

Technology Integration Division

March 2010



DEFENSE LANGUAGE INSTITUTE FOREIGN LANGUAGE CENTER

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## Profile

### Introduction

Gan language speakers belong primarily to China's largest ethnic group, Han Chinese. Although the Han people are spread from north to south throughout eastern and central China, those who speak Gan live in southeastern China's Jiangxi Province.<sup>1, 2, 3</sup> They populate the northern and central part of the province, and blend with Hakka speakers in the south.<sup>4, 5</sup> A smaller number of Gan speakers also live in neighboring provinces.<sup>6, 7, 8</sup>



© Urban Artist / flickr.com  
Elderly woman in Jingdezhen

The central part of the Gan region has played a pivotal role in events in China. Jiangxi Province represents one of China's most important historical trade corridors. It was also the hub of the Chinese Communist Revolution. Today, however, this region is far more politically and economically subdued.

The Gan-speaking people in this region belong to the Han Chinese ethnic group. Han civilization is foundational to the earliest Chinese empire. It remained the standard-bearer of Chinese cultural development through the centuries, having influenced religion, philosophy, government, and social life.<sup>9, 10</sup> The majority of people in China, of all classes, are of Han descent. Even though 55 officially recognized minorities exist (and speak their own languages), they represent a little over 8% of China's population.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ethnologue, Languages of the World. "Chinese, Gan." 2010.  
[http://www.ethnologue.com/show\\_language.asp?code=gan](http://www.ethnologue.com/show_language.asp?code=gan)

<sup>2</sup> *Language Planning and Policy in Asia, Vol. 1: Japan, Nepal, Taiwan, and Chinese Characters*. Zhao, Shouhui. "Chinese Character Modernisation in the Digital Era: A Historical Perspective: Notes: 3 [pp. 93–94]." Robert B. Kaplan, and Richard B. Baldauf, Eds. 2008. Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters.

<sup>3</sup> *Compendium of the World's Languages: Abaza to Kurdish*, Vol. 1. Campbell, George L. "Gan [p. 382]." 2000. London, UK: Routledge.

<sup>4</sup> Ethnologue, Languages of the World. "Chinese, Gan." 2010.  
[http://www.ethnologue.com/show\\_language.asp?code=gan](http://www.ethnologue.com/show_language.asp?code=gan)

<sup>5</sup> *Compendium of the World's Languages: Abaza to Kurdish*, Vol. 1. Campbell, George L. "Gan [p. 382]." 2000. London, UK: Routledge.

<sup>6</sup> The neighboring provinces where Gan-speaking people reside include the border areas of southeastern Hubei, eastern Hunan, western Fujian, and southern Anhui provinces.

<sup>7</sup> The Linguist List. "Map of the Chinese, Gan Language." No date.  
[http://lmap.org/language/gan/static\\_map.html](http://lmap.org/language/gan/static_map.html)

<sup>8</sup> Omniglot Writing Systems & Languages of the World. "Gan." 1998–2010.  
<http://www.omniglot.com/writing/gan.htm>

<sup>9</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. "Han Dynasty." 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9039094>

<sup>10</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. "Jiangxi: Cultural Life." 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-71331>

<sup>11</sup> *Language Planning and Policy in Asia, Vol. 1: Japan, Nepal, Taiwan, and Chinese Characters..* Zhao, Shouhui. "Chinese Character Modernisation in the Digital Era: A Historical Perspective [p. 39]." Robert B. Kaplan and Richard B. Baldauf, Eds. 2008. Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters.

## Geography

### Area

Jiangxi Province, often referred to as Gan, is situated in southeastern China.<sup>12,13</sup> It belongs to the region of East China that borders South Central China on its western side and North China on its northern side.<sup>14</sup> It lies south of the Chang Jiang (Yangtze River) and borders four other provinces where Gan speakers live: Hunan to the west of Jiangxi, Hubei to the northwest, Anhui to the north, and Fujian to the east.<sup>15</sup> Outside its Gan linguistic area, Jiangxi Province also borders Zhejiang Province to its east and Guangdong Province to the south.



© Ji Ruan  
Busy streets of Jiangxi

### Climate

Located in a humid, subtropical monsoon climate zone, the Jiangxi region experiences average annual temperatures of around 18°C (64°F).<sup>16</sup> The climate is mild, with distinctive seasons that include cloudy winters with cold temperatures extending into springtime. Rainfall is substantial, between 1,400 and 1,900 mm (55–75 in) annually.<sup>17, 18</sup> Much of the rain occurs during summer, then tapers off in autumn, a dry season for the area.

### Geographic Divisions and Topographic Features

Jiangxi Province and its border areas lie in a region of hills, alluvial plains, and mountains.<sup>19</sup> Jiangxi lies at the center of a “longitudinal depression” between coastal



© shenxy / flickr.com  
Rain in Hongcun

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<sup>12</sup> China.org.cn. “An Introduction to China’s Provinces, Municipalities and Autonomous Regions: Jiangxi.” 2005. <http://www.china.org.cn/english/features/ProvinceView/184162.htm>

<sup>13</sup> The following source defines Gan as the “classical term” used for the province: *The Political Economy of China’s Provinces: Comparative and Competitive Advantage*. Chongyi, Feng. “Jiangxi in Reform: The Fear of Exclusion and the Search for a New Identity [p. 249].” Hans J. Hendrischke and Feng Chongyi, Eds. 1999. London, UK: Routledge. `

<sup>14</sup> China Tourist Maps. “China Regional Map.” No date. <http://www.chinatouristmaps.com/china-maps/regions-of-China.html>

<sup>15</sup> China Tourist Maps. “Jiangxi Province Map.” No date. <http://www.chinatouristmaps.com/provinces/jiangxi.html>

<sup>16</sup> China.org.cn. “An Introduction to China’s Provinces, Municipalities and Autonomous Regions: Jiangxi.” 2005. <http://www.china.org.cn/english/features/ProvinceView/184162.htm>

<sup>17</sup> ChinaMaps.org. “China Map of Jiangxi Province.” No date. <http://www.chinamaps.org/china/provincemaps/jiangxi.html>

<sup>18</sup> Chinatour.com. “Jiangxi Province.” No date. <http://www.chinatour.com/attraction/jiangxi.province.htm>

<sup>19</sup> China.org.cn. “An Introduction to China’s Provinces, Municipalities and Autonomous Regions: Jiangxi.” 2005. <http://www.china.org.cn/english/features/ProvinceView/184162.htm>

ranges on its east and China's western highlands on its west.<sup>20</sup>

### *Hills*

Hills constitute the central part of Jiangxi Province. Surrounded by mountains, they occupy slightly over 40% of the province's territory. The hills, which are relatively low, border the lower lands and plains around the Gan River and Poyang Lake.<sup>21, 22, 23</sup>

### *Plains*

Flat plains occupy the northern part of Jiangxi Province, and the land gradually rises to meet the central hills. The plains form a marshy area around Poyang Lake, which drains into the Chang Jiang (Yangtze River) on its northern side.<sup>24</sup> At the southern end of the lake, the plains stretch along the Gan Jiang (Gan River), forming the Gan River Valley. This valley extends through much of the province. In past centuries, the valley was an important transportation route from Canton, in southern China, to the Chang Jiang Valley (Yangtze Valley) and points north.<sup>25</sup> The plains are narrow through the central part of the province. Plains and water surface combined form approximately 22% of Jiangxi's territory.<sup>26, 27</sup>

### *Mountains*

Mountains surround Jiangxi Province on three sides, sloping down to hills and the central basin in the north and covering approximately 36% of the land.<sup>28</sup> On the northwestern side of the province, the rugged, heavily forested Jiuling Shan range extends from Jiangxi into eastern Hunan Province. This range is composed of 2 or 3 ridges running parallel with each other. The peaks reach approximately 1,000 m (3,300 ft) in elevation, although some are much higher.<sup>29</sup> Farther south, stretching north to south along the border area with Hunan Province, lies the Luoxiao Shan range. In this area, Mount Jinggang (Jinggangshan) was the site of the first revolutionary base established by Mao Zedong and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP)



© Rolf Müller  
Forest in Wuyi Mountains

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<sup>20</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. "Jiangxi." 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9117338>

<sup>21</sup> China.org.cn. "An Introduction to China's Provinces, Municipalities and Autonomous Regions: Jiangxi." 2005. <http://www.china.org.cn/english/features/ProvinceView/184162.htm>

<sup>22</sup> ChinaBusinessWorld.com. "Jiangxi Province." 1998–2009. <http://www.cbw.com/general/g14/g14.htm>

<sup>23</sup> China Tourist Maps. "Topography of China." No date. <http://www.chinatouristmaps.com/china-maps/topography-of-china/detailed-map.html>

<sup>24</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. "Poyang Lake." 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9060493>

<sup>25</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. "Gan River." 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9044513>

<sup>26</sup> China.org.cn. "An Introduction to China's Provinces, Municipalities and Autonomous Regions: Jiangxi." 2005. <http://www.china.org.cn/english/features/ProvinceView/184162.htm>

<sup>27</sup> TopTrip. "Jiangxi Province, China." 2004–2008. <http://www.toptrip.cc/destination/province/jiangxi.htm>

<sup>28</sup> China.org.cn. "An Introduction to China's Provinces, Municipalities and Autonomous Regions: Jiangxi." 2005. <http://www.china.org.cn/english/features/ProvinceView/184162.htm>

<sup>29</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. "Jiuling Mountains." 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9082226>

in 1927.<sup>30</sup> The Wugong Shan range lies between the Jiuling Shan and Luoxiao Shan ranges, extending approximately 130 km (80 mi) from the southwest to the northeast. Reaching an elevation of 1,918 m (6,293 ft), Mount Wugong is the highest mountain in this range. The mountains form the main watershed for the Gan River and its tributaries in the Hunan Province.<sup>31</sup> In eastern Jiangxi Province, the Wuyi Shan range extends along the border with Fujian Province.<sup>32</sup> Listed as a World Cultural Heritage Site, the highest peak in this range is Mount Wuyi, at 2,120 m (6,955 ft).<sup>33, 34</sup>

Situated just west of Poyang Lake near the Chang Jiang River, Mount Lushan is a famous mountain of northern Jiangxi Province. The area has been developed as a resort, popular for its dramatic waterfalls, springs, and varied scenery. Clouds and mist often surround the mountain, and several ancient temples are located here.<sup>35</sup> UNESCO has designated Lushan National Park a World Heritage Site for its cultural significance.<sup>36</sup>

## Rivers and Lakes

### *Poyang Lak*<sup>37</sup>

China's largest freshwater lake, Poyang Lake lies in north central Jiangxi Province, bordering Anhui province to the north. The lake lies south of the Chang Jiang (Yangtze River), China and Asia's longest river, which enters the region from the northwest and then runs along part of the province's northern borders. Poyang Lake receives the waters of the rivers in Jiangxi Province, and the lake drains into the Chang Jiang at the city of Hukou.



© Ngai Arthur  
Everglades by Poyang Lake

Composed of many small lakes and marshes that seasonally fluctuate with rainfall and inflow, Poyang Lake is difficult to measure. Its north–south length is approximately 150 km (95 mi) at the longest point, and its width is approximately 31 km (19 mi). During winter, the entire area becomes marshy, crisscrossed by waterways and connecting hills. In summer, the monsoon (a time of heavy rains), the hills—many of them topped with villages—are surrounded by expanses of water. The whole lake is surrounded by swamps

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<sup>30</sup> Maps-of-China.net. "Attractions in Jiangxi: Mt. Jinggang." No date. [http://www.maps-of-china.net/p\\_jiangxi\\_attraction.html](http://www.maps-of-china.net/p_jiangxi_attraction.html)

<sup>31</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. "Wugong Mountains." 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9077589>

<sup>32</sup> ChinaMaps.org. "China Map of Jiangxi Province." No date.

<http://www.chinamaps.org/china/provincemaps/jiangxi.html>

<sup>33</sup> *Philips Great World Atlas* 7th Ed. "Southern China [p. 59]." 2001. London, UK: George Philip Limited.

<sup>34</sup> China.org.cn. "An Introduction to China's Provinces, Municipalities and Autonomous Regions: Jiangxi." 2005. <http://www.china.org.cn/english/features/ProvinceView/184162.htm>

<sup>35</sup> Maps-of-China.net. "Attractions in Jiangxi: Mt. Lushan." No date. [http://www.maps-of-china.net/p\\_jiangxi\\_attraction.html](http://www.maps-of-china.net/p_jiangxi_attraction.html)

<sup>36</sup> ChinaBusinessWorld.com. "Jiangxi Province." 1998–2009. <http://www.cbw.com/general/g14/g14.htm>

<sup>37</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. "Poyang, Lake." 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9060493>



and beds of reeds. Farmlands that encircle the lake and its marshy fringes often flood because Poyang Lake receives excess water from the Chang Jiang when it overflows.

