A photograph of a bamboo raft on a river. The raft is made of several large bamboo logs and is being paddled by a man wearing a traditional conical hat. Two dark birds are perched on the raft. The background features misty, karst mountains. The text 'JOURNEY TO THE EASTERN HEMISPHERE' is overlaid in white serif font.

JOURNEY TO THE
EASTERN
HEMISPHERE

APRIL LOTEMPIO

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ASIA

CHINA

CHINA: THE BIG PICTURE

Did you know that more people live in China than any other country on Earth? With a population of 1.3 billion, the People's Republic of China is home to 20% of the world's population. China is one of the oldest continuous civilizations, with roots going back roughly 7,000 years. It is also one of world's largest countries. With such vast size, population, and history, China has developed a rich and fascinating culture.

China is a land of contrasts: ancient and modern, rural and urban, and prosperous and poor. Most of the population lives in the eastern third of the country in sprawling rural villages or huge, modern cities. In the west, various people groups make their homes in desert and mountain regions. Farming is the dominant occupation, though workers are increasingly moving to cities to find jobs in manufacturing and services. Although the nation generates huge economic output and has vast resources, the people as a whole are not wealthy.

Much of China's government, education, and daily life are based on the ancient belief systems and philosophies of Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism.

China's oldest written records, dating to about 1,500 BCE, tell us that the nation began as a collection of independent kingdoms that frequently warred with one another. In 221 BCE, China's first emperor, Qin Shi Huangdi, united the country under one central government and founded a dynasty.

Dynastic rule continued for many centuries, and China became one of the world's most advanced civilizations. Inventors, artists, philosophers, and traders spread Chinese influence throughout the world.

In 1912, the dynasties came to an end as the Nationalist Party established a republic in China. Just 37 years later, the Communists took control of the country, and continue to rule to this day. Communists placed strict controls on China's economy, industry, finance, and everyday life. Today, China is slowly allowing more freedom in industry, the media, and everyday life.

CHINA'S HISTORY

As one of the world's oldest civilizations, China has a long and rich history. The first evidence of human settlements in China date back to somewhere between 10,000 and 5,000 BCE. During this time, Chinese civilization grew from two main cultures—the Yangshao and the Longshan. The Yangshao farmed the central valley of the Yellow River, while the Longshan, who lived in walled communities, raised rice, cattle, and sheep.

As early as the 1500's BCE, early forms of writing emerged, allowing Chinese culture to develop quickly. The first major written history of China dates back to 100 BCE and was written by a historian named Sima Qian. Civilization flourished

Fast Facts

Capital:

Beijing

Size:

4th in the world

Area:

5,963,274 sq miles
(15,444,809 sq km)

Coastline:

9,010 miles (14,500 km)

Highest Point:

Mount Everest 29,035
feet (8,850 meters)

Lowest Point:

Turpan Pendi -505 feet
(-154 m)

Population:

1.3 billion

Official Languages:

Standard Chinese
(Mandarin)

Currency:

Yuan (or renminbi)



National Anthem:

"The March of the
Volunteers"

National Symbol:

dragon

in China, giving rise to many inventions, philosophies, and other cultural developments.

Ancient Chinese history is divided into dynasties, or rule by families. Beginning in 221 BCE, rival kingdoms became united under an emperor to form one massive kingdom. This form of government lasted through several dynasties for thousands of years. In 1912, Chinese citizens overthrew the emperor and formed a republic. Then, in 1949, civil war resulted in a Communist government coming to power. Today, China is a truly “modern” nation that is changing rapidly.

Xia Culture

Xia culture started during the 2100’s BCE. Although it was traditionally considered the first dynasty, some scholars suggested this claim was a myth. Archaeologists have uncovered sites that may support the theory of the Xia culture as the first dynasty. Now scholars question how much of the written record is truth and how much is fiction.

Shang Dynasty (1766–1045 BCE)

The Shang created a highly developed society in the eastern valley of the Yellow River. Arising from the Longshan and Xia cultures, the Shang dynasty lasted several hundred years. Archaeologists have discovered bronze vessels, war chariots, and written records they attribute to the Shang people.

Zhou Dynasty (1045–221 BCE)

The Zhou came out from the west, overthrew the Shang, and established a new dynasty. Though they ruled the western part of China, they allowed some followers to create semi-independent states in the east. The most famous individual from the Zhou Dynasty is the philosopher Confucius. He inspired people to live according to moral principles, including respecting others and leading a family-focused life.

