, 29 January 2019, retrieved on 14 December 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/01/29/magazine/china-globalization-kazakhstan.html>.

114 European Bank, "Belt and Road Initiative," n.d., retrieved on 14 December 2021, <https://www.ebrd.com/what-we-do/belt-and-road/overview.html>.

115 People's Daily (China), "Banking Laws Under Revision," 16 June 2003, http://english.people.com.cn/200306/16/eng20030616_118317.shtml.

116 U.S. Department of Commerce, "China: Financial Services: Banking," 2008, http://www.buyusa.gov/china/en/financial_services.html

in the country. Citigroup, Credit Suisse, Goldman Sachs, HSBC, JPMorgan Chase, Morgan Stanley, and UBS are among the biggest. In 2021, the central bank introduced new rules limiting how much money foreign banks can transfer into China and restricting their loan-making ability within the country. The rules may make foreign banks less competitive against Chinese banks and make foreign companies more dependent on China's state-owned banking system.^{117, 118}

China's currency is the renminbi (CNY), literally "the people's money." The renminbi is denominated into yuan, and the two terms are used interchangeably. CNY 1 is divided into ten jiao; 1 jiao is divided into ten fen. CNY banknotes are issued in denominations ranging from 1 fen to 100 renminbi. As of December 2021, USD 1 was worth CNY 6.37.^{119, 120} The central bank imposes controls on the value of the CNY on mainland China, resulting in a slight difference between the market price of the CNY within China and outside China.¹²¹ As recently as 2019, the United States has accused China of currency manipulation, specifically of allowing the CNY's value to weaken against the USD, thereby giving Chinese exports an unfair advantage in the U.S. market and helping undermine U.S.-imposed trade tariffs.^{122, 123} In late 2020, China began testing a digital version of the CNY, meant to replace physical coins and banknotes someday.¹²⁴

Debt

In late 2021, China's national debt exceeded 300% of GDP, up from 270% at the end of 2020 and 246% at the end of 2019. The significant rise is due in large part to efforts to stimulate the economy in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Debt reduction has been a government goal in recent years. Foreign debt, which at the end of 2020 stood at USD 2.4 trillion, consists of bonds from the national and local governments and private companies as well as mortgage-backed and asset-backed securities. Domestic debt is held primarily by commercial and state-owned banks. Local government debt, driven in large part by massive infrastructure spending, was USD 3.97 trillion in 2020, although off-the-books "hidden debt" may bring that figure up to USD 8.2 trillion. Household debt was USD 10 trillion in 2020, up by USD 8 trillion in the past decade.^{125, 126, 127}

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- 117 Daniel Slotta, "Number of Foreign Banks in China from 2006 to 2016," Statista, 29 May 2020, retrieved on 3 December 2021, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/277993/number-of-foreign-banks-in-china/>.
- 118 Keith Bradsher, "China Puts Limits on Foreign Banks, Worrying Businesses," New York Times, 2 April 2021, retrieved on 3 December 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/02/business/china-foreign-banks.html>.
- 119 Rebecca Company, "What's the Difference between the Renminbi and the Yuan? The Answer to This and Other Questions in 'Renminbi Internationalization,'" Brookings, 19 August 2015, retrieved on 3 December 2021, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/brookings-now/2015/08/19/whats-the-difference-between-the-renminbi-and-the-yuan-the-answer-to-this-and-other-questions-in-renminbi-internationalization/>.
- 120 Encyclopaedia Britannica, "Renminbi," 10 May 2021, retrieved on 3 December 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/renminbi>.
- 121 Karen Yeung, "Explainer: China's Yuan vs Renminbi: What's the Difference?" South China Morning Post, 12 November 2020, retrieved on 3 December 2021, <https://www.scmp.com/economy/china-economy/article/3109065/chinas-yuan-vs-renminbi-whats-difference>.
- 122 Keith Bradsher, "How Does China's Currency Move Put Pressure on U.S.?" New York Times, 5 August 2018, retrieved on 7 December 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/05/business/china-currency.html>.
- 123 Ana Swanson, "The U.S. Labeled China a Currency Manipulator. Here's What It Means," New York Times, 6 August 2019, retrieved on 7 December 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/05/business/china-currency.html>.
- 124 Arjun Kharpal, "E-commerce Giant JD Starts Accepting China's Digital Currency on Singles Day for the First Time," CNBC, 11 November 2021, retrieved on 17 December 2021, <https://www.cnbc.com/2021/11/11/china-digital-currency-jd-begins-accepting-e-cny-on-singles-day.html>.
- 125 George Magnus, "End to China's Estate Market Boom Could Spell Trouble for the Economy," Guardian, 15 October 2021, retrieved on 13 December 2021, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/oct/15/chinas-booming-real-estate-market-could-spell-trouble-for-the-economy>.
- 126 Amanda Lee, "Explainer: China Debt: Has It Changed in 2021 and How Big Is It Now?" South China Morning Post, 5 June 2021, retrieved on 13 December 2021, <https://www.scmp.com/economy/china-economy/article/3135883/china-debt-has-it-changed-2021-and-how-big-it-now>.
- 127 Antonio Graceffo, "Could China's Massive Public Debt Torpedo the Global Economy?" War on the Rocks, 2 December 2021, retrieved on 10 December 2021, <https://warontherocks.com/2021/12/could-chinas-massive-public-debt-torpedo-the-global-economy/>.

Foreign Reserves

China has accumulated the world's largest foreign reserves, about USD 3.2 trillion. The reserves comprise foreign currencies, bonds, and gold. While the USD is China's primary reserve currency, its reserves include euros, British pounds, and Japanese yen.¹²⁸

The Chinese government has been encouraging trading partners to use CNY to invoice and/or settle transactions, in a challenge to the use of the USD as the primary currency for foreign trade. In 2020, 2% of global currency reserves were in CNY, compared to 61.3% in USD. That same year the CNY was the world's fifth-most active currency. China has set a target date of 2030 for the CNY to replace the USD as the world's dominant currency.^{129, 130}

Finance

In 2020, foreign direct investment (FDI) into China reached USD 149 billion, making China the world's second-largest recipient of FDI after the United States. That same year, the country's total FDI stock was USD 1.9 trillion, a remarkable increase from USD 587 billion a decade earlier. FDI is investment across borders in which an investor from one economy significantly controls or influences a business enterprise in another economy. The primary recipients of FDI in China are real estate, manufacturing, computer services, leasing business and services, financial intermediation, wholesale and retail trade, transport, scientific research, construction, and energy. The most prominent foreign investors are Singapore, the Virgin Islands, South Korea, the Cayman Islands, Japan, Germany, and the United States.^{131, 132}

In 2020 the World Bank ranked China the 31st-easiest place to do business out of 190 economies, 15 places higher than in 2019. That same year, as part of efforts to counter the negative economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, the government lifted restrictions on foreign investments and expanded the number of industries open to FDI. Recent years have seen improvements in the ease of starting a business, access to electricity, and gaining construction permits. Some barriers to foreign investment are legal uncertainty, a lack of transparency, corruption or protectionist measures favoring local businesses, and a lack of protection of intellectual property rights.¹³³ In 2020, there were over 175,000 foreign companies registered in China.¹³⁴

Standard of Living

China ranked 85 out of 189 countries on the 2020 UN Human Development Index, which measures a country's standard of living based on key dimensions.¹³⁵ China spends about 5.4% of its GDP on health expenditures. Life

128 Valentina Pasquali et al., "International Reserves of Countries Worldwide," *Global Finance*, n.d., <http://www.gfmag.com/component/content/article/119-economic-data/12374-international-reserves-by-country.html#axzz2TTP3xatN>

129 Kopin Tan, "Enter the Yuan," *Barrons*, 14 November 2011, http://online.barrons.com/article/SB50001424052748703893804577024122523328762.html#articleTabs_article%3D1

130 Karen Yeung, "Explainer: China's Yuan vs Renminbi: What's the Difference?" *South China Morning Post*, 12 November 2020, retrieved on 3 December 2021, <https://www.scmp.com/economy/china-economy/article/3109065/chinas-yuan-vs-renminbi-whats-difference>.

131 Santander, "China: Foreign Investment," December 2021, retrieved on 8 December 2021, <https://santandertrade.com/en/portal/establish-overseas/china/foreign-investment>.

132 Cornell Law School, Legal Information Institute, "Foreign Direct Investment," n.d., retrieved on 22 October 2021, https://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/foreign_direct_investment.

133 Santander, "China: Foreign Investment," December 2021, retrieved on 8 December 2021, <https://santandertrade.com/en/portal/establish-overseas/china/foreign-investment>.

134 Antonio Graceffo, "Could China's Massive Public Debt Torpedo the Global Economy?" *War on the Rocks*, 2 December 2021, retrieved on 10 December 2021, <https://warontherocks.com/2021/12/could-chinas-massive-public-debt-torpedo-the-global-economy/>.

135 United Nations Development Programme, "Human Development Data Center," n.d., retrieved on 22 October 2021, <http://hdr.undp.org/en/data>.

expectancy at birth is 76.31 years, a global ranking of 107 out of 227. Life expectancy for males is 74.23 years and for females 78.62 years. The infant mortality rate is 11.15 deaths per 1,000 live births, a global ranking of 131 out of 227. The maternal mortality rate is 29 deaths out of 100,000 live births, a global ranking of 111 out of 184.¹³⁶

Major causes of death are primarily non-communicable diseases such as stroke, ischemic heart disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, lung cancer, and stomach cancer. The significant risk factors that drive most death and disability are tobacco use, high blood pressure, dietary risks, air pollution, and high fasting plasma glucose.¹³⁷ China had 833,000 incidences of tuberculosis in 2019. Between 2010 and 2019, the country's tuberculosis incidence rate reduced by 24%, but China remains among the world's top-30 high-burden tuberculosis countries.¹³⁸

China has made the eradication of poverty a preeminent national goal and a major outcome of its industrial development. China sets the poverty line as anyone earning less than USD 2.30 per day, slightly above the World Bank's standard of USD 1.90 per day. The number of impoverished Chinese has shrunk dramatically, from 750 million people in 1990 to 7.2 million (0.5% of the population) in 2016. Since coming to power in 2012, Xi Jinping has made the war against poverty a top priority. In 2021, Xi declared China free of extreme poverty, claiming that some 100 million rural people had been lifted from destitution under his rule. During that time, the country invested some USD 246 billion in anti-poverty measures, focusing primarily on the "two worries" (food and clothing). Assistance was distributed in the form of jobs on poverty reduction projects, farm animals, loans, grants, and renovated rural housing. Critics question the long-term sustainability of China's anti-poverty measures.^{139, 140, 141}

While economic development has helped reduce poverty in China, it has also drastically widened the country's wealth inequality gap. China has about 5.2 million USD millionaires, and the country's wealthiest 1% owns over 30% of its wealth, up from 20.9% at the turn of the millennium. By contrast, some 600 million Chinese live on about USD 154 per month, which is just enough to cover rent in a mid-sized Chinese city. In 2021, Xi announced his resolve to narrow the wealth gap under the slogan of "common prosperity." The initiative aims to curtail the dominance of major corporations and redistribute the country's accumulated wealth to address the "three guarantees" (health care, housing, and education).^{142, 143, 144}

Employment

In early 2021, China's urban unemployment rate was at 5% out of a workforce of approximately 800 million. Despite the promising figure, the economy is dealing with job creation challenges. The unemployment rate for young people

136 Central Intelligence Agency, "China," World Factbook, 30 November 2021, retrieved on 8 December 2021, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/china/>.

137 IHME, "China," 2020, retrieved on 8 December 2021, <https://www.healthdata.org/china>.

138 World Health Organization, "Tuberculosis in China," n.d., retrieved on 8 December 2021, <https://www.who.int/china/health-topics/tuberculosis>.

139 Jack Goodman, "Has China Lifted 100 Million People out of Poverty?" BBC News, 28 February 2021, retrieved on 8 December 2021, <https://www.bbc.com/news/56213271>.

140 Gao Feng, "China Claims It Has Eliminated Poverty but Is That True?" Voice of America, 30 March 2021, retrieved on 8 December 2021, https://www.voanews.com/a/east-asia-pacific_voa-news-china_china-claims-it-has-eliminated-poverty-true/6202791.html.

141 Maria Ana Lugo et al., "What's Next for Poverty Reduction Policies in China?" Brookings, 24 September 2021, retrieved on 8 December 2021, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/future-development/2021/09/24/whats-next-for-poverty-reduction-policies-in-china/>.

142 Gao Feng, "China Claims It Has Eliminated Poverty but Is That True?" Voice of America, 30 March 2021, retrieved on 8 December 2021, https://www.voanews.com/a/east-asia-pacific_voa-news-china_china-claims-it-has-eliminated-poverty-true/6202791.html.

143 Andrew Mullen, "Explainer: What is China's Common-Prosperty Strategy that Calls for an Even Distribution of Wealth?" South China Morning Post, 26 August 2021, retrieved on 8 December 2021, <https://www.scmp.com/economy/china-economy/article/3146271/what-chinas-common-prosperty-strategy-calls-even?module=inline&pgtype=article>.

144 Chris Buckley et al., "Warning of Income Gap, Xi Tells China's Tycoons to Share Wealth," New York Times, 7 September 2021, retrieved on 8 December 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/09/07/world/asia/china-xi-common-prosperty.html>.

under 24 for the same period was much higher, reaching more than 13%. Since the pandemic recovery is being driven by manufacturing and heavy industry, the availability of desirable white-collar jobs is shrinking even as more and more young Chinese graduate from school and enter the job market. Yet Chinese manufacturers are also having difficulty filling highly skilled positions due to a lack of interest among job seekers and a lack of available vocational skills training. The government is allocating subsidies to create a vast array of new jobs and provide skills training to recent graduates, furloughed workers, and migrant workers.^{145, 146, 147}

China's 286 million rural migrant workers make up about 36% of the workforce. Starting in the 1980s, China's rapid economic development facilitated one of the largest human migrations of all time, as millions of rural people went to provide cheap labor to factories and construction sites in cities. Because of China's rigid household registration system, these workers and their descendants remained registered as "rural" and therefore lacked access to social services and legal status in cities. Onerous restrictions on migrant worker freedom of movement were somewhat relaxed after 2003. In 2020 the number of migrant workers shrank as job opportunities in cities diminished due to the COVID-19 pandemic and local e-commerce work expanded. Migrant workers continue to be disadvantaged: their average monthly income is nearly half that of urban workers; vastly fewer migrant workers than urban ones are enrolled in unemployment insurance, worker compensation, and pension benefits.^{148, 149, 150}

Chinese workers are legally entitled to benefits and protections such as full and timely pay, overtime pay, union representation, safety regulations, injury insurance, and detailed employment contracts. Yet many of these regulations are fiercely opposed by employers, and the local authorities tasked with enforcing them often look the other way. Labor disputes are usually addressed through a system of local dispute resolution and civil court arbitration. Most disputes result in a compromise between worker and employer. All of China's labor unions fall under the All-China Federation of Trade Unions. The unions essentially function as government or communist party organizations and do not represent the interests of workers. In the past two decades, workers have increasingly taken independent collective actions such as strikes or protests, usually over unpaid wages.¹⁵¹

Outlook

In 2020, after the implementation of strict virus containment measures and emergency relief to businesses, China's was the only major economy not to shrink in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. The economy continues to be affected by the unparalleled disruptions to the global supply chain created by the pandemic. Moving forward, government economic planners are guided by the vision of maintaining China's impressive economic growth while devising policies that will allow more Chinese to benefit from the country's wealth. Sound economic planning is based

145 Evelyn Cheng, "China's Young People Struggle to Find Jobs as Unemployment Rate Holds at 13.1%," CNBC, 15 March 2021, retrieved on 9 December 2021, <https://www.cnbc.com/2021/03/15/chinas-young-people-are-still-having-a-hard-time-finding-jobs.html>.