### *Chang Jiang (Yangtze River)*

The longest river in Asia, the Chang Jiang is also the world's third longest river. Running 6,300 km (3,915 mi), it begins in the Tibetan Plateau and drains a total area of 1,808,500 sq km (698,265 sq mi), emptying into the ocean at Shanghai.<sup>38</sup> It lies in the northern part of the Gan-speaking region along Jiangxi Province's borders with Hubei and Anhui provinces, linking with Poyang Lake. One of Chang Jiang's several main tributaries is the Gan River in Jiangxi Province. After passing through the Jiangxi plains, the Chang Jiang turns northeast into Anhui Province.<sup>39</sup>



© Ly-Sing H.  
Chang Jiang bridge over the Yangtze river

### *Gan Jiang (Gan River)*

The Gan Jiang is the primary drainage river for Jiangxi Province. Beginning south of Jiangxi in Guangdong Province, where it is named the Zhang River, it flows into Jiangxi and meets the Gong River at the city of Ganzhou. From that point, the combined rivers are named the Gan River. From Ganzhou, the Gan River flows north-northeast through Jiangxi Province and empties into Poyang Lake. Downriver from (north of) the city of Ji'an, the river is at least partially navigable by small ships, depending on the season and water levels. The river's total length is 815 km (506 mi).<sup>40</sup>

### *Xin Jiang (Xin River)*

The Xin Jiang, one of Jiangxi Province's main rivers, is 312 km (194 mi) long and drains around 16,800 sq km (6,500 sq mi) of land.<sup>41, 42</sup> Also a tributary of the Chang Jiang (Yangtze River), the Xin Jiang begins in northeastern Jiangxi Province near the border and flows to the southwest. It flows past both Shangrao and Yingtan, then turns northwest and empties into the southern end of Poyang Lake.<sup>43</sup>



© ryan1003 / flickr.com  
Xin river

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<sup>38</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. "Yangtze River." 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9110538>

<sup>39</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. "Yangtze River: Physical Features: The Lower Course." 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-48041>

<sup>40</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. "Gan River." 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9044513>

<sup>41</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. "Xin River." 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9041297>

<sup>42</sup> China.org.cn. "An Introduction to China's Provinces, Municipalities and Autonomous Regions: Jiangxi." 2005. <http://www.china.org.cn/english/features/ProvinceView/184162.htm>

<sup>43</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. "Xin River." 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9041297>

## Major Cities

### *Nanchang*<sup>44, 45, 46</sup>

Located at the entry point of the Gan Jiang basin in north central Jiangxi Province, Nanchang lies in a fertile and productive farming region. It is the provincial capital and center of finance, political activity, education, industry, and scientific research. Industrialized after 1949, its factories include cotton textiles, paper production, machinery, and automotive manufacturing.

Nanchang has a long and rich history. It dates back to 201 B.C.E., when residents built the city and reinforced it with a circular wall. In the 6th century when it was known as Hongzhou, the city began to grow rapidly. It became the provincial center of Jiangxi Province, which by the 12th century was the most highly populated province in China. Nanchang served as a central point to store and distribute porcelain made by artisans in Jingdezhen for European and other markets. The region around Nanchang has been a center for political struggle and warfare through the years. One of the most famous events took place in 1927, when a rebellion known as the Nanchang Uprising took place. This uprising led to the development of the People's Liberation Army.



### *Jiujiang*<sup>47</sup>

The main port on the Chang Jiang (Yangtze River) for Jiangxi Province, the city of Jiujiang is located in northern Jiangxi approximately 690 km (430 mi) upstream of Shanghai.<sup>48</sup> It lies on the west side of Poyang Lake and the Gan River tributary. Jiujiang is an outlet for provincial trade and connects by railway to Nanchang and by water transport to other points in Jiangxi Province. It is a shipbuilding and manufacturing center, producing petrochemicals, textiles, and machinery.



The city's history begins sometime around the 3rd century C.E., when Jiujiang was a customs station. Its strategic location on the river provided the conditions for Jiujiang to serve as a guarded entry point into Jiangxi Province for many years. In 1861, the city became a port for foreign trade and around the same time a center for China's rice and tea

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<sup>44</sup> China Connection Tours. "Nanchang Travel Guide." 1987–2010. <http://www.china-tour.cn/Nanchang/Nanchang-Travel-Guide.htm#History>

<sup>45</sup> ChinaTour.com. "Nanchang, Jiangxi Province." No date. <http://www.chinatour.com/attraction/nanchang.htm>

<sup>46</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. "Nanchang." 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9054751>

<sup>47</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. "Jiujiang." 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9082224>

<sup>48</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. "Jiangxi." 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9117338>

trade. The trade shrank, however, when a railway between Nanchang and the coast began operating in 1936–1937, cutting Jiujiang out of the trade circuit. Subsequently, the city’s economic and political importance declined.

### *Jingdezhen*

Located 121 km (75 mi) north of Nanchang, Jingdezhen is famous as one of China’s most important porcelain production sites. It is presently a popular tourist resort and a china and pottery manufacturing center. Kilns used in the ancient porcelain industry are on display at an exhibition ground here, a popular site for visitors to the area. Other places of interest include a museum and a college for the study of china and pottery.<sup>49</sup>

The history of porcelain making in Jingdezhen reportedly dates back to the Eastern Han Dynasty (25 C.E.–220 C.E.).<sup>50, 51, 52</sup> During the late Northern Song Dynasty, the industry’s most productive period, the emperor sent officials to Jingdezhen to supervise the manufacture of porcelain to be used by members of the royal family. The fine china, known as *Jingde*, became an export product and gained popularity around the world. During the Qing Dynasty, the town was destroyed and then rebuilt with a large, government-sponsored porcelain factory. In the 17th and 18th centuries the ceramics produced attained even higher levels of quality. The production process declined in the following years, and in the Taiping Rebellion (1850–1864) fighting resulted in widespread destruction of the kilns.<sup>53, 54</sup>

### *Pingxiang*<sup>55, 56</sup>

Located in the Wugong Mountains of western Jiangxi Province near the Hunan border, Pingxiang is a center for the production of coal and iron. It is primarily an industrial city that houses the headquarters of several large companies. One of them, Pingxiang Mining Group,



Courtesy of Wikipedia.com  
Downtown Pingxiang City

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<sup>49</sup> ChinaTour.com. “Nanchang, Jiangxi Province – Jingdezhen.” No date.

<http://www.chinatour.com/attraction/nanchang.htm>

<sup>50</sup> The Han Dynasty is divided into the Western Han (206 B.C.E.–25 C.E.), when its capital was in western China, and the Eastern Han (25 C.E.–220 C.E.), when the capital was moved east to Luoyang. Source: Encyclopædia Britannica. “Han Dynasty.” 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9039094>

<sup>51</sup> ChinaTour.com. “Nanchang, Jiangxi Province: Jingdezhen.” No date.

<http://www.chinatour.com/attraction/nanchang.htm>

<sup>52</sup> *The Political Economy of China’s Provinces: Comparative and Competitive Advantage*. Chongyi, Feng. “Jiangxi in Reform: The Fear of Exclusion and the Search for a New Identity [p. 251].” Hans J. Hendrichske and Feng Chongyi, Eds. 1999. London, UK: Routledge.

<sup>53</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. “Jingdezhen.” 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9082163>

<sup>54</sup> ChinaTour.com. “Nanchang, Jiangxi Province: Jingdezhen.” No date.

<http://www.chinatour.com/attraction/nanchang.htm>

<sup>55</sup> HTDC. “Pingxiang (Jiangxi).” 14 August 2009.

<http://www.hktdc.com/info/vp/a/pprd/en/2/2/1/1X06B6JZ/Pan-Pearl-River-Delta--Pan--PRD-/Pingxiang--Jiangxi-.htm>

<sup>56</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. “Pingxiang.” 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9060088>

specializes not only in coal production but also construction materials and glass products. Other local industries produce steel, iron, machinery, ceramics, and pharmaceuticals.

Pingxiang's importance as a coal-mining center began at the end of the 1800s and developed after the 1903–1905 construction of a railroad to transport the coal. Production declined after World War I, however, when the worldwide market became depressed. The mines closed in 1925, but in the 1950s they were modernized and major production, which continues today, resumed.

## History

The history of the Gan region is linked to China's broader history including Han civilization. Gan language traditions have developed within a particular geographic region in southeast-central China. Historically, the Gan-speaking people have been concentrated along the Gan Jiang (Gan River) in Jiangxi Province, and they remain in this area today.



© felbrilu / flickr.com  
Han Dynasty cavalry sculptures

### *Early History*

People in the Gan linguistic group trace their origins to the Han Dynasty (206 B.C.E.–220 C.E.), considered to be the second great imperial dynasty to appear in China. During the Han period, Chinese cultural traditions as we know them were established. From the strength of its administrative structure and its culture, “Han” became a word synonymous with “Chinese.” Throughout much of China's history, a privileged few among the Han Chinese formed the Mandarin upper class and the bureaucratic power elite.<sup>57</sup>

### *Han Culture*

The society that developed during the Han Dynasty had a centralized government. Its authoritarian structure was somewhat masked by the Confucian ideology it adopted, emphasizing self-restraint, self-discipline, and virtue. Society was literate, marked by detailed record keeping and documentation of activities and events. Art, sculpture, architecture, and literary forms flourished. Technological advances were numerous, including the sundial to measure time, the invention of paper, and a seismograph. The Han elevated learning, even requiring prospective employees to master classical texts they could work for the civil service.<sup>58</sup>



© Rosemania / flickr.com  
Western-Han painted ceramic jar

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<sup>57</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. “Han Dynasty.” 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9039094>

<sup>58</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. “Han Dynasty.” 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9039094>

## *Growth and Development in Jiangxi Province*

During the 4th–6th centuries, many refugees from the Tatar attacks in northern China fled south and settled in Jiangxi Province, stimulating a pattern of growth. The administrative skills and cultural and artistic traditions they brought eventually blended in and benefited the life of the province. During this period, the valley of the Gan Jiang became central to Chinese history. The transport route from Canton in the south to the valley of the Chang Jiang (Yangtze River) and points north made the Gan River Valley the “main highway of the empire.”<sup>59, 60</sup> This strategic route offset Jiangxi’s ineligibility for preferential government treatment awarded to the coastal provinces. The government, for example, opened treaty ports, which were a path to rapid economic development for those provinces. During the Tang Dynasty (618–907), engineers linked the Gan Jiang to China’s Grand Canal. This artery in turn connected central and southern China’s agricultural center to the northern empire’s political center and its wealthy markets. By the later years of the Tang Dynasty, Jiangxi Province was one of the most highly-populated areas in China, with over 12% of the country’s households.<sup>61, 62</sup>

## *The Song Dynasty and Confucianism*

During the Song Dynasty (960–1279), which followed the Tang Dynasty, the scholarly officials who governed Jiangxi Province turned it briefly into a model Confucian state. A religious philosophy that reached its height in the Han Dynasty, Confucianism emphasized moral behavior in all realms of government and social relationships. Neo-Confucianism was a modern reform movement. It stressed the Confucian ideal of moral conduct and self-cultivation over profit and material success, adapting it to the new economic reality of the 11th century. Also synthesizing some of the prevalent spiritual ideas from Taoism and Buddhism, two influential philosophies, it established a firm base in the province. Economically, neo-Confucianism emphasized agrarian production as a superior occupation to trade. In all of its dimensions, it became extremely influential not only in Jiangxi Province but also throughout the Asian world.<sup>63, 64</sup>



Courtesy of Wikipedia.com  
Emperor Taizu of Song

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<sup>59</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. “Jiangxi: History.” 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-71332>

<sup>60</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. “Gan River.” 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9044513>

<sup>61</sup> *The Political Economy of China’s Provinces: Comparative and Competitive Advantage*. Chongyi, Feng. “Jiangxi in Reform: The Fear of Exclusion and the Search for a New Identity [pp. 250–252].” Hans J. Hendrichske and Feng Chongyi, Eds. 1999. London, UK: Routledge.

<sup>62</sup> Asia for Educators. Columbia University. Knapp, Ronald G. “Case Study, China’s Water Routes: The Grand Canal.” No date. [http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/geography/element\\_f/ef17.html#1](http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/geography/element_f/ef17.html#1)

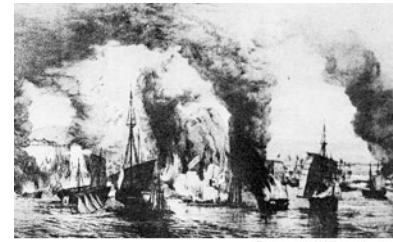
<sup>63</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. “Jiangxi: History.” 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-71332>

<sup>64</sup> *The Political Economy of China’s Provinces: Comparative and Competitive Advantage*. Chongyi, Feng. “Jiangxi in Reform: The Fear of Exclusion and the Search for a New Identity [pp. 252–254].” Hans J. Hendrichske and Feng Chongyi, Eds. 1999. London, UK: Routledge.

## *Neo-Confucianism, New Transport Routes, and the Decline of Trade*

Although Neo-Confucianism promoted cultural activity in the region, at the same time it contributed to the decline of trade in Jiangxi Province. Its anti-trade ideology stood in opposition to pro-trade market forces, which were becoming stronger. These tendencies increased after the Opium War in 1840–1842. Western thinking with its marked emphasis on business activity was introduced. Government leaders in Jiangxi remained true to their Confucian roots and protected their localized power, based on revenue sources they monopolized. They remained opposed to the increasingly powerful momentum of modernization and commercialism linked to networks outside the province.<sup>65</sup>

New transportation links, however, had an even stronger cumulative effect on the declining level of trade in Jiangxi Province. It was the development of ocean shipping lines and railway transportation links between Canton and Nanjing that made the entire Gan River Valley transportation corridor obsolete. Commercial trade shifted to the coastal areas and railway arteries to the east of Jiangxi. New taxes levied to support troops opposing the Taiping Rebellion against the Qing Dynasty also took their toll on the provincial economy. Local government agents set up numerous checkpoints along transportation routes to collect taxes (called *likin*) on shipments of goods. The taxes were later adopted by the national government, and by 1860, the people of Jiangxi were paying the nation's highest taxes. The high taxation continued even after local merchants in other provinces pressured the government to abolish taxes in their provinces. The effects on Jiangxi's economy were predictable. By the late 1800s, surrounding provinces established mining and munitions industries, but Jiangxi lagged behind and its industrial growth stalled.<sup>66</sup>



Courtesy of Wikipedia.com  
Naval battle between Taiping-Qing on Yangtze

## *Revolution and War*

The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) developed its base in Jiangxi Province during the early 20th century, and the region became the center of revolution. At Jinggang, a mountainous area in western Jiangxi near the border with Hunan Province, Mao Zedong combined his peasant army with the forces of another revolutionary leader in 1928. Three years later, Ruijin, a nearby city, became headquarters of the Chinese Soviet Republic, or the Jiangxi Soviet. For six years, the Chinese Red Army fought the Kuomintang (KMT, Nationalist forces) around the Jinggang Base Area. The KMT used an economic



Courtesy of Wikipedia.com  
Mao Zedong, 1931

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<sup>65</sup> *The Political Economy of China's Provinces: Comparative and Competitive Advantage*. Chongyi, Feng. "Jiangxi in Reform: The Fear of Exclusion and the Search for a New Identity [p. 253]." Hans J. Hendrichske and Feng Chongyi, Eds. 1999. London, UK: Routledge.

