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## Chapter 1 Profile

### Introduction

China is the third largest country in the world by land area, bigger than the U.S. but smaller than Canada and Russia. Despite the country's size, the Chinese established a system of centralized government by 221 B.C.E. and every state administrator used a uniform written language.<sup>1</sup> The spoken language evolved into numerous regional dialects. Mandarin, based on the Beijing dialect, became China's official language in the 20th century. Since economic reforms were unveiled in 1978, Mandarin has displaced local dialects. This is due to increasing levels of education in China, widespread personal television ownership, and migration within the country to take advantage of economic opportunity.



© Trey Ratcliff  
Young girl with Chinese flag

The Chinese Communist Party (CCP), which came to power in 1949, remains firmly in control, despite its retreat from overseeing citizens' daily lives. To sustain one-party rule, Beijing accords a high priority to maintaining social stability (*weiwén*). Budgeted at USD 95 billion in 2011, a 13.8% jump over 2010; *weiwén* now commands a larger share of resources than the Chinese military.<sup>2</sup> It is unclear, however, whether simply spending more will ensure the regime's survival. A Chinese sociologist counted 180,000 "mass incidents" reflecting some type of unrest in 2010, double the number in 2006.<sup>3</sup> Beijing took justifiable pride in its well-coordinated response to the earthquakes in the western provinces of Sichuan (2008) and Qinghai (2010). It proved considerably less sure-footed in reacting to crimes sprees like the 2010 spate of schoolyard killings that left 21 dead and over 90 injured, the majority of them children.<sup>4</sup> In the U.S., the lives of those who perpetrate such atrocities are put under the microscope to identify what is aberrant about them. In China, people tended to view the knife-wielding perpetrators, all of whom were middle-aged men, as having reached a breaking point in a society they felt was unjust.<sup>5</sup> Nonetheless, a journalist observed, "it took many days for Premier Wen Jiabao to admit that the killings might reflect an undercurrent of social strife."<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Alasdair Clayre, "Chapter 1: Remembering: Emperors and Rebels," in *The Heart of the Dragon* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1984), 1.

<sup>2</sup> Willy Lam, The Jamestown Foundation, "Beijing's 'Wei-Wen' Imperative Steals the Thunder at NPC," *China Brief* 11, no. 4 (10 March 2011):

[http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no\\_cache=1&tx\\_ttnews\[tt\\_news\]=37630](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=37630)

<sup>3</sup> Barbara Demick, "China Tries to Restore Order After Migrant's Riot," *Los Angeles Times*, 13 June 2011, <http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-china-riot-20110614,0,7076814.story>

<sup>4</sup> Chris Hogg, "China's New 'Culture' of Violence," *BBC News*, 21 December 2010.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-pacific-11861919>

<sup>5</sup> Michelle Tsai, "China Under Pressure: What's Behind the Rash of Chinese School Stabbings?" *Slate*, 18 May 2010, <http://www.slate.com/id/2254176/>

<sup>6</sup> Russell Leigh Moses, "The Two Faces of China's Communist Party," *Wall Street Journal*, 31 May 2010, <http://blogs.wsj.com/chinarealtime/2010/05/31/the-two-faces-of-china%E2%80%99s-communist-party/>

## Geographic Regions

### *The Eastern Highlands*

Beginning in central Shandong Province and continuing to the other side of the Yellow Sea in eastern Northeast China (Manchuria) is a series of hills and mountains that run to the western border with Russia. The hills and mountains within Manchuria contain some of China's largest, densest forest reserves.<sup>7, 8</sup>



© silverlinedwinnebago / flickr.com  
Loess Plateau & Yellow River

### *The Mongolian Border Uplands*

This mostly mountainous region runs from the Russian-Mongolian border regions of northernmost China to the area known as the Loess Plateau (*Huangtu Gaoyuan*) in the south. The soil, known as loess, consists of fine-grained, yellowish-brown glacial debris that is easily eroded by wind and water. The Yellow River (*Huang He*) gets its name from the extensive loess sediment that it absorbs in its course through this region.<sup>9</sup>

### *The Eastern Lowlands*

The Eastern Lowlands (from north to south) consist of the Northeast or Manchurian Plain (*Dongbei Pingyuan*), the north China Plain (*Huabei Pingyuan*), and the Yangtze River (*Chang Jiang*) Valley. This area is the agricultural heartland of China.<sup>10</sup> It is also an extensively urbanized region that contains six of China's ten largest urban metropolises, including the two largest, Shanghai and Beijing.

### *The Central Uplands*

Sandwiched between the Tibetan Plateau to the west and the Eastern Lowlands to the east are mountains collectively known as the Central Highlands. The most well known of these ranges are the Tsinling Mountains (*Qin Ling Shan*), which run east-west and form part of the traditional divide between North and South China.<sup>11</sup>



Courtesy of Wikipedia.org  
Sichuan Basin

### *The Sichuan Basin*

The Sichuan Basin (*Sichuan Pendi*), noteworthy for the red sandstone found in the area, is a region of low hills and valleys surrounded by mountains and high plateaus on all sides. High humidity and reduced air circulation resulting from the ring of mountains make parts of the Sichuan Basin some of the foggiest places in China.<sup>12</sup> However, the

<sup>7</sup> China Hiking Adventure, Inc. (firm), "Forests," n.d., <http://www.china-hiking.com/ChinaStatus/naturalresources/Forests.htm>

<sup>8</sup> John Ross, "Trade Routes in Manchuria," *Scottish Geographical Magazine* 17 (Edinburgh, UK: University Press, 1901), 309.

<sup>9</sup> World Wildlife Fund (firm), "Central China Loess Plateau Mixed Forests," 2001, <http://www.nationalgeographic.com/wildworld/profiles/terrestrial/pa/pa0411.html>

<sup>10</sup> William Caraway, "Journey to Asia: China: Geography," *Korean History Project*, 2010. <http://www.koreanhistoryproject.org/Jta/Ch/ChGEO1.htm>

<sup>11</sup> Adric Hartin, Ginny Min, and Giles Peng, "Land Regions," in *China, an Inner Realm. Beauty: The Land of China*, 1998, [http://library.thinkquest.org/20443/g\\_land\\_regions.html](http://library.thinkquest.org/20443/g_land_regions.html)

<sup>12</sup> World Wildlife Fund (firm), "Sichuan Basin Broadleaf Evergreen Forests (PAO437)," 2001,

basin's location on a south facing slope allows it to receive direct sunshine for most of the year.<sup>13, 14</sup> Despite being one of the most densely populated areas in China, it has the natural resources to be self-sufficient.

### *The Xinjiang-Mongolian Uplands*

This immense northern region encompasses several large deserts and arid basins divided by towering mountain ranges. In the far west lie the two great basins of the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region—the Tarim Basin (*Tarim Pendi*) and the Dzungarian Basin (*Junggar Pendi*). Within the Tarim Pendi lies the vast Shamo Takla Makan Desert (*Taklimakan Shamo*), a sandy, barren wasteland that is inhabited only in oasis towns and villages on its northern and southern fringes. Some of the country's largest oil and coal deposits lie within the Dzungarian Basin, making it strategically important.<sup>15</sup>

### *The Tibetan Highlands*

The entire southwestern region of China is made up of the sparsely populated Tibetan Highlands. Known as *Xizang* in Mandarin, most of this region is a high-altitude plateau surrounded by some of the world's highest mountains. Broad swathes of flat terrain punctured by small lakes, the majority of which are saline, dominate the landscape between the Sichuan border and the Himalayas.<sup>16</sup>

### *The Southern Uplands*

Occupying all of southeastern China, this region is relentlessly hilly. The largest tract of level land comes in the Pearl River Delta, where economic and population growth has been fueled by foreign investment, taking advantage of the region's proximity to Hong Kong. In the western part of the Southern Uplands are limestone plateaus, which have weathered to produce world-famous karst topography, such as the Stone Forest in Yunnan Province.<sup>17</sup>

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[http://www.worldwildlife.org/wildworld/profiles/terrestrial/pa/pa0437\\_full.html](http://www.worldwildlife.org/wildworld/profiles/terrestrial/pa/pa0437_full.html)

<sup>13</sup> Lydia Pulsipher, et al., "Chapter 9: East Asia," in *World Regional Geography: Global Patterns, Local Lives (with Subregions)* (New York, NY: W.H. Freeman, 2007), 512.

<sup>14</sup> Robert McColl, "Understanding the Geographies of China: An Assemblage of Pieces," *Education About Asia* 4, no. 2 (Fall 1999): <http://www.aasianst.org/ea/mccoll.htm>

<sup>15</sup> Adric Hartin, Ginny Min, and Giles Peng, "Land Regions," in *China, an Inner Realm. Beauty: The Land of China*, 1998, [http://library.thinkquest.org/20443/g\\_land\\_regions.html](http://library.thinkquest.org/20443/g_land_regions.html)

<sup>16</sup> Robert McColl, "Understanding the Geographies of China: An Assemblage of Pieces," *Education About Asia* 4, no. 2 (Fall 1999): <http://www.aasianst.org/ea/mccoll.htm>

<sup>17</sup> Adric Hartin, Ginny Min, and Giles Peng, "Land Regions," in *China, an Inner Realm. Beauty: The Land of China*, 1998, [http://library.thinkquest.org/20443/g\\_land\\_regions.html](http://library.thinkquest.org/20443/g_land_regions.html)



## Major Rivers

### *Yangtze River (Chang Jiang)*

The Yangtze, meaning “Long River,” following a course of 6,300 km (3,915 mi), is the longest river on continental Asia and the third longest in the world.<sup>18</sup> Originating in the Tibetan Plateau, it traverses nine provinces and irrigates some of China’s most fertile fields in the Yangzi (Yangtze) Delta, before emptying out into the East China Sea by Shanghai.<sup>19</sup> Navigable all year round, it is a major transportation artery. The Three Gorges Dam, the largest such project in human history, was undertaken until the 1990s.<sup>20</sup> The project required a massive resettlement of people who lived in the area that has been flooded. Safety concerns remain due to rapid changes in the reservoir water level. In July 2010, the reservoir came within 10 m (33 ft) of its full capacity after torrential summer rains.<sup>21</sup>



### *Yellow River (Huang He)*

The Yellow River is 5,464 km (3,395 mi) long and runs from the Qinghai-Tibetan Plateau to the Bohai Sea and crosses the North China Plain. It is considered the cradle of Chinese civilization. The earliest inhabitants of the present-day region acquired the ability to practice sedentary farming by using the river’s water for irrigation. Periodic flooding, causing the deaths of millions living near its banks, was a testament to the river’s power and earned it the name “China’s sorrow.” Today, concerns focus on the impact of climate change and dam building that have reduced the flow of the river, upon which 140 million Chinese depend, to a trickle at times.<sup>22</sup> In the lower reaches, millions of acres of farmland have already been abandoned.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Center for Global Environmental Education, Hamline University, “The Yangtze River,” 2001, [http://cgee.hamline.edu/rivers/Resources/river\\_profiles/Yangtze.html](http://cgee.hamline.edu/rivers/Resources/river_profiles/Yangtze.html)

<sup>19</sup> Patricia Buckley Ebrey, “Yangtze River,” In *A Visual Sourcebook of Chinese Civilization* (Seattle: University of Washington, n.d.), <http://depts.washington.edu/chinaciv/geo/yangtze.htm>

<sup>20</sup> Peter H. Gleick, “Water Brief 3: Three Gorges Dam Project, Yangtze River, China,” in *The World’s Water, 2008-2009: The Biennial Report on Freshwater Resources*, eds. Peter H. Gleick, et al. (Washington, DC: Island Press, 2009), <http://www.worldwater.org/data20082009/WB03.pdf>

<sup>21</sup> Voice of America, “China’s Three Gorge’s Dam Faces Flood Test,” 20 July 2010, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/asia/-Chinas-Three-Gorges-Dam-Faces-Flood-Test-98846379.html>

<sup>22</sup> Rob Gifford, “China’s Mother River Under Threat,” *National Public Radio*, 10 December 2007, <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=16918503>

<sup>23</sup> Fred Pearce, “Chapter 13: The Hanging River,” in *When the River Runs Dry: Water –The Defining Crisis of the Twenty-First Century* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2006), 110

## Cities

### *Beijing*

Lying within a mountain bay formation in the northernmost portion of the North China Plain (*Huabei Pingyuan*), Beijing is not centrally located within China. Nonetheless, it has been the Chinese capital since 1267 C.E. (with the exception of several sporadic decades since). When Mao Zedong proclaimed the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC) from the gate of the Forbidden City, the emperor's residence, he stood in a place that had remained unchanged for centuries. Rather than razing it as a relic of China's feudal past, the Communists incorporated it into their vision of a new China.<sup>24</sup> Specifically, the CCP put a huge square in front, suitable for rallies, flanked by massive buildings that house government offices and museums.<sup>25</sup> Radial concentric "ring roads" (beltways) were built to encircle the city. Many people continued to live in traditional courtyard housing bounded by alleys called *hutong*.



© simone.brunozzi / flickr.com  
Central Beijing, 2010

In the market reform era, Beijing municipal officials stand to profit handsomely by allowing a neighborhood to fall into disrepair.<sup>26</sup> After condemning it, they auction off land use rights to the highest bidder, typically a commercial developer.<sup>27</sup> Residents who do not want to leave the place where their families have lived for generations lack legal avenues to appeal. This has led to violent clashes when police come to evict them. A Chinese academic who favors greater emphasis on preservation opined, "most [Chinese] people think of literature or drawings – not of buildings – as heritage."<sup>28</sup> Beijing was constructed with immense geometrical precision. One urban planner described it as "possibly the greatest single work of man on the face of the earth."<sup>29</sup> It now resembles sprawling Los Angeles.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Chang-Tai Hung, "Chapter 1: Tiananmen Square: Space and Politics," in *Mao's New World: Political Culture in the Early People's Republic* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011), 25-50.

<sup>25</sup> Hung Wu, *Remaking Beijing: Tiananmen Square and the Creation of Political Space* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

<sup>26</sup> Iain Mills, "Beijing Agonizes Over Urban Regeneration," *Asia Times*, 11 May 2010.

<http://www.atimes.com/atimes/China/LE11Ad01.html>

<sup>27</sup> Kelly Layton, "Qianmen, Gateway to a Beijing Heritage," *China Heritage Quarterly* 12 (December 2007): [http://www.chinaheritagequarterly.org/articles.php?searchterm=012\\_qianmen.inc&issue=012](http://www.chinaheritagequarterly.org/articles.php?searchterm=012_qianmen.inc&issue=012)

<sup>28</sup> Time Out Beijing, "Goodbye Gulou?" 17 July 2010,

<http://english.sina.com/cityguide/p/2010/0813/333858.html>

<sup>29</sup> Tim Halbur, "The Changing Skyline of Beijing," *Planetizen*, 23 June 2008.

<http://www.planetizen.com/node/33635>

<sup>30</sup> Ian Johnson, "The High Price of the New Beijing," *New York Review of Books*, 23 June 2011,

<http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2011/jun/23/high-price-new-beijing/?page=2>

## Shanghai

Shanghai, China's largest metropolis and one of the largest cities in the world, is a port city on the Yangtze River Delta (*Changjiang Sanjiaozhou*). The heart of the city is located a bit inland, along the Huangpu River (*Huangpu Jiang*). Shanghai, birthplace of the CCP, is often likened to New York City, both in density of population and the attitude among residents.



© Micah Sittig  
Shanghai (Pudong) skyline

During the first three decades of Communist rule, Shanghai was forced to remit most of the income generated from local industry to Beijing, which invested it in other parts of the country.<sup>31</sup> In the 1990s, the city was allowed to keep more of that money, redefining its subordinate relationship to the central government. Most Western visitors marvel at the Bund, a waterfront boulevard lined with art deco buildings and other prominent examples of European architecture that developed as the center of commerce under the British. For Chinese, it represents their country's past. By contrast, the modernistic skyline across the Huangpu River in Pudong represents China's future, evidence the Middle Kingdom is regaining its rightful place in the world.<sup>32</sup> Shanghai represents another type of future for Chinese cities as well, ranking as China's oldest city in terms of populace, with one-fifth of the population over the age of 60. By 2030, demographers predict 40% of the population will be over the age of 60.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Weiping Wu, "Cultural Strategies in Shanghai: Regenerating Cosmopolitanism in an Era of Globalization" *Progress in Planning* 61 (2004): 159-180,

<http://www.people.vcu.edu/~wwu/publications/SHculturePROPLA.pdf>

<sup>32</sup> Jason McGrath, "Chapter 7: Postsocialist Modernity's Future," in *Postsocialist Modernity: Chinese Cinema, Literature and Criticism in the Market Age* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008) 203,.

<sup>33</sup> David Pierson, "China's Elderly Will Overwhelm the Nation," *Los Angeles Times*, 6 July 2009.

<http://articles.latimes.com/2009/jul/06/business/fi-china-old6>

### *Chongqing*

Chongqing was historically a backwater in the interior built on a finger of land where the Yangtze River adds a smaller tributary. It served as the wartime capital for the central government during the Japanese occupation in World War II, attracting a large number of refugees. After the founding of the People's Republic, its interior location made it an attractive place to develop China's weapons industry, and many defense-related factories were relocated there.<sup>34</sup> More recently, Beijing designated Chongqing to be an engine of growth for western China.



© oggloomsunday / flickr.com  
Riverfront in Chongqing

Encompassing an area twice the size of Switzerland, it has become one of the most populous cities in the world.<sup>35</sup> This is a bit misleading, however. Having been designated a municipality with the equivalent status of a province, over half the city's residents reside in villages and remain dependent on farming for their livelihood. Nonetheless, Chongqing now challenges traditional ideas of what constitutes a city.<sup>36</sup>

### *Guangzhou (Canton)*

Trade has been the linchpin of Guangzhou's economy since the British forcibly opened China in the mid-19th century.<sup>37</sup> With strong rail and road links to both the interior and coastal Hong Kong, as well as excellent port facilities, Guangzhou, and the entire Pearl River Delta region to the south, has become a shipping hub for many industrial and consumer goods produced in southern China.

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<sup>34</sup> Christina Larson, "Chicago on the Yangtze," *Foreign Policy* 181 (September/October 2010): 136-148, [http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2010/08/16/chicago\\_on\\_the\\_yangtze?page=0,1](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2010/08/16/chicago_on_the_yangtze?page=0,1)

<sup>35</sup> Spencer Davidson, "China: The World's Largest City," *Time*, 18 April 2005, <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1050477,00.html>

<sup>36</sup> Matt Gross, "Lost in China," *New York Times*, 24 December 2010, <http://travel.nytimes.com/2010/12/26/travel/26chongqing.html?scp=1&sq=chongqing&st=cse>

<sup>37</sup> Ezra Vogel, *One Step Ahead in China: Guangdong Under Reform* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990).

## Imperial History

Chinese history records a series of dynasties that came to power, consolidated or expanded their domain, and then either quickly or slowly declined to be replaced by a new dynasty. Qin Shi Huang (259 B.C.-210 B.C.) is among the most renowned emperors. Historians credit him with unifying China and building the first wall to keep Mongol invaders out.<sup>38</sup>



Courtesy of Wikipedia.org  
Qin Shi Huang

Qin Shi Huang came to be referred to as “Qin Shi Huang Di.”<sup>39</sup>

Imperial authority was legitimized through the “Mandate of Heaven” reflected in the harmony of the universe and society.<sup>40</sup> Administrators were chosen through imperial examination.<sup>41</sup> Educational achievement conferred social status and political power.

China, literally “the Middle Kingdom” (*Zhongguo*) in Chinese, enjoyed pre-eminent status in East Asia. By adopting its rites, ceremonies and examination system, surrounding states could be welcomed into its orbit. Coming to the imperial palace and paying tribute to the Chinese emperor acknowledged the Middle Kingdom’s superior civilization. Therefore, it was a rude awakening when the British arrived by boat and forcibly opened China to trade, draining the imperial treasury through opium sales. A series of unequal treaties was imposed on the ailing Qing Dynasty in the mid-19th century, enabling Europeans to enjoy extra-territorial rights.<sup>42</sup> China’s forced entry into the world economy led to the disintegration of the existing social order as the monarchy became progressively weaker.

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<sup>38</sup> Clifford Coonan, “The First Emperor: Tyrant Who Unified China,” *The Independent*, 25 August 2007. <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/the-first-emperor-tyrant-who-unified-china-462928.html>

<sup>39</sup> The first emperor in a dynasty, he placed the word “Di” behind his name, a term for Supreme Being or deity. It signified the emperor’s power extended over everything under heaven (*Tian Xia*).

<sup>40</sup> Francis Fukuyama, “Chapter 20: Oriental Despotism,” in *The Origins of Political Order: From Prehuman Times to the French Revolution* (New York, NY: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2011), 300.

<sup>41</sup> Patricia Lin, “Confucianism and the Chinese Scholastic System: The Chinese Imperial Examination System,” in *Traditions in Liberal Education* (online course material, California State University, Pomona, 27 November 2000), <http://www.csupomona.edu/~plin/ls201/confucian3.html>

<sup>42</sup> Institute for Historical Review, “Chinese ‘No Dogs or Chinese’ Sign,” n.d., [http://www.ihr.org/jhr/v15/v15n5p31\\_Weber.html](http://www.ihr.org/jhr/v15/v15n5p31_Weber.html)

## Republican China (1911-1949)

When the Qing Dynasty fell in 1911, a republic founded by Sun Yat-sen, who headed the Nationalist Party (Kuomintang or Guomindang), was established in 1912. It struggled to assert its authority over the country, parts of which were controlled by warlords.



Courtesy of Wikipedia.org  
May Fourth Movement

In the wake of World War I, Germany's territorial holding in China was not returned to Chinese sovereignty but instead awarded to the Japanese in the 1919 Treaty of Versailles. Patriotic youth protested in what became known as the May Fourth Movement, China's first large-scale student movement.<sup>43, 44</sup> Questioning how their country had become so weak, the students promoted scientific and democratic ideas. This became part of the New Culture Movement, aimed at enabling China to overcome its backwardness and defend its interests on the international stage. Issues related to modernization set off an intellectual debate that gave rise to a number of different groups, including the Chinese Communist Party (CCP).