146 Al Jazeera, "A Drop in China's Unemployment Rate Hides a Lack of Jobs," 21 June 2021, retrieved on 9 December 2021, <https://www.aljazeera.com/economy/2021/6/21/a-drop-in-chinas-unemployment-rate-hides-a-lack-of-jobs>.

147 China Labour Bulletin, "Migrant Workers and Their Children," 4 May 2021, retrieved on 9 December 2021, <https://clb.org.hk/content/migrant-workers-and-their-children>.

148 China Labour Bulletin, "Migrant Workers and Their Children," 4 May 2021, retrieved on 9 December 2021, <https://clb.org.hk/content/migrant-workers-and-their-children>.

149 Evelyn Cheng, "Watch Out, Alibaba. Chinese Video Apps Are Quickly Becoming E-commerce Players Too," CNBC, 5 February 2021, retrieved on 9 December 2021, <https://www.cnbc.com/2021/02/05/china-video-apps-kuaishou-douyin-become-e-commerce-sites-like-alibaba.html>.

150 Tianlei Huang, "China's Migrant Workers Need Help in the Economic Downturn," Peterson Institute for International Economics, 14 May 2020, retrieved on 9 December 2021, <https://www.piie.com/blogs/china-economic-watch/chinas-migrant-workers-need-help-economic-downturn>.

151 China Labour Bulletin, "Workers' Rights and Labour Relations in China," 30 June 2020, retrieved on 9 December 2021, <https://clb.org.hk/content/workers%E2%80%99-rights-and-labour-relations-china>.

on properly managing the “six stabilities” (employment, finance, trade, foreign investment, domestic investment, and expectations). Some economic challenges include managing high public and corporate debt, creating viable job opportunities available across social classes, controlling speculative investment in the real estate sector, and contending with economic damage from environmental degradation.^{152, 153, 154, 155, 156}

152 Tim Stickings, “How the Country that Gave the World Covid Is Now the Only One in the Black: China Is Only Economy to Grow In 2020 after Beijing Hid the Scale of Their Outbreak from Rest of the World,” Daily Mail, 18 January 2021, retrieved on 14 December 2021, <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9158797/China-major-economy-grow-2020.html>.

153 Economist, “In Word and Deed, China Is Easing Economic Policy,” 11 December 2021, retrieved on 14 December 2021, <https://www.economist.com/finance-and-economics/2021/12/11/in-word-and-deed-china-is-easing-economic-policy>.

154 Central Intelligence Agency, “China,” World Factbook, 16 November 2021, retrieved on 29 November 2021, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/china>.

155 Chris Buckley et al., “Warning of Income Gap, Xi Tells China’s Tycoons to Share Wealth,” New York Times, 7 September 2021, retrieved on 8 December 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/09/07/world/asia/china-xi-common-prosperity.html>.

156 Lazaro Gamio and Peter S. Goodman, “How the Supply Chain Crisis Unfolded,” New York Times, 5 December 2021, retrieved on 20 December 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/12/05/business/economy/supply-chain.html?referringSource=articleShare>.

China in Perspective

Economy Assessment

Read the following statements and answer True or False

- | | | | |
|----|---|------|-------|
| 1. | Economic development has drastically widened China's wealth inequality gap. | True | False |
| 2. | China is the largest goods-trading economy in the world | True | False |
| 3. | China's state-owned enterprises have given way to private companies since the beginning of the 21st century | True | False |
| 4. | China relies on natural gas to meet most of its energy consumption needs. . | True | False |
| 5. | China's forest cover has been diminishing over the course of the 20th and 21st centuries. | True | False |

China in Perspective

Economy Assessment Answers

1. True:
As of 2021, the country's wealthiest 1% owns over 30% of its wealth, up from 20.9% in 2000. By contrast, some 600 million Chinese live on about USD 154 per month, which barely covers rent in a mid-size Chinese city
2. True:
China overtook the United States in the top spot in 2013.
3. False:
In recent decades, many state-owned enterprises have been restructured to induce greater economic efficiency. State enterprises continue to occupy sectors that the government has not opened to foreign investors.
4. False:
Coal accounts for 57% of China's energy needs. Natural gas fields in the South China Sea and Xinjiang are being developed for domestic consumption.
5. False:
The country's forest cover has been increasing over the past 25 years due to successful government programs to limit logging in natural forests and incentivize afforestation in rural and agricultural areas.

Chapter 4 | Society



Chinese dancers
Wikimedia/Galeno

Introduction

Throughout much of its history, Zhongguo (China), which literally means “Middle Kingdom,” was the dominant power in east Asia. Surrounding countries paid tribute to the Chinese emperor and sometimes copied China’s imperial form of government and the examination system for advancing within it. In this way, Chinese culture—such as the writing system—was widely disseminated in the region. So it was a great shock to the Chinese when their state succumbed to domination by Western commercial interests in the 19th century, an era known as *bainian guochi*, the century of humiliation. After the communists took control in the mid-20th century, their efforts to forcibly do away with China’s old culture led to disastrous results during the Cultural Revolution. Today, China’s leadership is drawing on the country’s rich cultural, religious, and artistic traditions in its efforts to create a stable society and foster a unified national identity. The Han ethnic majority dominates Chinese culture, sometimes to the detriment and exclusion of other ethnicities.^{1, 2, 3}

1 William Callahan, “National Insecurities: Humiliation, Salvation, and Chinese Nationalism.” *Alternatives* 29, 2004, <http://www.humiliationstudies.org/documents/CallahanChina.pdf>

2 Zheng Wang, ““Never Forget National Humiliation”: Postcolonial Consciousness and China’s Rise,” *Newsletter*, no. 59 (Spring 2012): 33–34, http://www.ias.asia/sites/default/files/IIAS_NL59_3233.pdf

3 Hoklam Chan et al., “China,” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 9 November 2021, retrieved on 12 November 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/place/China>.

Ethnic Groups

Han Chinese are China's ethnic majority, accounting for 92% of the population.⁴ At 1.3 billion, they constitute 19% of the human population and are the largest single ethnic group in the world. Han people trace their origins back to the Hua Xia tribe, which according to tradition, settled in the central Yellow River and created a four-century-long dynasty that ended in 1600 BCE. The Han name comes from the Han Dynasty, which ruled over a unified China in the early third century. Today, Han people live throughout the country but mainly in the east. The Han dominate China politically and culturally, and Han identity has become synonymous with Chinese national identity. China sees even foreign-born Han as essentially Chinese.^{5, 6, 7, 8}

Ethnic minorities (*shaoshu minzu*) make up the rest of China's population, about 110 million people. The government recognizes 56 ethnic groups. When the classification effort began in the 1950s, more than 400 separate groups were identified on the basis of distinct language, culture, or migratory heritage. This number was radically reduced by designating some as sub-groups.⁹ Ethnic minorities include Zhuang, Hui, Manchu, Uighur, Miao, Yi, Tujia, Tibetan, Mongol, Dong, Buyei, Yao, Bai, Korean, Hani, Li, Kazakh, and Dai.¹⁰ Despite being equal under the law, ethnic minorities often lack access to China's labor market and face disadvantages and prejudice. In recent years China has been criticized for its forced detention and reeducation of Uighurs and its cultural repression of Tibetans. Many ethnic minorities are increasingly outnumbered in their home regions due to the government-sponsored resettlement of Han Chinese people.^{11, 12}

Language

There is considerable linguistic diversity in China within the majority Han group and among the minority ethnicities. The Chinese language is part of the Sino-Tibetan family and is divided into seven dialects: Mandarin, Wu, Xiang, Gan, Min, Cantonese, and Hakka. Beijing Mandarin, known as "common language" (*putonghua*), is the official language of China and Taiwan, where it is referred to as the "national language" (*guoyu*). *Putonghua* is the national broadcasting language and the medium of instruction in schools. It uses four tones to distinguish between words with the same sound.^{13, 14} Since Chinese dialects differ in the number of tones and pronunciation, they are often mutually unintelligible.¹⁵ But they share a writing system of stylized, pictographic characters—a cherished cultural

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- 4 Mary Hennock, "In China, Learning to the Government's Tune," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 19 September 2010, <http://chronicle.com/article/In-China-Learning-to-the/124434/>
 - 5 Candice Song, "The Han—China's Majority Ethnic Group," China Highlights, 1 December 2021, retrieved on 17 December 2021, <https://www.chinahighlights.com/travelguide/nationality/han.htm>.
 - 6 China Culture, "Han Ethnic Group," n.d., retrieved on 17 December 2021, http://en.chinaculture.org/library/2008-02/05/content_23849.htm.
 - 7 Travel China Guide, "Han Nationality," 20 April 2021, retrieved on 17 December 2021, <https://www.travelchinaguide.com/intro/nationality/han/>.
 - 8 *Economist*, "The Upper Han," 19 November 2016, retrieved on 17 December 2021, <https://www.economist.com/briefing/2016/11/19/the-upper-han>.
 - 9 Stefan Landsberger, "National Minorities," International Institute of Social History, n.d., <http://www.iisg.nl/landsberger/xsmz.html>
 - 10 Central Intelligence Agency, "China," *World Factbook*, 16 November 2021, retrieved on 29 November 2021, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/china>.
 - 11 *Economist*, "The Upper Han," 19 November 2016, retrieved on 17 December 2021, <https://www.economist.com/briefing/2016/11/19/the-upper-han>.
 - 12 U.S. Department of State, "2020 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: China (Includes Hong Kong, Macau, and Tibet)—Tibet," 2020, retrieved on 17 December 2021, <https://www.state.gov/reports/2020-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/china/tibet/>.
 - 13 Haiwang Yuan and Shizhen Gao, "Chinese 101: Pinyin: Tones," Western Kentucky University, August 22, 2002, <http://people.wku.edu/shizhen.gao/Chinese101/pinyin/tones.htm>
 - 14 Travel China Guide, "Han Nationality," 20 April 2021, retrieved on 17 December 2021, <https://www.travelchinaguide.com/intro/nationality/han/>.
 - 15 David K. Jordan, "The Chinese Language(s): An Overview for Beginners," n.d., <http://weber.ucsd.edu/~dkjordan/chin/hbchilang-u.html#pt1>

aspect that unites all Chinese speakers.¹⁶

Most characters contain two parts; one of them, the “radical” (*bu shou*), is usually on the left and indicates something about the meaning of the character. For example, the radical for woman is 女 (*nu*). When combined with other characters, it indicates something feminine. So, 妈妈 (*mama*) is the colloquial word for mother, whereas 姐妹 (*jiemei*) means sisters (the character on the left refers to an older sister, while the one on the right indicates a younger sister). There are 214 radicals that can be used to look up unfamiliar characters in a dictionary.¹⁷ Although dictionaries can contain more than 56,000 different characters, a much smaller number is needed for daily life. A person with knowledge of 3,000 to 4,000 characters is considered literate.¹⁸ In the 1950s, a simplified system of writing was introduced to ease the learning process. Thus, “salt” (*yan*) went from 鹽 to 盐, requiring significantly fewer strokes to master.¹⁹

At the same time, a new romanization system known as *pinyin* was introduced.²⁰ When the PRC normalized relations with the outside world, the government wanted Chinese names rendered according to *pinyin*. Hence, Peking became Beijing. *Pinyin* is used in public signage throughout the country. Even Taiwan, which still uses traditional Chinese characters, has adopted *pinyin* in a modified form, reflecting the importance of a unified spelling system in the internet era.²¹

Religion

About 22% of people in China adhere to folk religion, 18% are Buddhist, 5% are Christian, and 2% are Muslim; the remaining 51% are unaffiliated.²² In keeping with its Marxist origins, the CCP is an atheist organization, and public officials are expected to dismiss traditional superstitions. Yet in recent years, as part of China’s cultural heritage, the party has promoted folk religion customs—particularly deities without a clerical establishment that might offer a competing dogma.²³ Chinese folk religions blend Buddhist and Daoist practices and are characterized by the worship of ancestors, spirits, and local deities.²⁴

The constitution provides citizens with “freedom of religious belief,” but worship is regulated. Five religions are officially recognized: Buddhism, Daoism, Islam, Catholicism, and Protestantism. Formal worship can only be conducted by groups that register with one of the government’s five Patriotic Religious Associations, which oversee

16 Peter Foster, “Plans to Simplify Chinese Characters Provoke Anger,” *Telegraph*, 21 October 2009, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/china/6397611/Plans-to-simplify-Chinese-characters-provoke-anger.html>

17 University at Albany, State University of New York, “Radicals of Chinese Characters,” n.d., <http://www.albany.edu/eas/205/205%20radicals%20of%20chinese%20characters.pdf>

18 Jerry Norman, “Chinese Writing,” Asia Society, n.d., <http://asiasociety.org/education/chinese-language-initiatives/chinese-writing>

19 Simplified versus traditional characters continues to be a source of controversy. Editors, “The Chinese Language, Ever Evolving (blog),” *New York Times*, 2 May 2009, <http://roomfordebate.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/05/02/chinese-language-ever-evolving/>

20 Louisa Lim, “At 105, Chinese Linguist Now a Government Critic,” NPR, 19 October 2011, <http://www.npr.org/2011/10/19/141503738/at-105-celebrated-chinese-linguist-now-a-dissident>

21 Taiwan News, “Pinyin Move Hurts Taiwan’s Pluralism,” 1 October 2010, http://www.etaiwannews.com/etn/news_content.php?id=752386

22 Central Intelligence Agency, “China,” *World Factbook*, 16 November 2021, retrieved on 29 November 2021, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/china>.