<sup>66</sup> *The Political Economy of China's Provinces: Comparative and Competitive Advantage*. Chongyi, Feng. "Jiangxi in Reform: The Fear of Exclusion and the Search for a New Identity [pp. 253–254]." Hans J. Hendrichske and Feng Chongyi, Eds. 1999. London, UK: Routledge.

blockade to defeat the Red Army in 1934, forcing it to leave Jiangxi Province for northwestern China in a retreat known as the Long March. In the north, Mao and his forces regrouped and consolidated their power. Guerrilla activities continued in much of Jiangxi Province between 1938 and 1945 under the occupation of Japanese invaders.<sup>67, 68</sup>

### *Modern History in the Jiangxi Gan Region*

The CCP, supported by workers, farmers, students, and intellectuals, came to power in China in 1949, following the defeat of the Japanese. In Jiangxi, many residents who had supported the Jiangxi Soviet were rewarded with leadership positions in local government. This ushered in a period of relative stability for the province, and preliminary development of an industrial and transportation infrastructure. In the government's monumental efforts to rebuild and industrialize China, it used Jiangxi Province as a model for showcasing some of Mao's projects. This included land reclamation to boost grain production and promotion of a work-study program for students to create a revolution in education. Because many government leaders in Jiangxi had close connections to the top CCP leadership in Beijing, they were able to gain support for projects to benefit their province.<sup>69, 70</sup>

Between 1958 and 1962 and the implementation of China's Second Five-Year Plan, Jiangxi Province continued to receive favored treatment by the CCP leadership. The government chose the province as a site for the development of mechanized farming operations. Investments improved Jiangxi's energy and chemical fertilizer supplies and built reservoirs enabling farmers to bring more land into agricultural production. The central government began to develop industry in the province. As a result of this substantial support, Jiangxi Province fared relatively well during the famine of 1958–1960, when approximately 30 million people in China died from starvation.<sup>71</sup>



© Geoff Wong  
Industry along the  
Yangtze, Jiujiang

The province's post-revolutionary momentum ended during China's Cultural Revolution in the mid to late 1960s. Jiangxi's provincial leaders fell out of favor with Mao, and a power struggle followed. Political purges and fighting between provincial and government forces led to steep declines in Jiangxi's agricultural and industrial production

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<sup>67</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. "Jiangxi: History." 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-71332>

<sup>68</sup> *The Political Economy of China's Provinces: Comparative and Competitive Advantage*. Chongyi, Feng. "Jiangxi in Reform: The Fear of Exclusion and the Search for a New Identity [p. 254]." Hans J. Hendrichske and Feng Chongyi, Eds. 1999. London, UK: Routledge.

<sup>69</sup> *The Political Economy of China's Provinces: Comparative and Competitive Advantage*. Chongyi, Feng. "Jiangxi in Reform: The Fear of Exclusion and the Search for a New Identity [pp. 255–256]." Hans J. Hendrichske and Feng Chongyi, Eds. 1999. London, UK: Routledge.

<sup>70</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. "Jiangxi: History." 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-71332>

<sup>71</sup> *The Political Economy of China's Provinces: Comparative and Competitive Advantage*. Chongyi, Feng. "Jiangxi in Reform: The Fear of Exclusion and the Search for a New Identity [pp. 256–257]." Hans J. Hendrichske and Feng Chongyi. 1999. London, UK: Routledge.

from 1967 to 1976. Other factors contributed to the decline as well, including the provincial government's hostility to expanding private trade. The government was following a pattern similar to the Neo-Confucian policies of the 1800s. All these factors blocked development of a market economy in Jiangxi Province. Different government authorities controlled trade so strictly that by the early 1980s, one checkpoint or tax collecting outpost existed for every 30 km (18.6 mi) of highway.<sup>72</sup> To trade with neighboring provinces, peasants in southern Jiangxi were forced to smuggle their goods at night, transporting them by river or narrow mountain roads.

## Economy

In the Gan area, the economic infrastructure has never been fully developed. Neither has it recovered from the policies of the past that discouraged any trade beyond local boundaries. To address Jiangxi's faltering economy, in the 1990s, the government began a project of "cultural construction" to showcase specific Gan cultural attributes. With the goal of economic development in mind, the government backed the creation of the Institute for Gan Culture and began to promote a Gan culture. The people in the area share Han cultural traditions similar to those practiced throughout China. Because a separate local cultural tradition never really developed, there was no clear foundation for the government's economic project.<sup>73,74,75</sup>



© Neville Mars  
Tea farm in Wuyuan village

### *Overview of the National Economy*

In 2001, China became a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO), and the private sector continued to transform from earlier socialist economy. Beginning in the late 1970s, the country began to phase out farm collectives, decentralize the economy, open up to foreign investment, and develop its private sector. The country's gross domestic product (GDP) began to rise in the 1980s, and this pattern continued into the 21st century.<sup>76</sup> Economic reforms have been inconsistent across the country, however,

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<sup>72</sup> *The Political Economy of China's Provinces: Comparative and Competitive Advantage*. Chongyi, Feng. "Jiangxi in Reform: The Fear of Exclusion and the Search for a New Identity [pp. 257–258]." Hans J. Hendrischke and Feng Chongyi, Eds. 1999. London, UK: Routledge.

<sup>73</sup> *The Political Economy of China's Provinces: Comparative and Competitive Advantage*. Chongyi, Feng. "Jiangxi in Reform: The Fear of Exclusion and the Search for a New Identity. [pp. 263–64]." Hendrischke, Hans J. and Chongyi, Feng. 1999. London, UK: Routledge.

<sup>74</sup> *The Political Economy of China's Provinces: Comparative and Competitive Advantage*. Chongyi, Feng. "Jiangxi in Reform: The Fear of Exclusion and the Search for a New Identity [pp. 265–266]." Hans J. Hendrischke and Feng Chongyi, Eds. 1999. London, UK: Routledge.

<sup>75</sup> *The Pacific Review*, Vol. 19, No. 1. Oakes, Tim. "Cultural Strategies of Development: Implications for Village Governance in China [pp. 14–15]." March 2006.  
<http://spot.colorado.edu/~toakes/CulturalStrategies.pdf>

<sup>76</sup> EIA. Energy Information Administration. "China: Background." July 2009.  
<http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/China/Background.html>



and in general, people have not benefited from a higher standard of living. Wages remain low; a sharp divide exists between rich and poor, and both unemployment and underemployment are high.<sup>77</sup> The world economic downturn in 2009 continued to have a depressing effect on China's exports as foreign demand fell. Economic development has continued to favor the coastal provinces, leaving large sections of the interior underdeveloped.<sup>78</sup>

## Economic Features of the Gan Region

### *Agriculture*

Agriculture is the dominant economic activity in Jiangxi Province. The reclamation of land and expansion of irrigation projects that began during the communist era helped the long-term development of this sector. Rice production takes place in the plains around Poyang Lake and along the valleys of the Gan Jiang and Xiu River valleys. The use of hybrid seeds has improved rice crop yields. Farmers grow different varieties of tea and herbs in the hillside regions. The teas are prized for their quality, and processed herbs are sold in pharmacies and herb shops nationwide. Other agricultural products of Jiangxi Province include cotton, sugarcane, fruit, and soybeans.<sup>79, 80</sup>



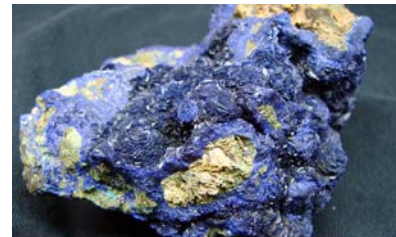
© Preston Rhea  
Farmland in Jiangxi Province

### *Aquaculture and Fishing*

Along the province's rivers and in Poyang Lake, fishing is a primary economic activity. Aquaculture (the harvesting of fish and aquatic plants in controlled areas) is a means of earning income. In village ponds and other freshwater areas, farmers grow fish (often carp) and other products for the market.<sup>81</sup>

### *Mining*

Mining is prevalent throughout the province. In northeastern Jiangxi Province, copper mining has long been an active industry. Coal mining is important in the west and also in the central area south of Nanchang.



© Craig Elliot  
Malachite from Chengmenshan mine, Jiujiang

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<sup>77</sup> The term "underemployment" refers to working in jobs that are temporary, part-time, low paying, or lacking security and benefits.

<sup>78</sup> Central Intelligence Agency. The World Factbook. "China: Economy." 4 February 2010. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ch.html>

<sup>79</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. "Jiangxi: Economy: Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishing." 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-71324>

<sup>80</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. "Jiangxi: Cultural Life." 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-71331>

<sup>81</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. "Jiangxi: Economy: Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishing." 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-71324>

Other mining (for tungsten, tin, and other minerals) takes place outside the Gan-speaking areas of the province.<sup>82</sup>

### *Manufacturing and Industry*<sup>83</sup>

Modern industry was not developed in Jiangxi Province until after the communist government came to power. It established Nanchang as a center of industry, and this city remains the province's largest industrial area today. Jiujiang, north of Nanchang, has a petrochemical industry, oil refinery, and textile mills. On a smaller scale, many areas in the province are sites for food processing plants.

Aside from heavy industry, light manufacturing has long been important to Jiangxi Province. Manufactured goods include ramie cloth used for clothing, printing paper made of bamboo, and a special paper for scribing (writing by hand), made from mulberry and rice. The province's most famous and important manufactured product, however, is porcelain. For centuries, it has been produced by imperial decree. It is still made in Jingdezhen from



© Ariel Steiner  
Porcelain workshop in Jingdezhen

clay retrieved from the shores of Poyang Lake and along the Chang Jiang (Yangtze Valley). Some of the porcelain is exported, but most is used domestically.

## **Linguistic Groups of the Gan Region**

### *Gan*

The Sinitic languages, commonly referred to as “Chinese dialects,” are part of the Sino-Tibetan language family, the second largest language family in the world.<sup>84, 85, 86</sup> Approximately eight languages exist within the Sinitic group, including Gan, Mandarin, Wu, Hakka, Cantonese, and others. Each of the Sinitic languages is subdivided into a number of dialects, but not all linguists agree on how many dialects there are, nor how they should be categorized. The Gan language, named after the Gan River which runs through Jiangxi Province, includes five or more dialects, mostly mutually intelligible



© televiseus / flickr.com  
Billboard at Nanchang airport

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<sup>82</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. “Jiangxi: Economy: Resources and Power.” 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-280703>

<sup>83</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. “Jiangxi: Economy: Manufacturing.” 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-71325>

<sup>84</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. “Sino-Tibetan Languages: Distribution and Classification of Sino-Tibetan Languages: Distribution: Sinitic Languages.” 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-75003>

<sup>85</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. “Sino-Tibetan Languages.” 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9109793>

<sup>86</sup> “Dialects” can be defined as language variations (influenced by region, political differences, and other factors) or as languages that are closely related to each other. Source: *Belfast English and Standard English: Dialect Variation and Parameter Setting*. Henry, Alison. “Chapter. 1: Introduction [p. 3].” 1995. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, Inc.

(can be understood by each other). Some linguists have considered Gan a transitional language between the languages of northern and southern China. Other linguists consider Gan and Hakka one subgroup of languages, rather than two separate languages. This report adopts the consensus that Gan is a unique language, even though it has many common features with Hakka and is related to Wu and Mandarin.<sup>87, 88, 89, 90</sup> Most Gan speakers are bilingual in Mandarin, China's national language.

### *Mandarin*

One of approximately eight Sinitic languages, Mandarin is also known as Northern Chinese (or Northern Speech) and Standard Chinese.<sup>91, 92</sup> It developed as a court language during the Qing Dynasty (1644–1911) and is now China's national language. In Mainland China, the standardized form of Mandarin is called Putonghua (or common language). It is used as the official language of government, media, and academia to unify spoken and written language across the country. In requiring its usage for these purposes, the Chinese government is attempting to address the problem of language fragmentation—the many dialects used regionally in China and understood only by people of a particular region.<sup>93, 94</sup> For instance, members of China's ethnic minority populations are not legally required to speak any language other than their own regional dialect.<sup>95</sup> In addition, some estimates report the Han Chinese people alone (apart from China's many ethnic groups) speak as many as 1,500 different dialects, some so distinct as to be mutually incomprehensible. Because of this communication diversity, the government enacted a 2001 language law.



© Jay Collier  
Tour guide speaking in Mandarin

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<sup>87</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. “Sino-Tibetan Languages: Distribution and Classification of Sino-Tibetan Languages: Distribution: Sinitic Languages.” 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-75003>

<sup>88</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. “Gan Language.” 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9044512>

<sup>89</sup> *An Ethnohistorical Dictionary of China*. Olson, James Stuart. “G: Gan [pp. 79–80].” 1998. Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood Publishing Group.