The Zhou dynasty was weakened by battles with foreign invaders and the increasing independence of the seven eastern states. Ultimately, the Qin state took control and began a long-lasting period of a united China.

Map of China



CHINA'S GOVERNMENT

China is officially named the People's Republic of China, or PRC for short. It is a Communist state with its capital in Beijing. China consists of 23 provinces, or sheng, as well as other regions that fall under slightly different classifications, such as Tibet, Taiwan, and Hong Kong. Until 221 BCE, China was ruled by separate kingdoms. It was then unified under the Qin dynasty. In 1912, dynasty rule was replaced by the Republic of China. In 1949, Communist leaders established the People's Republic of China. The Chinese celebrate National Day every October 1st to commemorate that event.

Citizens 18 years of age or older are allowed to vote in elections. The government follows a constitution that has been amended several times, most recently in 2005. China's top leaders are the president, who is elected every five years, and a premier nominated by the president and approved by the National People's Congress. They serve as the head of the executive branch, or State Council. The president is more of a figurehead, while the premier carries out the day-to-day duties of government.

China's highest decision-making body is the National Party Congress. Serving as the legislative branch of the government, it consists of 2,200 representatives elected by popular vote up to the county level, and by delegates at higher levels. However, the Party Congress only meets once every five years, so a Central Committee, consisting of about 200 members, acts in their name when the Party Congress isn't in session. Other main administrative bodies include the Politburo and the Secretariat, both small groups of powerful leaders. The head of the Secretariat is the general secretary, the highest position in the Chinese Communist Party (CCP).

The judicial branch consists of courts that follow the policies of the Communist Party. The Supreme People's Court, the highest court in the nation, deals with national issues and oversees the lower courts.

The Chinese Communist Party works in parallel with the State Council and is the strongest group in the government. It is responsible for setting major policy directions and establishing Communist values among citizens. The government carries out these policies and handles the day-to-day matters involved in running a huge country. Until recently, there was

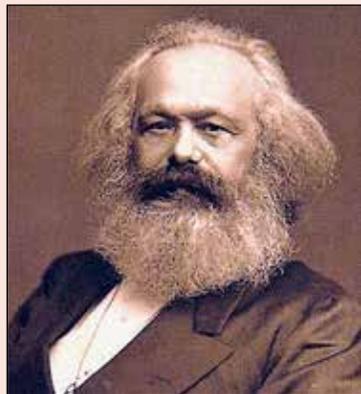
great overlap between the CCP and the Chinese government, as individuals often held similar positions in both. As representatives of the working class, the CCP traditionally didn't allow business owners to join the party. But that has changed in recent years. Even so, only 5% of China's population belongs to the Communist Party.

China's unified military, the People's Liberation Army (or PLA) consists of an army, navy, and air force. With over two million members, it reports to the joint command of the Central Military Commission. China also has a large militia (a citizens' army) and army reserves. All men must serve in the PLA when they reach 18 years old. Many women serve as well, especially in technical and medical areas.

COMMUNISM

Communism is a political and economic ideology. That means communist beliefs affect all aspects of government, citizens' rights, property, resources, production, and more. It is based on public, rather than private, ownership and government control of most major industries. Communism is related to socialism, a set of beliefs based on communal ownership. However, communism more closely follows the doctrines of Marxism, a worldview developed by German philosopher Karl Marx.

Communist governments are dominated by a single political party that adheres strictly to communist ideals. They own all of a country's means of production—factories, mines, etc.—as well as the land. Although it promises to provide financial security and economic equality for all, communism results in a fairly poor general population with a few extremely wealthy leaders.



Karl Marx

Communism's Roots

As far back as the 300's BCE, ancient Greeks wrote about communal ownership of property. Their early form of communism, based on the Latin word *communis*, proposed ownership of all property and goods by a ruling class. Those rulers would have to put the welfare of the state above that of the individual.

In the 1800's, Karl Marx published his radical ideas about government in *The Communist Manifesto* and *Das Kapital*. These writings criticized capitalism—the economic system in which private citizens own the means of production and set prices. Marx believed that all the problems of history were caused by class struggles. He thought that owners and managers (which he called the bourgeoisie) kept all of the profits of production and treated workers poorly. The workers (or proletariat), on the other hand, labored long hours in unsafe conditions, yet had a lower standard of living. Marx felt sure that a coming revolution would establish common workers as the ruling class. His writing was so inflammatory that he was expelled from his home country of Germany, as well as France and Belgium.