The Republican government was finally able to subdue warlords in southern China and bring that part of the country under Kuomintang (KMT) control in 1925, shortly before the death of Sun Yat-sen. Several years later, Chiang Kai-shek (Jiang Jieshi), who viewed the Communists as the primary threat to his government, emerged as the new leader.

In 1931, the Japanese Imperial Army invaded Manchuria. Chiang ordered his forces not to resist, in line with his policy of "first internal pacification then external resistance."<sup>45</sup> As his troops retreated, the CCP was able to organize an anti-Japanese resistance in the countryside. Although the Communists had been largely unsuccessful in organizing worker strikes in Shanghai, the peasants saw them as patriots defending the homeland.<sup>46</sup> By some accounts, the Japanese invasion changed the fortunes of their movement.<sup>47</sup> After the Japanese defeat in 1945, the Nationalists attempted to reassert control over the entire country. However, corruption and high inflation hobbled the government. The CCP and its People's Liberation Army (PLA) ultimately forced Chiang and his followers into exile on Taiwan.

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<sup>43</sup> Asia for Educators, Columbia University, "Before and After the May Fourth Movement," 2009, [http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/special/china\\_1750\\_mayfourth.htm](http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/special/china_1750_mayfourth.htm)

<sup>44</sup> Orville Schell, "China: Humiliation and the Olympics," *New York Review of Books*, 14 August 2008. <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2008/aug/14/china-humiliation-the-olympics/>

<sup>45</sup> Louis D. Hayes, "Chapter 4: The Cataclysm of War," in *Japan and the Security of Asia*. (New York, NY: Lexington Books, 2002), 52.

<sup>46</sup> Chalmers Johnson, *Peasant Nationalism and Communist Power* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1962).

<sup>47</sup> Elizabeth Perry, "Chinese Politics: Farewell to Revolution?" *The China Journal* 54 (January 2007): 10,

## People's Republic of China

### *Mass Mobilization Campaigns*

On 1 October 1949, Mao Zedong founded the People's Republic of China. The new government was initially welcomed by many who had suffered through war and financial insecurity wrought by rampant inflation. Landlords in the countryside, however, were immediately vilified for “exploiting the people.” In the Marxist view, the only way someone could get rich is by taking advantage of those who are weaker and profiting from their labor. Therefore, people from wealthy, urban families or with relatives abroad in capitalist countries were politically suspect from the start. Others soon joined their ranks because of successive mass mobilization campaigns, which were a hallmark of Chinese Communist rule that had no counterpart in the Soviet Union. During the Hundred Flowers movement (1957), intellectuals were encouraged by Mao Zedong, Chairman of the CCP, to offer constructive feedback on the party's performance. Within the party hierarchy, rank and file members were apprehensive about where this would lead. Their concerns were not misplaced; after all, they had appropriated the authority of the traditional intelligentsia who were being asked to pass judgment on their performance.<sup>48</sup>



© Richard Fisher  
Mao Zedong

One of those who offered criticism was a Harvard-educated physician, drawn home to Shanghai by the prospect of helping to build a “New China.” He suggested doctors, not party secretaries, who were often uneducated peasants from the countryside, should run hospitals. “I took Mao at this word,” he explained years later.<sup>49</sup> Shocked by the outpouring of criticism, the government reversed course and launched a campaign to ferret out rightists, or those who questioned party leadership. The doctor was branded a rightist. He was sent away to break rocks in a quarry. His wife, also a medical doctor, lost her position as well. Their son, a promising pre-med student, was also sent to the countryside.

### *Great Leap Forward*

After agricultural collectivization, farmers were organized into teams responsible for delivering a certain amount of grain to the state each year. During the Great Leap Forward (1958-1961), Mao set very high harvest targets. Communal dining halls were established so farmers could devote all their time to expanding the harvest, a task made more difficult when their tools were smelted in backyard furnaces to increase steel production. Many cadres reported large harvests whether they had achieved them or not.<sup>50</sup> As the food supply in the communal dining halls dwindled, what remained was confiscated to



Courtesy of Wikipedia.org  
Backyard furnaces

<sup>48</sup> John M. Jackson, “An Early Spring: Mao Tse-tung, the Chinese Intellectuals and the Hundred Flowers Campaign” (paper, University of Vermont, 2004),

<http://filebox.vt.edu/users/jojacks2/words/hundredflowers.htm>

<sup>49</sup> Fox Butterfield, “Introduction: Clawed by the Tiger,” in *China: Alive in the Bitter Sea* (New York, NY: Bantam Books, 1982), 5.

<sup>50</sup> William Harms, “China's Great Leap Forward,” *The University of Chicago Chronicle* 15, no. 13 (14 March 1996): <http://chronicle.uchicago.edu/960314/china.shtml>

feed city dwellers.<sup>51</sup> Any farmer who refused to turn over grain risked being accused of “hoarding,” a serious charge.<sup>52</sup> Experts have estimated between 15 and 40 million people in the countryside starved to death because of the Great Leap Forward.<sup>53</sup> While the number of deaths was not publicized in China, Mao’s power within the government was greatly diminished as a result. Though not directly repudiated, the Great Helmsman was forced to retire from active leadership and allow others to make policy.

Mao, likely realizing his window of opportunity to shape China’s future was closing, needed to reassert his authority in a dramatic way. In July 1966, the 72-year-old Chairman swam across the Yangtze River. His feat was well publicized and “widely interpreted as a demonstration that Mao... still was physically fit and able to continue to lead China on its revolutionary course.”<sup>54</sup> Two days later, he appeared in Beijing. Declaring the need for “permanent revolution” to achieve a Communist utopia in the face of internal opposition, Mao launched his biggest mass movement to date, the Cultural Revolution. It was directed at the state and party apparatus and intended to shake the bureaucracy to its core. The movement would remove the more cautious bureaucrats whom Mao had earlier mocked as “women with bound feet.”<sup>55</sup>

### *Cultural Revolution*

Once the Cultural Revolution was launched, schools were closed and teenagers became Red Guards. Armed with the *Little Red Book* of Mao’s sayings, they went on urban witch-hunts to identify individuals impeding the chairman’s goals, terrorizing residents in the process.<sup>56, 57</sup> Different Red Guard groups competed, and often came to blows, to appear most loyal to Chairman Mao.<sup>58</sup> Most law enforcement personnel retreated to avoid being accused of impeding the revolution, enabling Red Guards to take over functions normally handled by the police.<sup>59</sup>



<sup>51</sup> Ian Johnson, “Finding the Facts About Mao’s Victims,” *New York Review of Books*, NYR Blog, 20 December 2010, <http://www.nybooks.com/blogs/nyrblog/2010/dec/20/finding-facts-about-maos-victims/>

<sup>52</sup> Perry Link, “China” From Famine to Oslo,” *New York Review of Books*, 13 January 2011, <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2011/jan/13/china-famine-oslo/>

<sup>53</sup> Felix Wemheuer, “Dealing with Responsibility for the Great Leap Famine in the People’s Republic of China,” *China Quarterly* 201 (January 2010): 177, [http://www.viet-studies.info/kinhte/GreatLeapFamine\\_ChinaQuarterly.pdf](http://www.viet-studies.info/kinhte/GreatLeapFamine_ChinaQuarterly.pdf)

<sup>54</sup> International Institute of Social History, “Chairman Mao Swims Across the Yangzi,” 08 July 2011, <http://chineseposters.net/themes/mao-swims.php>

<sup>55</sup> Frank Dikötter, “Chapter 1: Two Rivals,” in *Mao’s Great Famine: The History of China’s Most Devastating Catastrophe* (New York, NY: Walker and Company, 2010), 8.

<sup>56</sup> Jonathan Mirsky, “How Reds Smashed Reds,” *New York Review of Books*, 11 November 2010, <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2010/nov/11/how-reds-smashed-reds/>

<sup>57</sup> Frederick C. Teiwes, “Chapter 6: Mao and His Followers,” in *A Critical Introduction to Mao*, ed. Timothy Cheek (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 148.

<sup>58</sup> Xiyun Yang and Michael Wines, . “Stitching the Narrative of Revolution,” *New York Times*, *Beijing Journal*, 25 January 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/01/26/world/asia/26files.html?scp=1&sq=cultural%20revolution%20china%20mao&st=cse>

<sup>59</sup> Yan Jiaqi and Gao Gao, “Chapter 4: Declaring War on the Old World,” in *Turbulent Decade: A History of the Cultural Revolution*, trans. Danny Wynn Ye Kwok (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press, 1996) 75.



In December 1968, Mao abruptly ordered the Red Guards to go to the countryside and learn from the peasants.<sup>60</sup> This restored a degree of normalcy to urban life. Yet industrial production remained limited because workplaces were more concerned with the ideological purity of their staff than meeting output targets. It was during this time that reliance on “going through the back door” (*zou houmen*), or securing scarce goods through unofficial channels, increased. By the time the Cultural Revolution was declared over in 1976, Mao had died. His widow, Jiang Qing, along with three others, was blamed for the excesses of the period in which millions of lives were ruined. Known as the “Gang of Four,” they were sentenced to long prison terms. Deng Xiaoping, whom Mao had called a “capitalist roader” before banishing him to the countryside, was rehabilitated. Under his leadership, China embarked on a path of market-oriented reform.

### *Market Reforms Introduced*

Discrimination against those with “bad class backgrounds” (landlords, rich peasants, counterrevolutionaries and rightists), which stigmatized family members, officially ended in 1979. Many who had been sent away for re-education, as well as the youth who had been sent down to the countryside (*xia fang*), began to receive permission to return to their former homes. They became eligible for job reinstatement or first-time placement, which put pressure on the government to create job opportunities. In moving away from class struggle and toward economic development, Deng reassured a populace weary of mass mobilization campaigns that it was all right for some people to get rich first. The Chinese people reacted cautiously, having lived through several decades in which capitalists had been vilified and targeted for abuse.

Many of those in the ranks of the first wave of entrepreneurs were ex-cons and others who could not secure sought after public-sector jobs; citizens who had little to lose if the reforms were reversed. While they were initially limited to a maximum of five employees, individual business proprietors (*getihu*) could pool household labor and expand their businesses in that way. Free markets quickly appeared all over the country. Suburban peasants took advantage of their ability to market cash crops to nearby city folk. Local governments scrambled to establish regulations covering hygiene, quality, and taxation.<sup>61</sup> Although consumers were happy to have greater choice, the introduction of free markets also unleashed inflation, which had been unknown during the first three decades of Communist rule. Those who had saved most of their salaries over the years found their money could buy very little. Meanwhile cadres, and anyone connected to officialdom, could make money simply by procuring scarce goods through official channels and unloading them in the free market.

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<sup>60</sup> Peng Yining, “Red Guard Cemetery Reveals Scars Yet To Heal,” *China Daily*, 8 April 2010, [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2010-04/08/content\\_9699494.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2010-04/08/content_9699494.htm)

<sup>61</sup> Yingqiu Liu, “Development of Private Entrepreneurship in China: Process, Problems and Countermeasures ” (paper, Maureen and Mike Mansfield Foundation, Washington, DC, 2001), 3, [http://www.mansfieldfdn.org/backup/programs/program\\_pdfs/ent\\_china.pdf](http://www.mansfieldfdn.org/backup/programs/program_pdfs/ent_china.pdf)

### *1989 Democracy Movement*

The 1980s were also a period of self-reflection. Older intellectuals pondered why no one had acted to stop the excesses of the Cultural Revolution. Chinese history, after all, is replete with tales of courageous scholar-officials who criticized imperial policy, knowing it would lead to their imprisonment and even execution.<sup>62</sup> Information flowing in revealed that surrounding countries, traditionally tributary states, were wealthier and more modern than the Middle Kingdom, promoting widespread cynicism.



© Betsy Bowditch  
Tiananmen Square protesters

The immediate catalyst for the demonstrations that led to the occupation of Tiananmen Square in the spring of 1989 was the death of Hu Yaobang. Hu was a popular reformer who had been dismissed from his position of CCP General Secretary during an earlier round of student demonstrations in 1987. Paying their respects on Tiananmen Square gave ordinary people the chance to congregate and pass judgment on the party's handling of the economic reforms. College students, after prevailing in an intensely competitive process to secure acceptance at a university, were particularly dissatisfied. A familiar complaint was that *getihu*, who set up stalls outside school gates, earned more money than a professor did. In addition to income differentials, living conditions on campuses were significantly worse than in other urban districts.<sup>63</sup>

Workers, who had been hard hit by surging inflation, were well represented in the ranks of the protesters too. On 4 June 1989, the PLA cleared the square by force. Many Chinese expected retribution. However, residents of the capital city were shocked that protesters, as well as mere onlookers on the Boulevard of Eternal Peace (*Chang An*) leading into the square, were killed in the crackdown.<sup>64</sup> In the aftermath, workers were punished more harshly.<sup>65</sup> Students had a tradition of protest dating back to the May Fourth Movement and could at least claim to represent a loyal opposition. By contrast, workers had no justification to protest in a worker's state. Since there were many more workers than college students in China, their dissatisfaction represented a greater threat to the government. Workers were sentenced to long prison terms of hard labor, and even executed, while students were detained and released.

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<sup>62</sup> Perry Link, "Introduction," in *Evening Chats in Beijing: Probing China's Predicament* (New York, NY: Norton Publishing, 1992), 12.

<sup>63</sup> Mara Hvistendahl, "The Great Forgetting: 20 Years After Tiananmen Square," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 19 May 2009, <http://chronicle.com/article/The-Great-Forgetting-20-Ye/44267/>

<sup>64</sup> Michael True, "The 1989 Democratic Uprising in China: A Nonviolent Perspective," *International Journal of Peace Studies* 2, no. 1 (January 1997), [http://www.gmu.edu/programs/icar/ijps/vol2\\_1/True.htm](http://www.gmu.edu/programs/icar/ijps/vol2_1/True.htm)

<sup>65</sup> Geoffrey Murray, "Chapter 2: Contradictions in Economic Reform," in *China the Next Superpower: Dilemmas in Continuity and Change*. New York, NY: St Martin's Press, 1998), 26.

### *Middle Kingdom Ascendant*

The Chinese government was severely criticized by the outside world for its response to the peaceful protesters. However, it did not deviate from the path of market reform. Despite the crackdown, foreign investors continued to see China's large market as attractive. Over time, deepening economic reforms raised the standard of living of most Chinese by creating a more vibrant private sector in which education and hard work are rewarded through higher salaries. Recognizing the role universities play in technological innovation and research, the government has given greater funding priority to higher education. This has reduced the impetus for intellectuals to take to the streets in protest. As market reforms made socialism increasingly irrelevant, patriotism has become the guiding ideology of the People's Republic.<sup>66</sup> It relies heavily on the narrative of national humiliation that gained currency at the turn of the century when the last dynasty fell.<sup>67</sup> The fruits of this patriotic education campaign were evident during the Olympic Torch run in 2008 when angry Chinese youth (*fenqing*) vigorously defended their government's harsh crackdown on protesting Tibetans.<sup>68</sup> As a blogger observed, "Twenty years ago, today's *fenqing* would have been protesting against rats in their dorms and lack of democracy; go back another twenty years, and they would have been Red Guards."<sup>69</sup>



© Trey Ratcliff  
Hong Kong at night

## **Government**

### *Division of Authority*

While the CCP and government are ostensibly separate in the PRC, all government leaders above the village level are party members. High-ranking officials are also members of "leading groups" (*lingdao xiaozu*) where policy is hashed out but deliberations are never discussed in the domestic press.<sup>70</sup>

Power is spread horizontally throughout the government and party apparatus. This owes to the fact the CCP achieved power through an insurgency, in which self-contained local administrative structures arose before a national government was established. As a result, lower-level party secretaries and municipal officials have always enjoyed a lot of discretionary authority, enabling them to create local fiefdoms.

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<sup>66</sup> Damien Kinney, "Progressive and Nationalist Ways of Discussing Patriotism, Humiliation and Memory in the Chinese Media" (paper, 17th Biennial Conference of the Asian Studies Association of Australia, Melbourne, 1-3 July 2008), <http://arts.monash.edu.au/mai/asaa/damienkinney.pdf>

<sup>67</sup> Jing Li, "Chinese Nationalism and Its Foreign Policy Implications" (speech transcript, US-China Institute, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA, 14 February 2007), <http://china.usc.edu/ShowArticle.aspx?articleID=23>

<sup>68</sup> Orville Schell, "China: Humiliation and the Olympics," *New York Review of Books*, 14 August 2008, <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2008/aug/14/china-humiliation-the-olympics/>

<sup>69</sup> Julia Lovell, "It's Just History: Patriotic Education in the PRC," *The China Beat* (blog), 22 April 2009, <http://thechinabeat.blogspot.com/2009/04/its-just-history-patriotic-education-in.html>

<sup>70</sup> Ian Johnson, "The Party, Impenetrable, All Powerful," *New York Review of Books*, 30 September 2010, <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2010/sep/30/party-impenetrable-all-powerful/>

### *Petitioners*

The only recourse citizens have is to petition (*shang fang*) higher levels of government, a practice that has survived since imperial times.<sup>71</sup> In January 2011, on the eve of the Lunar New Year, Premier Wen took the unprecedented step of meeting with petitioners at the State Bureau of Letters and Calls in Beijing.<sup>72</sup> Still, the bureau sends most petitions back to the place where the dispute originated rather than becoming directly involved.<sup>73</sup> As a result, upon return home petitioners risk retribution.<sup>74</sup>



© Yan song  
Government petitioner

### *Party-Private Sector Relations*

In 2011, the PRC could claim close to one million Chinese millionaires, three-quarters of whom owe their fortunes to either private business ownership or real estate speculation.<sup>75</sup> Observers have long predicted the emerging entrepreneurial class would challenge the one-party state's monopoly on power as market reforms deepened.<sup>76</sup> Instead, the CCP has co-opted it; a 2004 survey revealed far higher levels of party membership among private entrepreneurs (35%) than the populace at large (6%).<sup>77</sup> The continued viability of their businesses requires them to maintain good relations with government officials who, desiring high rates of growth, are unlikely to allow the residential construction sector to falter. Those who lack such connections complain they are disadvantaged in reaping the economic returns of speculative investments.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Elizabeth Lynch, "Movie Review: Zhao Liang's 'Petition: The Court of Complaints,'" *China Law & Society*, 8 February 2010, <http://chinalawandpolicy.com/tag/shangfang/>

<sup>72</sup> Asiaone News, "China PM Meets Discontented Petitioners," *Agence France Press*, 26 January 2011, <http://www.asiaone.com/News/Latest+News/Asia/Story/A1Story20110126-260410.html>

<sup>73</sup> David Barboza, "China Leader Encourages Criticism of Government," *New York Times*, 26 January 2011. [http://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/27/world/asia/27china.html?\\_r=1&ref=world](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/27/world/asia/27china.html?_r=1&ref=world)

<sup>74</sup> Sophie Richardson, ed., "'An Alleyway in Hell': China's Abusive 'Black Jails,'" *Human Rights Watch*, 12 November 2009, [http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/china1109web\\_1.pdf](http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/china1109web_1.pdf)

<sup>75</sup> C. Cindy Fan, "The Upside if the Bubble Bursts," *New York Times*, 15 April 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2011/04/14/chinas-scary-housing-bubble/the-upside-if-the-bubble-bursts>

<sup>76</sup> Michael Hill, "Q & A: Kellee S. Tsai," *Baltimore Sun*, 16 December 2007,

[http://articles.baltimoresun.com/2007-12-16/news/0712160152\\_1\\_china-democracy-working-class](http://articles.baltimoresun.com/2007-12-16/news/0712160152_1_china-democracy-working-class)

<sup>77</sup> Bruce Dickson, "Integrating Wealth and Power in China: The Communist Party's Embrace of the Private Sector," *The China Quarterly* 192 (December 2007), 837,

<http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayFulltext?type=1&fid=1587456&jid=CQY&volumeId=192&iss ueId=-1&aid=1587452>

<sup>78</sup> Joseph Gamble, "Chapter 1: Opening the Door, Crossing the Stream: Representations and Metaphors of Reform in Contemporary China," in *Shanghai in Transition: Changing Perspective and Social Contours of a Chinese Metropolis* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2003), 55.

## Economy

While some Chinese, have watched their standard of living fall since 1978, most have benefited from the introduction of flexible labor markets. Well-educated urbanites could take advantage of their skills by “jumping into the sea.”<sup>79</sup> This is a reform-era phrase that refers to leaving the security of public sector to become an entrepreneur with the potential to amass personal wealth. Those in the countryside could seek work in labor-intensive industries assembling goods for export. Despite the overall increase in prosperity, the gap between coastal cities and poorer, inland rural communities continues to widen. In 2009, net urban per capita income stood at 17,175 *yuan* (USD 2,525), more than three times the 5,153 *yuan* (USD 757) of a farmer.<sup>80</sup>



© Clay Irving  
Migrant workers in a  
shoe factory

Several decades ago, Deng Xiaoping famously declared it was all right for “some to get rich first.”<sup>81</sup> There had been no indication when wealth would begin to equalize until a series of migrant worker strikes occurred in 2010.<sup>82</sup> This labor unrest led some analysts to assert China has reached its turning point at which surplus rural labor is exhausted and wages begin to rise rapidly in sectors dependent on that labor.<sup>83, 84</sup> The effect is to equalize income distribution across the society. Yet migrants from the countryside still lack the right to live in the city, a bureaucratic impediment to claiming equal pay for equal work.

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<sup>79</sup> Xiuwu R. Liu, *Jumping Into the Sea: From Academics to Entrepreneurs in South China* (New York, NY: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2001).

<sup>80</sup> Fu Jing, “Urban-Rural Income Gap Widest Since Reform,” *China Daily*, 2 March 2010, [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2010-03/02/content\\_9521611.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2010-03/02/content_9521611.htm)

<sup>81</sup> Marcy Nicks Moody, “Some Got Rich First—and Richer Later: The Uneven Nature of China’s Economic Development,” *Foreign Policy Digest*, May 2010, <http://www.foreignpolicydigest.org/2010/05/01/some-got-rich-first-and-richer-later-the-uneven-nature-of-chinas-economic-development/>

<sup>82</sup> C. Cindy Fan, “New Generation of Workers in China Take to the Streets,” *UCLA Today*, 14 June 2010, <http://www.today.ucla.edu/portal/ut/china-s-labor-unions-160340.aspx>

<sup>83</sup> Yueqing Jia, “Lewis Turning Point and China’s FDI Prospects,” *Prospects for Development* (blog), 22 June 2010, <http://blogs.worldbank.org/prospects/lewis-turning-point-and-chinas-fdi-prospects>

<sup>84</sup> Bloomberg News, “China Reaches Lewis Turning Point as Labor Costs Rise,” 11 June 2010, <http://www.bloomberg.co.jp/apps/news?pid=20601068&sid=aOEXbd09bloM>

## Media

In 2010, there were some 2,000 newspapers, 8,000 magazines, and 374 television stations in China.<sup>85</sup> They must produce content people will actually pay to read or watch that will not pose problems with the censors.<sup>86</sup> Many publications, particularly new ones, and some TV shows are devoted to sensationalist stories and celebrity gossip.