<sup>90</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. “Chinese Languages.” 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9360616>

<sup>91</sup> Ethnologue, Languages of the World. “Languages of China: Chinese, Mandarin.” 2010. [http://www.ethnologue.com/show\\_country.asp?name=China](http://www.ethnologue.com/show_country.asp?name=China)

<sup>92</sup> *Language Planning and Policy in Asia, Vol. 1: Japan, Nepal, Taiwan, and Chinese Characters* Zhao, Shouhui. “Chinese Character Modernisation in the Digital Era: A Historical Perspective [p. 42].” Robert B. Kaplan and Richard B. Baldauf, Eds. 2008. Bristol, UK : Multilingual Matters.

<sup>93</sup> Ethnologue, Languages of the World. “Languages of China: Chinese, Mandarin.” 2010. [http://www.ethnologue.com/show\\_country.asp?name=China](http://www.ethnologue.com/show_country.asp?name=China)

<sup>94</sup> Radio86.com. “Introduction to Putonghua, ‘The Common Speech.’ ” 12 July 2006.

<http://www.radio86.co.uk/explore-learn/learn-chinese/language-lessons/190/introduction-to-putonghua-the-common-speech>

<sup>95</sup> *Language Planning and Policy in Asia, Vol. 1: Japan, Nepal, Taiwan, and Chinese Characters*. Zhao, Shouhui. “Chinese Character Modernisation in the Digital Era: A Historical Perspective [p. 40].” Kaplan, Robert B. and Richard B. Baldauf, Eds. 2008. Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters.

This law establishes Mandarin as China's official language for specific purposes, including government and media.<sup>96, 97</sup>

The need for a common language in China has also led to a transcription system known as *pinyin* to encourage use of the Mandarin dialect common in Beijing. *Pinyin* is used to help standardize and teach pronunciation of Mandarin in regions (often within one city) where several dialects are commonly used. The Chinese government requires Mandarin in diplomatic documents and official publications translated in countries where English is spoken. It has also been useful for standardizing the spelling of names of places and people.<sup>98</sup>

### *Wu*

The Wu-speaking region of eastern central China has been linguistically unified since the 5th century B.C.E., when the language originated around Suzhou, a city renowned for its culture. The language has remained stable in the region surrounding the Yangtze Delta and reaches to the south. The Wu region borders the Gan language region in the northeast of Gan territory. Wu includes several dialects and was an important official language during the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644 C.E.), when Shanghai was consolidating into a large city.<sup>99, 100</sup>



### *Hakka*

Concentrated in Guangdong Province, which lies south of Jiangxi, Hakka is spoken primarily by people of Han descent. It comprises several dialects, some of which merge in the southern Gan region in Jiangxi Province. Hakka is similar to the Cantonese language in that it has the same number of tones (six) to distinguish meaning. Hakka has also borrowed many words from Cantonese, another Sinitic language. Hakka is spoken by thousands of Chinese immigrants around the world, many concentrated in Malaysia, Thailand, and Indonesia.<sup>101, 102</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> New York Times. "Mandarin, Lost in a Maze of Dialects." 11 July 2005.

[http://www.nytimes.com/2005/07/10/world/asia/10iht-china.html?\\_r=1](http://www.nytimes.com/2005/07/10/world/asia/10iht-china.html?_r=1)

<sup>97</sup> *Language Planning and Policy in Asia, Vol. 1: Japan, Nepal, Taiwan, and Chinese Characters*. Zhao, Shouhui. "Chinese Character Modernisation in the Digital Era: A Historical Perspective: Notes: 3 [pp. 93–94]." Robert B. Kaplan and Richard B. Baldauf, Eds. 2008. Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters.

<sup>98</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. "Pinyin Romanization." 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9060119>

<sup>99</sup> Ethnologue: Language of the World. "Chinese, Wu: A Language of China." Raymond G. Gordon, Ed. 2005. [http://www.ethnologue.com/show\\_language.asp?code=wuu](http://www.ethnologue.com/show_language.asp?code=wuu)

<sup>100</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. "Wu Language." 2008. <http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-9077590/Wu-language>

<sup>101</sup> Ethnologue, Languages of the World. "Languages of China: Chinese, Hakka." 2010. [http://www.ethnologue.com/show\\_country.asp?name=China](http://www.ethnologue.com/show_country.asp?name=China)

<sup>102</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. "Hakka Language." 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9396772>

## *Xiang*

Xiang is spoken primarily in Hunan Province, directly west of Jiangxi, and in other areas of China. This language is somewhat understandable by both Mandarin and Wu speakers. Xiang has two main forms, New Xiang, which is noticeably influenced by Mandarin, and Old Xiang, which is more similar to Wu. Xiang uses five separate tones to convey and distinguish word meanings.<sup>103, 104</sup>

## *Min*

Min is a language group with several divisions, all bearing differences in vocabulary and pronunciation from the other Sinitic languages. Min is generally divided into five varieties, but some scholars claim there are nine varieties, all mutually unintelligible (cannot be understood by each other). Northern Min (also called Min Bei) is used in northern Fujian Province, which borders the Gan-speaking area.<sup>105, 106</sup>



© Remko Tanis  
Local women catching up in a shop

## **Self Study Questions:**

Gan language speakers belong to what is probably China's smallest ethnic group. True or False?

The Gan Jiang is the primary drainage river for Jiangxi Province. True or False?

The region around Nanchang has been a center for political struggle and warfare. True or False?

Technological advances were discouraged during the Han Dynasty. True or False?

After World War II ended, Jiangxi Province became a model for showcasing some of Mao's projects. True or False?

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<sup>103</sup> Ethnologue, Languages of the World. "Languages of China: Chinese, Xiang." 2010.

[http://www.ethnologue.com/show\\_country.asp?name=China](http://www.ethnologue.com/show_country.asp?name=China)

<sup>104</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. "Xiang Language." 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9041278>

<sup>105</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. "Min Languages." 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9052784>

<sup>106</sup> Ethnologue, Languages of the World. "Languages of China: Chinese, Min Bei." 2010. [http://www.ethnologue.com/show\\_country.asp?name=China](http://www.ethnologue.com/show_country.asp?name=China)

## Religion

The people who speak Gan Chinese are of Han descent, and their religion and culture are those of the Han, largest ethnic group in China. The main philosophical beliefs of the Han Chinese are Taoism and Confucianism, often combined. Buddhism has played an influential role in the lives of the Han Chinese.<sup>107</sup> These three thought systems are more philosophies, philosophies with a strong moral or spiritual element, than they are actual religions.<sup>108</sup>



© Giesing / wikipedia.com  
Temple of Confucius in Qufu

Whether Taoist, Confucianist, or Buddhist views, the Chinese people have tended to emphasize “a collective relationship with the past rather than an individual’s faith in a supernatural being.”<sup>109, 110</sup> This insight is helpful in understanding their worldview in the context of “religion.”

### Overview of Religion in China<sup>111, 112</sup>

Confucianism and Taoism, both considered philosophies as well as spiritual practices, began in China. As early as the Zhou Dynasty (1027–221 B.C.E.), Confucian teachings were widely taught. In later years the Han Dynasty (206 B.C.E.–220 C.E.) made Confucian teachings the foundation of state ideology, a position it retained until imperial China ended.<sup>113, 114</sup> Before a Chinese person could hold an important official post, it was necessary to study and learn the *Five Classics of Confucius*. Taoism developed early in China. It was influenced by local traditions and became an integral part of the nation’s spiritual, social, and political life. Both of these (religious) philosophies have been deeply embedded in the Gan region of China.



Courtesy of Wikipedia.com  
Han Dynasty oil lamp,  
2nd century BCE

Buddhism (Mahayana branch) is another major religious system that became popular among the Chinese people. Arriving from India around the 1st or 2nd century C.E., it is the only foreign religion the Chinese people have ever widely adopted.<sup>115</sup> Through the

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<sup>107</sup> *An Ethnohistorical Dictionary of China*. Olson, James S. “The Dictionary: G: Gan [p. 79].” 1998. Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group, Inc.

<sup>108</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. “China: People: Religion.” 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-258961>

<sup>109</sup> Society for Anglo-Chinese Understanding. “Religious Concepts in China.” 2001. <http://www.sacu.org/religion2.html>

<sup>110</sup> Society for Anglo-Chinese Understanding. “Religion and China: Broader Sense of Spirituality.” 2001. <http://www.sacu.org/religion.html>

<sup>111</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. “China: People: Religion.” 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-258961>

<sup>112</sup> Religion Facts. “History of Chinese Religion.” 2004–2008. [http://www.religionfacts.com/chinese\\_religion/history.htm](http://www.religionfacts.com/chinese_religion/history.htm)

<sup>113</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. “Han Dynasty.” 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9039094>

<sup>114</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. “Confucianism.” 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9109629>

<sup>115</sup> Society for Anglo-Chinese Understanding (SACU). “Religion in China: Buddhism.” 2001. <http://www.sacu.org/religion.html>

centuries, its popularity has remained consistent, although there are notable exceptions. During the later years of the Tang Dynasty (618–907), when the rulers saw Buddhism as a threat to the empire’s power, the Taoist emperor Wu-tsung persecuted Buddhists by seizing monasteries and their lands. He increased the empire’s holdings at a time of financial strain on the nation, closing temples and forcing thousands of monks and nuns to return to secular life. This far-reaching act modified Buddhist practice in China, but the religion remained popular.

The Chinese people today are acculturated in the systems of Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism, as well as in beliefs of the Chinese Communists, who associated religion with feudalism and foreign rule. Throughout China, the Communist Party was hostile to all religion, indigenous or otherwise, and discouraged its practice. This situation changed after the end of the Cultural Revolution. The People’s Republic of China wrote freedom of religion into its 1978 Constitution. However, this freedom is constrained by a few significant exclusions. For instance, religious groups cannot “challenge the state,” or they will encounter government opposition. The Falun Gong, a Buddhist spiritual discipline that combines physical exercise, meditation, and faith healing, is one such organization. It came under scrutiny for opposing the power of the state, and the government banned its practice in 1999.<sup>116, 117</sup>



© Yen Li-pen  
Emperor Taizong receiving Ludongzan, 641 AD

## Overview of Religion in the Gan Region

The Gan region is the birthplace of Neo-Confucianism, the ethical philosophy that has roots in Confucianism. Neo-Confucianism took hold during the Song Dynasty, and its founders (Zhou Dunyi, Cheng Hao, Cheng Yi, Lu Jiuyuan, and Zhu Xi) lived and taught in Jiangxi Province. Over the years, many Neo-Confucian academies for students were established in the mountains of the province. Neo-Confucianism contributed to the province’s standing as a local peasant economy. The political and spiritual leaders of the province remained opposed to involvement in “disgraceful commercial activities,” which were seen as deviations from Confucian morality.<sup>118</sup> From Jiangxi Province, the influence of Neo-Confucianism spread throughout China and Asia.



Courtesy of Wikipedia.com  
Portrait of Zhū Xi

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<sup>116</sup> Asia for Educators, Columbia University. “Living in the Chinese Cosmos: Understanding Religion in Late Imperial China (1644–1911). Religion in China Today: Reemergence of Traditional Practices and the Question of National Identity. Ethnicity, Religious Practice, and State Control.” Cohen, Myron L. and Stephen F. Teiser. 2007. <http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/cosmos/bgov/today#ethnicity.htm>

<sup>117</sup> U.S. Department of State. “International Religious Freedom Report 2009:China.” 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127268.htm>

<sup>118</sup> “Jiangxi in Reform: The Fear of Exclusion and the Search for a New Identity [pp. 252–253].” Chongyi, Feng. In *The Political Economy of China’s Provinces: Comparative and Competitive Advantage*. 1999. Hans Hendrichske, Ed. 1999. London, UK: Routledge.

Like other Han Chinese, the Gan people follow Confucianism as expressed in their devotion to its social values, including reverence for ancestors.<sup>119, 120</sup> Most of the Han Chinese people who live in the Gan-speaking region of China do not identify with a specific religion, similar to the overall trend in China.<sup>121, 122</sup> Since the Chinese government relaxed religious restrictions in the 1980s, more people in Jiangxi Province and the its surrounding border areas identify themselves as Taoist or Buddhist.<sup>123</sup>

## Major Religions in China<sup>124</sup>

### *Confucianism*

Confucianism, which developed in the 6th through 5th centuries B.C.E., has been described as a philosophy, or a way of life. It is less a religion than a social ethic. Because Confucianism emphasizes a political and moral system that promotes social order, it was favored by early Chinese dynasties. Its ethical values regarding human relationships have strongly influenced life in China for over 2,000 years. They are visible today in family life as well as in government, education, and other social institutions.<sup>125</sup>



© Wu Daozi  
Portrait of Confucius

Confucius (551–479 B.C.E.) did not found a “religion,” but rather transmitted traditional Chinese values that had existed in the earlier Zhou and other dynasties. Such values upheld a domestic order that relied on social rituals based on blood ties, reverence for ancestors, social alliances, and a kingship imbued with spiritual power. Benevolent and ethical rule by kings or dynastic leaders was the ideal that would attract a mandate from Heaven and lead to social and political stability. Confucius tried to revitalize institutions such as the family, the neighborhood, the schools, and the surrounding kingdom. He believed that virtue in all areas of life was essential to stability, resting on a just governmental and social order.

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<sup>119</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. “Confucianism.” 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9109629>

<sup>120</sup> Society for Anglo-Chinese Understanding (SACU). “Religions Concepts in China.” 2001. <http://www.sacu.org/religion2.html>

<sup>121</sup> *Peoples of the Buddhist World: A Christian Prayer Diary*. Hattaway, Paul. “Han Chinese, Gan.” 2004. Carlisle, CA: Piquant Editions, Ltd.