Communism in Practice

In a capitalist economy, private parties (individuals or corporations) own land, factories, and other means of production. They decide what goods or services to provide, how much to produce, what prices to charge, and which workers to hire. In a communist system, on the other hand, the government makes these decisions and more. Central planning means that the government owns all means of production and directs all economic activity. This nationalization, or government control, allowed for the rapid industrialization of Communist countries.

The Chinese Communist Party

Communism came to China in 1921 in the form of the Chinese Communist Party, which still holds power today. Events in Russia influenced Chinese revolutionaries to turn to Marxism. Among the most influential of these revolutionaries was Mao Zedong. Mao began by working with others to organize labor unions in the 1920's, when China's government was

unstable. At first, members of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) formed an alliance with the Nationalist Party government. However, Chiang Kai-shek, leader of the Nationalists, turned the Nationalists against the CCP, suppressing their activity for a time.

Mao and his followers fled the cities and turned their focus to peasant farmers. The CCP had so much support that in 1931 they established the Chinese Soviet Republic, consisting of 10 million people. They elected Mao as chairman. The Nationalist military launched attacks against the Chinese Soviet Republic. Under the leadership of Mao, the Communists defended themselves successfully four separate times. However, Mao was then removed from his position and the new leadership was unable to resist the fifth attack.



Chinese Communist Mao Zedong

After the Nationalist military conquered them, the CCP escaped from southeastern China in the Long March of 1934-35. The Communists marched thousands of miles across

18 mountain ranges and 24 rivers to northwestern China. About 85,000 troops and additional personnel moved secretly at night, carrying all of their weapons and supplies themselves. Unfortunately, tens of thousands of people died due to starvation, fighting, and disease. Mao lost two small children and a younger brother. However, during the year-long trek, Mao rose to the position of undisputed leader of the CCP. The heroism displayed during the march also inspired many young Chinese to join the party.

In 1936, the Nationalists and the CCP set aside their conflict to fight Japanese invaders. For about a decade, the Nationalists put forth little effort while Mao's forces grew stronger by fighting the Japanese, building support, and gaining experience. Once the Japanese were defeated, the Chinese civil war resumed. While the United States supported the Nationalists, Mao's CCP ultimately defeated them in 1949. The Nationalists fled to the island

of Taiwan and Mao established the People's Republic of China, a Communist state. With high hopes for a new era, he stated, "The era in which the Chinese were regarded as uncivilized is now over. We will emerge in the world as a highly civilized nation." Mao continued to lead the Communist Party until his death in 1976.

At first, the CCP formed a strong alliance with the Soviet Union, a fellow Communist country. However, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) was much more open to relationships with other foreign countries, including the United States, than the CCP was. These ideological differences caused the CCP to sever ties with the Soviet Union in the 1950's.

The CCP itself experienced a rift in the 1960's when Mao and his more radical followers clashed with more pragmatic Communist leaders Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping. Mao's Cultural Revolution, a plan for economic and social development, caused others to view him and his ideals as too extreme. However, the Cultural Revolution gained momentum and several of the more pragmatic leaders lost their positions in government. Later, after Mao's death in 1976, Deng Xiaoping took control as head of the CCP. Along with other leaders, Deng put an end to the Cultural Revolution and arrested Mao's widow and other powerful radical leaders.

Deng Xiaoping rose to power when China's economy was greatly weakened. Mao's failed attempt at centralized planning and huge communal farms had left most people very poor. China's economic growth struggled to keep pace with its exploding population. Under Deng's leadership, farmers were once again allowed private land. Others opened private businesses. In special economic zones, foreign investors were allowed to manufacture goods to export. With these changes in place, the economy slowly recovered and the standard of living improved for most people.

Today, the CCP is the largest political party in the world. With over 80 million members, it sets policy for China's central, provincial, and local government. Every five years, a National Party Congress of about 2,000 meets to elect 200 members to a Central Committee. The Central Committee, which meets once a year, elects 25 members to a Politburo. The Politburo leads the CCP and its six to nine top members form a Standing Committee, the highest leadership body in the country. In another branch

of the government, the Secretariat handles day-to-day administrative tasks. Its general secretary is the top party official. The CCP partly controls China's military. It also publishes a daily newspaper ("People's Daily") and a biweekly journal ("Seeking Truth").

CHINESE CULTURE

Because Chinese civilization is one of the oldest on Earth and was isolated from the Western world for hundreds of years, it has a rich, unique culture. Traditional Chinese artisans were highly valued for their ability to blend the beauty of nature with functional designs. The various dynasties in China's history each made their own contributions to art, music, and literature.