© Ivan Walsh  
Urban news stand in Beijing

Fashion magazines have also surged. For periodicals focused on national affairs, it is permissible to discuss societal problems. This includes sensitive subjects such as the urban-rural income disparity. What cannot be addressed in detail are tragedies and accidents that are the result of state violence, corruption, or negligence.<sup>87</sup>

Cognizant it cannot block critical news coming in from the outside, the Chinese government has developed more sophisticated strategies to discredit unflattering stories by studying the techniques other governments routinely employ. Spinning has replaced outright denial. To disseminate its views internationally, in July 2010 the state-run Xinhua News Agency launched a 24-hour English language news channel broadcast out of Times Square, New York.<sup>88</sup>

## Language

Ancient precursors to Chinese writing are found on pottery.<sup>1</sup> Once established in the B.C.E. era, characters embedded in a complicated system of literary grammar were used, essentially unchanged, until the second decade of the 20th century. At that time, a writing style based on spoken Chinese, which could reach a broader audience, began to appear.<sup>2</sup> While there are an estimated 50,000 Chinese characters, only about 5,000 to 8,000 are in common use. A knowledge of 3,500 is considered sufficient for everyday life.<sup>89</sup>

Characters are necessary in a language that relies on stress, not sound, to convey meaning. For example, the name of China's most popular internet search engine, Baidu.com, comes from a Song Dynasty (960-1279 C.E.) poem about a man searching for a woman in a crowded place, literally *baidu* "a hundred ways," until he catches sight of her. Those surfing the web for a specific piece of information often go through a similar process. Most Chinese would be able to identify the poem upon seeing the Chinese character name (百度) of the search engine. They would be at a loss, however, if confronted only with the Romanized *pinyin* spelling. *Baidu* has a bewildering array of meanings including "a failed attempt at poisoning" and "make a religion of gambling;"

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<sup>85</sup> Isabella Bennett and Preeti Bhattacharji, "Backgrounder: Media Censorship in China," *Council on Foreign Relations*, 07 March 2011, [http://www.cfr.org/publication/11515/media\\_censorship\\_in\\_china.html](http://www.cfr.org/publication/11515/media_censorship_in_china.html)

<sup>86</sup> Benjamin L. Liebman, "Scandal, Sukyandaru, and Chouwen," *Michigan Law Review* 106, no. 6 (2008): 1041-1070, <http://www.michiganlawreview.org/assets/pdfs/106/6/liebman.pdf>

<sup>87</sup> Mark Magnier, "China Tightens Media Limits Loosened in Quake," *Los Angeles Times*, 5 June 2008, <http://articles.latimes.com/2008/jun/05/world/fg-rollback5>

<sup>88</sup> David Barboza, "China Puts Best Face Forward With News Channel," *New York Times*, 1 July 2010, [http://www.nytimes.com/2010/07/02/world/asia/02china.html?\\_r=1&hpw](http://www.nytimes.com/2010/07/02/world/asia/02china.html?_r=1&hpw)

<sup>89</sup> Ling Wang, "Characters," in *Chinese Culture* (online teaching material, Department of Asian Languages and Literatures, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN, December 2001), [http://www.all.umn.edu/chinese\\_language/Resource/ChnBizCulture/Chinese\\_Culture/Characters.htm](http://www.all.umn.edu/chinese_language/Resource/ChnBizCulture/Chinese_Culture/Characters.htm)

there is simply no way to know without tone marks.<sup>90</sup> Mandarin has four tones, and many of the dialects have more.

## Ethnic Groups

The PRC officially recognizes 56 ethnic groups. The government likes to showcase minority (*shaoshu minzu*) tribal traditions; however, minorities often complain of Han chauvinism.<sup>91</sup> In turn, Han Chinese tend to be resentful of what they see as official favoritism toward minorities, who are generally exempted from the one-child policy and receive preferential points on the national college entrance exam.<sup>92</sup>



## Han

Han are the dominant group in China, representing 93-94% of the total population. The dragon, the Yellow River, and the Great Wall symbolize their culture. Han Chinese prize devotion to family, willingness to work hard, carefully controlled emotions, humility, and a desire to acquire knowledge through schooling. For the Han, native place locale constitutes the basis for differentiation that has traditionally been reinforced by mutually unintelligible dialects.

The present-day insider/outsider dichotomy between rural and urban Han Chinese could have been eroded by migration and the increasing use of Mandarin as a first language. Instead, urbanites often resort to racist language to demonize migrants from the countryside, who cannot legally settle in the cities and enjoy limited employment prospects in the licit economy. Migrants are frequently blamed for rising crime rates. In response, municipalities have begun to take measures akin to the controversial 2010 Arizona law giving police the right to ask for identification from people stopped for other infractions to ascertain their residency status. In Beijing, migrant settlements have been fenced off as part of a policy known as “sealed management.” In July 2010, police implemented a nightly lockdown to prevent anyone from going in or out between 11PM and 6AM. During the daytime, police spot check the papers of anyone who is deemed “suspicious.” While many Beijingers applaud these efforts as necessary to combat lawlessness in the capital city, “the assumption underlying the creation of the gated communities is that *the migrants themselves* are inherently suspicious....”<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Ruiyan Xu, “Search Engine of the Song Dynasty,” *New York Times*, 14 May 2010,

<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/05/16/opinion/16xu.html?scp=1&sq=baidu%20pinyin&st=cse>

<sup>91</sup> Jane Macartney and Hannah Fletcher, “New Fakery Scandal as China’s ‘Ethnic’ Children Actually Come from Han Majority,” *The Times* (UK), 16 August 2008,

<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/sport/olympics/article4540907.ece>

<sup>92</sup> Barry Sautman, “Scaling Back Minority Rights?: The Debate about China’s Ethnic Policies,” *Stanford Journal of International Law* 46, no. 1 (Summer 2010): 52-120,

<http://www.heinonline.org.ezproxy.library.wisc.edu/HOL/Page?handle=hein.journals/stanit46&id=53&collection=journals&index=journals/stanit>

<sup>93</sup> Sylvie Stein, “Beijing Cracks Down on Migrants.” *Passport* (blog), 16 July 2010,

[http://blog.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2010/07/15/beijing\\_is\\_the\\_new\\_arizona](http://blog.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2010/07/15/beijing_is_the_new_arizona)

### *Tibetan*

Tibetans are probably China's best-known ethnic minority. Independent scholars have established that Tibetans were divided into two hereditary categories: lords (*sger pa*), comprised of several hundred families, and serfs (*mi ser*), the rest of the population.<sup>94</sup> The serfs were bound to an estate, and if ownership changed hands, they remained. Many of the estates were owned by monasteries, so land reform had religious implications in Tibet. Han Chinese equate the liberation of Tibet with the abolition of slavery in the American South.<sup>95</sup> The harsh treatment of monks has been defended by Beijing on the grounds it was necessary to destroy a theocracy that enslaved people.



In the 21st century, there are an estimated 2 million nomads (*drokpa*), literally “high pasture people,” who rely on rangeland to graze their herds.<sup>96</sup> Beijing has forcibly moved them off the rangeland and into bunker-style housing camps where they raise their cattle in enclosures.<sup>97</sup> Tibetans view such changes as a threat to their indigenous way of life.

### *Uighur*

Central Asia was the crossroads of many people. This heritage is reflected in the appearance of China's ethnic Uighur minority, which includes people with light hair and blue eyes. Yet in contrast to many Central Asian tribes, which forged a nomadic existence on the steppe, the Uighurs, based in Xinjiang, are an urban people who have established extensive trading networks.<sup>98, 99, 100</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Melvyn Goldstein, “Serfdom and Mobility: An Examination of the Institution of ‘Human Lease’ in Traditional Tibetan Society,” *Journal of Asian Studies* XXX, no. 3 (May 1971):

[http://www.case.edu/affil/tibet/booksAndPapers/Human\\_Lease.pdf](http://www.case.edu/affil/tibet/booksAndPapers/Human_Lease.pdf)

<sup>95</sup> Junyan Liang and Zhang Yun, “A Comparison Between Serfdom/Slavery Abolition in China’s Tibet, Russia and US,” *China.org.cn*, 27 March 2009,

[http://www.china.org.cn/china/tibet\\_democratic\\_reform/content\\_17509234.htm](http://www.china.org.cn/china/tibet_democratic_reform/content_17509234.htm)

<sup>96</sup> Daniel J. Miller, “The World of Tibetan Nomads,” (paper, The Center for Research on Tibet, Case Western University, Cleveland, OH, 2007),

<http://www.case.edu/affil/tibet/documents/TheWorldofTibetanNomadsSept14.pdf>

<sup>97</sup> Abraham Lustgarten, “Chapter 7: Under a Han Sun,” in *China’s Great Train: Beijing’s Drive West and the Campaign to Remake Tibet* (New York, NY: Times Books, 2008), 150.

<sup>98</sup> Stefanie Tubbs, “Behind the Urumchi Violence: Causes and Consequences of Han-Uyghur Tension in Xinjiang” (lecture recap, Center for Eurasian, Russian and East European Studies, Georgetown University, Washington, DC, 9 November 2009), <http://ceres.georgetown.edu/events/Urumchi%20for%20website.pdf>

<sup>99</sup> Edward Cody, “Train 27, Now Arriving Tibet, in a ‘Great Leap West,’” *Washington Post*, 4 July 2006, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/07/03/AR2006070301219.html>

<sup>100</sup> Michael Wines, “In Restive Chinese Area, Cameras Keep Watch,” *New York Times*, 2 August 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/08/03/world/asia/03china.html>



## Chapter 1 Assessments

1. The Yellow River is considered the cradle of Chinese civilization.  
**True**  
Many historic developments such as the use of irrigation are associated with the Yellow River.
2. When the Communists came to power in 1949, they radically reconstructed the ancient capital of Beijing.  
**False**  
Communists added additional features, such as Tiananmen Square, but left the existing city intact.
3. The “Gang of Four” were held responsible for the Cultural Revolution.  
**True**  
By the time the Cultural Revolution was declared over in 1976, Mao had died. His widow, Jiang Qing, along with three others, was blamed for the excesses of the period in which millions of lives were ruined.
4. The PRC officially recognizes only 1 ethnic group.  
**False**  
The PRC officially recognizes 56 ethnic groups. A few include Han, Tibetan and Uighur.
5. Deng Xiaoping was the leader who proclaimed “it is all right for some to get rich first.”  
**True**  
This represented a reversal of the egalitarian ethos that had dominated during the first three decades of Communist rule under Mao Zedong, when the wealthy had been vilified.

## Chapter 2 Religion

### Introduction

Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism, the three major schools of thought in China, have been synthesized over the centuries. Thus, while many Chinese profess not to be religious, meaning they do not attend worship services or pray, they have developed a set of values that reflect elements of these three schools.



© 黃毛 / flickr.com  
Temple pilgrimage, Taiwan 2011

Chinese frequently refer to their destiny (*mingyun*) when reflecting on their lives. This word is considered Confucian in origin; each individual comes into the world with a particular genetic make-up, the *ming* or command of heaven. *Yun*, or movement, implies individual choice in what one makes of his or her *ming*.<sup>101</sup> Another word in common use is *yuanfen*, translated as “good luck.” This may apply to meeting a marital partner or someone who can provide help with career advancement, resulting in the person charting a new direction. Yet, what Westerners would chalk up to chance encounter or random occurrence is attributed to the invisible hand of fate by Chinese, a perspective gained from Buddhism.

### Traditional Religions

#### *Confucianism*

The ancient philosopher Confucius (551 B.C.E.– 479 B.C.E.) lived 500 years before Jesus. While he never achieved name recognition during his lifetime, his teachings have set the standard for Chinese public and private behavior. Confucius created five categories for human relationships: 1) Ruler-Subject; 2) Parent-Child; 3) Husband-Wife; 4) Older Brother-Younger Brother; 5) Friend-Friend. This represents a hierarchy in which it is the duty of the more powerful party to guide the lesser one by moral example.<sup>102</sup> The same rules that governed behavior within a household applied to relations with a state or between states. The emperor acted as the family head. If he failed to exhibit benevolence, as evidenced by famine and disorder, his subjects were justified in overthrowing him and starting a new dynasty.<sup>103</sup> As a result, both leaders and those challenging their authority stated their case in moral language.



© Richard Weil  
Character for “filial piety” (xiao)

In line with his belief people could be educated, Confucius put great stock in the value of rites (*li*), or social mores. In his view, it was the observance of *li* that creates harmony in

<sup>101</sup> Fan Lizhu, et al, “Nourishing the Spirit: The Search for Meaning in Contemporary China,” *Pacific Rim Report* 29. (November 2003), 3, <http://usf.usfca.edu/ricci/research/pacrimreport/pr29.pdf>

<sup>102</sup> Ann A. Pang-White, “Caring in Confucian Philosophy,” *Philosophy Compass* 6, no. 6 (2011): 374-384, <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1747-9991.2011.00405.x/full>

<sup>103</sup> Mark Chunhuang Shan, “China’s Policies Toward Spiritual Movements” (paper, Congressional Executive Commission on China Roundtable, Washington, DC, 18 June 2010), <http://www.cecc.gov/pages/roundtables/2010/20100618/shanTestimony.pdf>

a society, not the codification of laws.<sup>104</sup> One of the most important *li* is ancestor worship, which enables people to demonstrate filial piety (*xiao*) to their forbearers in perpetuity.<sup>105</sup> Traditionally, the ancestral altar had a prominent place in the Chinese home. The family assembled there to say prayers on a daily basis. Children learned that behaving dishonorably would bring shame not only to living members of the family but to the deceased as well.<sup>106</sup> Because Confucius did not specify the way strangers were to interact, there are no *li* to guide Chinese people in this regard. Scholars have noted the omission and its consequences for society. Good Samaritanism, for example, was traditionally unknown in China.<sup>107</sup>

### *Taoism*

Taoism synthesizes several diverse trends of thoughts, associated with the philosopher Lao-tzu who lived sometime between the 6th and 3rd centuries B.C.E. He wrote a book, the *Tao-Te-Ching*, in which he explained the benefits of living in harmony with nature.<sup>108</sup> One element of Taoism, *feng-shui*, literally “wind and water,” harnesses the power of supernatural forces by ensuring man-made structures and activities are in harmony with the universe. Also known as the art of placement, it held considerable sway with Chinese emperors. During the Ming Dynasty, no emperor authorized construction of what is known today as the Great Wall along a 32 km (20 mi) ridge. From a military perspective it was ideal for fortification. Moreover, *feng-shui* masters claimed it represented a dragon vein (*longtai*). Disturbing it would usher in misfortune for the dynasty. Instead the wall was built further north, which from a security standpoint was a less optimal locale that required additional fortification.<sup>109</sup>



© Rolf Müller  
Taoist rock inscription

After the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) came to power in 1949, Taoism was dismissed as a feudal superstition. Yet the Communist government has not strayed from the traditional Taoist view that good rulers live in harmony with the natural world. For example, every year high ranking leaders send their Lunar New Year greetings on behalf of the party to the people celebrating what the Chinese refer to as Spring Festival (*Chun*

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<sup>104</sup> Ian Buruma, “Chapter 2: Oriental Wisdom,” in *Taming the Gods: Religion and Democracy on Three Continents* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010), 53.

<sup>105</sup> Columbia University, “Confucian Teaching: Three Confucian Values: Ritual (Li),” *Asian Topics*, 2011, [http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/at/conf\\_teaching/ct05.html](http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/at/conf_teaching/ct05.html)

<sup>106</sup> Well into the 20th century, those accused of wrong-doing in both anti-communist Taiwan and China were subject to various types of public humiliation to demonstrate the consequences of immoral behavior. For more, see Gordon G. Chang, “Why Shaming Has Lost Power in China,” *New York Times, Room to Debate*, 02 December 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2010/7/31/china-shaming/the-shame-concept-goes-back-to-confucius>

<sup>107</sup> Yutang Lin, “Chapter 6: Social and Political Life,” in *My Country, My People*. 2006. Singapore: Hesperides Press, 2006), 172.

<sup>108</sup> Julia Hundoble, “Taoism: Basic Fundamentals of ‘The Way,’” California State University, Chico, Fall 1999, <http://www.csuchico.edu/~cheinz/syllabi/fall99/hundoble/>

<sup>109</sup> Peter Hessler, “Chapter 1: The Wall,” in *Country Driving: A Journey Through China From Farm to Factory* (New York, NY: HarperCollins, 2010), 13.

*Jie*).<sup>110</sup> The message conveyed is that party rule is as stable as the change of seasons.<sup>111</sup> The CCP has also continued the centuries-old Taoist tradition of inscribing slogans on mountain rock formations and other places of great natural beauty to emphasize all that lies beneath Heaven is under governmental control.

### *Buddhism*

Buddhist priests from India first entered China during the latter half of the Han Dynasty (ca 150 C.E.), introducing Chinese to Mahayana Buddhism.<sup>112</sup> Among the most prominent of those beliefs that eventually came to profoundly shape the Chinese world view were *karma* (the cause and effect link) and *samsara* (the cycle of reincarnation) in which death represents not an end point but continuation in another form. Whereas a Westerner might view the unfortunate victim of an accident as “being in the wrong place at the wrong time,” Buddhists would view it as the result of the person’s karma. Whatever happens to an individual in the present is the result of his/her actions in the past or past life. Yet, those who experience misfortune cannot know why since Mahayana Buddhists do not believe personal characteristics are transferred from one incarnation to the next.<sup>113</sup>



© Kjell Tjensvoll  
Leshan Buddha, Sichuan

## Religion and the State

### *Organized Religion*

Communists are traditionally hostile to religion for ideological reasons. According to Marx, religious faith served to bolster the existing social order by encouraging people to accept their fate. During the many campaigns launched by Mao, few Chinese dared to worship publicly, lest they be branded as counter-revolutionaries. In the reform era, the situation has become more relaxed. Beijing recognizes five religions (Islam, Buddhism, Taoism, Catholicism, and Protestantism).<sup>114</sup> All religious organizations must register with “patriotic governmental associations” that monitor sermons and church activities. Churches that choose not to register, which can be shut down at any time, often resent what they see as governmental interference. Rules, for example, limit the number of congregants who may worship at



© angele n. / flickr.com  
Monk in Jade Buddha Temple, Shanghai

<sup>110</sup> Xinhua, “State Leaders Extend Spring Festival Greetings to the Nation,” *China Daily*, 13 February 2010, [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2010-02/13/content\\_9469190.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2010-02/13/content_9469190.htm)

<sup>111</sup> This insight is drawn from a book about Vietnam which says “[e]ach year at *Tet*, the lunar new year, a slogan appears on billboards, banner and even planted in flower beds, ‘*Mung Dang, Mung Xuan*,’ – ‘Greet the Party, Greet Spring’ – as if the party’s presence is as much a part of life as the seasons.” The only difference is the Chinese variant is more subtle. Bill Hayton, “Chapter 5: Greet the Party, Greet Spring!” *Vietnam: Rising Dragon* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010), 111.

<sup>112</sup> Geoff Foy, “Chinese Belief Systems: From Past to Present and Present to Past,” *Asia Society*, 14 August 2008, <http://asiasociety.org/countries-history/religions-philosophies/chinese-belief-systems>

<sup>113</sup> Ernest Valea, “Reincarnation: Its Meaning and Consequences,” *Comparative Religion* (website), n.d., <http://www.comparativereligion.com/reincarnation2.html>

<sup>114</sup> Sarah Cook, “China’s Policy Toward Spiritual Movements,” (roundtable transcript, Congressional Executive Commission on China Roundtable, Washington, DC, 18 June 2010), <http://www.cecc.gov/pages/roundtables/2010/20100618/cookTestimony.pdf>

any one time. Chinese citizens are forbidden to pledge allegiance to any foreign figure, including the Pope. Thus, Chinese Catholics may prefer to worship unofficially.<sup>115</sup>

In an era when materialism has replaced ideology, greater numbers of Chinese have sought out religion as a source of spiritual knowledge and comfort.<sup>116</sup> Between 1997 and 2006, the number of acknowledged Christians in China increased from 14 million to 21 million.<sup>117</sup> Christians who run afoul of governmental authorities are often charged with evangelizing, a natural act for Christians but one which violates the rights of non-believers that are also protected by the Chinese constitution.<sup>118</sup>

In the Tibet and Xinjiang Autonomous Regions, religion is viewed as promoting separatism. As a result, Tibetan Buddhist temples and Uighur mosques are under tight governmental supervision.<sup>119, 120</sup>

### *Cults*

The Chinese government cracks down hard on what it views as cults. The most prominent, Falun Gong, was banned in 1999, four years after its founder, Li Hongzhi, moved to the United States. The group was seen as particularly threatening because it had been able to amass members in particular locations without the government's knowledge.

Their purpose for congregating was to practice *qigong* breathing exercises and seek spiritual inspiration from Taoist and Buddhist teachings. However, Beijing is also acutely aware that throughout Chinese history there was no shortage of millenarian groups led by charismatic individuals that developed into rebellion movements.