23 Louisa Lim, “China’s Leaders Harness Folk Religion for Their Aims,” NPR, 23 July 2010, <http://www.npr.org/2010/07/23/128672542/chinas-leaders-harness-folk-religion-for-their-aims>

24 Eleanor Albert and Lindsay Maizland, “Religion in China,” Council on Foreign Relations, 25 September 2020, retrieved on 22 December 2021, <https://www.cfr.org/background/religion-china>.

the five state-recognized religions. Recognized groups agree to support the principle “love the country—love your religion.”²⁵ Surveys suggest that religious faith has boomed in recent years.²⁶

Underground Christian churches are typically non-denominational and meet in private homes for Bible study.²⁷ Those with congregations large enough to require more space are often targeted for closure.²⁸ In 2009, law enforcement closed the Golden Lamp Church, China’s first Christian megachurch that operated out of an eight-story building and claimed 50,000 parishioners.²⁹

In regions perceived as vulnerable to separatist sentiments, such as Tibet and Xinjiang, religious activities are heavily monitored. Beijing has banned the Tibetan practice of identifying young boys as reincarnated religious leaders, to complicate the Buddhist clerical establishment’s efforts to identify the aging Dalai Lama’s successor.³⁰ Faced with harsh repression of Tibet’s ethnic and religious identity, some Tibetans are responding with self-immolation. Since 2009, some 157 Tibetans have set themselves on fire to protest Chinese rule.³¹ In Xinjiang, the Chinese government has detained more than a million Muslims, mostly ethnic Uighurs, in reeducation camps since 2017. Muslims in Xinjiang also face religious restrictions, forced labor, and forced sterilizations.³²

Gender Issues

Male authority has long been part of Chinese life and culture. Confucian thought created a male-female dichotomy in which men were active and intelligent, and women were soft and passive. Sons traditionally inherited the family name and property and were responsible for caring for their elderly parents. Although these norms lost potency over time, they remain influential in today’s China, especially in rural areas. Most couples prefer having boys over girls, based on the perception that a son will be more materially successful in life.^{33, 34, 35, 36}

China’s patriarchal cultural norms played out tragically during the implementation of the government’s one-child policy. In effect from 1980 to 2016, the policy restricted most couples to having only one child, often on pain of heavy fines, as a way to curb the country’s surging population growth rate. The birth rate declined after 1980, but the policy produced unanticipated harmful effects. Since girls were unwanted, there was a rise in the abortion of female fetuses and the abandonment and even infanticide of female children. Many couples hid additional children from

25 Tim Gardam, “Christians in China: Is the Country in Spiritual Crisis?” BBC News, 11 September 2011, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-14838749>

26 Preeti Bhattacharji, “Religion in China,” Council on Foreign Relations, 16 May 2008, http://www.cfr.org/publication/16272/religion_in_china.html

27 *Economist*, “Christianity in China: Sons of Heaven,” 2 October 2008, <http://www.economist.com/node/12342509>

28 Andrew Jacobs, “Chinese Christians Rally around Underground Church,” *New York Times*, 12 May 2011, <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/05/13/world/asia/13china.html>

29 “Christian Church in China Shut Down by Hundreds of Police and Armed Thugs,” *Daily Mail* (UK), 11 December 2009, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1235065/Christian-church-China-shut-hundreds-police-armed-thugs.html>

30 Naresh Kumar Sharma, “New Chinese Law Aimed at Wiping Out Tibetan Identity,” *Times of India*, 14 February 2011, http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2011-02-14/india/28542221_1_tibetan-issue-panchen-lama-tibetan-government

31 Richard Finney, “News of Tibetan Self-Immolation Protest Surfaces after Five-Year Delay,” Radio Free Asia, 14 January 2021, retrieved on 22 December 2021, <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/tibet/news-01142021150839.html>.

32 Lindsay Maizland, “China’s Repression of Uyghurs in Xinjiang,” Council on Foreign Relations, 1 March 2021, retrieved on 22 December 2021, <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/chinas-repression-uyghurs-xinjiang>.

33 Dorian Ducre, “The Fight for Women’s Rights in China,” Borgen Project, 30 October 2020, retrieved on 23 December 2021, <https://borgenproject.org/womens-rights-in-china/>.

34 Kristal Sotamayor, “The One-Child Policy Legacy on Women and Relationships in China,” PBS, 5 February 2020, retrieved on 23 December 2021, <https://www.pbs.org/independentlens/blog/the-one-child-policy-legacy-on-women-and-relationships-in-china/>.

35 Kenneth Pletcher, “One-Child Policy,” *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 15 September 2021, retrieved on 23 December 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/one-child-policy>.

36 Patricia Ebrey, “Women in Traditional China,” Asia Society, n.d., retrieved on 27 December 2021, <https://asiasociety.org/education/women-traditional-china>.

the authorities, leading to thousands if not millions of undocumented people with no access to legal employment or education. Over time, the country's sex ratio became skewed in favor of males by as much as 4%. By 2016 the population had 33.5 million more men than women, leaving many men with little prospect of finding a wife. By the 2010s, the government was faced with an aging population and a shrinking workforce. Although restrictions on the number of children a couple can have were lifted entirely in 2021, many Chinese people are reluctant to have children due to the high costs and impact on careers.^{37, 38, 39}

Despite proclaiming the need for gender equality, the CCP has shown little willingness to address specific gender issues. Since Xi Jinping took power in 2012, China's place in global gender equality standings has declined. Xi's rule has seen the suppression of feminist activism, the promotion of women's roles as wives and mothers, and the continued overwhelming preponderance of males in CCP ruling bodies. Debates about gender inequality, references to the MeToo movement, and even the term "sexual harassment" are swiftly censored. A 2011 high court ruling weakened women's claims to property in divorce cases, in effect making it unlikely that women would be awarded homes in divorce rulings. Women considering divorce may thus be faced with a choice between potential homelessness and staying in unwanted marriages.^{40 41}

China's rapid industrialization starting in the 1970s has coincided with the increasing marginalization of women in the workplace. Female participation in the labor force stands at 61%, down from 75% in 1990. Pay has followed a similar trajectory. In 2019, a woman earned 78 cents for every dollar paid to a man, a drop of 9% from the previous year. Despite gender equality under the law, discrimination against women in hiring practices and work contracts is widespread. Job announcements often include "men preferred" disclaimers, and female employees can be asked to sign agreements stipulating that they can be fired without compensation if they become pregnant. In late 2021, lawmakers began the process of strengthening laws that protect women from gender-based discrimination in employment and education.^{42, 43, 44}

LGBTQ Rights

China's government has an ambivalent attitude toward the country's LGBTQ community. Homosexuality was decriminalized in 1997 and removed from a list of mental disorders in 2001. Sexual minorities socialize in large cities with little fear of discrimination. Yet, in recent years the LGBTQ community has become caught up in China's broader crackdown on freedom of expression. The distribution of LGBTQ information is deemed socially disruptive and is banned under China's cybersecurity law; LGBTQ content is routinely removed from social media. In 2020, the annual Shanghai Pride event was canceled with no explanation after a run of 11 years. The following year a prominent LGBTQ advocacy group ceased its work. Sexual minorities must also contend with entrenched cultural

37 Kenneth Pletcher, "One-Child Policy," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 15 September 2021, retrieved on 23 December 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/one-child-policy>.

38 *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, "The Effects of China's One-Child Policy," n.d., retrieved on 23 December 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/story/the-effects-of-chinas-one-child-policy>.

39 Tania Branigan, "China's Great Gender Crisis," *Guardian*, 2 November 2011, retrieved on 23 December 2021, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/nov/02/chinas-great-gender-crisis>.

40 *Economist*, "China Says It Defends Women's Rights. So Why Attack Feminists?" 30 October 2021, retrieved on 23 December 2021, <https://www.economist.com/leaders/2021/10/28/china-says-it-defends-womens-rights-so-why-attack-feminists>.

41 Amy Qin, "A Prosperous China Says 'Men Preferred,' and Women Lose," *New York Times*, 16 July 2019, retrieved on 27 December 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/07/16/world/asia/china-women-discrimination.html>.

42 Rhoda Kwan, "China Mulls Bolstering Laws on Women's Rights and Sexual Harassment," *Guardian*, 21 December 2021, retrieved on 27 December 2021, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/dec/21/china-laws-womens-rights-sexual-harassment>.

43 Amy Qin, "A Prosperous China Says 'Men Preferred,' and Women Lose," *New York Times*, 16 July 2019, retrieved on 27 December 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/07/16/world/asia/china-women-discrimination.html>.

44 Phoebe Zhang, "China Looks to 'Update and Strengthen' Women's Rights Law," *South China Morning Post*, 22 December 2021, retrieved on 27 December 2021, <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/politics/article/3160602/china-looks-update-and-strengthen-womens-rights-law>.

hostility toward homosexuality. Many gay people face pressure or coercion from their families to undergo illegal and unscrupulous “conversion therapy,” which can involve electroshock treatment.^{45, 46, 47}

Cuisine

In the Shang Dynasty (1700–1040 BCE), a scholar related the five primary body parts (heart, spleen, lungs, kidneys, and gall bladder) to the five flavors in Chinese cuisine: bitter, sweet, spicy, salty, and sour, each of which contributed to human well-being.⁴⁸ Thus, a common principle underlying Chinese cooking is balance—between flavors, textures, colors, consistencies, and temperatures. The practice of stir-frying ingredients that have been finely chopped is attributed to necessity. Food was often scarce, meals were cooked quickly to conserve fuel, and dishes were served in quick succession. Grains, notably rice and wheat, are staples with every meal. Chinese prefer pork to other meats.⁴⁹ So beloved is pork that the PRC maintains a strategic pork reserve.^{50, 51}

China’s vast territory, history, and culture have led to tremendous culinary diversity. Over the centuries, eight distinct regional cuisines have emerged: Sichuan, Guangdong (or Cantonese), Hunan, Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Fujian, Shandong, and Anhui. Sichuan, from the southern province of the same name, is among the most well-known Chinese cuisines. Sichuan dishes are spicy and strongly seasoned, relying on ingredients such as garlic, chili peppers, the Sichuan peppercorn, peanuts, sesame paste, and ginger. A representative dish is mapo tofu, consisting of minced beef, red vegetable oil, tofu, and green onions. Guangdong, another famous cuisine, originated in Guangdong province in the south of the country. The style is characterized by fresh ingredients and the use of distinctive sauces, condiments, and cutting and cooking skills to create subtle, elegant flavors. Some well-known Guangdong foods are dim sum and sweet and sour pork.^{52, 53, 54, 55}

Traditional Dress

Most Chinese people, especially the Han ethnic majority, wear Western clothing. The use of traditional Han clothing is reserved for special occasions such as festivals, weddings, or religious ceremonies. Traditional Han clothing has evolved over thousands of years. Hanfu is perhaps the most emblematic traditional dress style. Hanfu garments

45 Ben Westcott and Steven Jiang, “China’s LGBTQ Community Is Fading from Rainbow to Gray,” CNN, 9 July 2021, retrieved on 29 December 2021, <https://www.cnn.com/2021/07/09/china/china-pride-month-lgbt-weibo-intl-mic-hnk/index.html>.

46 Reuters, “Many LGBT People in China Forced into Illegal ‘Conversion Therapy’: Groups,” 21 November 2019, retrieved on 29 December 2021, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-lgbt-health/many-lgbt-people-in-china-forced-into-illegal-conversion-therapy-groups-idUSKBN1XV113>.

47 Huizhong Wu, “China LGBT Rights Group Shuts Down amid Hostile Environment,” Associated Press, 5 November 2021, retrieved on 29 December 2021, <https://apnews.com/article/technology-china-media-social-media-taiwan-348cab147964f24ccf83907403d4c84a>.

48 Valeria Beroiz, “The Ancient Theory Behind Chinese Food,” *Epoch Times* (Association for Asian Research), 30 August 2008, <http://www.asianresearch.org/articles/3138.html>

49 Nicola Davison, “China’s Taste for Pork Serves Up a Pollution Problem,” *Guardian* (UK), 1 January 2013, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2013/jan/01/china-taste-pork-pollution-problem>

50 *Foreign Policy*, “China’s Love Affair with Pork,” 1 April 2013, http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2013/04/01/china_love_affair_pork_pigs

51 Michael Wines, “China Plans to Release Some of Its Pork Stockpile to Hold Down Prices,” *New York Times*, 15 July 2011, <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/07/16/world/asia/16china.html>

52 Fly by Jing, “Guide to Different Regional Chinese Cuisines,” n.d., retrieved on 22 December 2021, <https://flybyjing.com/blog/guide-to-regional-chinese-cuisine/>.

53 Lee Kum Kee, “The Eight Great Traditions of Chinese Cuisine,” n.d., retrieved on 22 December 2021, <https://usa.lkk.com/en/cooking-stories/the-eight-great-traditions-of-chinese-cuisine>.

54 China International Travel Service, “Four Major Cuisines in China,” n.d., retrieved on 22 December 2021, <http://www.cits.net/china-travel-guide/four-major-cuisines-in-china.html>.

55 Asia Society, “What Is Dim Sum? The Beginner’s Guide to South China’s Traditional Brunch Meal,” n.d., retrieved on 23 December 2021, <https://asiasociety.org/reference/what-dim-sum-beginners-guide-south-chinas-traditional-brunch-meal>.

are made of silk and include a jacket (*shan*) worn with a skirt (*qun* or *chang*), a jacket (*shan*) worn with trousers (*ku*), and a one-piece dress (*qipao*). Ornaments (*pei*) worn on belts or sashes historically indicated social status.^{56, 57}

Chinese traditional dress also includes two recognizable jacket styles. The *dujin* is a jacket with a band or Mandarin collar and buttons formed from knotted cord. A popular type of *dujin* is the Tang suit, which is often adorned with Chinese characters expressing good luck or longevity and worn on festive occasions. Another well-known jacket is the Zhongshan suit, known as the Mao suit outside China. This is a formal jacket that combines Chinese and Western-style elements and has been worn by political leaders, starting with Sun Yat-sen.^{58, 59}

Arts

Painting and Calligraphy

Painting and calligraphy have been conjoined throughout Chinese history. They utilize the same four instruments (known as the Four Treasures of the Study): a brush, ink, paper, and a rubbing stone that would have been on the desk of any scholar or imperial official.⁶⁰ Over the centuries, calligraphic artists developed many forms, from formal and classic to expressive and stylized. In the words of an art scholar, superior calligraphy exhibits “the beauty of plastic movement, not of designed and motionless shapes.”⁶¹

Traditional Chinese painting does not employ the realism and perspective common to Western painting. Instead, the flatness of the surface helps to emphasize the emotional and thematic effect. The landscape style is referred to as mountain and water paintings (*shanshuihua*).⁶² The placement of small human figures suggests humanity’s tiny and fleeting presence in the natural world. Both artists and owners would adorn art with their personal “chop,” a carved seal dipped in an oil-based red paste.⁶³

During the Mao Zedong era, propaganda posters emerged as a new art form. Such posters depicted triumphant images featuring “heroic, cartoonlike figures with political slogans” and were regularly used to rally the masses.⁶⁴ They are now collector’s items. To merge old with new, one contemporary artist has created works in the traditional *shanshuihua* style but depicting polluted landscapes to reflect present-day society.⁶⁵

56 New World Encyclopedia, “Han Chinese,” n.d., retrieved on 29 December 2021, https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Han_Chinese.

57 Mike Ho, “4 Traditional Chinese Clothing and Dress: Hanfu, Qipao, Tang Suit, Zhongshan Suit” retrieved on 29 December 2021.

58 New World Encyclopedia, “Han Chinese,” n.d., retrieved on 29 December 2021, https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Han_Chinese.