<sup>122</sup> U.S. Department of State. “China.” 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127268.htm>

<sup>123</sup> *Peoples of the Buddhist World: A Christian Prayer Diary*. Hattaway, Paul. “Han Chinese, Gan.” 2004. Carlisle, CA: Piquant Editions, Ltd.

<sup>124</sup> Religion Facts. “History of Chinese Religion.” 2004–2008. [http://www.religionfacts.com/chinese\\_religion/history.htm](http://www.religionfacts.com/chinese_religion/history.htm)

<sup>125</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. “Confucianism.” 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9109629>



Confucius' ancestors compiled his sayings in a book called the *Analects*. His followers splintered into different schools. During the Han Dynasty and beyond, Confucian ideals became very influential in the government, becoming a core part of education and bureaucracy at all levels. In *The Five Classics (Wu Ching)*, the classical tradition of Confucian ideals was set forth, along with pre-Confucian writings. Study of this book became necessary for advancement in the bureaucracy. Over the centuries, Confucianism became foundational to Chinese culture. Although attacked by communists during the Cultural Revolution, it has remained embedded in China's political and cultural life.<sup>126, 127</sup>



© Thomas Galvez  
Incense burner at Confucius temple

### *Neo-Confucianism*

Confucianism declined after the fall of the Han Dynasty (220 C.E.) but experienced a revival during the Song Dynasty (11th century), reemerging as Neo-Confucianism. In this period, a new class known as the gentry (scholar-officials) gained upward mobility and political influence. In addition, they used technological advances in printing to spread their ideas through society. As the new landed gentry took the place of the old aristocracy, they formed alliances, gained local control, and opposed modernizing or foreign influences. As landowners with conservative traditions, they promoted a locally self-sufficient, agrarian economy. In the 11th and 12th centuries, Neo-Confucianism became the new orthodoxy in China, and its center was in Jiangxi Province.<sup>128, 129, 130</sup>



Courtesy of Wikipedia.com  
Laozi, Buddha, Confucius

### *Taoism (Daoism)*<sup>131, 132</sup>

Around the 2nd century C.E., Taoist beliefs were emerging in China. They became prominent during the Han Dynasty (206 B.C.E.–25 C.E.) and following dynasties. A religious-philosophical system, Taoism is indigenous to China, developing alongside folk

<sup>126</sup> Internet Sacred Text Archive. "The Chinese Classics." 2010. <http://www.sacred-texts.com/cfu/index.htm>

<sup>127</sup> Friesian.com. Ross, Kelly L. "Confucius." 2007. <http://www.friesian.com/confuci.htm>

<sup>128</sup> China Knowledge. "Neo-Confucianism." 2000.

<http://www.chinaknowledge.de/Literature/Classics/neoconfucianism.html>

<sup>129</sup> Jrank.org. "Confucianism: Neo-Confucianism." 2010.

<http://science.jrank.org/pages/8787/Confucianism-Neo-Confucianism.html>

<sup>130</sup> Jiangxi in Reform: The Fear of Exclusion and the Search for a New Identity [pp. 252–253]. Chongyi, Feng. In *The Political Economy of China's Provinces: Comparative and Competitive Advantage*. Hans Hendrichske, Ed. 1999. "London, UK: Routledge.

<sup>131</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. "Daoism." 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9105866>

<sup>132</sup> Asia for Educators, Columbia University. Cohen, Myron L. and Stephen F. Teiser. "Living in the Chinese Cosmos: Understanding Religion in Late-Imperial China (1644–1911). Defining 'Daoism': A Complex History." 2007. <http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/cosmos/ort/daoism.htm>

religion and sharing many of the same beliefs. It deeply influenced some schools of Buddhism that were trying to adapt to China's culture, such as the Chan (Zen) school.

Taoism emphasizes an attitude of yielding, noninterference, reconciliation, and willingness to explore different sides of reality. It is more contemplative and metaphysical (questioning truth and realism) compared to the pragmatism and order of Confucianism. The two are related, however, and Taoism connects Confucianism and Chinese folk religion. Some Taoist traditions merge with mysticism, exploring the occult and practices such as alchemy (chemical experiments attempting to produce gold for spiritual purposes).



© Tim Zachernuk  
Daoist priest

Several early Taoist writings exist, covering a variety of speculative and philosophical topics. Two of the most well-known are the *Tao-te Ching* by Lao-Tzu, and the *Zhuangzi*, named after one of its authors. The *Tao-te Ching* has been widely translated into English and other Western languages.

### *Buddhism*<sup>133, 134</sup>

Buddhism was founded by Siddhartha Gautama Sakyamuni (later called “the Buddha”). Living in northern India in the 6th century B.C.E., Siddhartha followed an ascetic path for many years and became aware of the cause of suffering. He suggested how to overcome suffering and dedicated his life to passing the revelation on to others. Buddhism became influential in central and northern Asia, finding a home in countries such as China, Tibet, Japan, and Korea. The Chinese adapted Buddhism to their culture and made it one of the country's core religious philosophies.<sup>135</sup> In government, leaders who adopted Buddhist beliefs sometimes competed with those affiliated with Taoism.



Courtesy of Wikipedia.com  
Statue of Buddha from Sarnath,  
4th century CD

Buddhism focuses on humankind, rather than a god or gods. Its central premise is that humans can escape pain in life only by ending their worldly attachments and extinguishing the ego. The ultimate goal is enlightenment, known as *nirvana*. Enlightenment, or bliss, is a state of mind that transcends all desire and ends any sense of suffering, according to Buddhist scripture and belief. To achieve this state, people should avoid extremes in both austerity (self-renunciation) and pleasure in their lives.

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<sup>133</sup> Shippensburg University. Boeree, George C. “The Basics of Buddhist Wisdom.” No date. <http://webspace.ship.edu/cgboer/buddhawise.html>

<sup>134</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. “China: People: Religion.” 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-258961>

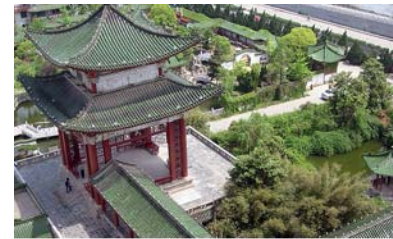
<sup>135</sup> Religion Facts. “Mahayana Buddhism: The ‘Greater Vehicle.’ ” 2004–2009. <http://www.religionfacts.com/buddhism/sects/mahayana.htm>

## *Other Religions*

Other religions active in China include Catholicism, various Protestant denominations, and Islam. The Chinese government retains the right to intervene, however. If a threat to the state is perceived because of an adherents' loyalty to a religious leader, such as the Catholic Pope, the government may appoint its own religious leaders. Religious conflict has played out between the Chinese government and followers of the Dalai Lama who practice Tibetan Buddhism. Ethnic minority groups authorized to practice their beliefs have encountered state suppression of religious activities. The Uighurs living in Xinjiang Province practice Islam, and the government regulates and monitors public order in this and other areas where ethnic minority groups live.<sup>136, 137</sup>

## **The Role of Religion in the Chinese Government**<sup>138, 139</sup>

As leaders of China's government, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) banned religion when the People's Republic of China (PRC) was founded in 1949. The state officially proclaimed atheism at that time.



© Jay Collier  
Tengwang Pavilion, Nanchang

Despite this official atheism, the state has continued to allow religious practice provided it is under government control.<sup>140</sup> In the last 20 years, the party has been more lenient in religious matters, and toward certain religions and practices. The Chinese Constitution, Article 36, prohibits discrimination in religion and “forbids state organs, public organizations, or individuals from compelling citizens to believe in—or not to believe in—any particular faith.”<sup>141</sup> The State Council passed new religious regulations allowing approved organizations to freely promote specific religious matters such as training clergy and publishing material. Chinese criminal law authorizes the sentencing of two years or less in prison for authorities who violate citizens' religious rights.

At the same time, the constitutional protection of religion is qualified. Only “normal religious activities” are protected in the context of five approved religions: Taoism, Buddhism, Islam, Protestantism, and Catholicism. The definition of “normal religious

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<sup>136</sup> Asia for Educators, Columbia University. Cohen, Myron L. and Stephen F. Teiser. “Living in the Chinese Cosmos: Understanding Religion in Late Imperial China (1644–1911). Religion in China Today: Reemergence of Traditional Practices and the Question of National Identity. Ethnicity, Religious Practice, and State Control.” 2007. <http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/cosmos/bgov/today#ethnicity.htm>

<sup>137</sup> Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. Department of State. International Religious Freedom Report 2009. “China.” 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127268.htm>

<sup>138</sup> Council on Foreign Relations. Bhattacharji, Preeti. “Religion in China.” 16 May 2008. <http://www.cfr.org/publication/16272/>

<sup>139</sup> Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. Department of State. International Religious Freedom Report 2009. “China.” 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127268.htm>

<sup>140</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. “China: People: Religion.” 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-258961>

<sup>141</sup> Council on Foreign Relations. Bhattacharji, Preeti. “Religion in China. 2: Freedom and Regulation.” 16 May 2008. <http://www.cfr.org/publication/16272/>

activities” is subject to government interpretation. The government discriminates against religious groups such as the Tibetan Buddhists and Muslim Uighurs as well as unregistered religions and designated cults (Falun Gong falls into the latter category).

To monitor religious activity, the CCP uses an organization called State Administration for Religious Affairs (SARA). Western experts explain that the SARA finds ways to restrict religious freedom by using loopholes and ambiguities in the law. It finds exceptions to laws that protect religious freedom.

### **Influence of Religion on Daily Life**<sup>142, 143</sup>

Although the constitution guarantees religious freedom, all individuals who belong to religious groups are under government control that can assert itself at any time. The government’s purpose in monitoring religious activities is to make sure churches do not threaten or challenge the state’s authority in any way. Religious practitioners are not allowed to pledge their loyalty to a foreign leader of the religion. This restriction applies to the Pope and the Dalai Lama. Practitioners of unauthorized religions may be harassed, intimidated, and detained at will, although the extent of government interference varies among regions. Harsh treatment can also apply to those who practice approved religions but participate in affiliated religious events that are not controlled by the state.



Despite state restrictions, religion—both official and unofficial—remains important in the lives of over a third of the country’s population. Although figures are not available for the Gan-speaking region, the most widely practiced religion in China is Buddhism, with roughly 11–16% of the adult population (around 100 million people), according to a Chinese survey. Taoism has a lower number of adherents, estimated at less than 1% of the adult population. (It proves difficult to estimate the number of Buddhists and Taoists because they do not attend formal, institutional gatherings; instead they practice religion in their homes.) According to figures and estimates for the number of religious practitioners, China has 20–50 million Muslims and 20–70 million or more Christians. The CCP has a membership estimated at around 60 million, of whom one–sixth practice some form of religion.<sup>144</sup>

Tension exists between the churches, their members, and the government. Many Christians practice their religion underground, attending services in private homes to

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<sup>142</sup> Council on Foreign Relations. Bhattacharji, Preeti. “Religion in China.” 16 May 2008. <http://www.cfr.org/publication/16272/>

<sup>143</sup> Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. Department of State. International Religious Freedom Report 2009. “China.” 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127268.htm>

<sup>144</sup> All figures for this section are taken from the following source: Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, U.S. Department of State. International Religious Freedom Report 2009. “China.” 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127268.htm>

avoid state scrutiny. In some areas, unapproved religions flourish without interference from the authorities simply because the party leadership in some regions is more flexible than others. In rural areas control over religion may be more lax than in urban areas.

### *Persecution against Falun Gong Members*

Falun Gong followers, who are spread throughout China, have been repressed by the Chinese government. In 1999 the CCP outlawed this Chinese religious practice that incorporates Buddhism, Taoism, and spiritual Qigong exercises. Its adherents reportedly face arrest, imprisonment, and sometimes torture. They may be sent to labor camps for reeducation, an effort to dissuade them of their beliefs. The CCP officially explained it has been punishing and controlling Falun Gong because the group was “spreading fallacies” and “advocating superstition.”<sup>145</sup> However, many analysts claim the real reason behind the CCP’s persecution is the Falun Gong’s high level of independent organization, which the government considers threatening.



### **Religious Events and Holidays**<sup>146, 147, 148</sup>

Traditional Han Chinese religious festivals and elaborate rituals take place throughout China, with many in the Gan region. One of these national events, Chinese New Year, is a public holiday, meaning the government offices, banks, post offices, and airlines are closed. This holiday and a few of China’s other more notable festivals are described below.

#### *Chinese New Year*

Chinese New Year, also referred to as Spring Festival or Lunar New Year, is China’s most significant traditional holiday. Families all across the country gather to celebrate this late January or early February event, signaling a lucky beginning to a year hopefully filled with prosperity. Different ways of celebrating include feasting on traditional foods, hanging red lanterns, and attending fireworks displays or lighting firecrackers. Most people receive a seven-day holiday from work, and the start date depends on the Chinese calendar. Used for centuries, this lunarsolar calendar relies on observations of the sun and moon to determine a new year.



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<sup>145</sup> Council on Foreign Relations. Bhattacharji, Preeti. “Religion in China.7: Falun Gong/Falun Dafa.” 16 May 2008. <http://www.cfr.org/publication/16272/>

<sup>146</sup> China Highlights. “Chinese Festivals.” 1998–2008. <http://www.chinahighlights.com/travelguide/festivals/>

<sup>147</sup> Religion Facts. “Chinese Holidays and Festivals.” 2004–2009. [http://www.religionfacts.com/chinese\\_religion/holidays.htm](http://www.religionfacts.com/chinese_religion/holidays.htm)

<sup>148</sup> *The Rough Guide to China*, 4th Ed. Leffman, David and Simon Lewis. “Basics: Opening Hours, Public Holidays, and Festivals [pp. 67–68].” 2005. London, UK: Rough Guides.