© William Murphy  
Overseas supporters of Falun Gong

<sup>115</sup> Preeti Bhattacharji, "Religion in China," *Council on Foreign Relations*, 16 May 2008, [http://www.cfr.org/publication/16272/religion\\_in\\_china.html](http://www.cfr.org/publication/16272/religion_in_china.html)

<sup>116</sup> Louisa Lim, "Chinese Turn to Religion to Fill Spiritual Vacuum," *National Public Radio*, 18 July 2010, <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=128544048>

<sup>117</sup> Brian Grim, "Religion in China on the Eve of the 2008 Beijing Olympics," *Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life*, 7 May 2008, <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/827/china-religion-olympics>

<sup>118</sup> Kate McGeown, "China's Christians Suffer for Their Faith," *BBC News*, 9 November 2004, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/3993857.stm>

<sup>119</sup> Malcolm Moore, "China Insists It Will Choose Dalai Lama's Successor," *The Telegraph (UK)*, 8 March 2010, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/china/7397440/China-insists-it-will-choose-Dalai-Lamas-successor.html>

<sup>120</sup> Gordon Fairclough, "China, Tibetans Spar Over Buddhist Reincarnation," *Wall Street Journal*, 9 March 2009. <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB123655409722065741.html>

## Places of Worship

Many Buddhist temples in China are both museums and places of worship. Some visitors may be startled to see what appears to be a Nazi swastika adorning the walls or carved into a statue. In fact, it is a Buddhist symbol of peace that is positioned at a slightly different angle.<sup>121</sup>

### Exchange 1: May I enter?

Visitor:	May I enter?	wo keyi jinglai ma?
Local:	Yes.	keyi.

While visitors are generally welcomed, they should take care to follow temple protocol. If a monk offers a tour, it is appropriate to reciprocate by making a donation to the temple in the boxes, which are scattered throughout the worship area. Do not shake his hand, particularly if you are female.

## Religious Holidays

### *Tomb Sweeping Day*

This holiday falls on 4 or 5 April every year. Its literal name in Chinese, *Qing Ming*, means “clear brightness,” a reference to spring. Only recognized in the People’s Republic as a public holiday in 2008, it is the day Chinese people traditionally pay their respects to the ancestors by going to the family cemetery plot.<sup>122</sup> They tidy it up and make fresh offerings. In earlier times, it was believed that keeping the ancestral spirits happy would enable the family to prosper through abundant harvests and the births of more children.<sup>123</sup>



Courtesy of Wikipedia.org  
Food offerings for hungry ghosts

<sup>121</sup> James Ure, “Is the Swastika a Universal Symbol of Hate?” *The Buddhist Blog*, 29 July 2010, <http://thebuddhistblog.blogspot.com/2010/07/is-swastika-universal-symbol-of-hate.html>

<sup>122</sup> Albert Wolfe, “Tomb Sweeping Festival,” *Laowai Chinese* (blog), 4 April 2008. <http://laowaichinese.net/tomb-sweeping-festival.htm>

<sup>123</sup> Fox Butterfield, “Chapter 11: Peasants: A Pig under the Roof,” in *China: Alive in the Bitter Sea* (New York, NY: Bantam Books, 1982), 257.

### *Ghost Month*

Ghost Month (*Gui Yue*), which falls during the seventh lunar month, represents a fusion of Buddhist beliefs on the afterworld with Confucian filial piety. It is widely celebrated in Taiwan and Hong Kong, where many residents believe the gates of hell, of which there are 18 levels, have been flung open.<sup>124</sup> As a precaution, people avoid potentially dangerous activities, such as swimming, which provides water spirits, or the souls of those lost at sea, with the opportunity to steal the body of a living person. Temples are deserted since there is no need to go there to communicate with the dead, though Buddhist monks are hired to pray for the deceased.<sup>125</sup> In addition, food offerings are left in public places for hungry spirits. Red lights are hung to help wandering souls navigate as they roam at night. Fake money and even miniature paper models of goods the ghosts might covet, like cell phones, are burned for their pleasure. Street operas are staged for their entertainment. This is all done to appease them so they won't haunt the living. At the end of the month, there is a feast to usher the ghosts back into the underworld as a Taoist priest chants to remind them where they belong. When the gate is believed to close, the priest covers his ears to avoid being deafened by the terrible sound of wailing ghosts unhappy about returning to their dark existence.

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<sup>124</sup> Mark Magnier, "In Taiwan, Those Who Believe in Ghosts (Just About Everyone) Brace for Long Spirit Month," *Religious News Blog*, 23 July 2006, <http://www.religionnewsblog.com/15369/in-taiwan-those-who-believe-in-ghosts-just-about-everyone-brace-for-long-spirit-month>

<sup>125</sup> Katrien Vander Straeten, "The Chinese Ghost Month," Suite101 (blog), 6 September 2006, [http://customsholidays.suite101.com/article.cfm/the\\_chinese\\_ghost\\_month](http://customsholidays.suite101.com/article.cfm/the_chinese_ghost_month)

## Chapter 2 Assessments

1. Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism remain largely distinct faiths.  
**False**  
They have become synthesized or intertwined over the centuries.
2. Tomb Sweeping Day has always been a public holiday in the People's Republic of China.  
**False**  
It only became a public holiday in 2008.
3. Ghost Month represents a fusion of Buddhist beliefs on the afterworld with Confucian filial piety.  
**True**  
Ghost Month (*Gui Yue*), combines Confucian respect for forbearers with Buddhist beliefs about ghosts in the afterlife by offering those who have died food and prayers.
4. All religious organizations in China must register.  
**True**  
All religious organizations must register with "patriotic governmental associations" that monitor sermons and church activities. Rules, for example, limit the number of congregants who may worship at any one time.
5. Beijing recognizes three religions.  
**False**  
Beijing recognizes five religions (Islam, Buddhism, Taoism, Catholicism and Protestantism).



## Chapter 3 Traditions

### Introduction

China exhibits tremendous geographic and linguistic diversity reflected in a myriad of mutually unintelligible dialects. Yet there is a broad consensus that a common set of identifiably Han Chinese cultural traditions emerged centuries ago. The philosophy of Confucius (551 B.C.E. - 479 B.C.E.), who equated hierarchy with stability, is evident in Chinese behavior today.<sup>126</sup> While Communism offered the prospect of remaking society along radically egalitarian lines, in practice it simply reconfigured the rankings of groups within the existing social order but did not challenge the dominance of the Han Chinese. Theme parks showcasing ethnic minority traditions such as unsophisticated dancing and singing rituals reinforce a sense of cultural nationalism.<sup>127</sup> Han Chinese spectators come away with a sense their culture is “modern,” since it has advanced through evolutionary phases while minorities, officially referred to as nationalities (*shaoshu minzu*), are stuck in a simple, primitive way of life that revolves around hunting and gathering.<sup>128</sup>



Anxious to convey a favorable impression of their culture and country, Chinese often go out of their way to assist foreign visitors who are stymied by the language barrier.<sup>129</sup> It is also evident Chinese are quite attentive to family concerns. Yet, visitors are invariably struck by the way crowds jostle each other.<sup>130</sup> Cutting in line is an endemic practice in China. Public places are often strewn with litter and poorly maintained.<sup>131</sup> To explain this contradiction a scholar noted, “Strongly familial societies tend to develop a two-tier system of ethical values, with higher standards of behavior reserved for relations within the family or other types of personal relations and lower ones for public life.”<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> David Lenard, “Through the Wall: A Cross-Cultural Guide to Doing Business in China,” *Asia Times*, June 2006, <http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Others/china-culture-guide-part1.html>

<sup>127</sup> Edward Wong, “China’s Han Flock to Theme Parks Featuring Minorities,” *New York Times*, 23 February 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/02/24/world/asia/24park.html>

<sup>128</sup> Dru C. Gladney, “Chapter 3: Mapping the Chinese Nation,” in *Dislocating China: Reflections on Muslims, Minorities, and Other Subaltern Subjects* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 39-45,

<sup>129</sup> Brian Cross, “Friendliness with Chinese Characteristics: Correcting Some Western Myths and Fallacies,” *Suite101* (blog), 8 March 2010, <http://china.suite101.com/article.cfm/friendliness-with-chinese-characteristics>

<sup>130</sup> Karen Micham, “Shanghai Visit Underscores Global Presence of UCLA,” *Center for Chinese Studies, UCLA*, 31 August 2010, <http://www.international.ucla.edu/china/article.asp?parentid=117162>

<sup>131</sup> Tim Gingrich, “Chinese People AREN’T Like That!” *Go Too Far East* (blog), 1 September 2008, <http://www.gotoofareast.com/toblog/?p=553>

<sup>132</sup> Francis Fukuyama, “Asian Values and Civilization” (lecture, Fall Symposium, Institute for Korean-American Studies, University of Pennsylvania, Blue Bell, PA, 29 September 1998), <http://www.icasinc.org/1998/1998f/1998ffrf.html>

## Honor and Values

While individual freedom is celebrated in the West, Chinese emphasize the role and responsibilities of the individual to the group as the means to achieve social harmony. The importance of subordinating personal desires by “eating bitterness” (*chi ku*) is stressed from a tender age.<sup>133</sup> Children are expected to spend long hours in preparation for standardized academic tests.<sup>134</sup> Learning by example, they see their parents accept difficult work conditions to improve the household’s financial situation. Confucian-dictated filial duty to the family has been extended to patriotic acceptance of state prerogatives, which, during the initial decades of Chinese Communist Party (CCP) rule, meant promotion of the revolutionary cause. Although socialist values embodied in the slogan “serve the people” have receded, the CCP has created a new basis of legitimacy to justify its continued monopoly on power: protector of the country’s honor in a world of nation-states that want to keep China down.<sup>135</sup> Toward this end, the government routinely asks its citizenry to make sacrifices on behalf of the nation. These include limiting family size and enduring the temporary inconvenience caused by hosting international events such as the 2008 Olympics in Beijing or the 2010 World Expo in Shanghai.<sup>136, 137</sup>



## Formulaic Codes of Politeness

Relations between people in ancient China reflected man’s place in the natural world, demonstrating the influence of Taoism.<sup>138</sup> Thus, when greeting a superior, it was customary for someone of lower social status to touch his head to the ground. This posture is known in English as kowtowing and was literally translated from the Chinese word *ketou* (“knocking head”). When begging for consideration, the person literally got down on all fours and touched his head to the ground, never making eye contact. For Chinese, shaking hands, which is performed with a light grip, and making eye contact are relatively new ways of initiating contact with strangers.<sup>139</sup> To show respect for the people they are greeting, some Chinese may still avoid direct eye contact.



<sup>133</sup> Nicholas D. Kristof, “China Rises, and Checkmates,” *New York Times*, 8 January 2011, [http://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/09/opinion/09kristof.html?\\_r=1&scp=3&sq=nicholas%20kristof&st=cse](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/09/opinion/09kristof.html?_r=1&scp=3&sq=nicholas%20kristof&st=cse)

<sup>134</sup> Anna Greenspan, “Tiger Moms: The Benefits of Eating Bitterness,” *Miller-McCune, Culture*, 5 February 2011, <http://www.miller-mccune.com/culture/tiger-moms-the-benefits-of-eating-bitterness-28029/>

<sup>135</sup> Daniel Bell, “Chapter 2: War, Peace, and China’s Soft Power,” in *China’s New Confucianism: Politics and Everyday Life in a Changing Society* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010), 21.

<sup>136</sup> Charles E. Morrison, “Beijing Games Fuel Pride, from U.S. to Togo,” *Honolulu Advertiser*, 24 August 2008. <http://www.eastwestcenter.org/news-center/east-west-wire/counting-the-medals-the-olympics-are-still-not-flat/>

<sup>137</sup> Howard French, “China Presses Injured Athletes in Quest for Gold,” *New York Times*, 20 June 2008, <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/06/20/world/asia/20olympics.html>

<sup>138</sup> Hao Dazheng, “Chapter 2: Chinese Visual Representation: Painting and Cinema,” trans. Douglas Wilkerson, in *Cinematic Landscapes: Observations on the Visual Arts and Cinema of China and Japan*, eds. Linda Ehrlich and David Desser (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2000), 50.

<sup>139</sup> Mary S. Erbaugh, “China Expands Its Courtesy: Saying ‘Hello’ to Strangers,” *Journal of Asian Studies* 67, no. 2 (2008): 621-652, <http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayAbstract?fromPage=online&aid=1856720>

**Exchange 2: Good afternoon!**

Visitor:	Good afternoon!	ni hao!
Local:	Good afternoon.	ni hao.

Often early risers, Chinese greet each other with a “Good Morning.” At any time of the day, “How are you?” is fine. One may also hear, “Have you eaten yet?” This is not a prelude to a meal invitation but a demonstration of concern for the other person and family’s well-being.

**Exchange 3: How are you?**

Visitor:	How are you?	ni hao ma?
Local:	Fine, thank you.	Hen hao, ShieShie.

During a formal group introduction, the person being introduced may receive a round of applause. This person should join in the applause to show solidarity with the group and as a sign of appreciation for the welcome. While not clapping reflects humility for Americans, Chinese would interpret as a sign of conceit, of regarding oneself as above the group.<sup>140</sup>

When it is time for individual introductions, business cards should be extended with both hands. After receiving a business card, the recipient should show respect by examining the card. Similarly, pauses in conversation are not considered awkward by Chinese, who instead view them as a chance to reflect on what has been said.<sup>141</sup> Answering a question immediately is taken as a sign you do not respect the person who asked it.

It is important to avoid making anyone lose face (*diu lian*). Do not point out someone’s mistake or accuse anyone of lying. Losing your temper will cause everyone to lose face.<sup>142</sup>

<sup>140</sup> Wenzhong Hu and Cornelius Grove, “Chapter 6: Chinese Modesty and Humility,” in *Encountering the Chinese: A Guide for Americans*, 2nd edition (Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press, 1999), 55.

<sup>141</sup> Lu Yin, “Cultural Differences in Politeness in Chinese and English,” *Asian Social Science* 5, no. 6 (June 2009): 154-156, <http://www.ccsenet.org/journal/index.php/ass/article/viewFile/2492/2338>

<sup>142</sup> Boye Lafayette de Mente, “Asian Business Code Words,” *Asian Pacific Management Forum*, April 1998, <http://www.apmforum.com/columns/boye13.htm>

## Hospitality and Gift Giving

Gift giving is an important part of Chinese culture. It is so commonplace that the government forbids public officials from accepting gifts, since this constitutes a form of bribery. Gifts should be offered in the spirit of reciprocity or as a token of appreciation.<sup>143</sup> Money, presented in a red envelope since the Chinese associate the color red with good fortune, is the standard wedding gift. When offering gifts to the Chinese, you will probably have to press them to accept it several times. Politeness requires they first reject the gift to demonstrate they are an unworthy recipient. Persistence on the part of the giver demonstrates they are worthy of the gift. Recipients will not open a gift in front of the person giving the gift so as not to appear greedy.



© Vanessa Pike-Russell  
Health & wealth lucky coins

While gifts are appreciated, a few would cause offense. Never give a clock, as they are associated with a countdown to death. A fan is not considered an appropriate gift either. The opening of a fan is symbolic of a couple on the verge of splitting up. Finally, do not give a man a green hat.<sup>144</sup> A man whose wife or girlfriend is unfaithful to him is described as “wearing a green hat” (*dai lu maozi*).<sup>145</sup> This owes to an ancient tale of an unfaithful wife who gave her traveling salesman husband a green hat as a token of her affection.

## Meals and Banquets

In their cuisine, Chinese emphasize the Taoist notion of *yin* and *yang*, which represent opposing forces in the universe that must be brought into harmony and balance.<sup>146</sup> Illness, for example, is sometimes believed to be caused by an imbalance of *yin* (dark) and *yang* (light) in the diet. As a result, children are taught to sample everything and discouraged from taking multiple helpings of a favorite.<sup>147</sup>



© Harald Groven  
Young boy being fed

Both every day meals and lavish Chinese banquets will consist of common dishes in the middle of the table from which everyone takes a serving that is placed in an individual bowl. It is acceptable to place the bowl near the common plates to take food and right up to your face to scoop it literally into your mouth. Each person will have his or her own plate, a flat spoon, and a small bowl for rice. Rice is served at every meal. Eating begins in order of seniority.

<sup>143</sup> Minnesota-China Connection, “Chinese Gift-Giving Etiquette,” 2005, <http://www.minnesota-china.com/Education/emEcon/GiftEtiquette.htm>

<sup>144</sup> Transparent Language, “When Gift-Giving Goes Awry,” *Chinese Blog*, 7 October 2008. <http://www.transparent.com/chinese/when-gift-giving-goes-awry/>

<sup>145</sup> Comrade Language, “Color Me Confused,” *Beijing Scene* (blog) 7, no. 13, 14-20 April 2000, <http://www.beijingscene.com/cissue/comrade.html>

<sup>146</sup> Society for Anglo-Chinese Understanding, “Chinese Food,” 2001, <http://www.sacu.org/food.html>

<sup>147</sup> Weisen Li, “Chinese Culture and Customs” (lecture notes, Department of Economics, Fudan University, Shanghai, China, n.d.), <http://people.wku.edu/haiwang.yuan/China/docs/chinesecultureandcustoms.rtf>

**Exchange 4: I really appreciate your hospitality.**

Visitor:	I really appreciate your hospitality.	ShieShie ni de kwandai.
Local:	You are welcome.	bukeChi.

Generally, the soup, often a clear broth, is served last, indicating the meal is complete. Shark's fin soup is a delicacy served at special occasions like weddings.<sup>148</sup>

**Exchange 5: The meal was very good.**

Visitor:	The meal was very good.	fan dzuode tebie hao chi.
Local:	Thanks.	ShieShie.

Chinese are very proud of their cuisine and the names of many dishes, such as General Tso's Chicken, are associated with historic figures.<sup>149</sup> Complementing the chef is a way to show appreciation.

**Exchange 6: I'd like a coffee / tea.**

Visitor:	I'd like a coffee / tea.	wo yao yibei kafei/cha.
Local:	Sure.	hao.

Banquets invariably involve toasting, usually with both beer and hard liquor. As someone who spent several years in China marveled, "after [multi] course gastronomical extravaganzas, many foreign guests tended to miss the subtlety of these toasts, the host's well turned knack of seeming to convey great warmth and friendship without ever getting too personal."<sup>150</sup> Non-drinkers may ask to be exempted without causing offense. It is acceptable to ask for a soft drink or tea as a substitute. Afterwards, the host, who decides when to conclude the gathering, escorts the guests out.

<sup>148</sup> Jonathan Kauffman, "Shark's Fin – Understanding the Political Soup," *San Francisco Weekly*, 2 March 2011, <http://www.sfweekly.com/2011-03-02/restaurants/shark-s-fin-soup-shark-s-fin-leland-yee-slanted-door-fin-shark-ab-376/#>

<sup>149</sup> The General himself had nothing to with creating the dish. It was named in his honor by a cook from his home province of Hunan who had fled to Taiwan. Francis Lam, "The Curious History of General Tso's Chicken," *Salon.com*, 5 January 2010, [http://www.salon.com/food/francis\\_lam/2010/01/05/history\\_of\\_general\\_tsos\\_chicken](http://www.salon.com/food/francis_lam/2010/01/05/history_of_general_tsos_chicken)

<sup>150</sup> Fox Butterfield, "Chapter 2: Where Are You Comrade?" in *China: Alive in the Bitter Sea* (New York, NY: Bantam Books, 1982), 53.

**Attire**

*Social*

Under socialism, most adult Chinese dressed in blue one-size-fits-all clothing. There was little individuality evident in people’s attire. Some visitors saw this as a sign of liberation, particularly for women, who had been freed from the near universal female preoccupation with appearance. Yet as soon as market reforms delivered a greater variety of consumer goods, personal appearance assumed the importance it does in most other societies.



Courtesy of Wikipedia.org  
Chinese qipao dress

The *Qipao* (*Cheungsam* in Cantonese) is a one-piece garment with a stiff, upright collar, an embroidered opening from the neck running under the right arm, and a slit up one or both legs if the skirt falls below mid-calf.<sup>151</sup> Introduced by Manchurians, it was unthinkable for Manchu women associated with the Qing court to wear anything else. After the Manchus were toppled, the dress “got a new lease on life in the 1920s, when Shanghai’s fashion mavens reclaimed it as their own, but with a more alluring body-skimming cut.”<sup>152</sup> Indeed, silk *Qipao*, affordable only to the wealthy, became synonymous with refined taste. Female entertainers wore cheaper imitations. When the economic reforms were initiated in 1978, conservative *Qipao*, which included long sleeves, reappeared. By the 21st century, tailors were once again specializing in *Qipao*.<sup>153, 154</sup>

*Professional*

Security volunteers wear red armbands identifying their status. Under socialism, they were part of the neighborhood committee, the lowest rung of authority in urban China. Strangers who ventured into any traditional neighborhood would invariably find themselves surrounded by a brigade of elderly red armbands demanding to know their business.<sup>155</sup>



© Matt Barber  
Woman and grandchild, woman with armband

**Exchange 7: Do you know this area very well?**

Visitor:	Do you know this area very well?	ni dui Jege diChu shu ma?
Local:	Yes.	dui.

<sup>151</sup> Patricia Buckley Ebrey, “Qipao,” In *A Visual Sourcebook of Chinese Civilization*, n.d., <http://depts.washington.edu/chinaciv/clothing/11qipaos.htm>

<sup>152</sup> Agence France Press, “Shanghai Women Revisit ‘In the Mood for Love,’” France 24, 18 February 2010, [http://www.france24.com/en/20100201-shanghai-women-revisit-mood-love-0?quicktabs\\_1=0](http://www.france24.com/en/20100201-shanghai-women-revisit-mood-love-0?quicktabs_1=0)

<sup>153</sup> Shen Jingting, “Qipao Maker Revamps Classic Style,” *China Daily*, 16 March 2010, [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/metro/2010-03/16/content\\_9595992.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/metro/2010-03/16/content_9595992.htm)

<sup>154</sup> Shih Ying Lin, “The Qipao and the Politics of Dress” (paper, 3rd Global Conference, Interculturalism, Meaning & Identity, Salzburg, Austria, 10-12 November 2009), <http://www.inter-disciplinary.net/wp-content/uploads/2009/10/linpaper.pdf>

<sup>155</sup> Wenfang Tang and William Parish, “Introduction,” in *Chinese Urban Life Under Reform: The Changing Social Contract* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 28.

Residents viewed them as a deterrent to theft. However, stable neighborhoods are being replaced by more anonymous, privately owned luxury housing units filled with newcomers who may barely know each other. While red armband security volunteers are still evident on city streets, where they assist with traffic control, the committees themselves have been merged into district community (*shequ*) offices.