59 Mike Ho, “4 Traditional Chinese Clothing and Dress: Hanfu, Qipao, Tang Suit, Zhongshan Suit” retrieved on 29 December 2021.

60 Department of Asian Art, Metropolitan Museum of Art, “Chinese Calligraphy,” in *Heilbrun Timeline of Art History*, n.d., http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/chcl/hd_chcl.htm

61 Emily Wilson, “Decoding the Secrets of Chinese Calligraphy,” *San Francisco Weekly*, 4 October 2012, http://blogs.sfweekly.com/exhibitionist/2012/10/calligraphy_asian_art_jerry_yang.php

62 Christin Bolewski, “‘Shan-Shui-Hua’—Traditional Chinese Landscape Painting Reinterpreted as Moving Digital Visualization,” EVA 2008 London Conference, 22–24 July 2008, 28, http://www.bcs.org/upload/pdf/ewic_eva08_paper4.pdf

63 Patricia Buckley Ebrey, “A Visual Sourcebook of Chinese Civilization: Technical Aspects of Painting,” University of Washington, n.d., <http://depts.washington.edu/chinaciv/painting/4ptgtech.htm>

64 Frank Langfitt, “The Art of Chinese Propaganda,” NPR, 9 November 2012, <http://www.npr.org/blogs/pictureshow/2012/11/16/164785930/the-art-of-chinese-propaganda>

65 An Xiao, “Mountains and Oceans of Trash,” *Hyperallergic*, 16 May 2013, <http://hyperallergic.com/70772/mountains-and-oceans-of-trash/>

Literature

Literacy was traditionally a source of elite power in China because only the scholar-gentry class had the ability to create, transmit, and receive the knowledge of texts written in classical Chinese (*wenyan*).⁶⁶ The first works written in the vernacular (*baihua*) did not appear until the 20th century. Such authors found favor with the underground communist movement for their ability to satirize and expose social problems. They were later persecuted for their inability to produce work that glorified socialism.⁶⁷

In the 1980s, writers gained greater latitude under the economic reforms. *Red Sorghum* (1986), one of many novels by Mo Yan, received the most votes in a 1996 Chinese contest for favorite novel.⁶⁸ The book broke a number of morality taboos.⁶⁹ Mo Yan received the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2012.⁷⁰ The economic reforms also provided opportunities for non-mainstream authors to sell their work.⁷¹ Wang Shuo, who lacks a university degree and is not a member of the government-affiliated Chinese Writers' Association, has written a series of best-sellers depicting the underbelly of urban society, leaving readers to ponder how high up that world extends.^{72, 73} He is credited with giving rise to a new genre: hoodlum literature (*pizi wenxue*).^{74, 75}

Film

After several decades of propaganda movies that were seldom shown internationally, Zhang Yimou's film version of *Red Sorghum* (1987) became the PRC's breakout film achievement when it won the 1988 Berlin Film Festival's top prize.⁷⁶ *Farewell My Concubine* (1993), a 20th-century epic directed by Chen Kaige, shared the top award at the Cannes Film Festival. Overseas acclaim enabled a growing cohort of Chinese filmmakers to secure international financial backing to work outside the Chinese film studio system. Historical dramas featuring oppressed women figured prominently.⁷⁷ Eventually, a backlash within China developed against such films because they were perceived as catering to Western stereotypes of the exotic East.⁷⁸ Some of these filmmakers, like Zhang Yimou, went mainstream and produced big-budget martial arts pictures, such as *Hero* (2002), *House of the Flying Daggers* (2004), and other films that did well at the domestic box office and secured overseas distribution.⁷⁹

66 Editors, "The Chinese Language, Ever Evolving (blog)," *New York Times*, 2 May 2009, <http://roomfordebate.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/05/02/chinese-language-ever-evolving/>

67 A 1982 documentary by Chung-Wen Shih, a George Washington University professor of Chinese, called *Return from Silence: China's Revolutionary Writers*, features interviews with five prominent authors who discuss their literary contributions to the modernization of China. <http://home.gwu.edu/~cwshih/shih.pdf>

68 Donald Morrison, "Holding Up Half the Sky," *Time*, 14 February 2005, <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1027589,00.html>

69 Richard Brody, "Mo Yan and the Power of Movies (blog)," *New Yorker*, 11 October 2012, <http://www.newyorker.com/online/blogs/movies/2012/10/mo-yan-and-red-sorghum.html>

70 Perry Link, "Does This Writer Deserve the Prize?" *New York Review of Books*, 6 December 2012, <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2012/dec/06/mo-yan-nobel-prize/?pagination=false>

71 Kirk A. Denton, assoc. ed., "Chapter 57: Historical Overview," in *The Columbia Companion to Modern East Asian Literature*, ed. Joshua S. Mostow, ed., (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 300. <http://books.google.com/books?id=XGanvv6MeiMC&pg=PA300&lpg=PA300&dq=>

72 Ben Xu, "Chapter 1: The Crisis of National Identity and the Decline of Unitary Culture," in *Disenchanted Democracy: Chinese Cultural Criticism After 1989* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999), 41. http://books.google.com/books?id=rMX5l_iP6m0C&pg=PA42&lpg=PA42&dq=

73 Geremie Barmé, "Wang Shuo and *Liumang* ('Hooligan') Culture," *Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs*, no. 28 (July 1992): 34–64, http://www.upf.edu/materials/huma/central/historia/lite/bibli/arti/art_61.pdf

74 Claire Huot, "Chapter 2: Away from Literature I: Words Turned On," in *China's New Cultural Scene: A Handbook of Changes* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000): 49–71. <http://books.google.com/books?id=EG76bw3y1FsC&pg=PA49&lpg=>

75 Jing Wang, "Chapter 7: Wang Shuo: 'Pop Goes the Culture?'" in *High Culture Fever: Politics, Aesthetics, and Ideology in Deng's China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 252. <http://books.google.com/books?id=baGKlj-mNH8C&pg=PA262&lpg=>

76 Liz Flora, "Coming Attraction: Asia Society Screens 'Red Sorghum' Based on Mo Yan's Novel," *Asia Society*, 18 October 2012, <http://asiasociety.org/blog/asia/coming-attraction-asia-society-screens-red-sorghum-based-mo-yans-novel>

77 Vincent Brook, "To Live and Dye in China: The Personal and Political in Zhang Yimou's *Judou*," *CineAction*, 60, 2003.

78 Alan Wolf, "Zhang Yimou's Long Road Home," *Boston Review*, November 2001, <http://bostonreview.net/BR26.5/stone.html>

79 Chris Lee, "Zhang Yimou Remakes the Coen Brothers' 'Blood Simple,'" *Los Angeles Times*, 29 August 2010, <http://articles.latimes.com/2010/aug/29/entertainment/la-ca-0829-woman-noodle-20100829/2>

Co-productions are exempt from the PRC's foreign film screening quota, which is a maximum of 34 movies per year.^{80, 81} In order to secure a coveted slot, Hollywood filmmakers incorporate positive references to Chinese culture and people in their films.⁸² For example, in the 2011 remake of the 1984 cult classic *Red Dawn*, the invaders were digitally altered so they were no longer mainland Chinese but North Koreans.⁸³ Commenting on the trend, a Hollywood insider observed, "It's a clear-cut case—maybe the first I can think of in the history of Hollywood—where a foreign country's censorship board deeply affects what we produce."⁸⁴

Sports and Recreation

China's popular sports and recreational activities consist of traditional practices and international sports. Dating back over 2,000 years, Chinese martial arts (*wushu*) grew out of the need for individuals (often monks) to defend themselves while living in a volatile and fractious environment of war and political tumult.⁸⁵ Apprentices learned lethal fighting skills from masters. A renowned Chinese martial art is *gongfu*, dating back some three millennia to the Zhou Dynasty and better known in the West as kung fu. The style's movements are imitations of the fighting styles of animals and are based on a familiarity with human anatomy and physiology. Today, martial arts have become a recreational activity practiced in urban public parks for physical fitness as well as spiritual and mental well-being.^{86, 87}

Over the past 30 years, the PRC has become a dominant force in international sports competitions.⁸⁸ The state sponsors the training of most athletes.⁸⁹ Those with promise are identified at the local level and sent to live at specialized sports schools where they rigorously train on a daily basis. Education is sacrificed in the process, and nothing is allowed to interfere with the training.⁹⁰ Thus, information such as a death or serious illness in the family may be kept from young athletes by school authorities, to whom parents typically defer.⁹¹ In the eyes of many Chinese, winning medals is an important reflection of the country's place in the world.⁹² China holds sixth place in

80 Michael Cieply and Brooks Barnes, "To Get Movies into China, Hollywood Gives Censors a Preview," *New York Times*, 14 January 2013, http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/15/business/media/in-hollywood-movies-for-china-bureaucrats-want-a-say.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0

81 Shirley Li, "How Hollywood Sold Out to China," *Atlantic*, 10 September 2021, retrieved on 29 December 2021, <https://www.theatlantic.com/culture/archive/2021/09/how-hollywood-sold-out-to-china/620021/>

82 Ryan Nakashima, "Hollywood in China? Country's New Foreign Film Quotas Make the Industry Optimistic," *Huffington Post*, 16 April 2012, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/04/17/hollywood-in-china-countr_n_1431395.html

83 Ben Fritz and John Horn, "Red China: Hollywood Tries to Stay on China's Good Side," *Los Angeles Times*, 16 March 2011, <http://articles.latimes.com/2011/mar/16/entertainment/la-et-china-red-dawn-20110316>

84 Steven Zeitchik and Jonathan Landreth, "Hollywood Gripped by Pressure System from China," *Los Angeles Times*, 12 June 2012, <http://articles.latimes.com/2012/jun/12/entertainment/la-et-china-censorship-20120612>

85 Raffi Kamalian, "What is Wushu?" Stanford Wushu, n.d., <http://wushu.stanford.edu/whatis.html>

86 Dennis Lim, "Berlin Film Festival: Wong Kar-Wai, Kung Fu Auteur," *New York Times*, 16 February 2013, <http://artsbeat.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/02/16/berlin-film-festival-wong-kar-wai-kung-fu-auteur/>

87 *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, "Kung Fu," 1 November 2021, retrieved on 29 December 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/sports/kung-fu>

88 Trip Gabriel, "The Seoul Olympics; China Producing New Waves of Young Divers," *New York Times*, 11 September 1988, <http://www.nytimes.com/1988/09/11/sports/the-seoul-olympics-china-producing-new-waves-of-young-divers.html?pagewanted=all>

89 Pang Zhongying, "The Beijing Olympics and China's Soft Power," Brookings Institution, 4 September 2008, <http://www.brookings.edu/research/opinions/2008/09/04-olympics-pang>

90 Juliet Macur, "In China's Medal Factory, Winners Cannot Quit," *New York Times*, 21 June 2008, <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/06/21/sports/olympics/21athlete.html?pagewanted=all>

91 *Week*, "China's Olympic Training Program: Abusive?" 2 August 2012, <http://theweek.com/article/index/231485/chinas-olympics-training-program-abusive>

92 Eurosport, "China 'Plan to Win Every Single Olympic Medal in Future' (blog)," *Yahoo News*, 9 August 2012, <http://uk.eurosport.yahoo.com/blogs/londonspy/china-plan-win-every-single-olympic-medal-future-144119363.html>

the all-time summer Olympics gold medal count.⁹³ Athletes are required to turn over a hefty portion of any money earned from commercial endorsements to the government-run sports federations that underwrote their training.⁹⁴

93 Aaron O'Neill, "All-Time Medal Count at the Summer Olympics by Country and Color from 1896 to 2020," Statista, 9 August 2021, retrieved on 29 December 2021, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1101719/summer-olympics-all-time-medal-list-since-1892/>.

94 Louis Lim, "Sporting Fame Comes with Limits in China," National Public Radio, 24 July 2008, <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=92651343>

China in Perspective

Society Assessment

Read the following statements and answer True or False

- | | | | |
|----|---|------|-------|
| 1. | Beijing Mandarin is the official language of China. | True | False |
| 2. | China's one-child policy remains in effect today.. | True | False |
| 3. | Most written Chinese characters contain two parts. . | True | False |
| 4. | The Chinese government recognizes five religions. | True | False |
| 5. | China's rapid industrialization has coincided with increased equality for women in the workplace. | True | False |

China in Perspective

Society Assessment Answers

1. True:
Beijing Mandarin is the medium of instruction in schools and the national broadcasting language.
2. False:
The one-child policy ended in 2016. Its unforeseen effects include thousands of undocumented individuals without access to education or legal employment, and millions of men who cannot find wives..
3. True:
One part is called the “radical” and indicates something about the meaning of the character. The radical can be combined with other parts to form unique words. .
4. True:
Islam, Catholicism, Protestantism, Buddhism, and Taoism are the five recognized religions, but half the population are unaffiliated with any religion.
5. False:
Female participation in the labor force stands at 61%, down from 75% in 1990. In 2019, women earned 78 cents for every dollar paid to a man, a drop of 9% from 2018.