According to the Chinese calendar, each new year is represented by the image of an animal, for example, 2010 is the Year of the Tiger (*Geng Yin*).<sup>149, 150</sup>

People in China prepare ritually for Chinese New Year because it represents a new beginning in life. Their preparation helps set the direction the year will take. They clean their houses carefully on New Year's Eve and decorate with red, which represents prosperity and good luck. To begin the year with a clean start, they settle debts, paying or collecting monies owed to achieve financial balance. That evening, they share a festive dinner with extended family members.<sup>151</sup>

On the first day of Chinese New Year, people begin the celebration fully. They dress in clothing of bright colors, often newly purchased. They honor their ancestors, visit family members, and share foods such as mandarin oranges or special sweets. Parents traditionally give their children gifts of money placed in red envelopes. On subsequent days of the holiday, people visit friends and continue celebrating. They may attend parades, observe lion dances (a traditional event performed by acrobatic dancers), and gather around bonfires. It is thought that the noise and light of these events, along with the fireworks, will cause evil spirits to disperse.<sup>152, 153</sup> On the last day of the Chinese New Year celebration, the official Lantern Festival takes place. This festival is characterized by displays of different colorful paper lanterns. Its origin is associated with different spiritual or religious legends. This festival is especially popular in rural areas.<sup>154, 155</sup>



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<sup>149</sup> China Highlights. "Introduction to Chinese New Year." 25 November 2009.

<http://www.chinahighlights.com/travelguide/festivals/introduction-to-chinese-new-year.htm>

<sup>150</sup> China the Beautiful. "Chinese New Year by the Chinese Calendar." 29 January 2010.

<http://www.chinapage.com/newyear.html>

<sup>151</sup> Religion Facts. "Chinese New Year." 2004–2009.

[http://www.religionfacts.com/chinese\\_religion/holidays/chinese\\_new\\_year.htm](http://www.religionfacts.com/chinese_religion/holidays/chinese_new_year.htm)

<sup>152</sup> Feng Shui Times. Tew, Suan. "Traditions of Chinese New Year." 2000–2010.

<http://www.fengshuitemes.com/article/detail.asp?aid=165&cid=4&pg=1>

<sup>153</sup> Religion Facts. "Chinese New Year." 2004–2009.

[http://www.religionfacts.com/chinese\\_religion/holidays/chinese\\_new\\_year.htm](http://www.religionfacts.com/chinese_religion/holidays/chinese_new_year.htm)

<sup>154</sup> Index-China.com. "Chinese Holidays and Festivals: Chinese Traditional Holidays." No date.

[http://www.index-china.com/index-english/chinese\\_holidays.htm](http://www.index-china.com/index-english/chinese_holidays.htm)

<sup>155</sup> Chinese-family.com. "Chinese Festivals and Holidays: Lantern Festival." 2006–2009.

<http://www.chinese-family.com/Chinese-Festivals-Holidays.htm>

### *Autumn Moon Festival (Mid-Autumn Festival)*<sup>156, 157</sup>

Falling in late September or early October, this autumn festival takes place when the moon is full, symbolizing harmony and prosperity in the family. After Chinese New Year it is the second most important holiday in China. Relatives and friends mark this holiday by gathering in the evening to visit scenic locations where they can look upon the moon as they enjoy a light meal of fruit and mooncakes. Foods vary according to region: in some areas, people eat vegetables that represent the harvest or particular foods that symbolize peace. Children at the family gatherings often walk around carrying bright lanterns. Held at the end of the growing season, the Autumn Moon Festival allows farmers to celebrate their harvest.



The origins of this festival are not known. Many people believe that in ancient times, the celebrations grew out of a belief that sacrifices should be made to the Moon Goddess, who for centuries inspired songs and literary expressions such as poetry in China. Others believe that the Autumn Moon Festival simply honors the fall harvest and the end of the agricultural season.

### *Ghost Festival*<sup>158, 159</sup>

The Chinese observe the Ghost Festival in August or September, the time when the spirits of the dead walk the earth and visit the living, according to belief. This festival symbolizes bonds between the living and the dead. On this solemn day, considered inauspicious for travel or a marriage, people participate in various rituals.<sup>160</sup> They place lanterns or paper boats on moving water, which signifies giving direction to ghosts that may be lost. They also offer the ghosts ritual gifts of food or money. The festival is directed not only toward ghosts but also to other spiritual beings and ancestors.



The Ghost Festival celebration is both Buddhist and Taoist in origin. For Buddhists, it is connected to an Indian legend that the Chinese adapted, telling the story of a merchant

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<sup>156</sup> Religion Facts. "Autumn Moon Festival." 2004–2009.

[http://www.religionfacts.com/chinese\\_religion/holidays/autumn\\_moon\\_festival.htm](http://www.religionfacts.com/chinese_religion/holidays/autumn_moon_festival.htm)

<sup>157</sup> China Highlights. "Mid-Autumn Festival." 1998–2009.

<http://www.chinahighlights.com/travelguide/festivals/mid-autumn-festival.htm>

<sup>158</sup> Religion Facts. "The Ghost Festival." 2004–2009.

[http://www.religionfacts.com/chinese\\_religion/holidays/ghost\\_festival.htm](http://www.religionfacts.com/chinese_religion/holidays/ghost_festival.htm)

<sup>159</sup> Chinese-family.com. "Chinese Festivals and Holidays: Ghost Festival." 2006–2009.

<http://www.chinese-family.com/Chinese-Festivals-Holidays.htm>

<sup>160</sup> *The Rough Guide to China*, 4th Ed. Leffman, David and Simon Lewis. "Basics: Opening Hours, Public Holidays, and Festivals [p. 68]." 2005. London, UK: Rough Guides.

who left his home to seek enlightenment and in later years tried to find his parents. He eventually found his mother in the form of a hungry ghost living in the underworld, and the legend focuses on his efforts to help her find release from suffering. Many people in China pay Buddhist monks to pray for their ancestors during this time, a payment considered a form of charity to the monks.

### *Chinese Buddhist Festivals*<sup>161</sup>

The Chinese observe approximately 25 Buddhist festivals celebrating different occasions, such as the day the Buddha received enlightenment or a day of renunciation (sacrifice). The festivals include several birthdays, including the Buddha's and other historical figures in Buddhism., Celebration of Buddhist holy days involves visiting temples to pray, burn incense, or offer gifts such as flowers and fruit.

### *Qing Ming Jie (Tomb Sweeping Day)*

Also called Ching Ming Festival (Pure Brightness Festival), this traditional festival takes place in mid spring to honor the dead. It is a day for mourning and honoring the ancestors by sweeping their graves, praying to them, and offering them gifts of food and drink. Honoring the dead is considered an obligation. Many Chinese believe if they do not take care of the spirits of the dead, those spirits will become “hungry ghosts” that haunt the living and cause mischief against them. In ancient China, ceremonies to honor the ancestors were much more frequent and often involved excessive time and expense. This changed in 732 C.E., when the Chinese emperor declared such practices too elaborate and should formally take place only once a year, on the day of Qing Ming. This custom has continued to the present.<sup>162, 163</sup>



© toafay06 / flickr.com  
Tomb sweeping day

## **Buildings of Worship**

In the Gan region of northern Jiangxi Province (where Chan Buddhism was taught for many years) a few Buddhist temples were built.<sup>164</sup> Taoist temples, usually small, nondescript buildings devoid of obvious ornamentation, are also found in the Gan-speaking region.<sup>165</sup> During China's Cultural Revolution from 1966–1976, activists

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<sup>161</sup> Religion Facts. “Chinese Buddhist Holidays.” 2004–2009.

[http://www.religionfacts.com/chinese\\_religion/holidays/buddhist.htm](http://www.religionfacts.com/chinese_religion/holidays/buddhist.htm)

<sup>162</sup> Chinese-family.com. “Chinese Festivals and Holidays: Qingming Festivals.” 2006–2009.

<http://www.chinese-family.com/Chinese-Festivals-Holidays.htm>

<sup>163</sup> Religion Facts. “Qing Ming Jie (Tomb Sweeping Day).” 2004–2009.

[http://www.religionfacts.com/chinese\\_religion/holidays/tomb\\_sweeping.htm](http://www.religionfacts.com/chinese_religion/holidays/tomb_sweeping.htm)

<sup>164</sup> Explore My China! “Tourist Attractions in Jiangxi Province.” 2000–2009.

<http://www.asinah.net/china/jiangxi.html>

<sup>165</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. “The History of Two Taoist Temples.” 2010.

<http://www.britannica.com/bps/additionalcontent/18/23887482/The-History-of-Two-Taoist-Temples>



destroyed or damaged many religious buildings throughout China. Some were converted into unofficial museums, and others were restored for worship.

A few Buddhist temples that remain standing in Jiangxi Province are important for their historical value. One religious site in the city of Jiujiang is Donglin Monastery, established during the short-lived Eastern Jin Dynasty (317–420). Over 1,600 years old, the monastery attracts visitors from around the world. It covers an area of approximately 120,000 square meters (29.7 acres) and was at one time famed for the Buddhist sermons its priests gave to dignitaries and commoners alike. During World War II, fighting destroyed most of the monastery, but it has been rebuilt. Another religious structure in Jiujiang is Nengren Temple, also built during the Eastern Jin Dynasty, at the foot of Mount Lushan. It was restored during the Tang Dynasty (618–907), and during the Song Dynasty (960–1279), builders added the Iron Buddha Hall. The temple has since been repeatedly rebuilt. Today, the Nengren Temple complex includes bridges, famous gates, a pagoda, and rooms where ancient texts are kept.<sup>166, 167</sup>



© Shawn de Raaf  
Buddhist temple in Jiangxi

Lushan National Park in northern Jiangxi, a UNESCO World Heritage site, is the home of the ancient Bailudong Academy. Also known as White Deer Cave Academy, it was one of ancient China's four largest schools of classical learning. Zhu Xi, a Neo-Confucian scholar, developed the academy during the Song Dynasty. It still stands in the form of a large, well-preserved shrine that includes its ancient interior structures.<sup>168, 169,</sup>  
<sup>170</sup> Mount Lushan, though one of China's most famous Confucian sites, also hosts Buddhist and Taoist temples.

### **Behavior in Places of Worship<sup>171</sup>**

Statues and images of the Buddha and other religious and philosophical figures are sacred throughout China and Asia. Visitors should approach them quietly, and respectfully, since they represent China's cultural heritage.

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<sup>166</sup> TouroChina. "Jiangxi." 2004–2010. <http://www.tourochina.com/province-guide-7/Jiangxi>

<sup>167</sup> ChinaTour360.com. "Tourist Attractions: Donglin Monastery & Nengren Temple." 2010. <http://www.chinatour360.com/jiangxi/jiujiang/donglin-monastery.htm>

<sup>168</sup> Confucius Institute Online. "Four Great Academy of Classical Chinese Learning." 4 December 2009. [http://cul.chinese.cn/en/article/2009-12/04/content\\_35483.htm](http://cul.chinese.cn/en/article/2009-12/04/content_35483.htm)

<sup>169</sup> ChinaTour360.com. "Tourist Attractions: Lushan National Park." 2010. <http://www.chinatour360.com/jiangxi/jiujiang/lushan.htm>

<sup>170</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. "Facts about Bailudong Academy: Jiangxi Province, as Discussed in Jiangxi (Province, China): History." 2010. <http://www.britannica.com/facts/5/591375/Bailudong-Academy-as-discussed-in-Jiangxi-province-China>

<sup>171</sup> eHow. "How to Be Respectful While Visiting a Buddhist Temple." 1999–2008. [http://www.ehow.com/how\\_2103253\\_be-respectful-visiting-buddhist-temple.html](http://www.ehow.com/how_2103253_be-respectful-visiting-buddhist-temple.html)

**Exchange 1:** May I enter the temple?

<b>Soldier:</b>	May I enter the temple?	ngo ko-ee jeen si meeyo maa?
<b>Local</b>	Yes.	ko-ee

Foreign visitors should dress modestly because Chinese culture is quite conservative. Strict rules apply in Buddhist temples worldwide not only about conduct but also appearance in and around the temples. Visitors who enter a temple should wear clean clothing that is not skimpy or revealing. The dress code includes shirts and long pants for men and long skirts or pants with blouses or sweaters that cover the shoulders for women. Both men and women should remove their shoes before walking inside and must refrain from touching paintings or statues.



© Jared Stein  
Temple visitors

**Exchange 2:** What should I wear?

<b>Soldier:</b>	What should I wear in the temple?	ngo dzay meeyo le een guy tsuan shi lee ee foo?
<b>Local</b>	Nothing low-cut, but anything nice is fine.	len hoh tee meeyen go ee foo doh Sheen. bo yo tsuan dee Sheeyong ge ee foo.

As in visiting a Buddhist temple, it is important to dress conservatively and behave politely when visiting a Taoist or Confucian temple. Visitors should never lean against statues or allow their children to walk or climb upon them.

Visitors to any temple or spiritual building should follow protocols learned in advance or posted in writing. Once inside, if people are praying or meditating, visitors should observe silence, as talking can interrupt prayers or be seen as rude, inappropriate behavior. Visitors to a temple can avoid interruptions by checking ahead of time as to when meditation or prayer sessions will take place.

**Exchange 3:** When does the temple hold prayer?

<b>Soldier:</b>	When does the temple hold prayer?	si meeyo shi lee si ghon dzoo goong koh?
<b>Local:</b>	Traditionally, we have morning practice.	tsuan toong song ngo min dzoo zao koh.