### Non-Religious Celebrations (Holidays)

#### *Chinese (Lunar) New Year*

Lunar New Year, which falls between mid-January and late-February, is divided into 12-year cycles, each year represented by a different animal. Known in China as the Spring Festival (*Chun Jie*), it developed as a means to usher in an abundant agricultural season before the start of spring planting. Celebrated by both farmers and city folk alike, the biggest holiday of the year involves preparations that begin well in advance.<sup>156</sup> People spruce up their homes and focus attention on their personal appearance to start the year off right.



© Bernard Oh  
New Year's Lion Dance

#### Exchange 8: Will you celebrate Chinese New Year?

Visitor:	Will you celebrate Chinese New Year?	nimen mingtian ChingJu chunjie ma?
Local:	Yes.	dui.

The government has stipulated everyone is allowed seven days off, but schools close down for a month and most other non-essential public sector businesses operate on reduced staff for several weeks.<sup>157</sup> Subsequent days are designated to receive visitors, who partake of sweets the family offers them to usher in a sweet new year. Other days are reserved for a family outing. Each day has specific rituals associated with it.

#### *Lantern Festival*

Fifteen days after the start of Chinese New Year, festivities wrap up with the Lantern Festival, which falls on the first full moon of the new year. Its origins go back as early as the Western Han Dynasty (206 B.C.E.- 25 C.E.) when paper lanterns lit by candles were first hung.<sup>158</sup> While the origins of this festival are in dispute, some have suggested the lantern festival evolved as a means to honor Buddha or



© Ting W. Chang  
Lantern Festival

<sup>156</sup> Wolff-Michael Roth, "Chinese New Year," n.d.,

[http://www.educ.uvic.ca/faculty/mroth/438/CHINA/chinese\\_new\\_year.html](http://www.educ.uvic.ca/faculty/mroth/438/CHINA/chinese_new_year.html)

<sup>157</sup> Jenn Kucharczyk, "Last Train Home: Globalization in China's Backyard," *The Strand*, 24 August 2011,

<http://media.www.thestrاند.ca/media/storage/paper404/news/2010/03/04/FilmMusic/Last-Train.Home.Globalization.In.Chinas.Backyard-3885489.shtml>

<sup>158</sup> China.Org, "Lantern Festival," 2009, [http://www.china.org.cn/living\\_in\\_china/spring-festival-2009/2009-01/07/content\\_17070641.htm](http://www.china.org.cn/living_in_china/spring-festival-2009/2009-01/07/content_17070641.htm)

Tianguan, the Taoist God of Good Fortune.<sup>159</sup> In any event, lanterns long ago became associated with the return of spring. Today, households and local governments put up multicolored lanterns, now lit by electricity or batteries. Competitions for “best lantern” are organized throughout China. People spend the evening strolling through neighborhoods to admire lanterns hung from private homes or they congregate in a public place lit by larger lanterns. It is the last night of the holiday season and is typically celebrated in festive fashion as a way to usher in a prosperous new year.

### *Dragon Boat Festival*

Dragon boat races commemorate the sacrifice of Qu Yuan, a poet who lived during the Warring States period (475-221 B.C.E.). His efforts to combat corruption in the Chu imperial court, where he served as a minister, won him a place in the hearts of ordinary people. After urging the emperor to avoid conflict with the more powerful Qin state and instead devote himself to improving the welfare of his subjects, Qu Yuan was dismissed from office. Freed from administrative responsibilities, he traveled the Chu kingdom as a visiting scholar. Upon receiving news that the Qin had defeated the Chu army, Qu Yuan fell into a deep state of despair and drowned himself. As news of his death spread fishermen, beating drums to scare away hungry fish and evil spirits, took to their boats to look for his body. They also threw balls of glutinous rice (*zongzi*) wrapped in lotus leaves for them to feed on in case the noise did not stop them. Their response to his patriotic self-sacrifice is reenacted on this holiday, which typically falls during the first half of June.



© Toby Oxborough  
Dragon Boat racing

### *Mid-Autumn Festival*

This festival marks the autumn equinox, and falls on the 15th day of the eighth lunar month sometime in October, when the moon is at its greatest distance from the earth. Chinese celebrations have been traced back as far as the Xia and Shang Dynasties (ca. 2,000 B.C.E. –1,000 B.C.E.).<sup>160</sup> In subsequent dynasties, some emperors honored the moon with a three-day gazing holiday. The moon has a special significance in Chinese culture, often as a symbol of loneliness, which has been described in countless poems.<sup>161</sup> For ordinary people, the waxing and waning of the moon mirrors the vicissitudes of life with the full moon representing peace and prosperity. On this day, those living away from home make reasonable efforts to return home and enjoy an evening meal together. Moon cakes, bearing the baker’s insignia, filled with bean paste and perhaps an egg yolk are available for sale everywhere. Their origins hark back to the Yuan Dynasty (1279-1368) when the Chinese were under Mongol rule. In order to avoid having their plans for a full

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<sup>159</sup> Chinese American Museum, “Lantern Festival,” *Chinese Historical Society of Southern California*, 2003, <http://www.chssc.org/Festival/Lantern/Lantern%20Festival.htm>

<sup>160</sup> ChinaVoc, “Mid-Autumn Festival,” *Chinavoc.com*, 2007, <http://www.chinavoc.com/festivals/Midautumn.htm>

<sup>161</sup> Wai-leung Wong, “Chinese Literature, The Creative Imagination, and Globalization,” *Macalester International* 3 (9 June 2008): 40-43, <http://digitalcommons.macalester.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1055&context=macintl>



moon rebellion detected, Chinese organizers used moon cakes to hide logistical messages.<sup>162</sup>

### *National Holidays*

As the Chinese embrace a market economy, the issue of annual leave has come up. Under socialism, most urban workplaces were overstaffed. It was not difficult for workers to ask for personal leave, even on short notice. There were no vacations per se other than Lunar New Year. Instead, offices closed down and factories ceased production at certain times, during which employees did not report for work. In 1999, in the wake of the Asian financial crisis, the Chinese government came up with the idea of “Golden Week” holidays to spur domestic consumption by promoting commerce and tourism.<sup>163</sup> The May 1st International Labor Day and the October 1st founding of the People’s Republic anniversary were expanded into week-long holidays. Yet, block vacation time created congestion, making travel unattractive to some. Therefore, the government is continuously tweaking holiday schedules, as traditional celebrations are made public holidays and Golden Weeks for national holidays are phased out. May 1st has been restored to its original status as a single day holiday.

### **Do’s and Don’ts**

**Do** greet the oldest person in a room first.

**Do** offer a gift with both hands at least three times to a host.

**Do** study someone’s business card rather than putting it away immediately.

**Do** show patience with strangers’ attempts to practice speaking English.

**Do** avoid showing irritation that will cause all parties to lose face.

**Don’t** write anyone’s name in red ink, because historically only the names of the dead were written in red.

**Don’t** point at anyone with your fingers; instead, motion them with your palm down.

**Don’t** stick the chopsticks upright into the leftover rice bowl, as this resembles incense burned on behalf of the dead.

**Don’t** bring up Chinese politics.

**Don’t** take offense at people who stare at you.

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<sup>162</sup> ChinaVoc, “Mid-Autumn Festival,” *Chinavoc.com*, 2007, <http://www.chinavoc.com/festivals/Midautumn.htm>

<sup>163</sup> Andrew Jacobs, “China’s Mandatory Vacation, With a Catch,” *New York Times*, 1 October 2010, [http://www.nytimes.com/2010/10/02/world/asia/02china.html?\\_r=1&scp=1&sq=china%20holdiays&st=cse](http://www.nytimes.com/2010/10/02/world/asia/02china.html?_r=1&scp=1&sq=china%20holdiays&st=cse)

## Chapter 3 Assessments

1. Shaking hands, for Chinese, has been used as a greeting for centuries.

**False**

For Chinese, shaking hands and making eye contact are relatively new ways of initiating contact with strangers. Traditionally, it was customary for someone of lower social status to literally get down on all fours and touch his head to the ground, never making eye contact. This posture is known in English as kowtowing and was literally translated from the Chinese word *ketou* (“knocking head”).

2. Shark’s fin soup is a served at every meal.

**False**

Shark’s fin soup is a delicacy served at special occasions like weddings. Rice is served at every meal.

3. The Lantern Festival concludes the Chinese New Year holiday season.

**True**

The Lantern Festival is the last night of festivities. Chinese want to avoid any type of misfortune on that evening to usher in a prosperous new year.

4. When offering a gift to Chinese, offer it with both hands at least three times.

**True**

Gift giving is an important part of Chinese culture. When offering gifts to the Chinese, you will probably have to press them to accept it several times. Politeness requires they first reject the gift to demonstrate they are an unworthy recipient. Persistence on the part of the giver demonstrates they are worthy of the gift.

5. Security volunteers wear yellow armbands identifying their status.

**False**

Security volunteers wear red armbands identifying their status. Under socialism, they were part of the neighborhood committee, the lowest rung of authority in urban China.

## Chapter 4 Urban Life

### Introduction

For the first three decades of Communist rule, municipal governments allocated jobs to those who possessed a local household registration (*hukou*). While salaries were essentially the same, some jobs were better than others.<sup>164</sup> Industry could offer housing, for example, while secondary schools could not, making teaching an undesirable profession despite the high social status teachers traditionally enjoyed in China. The applicant was not ordinarily afforded any input; it was simply a matter of whatever openings needed to be filled.



Nonetheless, being a city resident, entitled to subsidized grain rations, was almost universally viewed as preferable to being a farmer, since subsistence was guaranteed.<sup>165</sup> Workers received their rations and wages during mass mobilization campaigns despite the disruption to production.<sup>166</sup>

In some cities today migrants, drawn by service sector jobs created during the economic reforms, may outnumber residents.<sup>167</sup> Most have no prospect of changing their household registration status. They are routinely referred to as the floating population (*liudong renkou*).<sup>168, 169</sup>

<sup>164</sup> Yu Xie, Qing Lai, and Xiaogang Wu. “Danwei and Social Inequality in Contemporary Urban China,” *Research in the Sociology of Work* 19 (2009): 283-306, <http://www.emeraldinsight.com/books.htm?issn=0277-2833&volume=19&chapterid=1811268&show=pdf&PHPSESSID=5b367tskefg7smlasjlr3ibj5>

<sup>165</sup> Miriam Gross, “Postulating Peasants and Upholding Urbanites,” *Modern Chinese History* (blog), 24 March 2010, <http://ucsdmodernchinesehistory.org/2010/03/24/776/>

<sup>166</sup> Fox Butterfield, “Chapter 2: Where Are You Comrade?” in *China: Alive in the Bitter Sea* (New York, NY: Bantam Books, 1982), 53.

<sup>167</sup> Fan Gang, “Urbanizing China,” *China Daily*, 31 December 2010, [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/opinion/2010-12/31/content\\_11780292.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/opinion/2010-12/31/content_11780292.htm)

<sup>168</sup> *China Urbanizes: Consequences, Strategies, and Policies*. Yusuf, Shahid and Anthony Saich, eds. “Chapter 3: Migration, *Hukou*, and the Chinese City [p. 66].” Fan, C. Cindy. 2008. Washington, DC: The World Bank. <http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/geog/downloads/597/321.pdf>

<sup>169</sup> China Daily. He, Na. “Unlike Parents, Young Migrants Won’t Take Their Fate Lying Down.” 23 March 2010. [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2010-03/23/content\\_9625419.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2010-03/23/content_9625419.htm)

## Urban Living

### *Danwei*

When the household registration system was established in the 1950s, every citizen was given either an agricultural or an urban *hukou* (household registration).<sup>170</sup> The former conferred access to farmland in a specific place while the latter afforded holders a job in their city of residence. Urban Chinese were assigned to a specific work unit (*danwei*). In addition to employment, *danwei* allocated housing, distributed food ration coupons, and approved marriage licenses. After the one-child policy was implemented, birth permits were distributed to urban Chinese through their *danwei*. Often self-contained gated communities that provided for daily life needs including recreation, childcare, and even the equivalent of family counseling, the *danwei* was “a hallmark of Maoist social organization and spatial regulation.”<sup>171, 172</sup>



The work unit acted as an impediment to social mobility because job assignments conferred lifetime employment, an arrangement known as the iron rice bowl. Even if a person found another position, the *danwei* could block the transfer by refusing to send his/her personal dossier to another *danwei*.<sup>173</sup> Moreover, changing jobs was complicated by the fact people lived in *danwei* housing.

### Exchange 9: Does your family live here?

Visitor:	Does your family live here?	nimen jia Judzai Jer ma?
Local:	Yes.	Ju Jer.

### *Daily Life*

*Danwei* apartments lacked kitchens so residents used communal cooking facilities to prepare their meals. Such a situation necessitated a high degree of daily interaction with neighbors who were also colleagues of at least one member of the household, typically the male head. It reinforced a risk averse mentality that was essential to the Chinese Communist Party’s (CCP) ability to maintain control of the populace. In an autobiographical short story published after she left China, a woman recounted her growing alarm when her young son excitedly told neighbors about upcoming plans to celebrate his birthday with a trip to the park:

<sup>170</sup> C. Cindy Fan, “Chapter 3: Migration, *Hukou*, and the Chinese City,” in *China Urbanizes: Consequences, Strategies, and Policies*, eds. Shahid Yusuf and Anthony Saich (Washington, DC: The World Bank, 2008), 66, <http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/geog/downloads/597/321.pdf>

<sup>171</sup> Yomi Braester, “Chapter 6: This is the Story of Our Street,” in *Painting the City Red: Chinese Cinema and the Urban Contract* (Chapel Hill, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), 230-231.

<sup>172</sup> Fox Butterfield, “Chapter 7: Follow the Leader: Organization,” in *China: Alive in the Bitter Sea* (New York, NY: Bantam Books, 1982), 302.

<sup>173</sup> The *dang’an* inspired real fear since individuals were not allowed to see their own files, which contained information on family background, work history and any political problems. See Jie Yang, “The *dang’an* ‘personal dossier’” (paper, *The Political Life of Documents: Archives, Memory and Contested Knowledge Conference*, Centre for Research in the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities, University of Cambridge, 15-16 January 2009), <http://www.crash.cam.ac.uk/page/556/yang-abstract.htm>

*If he were to go around telling everyone about celebrating his birthday, people would think that his parents were still full of decadent capitalist ideas. So I quickly pulled him inside the house and told him not to mention his birthday again or one day he would become an old counterrevolutionary. He couldn't understand why he mustn't talk about his birthday, but he knew exactly what an "old counterrevolutionary" was.<sup>174</sup>*



The mother's concern reflects the inversion of public and private spaces associated with totalitarianism. The home did not function as an intimate private space but one where any conversation or innocent remark could be brought to the attention of the authorities who have the means to monitor what goes on behind closed doors. By contrast, those seeking privacy sought out public places like parks where anonymity provided cover. Well into the 1980s, many Chinese felt more comfortable discussing sensitive topics with strangers on trains than with co-workers or neighbors. Those they interacted with on a daily basis might be compelled to report them in the event there was another campaign to identify individuals guilty of some political offense.

#### *Privatization of Housing*

By the time Mao Zedong died in 1976, little new housing stock had been built during the successive political campaigns launched on his watch. People rehabilitated for political crimes such as being branded "rightists" returned from labor camps or exile in the countryside to live side by side with their former accusers. Multi-generation families were often crammed into small units.

#### **Exchange 10: How many people live in this house?**

Visitor:	How many people live in this house?	Jege angdzili Ju duoshapRen?
Local:	Ten.	shigRen.

This situation was addressed over time as the 1978 economic reforms deepened. Initially rents, which had been nominal, were raised. Later residents were offered the opportunity to buy their homes. As older structures were torn down to make way for condominium high-rise buildings that included much better amenities and modern kitchens, people were able to buy housing on the open market. In contrast to the *danwei* era, when even bicycles were rationed and the streets eerily devoid of commuter traffic, today's streets are clogged with privately owned vehicles. The commercialization of real estate, in short, represented an end to the socialist era when work, leisure and place of residence were tightly integrated.<sup>175</sup> In the 21st century, urban Chinese find their own jobs and housing;

<sup>174</sup> Ch'en Jo-his, "Chairman Mao is a Rotten Egg," trans. Nancy Ing and Howard Goldblatt, in *Bamboo Shoots in the Rain: Contemporary Stories by Women Writers of Taiwan*, eds. Ann C. Carver and Sung-Sheng Yvonne Chang (New York, NY: The Feminist Press of City University of New York, 1993), 86.

<sup>175</sup> Chengri Ding and Gerrit Knaap, "Urban Land Policy Reform in China," *Land Lines* 15, no. 2 (April 2003): [http://www.lincolninst.edu/pubs/793\\_Urban-Land-Policy-Reform-in-China](http://www.lincolninst.edu/pubs/793_Urban-Land-Policy-Reform-in-China)

paying market-determined prices for many services that were formerly heavily subsidized and procured through the *danwei*.<sup>176</sup>

## Healthcare

The delivery of healthcare has been greatly affected by the adoption of a market economy. In 1980, roughly one-fifth of health care costs were paid out of pocket with the remainder being paid by the *danwei*.<sup>177</sup> By the close of the 20th century, after two decades of privatization, only 10% of urban Chinese had any type of health care coverage. A 2000 World Health Organization (WHO) ranking placed China at 188 out of 191 countries in terms of access.<sup>178</sup> This prompted Beijing to pour money into the system to improve China's standing. By 2005, more Chinese had access but out of pocket expenses had climbed over 100 times what they had been for urbanites in 1980.<sup>179</sup> For those who have insurance and/or the means to pay out of pocket, the quality of care is vastly improved. Many hospitals have so-called VIP Wards offering new technology and high quality care to government officials and those who can pay for top-of-the-line services.<sup>180</sup>



### Exchange 11: Is there a doctor here?

Visitor:	Is there a doctor here?	Jer you dafu ma?
Local:	No.	meiyou.

Yet this tiered system has fueled discontent. In short, an atmosphere of suspicion has set in where patients and their families are frequently uncertain over whether treatment, and particularly medication, is necessary or simply prescribed as a money maker. When family members believe a patient has received substandard care or been overcharged, melees frequently break out in hospital corridors. Staffers have been taken hostage.<sup>181</sup> The Chinese press reported on an incident where a discharged patient returned to set the facility on fire.<sup>182</sup>

<sup>176</sup> Matthew Skogstad-Stubbs, "Is China Socialist in Name Only?" *Suite101* (blog), 11 April 2008, [http://china.suite101.com/article.cfm/socialist\\_in\\_name\\_only](http://china.suite101.com/article.cfm/socialist_in_name_only)

<sup>177</sup> Mary Hennock, "Why China is Too Scared to Spend," *Newsweek*, 12 December 2008, <http://www.newsweek.com/2008/12/12/why-china-is-too-scared-to-spend.html>

<sup>178</sup> Iain Mills, "China Puts Healthcare Cart Before the Horse," *Asia Times*, 21 April 2010, <http://www.atimes.com/atimes/China/LD21Ad01.html>

<sup>179</sup> Steven Mufson, "In China, Too, A Health-Care System in Disarray," *The Washington Post*, 29 October 2009, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/10/28/AR2009102805081.html>

<sup>180</sup> Consular Affairs Bureau, U.S. Department of State, "China: Country Specific Information," 20 April 2011, [http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis\\_pa\\_tw/cis/cis\\_1089.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1089.html)

<sup>181</sup> Sharon LaFraniere, "Chinese Hospitals are Battlegrounds of Discontent," *New York Times*, 12 August 2010, [http://www.nytimes.com/2010/08/12/world/asia/12hospital.html?\\_r=1&hpw](http://www.nytimes.com/2010/08/12/world/asia/12hospital.html?_r=1&hpw)

<sup>182</sup> Todd Balazovic, "Unhappy Patient Sets Fire in Hospital, Three Doctors Injured," *China Daily*, 9 June 2010, [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/2010-06/09/content\\_10002656.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/2010-06/09/content_10002656.htm)

## Transportation

### Mass Transit

The Chinese government has invested a great deal in infrastructure development to support a market economy. While Beijing alone had a two-line subway for several decades, most coastal cities now have multi-line subway systems and interior cities are building underground transportation networks as well. In 2010, Beijing broke ground on a new 42 km (26 mi) subway line, the capital city's sixth line.<sup>183</sup> The ticket price is subsidized to encourage use of public transportation. This is true for buses as well.



© Jens Schott Knudsen  
Girl on the Shanghai Metro

### Exchange 12: Will the bus be here soon?

Visitor:	Will the bus be here soon?	gonggongChiche kwai lai le ma?
Local:	Yes.	kwai lai le.

High-speed rail lines have also been prioritized. A national network, estimated to cost USD 293 billion, will lay 16,000 km (9,941 mi) “of dedicated high-speed rail lines connecting all of China's major cities by 2020.”<sup>184</sup>

### Exchange 13: Is the train station nearby?

Visitor:	Is there a train station nearby?	fujin you huocheJanma?
Local:	No.	meiyou.

### Road Network

China is developing a road network similar to the U.S. Interstate Highway System. In 1989, a decade after the economic reforms had been implemented, China could claim only 270 km (168 mi) of expressways.<sup>185</sup> In 2010, China claimed 65,000 km (40,400 mi) of high-speed roadway.<sup>186</sup> By 2020, the PRC is expected to have 96,560 km (60,000 mi) of expressways in operation, surpassing the U.S. in freeway mileage.<sup>187</sup>

Toll rates are not standardized according to distance or type of vehicle. For a sedan, toll charges average USD .007 per km, or .012 per mile, more than the cost of the fuel

<sup>183</sup> Zuo Lilcun, “New Beijing Subway to Break Ground This Year China Daily,” 10 March 2010, [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2010-03/10/content\\_9567088.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2010-03/10/content_9567088.htm)

<sup>184</sup> Peter Fairley, “China’s High-Speed-Rail Revolution,” *Technology Review*, 11 January 2010, <http://www.technologyreview.com/energy/24341/>

<sup>185</sup> Robyn Meredith, “When the Silk Road Gets Paved,” *Forbes*, 20 September 2004, [http://www.forbes.com/forbes/2004/0920/111\\_print.html](http://www.forbes.com/forbes/2004/0920/111_print.html)

<sup>186</sup> Michael Wines, “China’s Growth Leads to Problems Down the Road,” *New York Times*, 27 August 2010, [http://www.nytimes.com/2010/08/28/world/asia/28china.html?\\_r=1&ref=china](http://www.nytimes.com/2010/08/28/world/asia/28china.html?_r=1&ref=china)

<sup>187</sup> Wendell Cox, “Decentralized Growth and ‘Interstate’ Highways in China,” *New Geography*, 19 June 2010, <http://www.newgeography.com/content/001627-decentralized-growth-and-interstate-highways-china>

burned.<sup>188</sup> Truckers, particularly those hauling heavy loads like coal, often stick to the cheapest route, which has created traffic jams that have lasted days.