Chapter 5 | Security



Chinese airmen on parade, Beijing
U.S. Department of Defense/Linda D. Kozaryn

Introduction

During the first 30 years of Communist rule, China clashed with India, the Soviet Union, and Vietnam. In the 1980s, Deng Xiaoping put the country on a course to “hide its capacities, focus on national strength building, and bide its time.”¹ There appears to be a consensus within China that its time has come.² In some of China’s 14 neighboring countries, Beijing’s assertive behavior is reminiscent of a regional hegemon.³ The relationship between China and the United States, economically intertwined and increasingly contentious, is perhaps the most consequential on a global scale.^{4, 5} China promotes the view that the UN Security Council, of which the PRC is a permanent member, should be the final arbiter in the use of force internationally.⁶ China is an influential member of another

- 1 Ian Johnson, “Will the Chinese Be Supreme?” *New York Review of Books*, 4 April 2013, <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2013/apr/04/will-chinese-be-supreme/>
- 2 Jonathan Pearlman, “The Time for Waiting is Over: China has Taken Its Great Political Leap Forward,” *Sydney Morning Herald*, 23 December 2009, <http://www.smh.com.au/world/the-time-for-waiting-is-over-china-has-taken-its-great-political-leap-forward-20091221-la21.html>
- 3 Odd Arne Westad, “China’s Me-First Foreign Policy,” *Los Angeles Times*, 20 January 2013, <http://articles.latimes.com/2013/jan/20/opinion/la-oe-westad-china-not-taking-over-20130120>
- 4 Harry Harding, “Three Competing Strands in Chinese Foreign Policy,” *Thinking about Asia* (blog), 3 March 2011, <http://thinkingaboutasia.blogspot.com/2011/03/three-competing-strands-in-chinese.html>
- 5 Kenneth Lieberthal, “The American Pivot to Asia,” *Foreign Policy*, 21 December 2011, http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/12/21/the_american_pivot_to_asia?page=0.2
- 6 David M. Lampton, “China: Outward Bound but Inner-Directed,” *SAISPHERE* (Johns Hopkins University), 2006, <http://legacy2.sais-jhu.edu/pressroom/publications/saisphere/2006/lampton.htm>

international body, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), along with Russia and several Central Asian nations. The SCO is a regional grouping of states that share common interests in combating non-state actors such as international terrorist groups and drug traffickers.^{7, 8} But when its size and power is an advantage, China eschews multilateral involvement in favor of bilateral dealings on issues such as sovereignty over the South China Sea.⁹

U.S.–China Relations

After the PRC was founded in 1949, relations between Beijing and Washington were adversarial. The United States maintained diplomatic ties to the government of Chiang Kai-shek, which had fled to Taiwan. Soon after, the United States and the PRC fought on opposing sides in the 1950–53 Korean War. In 1979, the United States and China officially normalized relations, and Washington shifted diplomatic recognition from Taipei to Beijing.¹⁰

Today, the United States and China are engaged in a global rivalry driven by conflicting ideologies and fraught with tensions and mistrust. China sees itself as a rising superpower and the United States as part of the declining West. Beijing believes its one-party authoritarian system is superior to Western liberal democracies and resents U.S. criticism over its human rights violations such as repression of Muslims in Xinjiang and the antidemocratic crackdown in Hong Kong. With its growing military might, China is challenging U.S. dominance in the Pacific. Major flashpoints are China's disputes with U.S. allies, such as its maritime claims in the South China Sea and its territorial claim over Taiwan.^{11, 12}

The two countries' deep economic ties complicate their rivalry. The United States has supported China's integration into the world economy. China is one of the biggest holders of U.S. debt, periodically switching between first and second place with Japan. The United States is China's top export partner and fifth-largest import partner, while China is the United States' third-largest export partner and top import partner. The balance of trade has favored China, and persistent trade deficits have prompted accusations from Washington that Beijing unfairly manipulates its currency to its advantage.^{13, 14, 15, 16} The United States has also accused China of stealing proprietary economic and technology information from the West. While some American tech companies have ceased operating in China,

- 7 Pavel Feigenhauer, "SCO Fails to Turn into an 'Eastern NATO,'" Eurasia Daily Monitor (Jamestown Foundation) 8, no. 112 (June 16 2011), [http://www.jamestown.org/programs/edm/single/?tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=38055&cHash=56bac713e6fbc274a470e3afbe15d04f](http://www.jamestown.org/programs/edm/single/?tx_ttnews[tt_news]=38055&cHash=56bac713e6fbc274a470e3afbe15d04f)
- 8 Greg Chaffin, "China's Evolving Land Force: An Interview with Roy Kamphausen," National Bureau of Asian Research, 1 October 2012, <http://www.nbr.org/research/activity.aspx?id=277>
- 9 Aileen S. P. Baviera, "Power Asymmetry in South China Sea," Philippine Daily Inquirer, 26 June 2011, <http://opinion.inquirer.net/6896/power-asymmetry-in-south-china-sea>
- 10 Asia for Educators, Columbia University, "U.S.–China Relations Since 1949," 2008, http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/special/china_1950_us_china.htm
- 11 Raymond Zhong and Steven Lee Myers, "Taiwan, Trade, Tech and More: A Tense Era in U.S.–China Ties," New York Times, 8 December 2021, retrieved on 12 January 2022, <https://www.nytimes.com/article/us-china-tensions-explained.html>.
- 12 U.S. Department of State, "U.S. Relations with China," 12 May 2021, retrieved on 12 January 2022, <https://www.state.gov/u-s-relations-with-china/>.
- 13 Lin Jinbing, "China Economists See Yuan Rising Further," MarketWatch, 7 November 2012, <http://www.marketwatch.com/story/china-economists-see-yuan-rising-further-2012-11-07>
- 14 Central Intelligence Agency, "China," World Factbook, 9 November 2021, retrieved on 16 November 2021, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/china/>.
- 15 Central Intelligence Agency, "United States," World Factbook, 20 December 2021, retrieved on 12 December 2022, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/united-states/>.
- 16 Amanda Lee, "Explainer: US Debt to China: How Big Is It and Why Is It Important?" South China Morning Post, 3 December 2020, retrieved on 13 January 2022, <https://www.scmp.com/economy/china-economy/article/3112343/us-debt-china-how-big-it-and-why-it-important>.

others, including Apple and Tesla, remain in 2022.¹⁷ During the Trump and Biden administrations the two countries engaged in a protracted trade war, imposing hundreds of billions of dollars in tariffs on each other's goods.¹⁸

Relations with Neighboring Countries

Afghanistan

To the west, China shares 76 km (47 mi) of border with Afghanistan.¹⁹ Though historically their relationship has been limited, Afghan stability is important to Chinese security because extremist organizations that threaten China maintain ties with terrorist networks operating in Afghanistan. For Beijing, the NATO and U.S. presence was desirable because regional terrorist networks focused on the Western foreign presence rather than fomenting unrest in neighboring countries.²⁰ Since Afghanistan was retaken by the Taliban in 2021, China has signaled acceptance of the new regime and a willingness to pursue economic ventures there, especially pertaining to Afghanistan's abundant natural resources. For its part, the Taliban will likely welcome Chinese economic investment if it is not attached to demands for reform.²¹

Bhutan

To the southwest, China shares a 470-km (292-mi) border with Bhutan.²² The two countries do not have direct diplomatic relations. Bhutan, a small landlocked state between China and India, is strategically important because it controls several Himalayan passes.²³ In recent years Bhutan has become caught up in the struggle between India and China for supremacy in the Himalayan region. China is using negotiations in a long-standing border dispute with Bhutan to try to gain military advantage at a Bhutan-India-China border tri-junction. China has also expanded its activities along the border with Bhutan, including constructing road networks and building settlements on Bhutanese territory. In 2021, China and Bhutan agreed on a framework to settle their boundary dispute.^{24, 25, 26}

Burma (Myanmar)

17 Raymond Zhong and Steven Lee Myers, "Taiwan, Trade, Tech and More: A Tense Era in U.S.-China Ties," *New York Times*, 8 December 2021, retrieved on 12 January 2022, <https://www.nytimes.com/article/us-china-tensions-explained.html>.

18 Yukon Huang, "The U.S.-China Trade War Has Become a Cold War," *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, 16 September 2021, retrieved on 26 January 2022, <https://carnegieendowment.org/2021/09/16/u.s.-china-trade-war-has-become-cold-war-pub-85352>.

19 Central Intelligence Agency, "China," *World Factbook*, 9 November 2021, retrieved on 16 November 2021, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/china/>.

20 Raffaello Pantucci, "China's Leadership Opportunity in Afghanistan," *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, 2 April 2013, <https://carnegieendowment.org/2013/04/02/china-s-leadership-opportunity-in-afghanistan/fvvs>

21 Ian Johnson, "How Will China Deal with the Taliban?" *Council on Foreign Relations*, 24 August 2021, retrieved on 13 January 2022, <https://www.cfr.org/in-brief/china-afghanistan-deal-with-taliban>.

22 Central Intelligence Agency, "China," *World Factbook*, 9 November 2021, retrieved on 16 November 2021, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/china/>.

23 Broad College of Business, Michigan State University, "Bhutan: Introduction," 2013, <http://globaleledge.msu.edu/countries/bhutan>

24 Jianli Yang, "Bhutan-China Border Negotiations in Context," *Diplomat*, 18 November 2021, retrieved on 13 January 2021, <https://thediplomat.com/2021/11/bhutan-china-border-negotiations-in-context/>.

25 Robert Barnett, "China Is Building Entire Villages in Another Country's Territory," *Foreign Policy*, 7 May 2021, retrieved on 13 January 2022, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/05/07/china-bhutan-border-villages-security-forces/>.

26 Manoj Joshi, "The China-Bhutan Border Deal Should Worry India," *Observer Research Foundation*, 22 October 2021, retrieved on 13 January 2022, <https://www.orfonline.org/research/the-china-bhutan-border-deal-should-worry-india/>.

To the south, China and Burma share a border of 2,185 km (1,358 mi).²⁷ When Burma was an international pariah, the two governments developed close relations. China provided discounted loans to the isolated military regime and secured access to Burma's natural resources, which include natural gas, timber, and gems. In May 2013, a Chinese-constructed network of oil and natural-gas pipelines opened, allowing the bypass of the congested, narrow Malacca Strait that most of China's oil imports had traveled through until then.^{28, 29} A less welcome import has been narcotics. Border security has been threatened by drug trafficking and ongoing fighting between the Burmese government and ethnic Kachin rebels.^{30, 31}

Burma's decade of democracy starting in 2010 brought closer engagement with the West and diluted Beijing's influence. After a 2021 military coup deposed the democratically elected government, China tacitly accepted the new ruling junta. The Burmese military pressed forward with joint economic projects such as a natural gas generating plant, a deep-sea port, and special economic zones.^{32, 33, 34}

India

To the southwest, China maintains a large military presence in areas along its 3,380-km (2,100-mi) border with India, particularly in Bum La, where the two countries dispute the historical territory of Tibet.^{35, 36} Also, China claims a large portion of the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh (located east of Bhutan and south of the Tibetan Plateau).³⁷ In recent years, the PRC has increased its military presence along the unofficial border in this rugged Himalayan region. The improved roads on the Chinese side of the border would facilitate movement by troops in the event of conflict.³⁸ India has also boosted its border forces.³⁹ Territorial disputes have been ongoing since the two countries clashed in a 1962 border war. At issue have been China's claims to the Aksai Chin territory and a small, northern portion of Kashmir that Pakistan ceded to China in 1964.⁴⁰ In 2020, troops from the two sides engaged in hand-to-

27 Central Intelligence Agency, "China," World Factbook, 9 November 2021, retrieved on 16 November 2021, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/china/>.

28 Credit Suisse, "China's 'Malacca Dilemma' Inspiring Quest for Energy Security, says Kaplan," 21 March 2012, https://www.credit-suisse.com/conferences/aic/2012/en/reporter/day3/pacific_politics.jsp

29 Jamil Anderlini and Gwen Robinson, "China-Myanmar Pipeline to Open in May," Financial Times, 21 January 2013, <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/faf733ae-63b6-11e2-af8c-00144feab49a.html#axzz2SFv1H1i>

30 Thomas Fuller and Edward Wong, "Myanmar Announces a Cease-Fire in Assault against Kachin Rebels," New York Times, 19 January 2013, <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/19/world/asia/kachin-refugees-reported-to-flee-myanmar-to-china.html>

31 Economist, "Less Thunder Out of China," 6 October 2012, <http://www.economist.com/node/21564279>

32 Toshihiro Kudo, "China's Policy toward Myanmar: Challenges and Prospects," IDE JETRO, September 2012, 2, http://www.ide.go.jp/English/Research/Region/Asia/pdf/201209_kudo.pdf

33 Janes Perlez and Bree Feng, "China Tries to Improve Image in a Changing Myanmar," New York Times, 18 May 2013, <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/05/19/world/asia/under-pressure-china-measures-its-impact-in-myanmar.html?pagewanted=all>

34 Jason Tower and Priscilla A. Clapp, "Myanmar: China, the Coup and the Future," United States Institute of Peace, 8 June 2021, retrieved on 14 January 2022, <https://www.usip.org/publications/2021/06/myanmar-china-coup-and-future>.

35 Central Intelligence Agency, "China," World Factbook, 9 November 2021, retrieved on 16 November 2021, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/china/>.

36 Economist, "China and India: Contest of the Century," 19 August 2010, <http://www.economist.com/node/16846256>

37 Edward Wong, "China and India Dispute Enclave on Edge of Tibet," New York Times, 3 September 2009, http://www.nytimes.com/2009/09/04/world/asia/04chinaindia.html?_r=1

38 Namrata Goswami, "Ending Sino-Indian Border Dispute Essential to Continued Prosperity," Global Times, 16 January 2013, <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/756338.shtml>

39 N. C. Bipindra, "A New Mountain Strike Force to Counter China's Border Threat," Sunday Standard (India), 10 March 2013, <http://newindianexpress.com/thesundaystandard/article1494986.ece>

40 John C. K. Daly, "Energy Concerns and China's Unresolved Territorial Disputes," China Brief (Jamestown Foundation) 4, no. 24 (7 December 2004), [http://www.jamestown.org/programs/chinabrief/single/?tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=3701&tx_ttnews\[backPid\]=194&no_cache=1#UcCRKZyWJQ](http://www.jamestown.org/programs/chinabrief/single/?tx_ttnews[tt_news]=3701&tx_ttnews[backPid]=194&no_cache=1#UcCRKZyWJQ)

hand skirmishes along the disputed border resulting in 24 deaths.⁴¹ Despite tensions, trade between the two Asian giants is booming, reaching USD 125 billion in 2021, up from USD 3 billion in 2000.^{42, 43}

Japan

Japan lies east of China in the East China Sea. The two countries most recently established diplomatic relations in 1972. Beijing and Tokyo value a stable, constructive mutual relationship, but in recent years Japan has increasingly criticized China's military assertiveness in the region. Japan is China's third-largest export partner and second-largest import partner.^{44, 45, 46}

China and Japan have a territorial dispute over eight uninhabited islands in the East China Sea (called the Diaoyu Islands by China and the Senkaku Islands by Japan).⁴⁷ Beijing insists the islands have been part of China since ancient times. Tokyo claimed sovereignty over the islands in 1895 and currently controls them. The dispute became more pressing after the 1969 discovery of significant oil and natural gas deposits around the islands.⁴⁸ In recent decades, both countries have intensified rhetoric surrounding their claims to the islands and enhanced their military presence in the area.^{49, 50, 51}

Kazakhstan

China shares a 1,533-km (953-mi) border with Kazakhstan.⁵² The two countries enjoy warm relations, centered primarily on trade. China is Kazakhstan's second-largest trading partner and top export destination. Trade has been bolstered by Kazakhstan's participation in China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI); China has invested more than USD 24 billion in over 50 projects in Kazakhstan, including solar panel factories, wind farms, and the Khorgos Gateway dry port, a high-tech logistics and industrial center near the Chinese border. Kazakhstan is also an important source of and transit country for China's energy imports. Chinese companies have invested significantly