Other restrictions apply when visiting religious sites in China. Visitors should not bring food or drink into a temple. They should never stand or sit with their feet pointed directly at a Buddha statue or symbol because this indicates disrespect. This is true whether the statue or image is in a temple or any other location. Finally, visitors should not take photographs inside or outside places of worship without permission.



© Preston Rhea  
Luotiancun temple

Finally, foreign visitors need to be aware of China’s restrictions concerning general religious conduct, whether inside places of worship or outside them. Because it is against the law to proselytize in China, visitors should not pass out religious materials or even giving them away occasionally to a local person. These rules vary according to region, but visitors would be well advised to pay attention to the law and interpret it strictly. Foreign visitors who proselytize using unauthorized religious literature can be investigated, deported, or imprisoned for a period of 3–5 years. Visitors should also avoid religious socializing in groups, unless such group activity is sanctioned by the government. It is appropriate to attend religious services only when they are state-approved.<sup>172, 173, 174</sup> This applies in the Gan-speaking region and all areas of China.

<sup>172</sup> Bureau of Consular Affairs, U.S. Department of State. “China: Criminal Penalties.” 31 December 2009. [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>173</sup> General Board of Global Ministries, The United Methodist Church. *Monthly News Summary: People’s Republic of China*. “Christians Attending Olympics Welcomed to Worship, but Not to Evangelize.” July 2007. <http://74.125.155.132/search?q=cache:YAsxqDtguOkJ:new.gbgm-umc.org/media/newsletters/chinanewssummary200707.doc+laws+on+proselytizing+in+China&cd=5&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=us>

<sup>174</sup> Asia Times Online. Lee, Sunny. “Korean Holy Ghost Descends on China.” 12 October 2007. <http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Korea/IJ12Dg01.html>

**Self Study Questions:**

The religion and culture of the people who speak the Gan Chinese language is the same as the Han Chinese. True or False?

Buddhism is the only foreign religion that the Chinese people have ever widely adopted. True or False?

The Gan region is the birthplace of Neo-Confucianism. True or False?

In China, all individuals who belong to religious groups may operate freely without fear of government interference. True or False?

The second most important holiday in China is the Autumn Moon Festival. True or False?

## Traditions

### Honor and Values

Like the Han people throughout China, the Han Chinese of Jiangxi Province have for centuries lived according to values associated with Confucian culture.<sup>175</sup> With a state organized to achieve social order, orthodox Confucianism promoted a strong central government, unlike other older civilizations both in its structure and value system.

Confucian society was established by the state rather than through religion. Only in Confucianism do we see a state represent the forces of “wisdom, morality, and the common good.”<sup>176</sup> The Chinese people accepted that the central government had a right to dictate their values, and that they had no freedom to object. There was a sense of social obligation based on rank as established by the social order.

Confucian values have permeated Chinese culture, shifting in emphasis but remaining fundamental from the Han Dynasty to present time.<sup>177</sup>



© Bob Huberman  
Elderly Han woman

Within Confucian society, the concept of honor was linked to paying respect to others and earning respect through one’s actions. Practicing filial piety and showing deference toward one’s ancestors were expected. Honor and prestige in China were also accorded to those who advanced through their own efforts, rather than by hereditary privilege alone. Confucians valued learning, which was based on the study of the classics. During the imperial era of the Han Dynasty, mastering the Confucian classics was a way of developing “internalized moral guidance,” which was more highly valued than external laws.<sup>178</sup> Such education became part of the criteria required to hold public office. Confucians believed leaders steeped in this ideology could be role models who teach by example. Ideally, the values they represented would be diffused throughout society through folk songs and tales, even into rural areas populated by peasants or others people who were illiterate.<sup>179</sup>

Although Confucian ideology no longer guides the state, contemporary life in China reflects its influence. It regulates the relationship between individuals and their government. Confucian values are also found in social code of conduct for the family and the community. Although this code has weakened in recent years, its underlying values

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<sup>175</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. “Jiangxi: Cultural Life.” 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-71331>

<sup>176</sup> U.S. Library of Congress. “A Country Study: China: Chapter 3: The Social System: Han Diversity and Unity.” 1987. <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/cntoc.html>

<sup>177</sup> U.S. Library of Congress. “A Country Study: China: Chapter 3: The Social System: Traditional Society and Culture.” 1987. <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/cntoc.html>

<sup>178</sup> U.S. Library of Congress. “A Country Study: China: Chapter 3: The Social System: Traditional Society and Culture.” 1987. <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/cntoc.html>

<sup>179</sup> U.S. Library of Congress. “A Country Study: China: Chapter 3: The Social System: Traditional Society and Culture: Diffusion of Values.” 1987. <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/cntoc.html>

still shape attitudes toward learning, hierarchy, legalism, and collectivism versus individualism.<sup>180, 181, 182</sup>

### *The Tradition of Guanxi*<sup>183, 184</sup>

*Guanxi*, which translates loosely as “relationships,” is the traditional way to accomplish objectives by trading favors. *Guanxi* is a relationship involving obligations between individuals and the group(s) they belong to. *Guanxi* does not operate between strangers who have no group connections; it functions on the basis of collective behavior, which is a preeminent value in China. In China, the most important group is one’s family, and beyond that, friends and professional associates. Rules of obligation and ritual social behavior apply to persons within one’s inner circles. A person can also have a *guanxi* connection with someone he or she has never met, based on a shared connection, such as residence in a similar village.



© randomix / flickr.com  
Family in Likeng Village

*Guanxi* operates when people exchange favors out of a sense of willing obligation. To meet particular goals, a person may need to contact someone, may need a reference, or require assistance with a project. *Guanxi* may involve seeking influence from another person to obtain personal or professional advancement. The person who needs help or influence relies on the one with whom he or she has *guanxi* to fulfill that need. In responding, the provider confirms the mutual obligation, and the reciprocity becomes stronger. *Guanxi* is stronger in rural areas, in smaller companies, and in villages that have remained unchanged. In large companies and many urban settings merit usually takes precedence of connections or *Guanxi*.

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<sup>180</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. “Confucianism.” 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9109629>

<sup>181</sup> U.S. Library of Congress. “A Country Study: China: Chapter 3: The Social System: Traditional Society and Culture: The Confucian Legacy.” 1987. <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/cntoc.html>

<sup>182</sup> *Los Angeles Times*. Magnier, Mark. “China’s Honor Code.” 15 April 2006.

<http://articles.latimes.com/2006/apr/15/world/fg-piety15?pg=2>

<sup>183</sup> International Federation of Journalists, Play the Game for Open Journalism. Sparre, Kirsten. “Tips for Foreign Journalists on Negotiating Chinese Culture.” 2008.

<http://playthegameforopenjournalism.org/journalists/how-to-report-from-china.html>

<sup>184</sup> China Travel Tour Guide. “Chinese Etiquette and Courtesies.” 2003–2009. <http://www.china-travel-tour-guide.com/travel-tips/etiquette.shtml>

## Politeness<sup>185, 186, 187, 188</sup>

Rules concerning codes of politeness vary between cultures. Customs concerning good versus bad manners are so automatic they seem “natural,” when in fact they are a result of social conditioning. For these reasons, it is useful to suspend judgment when people from other cultures do not react in socially anticipated ways.

### *Greetings and Introductions*

Chinese people who live in the cities often greet foreigners with a handshake, but this practice is less common in the countryside. If the foreign visitor initiates the greeting, he or she should shake hands with the eldest Chinese person first. If a male visitor is greeting a Chinese woman, he should let her initiate the handshake. When shaking hands with either men or women, the grip should be light and not prolonged. The Western norm for a handshake, in which a firm grip means sincerity, does not apply to the Chinese culture, among others.



© Bob Huberman  
Elder Han man

A polite spoken expression is part of the greeting ritual.

#### **Exchange 4:** Good morning.

<b>Soldier:</b>	Good morning.	zao song how
<b>Local:</b>	Good morning.	zao song how

If a Chinese person does not offer to shake hands, it does not indicate hostility or lack of manners. Shaking hands may simply not be an appropriate custom for that particular place and circumstance. Rather than interpreting someone’s reluctance to shake hands as a rejection, the visitor’s immediate response could be an alternative form of greeting,

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<sup>185</sup> *China Survival Guide: How to Avoid Travel Troubles and Mortifying Mishaps*. Herzberg, Larry and Qin. “Chapter 11: A Basic Guide to Chinese Etiquette [pp. 139–155].” 2008. Berkeley, CA: Stone Bridge Press.

<sup>186</sup> Cultural Savvy. Millett, Joyce. “Chinese Culture, Etiquette, & Protocol.” 1999–2009.

[http://www.culturalsavvy.com/chinese\\_culture.htm](http://www.culturalsavvy.com/chinese_culture.htm)

<sup>187</sup> China Travel Tour Guide. “Chinese Etiquette and Courtesies.” 2003–2009. <http://www.china-travel-tour-guide.com/travel-tips/etiquette.shtml>

<sup>188</sup> Kwintessential. “China – Language, Culture, Customs, and Etiquette.” No date.

<http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/resources/global-etiquette/china-country-profile.html>

such as a slight bow. A nod of the head, accompanied by a smile and a spoken greeting, can also be a good way to acknowledge another person.<sup>189</sup>

**Exchange 5:** Good afternoon.

<b>Soldier:</b>	Good afternoon.	haa wo how
<b>Local:</b>	Good afternoon.	haa wo how

Families are uniquely important within the hierarchy of Chinese culture. When greeting a Chinese person, one may always inquire about the well-being of his or her family. This type of polite inquiry will help establish a positive relationship.

**Exchange 6:** How is your family?

<b>Soldier:</b>	How is your family?	nen ga anin how maa?
<b>Local:</b>	They are fine, thank you.	hay ho, Sheeya Sheeya

*Forms of Address*<sup>190</sup>

When meeting a person for the first time, visitors should use their full names and avoid using only the first (given) name. To do so, it is essential to first decipher Chinese names. Like many East Asian countries, China’s first names and last names are in reverse order from the West. In China, the person’s family name is written or spoken first (unless the name has been Westernized), and it is followed by the individual’s first (given) name. Thus, the famous basketball player Yao Ming would be addressed as Yao Ming, even though “Yao” is his family name, what Westerners would call his “last name.” This convention of using the full name applies when meeting Chinese people for the first few times. If uncertain as to



<sup>189</sup> *China Survival Guide: How to Avoid Travel Troubles and Mortifying Mishaps.* Herzberg, Larry and Qin. “Chapter 11: A Basic Guide to Chinese Etiquette [p. 142].” 2008. Berkeley, CA: Stone Bridge Press.

<sup>190</sup> *China Survival Guide: How to Avoid Travel Troubles and Mortifying Mishaps.* Herzberg, Larry and Qin. “Chapter 11: A Basic Guide to Chinese Etiquette [pp. 139–143].” 2008. Berkeley, CA: Stone Bridge Press.



which name should be first, simply ask which name is the family name, and then say the complete name. Do not make the mistake of using only one name, whether the last name, or the given name. When meeting and greeting the first few times, it is also advisable to use titles, such as Mr., Mrs., or professional titles such as Professor or Doctor.

**Exchange 7:** Hi, Mr. Li.

<b>Soldier:</b>	Hi, Mr. Li.	nen how, lee Sheen sen
<b>Local:</b>	Hello!	nen how!
<b>Soldier:</b>	Are you doing well?	nen how maa?
<b>Local:</b>	Yes.	how de

As a visitor becomes known, Chinese acquaintances will often invite them to use a given name. In most circumstances, it is better to wait until the person suggests this more familiar address.

The Chinese people tend to be initially reticent with foreigners, but they are less formal after a relationship has been established. Once they have indicated to visitors that strict form may be relaxed, the visitors should respond in kind.



**Exchange 8:** How are you?

<b>Soldier:</b>	How are you?	nen how maa?
<b>Local:</b>	Fine, thank you. And you?	hen how Sheeya Sheeya nen ne?

### *Eye Contact and Personal Space*

The degree and intensity of eye contact varies among cultures. In U.S. culture, direct eye contact is considered a sign of trustworthiness or character. By contrast, the Chinese consider direct eye contact disrespectful, and an invasion of privacy. The level of eye contact allowed varies according to one's position in society. For example, people of lower social rank may avoid direct eye contact with those in higher positions. For these reasons, many Chinese avert their gaze as they greet another person. They may also avoid eye contact in crowded situations to protect their own privacy.



© Cathy Stanley-Erickson  
Local elderly woman

Compared to North Americans, Chinese people tend to stand closer to those with whom they are speaking if they are very familiar with them. If visitors from the U.S. back away and extend their personal space, they may find that Chinese people simply step closer again. While people stand closer together than Americans would, they will be shoulder-to-shoulder with their friends, and distant from people who are unfamiliar to them.

### *Saving Face*

The concept of “saving face” is a powerful principle that governs social interaction. To “save face” is to preserve the dignity or honor of another and to maintain surface harmony. Losing face can result from interacting rudely, showing lack of respect, treating someone too casually, disagreeing publicly, or speaking confrontationally. A person allows another to save face by speaking politely, supporting someone publicly, or showing deference. One should always behave in ways that preserve outward harmony. “Saving face” is the means to build trust and win the cooperation of others.

### *Communication Style*

Chinese people's communication style is not aggressive, assertive, or confrontational. If foreigners approach Chinese people aggressively, they generally will passively withdraw from the conversation. It is always an affront to publicly criticize someone (thus causing that person to lose face) or to display impatience or anger. If criticism is necessary, it should always be delivered to a Chinese person privately and tactfully, not publicly.