**Exchange 14: Is there a good auto mechanic nearby?**

Visitor:	Is there a good auto mechanic nearby?	fujin youmeiyou hao yidianr de Chiche Shiuligong?
Local:	Yes.	yau.

*Cars*

Until recently, cars—the status symbols of government officials—were chauffeur driven. Private vehicle ownership has given rise to a new term, “self-driving,” which indicates there is no chauffeur.<sup>189</sup> Gasoline was once rationed, but is now easy to find to meet the fuel demands of private car owners.

**Exchange 15: Is there a gas station nearby?**

Visitor:	Is there a gas station nearby?	fujin you jiaoyouJan ma?
Local:	Yes.	yau.

The number of car registrations in Beijing increased from 2.8 million in 2005 to 4.8 million in 2010; despite the fact the registration can cost the equivalent of the vehicle. Transportation gridlock is now a daily reality in the capital.<sup>190</sup> In 2011, cars not registered in Beijing were barred from entering the city center during the morning and evening rush hours. In addition, restrictions based on the last numeral of the license plate have been phased in to reduce congestion.<sup>191</sup>

Caution should be used when driving in China, as there are no rules of the road.<sup>192</sup> Hiring a driver who is familiar with local roads, which are often unmarked, is strongly advised for those who want to rent a car.<sup>193</sup>

<sup>188</sup> Paul Midler, “The Cost of Driving in China,” *Forbes*, 20 April 2010, <http://www.forbes.com/2010/04/19/china-tolls-car-travel-markets-economy-infrastructure.html>

<sup>189</sup> Ted Conover, “Capitalist Roaders,” *New York Times*, 2 July 2006, <http://travel.nytimes.com/2006/07/02/magazine/02china.html>

<sup>190</sup> Barbara Demick, “In Beijing, Car Ownership Rules Drive Auto Sales,” *Los Angeles Times*, 24 January 2011, <http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-china-cars-20110124,0,4661159.story>

<sup>191</sup> Liu Yujie, “Beijing’s New Traffic Rules Surprise Some Drivers,” *China Daily*, 5 January 2011, [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/bizchina/2011-01/05/content\\_11798638.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/bizchina/2011-01/05/content_11798638.htm)

<sup>192</sup> Dwight Garner, “Feeling at Sea on the Roads of New China,” *New York Times*, 23 February 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/02/24/books/24book.html>

<sup>193</sup> Ted Conover, *The Routes of Man: How Roads Are Changing the World and the Way We Live* (New York, NY: Alfred Knopf, 2010).



**Exchange 16: Can I get a cab around here?**

Visitor:	Can I get a cab around here?	wo dzai fujin neng jiaodao chudzuChiche ma?
Local:	Yes.	neng.

Alternatively, taxis are easy to flag down in any city. They are metered, so the passenger should not negotiate the fare.

**Telecommunications**

Prior to the economic reforms, telecommunication was a monopoly of the Ministry of Telecommunications. China's accession into the World Trade Organization (WTO) enabled foreign firms to enter the market causing prices to fall. Today, almost all urban Chinese carry cellular (mobile) phones, though many grew up in homes that lacked landline service.

**Exchange 17: May I use your phone?**

Visitor:	May I use your phone?	wo keyi yongyong ni de dianhua ma?
Local:	Sure.	keyi.

Internet access first became available in China in early 1996. Users were initially required to register with the police. This soon proved logistically impossible as cyber cafés began to dot the urban landscape. Chat rooms and bulletin boards are monitored by what the Chinese refer to as “big Mamas,” automated censors that are tipped off to content objectionable to the government.<sup>194, 195</sup> Aware of the power of social media to coordinate the logistics of a protest movement, sites like YouTube and Facebook are also blocked.<sup>196</sup>

<sup>194</sup> Paul Mooney, “China’s ‘Big Mamas’ in a Quandary,” *Yale Global Online*, 12 May 2004, <http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/content/chinas-%E2%80%98big-mamas-quandary>

<sup>195</sup> Greg Sinclair, “The Internet in China: Information Revolution or Authoritarian Solution?” (paper, , Modern Chinese Studies, University of Leeds, 10 May 2002), <http://www.oocities.com/gelaige79/intchin.pdf>

<sup>196</sup> Francis Fukuyama, “Is China Next?” *Wall Street Journal*, 12 March 2011, [http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703560404576188981829658442.html?mod=WSJ\\_hp\\_mostpop\\_read#printMode](http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703560404576188981829658442.html?mod=WSJ_hp_mostpop_read#printMode)

## Restaurants

Chinese eat at standard times and almost never miss meals. Therefore, some restaurants close between meal times, particularly in the afternoon when they expect few customers.

### Exchange 18: Are you still serving breakfast / lunch / dinner?

Visitor:	Are you still serving breakfast / lunch / dinner?	nimen hi gongying dzaofan / wufan / wanfan ma?
Local:	Yes.	dui.

Those in need of food between meal times should look for street food vendors, keeping in mind that hygiene standards can vary widely.

### Exchange 19: Is this food fresh?

Visitor:	Is this food fresh?	Je dongShi ShinShian ma?
Local:	Yes.	ShinShian.

In China, the person who hosts the meal typically pays for everyone.

### Exchange 20: Put This on One Bill, ok ?

Visitor:	<i>Put this on one bill, ok ?</i>	ba suoyou de dou fangdzai yiJang Jangdanshang, Shingma?
Local:	Sure.	shing.

Only restaurants serving higher end clientele will have restroom facilities. Public outhouses abound in urban China, however. One side is for females (女), while the opposite entrance is for males (男). Squat toilets, considered more hygienic by Chinese, are common in those which have flush facilities. Users are expected to supply their own toilet paper.

### Exchange 21: Where is your bathroom?

Visitor:	Where is your bathroom?	nimen de weishengjian dzai nar?
Local:	Over there.	dzai nar.

## Marketplace

### *Shopping*

Traditional markets are characterized by the atmosphere of selling rather than the type of goods being sold.<sup>197</sup> The atmosphere is usually quite lively as buyers and sellers bargain over prices. Foreigners can expect to be quoted a higher price. Only engage someone in bargaining if you intend to buy the item.

### **Exchange 22: Buy something from me.**

Visitor:	Buy something from me.	mai yiShie wo de dongShi.
Local:	No.	bu mai.

Merchants can be quite aggressive in confronting customers. Use caution, and be aware of the quality of products before purchasing them. Ask to inspect vendors items.<sup>198, 199, 200</sup>

### **Exchange 23: May I hold this and inspect it?**

Visitor:	May I hold this and inspect it?	wo neng naje jege jiancha yiShia ma?
Local:	Sure.	Shing.

### *Payment Methods*

Once an offer has been accepted, it is rude to back out. It may be wise to ask if credit cards are accepted before bartering, and be aware that vendors may add a surcharge for using this type of payment.

In traditional markets most vendors only accept Chinese currency. They fear foreign banknotes might be counterfeit and are unlikely to accept them.

### **Exchange 24: Do you accept U.S. Currency?**

Visitor:	Do you accept U.S. currency?	ni shou meiyuan ma?
Local:	No we only accept Renminbi.	bu shou. women Ji shou Renmingbi.

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<sup>197</sup> China Tours, "Traditional Markets," 2005-2011. <http://www.chinatoursaffordable.com/china-shopping/traditional-markets.html>

<sup>198</sup> Office of United States Trade Representative, "Section III: Notorious Markets," 2009, <http://www.ustr.gov/sites/default/files/Notorious%20Markets.pdf>

<sup>199</sup> Reuters, "China Silk Market Traders Protest 'Fake Goods' Label," 6 February 2009, <http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSTRE51518220090206>

<sup>200</sup> Stephen Cronin, "Beijing – Silk Street Market," *JobsInChina.com*, 30 July 2008, <http://www.jobsinchina.com/blog/beijing-silk-street-market/>

They are often reluctant to change large *renminbi* notes for the same reason. The basic unit of *renminbi* is the *yuan*. Informally known as *kuai*, Chinese currency comes in bills with denominations of 1 (also available in coin form), 2, 5, 10, 20, 50, and 100.

**Exchange 25: Can you give me change for this?**

Visitor:	Can you give me change for this?	ni neng ba Je huancheng lingChian ma?
Local:	No.	buneng.

Beggars are common in Chinese cities and markets. Chinese invariably advise foreigners not to give.

**Exchange 26: Give me money.**

Local:	Give me money.	gei wo Chian.
Visitor:	No - I don't have any.	bu, wo mei Chian.

## Chapter 4 Assessments

1. Chinese are no longer assigned jobs by the state.  
**True**  
This practice was phased out by the 1990s.
2. Hospitalization in urban China today is paid for by the patient's *danwei*.  
**False**  
In the past, the *danwei* covered most costs. Now that healthcare has been privatized, patients must have their own insurance to seek reimbursement.
3. Bargaining is the norm in Chinese markets.  
**True**  
Prices are not listed and buyers must bargain with sellers.
4. Beijing is the only Chinese city with a subway system.  
**False**  
Beijing alone had a subway system in China for over two decades, but now many cities have built subway lines.
5. Migrants from the countryside are denied services available to city dwellers.  
**True**  
Migrants are not entitled to city services like education and subsidized health care.

## Chapter 5 Rural Life

### Introduction

One of the aims of the Chinese Revolution was to improve the lives of peasants by liberating them from the suffering inflicted by a landowning class that lived off their labor. In contrast to Marx, who viewed workers as the vanguard of the proletariat, Mao succeeded in organizing a peasant-led Communist revolution.<sup>201</sup> After the establishment of the People's Republic in 1949, the new government appropriated the property of those identified as landlords. Public tribunals were staged to denounce them before they were executed.



At the same time, in attempting to address the sources of peasant impoverishment including tenancy, landlessness, and usury, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) created another exploitative system.<sup>202</sup> It began with farmers losing the right to migrate to cities in the 1950s, when the household registration system (*hukou*) was implemented. Alongside this, they were forced to pay artificially high prices for inputs like seeds while selling their grain and cotton to the state at a low, fixed price. Such an arrangement is attractive to governments seeking to accumulate resources for industrialization but at the expense of rural producers whose standard of living lags.<sup>203</sup>

Initially, the introduction of economic reforms in 1978 served to negate three decades of urban bias.<sup>204</sup> However, it became evident again in the 1990s.<sup>205</sup> In recent years, the urban-rural income gap has hovered around 3.36:1.<sup>206</sup> The 2010 census found 261 million citizens, representing one in five Chinese, living somewhere other than their *hukou* residence.<sup>207</sup> This represents the pull of better employment opportunities. Moreover, their numbers are expected to grow.<sup>208</sup>

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<sup>201</sup> Robert Stockwell, "Socialism and Communism: After Marx" (online course material, DeAnza College, Cupertino, CA, 24 February 2008), [http://faculty.deanza.edu/stockwellbob/stories/storyReader\\$117](http://faculty.deanza.edu/stockwellbob/stories/storyReader$117)

<sup>202</sup> Center for Chinese Studies, "China's Durable Inequality: Legacies of Revolution and Pitfalls of Reform: A Talk by Mark Selden," *UCLA International Institute*, 15 February 2008, <http://www.international.ucla.edu/article.asp?parentid=87446>

<sup>203</sup> Colin A. Carter and Jing Zhu, "Trade Liberalization and Agricultural Terms of Trade in China: Price Scissors Revisited," (paper, Agricultural Economists Conference, Nanjing Agricultural University, Beijing, China, 16-22 August 2009), <http://ageconsearch.umn.edu/bitstream/51636/2/paper%20746.pdf>

<sup>204</sup> Yanyan Gao, "Urban Bias, Rural-Urban Income Gap and Agricultural Growth: The Resource Diverting Effect of Rural-Urban Income Gap in China" (paper, Department of Economics, Monash University, Clayton, Australia, 2010), <http://www.buseco.monash.edu.au/eco/research/papers/2010/3410urbangao.pdf>

<sup>205</sup> Li Shi and Luo Chuliang, "Chapter 5: Reestimating the Income Gap Between Urban and Rural Households in China," in *One Country, Two Societies: Rural-Urban Income Inequalities in Contemporary China*, ed. Martin King Whyte (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), 105.

<sup>206</sup> In other words, those who lived in the city "earned 3.36 times more than those in the country." Source: Shirong Chen, "China Urban-Rural Wage Gap Widens," *BBC News*, 16 January 2009, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/7833779.stm>

<sup>207</sup> Michael Wines and Sharon LaFraniere, "China's Population Growth Slower Than Expected," *New York Times*, 28 April 2011, <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/04/29/world/asia/29census.html?ref=world>

<sup>208</sup> John Boudreau, "China's Historic Migration Swamps Its Education," *Seattle Times*, 26 June 2010, [http://o.seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/nationworld/2012209925\\_chinaed27.html](http://o.seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/nationworld/2012209925_chinaed27.html)

## Farming

### *Collectivized Agriculture*

For the first three decades of CCP rule, rural Chinese were organized into teams administered at the village level. Teams fell under the authority of the brigade, the equivalent of a township. The county was reorganized as a commune (*gongshe*), which supplied most resident services to as many as 5,000 households. Each able-bodied laborer was paid a fixed number of work points (*gongfen*) for his/her work. Men and women were assigned to same-sex teams that performed different tasks according to the degree of physical exertion required. Men carried sacks of seedlings to the field where women did the planting, a job requiring them to squat for hours. Despite the government's commitment to gender equality, men could earn 10 points per day for their assigned tasks while women never received more than 8 points.<sup>209</sup> After state procurement agents collected and paid for the harvest, grain and other essentials were first distributed among brigade members on a need basis. Thus, a hard worker with few mouths to feed might receive less grain than his slacker neighbor who had more dependents.<sup>210</sup> The remainder, including modest cash payments, was then distributed according to the number of *gongfen* each person had earned.<sup>211</sup>



© Steve Evans  
Team harvest

### **Exchange 27: Did you grow up here?**

Visitor:	Did you grow up here?	ni shi dzai Jer Jangda de ma?
Local:	Yes.	shi.

### *Household Responsibility System*

The 1978 economic reforms broke up the collectivized production system. Under the Household Responsibility System (HRS), village land was divided among households based on a per capita basis. After contracting with the state to supply a fixed amount of grain, producer families were free to dispose of the rest as they wished. Grain production went up 20% almost immediately.<sup>212</sup> However, the benefits were spread unevenly. Villages situated in places where the land was flat and fertile, such as river valleys that enjoyed access to water, were able to take full advantage of the reforms. It was easy to expand the harvest under these conditions. Farmers close to urban areas could increase their income by marketing cash crops.

<sup>209</sup> Steven, "1949-2007: Women Workers in China," *Reinventing Labour* (blog), 18 January 2010.

<http://reinventinglabour.wordpress.com/2010/06/05/women-workers-in-china-1949-2007/>

<sup>210</sup> Jean Chun Oi, "Chapter 2: Dividing the Harvest," in *State and Peasant in Contemporary China: The Political Economy of Village Government* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1989), 40.

<sup>211</sup> Fei-Ling Wang, "Introduction: Labor Allocation Patterns and Institutional Structures," in *From Family to Market: Labor Allocation in Contemporary China* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 1998), 13.

<sup>212</sup> David Dollar, "China's Reform: 'Change the System, Open the Door,'" *East Asia & Pacific on the Rise* (blog), 23 December 2008, <http://blogs.worldbank.org/eastasiapacific/china-s-reform-change-the-system-open-the-door>

### Exchange 28: Will you be going to the market today?

Visitor:	Will you be going to the market today?	jintian ni Chu shichang ma?
Local:	Yes.	Chu.

By contrast, HRS delivered negligible benefits to ethnic minorities living in mountainous regions. In fact, residents of most communities off the beaten track had no means to market goods. Thirty years after the revolution, a trip to the commune headquarters, which became the county seat under the reforms, could take half a day. Here, households that had little grain left over after making their contractual sale to the state simply went hungry.<sup>213</sup>



© Minneapolis Institute of Arts / flickr.com  
Miao woman and child

Over time one of the major problems in farming communities was the need to redistribute land amongst the villagers, to take into account changing household size. This conflicted with the need to grant long tenure, now averaging 30 years, so farmers would have an economic incentive to invest in the land. Fruit trees, for example, require a number of years of labor and fertilizer inputs before they bear fruit and generate income.

### The Urban-Rural Divide

#### Migration

In the 1990s, hinterland villagers began seeking better-paying work elsewhere in large numbers.<sup>214</sup> They found work in factories, as farm laborers in wealthy coastal communities, and in cities where men work in construction and women as maids. They are attractive to employers because they are willing to work hard for a modest salary.

### Exchange 29: Do you have a job?

Visitor:	Do you have a job?	ni you gongdzuo ma?
Local:	Yes.	you.

<sup>213</sup> Jonathan Unger and Jean Xiong, "Life in the Chinese Hinterlands under the Economic Reforms," *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars* 22, no. 2 (April-June 1990):

[http://rspas.anu.edu.au/papers/ccc/JU\\_chinese\\_hinterlands.pdf](http://rspas.anu.edu.au/papers/ccc/JU_chinese_hinterlands.pdf)

<sup>214</sup> Zhan Shaohua, "Rural Labour Migration in China: Challenges for Policies" (paper, UNESCO, Management of Social Transformations, Policy Paper No. 10, 2005), 9,

<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001402/140242e.pdf>



Despite the status associated with being a permanent city resident, some migrants have become more prosperous than urbanites, particularly laid-off factory workers.<sup>215</sup> This prosperity owes in part to support networks, in the form of kinship and native place associations, migrants have created “villages within a city” (*chengguancun*).<sup>216</sup> Among the earliest and largest such communities was Zhejiang Village in Beijing, where most of the 70,000-80,000 residents hailed from the Wenzhou area of Zhejiang province.<sup>217, 218</sup> In 1995, Zhejiang Village was torn down for redevelopment after the residents had been evicted by police, an action defended by then Premier Li Peng. His message was clear: “illegal” outsiders were not welcome.<sup>219</sup>



© Remko Tanis  
Migrant village in Beijing

### *Hukou: One Country, Two Societies*

Within China, there is now recognition that the *hukou* has created a two-tiered society, or “differentiated citizenship.”<sup>220</sup> On 1 March 2010, the editors of 13 Chinese newspapers released a joint statement asking that the *hukou* system be scrapped.<sup>221, 222, 223</sup> This incident stifled public discussion of *hukou* reform. It remains an intractable issue; there is simply no way to disband the system without creating large short-term costs.<sup>224</sup> Municipalities provide their legal residents with a package of services including schooling, unemployment insurance, and health care subsidies.<sup>225</sup> They would be hard pressed to absorb an influx of new residents who work under the table and do not pay taxes but who would draw on these services. Chinese municipal officials are often proud



© Tricia Wang  
Migrant child

<sup>215</sup> Miriam Gross, “Postulating Peasants and Upholding Urbanites: A Reassessment of China’s Rural-Urban Divide,” (paper, Modern Chinese History, University of California, San Diego, 24 March 2010), <http://ucsdmodernchinesehistory.org/2010/03/24/776/>

<sup>216</sup> Beatriz Carrillo Garcia, “Rural-Urban Migration in China: Temporary Migrants in Search of Permanent Settlement,” in *Convergences and Exclusions: Regional Integration and Social Change around the Pacific Rim*, ed. Kate Barclay and Wayne Peake (Guadalajara: University of Guadalajara Press, 2005), 206-236.

<sup>217</sup> Youqin Huang, “Chapter 9: Urban Development and Contemporary China,” in *China’s Geography: Globalization and the Dynamics of Political, Economic, and Social Change*, eds. Gregory Veeck, et al (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2006), 205.

<sup>218</sup> Dorothy J. Solinger, “China’s Floating Population,” in *The Paradox of China’s Post-Mao Reforms*, eds. Merle Goldman and Roderick McFarquhar (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 220-240.

<sup>219</sup> Michael Dutton, “Subaltern Tactics, Government Response,” in *Street Life China* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 147.

<sup>220</sup> Kam Wing Chan, “The Chinese *Hukou* System at 50,” *Eurasian Geography and Economics* 50, no. 2 (2009): <http://courses.washington.edu/chinageo/Chan-Hukou50-EGE2009.pdf>

<sup>221</sup> Brad Adams, “Letter to Wen Jiabao Ahead of the NPC Annual Plenary Session,” *Human Rights Watch*, 4 March 2010, <http://www.hrw.org/node/88913>

<sup>222</sup> Donald C. Clarke, “The Famous Hukou Editorial,” *China Law Prof Blog*, 26 March 2010, [http://lawprofessors.typepad.com/china\\_law\\_prof\\_blog/2010/03/the-famous-hukou-editorial.html](http://lawprofessors.typepad.com/china_law_prof_blog/2010/03/the-famous-hukou-editorial.html)

<sup>223</sup> Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. Department of State, “2010 Human Rights Report: China (includes Tibet, Hong Kong and Macao),” 8 April 2011, <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2010/eap/154382.htm>

<sup>224</sup> Andrew Scheineson and Carin Zissis, “China’s Internal Migrants,” *Council on Foreign Relations*, 14 May 2009, [http://www.cfr.org/publication/12943/chinas\\_internal\\_migrants.html](http://www.cfr.org/publication/12943/chinas_internal_migrants.html)

<sup>225</sup> Li Hong, “Hukou – Longest Stopgap in History,” *People’s Daily Online*, 30 March 2011, <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90001/90780/91345/7335015.html>

their cities lack the miles of slums and shanty towns filled with recent arrivals from the countryside that are associated with developing countries.<sup>226</sup>

*Land Ownership*

Urban land belongs to the state, with the actual owner being a specific entity such as a factory or university. Under the economic reforms, land use rights (LURs) have been separated from ownership, enabling a private real estate market to emerge.<sup>227</sup> Thus, once a property is developed into residential housing, condominium owners can transfer title to their properties through private sales. By contrast, agricultural land is “collectively owned,” a legal designation that does not allow for buying and selling of individual plots.<sup>228</sup> Consolidating plots could usher in more efficient farming, resulting in higher crop yields.<sup>229</sup>



© Ming Xia  
Migrant construction workers

However, Beijing fears the land could also be developed for non-agricultural purposes.<sup>230</sup> This would lead to the loss of yet more tillable fields, making it difficult to grow enough grain to feed the country’s still expanding population. The central government also remains leery of allowing households to cut their ties to the village by cashing out. In Beijing’s view as well as that of some migrants, holding onto that land provides a safety net if they lose their jobs in the city.<sup>231</sup>

**Exchange 30: Are you and your family planning to move?**

Visitor:	Are you and your family planning to move?	ni he ni jialiRen shibushi yao banjia?
Local:	No.	bushi.