By the 1800's, European and American influences began to show up in Chinese culture, from food to fashion to theater. After a few hundred years of cultural diffusion, the Communist party took control in 1949. They placed strict limits on Chinese artists, requiring their work to express communist values and ideals. During the Cultural Revolution, the arts were stifled and millions of people were imprisoned or killed, many of them artists and intellectuals. In the 1970's, a change in leadership loosened the reins on artists once again. Now, they have more freedom to express themselves and experiment with different styles.

Pottery

China's vast resources of clay make pottery one of its most well-known and oldest art forms. For hundreds of years, the Chinese have used clay to make porcelain or china objects, like vases and teapots. The Chinese have been using the potter's wheel for over 5,000 years to create pottery. They also developed intricate methods of decorating pottery, including using glazes as far back as the 1300's BCE. Chinese pottery is often decorated with beautiful landscapes, flowers, and calligraphy. Many pieces feature dragons—a symbol of wisdom and goodness. In the 100's CE, the Chinese invented porcelain, a type of delicate china made from very fine clay.



Each life-size terracotta warrior has unique facial features

During the Ming dynasty, a blue and white pattern of decorated porcelain became popular. Upper-class people used pottery to decorate their homes and display their wealth.

Sculpture

China's earliest sculptures were often life-size figures made from clay. Sculptures of people, horses, and even chariots often stood guard around tombs. The most famous of these is the terra-cotta army of China's first emperor. Over 7,500 figures were found guarding his tomb when farmers accidentally discovered them while digging a well in 1974.

As Buddhism spread across China, sculptors turned their attention to decorating shrines with figures of Buddha. They also branched out from clay and stone to begin working with jade, bronze, and other metals. The Chinese were the first to make cast iron by heating iron ore in furnaces and pouring it into molds. However, this metal was used more for tools and weapons than for art.

Paper-Making, Printing, and Writing

The Chinese are credited with being the first to invent paper. This invention came about some time during the Han dynasty, about 200 BCE. The earliest forms of paper used rags, but soon plant material became more

popular. Bamboo or other plants would be soaked and turned into a pulp. Then, screens were dipped into the pulp and set out to dry. Government factories mass-produced the paper for civil service workers to use.

Printing was done using wooden blocks with carved symbols. At first, these printing blocks would contain a simple seal that could be stamped onto official documents or personal letters. Later, they were used to print entire pages of books. Carving a wood block for each page of a book was a slow and difficult process, but it caused a rise in literacy across the country.

Chinese writing is an art form all its own. The Chinese language doesn't use an alphabet, because the writing is based on symbols, or characters, instead of sounds. Each word has its own character, which means there are over 40,000 in all. The characters are written and read from the top of the page to the bottom in columns, moving from right to left. A particularly beautiful style of writing invented in China is calligraphy. It is traditionally done with a brush and ink. This ancient art form has been around for thousands of years and is a highly respected skill.



The Forest of Stone Stelae museum is home to over 3,000 inscribed stone slabs and is called the “Cradle of Calligraphy”

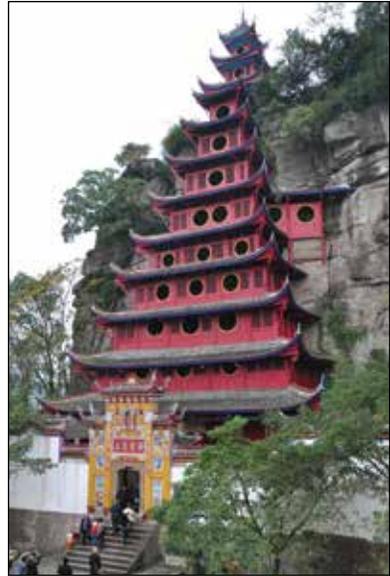
Despite its large economy, China's people have below-average income. They save a lot of their money, which slows economic growth. Other economic problems plague China as well. Population control means that the aging population is growing more rapidly than that of younger workers. Migrants from rural areas are moving to cities in large numbers looking for education and jobs. The huge population and industry are causing environmental damage, such as pollution and deforestation.

China's economy is made up of about 10% agriculture and then a near-even split between industry (44%) and services (46%). Its labor force of 800 million workers is the largest in the world. Workers in China are split almost equally among agriculture, industry, and services. About 4% of the population is unemployed and roughly 6% live below the poverty line.

The Chinese government sets five-year economic plans that establish goals for the economy. Beginning in the 1950's, these plans have recently included huge public works projects to improve roads, subways, bridges, and dams.