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- 41 Al Jazeera, "India, China Army Talks to Defuse Border Tensions Fail," 11 October 2021, retrieved on 28 January 2022, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/10/11/india-china-army-talks-border-tensions-ladakh>.
- 42 Zachary Fillingham, "China-India Relations: Cooperation and Conflict-Analysis," Geopolitical Monitor, 9 April 2013, www.eurasiareview.com/09042013-china-india-relations-cooperation-and-conflict-analysis/.
- 43 Economic Times, "India-China Trade Grows to Record \$125 Billion in 2021 Despite Tensions in Eastern Ladakh," 14 January 2022, retrieved on 14 January 2022, <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/foreign-trade/india-china-trade-grows-to-record-125-billion-in-2021-despite-tensions-in-eastern-ladakh/articleshow/88900383.cms>.
- 44 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, "Japan-China Relations (Basic Data)," October 2012, retrieved on 18 January 2022, <https://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/china/data.html>.
- 45 CNBC, "Japan Seeks Good Ties with China, Calls for 'Responsible Behavior,' New Foreign Minister Says," 11 November 2021, retrieved on 18 January 2022, <https://www.cnbc.com/2021/11/11/japans-new-foreign-minister-on-relationship-with-china.html>.
- 46 Central Intelligence Agency, "China," World Factbook, 9 November 2021, retrieved on 16 November 2021, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/china/>.
- 47 BBC News, "Q&A: China-Japan Islands Row," 22 January 2013, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-pacific-11341139>.
- 48 Office of the Secretary of Defense, U.S. Department of Defense, "Annual Report to Congress: Military Power of the People's Republic of China 2009," 2009, http://www.defense.gov/pubs/pdfs/China_Military_Power_Report_2009.pdf.
- 49 Stephanie Kleine-Ahlbrandt, "China: New Leaders, Same Assertive Foreign Policy," International Crisis Group, 8 March 2013, <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/asia/north-east-asia/china/op-eds/kleine-ahlbrandt-china-new-leader-same-assertive-foreign-policy.aspx>.
- 50 Lyle Morris, "Taming the Five Dragons? China Consolidates Its Maritime Law Enforcement Agencies," China Brief (Jamestown Foundation) 13, no. 7, 28 March 2013, [http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=40661&tx_ttnews\[backPid\]=13&cHash=c51a67af87f601d45c41ebcc31bceb79](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=40661&tx_ttnews[backPid]=13&cHash=c51a67af87f601d45c41ebcc31bceb79).
- 51 Council on Foreign Relations, "Tensions in the East China Sea," 14 January 2022, retrieved on 18 January 2022, <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/tensions-east-china-sea>.
- 52 Central Intelligence Agency, "China," World Factbook, 9 November 2021, retrieved on 16 November 2021, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/china/>.

in Kazakhstan's oil and gas production, and China is a major recipient of Central Asian natural gas through a series of pipelines that pass through Kazakhstan.^{53, 54}

Kyrgyzstan

To the northwest, China borders Kyrgyzstan for 850 km (528 mi).⁵⁵ China has built or financed multiple BRI infrastructure projects in Kyrgyzstan in recent years, and this has provoked Kyrgyz economic nationalism. Protests have vented popular opposition to Chinese mining activities and a poorly performing Chinese-built power plant, and have led to the scrapping of plans for a USD 275 million free-trade zone near the border with China. Some 40% of Kyrgyzstan's national debt is owed to Chinese creditors. The Kyrgyz government has considered handing China control of the country's mining and energy resources as a way to reduce the debt.^{56, 57}

Laos

To the south, China borders Laos for 423 km (263 mi).⁵⁸ Landlocked between Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand, and China, Laos is integral to the development of a transportation network connecting China to other Asian countries.⁵⁹ A high-speed railway that crosses Laos and connects Kunming, China to Bangkok, Thailand and the Bay of Bengal in Myanmar began limited operations in 2021. Although China is expected to benefit the most from the project and Chinese laborers built the line, Laos bore the cost of construction—borrowing billions of dollars from China. The development of the railway and other China-backed infrastructure projects has led to half of the public debt of Laos being held by China.^{60, 61, 62}

Mongolia

To the north, China's longest land border—4,667 km (2,900 mi)—is with Mongolia.⁶³ China is Mongolia's largest trading partner, receiving 90% of its exports and providing over one-third of its imports.⁶⁴ But Mongolians are wary of the Chinese, who are presumed to want to reclaim lost territory and acquire new land to accommodate their growing

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- 53 Luna Sun, "Explainer: Kazakhstan Unrest: How Will China's Economic Interests Be Affected by the Protests?" South China Morning Post, 7 January 2022, retrieved on 19 January 2022, <https://www.scmp.com/economy/china-economy/article/3162581/kazakhstan-unrest-how-will-chinas-economic-interests-be>.
- 54 Joe Webster, "The Kazakhstan Protests and Sino-Russian Relations," SupChina, 7 January 2022, retrieved on 19 January 2022, <https://supchina.com/2022/01/07/the-kazakhstan-protests-and-sino-russian-relations/>.
- 55 Central Intelligence Agency, "China," World Factbook, 9 November 2021, retrieved on 16 November 2021, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/china/>.
- 56 Reid Standish, "How Will Kyrgyzstan Repay Its Huge Debts to China?" Radio Free Europe Radio Liberty, 27 February 2021, retrieved on 19 January 2022, <https://www.rferl.org/a/how-will-kyrgyzstan-repay-its-huge-debts-to-china-/31124848.html>.
- 57 Wade Shepard, "Another Belt and Road Project Bites the Dust as China's New Silk Road Continues to Struggle," Forbes, 25 February 2020, retrieved on 19 January 2021, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/wadeshepard/2020/02/25/another-belt-and-road-project-bites-the-dust-as-chinas-new-silk-road-continues-to-struggle/?sh=56ac743653e3>.
- 58 Central Intelligence Agency, "China," World Factbook, 9 November 2021, retrieved on 16 November 2021, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/china/>.
- 59 Michael Penna, "Little, Landlocked Laos: Pawn or Pivot in Asia's Future?" Asian Correspondent, 19 February 2013, <http://asiancorrespondent.com/98465/laos-investment-china-asean/>.
- 60 Jane Perlez and Bree Feng, "Laos Could Bear Cost of Chinese Railroad," New York Times, 1 January 2013, <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/02/world/asia/china-builds-a-railroad-and-laos-bears-the-cost.html?pagewanted=all&r=0>.
- 61 Kearnin Sims, "On China's Doorstep, Laos Plays a Careful Game of Balancing," Diplomat, 7 July 2021, retrieved on 19 January 2022, <https://thediplomat.com/2021/07/on-chinas-doorstep-laos-plays-a-careful-game-of-balancing/>.
- 62 Marimi Kishimoto, "China-Laos Railway Begins with Limited Service," Nikkei Asia, 3 December 2021, retrieved on 19 January 2022, <https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics/International-relations/China-Laos-railway-begins-with-limited-service2>.
- 63 Central Intelligence Agency, "China," World Factbook, 9 November 2021, retrieved on 16 November 2021, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/china/>.
- 64 Central Intelligence Agency, "Mongolia," World Factbook, 17 January 2022, retrieved on 27 January 2022, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/mongolia/>.

population.⁶⁵ The Chinese province of Inner Mongolia, adjacent to the China-Mongolia border, contains 50% more ethnic Mongolians than Mongolia the country. The Mongolian government sent a letter of protest to Beijing after China replaced Mongolian with Chinese as the language of instruction for ethnic Mongolian schoolchildren in Inner Mongolia in 2020. The two countries are also at odds over the Dalai Lama. Mongolian Buddhists revere the Tibetan spiritual leader, but Beijing views him as a separatist instigator.⁶⁶

Nepal

To the west, China shares 1,236 km (768 mi) of border with Nepal.⁶⁷ In the 18th century, the monarch of Nepal described his kingdom as a “delicate yam between two boulders.”⁶⁸ Throughout its history, Nepal has attempted to maintain this delicate balance in its relations with India and China. China’s interests in Nepal are primarily strategic.⁶⁹ Nepal has served as a home or transit country for large numbers of Tibetan refugees who fled after Tibet was incorporated into the PRC in 1950. Today, about 20,000 Tibetan refugees live in Nepal. The Nepalese government has not registered Tibetan refugees, leaving them deprived of their rights. To appease the PRC, Nepal has cracked down on anti-Chinese and Tibetan independence protests.^{70, 71, 72}

North Korea

To the east, China and North Korea share a border of 1,416 km (880 mi).⁷³ The PRC supplies most of North Korea’s oil and consumer goods and a significant portion of its food.⁷⁴ History, geopolitics, and ideology have made China a close partner of North Korea. Mao Zedong once described the relationship with a Chinese idiom meaning “if the lips are gone the teeth will be cold.”⁷⁵ Although China has established diplomatic relations with South Korea, Korean unification on the South’s terms would create the unwelcome prospect of South Korean and U.S. troops on China’s border.⁷⁶ Moreover, a collapse of authority in the North would likely create a destabilizing refugee influx.⁷⁷ The PRC currently classifies North Korean refugees as “economic migrants” who are subject to deportation, despite protests from South Korea and the international community.⁷⁸

65 Marcia R. Ristaino, “Chapter 4: Government and Politics: Foreign Policy: China,” in *Mongolia: A Country Study*, 2nd ed., ed. Robert L. Worden and Andrea Matles Savada (Washington, DC: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1991), <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/mntoc.html>

66 Charlie Campbell, “‘We Face Very Tough Challenges.’ How Mongolia Typifies the Problems Posed to Small Countries by China’s Rise,” *Time*, 13 April 2021, retrieved on 20 January 2022, <https://time.com/5953518/mongolia-china-russia-problems/>.

67 Central Intelligence Agency, “China,” *World Factbook*, 9 November 2021, retrieved on 16 November 2021, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/china/>.

68 Mark Magnier, “Nepal Caught Between China and India,” *Los Angeles Times*, 20 February 2011, <http://articles.latimes.com/2011/feb/20/world/la-fg-nepal-china-20110220>

69 Joyce Roque, “Via Nepal, China Gains Foothold in South Asia,” *China Briefing*, 25 July 2005, <http://www.china-briefing.com/news/2008/07/25/via-nepal-china-gains-foothold-in-south-asial.html>

70 Tom McCawley, “Violence in Tibet Strains China’s Relations with India, Nepal,” *Christian Science Monitor*, 20 March 2008, <http://www.csmonitor.com/2008/0320/p99s01-duts.html>

71 Lisa Curtis, “China’s Expanding Global Influence: Foreign Policy Goals, Practices and Tools,” *Heritage Foundation*, 20 March 2008, <http://www.heritage.org/RESEARCH/ASIAANDTHEPACIFIC/tst032008.cfm>

72 Arun Budhathoki and Bindesh Dahal, “Nepal’s Cautious Approach to the Tibetan Question,” *Diplomat*, 18 July 2021, retrieved on 20 January 2022, <https://thediplomat.com/2021/07/nepals-cautious-approach-to-the-tibetan-question/>.

73 Central Intelligence Agency, “China,” *World Factbook*, 9 November 2021, retrieved on 16 November 2021, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/china/>.

74 Jayshee Bajoria and Beina Xu, “The China-North Korea Relationship,” *Council on Foreign Relations*, 21 February 2013, <http://www.cfr.org/china/china-north-korea-relationship/p11097>

75 Jenny Jun, “Dealing with a Sore Lip: Parsing China’s ‘Recalculation’ of North Korea Policy,” 38 *North, U.S.-Korea Institute at SAIS* (Johns Hopkins University), 23 March, 2013, <http://38north.org/2013/03/jjun032913/>

76 Shen Dingli, “Lips and Teeth,” *Foreign Policy*, 13 February 2013, http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2013/02/13/lips_and_teeth_china_north_korea

77 Bruce W. Bennett and Jennifer Lind, “The Collapse of North Korea: Military Mission and Requirements,” *International Security* 36, no. 2 (Fall 2011): 90, http://belfercenter.ksg.harvard.edu/files/Collapse_of_North_Korea.pdf

78 Kaitlin Brush, “Migrant Workers or Refugees? China’s Obligations to North Korean Defectors,” *Human Rights Brief*, 24 October 2010, <http://hrbrief.org/2010/10/migrant-workers-or-refugees-china%E2%80%99s-obligations-to-north-korean-defectors/>

Pakistan

To the west, China shares a 523-km (325-mi) border with Pakistan, which was one of the first countries to recognize the PRC. Bilateral relations have been strengthened by their separate conflicts with India. The PRC has been a major supplier of weapons and defense technology to Pakistan.^{79, 80}

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), part of the BRI, has become the focal point of Pakistan-China relations. The centerpiece of the project is a deep-sea port in Gwadar, which will give China access to the Arabian Sea. Since launching with great fanfare in 2015, CPEC has slowed down amid cooling enthusiasm from Islamabad and attacks and protests against Chinese workers and interests.^{81, 82}

Philippines

The Philippines is located a few hundred miles southeast of China's Hainan Island Province.⁸³ The Philippine government's 1991 decision not to renew the U.S. lease on the Subic Bay Naval Base opened the door for closer security cooperation between Manila and Beijing.⁸⁴ This cooperation has included military technology transfers and maritime safety exercises.⁸⁵ Yet the two countries remain at odds over the Spratly Islands and the Scarborough Shoal.⁸⁶ The Philippines claims that some of these South China Sea islands are within its "exclusive economic zone," while China asserts sovereignty over "practically the entire sea based on a centuries-old map."⁸⁷ In 2012, China erected a barrier to the Scarborough Shoal, preventing access by non-PRC ships.⁸⁸ Since 2013, China has built a number of artificial islands in the Spratlys, allowing it to increase its military presence.⁸⁹

Russia

China shares two borders with Russia—3,605 km (2,240 mi) in the northeast and 40 km (25 mi) in the northwest.⁹⁰ China and the Soviet Union had a strained and often adversarial relationship during the Cold War. Divergent Marxist ideologies and territorial disputes led to a brief armed conflict on the Ussuri River on the Sino-Soviet border in 1969. Since the 1991 dissolution of the Soviet Union, relations between Beijing and Moscow have improved. When the United States and Europe would not sell China arms after its 1989 crackdown in Tiananmen Square,

79 Central Intelligence Agency, "China," World Factbook, 9 November 2021, retrieved on 16 November 2021, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/china/>.

80 Office of the Secretary of Defense, U.S. Department of Defense, "Annual Report to Congress: Military Power of the People's Republic of China 2009," 2009, http://www.defense.gov/pubs/pdfs/China_Military_Power_Report_2009.pdf

81 Muhammad Akbar Notezai, "Can Pakistan Protect CPEC?" Diplomat, 20 May 2019, <https://thediplomat.com/2019/05/can-pakistan-protect-cpec/>

82 Adnan Aamir, "Pakistan and China: An Unhappy Union in Gwadar," Interpreter, 23 December 2021, , retrieved on 20 January 2022, <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/pakistan-and-china-unhappy-union-gwadar>.

83 Central Intelligence Agency, "The Philippines," World Factbook, 14 January 2022, retrieved on 27 January 2022, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/philippines/>.

84 Edward N. Luttwak, "Chapter 19: The Philippines: How to Make Enemies," in *The Rise of China vs. The Logic of Strategy* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University, 2012), 197.

85 BBC News, "Philippines and China Trade Soars," 14 November 2012, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-20334495>

86 Voice of America, "Chinese Ships Reported Spotted Near Spratly Shoal," 10 May 2013, <http://www.voanews.com/content/chinese-ships-appear-near-ayungin-shoal/1658868.html>

87 Simone Orendain, "Philippines, China Vow Friendly Relations despite Territorial Dispute," Voice of America, 20 March 2012, <http://www.voanews.com/content/philippines-china-vow-friendly-relations-despite-territorial-dispute-143616656/181217.html>

88 Gordon G. Chang, "The Rise of Militant Nationalism," Jewish Press, 30 April 2013, <http://www.jewishpress.com/indepth/opinions/the-rise-of-chinas-militant-nationalism/2013/04/30/>

89 Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative, "China Island Tracker," 2022, retrieved on 28 January 2022, <https://amti.csis.org/island-tracker/china/>.