<sup>226</sup> “Migration in China: Invisible and Heavy Shackles,” *The Economist*, 6 May 2010.

[http://www.economist.com/node/16058750?story\\_id=16058750](http://www.economist.com/node/16058750?story_id=16058750)

<sup>227</sup> Kara L. Phillips and Amy L. Sommers, “Tragedy of the Commons: Property Rights Issues in Shanghai Historic Residences” (paper, Seattle University School of Law, 2010), 20-21

<http://ssrn.com/abstract=1564413>

<sup>228</sup> Jingxin Wang, “China’s Rural Reform: The ‘Rights’ Direction,” *Transition* 10, no. 2 (1999),

<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/NEWSLETTERS/EXTTRANSITION/EXTDECBEYTRANEWLET/0,,contentMDK:20653243~menuPK:1544646~pagePK:64168445~piPK:64168309~theSitePK:1542353~isCURL:Y~isCURL:Y~isCURL:Y,00.html>

<sup>229</sup> Jialin Zhang, “China’s Slow-Motion Land Reform,” *Hoover Institution Policy Review* 159 (1 February 2010), <http://www.hoover.org/publications/policy-review/article/5383>

<sup>230</sup> Family farms in China average .67 ha (1.66 acres) in size. Source: BBC News, “China’s Leaders Discuss Land Reform,” 9 October 2008, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/7660528.stm>

<sup>231</sup> Daniëlle Hooijmans and Maaïke Siegerist, “Home is Where the Hukou Is,” *China Business*, 2011, [http://www.erim.eur.nl/ERIM/Research/Centres/China\\_Business/Featuring/Featuring\\_Detail?p\\_item\\_id=6571969&p\\_pg\\_id=&p\\_page\\_id=2286308#axzz1KHmL3nu0](http://www.erim.eur.nl/ERIM/Research/Centres/China_Business/Featuring/Featuring_Detail?p_item_id=6571969&p_pg_id=&p_page_id=2286308#axzz1KHmL3nu0)

## Healthcare

### *Barefoot Doctors*

In the 1950s, peasants began to receive state-funded healthcare such as routine inoculations through commune clinics. In a system established by the central government but administered at the commune level, “Barefoot Doctors,” whose name owed to the fact they removed their shoes to treat patients in the rice paddies, staffed the clinics. They also trekked to remote villages to treat those who could not travel to the clinic, which may have been several hours walk away. While most had probably only received a modest level of medical training, the World Health Organization (WHO) has lauded the pioneering role they played in the development of primary healthcare in rural China.<sup>232</sup> Emphasis was placed on providing preventive care, often in the form of education campaigns, and stopping the spread of communicable diseases.



© World Health Organization  
Barefoot doctor with patient

For all its limitations, China’s socialized healthcare system benefitted the overall population. In the 30-year period between 1952 and 1982, “infant mortality fell from 200 per 1,000 live births to 34, and life expectancy increased from about 35 years to 68, according to a study published by *The New England Journal of Medicine*.”<sup>233</sup> When the HRS was introduced, however, commune clinics lost their funding and shut down. By 1985, the percentage of rural residents who received medical care from government-subsidized healthcare clinics had fallen “from 90% to 9.8%.”<sup>234</sup> The commune clinics were replaced by treatment facilities that serve those with insurance, which few farmers can afford, or require a hefty deposit before services are rendered.

### **Exchange 31: Is there a medical clinic nearby?**

Local:	Is there a medical clinic nearby?	fujin you yiwusuo ma?
Local:	Yes, over there.	you, dzai nar.

<sup>232</sup> Cui Weiyuan, “China’s Village Doctor’s Take Great Strides,” *Bulletin of the World Health Organization* 86, no.12 (December 2008): <http://www.who.int/bulletin/volumes/86/12/08-021208/en/index.html>

<sup>233</sup> Howard W. French, “Wealth Grows, But Health Care Withers,” *New York Times*, 14 January 2006, <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/01/14/international/asia/14health.html>

<sup>234</sup> Richard Daniel Ewing, “The Need to Fix Rural Health Care in China,” *Asia Times*, 12 May 2006, <http://www.atimes.com/atimes/China/HE12Ad01.html>

### Privatized Medicine

In China there is no law that any patient in a life-threatening state must be treated regardless of ability to pay. Those who cannot afford to pay go without medical attention. As a result, hepatitis, tuberculosis, and HIV are spreading.<sup>235</sup> Many rural hospitals are on the brink of insolvency and cannot recruit well-trained staff.



### Exchange 32: Do you need my help?

Visitor:	Do you need my help?	ni yao wo bang ni ma?
Local:	Yes.	Yao.

A New Rural Cooperative Medical Service (NRCMS), subsidized by Beijing, was unveiled in 2002. Under the NRCMS, rural Chinese make a nominal contribution and then can draw on a pool of funds to cover a portion of hospitalization costs in the event of serious illness. It does not extend to preventive care. Despite the creation of this program, national government expenditures on healthcare per capita are about seven times higher in the cities than in rural areas.<sup>236</sup>

### Exchange 33: Do you know what is wrong?

Visitor:	Do you know what is wrong?	ni Jidao nar chuwentile ma?
Local:	No.	bu Jidao.

The emergence of a large “floating population” (*liudong renkou*) of migrant workers makes the spread of epidemics like severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) more difficult to prevent.<sup>237</sup>

### Transportation and Lodging

Transportation in rural China is reasonable. Dirt roads become progressively more common as one moves away from the coast into the less developed interior. Buses and motorcycle taxis serve roadside communities. In some straight stretches, farmers may dry crops on the side of the road.

### Exchange 34: Can you take me there?

Visitor:	Can you take me there?	ni neng dai wo Chu nar ma?
Local:	Yes, I can. Follow me.	neng, geng wo dzou.

<sup>235</sup> Bates Gill, Jennifer Chang, and Sarah Palmer, “China’s HIV Crisis,” *Foreign Affairs* (March/April 2002): <http://www.brookings.edu/views/articles/gill/20020301.pdf>

<sup>236</sup> Richard Daniel Ewing, “The Need to Fix Rural Health Care in China,” *Asia Times*, 12 May 2006, <http://www.atimes.com/atimes/China/HE12Ad01.html>

<sup>237</sup> Matthew Forney, “China’s Failing Health Care System,” *TIME*, 12 May 2003, <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,451006,00.html>

In the past, cheaper hotels were restricted to taking Chinese nationals; now they may provide lodging to anyone. Rural tourism is an emerging industry in China.<sup>238</sup>

### Who is in Charge?

After agriculture was decollectivized to the household level, the commune system was disbanded. The rapid erosion of governmental administrative and organizational integrity in rural areas quickly alarmed upper levels of the party-state leadership.



Specifically, a vacuum of power was blamed for the decline in order, reflected in rising crime rates and resistance to governmental policies, in particular taxation and family planning. In some cases, disregard for regulations like the need to acquire a building permit reflected the success of economic reform. In wealthier coastal villages, palatial homes, as large as 464 sq m (5,000 sq ft), sprouted out of rice paddies zoned for agricultural use only.<sup>239</sup> The owners had decided to invest their energy in lucrative off-farm pursuits and simply buy whatever grain they needed on the free market, including that which they were obligated to sell to the state. Paradoxically, the government in Beijing came to see grassroots democracy as the means to increase state capacity at the village level and restore law and order.<sup>240</sup> It hoped that allowing villagers to select their own leaders, accountable to them, would create the conditions for stable economic growth and development, in compliance with national laws.<sup>241</sup>

### Exchange 35: Does your leader live here?

Visitor:	Does your leader live here?	ni de lingdao Judzai jer ma?
Local:	Yes.	dui.

Since the 1980s, Chinese villagers have selected their village head (*cunzhang*) and members of a village committee (*cunmin weiyuanhui*) for three-year terms.<sup>242, 243</sup> Chinese village elections meet the basic democratic norms of secret ballot, direct election to office

<sup>238</sup> Cheng-hua Zhao, "Brief Analysis on China Rural Tourism," *Canadian Social Science* 3, no. 2 (April 2007): <http://cscanada.net/index.php/css/article/view/401/399>

<sup>239</sup> Sky Canaves and Sue Feng, "Chinese Village Wants to Stand Tall," *Wall Street Journal*, 8 January 2010, <http://blogs.wsj.com/chinarealtime/2010/01/08/chinese-village-wants-to-stand-tall/>

<sup>240</sup> Melanie Manion, "The Electoral Connection in the Chinese Countryside," *American Political Science Review* 90, no. 4. (December 1996): 736-748, [http://www.lafollette.wisc.edu/facultystaff/manion/files/Manion\\_APSR\\_1996.pdf](http://www.lafollette.wisc.edu/facultystaff/manion/files/Manion_APSR_1996.pdf)

<sup>241</sup> Jamie P. Horsely, "Village Elections: Training Ground for Democratization," *China Business Review*, March-April 2001, <http://www.chinabusinessreview.com/public/0103/horsley.html>

<sup>242</sup> Pierre F. Landry, Deborah Davis and Shiru Wang, "Elections in Rural China: Competition without Parties," *Comparative Political Studies* 20, no. 10 (2010): [http://www.yale.edu/sociology/faculty/pages/davis/LANDRY\\_DAVIS\\_WANG\\_2010.pdf](http://www.yale.edu/sociology/faculty/pages/davis/LANDRY_DAVIS_WANG_2010.pdf)

<sup>243</sup> Gunter Schubert, "Village Elections in the PRC: A Trojan Horse for Democracy?" (discussion paper, Institut für Ostasienwissenschaften, Gerhard-Mercator-University Duisburg, Duisburg, Germany, January 2002), <http://homepage.ruhr-uni-bochum.de/david.beckeherm/WiSe%202005-2006/Hausarbeit/Dorfwahlen%20in%20China%20-%20Demokratieansatz%20oder%20Opium%20f%20FCr%20Volk/Quellen/discuss19.pdf>

and competition between candidates. Lists of registered voters must be posted 20 days before an election and can be challenged by those who have been excluded. There is no provision for absentee ballots, so residents who work elsewhere must return to the village to vote. The candidates, who are not announced until five days before the election, do not campaign on party performance. Instead, their platforms emphasize how they will improve village life.

**Exchange 36: Can you take me to your leader?**

Visitor:	Can you take me to your leader?	ni neng dai wo Chu jian nimen lingdao ma?
Local:	Yes.	Shing.

**Checkpoints and Security**

Rural Chinese are well acquainted with roadway checkpoints. Local officials set up frequent checkpoints.

**Exchange 37: Where is the nearest checkpoint?**

Visitor:	Where is the nearest checkpoint?	dszijin de jianchaJan dzai nar?
Local:	It's 2 kilometers.	li Jer you liang gongli.

Clashes are common when villagers want to prevent the police from enforcing the judgment of the county or township level government to develop their farm land for other commercial uses, often in violation of the law. While the central government forbids the use of force in dealing with demonstrators, the specifics of how to arrive at a peaceful resolution are left to the discretion of lower-level authorities. If word of unrest reaches Beijing, leaders often side with those challenging the local authorities. In the words of a senior Sinologist, the central government's effort to align itself with the protesters "has reached the point that remarkably, senior government ministers now hail rural protests as a sign of democracy and praise the farmers' awareness of how to protect their rights."<sup>244</sup>



© owamercarey / flickr.com  
Policeman in a village

**Exchange 38: Is this all the ID you have?**

Visitor:	Is this all the ID you have?	Je shi ni weiyi de shenfenJen ma?
Local:	Yes.	shi.

Chinese are issued ID cards (**shenfenzheng**) upon reaching the age of 16.<sup>245</sup> However, there is a generation coming of age born to migrant parents in the cities. If the parents never registered their children's births in their home villages, they are ineligible for ID cards since officially they do not exist.

**Exchange 39: Show us the car registration.**

Visitor:	Show us the car registration.	Gei women knkan ni de Chiche JutseJen.
Local:	Ok.	hao.

All vehicles must be registered. The registration can cost as much as the vehicle, though this is more true in the cities than rural areas. Additionally, ordinary citizens do not have legal access to firearms.

**Landmines**

China, a non-signatory to bans on either landmines or cluster munitions, is a large producer and stockpiler of landmines.<sup>246</sup> Experts estimate that the PRC's stockpile contains around 110 million mines.<sup>247</sup>



© uniukenikki / flickr.com  
"Danger Mines" sign in Jinmen, Taiwan

At the same time, China has made a concerted effort to clear mines on its own border, particularly the one it shares with Vietnam.<sup>248</sup> Taiwan is clearing mines on certain outlying islands controlled by Taipei that were planted to discourage a possible Chinese invasion.<sup>249</sup>

**Exchange 40: Is this area still mined?**

Visitor:	Is this area mined?	Jege diChu mai dilei le ma?
Local:	Yes.	mai le.

<sup>245</sup> David Lee, "Deciphering Chinese Resident ID Cards," *David Lee's Blog*, 18 September 2010.

<http://www.cybercupidemag.com/blog/article.aspx?pkid=258>

<sup>246</sup> Ronald Hilton, "China and Landmines," *World Association of International Studies Forum on China*, 4 October 2003, [http://www.stanford.edu/group/wais/China/china\\_ChinaAndLandmines\(100403\).html](http://www.stanford.edu/group/wais/China/china_ChinaAndLandmines(100403).html)

<sup>247</sup> Matthew Bolton, "China's Landmine and Cluster Munitions Policy," *Political Minefields* (blog), 12 February 2009, <http://politicalminefields.com/2009/02/12/chinas-landmines-and-cluster-munitions-policy/>

<sup>248</sup> Nuclear Threat Initiative, James Martin Center for Non-Proliferation Studies, Monterey Institute of International Studies, "China and Anti-Personnel Landmines," 24 October 2003, <http://www.nti.org/db/china/aplorg.htm>

<sup>249</sup> "Taiwan Urged to Destroy All Recovered Landmines," *The China Post*, 28 August 2007, <http://www.chinapost.com.tw/taiwan/2007/08/28/120197/Taiwan-urged.htm>

## Chapter 5 Assessments

1. When agriculture was decollectivized in 1978, production was decentralized to the village level.  
**False**  
Production was decentralized to the household level.
2. The average income of farmers remains far below that of city dwellers.  
**True**  
On average, the household income of city dwellers is more than three times higher than farmers.
3. Chinese farmers have ownership title to their land.  
**False**  
Farmers sign leases for as long as 30 years, but all land is collectively owned by the village.
4. Today rural Chinese receive medical care from “Barefoot Doctors.”  
**False**  
Barefoot doctors were part of a system of subsidized health care under the commune system that has been disbanded.
5. Rural migrants can easily change their status (*hukou*) and become city residents.  
**False**  
Migrants cannot easily change their status which would enable them to enjoy access to services provided to city dwellers.



## Chapter 6 Family Life

### Introduction

When asked about the size of their household, Chinese respond by counting the number of people who must be fed. A well-known Chinese proverb states, “if a single member of a family eats, the whole family will not feel hungry.” This adage underscores the societal expectation that if a member of a family enjoys good fortune, that member should share it with the rest of the family. Failure to do so would cause the individual to lose face in the community. The traditional family consisted of several generations living under one roof with an extended network of male relatives.



© wisefly / flickr.com  
Traditional Chinese family

### Exchange 41: Do you have any brothers?

Visitor:	Do you have any brothers?	ni you gege didi ma?
Local:	Yes.	you.

The Chinese did not practice primogeniture where the firstborn son inherits his parents’ estate. This would have left his younger brothers to make their own way in the world, likely forcing them to seek work elsewhere.<sup>250</sup> Instead a couple’s assets were divided equally among their male offspring. Daughters, whom custom dictated marry into families outside the village, inherited nothing. They did not help care for or support their parents. Not to marry or have children was unthinkable because there would be no descendants to worship that individual in the afterlife.

### Elderly

The elderly traditionally enjoyed the highest status within the family. In a strict Confucian home, they received food first, even if it meant the children went hungry. Children learned their filial obligations through stories such as the one of a young boy who allowed mosquitoes to feed on him so they would not bite his elders.<sup>251</sup>



© Galen Frysinger  
Couple with grandchild,  
Guangxi

In recent decades, outward migration of the able-bodied from villages has become routine. As a result, there are an estimated 58 million children, over one-quarter of all Chinese children and nearly one-third of rural children, who are being raised in homes where one or both parents are absent.<sup>252</sup> This has shifted the burden of child-rearing to the elderly at a period in their lives when they expected to

<sup>250</sup> Francis Fukuyama, “Chapter 15: Sons and Strangers,” in *Trust: The Social Virtues and the Creation of Prosperity* (New York, NY: Free Press, 1995), 172-174.

<sup>251</sup> Fox Butterfield, “Chapter 8: No Road Out,” in *China: Alive in the Bitter Sea* (New York, NY: Bantam Books, 1982), 208.

<sup>252</sup> Megan K. Stack, “China Raising a Generation of Left-Behind Children,” *Los Angeles Times*, 29 September 2010, <http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-china-left-behind-20100930,0,4655427.story>

be cared for by their own children. Couples in their 80s may be raising their great-grandchildren, living off remittances provided by those working elsewhere.<sup>253</sup>

### Status of Women

Prior to the Communist revolution, upon marriage a woman worshipped her husband's ancestors. Her place in his household was secured through the birth of a son who could perpetuate the bloodline.<sup>254</sup> Still, it was only upon reaching old age that women achieved any power within the family, and that was largely limited to control over younger generations of women who had married into the family. They often became the draconian enforcement agents of the Confucian family code, which favored males.<sup>255</sup>



The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) came to power with a commitment to raising the status of women.<sup>256</sup> In the cities, both men and women were assigned jobs without regard for traditional gender roles. Thus, a woman could be hired to drive a city bus, requiring her to learn to drive and complete a course in auto mechanics. A man might be assigned to the unskilled job of onboard ticket seller. Nonetheless, they earned the same salary.

### Exchange 42: Are you the only person in your family who has a job?

Visitor:	Are you the only person in your family who has a job?	nimen jia Jiyou ni yigeRen gongdzuoma?
Local:	No.	bushi.

In the countryside, all able-bodied adults labored in the fields. However, when the cash payment portion of seasonal work points were distributed after the harvest had been collected, the male head of the family typically received payment due all members of his household.<sup>257</sup>

### Exchange 43: Is this your entire family?

Visitor:	Is this your entire family?	Jeshi nimen Chuanjia ma?
Local:	Yes.	shi.

<sup>253</sup> Richard Bernstein, "Booming China, Migrant Mystery." *NYR Blog*, 14 September 2010, <http://www.nybooks.com/blogs/nyrblog/2010/sep/14/booming-china-migrant-misery/>

<sup>254</sup> Patricia Ebrey, "Women in Traditional China," *Asia Society*, 20 August 2008, <http://asiasociety.org/countries-history/traditions/women-traditional-china>

<sup>256</sup> Barbara J. Spraker, "Women Hold Up Half the Sky" (paper, Antioch College, Seattle, WA, April 2008), <http://www.antiochsea.edu/academics/enviro/faculty/documents/WomenHoldupHalftheSky.pdf>

<sup>257</sup> Flemming Christiansen, "China Women in Rural-Urban Transition: Surrogate Brothers or Agents of Their Own Fate?" *Journal of Contemporary China* 50, no. 16 (February 2007): 122, <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/10670560601026850#preview>

Owing to restrictions placed on their geographical mobility by the household registration system (*hukou*), farmers remained reliant on their sons to care for them in old age. Daughters, by contrast, continued to marry out and become part of the support system for their in-laws. This had the effect of reinforcing the traditional second-class status of females (*zhong nan qing nu*).<sup>258</sup>

### Family Planning

The Chinese preference for male children is well known.<sup>259</sup> In addition to supporting their parents, only male heirs could carry on the family name and worship the ancestors.<sup>260</sup>



© katebellieje / flickr.com  
Village billboards from the early 1980s

By contrast, Marxist ideology stresses the equality of men and women under socialism, enabling everyone to work for the revolution. Mao Zedong thought that economic and population growth would reinforce each other. As a result, the chairman dismissed the need for family planning. Large families were encouraged, leaving traditional gender preferences unchallenged.

### Exchange 44: Are these your children?

Visitor:	Are these your children?	JeShie shi ni de haitsi ma?
Local:	Yes.	shi.

A baby boom occurred in the early 1960s, when the average number of births per woman reached 7.5.<sup>261</sup> As Deng Xiaoping consolidated power in the late 1970s, this generation was approaching adulthood when they would start their own families. Unchecked population growth would spell disaster for his plans to modernize the Middle Kingdom.<sup>262</sup> Deng intended to reorient China's economy away from the Maoist reliance on labor and replace it with mechanization and technology. This made a large, minimally educated population a liability rather than an exploitable resource.<sup>263</sup>

<sup>258</sup> Yanzhong Huang and Dali L. Yang, "China's Unbalanced Sex Ratios: Politics and Policy Response," *Chinese Historical Review* 13, no. 1 (Spring 2006), 3,

[http://www.daliyang.com/files/Huang\\_and\\_Yang\\_Unbalanced\\_Sex\\_Ratios\\_in\\_China.pdf](http://www.daliyang.com/files/Huang_and_Yang_Unbalanced_Sex_Ratios_in_China.pdf)

<sup>259</sup> Sidney B. Wesley and Minja Kim Choe, "Battling a Preference for Boys," *East-West Wire*, 2009.