China's main exports are electrical machinery, other machinery, clothing, furniture, toys, and textiles. Its largest export partners are Hong Kong, the United States, Germany, and Japan. Its main imports are electrical machinery, other machinery,

oil and mineral fuels, nuclear reactor components, medical equipment, metal ores, motor vehicles, and soybeans. China imports goods from all over the world, but mainly from South Korea, Japan, and Taiwan.



The pagoda at Shibaozhai

Agriculture

Only about 10% of China's land is suitable for farming. Even so, China's farmers produce most of the world's rice. They also grow wheat, corn,

tobacco, soybeans, peanuts, tea, sugar beets, potatoes, and cotton. Much of the land lacks irrigation, and farmers face the constant threat of floods, droughts, and erosion. Although modern farming machines are available, many peasant farmers employ simple, traditional methods instead.

Farmers grow rice in special fields called paddies. A rice paddy is a flat area that is flooded to help cultivate rice. Farmers in more hilly areas practice terrace farming. In this practice, long “steps” are cut into hillsides to create flat areas to farm. In the warm south, farmers can harvest two or three rounds of crops per year.

China also raises a great number of livestock. It is the world’s leading producer of pigs, chickens, and eggs. Sheep and cattle are also major forms of livestock. Farmers in China raise more domesticated ducks than anywhere else in the world.

Traditionally, most Chinese people lived in rural villages and worked as farmers. Until the late 1970’s, the state controlled all agricultural decisions from what to grow and where to what prices to charge. Peasant farmers worked together on communal land. Over the past few decades, policies have changed to allow farmers greater freedom. In modern times, many people are moving away from farms to cities in search of education and jobs.

Forestry and Fishing

Many of China’s vast forests are located in the inaccessible central mountain regions. Therefore, most of the country’s timber comes from areas in the northeast and south central regions.

With extensive coastlines and inland bodies of water, China leads the world in ocean and freshwater fishing. In addition, raising fish in ponds has been a longstanding practice.

Mineral and Energy Resources

China has some of the world’s richest stores of coal, petroleum, and oil. Until recently, however, it has been unable to use these resources due to inadequate production facilities and transportation. Partnering with foreign investors has improved production. China is still working to bring energy resources to places they are most needed — in large cities and

industrial areas. It receives 70% of its electrical energy from burning coal, but coal often has to be transported great distances to be used.

China produces more iron ore, aluminum, lead, and zinc than any other country. It is also a leading producer of gold, silver, and copper. Mining in China has been experiencing many problems in recent times. Current reserves of resources are not enough to meet the country's long-term needs. In addition, the process of mining is inefficient, causing much waste and pollution.

Manufacturing

This segment of China's economy has been growing about 10% per year. As the world's number one producer of steel, China engages in much heavy industry. Major manufactured products include automobiles, aircraft, ships, and military equipment. It also produces many consumer goods, especially clothing, electronics, and processed foods. Many foreign companies base their manufacturing in China and export products from there.

Services

With such a large population, Chinese workers must provide many services, including education, health care, banking, transportation, and many others. One of the largest service industries in China is tourism. People from within the country and abroad love to visit the many sights throughout China. This provides many jobs for tour guides, translators, bus drivers, hotel workers, and more.

Transportation

China's great size, population, and economic activity have created a challenge in the area of transportation. Roads, bridges, and railways cannot currently keep up with the need to move people and ship goods. Efforts have been made to extend roads and railways into China's more remote regions. Newer high-speed rail lines have been built to link major cities. Compared to the rest of the world, China is first in the number of navigable waterways, third in the number of roads and railways, and fourteenth in the number of airports.

In rural areas, many people use traditional forms of transportation, such as simple carts or wagons pulled by people or animals. People walk and ride bikes as well. In crowded cities, some people own cars or motor scooters, but most use public transportation like buses, taxis, and trains.

Communication

After the Communists came to power, communication in China came under strict government control. Most newspaper, radio, and television content is limited to the political topics and viewpoints of the Communist party. Since the 1980's, media has included more non-political information and entertainment, though it is still monitored by the government. In 2011, new restrictions set limits on Internet use and media broadcasting. Television stations are limited to two hours of state-approved news each evening and two 90-minute entertainment shows per week.

China has more telephones, cell phones, and Internet users than any other country. Almost all urban areas have modern telephone, radio, television, and Internet services. In rural areas, access to communication varies. Some remote villages have just a single television in a shared location.



Flag of China