90 Central Intelligence Agency, "China," World Factbook, 9 November 2021, retrieved on 16 November 2021, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/china/>.

Russia sold China weapons, oil, and natural gas.^{91, 92, 93} Since 2010, the two countries have deepened ties, driven by mutual military, diplomatic, and economic interests in the face of growing tensions with the United States. In 2021, the two countries held joint military exercises in the western Pacific, drawing the consternation of Japan and South Korea. Russia is a major supplier of weapons and oil for China; China is Russia's top trading partner and a key investor in Russian energy infrastructure.⁹⁴

Tajikistan

To the west, China shares 414 km (257 mi) of border with Tajikistan, the poorest country in Central Asia.⁹⁵ In early 2011, Tajikistan ceded 1% of its territory to China in a border demarcation deal.⁹⁶ Chinese firms have invested in the development of energy resources, including exploration for oil and gas, and in transportation infrastructure.⁹⁷ Three international highways transit Tajikistan. The longest highway, AH-66, connects Tajikistan to China via the Kulma Pass.^{98, 99} A Chinese bank holds USD 1.1 billion of Tajikistan's external debt, making China the biggest holder of Tajik debt.^{100, 101}

The two countries cooperate closely on security. From Beijing's perspective, the proximity of China's Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region to Tajikistan raises concerns about terrorism or extremist activity as well as drug trafficking.¹⁰² In late 2021, Tajik authorities announced China would be financing the construction of a military base near Tajikistan's border with Afghanistan, a move thought to be indicative of Chinese security concerns after Afghanistan fell to the Taliban earlier that year.¹⁰³

Vietnam

To the south, China shares a 1,281-km (796-mi) border with Vietnam.¹⁰⁴ Vietnam has historically viewed China as an adversary because of its northern neighbor's periodic incursions, the most recent of which occurred in

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- 91 Marcel de Haas, "Russian-Chinese Security Relations: Moscow's Threat from the East?" Netherlands Institute of International Relations Clingendael, 2013, http://www.clingendael.nl/publications/2013/20130327_rc_securityrelations.pdf
- 92 Stephen Blank, "Turning a New Leaf in Relations: Russia's Renewed Arms Sale to China," China Brief (Jamestown Foundation) 11, no. 2 (28 January 2011), [http://www.jamestown.org/programs/chinabrief/single/?tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=37427&cHash=122a836e99](http://www.jamestown.org/programs/chinabrief/single/?tx_ttnews[tt_news]=37427&cHash=122a836e99)
- 93 Jesse Du, "Russia vs. China: How Conflict at the Sino-Soviet Border Nearly Started Nuclear War," HistoryNet, July 2021, retrieved on 27 January 2022, <https://www.historynet.com/sino-soviet-border-conflict.htm>.
- 94 Zaheena Rasheed, "Why Are China and Russia Strengthening Ties?" Al Jazeera, 25 November 2021, retrieved on 22 January 2022, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/11/25/why-are-russia-and-china-strengthening-ties>.
- 95 Central Intelligence Agency, "China," World Factbook, 9 November 2021, retrieved on 16 November 2021, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/china/>.
- 96 Akbar Borisov, Agence France-Presse, "One Percent of Tajikistan Ceded to China: Official," Google News, 14 January 2011, http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5i7eA7wtkp7YrSKP4wXKzRotROtbQ?docId=CNG_ae397daff87cc1e47b63c5af72d5b9ae.8e1
- 97 Raffaello Pantucci and Alexandros Petersen, "Beijing Lays the Groundwork in Tajikistan: A View from the Ground," China Brief (Jamestown Foundation) 12, no. 11 (25 May 2012), [http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=39424](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=39424)
- 98 Shokhboz Asadov, "Tajikistan's Transit Corridors and Their Potential for Developing Regional Trade," University of Central Asia, Institute of Public Policy and Administration Working Paper no. 6, 2012, 13, 18, <http://www.ucentralasia.org/downloads/UCA-IPPA-WP-6-Tajikistan-Transit-Corridor.pdf>
- 99 Mark Vinson, "Road Projects in Tajikistan Impact Its Strategic Geography," Eurasia Daily Monitor (Jamestown Foundation) 9, no. 202, 5 November 2012, <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/509915ad2.html>
- 100 Alexander Sodiqov, "Tajikistan Attracts More Chinese Funds," Asia Times, 19 June 2012, http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Central_Asia/NF19Ag01.html
- 101 Linda Lew, "Explainer: Why China Is Funding a Base in Tajikistan," South China Morning Post, 7 November 2021, retrieved on 21 January 2022, <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/3155133/why-china-funding-base-tajikistan>.
- 102 Global Times (China), "Chinese Officers in Tajikistan SCO Military Drill Return," 19 June 2012, <http://community.globaltimes.cn/portal.php?mod=view&aid=837>
- 103 Linda Lew, "Explainer: Why China Is Funding a Base in Tajikistan," South China Morning Post, 7 November 2021, retrieved on 21 January 2022, <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/3155133/why-china-funding-base-tajikistan>.
- 104 Central Intelligence Agency, "China," World Factbook, 9 November 2021, retrieved on 16 November 2021, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/china/>.

1979. Since normalization of relations in 1991, China and Vietnam have become substantial trading partners.¹⁰⁵ Vietnam's manufacturing sector, a major driver of economic growth, relies heavily on equipment and raw materials from China. In 2021, imports from China equaled USD 110 billion, a 30% increase from the previous year.^{106, 107}

A long-standing territorial dispute over maritime claims in the South China Sea has kept bilateral relations testy. China and Vietnam claim sovereignty over the Paracel and Spratly Islands. In recent years, the dispute has led to small-scale armed confrontations that resulted in fatalities. The conflict centers on control of fishing grounds and mineral deposits in the South China Sea. The dispute has prompted Hanoi to seek closer relations with Washington.¹⁰⁸

Military

China's armed forces are known as the People's Liberation Army (PLA), which includes ground, naval, and air forces. The PLA also encompasses strategic missile forces, electronic and cyber warfare forces, paramilitary police, border forces, and the coast guard. Reservists and militia members supplement the active-duty PLA.¹⁰⁹ The PLA is under the authority of the CCP as well as the Ministry of National Defense.¹¹⁰ The PLA consists of about 2 million active-duty troops. About one-third of the troops are conscripted through a selective service system based on quotas for each province.^{111, 112}

In 2020, the PLA's ground forces numbered about 975,000 troops, down from 1.6 million in 2009. As part of the transition from a land-based force to a mobile, high-tech fighting force, the Maoist-era emphasis on the ground forces has been re-directed to air and sea power. Recently implemented reforms in the ground forces include enabling more decision making at lower tiers of command and making units smaller and more agile. A new lightweight tank, the Type 15, is capable of operating in high-altitude areas such as Tibet.^{113, 114, 115}

The People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) is the dominant force in the South China Sea, East China Sea, and Yellow Sea. The PLAN includes marines and naval aviation. It has 250,000 service members and more ships than any other naval force. The PLAN is growing and modernizing at a fast pace. At least three fleets of naval ships are believed to be under construction. The force's two existing aircraft carriers use ski jump-style takeoff systems;

105 H. C., "Fellow Travelers, Fellow Traders (blog)," *Economist*, 30 June 2012, <http://www.economist.com/blogs/banyan/2012/06/vietnam-trade-china>

106 Reuters, "Vietnam's 2021 Exports Climb 19%, Record Trade Surplus with U.S.," 13 January 2022, retrieved on 22 January 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/markets/asia/vietnams-2021-exports-climb-19-record-trade-surplus-with-us-2022-01-13/>

107 Cece Nguyen, "Why Manufacturing Is Driving Vietnam's Growth," *Vietnam Briefing*, 4 January 2022, retrieved on 22 January 2022, <https://www.vietnam-briefing.com/news/why-manufacturing-is-driving-vietnams-growth.html/>

108 Nguyen Manh Hung and Carlyle Thayer, "The Outlook for US-Vietnam Relations," *East-West Center*, 23 March 2011, <http://www.eastwestcenter.org/ewc-in-washington/events/previous-events-2011/march-23-nguyen-thayer>

109 Central Intelligence Agency, "China," *World Factbook*, 9 November 2021, retrieved on 16 November 2021, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/china/>

110 Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, "Country Profile: China," August 2006, <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/China.pdf>

111 Central Intelligence Agency, "China," *World Factbook*, 18 January 2022, retrieved on 24 January 2022, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/china/>

112 Dennis J. Blasko, "China's Law on Conscription under Revision," *Interpreter*, 14 July 2021, retrieved on 26 January 2022, <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/china-s-law-conscription-under-revision>

113 Joseph Y. Lin, "Reorientation of China's Armed Forces: Implications for the Future Promotions of PLA Generals," *China Brief* (Jamestown Foundation) 10, no. 13 (24 June 2010), [http://www.jamestown.org/programs/chinabrief/single/?tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=36531&cHash=61c94a766c](http://www.jamestown.org/programs/chinabrief/single/?tx_ttnews[tt_news]=36531&cHash=61c94a766c)

114 Lindsay Maizland, "China's Modernizing Military," *Council on Foreign Relations*, 5 February 2020, retrieved on 22 January 2022, <https://www.cfr.org/background/chinas-modernizing-military>

115 Kevin McCauley, "Reforming the People's Liberation Army's Noncommissioned Officer Corps and Conscripts," *China Brief* (Jamestown Foundation) 11, no. 20 (28 October 2011), [http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=38586](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=38586)

a third carrier currently under construction in Shanghai will use a more advanced and capable electromagnetic catapult system. China has also developed the capacity to mass produce diesel-electric submarines and surface warships.^{116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121}

The People's Liberation Army Air Force (PLAAF) is composed of about 400,000 service members. The PLAAF has acquired advanced equipment such as airborne warning and control systems, bomber aircraft, and unmanned aerial vehicles. Its J-20 fighter plane, in service since 2017, features stealth technology, supersonic cruising speed, and advanced avionics.^{122, 123, 124, 125}

The People's Liberation Army Rocket Force (PLARF) is responsible for China's strategic land-based nuclear and conventional missiles. China initiated its nuclear weapons program in the 1950s and became a nuclear power in 1964. Today, China possesses about 350 nuclear warheads. The country is modernizing its nuclear forces, a process that may include expanding its nuclear arsenal.^{126, 127}

Starting in the 1990s, China embarked on a massive effort to modernize its military, based on an increase in defense spending, investment in new weapons, and strengthening the country's defense industry. Substantial and consistent increases in the military budget demonstrate the country's commitment to modernization. In 2020, military expenditures amounted to 1.7% of GDP. Much of China's military technology is derived from other countries; the defense industry produces advanced weapons across all domains. Russia is the top supplier of foreign military equipment.^{128, 129}

In 2017, China inaugurated its first overseas military base, in the small eastern African country of Djibouti at the entrance to the Red Sea. Intended to support China's anti-piracy operations in the area, the base nevertheless underscores China's growing military might and its significant economic investment in Africa. Modifications

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- 116 Richard Parker (opinion), "Pilotless Planes, Pacific Tensions," 12 May 2013, http://www.nytimes.com/2013/05/13/opinion/drones-and-the-rivalry-between-the-us-and-china.html?_r=0
- 117 Gabe Collins and Andrew Erickson, "U.S. Navy Take Notice: China Is Becoming a World-Class Military Shipbuilder," *Diplomat* (Japan), 1 November 2012, <http://thediplomat.com/2012/11/01/u-s-navy-take-notice-china-is-becoming-a-world-class-military-shipbuilder/>
- 118 Central Intelligence Agency, "China," *World Factbook*, 18 January 2022, retrieved on 24 January 2022, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/china/>.
- 119 Matthew P. Funaiolo et al., "Signs Point to China's Third Aircraft Carrier Launching Soon," *Center for Strategic & International Studies*, 9 November 2021 retrieved on 24 January 2022, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/signs-point-chinas-third-aircraft-carrier-launching-soon>.
- 120 Lindsay Maizland, "China's Modernizing Military," *Council on Foreign Relations*, 5 February 2020, retrieved on 22 January 2022, <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/chinas-modernizing-military>.
- 121 Ian Urbina, "How China's Expanding Fishing Fleet Is Depleting the World's Oceans," *Yale Environment 360*, 17 August 2020, retrieved on 25 January 2022, <https://e360.yale.edu/features/how-chinas-expanding-fishing-fleet-is-depleting-worlds-oceans>.
- 122 Central Intelligence Agency, "China," *World Factbook*, 18 January 2022, retrieved on 24 January 2022, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/china/>.
- 123 Lindsay Maizland, "China's Modernizing Military," *Council on Foreign Relations*, 5 February 2020, retrieved on 22 January 2022, <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/chinas-modernizing-military>.
- 124 China Power, "Does China's J-20 Rival Other Stealth Fighters?" 26 August 2020, retrieved on 24 January 2022, <https://chinapower.csis.org/china-chengdu-j-20/>.
- 125 Economic Times, "China's J-20 fighter turns 10," 19 January 2021, retrieved on 28 January 2022, https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/chinas-j-20-fighter-turns-ten/articleshow/80328358.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst.
- 126 Christopher J. Mihal, "Understanding the People's Liberation Army Rocket Force," *Army University Press*, July-August 2021, , retrieved on 24 January 2022, <https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Journals/Military-Review/English-Edition-Archives/July-August-2021/Mihal-PLA-Rocket-Force/>.
- 127 Central Intelligence Agency, "China," *World Factbook*, 18 January 2022, retrieved on 24 January 2022, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/china/>.
- 128 Central Intelligence Agency, "China," *World Factbook*, 18 January 2022, retrieved on 24 January 2022, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/china/>.
- 129 Lindsay Maizland, "China's Modernizing Military," *Council on Foreign Relations*, 5 February 2020, retrieved on 22 January 2022, <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/chinas-modernizing-military>.

completed in 2021 make it possible for the base to support a Chinese aircraft carrier. Of particular interest is the proximity of this new base to Camp Lemonnier, the largest permanent US base in Africa.^{130, 131}

Police

Domestic security is provided by the Ministry of Public Security (MPS), the Ministry of State Security (MSS), and the People's Armed Police (PAP), which is part of the PLA. The MPS contains the national police, which is responsible for domestic law enforcement and public order. The MSS is the country's civilian intelligence and counterintelligence service. The PAP is a paramilitary organization tasked with internal security, maritime security, and supporting the PLA in time of war; it includes the coast guard and border defense forces. The PAP consists of approximately 600,000 personnel.^{132, 133}

In 2015, the government initiated a police reform initiative. The primary problems identified were low pay, a cumbersome bureaucracy, and the population's lack of respect for police officers. The goal of the reforms is to make the police a more effective force and strengthen public confidence.¹³⁴

Issues Affecting Stability

Taiwan (Chinese Taipei)

After Chiang Kai-shek and his Republic of China government retreated to Taiwan in 1949, they made "recovering the mainland" a priority, despite the daunting logistics. Taiwan's democratization, which started in the late 1980s, created tension across the Taiwan Strait because it gave voice to sentiments of independence.¹³⁵ Since the 1950s, China has positioned military units and weapons across the Taiwan Strait. Taiwan has a modern military force, with weapons and defense technology supplied primarily by the United States, which until 1979 defended the island from potential PLA invasion.¹³⁶ Since then, periodic U.S. arms sales to Taiwan elicit strong denunciations from Beijing, which regards them as an affront to its territorial sovereignty and national dignity.¹³⁷ In the 2020 presidential elections, Taiwanese Democratic Progressive Party (DDP) incumbent Tsai Ing-Wen won a second term in office. The DDP promotes an explicit Taiwanese identity, and Tsai's win drew condemnation from Beijing.¹³⁸ Despite tensions, the PRC and Taiwan have a strong economic relationship. China is Taiwan's largest import and export partner.¹³⁹

130 Max Bearak, "In Strategic Djibouti, a Microcosm of China's Growing Foothold in Africa," Washington Post, 30 December 2019, retrieved on 24 January 2022, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/africa/in-strategic-djibouti-a-microcosm-of-chinas-growing-foothold-in-africa/2019/12/29/a6e664ea-beab-11e9-a8b0-7ed8a0d5dc5d_story.html.