<http://www.eastwestcenter.org/news-center/east-west-wire/battling-a-preference-for-boys/>

<sup>260</sup> Yusheng Peng, "When Formal Laws and Informal Norms Collide: The Case of China's Birth Control Policy," *Economy and Society*, n.d.,

<http://www.economyandsociety.org/publications/When%20Formal%20Laws%20and%20Informal%20Norms%20Collide.pdf>

<sup>261</sup> Dudley L. Poston, Jr. and Karen S. Glover, "Too Many Males: Marriage Market Implications of Gender Imbalances in China" (paper, Department of Sociology, Texas A & M University, 1 September 2004), 3,

<http://iussp2005.princeton.edu/download.aspx?submissionId=50404>

<sup>262</sup> David M. Lampton, "The Costs of China's Population Policy?" *SAISPHERE*, 03 January 2011,

<http://media.sais-jhu.edu/saisphere/article/costs-china%E2%80%99s-population-policy>

<sup>263</sup> Rebecca E. Karl, "Chapter 10: Reform, Restoration, and the Repudiation of Maoism, 1976-Present," in *Mao Zedong and China in the Twentieth Century: A Concise History* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), 171.

### *One-Child Policy*

In formulating a national family planning policy, questions such as how efforts to limit family size in the countryside might affect the future of girls were not broached by policy-makers. The topic was too sensitive because the CCP had invested so heavily in promoting gender equality.<sup>264</sup> The government's ability to impose directives was seen as stronger than cultural norms. To this end, a public campaign was launched in 1980 when the new policy went into effect. Billboards, often featuring a little girl, extolled the virtues of the one-child family.

In the cities, the policy was easy to enforce and single-child families quickly became the norm. In the countryside, however, it represented a threat to survival of the family and met with resistance. In 1984, farmers became eligible to have a second child if the first was a girl. All births, however, have to be accommodated under an annual quota set by family planning authorities and fall within a specific time frame that includes a mandatory four-year gap between siblings.<sup>265, 266</sup>

### *Demographic Implications*

Urban Chinese are legally obligated to support their parents, which has become a greater responsibility since pensions are no longer automatically state funded.<sup>267</sup> However, family-planning induced demographic changes have created the "specter of 4-2-1," or one person being financially responsible for two parents and four grandparents, a heavy burden.

Ironically, given that the one-child policy was implemented to foster national development, there are now fears it will become a drag on economic growth. This scenario can be seen in places like Shanghai, an engine of such growth, as the number of retiring white collar workers exceeds that of school graduates. To ease the anticipated labor shortage, some municipal governments allow, and have even begun encouraging, couples who are both only children to have a second child.<sup>268</sup> Nonetheless, the central government insists the policy will remain in effect elsewhere until 2015.<sup>269</sup> Couples who violate the policy are required to pay a fine that can be equivalent to several years of their annual income or the child will be ineligible for schooling. These fines, called social

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<sup>264</sup> Susan Greenhalgh, "Chapter 7: Ally Recruitment in Beijing," *Just One Child: Science and Policy in Deng's China* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2008), 264.

<sup>265</sup> Kay Ann Johnson, *Wanting a Daughter, Needing a Son: Abandonment, Adoption, and Orphanage Care in China* (Hong Kong, China: Yeong and Yeong Publishing, 2004).

<sup>266</sup> Andrew Jacobs, "Abuses Cited in Enforcing Policy of One Child," *New York Times*, 21 December 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/12/22/world/asia/22population.html?scp=1&sq=one%20child%20policy%20china&st=cse>

<sup>267</sup> Mark Magnier, "China's Honor Code," *Los Angeles Times*, 15 April 2006, <http://articles.latimes.com/2006/apr/15/world/fg-piety15/3>

<sup>268</sup> Malcolm Moore, "China Begins Lifting Strict One-Child Policy," *The Telegraph* (UK), 24 July 2009, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/china/5901573/China-begins-lifting-strict-one-child-policy.html>

<sup>269</sup> Li Wei, "One Child or 'Double Happiness': Time to Ditch One-Child Policy?" *China.org.cn*, 25 March 2011, [http://www.china.org.cn/opinion/2011-03/25/content\\_22219192.htm](http://www.china.org.cn/opinion/2011-03/25/content_22219192.htm)

compensation fees, have become the primary source of revenue for some cash-strapped rural county and township governments.<sup>270</sup>

### Education

Schooling is compulsory through ninth grade in China. However, it is not free and there are no truancy officers to ensure attendance. Parents must now pay tuition and often for incidental expenses as well. Refusing to purchase supplementary lessons prepared by the teacher, for example, puts one's child at a disadvantage in the competition for entrance to a university. Acceptance is based solely on a two-day college entrance exam (*gaokao*), held the first Thursday and Friday in June.<sup>271</sup>



#### Exchange 45: Is there a school nearby?

Visitor:	Is there a school nearby?	fujin you ShuShiao ma?
Local:	Yes.	you.

Migrant children lacking a local household registration have no legal standing to enroll in urban schools.<sup>272</sup> A parallel educational system for migrants has sprung up in the form of unlicensed private schools (*minban xuexiao*) housed wherever there is space.<sup>273</sup> Although the central government has stipulated migrant children be admitted to city schools, local children have priority. This “space available” policy affords school administrators considerable discretionary authority. A parent spelled out the implications: “To get your children the rights they’re supposed to have, you need money, time, and good connections. What migrant worker has all that?”<sup>274</sup> Instead, migrants may opt to send their children back to the village for school, thus requiring the family to split up.<sup>275</sup>

#### Exchange 46: Do your children go to school?

Visitor:	Do your children go to school?	ni haidzi shangShue ma?
Local:	Yes.	shangShue.

<sup>270</sup> Andrew Jacobs, “Abuses Cited in Enforcing Policy of One Child,” *New York Times*, 21 December 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/12/22/world/asia/22population.html?scp=1&sq=one%20child%20policy%20china&st=cse>

<sup>271</sup> Manuela Zoninsein, “China’s SAT,” *Slate*, 4 June 2008, <http://www.slate.com/id/2192732/>

<sup>272</sup> Human Rights in China, “Shutting Out the Poorest: Discrimination Against the Most Disadvantaged Migrant Children in City Schools,” 8 May 2002, <http://hrichina.org/sites/default/files/oldsite/PDFs/Reports/HRIC-Migrant-Children.pdf>

<sup>273</sup> Kate Hoagland, “Student Examines Plight of Urban Migrant Children in China” (report, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, 8 September 2009), <http://www.hks.harvard.edu/news-events/news/students/migrant-china>

<sup>274</sup> Julian Baird Gewirtz, “China’s Explosive Illegal (Im)migration Problem,” *Huffington Post*, 18 August 2010, [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/julian-baird-gewirtz/chinas-explosive-illegal-\\_b\\_684052.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/julian-baird-gewirtz/chinas-explosive-illegal-_b_684052.html)

<sup>275</sup> Karmel Wong, “‘Left Behind Children’ in Rural China,” *Duke East Asia Nexus*, 6 April 2010, <http://www.dukenexus.org/344/%E2%80%98left-behind-children%E2%80%99-in-rural-china/>

Many of these children, referred to as left behind children (*liushou ertong*), end up in homes where there is no adult who can help them with their homework.<sup>276</sup> The offspring of legal city residents are 35 times more likely than those from rural families to attend college.<sup>277</sup> While this reflects a difference in quality of education and home environment, rural applicants are also disadvantaged by the fact that there are many more slots allocated to city students.<sup>278</sup> Scoring competitively on the *gaokao* is the only way for them to permanently cut their ties to the village.<sup>279</sup>

## Marriage

Marriages were traditionally alliances between families, rather than romantic partnerships between individuals. Wealthier families, who could plan far in advance, might arrange their children’s marriages while they were still infants. On the day of the wedding ceremony, the bride arrived with her head covered by a red cloth. She laid eyes on her husband only when the cloth was removed so they could bow in front of his family’s ancestral altar three times. That act of bowing made them husband and wife and a celebratory banquet followed.



© Harald Groven  
Newlyweds in rural community

### Exchange 47: Is this your wife?

Visitor:	Is this your wife?	Jeshi taitai ma?
Local:	Yes.	shi.

When the CCP came to power, people were given the legal right to choose their partners, though most consulted their parents.<sup>280</sup> They registered at a local government office that provided documentation of their status. This enabled them to live together and receive all benefits accorded to married couples. However, the banquet continued to signify that a couple was husband and wife in the eyes of society.<sup>281</sup>

<sup>276</sup> Agence France-Presse, “Schott’s Vocab: The Left Behind Children,” *New York Times*, 9 June 2009, <http://schott.blogs.nytimes.com/tag/education/page/2/>

<sup>277</sup> John Boudreau, “China’s Historic Migration Swamps Its Education,” *Seattle Times*, 26 June 2010, [http://o.seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/nationworld/2012209925\\_chinaed27.html](http://o.seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/nationworld/2012209925_chinaed27.html)

<sup>278</sup> Chen Guidi and Wu Chuntao, “Chapter 1: The Martyr,” in *Will the Boat Sink the Water? The Life of China’s Peasants* (New York, NY: Public Affairs, 2006), 4.

<sup>279</sup> Erica Lim, “Neglect and Discrimination are Often the Fate of Migrant Children,” *US-China Today*, 7 May 2009, [http://www.uschina.usc.edu/article@usct?neglect\\_and\\_discrimination\\_are\\_often\\_the\\_fate\\_of\\_migrant\\_children\\_13763.aspx](http://www.uschina.usc.edu/article@usct?neglect_and_discrimination_are_often_the_fate_of_migrant_children_13763.aspx)

<sup>280</sup> Rebekah Murray, “The Road to China.” *LSAMagazine*, Fall 2007, [http://www.lsa.umich.edu/UMICH/lsa\\_alumni/Home/\\_TOPNAV\\_LSA%20Magazine/07fall-page%2020-21.pdf](http://www.lsa.umich.edu/UMICH/lsa_alumni/Home/_TOPNAV_LSA%20Magazine/07fall-page%2020-21.pdf)

<sup>281</sup> Michael Palmer, “Transforming Family Law in Post-Deng China: Marriage, Divorce and Reproduction,” *China Quarterly* 191 (2007): 678, <http://eprints.soas.ac.uk/5396/1/TransformingFamilyLawInPostDengChina.pdf>

### Exchange 48: Congratulations on your marriage.

Visitor:	Congratulations on your marriage.	gongShi ni jiehun le.
Local:	Thank you.	ShieShie.

Women with an agricultural *hukou* can legally move anywhere within rural China, though not into the cities. This restriction has led to women from the poorer interior using marriage as a migration strategy for reaching the wealthy coastal regions. There, they have their choice of husbands, given the gender imbalance that exists in the countryside.<sup>282</sup> Beijing is well aware of the implications of this trend for men in poorer areas. According to the deputy director of the Chinese Population Association, “It will increase incidences of women being bought as wives, as well as abduction and trafficking, and prostitution and pornography.”<sup>283</sup>

#### *Contemporary Urban Unions*

Even in the 21st century, Chinese men are still viewed as the primary provider. Thus, bachelors need to demonstrate they have the means to provide for a family. At the same time, materialism is making inroads into family life.<sup>284</sup> For “twenty-something” males, part of the first only-child generation to reach adulthood in an age of unprecedented wealth and material comfort, marital prospects have come to hinge on their ability to buy a condo.<sup>285</sup>



© emop / flickr.com  
Young couple

### Exchange 49: Are you married?

Visitor:	Are you married?	ni jiehun le ma?
Local:	No.	Meiyou.

Property ownership is also a means to get a local household registration, which is necessary to register a marriage in that city. This is a situation confronted with increasing frequency by mobile, college-educated Chinese.<sup>286</sup> Yet, owing to rapid appreciation, prices start at USD 150,000 in most cities. A Chinese scholar complained, “Marriage is becoming more and more materialistic. This is a huge change in Chinese society. No matter how confident a woman is, she will lose face if her boyfriend or husband doesn’t have a house.”<sup>287</sup>

<sup>282</sup> Lei Meng, “Bride Drain: Rising Female Migration and Declining Marriage Rates in Rural China,” (paper, Shanghai University of Finance and Economics, Shainghai, China, 10 October 2009), 12-15, [http://se.shufe.edu.cn/upload/\\_info//32822\\_0910120859381.pdf](http://se.shufe.edu.cn/upload/_info//32822_0910120859381.pdf)

<sup>283</sup> He Na, “Brides and Prejudice in China,” *China Daily*, 23 August 2010, [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2010-08/23/content\\_11192405.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2010-08/23/content_11192405.htm)

<sup>284</sup> Xiyun Yang, “China’s Censors Reign in ‘Vulgar’ Reality Show,” *New York Times*, 19 July 2010, [http://www.nytimes.com/2010/07/19/world/asia/19chinatv.html?\\_r=1&ref=world](http://www.nytimes.com/2010/07/19/world/asia/19chinatv.html?_r=1&ref=world)

<sup>285</sup> Andrew Jacobs, “For Many Chinese Men, No Deed Means No Dates,” *New York Times*, 14 April 2011, <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/04/15/world/asia/15bachelors.html?pagewanted=1&hp>

<sup>286</sup> Quincy Yu, “The Long and Winding Path to Marriage in Modern China,” *The Epoch Times*, 27 May 2010, <http://www.theepochtimes.com/n2/content/view/36291/>

<sup>287</sup> David Pierson, “China’s Housing Boom Spells Trouble for Boyfriends,” *Los Angeles Times*, 21 June 2010, <http://articles.latimes.com/2010/jun/21/business/la-fi-china-bachelor-20100621>

This assertion could be disputed. Traditionally, Chinese women only married once, while a man could have multiple wives and mistresses. Therefore, her family carefully considered his ability to support her and their children. Material assets always figured in; they simply changed to reflect China's level of development at the time of the marriage. This remained true even after the CCP came to power. For example, prior to the economic reforms, having his own employer (*danwei*) allocated housing improved a man's prospects.<sup>288</sup> Now that real estate has been privatized, owning a home has become necessary and most males require assistance from their parents to make the purchase. For those whose parents are not in a position to help, their marital prospects are much dimmer.

## Divorce

Divorce was historically rare in China. Wives had no choice but to accept infidelity, given the stigma associated with divorced women. Though much of China's social heritage was deemed "feudal" by the CCP, female employment was seen as the solution to women's subordinate position within the family. Women's liberation was intended to serve the revolution, not a means to personal fulfillment. As a result, permission to divorce remained difficult to obtain in Maoist China. This was due in part to a belief that marital dissolution reflected a bourgeois lifestyle choice associated with the decadent West. However, there were practical reasons for *danwei*, whose approval was required, to restrict it as well. Chinese cities all had housing shortages, and divorce necessitated establishing two households. The upshot was most unhappy couples were forced to endure their unions, just as earlier generations had done.

After a series of incremental modifications, in 2003 the Chinese government moved to waive the 30-day waiting period for uncontested divorces. The paperwork can now be processed in a few minutes.<sup>289</sup> Since then, the national divorce rate has continued to inch up, while the number of people marrying, once a universal rite of passage, has fallen off.<sup>290</sup> In 2010, more Chinese couples divorced than married.<sup>291</sup> As is true elsewhere, there is no consensus in China on whether no-fault divorce helps or hinders women. So many cases involve third parties that China is moving to restrict the legal rights of the "little third," a colloquial term for mistress, to retain ownership of property she received from a married man if his wife sues to get it back.<sup>292</sup>

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<sup>288</sup> Lisa Movius, "Are Chinese Women Too Picky?" *Wall Street Journal*, 8 September 2010, <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703453804575480872856621644.html>

<sup>289</sup> Maureen Fan, "Chinese Slough Off Old Barriers to Divorce," *Washington Post*, 7 April 2007, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/04/06/AR2007040602220.html>

<sup>290</sup> Arienne Gaetano, "Single Women in Urban China and the 'Unmarried Crisis': Gender Resilience and Gender Transformation" (working paper, Center for East and Southeast Asian Studies, Lund University, 2009), [http://www.lu.se/upload/Syd\\_och\\_sydstasienstudier/pdf/Gaetano.pdf](http://www.lu.se/upload/Syd_och_sydstasienstudier/pdf/Gaetano.pdf)

<sup>291</sup> Agence France Presse, "China Saw More People Divorce Than Marry in 2010," *Sino Daily*, 7 February 2011, [http://www.sinodaily.com/reports/China\\_saw\\_more\\_people\\_divorce\\_than\\_marry\\_in\\_2010\\_999.html](http://www.sinodaily.com/reports/China_saw_more_people_divorce_than_marry_in_2010_999.html)

<sup>292</sup> Sharon LaFraniere, "Court Considers Revising China's Marriage Law," *New York Times*, 16 February 2011, <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/02/17/world/asia/17china.html>



## Funerals

In the cities, cremation is mandatory due to the shortage of land. This requirement has undercut the tradition of elaborate funerals that were once the rule in China.<sup>293</sup> The CCP leadership viewed such beliefs as feudal and banned burials as a waste of good land and timber; they were never able to stamp out the tradition in the countryside.<sup>294</sup> Today money is set aside for a good coffin, the single largest expense; the family might even consult a *feng-shui* master, or geomancer, to determine the appropriate placement of the coffin in the ground.



© swearl / flickr.com  
Funeral ceremony in the countryside

### Exchange 50: I would like to offer my condolences.

Visitor:	I would like to offer my condolences.	wo dui ni he ni jialiRen biaoshi aidao.
Local:	Thank you.	ShieShie.

The color white has traditionally been associated with death, since it is the color of bones. The next of kin will typically wear a white head band or white clothing during the funeral service. How long the family will grieve in private is a personal matter, though the grieving period may be longer than in cultures where there is the expectation that the family will be reunited with the deceased in heaven.<sup>295</sup>

<sup>293</sup> Edward Friedman, Paul g. Pickowicz, and Mark Sheldon, “Chapter 1: The County Declines, Villages Disintegrate,” in *Chinese Village, Socialist State* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993), 1.

<sup>294</sup> Fox Butterfield, “Chapter 11: A Pig Under the Roof,” in *China: Alive in the Bitter Sea* (New York, NY: Bantam Books, 1982), 256.

<sup>295</sup> Mary Hancock, “A Chinese View of Death,” (course material, Grief in a Family Context course, Indiana University, 2009), <http://www.indiana.edu/~famlygrf/culture/hancock.html>

## Naming Conventions

One Chinese expression used to refer to common people is the “old hundred surnames” (*lao bao xing*). This refers to the names used by most of the population, though a few surnames such as Zhang, Li, Chen and Wang are disproportionately represented. Women do not change their names upon marriage, though referring to Chen Yimei as

“Mrs. Wang” after she marries Wang Xiaobo will not cause offense. Names are typically composed of three characters; the surname always comes first and stands alone in the *pinyin* romanization. The second character may be either a generational name or a given one; the order is flexible.<sup>296</sup> Much thought went into selecting the third character, the given name, generally a trait the family wanted the child to exhibit. Only close family members use a person’s given name.



© John Roberts  
Children in Fengdu

Today, there’s a trend toward creating unique names by selecting obscure characters.<sup>297</sup> It has created problems of a practical nature when the characters are not found in computer databases as the PRC moves from a hand-written name on the official ID card (*shenfenzheng*) to a computerized entry, leading to complaints of arbitrary name changes.<sup>298</sup>

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<sup>296</sup> Asia for Educators, Columbia University, “Chinese Names,” 2009, [http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/special/china\\_1000bce\\_names.htm](http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/special/china_1000bce_names.htm)

<sup>297</sup> “Chinese Names: Big Deal and Big Headache,” *Wenhousecrafts.com*, 5 October 2006, <http://wenhousecrafts.com/culture/2006/name.htm>

<sup>298</sup> Baoru, “The Trouble With Chinese Names Not Found in the Computer,” *CN Reviews* (blog), 3 May 2009, [http://cnreviews.com/life/news-issues/unique-chinese-names-identification-cards\\_20090503.html](http://cnreviews.com/life/news-issues/unique-chinese-names-identification-cards_20090503.html)

## Chapter 6 Assessments

1. Divorce is difficult to obtain in China today.

**False**

Divorce takes a day in China now in contrast to the Maoist period when it required multiple levels of permission.

2. Urban Chinese can only marry in the city where they are registered to live.

**True**

To marry, a couple must each have a local household registration (*hukou*).

3. Chinese women take their husband's name upon marriage.

**False**

Chinese women retain their own name after marriage.

4. Chinese families traditionally divided their assets equally between all children.

**False**

Only sons inherited their parents' property; daughters received nothing.

5. In Chinese cities, cremation is a mandatory practice.

**True**

This requirement has undercut the tradition of elaborate funerals that were once the rule in China.

## Final Assessment

1. Bad class background designations like “landlord” remain a source of official discrimination.
2. Dual labor markets have been important to China’s post-reform economic growth.
3. Chinese travel to Beijing to see the future of their country.
4. Mass mobilization campaigns were unique to China.
5. The 1989 Democracy movement was the first student-led protest movement in China’s history.
6. Christian missionaries are restricted from seeking converts in present-day China.
7. Confucianism emphasizes all men are created equal.
8. A person can be both Buddhist and Taoist.
9. The PRC recognizes 150 ethnic groups.
10. Chinese citizens may not elevate allegiance to any religious authority over the government.
11. The Mid-Autumn Festival is the most important holiday to spend with family.
12. The *qipao* dress is of Manchu origin.
13. The Dragon Boat Festival commemorates the self-sacrifice of an imperial official who dared speak the truth.
14. “Eating Bitterness” (*chi ku*) refers to the taste of certain types of food.
15. Toasting is part of a Chinese banquet.
16. The *danwei* work unit was a Maoist invention.
17. The iron rice bowl referred to food ration coupons.
18. The “floating population” refers to people who change jobs often.
19. Chinese are sympathetic to the plight of beggars.
20. The highway system in China is under local control.
21. In the countryside, couples are legally allowed to have two children.
22. Most migrants leave their villages to make money in order to return home and start a business.
23. Elections were introduced to select village heads after villagers demanded a say in choosing their leaders.
24. Over 100 million rural Chinese have sought work away from their village homes.

25. *Hukou* reform is a politically sensitive topic.
26. The communist government created a pension system that covered all citizens.
27. The most prized quality in a Chinese child is obedience.
28. The one-child policy was implemented by Mao Zedong.
29. “Little emperors and empresses” refers to the first generation of only children.
30. Rural Chinese are disadvantaged by the college entrance exam system.

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