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134 Li Jing and Teddy Ng, "China Approves Police Reform Plan Aimed at Improving Force's Efficiency and Public Image," South China Morning Post, 16 February 2015, retrieved on 25 January 2022, <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/article/1714252/china-approves-police-reform-plan-aimed-improving-forces-efficiency-and>.

135 Richard C. Bush, "Introduction," in *Uncharted Strait: The Future of China-Taiwan Relations* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2012), 2, http://www.brookings.edu/~media/press/books/2013/unchartedstrait/unchartedstrait_chapter.pdf

136 Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, "Country Profile: Taiwan," March 2005, <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Taiwan.pdf>

137 Suisheng Zhao, "Understanding China's Assertive Foreign Policy Behavior During the Global Financial Meltdown," World Financial Review, <http://www.worldfinancialreview.com/?p=409>

138 Lily Kuo, "Taiwan Election: Tsai Ing-Wen Wins Landslide in Rebuke to China," Guardian, 11 January 2020, retrieved on 25 January 2022, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jan/11/taiwan-re-elects-tsai-ing-wen-as-president-in-clear-message-to-china>.

139 Central Intelligence Agency, "Taiwan," World Factbook, 18 January 2022, retrieved on 25 January 2022, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/taiwan/>.

Hong Kong

In 1997, the territory of Hong Kong reverted to China after 150 years of British rule. Under the “one country, two systems” approach, Beijing agreed not to interfere with Hong Kong’s self-governance. Over the next two decades, however, China chipped away at the territory’s autonomy and democratic institutions, leading to protests and legal battles. In 2020, a new comprehensive security law effectively curtailed protests and freedom of speech, giving Beijing unprecedented control over the territory. The law has led to the arrest and prosecution of dozens of pro-democracy activists, politicians, and journalists. China insists the law is needed for stability.^{140, 141}

Tibet

The PRC formally took control of Tibet in 1951 and suppressed an uprising in 1959 that caused the Dalai Lama, the Buddhist spiritual leader of a theocratic government, to flee to India, where he was joined by approximately 80,000 Tibetans seeking to escape Chinese repression.¹⁴² The refugees established a government-in-exile that asserts that Tibet had the status of a sovereign state when PLA troops entered the territory in 1949–50.¹⁴³ The PRC claims that the region belonged to the Chinese empire for over 700 years, and was only separated from China proper when Britain invaded Tibet in 1904 and forced the sitting Dalai Lama to establish relations.¹⁴⁴

Unrest in recent decades has captured worldwide attention. Beijing appears indifferent to criticism of its crackdown and blames the Dalai Lama for inciting the violence.¹⁴⁵ The PRC asserts that substantial state investment in the mountainous region has delivered improved services, modern infrastructure, and a higher standard of living to the area. Tibetans, for whom mountains are sacred places, complain of environmental degradation as well as the forcible resettlement of nomads, whose traditional way of life has been destroyed.¹⁴⁶

The Tibetan People’s Uprising Movement (TPUM) comprises at least five exile organizations that support Tibetan independence.^{147, 148} Chinese media describe these and similar groups as the “Dalai clique,” implying that the aging Tibetan spiritual leader is behind the protests and acts of civil disobedience associated with these organizations.¹⁴⁹

East Turkestan Islamic Movement and Related Organizations

140 BBC News, “Hong Kong Profile—Timeline,” 24 June 2019, retrieved on 25 January 2022, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-pacific-16526765>.

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142 BBC News, “1959: Dalai Lama Escapes to India,” 2008, http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/march/31/newsid_2788000/2788343.stm

143 Kerry Dumbagh, “CRS Report for Congress: Tibet: Problems, Prospects, and U.S. Policy,” Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress, 30 July 2008, <http://www.fas.org/spp/crs/row/RL34445.pdf>

144 Peter Hessler, “Tibet Through Chinese Eyes,” Atlantic, 1 February 1999, <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1999/02/tibet-through-chinese-eyes/306395/>

145 Economist, “The Burning Issue (blog),” 9 December 2012, <http://www.economist.com/blogs/analects/2012/12/self-immolation-tibet>

146 Edward Wong, “Fatal Landslide Draws Attention to the Toll of Mining on Tibet,” New York Times, 2 April 2013, <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/04/03/world/asia/deadly-tibetan-landslide-draws-attention-to-mining.html?pagewanted=all>

147 Kerry Dumbagh, “CRS Report for Congress: Tibet: Problems, Prospects, and U.S. Policy,” Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress, 30 July 2008, <http://www.fas.org/spp/crs/row/RL34445.pdf>

148 Phurbu Thinley, “Tibetan People’s Uprising Movement’ Declares More Protests Worldwide,” Phayul.com (India), 22 July 2008, <http://www.phayul.com/news/article.aspx?article=%E2%80%9CTibetan+People%E2%80%99s+Uprising+Movement%E2%80%9D+>

149 China View (China), “Spokesman: Lhasa Violence Part of Dalai Clique’s ‘Uprising,’” 1 April 2008, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2008-04/01/content_7899505.htm

The East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM) is a Muslim extremist group that operates from Pakistan.^{150, 151} The ETIM is one of several Uighur separatist groups that support the creation of an independent state known as East Turkestan, which would comprise the Xinjiang region of China and a number of Central Asian countries.¹⁵² Other separatist organizations designated by the PRC as terrorist groups include the World Uighur Youth Congress and the East Turkestan Information Center. Their activity has generally been less pronounced than that of the ETIM.¹⁵³ Like Tibetans, Uighurs see themselves as victims of internal colonization.^{155, 156, 157} Beijing has reacted to Uighur separatism by enhancing its military presence in the region, stepping up surveillance in the regional capital of Urumqi, detaining more than a million people in reeducation and training camps, and imposing forced labor and forced sterilization in Xinjiang.^{158, 159}

Cybersecurity

China is considered the world's most oppressive internet regulator. Behind the "Great Firewall," an army of censors tracks and deletes content deemed outside the bounds of official ideology or seen as capable of stoking instability. Censored information can include independent news stories, discussion of religious beliefs, or calls for investigating the origins of COVID-19. Chinese internet users can face criminal penalties for sharing unauthorized information online. Additionally, authorities have broad powers over the use of data, giving the state tight control over the technology industry.^{160, 161}

The United States and other countries have raised allegations that China carries out and sponsors cyber warfare against corporations, organizations, and government agencies. Beijing has countered that it is the victim of U.S. cyber warfare. But the U.S. substantiated its claims. Cybersecurity professionals pinpointed an office building in suburban Shanghai that allegedly houses a hacking unit of China's military. The presumed purpose of such

150 Holly Fletcher and Jayshree Bajoria, "Backgrounder: The East Turkestan Islamic Movement," Council on Foreign Relations, 31 July 2008. http://www.cfr.org/publication/9179/east_turkestan_islamic_movement_etim.html?breadcrumb=%2Fissue%2F456%2FTerrorist_organizations

151 Voice of America News, "What is the East Turkestan Islamic Movement?" 3 August 2011, <http://www.voanews.com/content/what-is-the-east-turkestan-islamic-movement-126763973/167829.html>

152 Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports on Terrorism, 2006: Terrorist Organizations," 30 April 2007, <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/crt/2006/82738.htm>

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154 Liu Yong, "An Economic Band-Aid: Beijing's New Approach to Xinjiang," *China Security* 17 (2010), http://www.chinasecurity.us/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=474&Itemid=8

155 Gloria Chou, "Autonomy in Xinjiang: Institutional Dilemmas and the Rise of Uighur Ethno-Nationalism," *Josef Korbel Journal of Advanced International Studies* 2 (Summer 2012), http://www.du.edu/korbel/jais/journal/volume4/volume4_chou.pdf

156 Gardner Bovingdon, "Autonomy in Xinjiang: Han Nationalist Imperatives and Uyghur Discontent," *East-West Center Washington, Policy Studies* 11, 2004, 2, <http://scholarspace.manoa.hawaii.edu/bitstream/handle/10125/3492/PS011.pdf?sequence=1>

157 Cara Anna, "China Installs 40,000 Security Cameras in Urumqi," *Boston Globe*, 2 July 2010, http://www.boston.com/business/technology/articles/2010/07/02/china_installs_40000_security_cameras_in_urumqi/

158 Lindsay Maizland, "China's Repression of Uyghurs in Xinjiang," Council on Foreign Relations, 1 March 2021, retrieved on 26 January 2022, <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/chinas-repression-uyghurs-xinjiang>.

159 Beina Xu et al., "The East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM)," Council on Foreign Relations, 4 September 2014, retrieved on 26 January 2022, <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/east-turkestan-islamic-movement-etim>.

160 Freedom House, "Freedom of the Net 2021: China," 2021, retrieved on 26 January 2022, <https://freedomhouse.org/country/china/freedom-net/2021>.

161 Associated Press, "China Tightens Control over Cybersecurity in Data Crackdown," *NBC News*, 14 July 2021, , retrieved on 26 January 2022, <https://www.nbcnews.com/tech/security/china-tightens-control-cybersecurity-data-crackdown-rcna1411>.

attacks on digital infrastructure is to collect strategic intelligence. In 2021, the United States alleged that China had sponsored a massive hacking campaign against Microsoft's email service.^{162, 163, 164, 165}

Water Security

Rights to international river water usage have proved contentious between the PRC and its neighbors. The biggest dispute involves the Mekong River, which originates in the Himalayas before traveling through Tibet, China's Yunnan Province (where the Chinese have built multiple dams), and five other countries. This resource pits national energy needs against food security for those downriver, who depend on the river for their livelihood. The PRC has not negotiated water sharing agreements with any of its downstream neighbors.^{166, 167}

China has abundant water resources, but they are concentrated in the south and far west. Scarcity has always been a problem for the north. To sustain economic growth, the government has embarked on a massive scheme of long-distance canals to reroute water from the southern flood plains and the western snowy mountains to the parched capital Beijing and nearby Tianjin.¹⁶⁸ The South to North Water Transfer Project has involuntarily relocated hundreds of thousands of people to make way for three canal routes.¹⁶⁹

Outlook

China's growing assertiveness and appetite for raw materials risks igniting economic nationalism among its neighbors.¹⁷⁰ Most Chinese firms operating in neighboring countries are state-owned, not private, so they are seen as extensions of the central government.¹⁷¹ Nationalism was introduced as part of the government's patriotic education campaign in the wake of the 1989 Tiananmen Square protests.¹⁷² As China's economy has grown and its great-power rivalry with the United States has intensified, its nationalist rhetoric has become more strident.^{173, 174} A shifting U.S. foreign policy toward the Pacific seeks to promote security in the South China Sea and its vicinity,

162 Russia Today (Russia), "U.S. and China Accuse Each Other of Cyber Warfare," 19 February 2013, <http://rt.com/usa/cyber-china-war-unit-604/>

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172 Benjamin Joseph Darr, "Nationalism and State Legitimation in Contemporary China" (PhD diss., University of Iowa, 2011), <http://ir.uiowa.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2771&context=etd>

173 Patrick Cronin and Paul Giarra, "China's Dangerous Arrogance," Diplomat (Japan), 23 July 2010, <http://thediplomat.com/2010/07/23/china%E2%80%99s-dangerous-arrogance/>

174 Kathrin Hille, "Confident China Risks Becoming Arrogant," Financial Times, 24 May 2012, <http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/b1593538-a59f-11e1-a77b-00144feabdc0.html#axzz2U2pTtQJM>

if serious hostilities were to occur.^{175, 176} Maritime tensions between the PRC and its neighbors reflect Beijing's determination to use force if necessary to back up its sovereignty claims.^{177, 178} The evolution of China's relationships with neighboring nuclear powers Russia, North Korea, India and Pakistan will continue to affect global security.

175 Kenneth Lieberthal, "The American Pivot to Asia," Foreign Policy, 21 December 2011, http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/12/21/the_american_pivot_to_asia?page=0.2

176 Bonnie S. Glaser, "Armed Clash in the South China Sea," Council on Foreign Relations, April 2012, <http://www.cfr.org/east-asia/armed-clash-south-china-sea/p27883>

177 William Wan, "Chinese Military Denies Damaging Vietnamese Fishing Boat in South China Sea Clash," Washington Post, 27 March 2013, http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2013-03-27/world/38053726_1_chinese-waters-spratlys-china-and-vietnam

178 Agence France-Presse, "Philippines Vows to Defend Against China," Taipei Times, 24 May 2013, <http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/front/archives/2013/05/24/2003563028>

China in Perspective

Security Assessment

Read the following statements and answer True or False

- | | | | |
|----|--|------|-------|
| 1. | The People's Republic of China is a permanent member of the UN Security Council | True | False |
| 2. | China emulates Western liberal democracies. | True | False |
| 3. | The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor is the focal point of Pakistan-China relations. | True | False |
| 4. | China's maritime dispute with Japan concerns sovereignty over the Spratly Islands. | True | False |
| 5. | China shares land borders with four other nuclear countries. | True | False |

China in Perspective

Security Assessment Answers

1. True:
China is a permanent member of the UN Security Council and promotes it as the final arbiter on the use of force internationally. es.
2. False:
Beijing believes its one-party authoritarian system is superior to Western liberal democracies and resents U.S. criticism over its human rights violations.
3. True:
The centerpiece of the project is a deep-sea port in Gwadar, which will give China access to the Arabian Sea..
4. False:
China's maritime dispute with Japan concerns a different set of islands located northeast of Taiwan that the Chinese refer to as Diaoyu and the Japanese call Senkaku.
5. True:
Among China's 14 neighbor countries are Russia, North Korea, India and Pakistan, all of which possess nuclear weapons.

China in Perspective

Further Readings and Resources

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China in Perspective

Final Assessment

“To receive a certificate of completion for this course, please complete the final assessment on the DLIFLC website.”