© Shawn de Raaf  
Villagers in Yingtan

Sometimes an intermediary delivers unpleasant news. This is a way of saving face and preserving surface harmony.

Westerners often casually reveal their emotions and feelings. Such openness is uncommon in Chinese culture, because the custom is to keep one's private feelings hidden. Partly for this reason, Chinese people will avoid giving direct praise or compliments. They often remain silent rather than express thoughts that may be inappropriate.

Facial expressions and gestures, too, are more restrained. Rather than communicating friendliness, for instance, a smile may simply be a hint of a Chinese person's emotions. It may reflect a desire or intention to restore harmony naturally, without reacting or attempting to change anything. An impassive expression is common, because facial expressions and body language reveal one's personal feelings, and group consensus is more important among the Chinese than individual feelings. Finally, when speaking with others, Chinese people often will nod their heads, but this does not mean they agree with what is being said or even that they understand it. The nod is mainly a neutral, accommodating gesture. It may be motivated by a desire to protect the speaker from losing face after saying something that the Chinese listener does not understand.

### Hospitality and Gift Giving<sup>191, 192, 193</sup>

Being invited into a Chinese person's home is an honor, and guests should acknowledge this by observing a few basic rules. First, they need to arrive on time, since punctuality is important in Chinese culture. Wearing appropriate clothing is also important. To make a good impression, visitors to a private home should dress in clean, conservative apparel. To show respect for the hosts and the other guests, it is important to take the time to learn about proper etiquette.



© Jack Parkinson  
Family in Fuzhou

Politely acknowledge your host's hospitality by briefly expressing your appreciation for the invitation. This statement should not make your host uncomfortable with effusive praise. Rather than express emotions publicly, Chinese people will often shrug off compliments or react to them minimally.

**Exchange 9:** Thank you for your hospitality.

<b>Soldier:</b>	Thank you for your hospitality.	Sheeya Sheeya nen go dzo daay
<b>Local:</b>	We're glad to have you join us.	hen gao Sheen nen len lie

<sup>191</sup>Cultural Savvy. Millett, Joyce. "Chinese Culture, Etiquette, & Protocol." 1999–2009.  
[http://www.culturalsavvy.com/chinese\\_culture.htm](http://www.culturalsavvy.com/chinese_culture.htm)

<sup>192</sup>Kwintessential. "China – Language, Culture, Customs, and Etiquette." No date.  
<http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/resources/global-etiquette/china-country-profile.html>

<sup>193</sup>*China Survival Guide: How to Avoid Travel Troubles and Mortifying Mishaps.* Herzberg, Larry and Qin. "Chapter 11: A Basic Guide to Chinese Etiquette [pp. 145–52]." 2008. Berkeley, CA: Stone Bridge Press.

It is customary to bring a small gift when invited into the home of a Chinese person. A gift should not be costly, and it should not be a knife, letter opener, or similar sharp instrument because these items symbolize ending a relationship (severing it). A gift should also not be a handkerchief or a clock, as both are associated with death or funerals in Chinese culture. A box of sweets or a memento from the visitor's home town would be appropriate (be sure there is no "made in China" tag, however). Because four is an inauspicious number (the word for four is similar to the word for death), a guest should not gift four of any particular item. When wrapping a gift, any color of paper is appropriate except blue, white, or black. Further, the visitor should present the gift with two hands and present it to the senior host. Last, it is unlikely the recipient will open the gift at the time he or she receives it. If the host does open it, the person giving the gift should not expect anything other than a simple acknowledgement that avoids emotion.



© Royai Shi  
Local gifts for sale

**Exchange 10:** This gift is for you.

<b>Soldier:</b>	This gift is for you.	gay ge lee yoo ghen nen
<b>Local:</b>	Thank you.	Sheeya Sheeya

When the host offers coffee or tea, it is customary to graciously accept. This is true even if a guest does not normally drink the kind of tea or coffee being offered. Rejecting the host's hospitality indicates poor manners and could be seen as a rejection of the host. If you drink the tea, remember they will continue to fill your cup as you empty your cup. The trick is to drink a little, but never let the cup be completely empty.



© Royai Shi  
Tea for sale

**Exchange 11:** Thank you, I'm done now.

<b>Soldier:</b>	Thank you, I'm done now.	Sheeya Sheeya, ngo cha won le
<b>Local:</b>	Don't be polite, eat more.	bo yo kaa chee doh cha dya dzi
<b>Soldier:</b>	Don't be polite, I'm full.	la le, ngo cha bao le

If a guest compliments the host or hostess on the quality of the food, he is likely to be encouraged to eat more. Often, the cook may lament over the lack of salt or other oversight. It is customary for the guest to react to this by objecting with praises and ask for more.

**Exchange 12:** This food is good.

<b>Soldier:</b>	This food is good.	dzen how cha
<b>Local:</b>	Eat more!	doh cha dya dzi

Chinese food is known for its variety of colors and ingredients. It is an art form, following many different schools of cooking and methods of preparation. When a guest expresses interest in the food being served, her curiosity can lend itself to interesting conversation over dinner.

**Exchange 13:** What ingredients are used?

<b>Soldier:</b>	What ingredients are used to make hong shao rou?	foon so nyoo young go si shi lee pey leeyo
<b>Local:</b>	Soy sauce, saki, sugar, and pork.	jon yo, leeyo jeeyo, tong hoh dzu nyoo

## Eating Customs and Habits<sup>194, 195, 196</sup>

There are a number of things to know about dining etiquette in China, whether the meal takes place at a host's home or in a restaurant. Being aware of and following rules of etiquette means that guests preserve face and shows respect for the host. To start, guests should sit where they are directed. The host usually faces



© Danny / flickr.com  
Noodle soup

<sup>194</sup> China Odyssey Tours. "Some Basic Dining Etiquette & Customs in China." 2004–2010. <http://www.chinaodysseytours.com/travel-guide-book/some-basic-dinning-etiquette-customs-in-china.html>

<sup>195</sup> Kwintessential. "China – Language, Culture, Customs, and Etiquette." No date. <http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/resources/global-etiquette/china-country-profile.html>

<sup>196</sup> Cultural Savvy. Millett, Joyce. "Chinese Culture, Etiquette, & Protocol." 1999–2009. [http://www.culturalsavvy.com/chinese\\_culture.htm](http://www.culturalsavvy.com/chinese_culture.htm)

the door and sits in a place of easy access, where he can get up easily to greet others or go into the kitchen if necessary. Once the food is on the table, the host is the first to begin eating. He is also the first to offer a toast. The guest should be ready to make a simple toast, but only in response to one the host has made. Appropriate topics for a toast include hopes for future friendship, pledges of cooperation, or plans for a mutually beneficial outcome.

Guests should spend some time learning how to use chopsticks because they are the customary eating utensils. Guests should also note that chopsticks are not used to take food out of serving bowls for shared food. Instead, each diner uses a large designated spoon to dish food from the common serving platters. After dishing up a portion, the guest then returns the serving spoon to its bowl for others to use. When eating with chopsticks, a guest should return them to the side of the plate after every few bites, or when the host is speaking. The chopsticks should never be used to gesture or point at others. Chopsticks also should not be rested standing up in a rice bowl because this looks like the way incense is placed and burned for funeral rituals.



Tasting everything that a host offers implies willingness to share and respect Chinese culture. At the same time, it's not necessary to eat everything on the plate, just most of it. If curious about something you are drinking or eating, simply ask what it is.

**Exchange 14:** What is the name of this dish?

<b>Soldier:</b>	What is the name of this dish?	goh si shi lee tsaay?
<b>Local:</b>	This is pork stew, hong shao rou.	goh si fone so nyoo

If a guest's plate is empty, the host will likely keep providing more food as a gesture of good hospitality. To avoid any waste of food, it's a good idea to leave just a small amount of food on the plate at the end of the meal.

## Dress Codes<sup>197</sup>

In China, clothing should be adapted to the weather. The weather is often hot and humid in the Gan region, so light, cool garments that can be easily washed and cared for are appropriate. Everyday wear can be casual but should be conservative, not revealing. Women often wear trousers, and in some temples, women are not allowed entry unless they are wearing long pants. Blouses have sleeves (usually short because of the climate).



© Cathy Stanley-Erickson  
Local couples dancing in Nanchang

### Exchange 15: How should I dress?

<b>Soldier:</b>	How should I dress?	ngo een gaay tsuan shi lee?
<b>Local:</b>	Anything nice is acceptable.	len hoh tee meeyen go ee foo doo how

In cities, more formal attire may be worn for business meetings and many official events. The clothing, always on the modest and conservative side, can include suits in dark colors. For women, the blouses worn under the suits have a high neckline. Women should wear low-heeled shoes and avoid bright colors.<sup>198</sup> Fewer formal styles of clothing are seen in rural areas, where, in general, local people wear long- or short-sleeved T-shirts, sandals and other comfortable shoes, and functional clothing.

If a visitor is uncertain as to what to wear, asking is the best way to find out.

### Exchange 16: Is this acceptable to wear?

<b>Soldier:</b>	Is this acceptable to wear?	tsuan gay ge Sheen bo Sheen?
<b>Local:</b>	Yes.	ko-ee

<sup>197</sup> China Travel Tour Guide. "What to Wear While Traveling in China." 2003–2009. <http://www.china-travel-tour-guide.com/travel-tips/clothing.shtml>

<sup>198</sup> Kwintessential. "China – Language, Culture, Customs, and Etiquette." No date. <http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/resources/global-etiquette/china-country-profile.html>

## Non-Religious Holidays<sup>199, 200</sup>

There are a number of non-religious public holidays in China. New Years Day (the 1st of January) is a secular holiday throughout much of the world. More important to Chinese culture is the Chinese New Year (also called Spring Festival), marked as a holiday in 2010 from 13–19 February. Three days of this period constitute a legal holiday. This is a celebratory time throughout the country and in international Chinese communities. Although Chinese New Year has some religious overtones, it is simultaneously a secular event in which artists perform dragon and lion dances, Chinese opera is produced, and a range of festive events is presented.



### Exchange 17: Will you be celebrating Chinese Lunar New Year?

<b>Soldier:</b>	Will you be celebrating Chinese Lunar New Year?	nen goh neeyen wee cheeng dzoo maa?
<b>Local:</b>	Yes!	wee!

Other holidays include Labor Day on 1 May and National Day on 1–3 October. Labor Day is an international recognition of the achievements of laborers, observed by most countries including China. National Day celebrates the establishment of the People’s Republic of China that took place in 1949. It is a three-day legal holiday. Other holidays observed by some members of the Chinese population include Women’s Day on 8 March, Children’s Day on 1 June, and Army Day on 1 August.

<sup>199</sup> TravelChinaGuide.com. “Public Holidays in China.” 1998–2010. <http://www.travelchinaguide.com/essential/public-holiday.htm>

<sup>200</sup> Index-China.com. “Chinese Holidays & Festivals: Official Chinese Holidays.” No date. [http://www.index-china.com/index-english/chinese\\_holidays.htm](http://www.index-china.com/index-english/chinese_holidays.htm)



## Social Events

*Weddings*<sup>201, 202, 203, 204</sup>

Wedding traditions vary in China, depending on the region and the degree to which traditional customs prevail. In the past, the parents of both the bride and groom arranged the marriage, but this practice is far less common now. Still, even though a young person may choose his or her marriage partner, family involvement is considerable because the relationship concerns two families, not simply two individuals. Many negotiations can take place regarding the lineage of the marriage partners, the cost of the wedding, details of the ceremony, and arrangements for the banquet.



© Royal Shi  
Bride and groom

In centuries past, local and Confucian tradition (honoring family ancestors) was part of the ceremony. Before the actual wedding took place, members of the wedding party followed several auspicious rituals. In one of them, the groom and his procession traveled from his home to the bride's, where he would spend some time with her friends or family. He would then bring her back to his home, where they would hold the wedding ceremony at his family altar. Another tradition that remains quite common today is consulting astrological signs in an attempt to find the most favorable date for a wedding.

Many updated customs also apply for those who wish to ignore older traditions or who have simply adapted to contemporary society. Some engaged couples exchange engagement rings and wear them on the left hand. They may live together for a period of time before they have a formal wedding. In other parts of the wedding ceremony, remnants of older traditions still hold an influence, often seen in the countryside.

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<sup>201</sup> Chinese Historical and Cultural Project. "Chinese Wedding Traditions." 1996–2009.

<http://www.chcp.org/wedding.html>

<sup>202</sup> WorldWeddingTraditions.com. "Chinese Wedding Traditions." 2002–2004.

[http://www.worldweddingtraditions.com/locations/asian\\_traditions/chinese\\_traditions.html](http://www.worldweddingtraditions.com/locations/asian_traditions/chinese_traditions.html)

<sup>203</sup> Chinatownconnection.com. Wong, Yee Lee. "Chinese Marriage and Chinese Marriage Traditions." 2005.

[http://www.chinatownconnection.com/chinese\\_marriage.htm](http://www.chinatownconnection.com/chinese_marriage.htm)

<sup>204</sup> China Today.com. Chan, Xinxin. "Marriage and the Family in China." March 2003.

<http://www.chinatoday.com.cn/English/e2003/e20033/marriage.htm>

The main color used in weddings is red, a color that traditionally symbolizes joy in China.

**Exchange 18:** I wish you both happiness.

<b>Soldier:</b>	I wish you both happiness.	dzoo ni min Sheen foo
<b>Local:</b>	Thank you so much.	Sheeya Sheeya

The bride often wears red shoes and a veil made of red silk. The bridegroom may wear a long gown with a red sash.

After the wedding ceremony, a banquet takes place for family and friends. Wine and several courses of elaborately prepared food are served (depending on the budget), accompanied by music. Each dish is symbolic of a different aspect of a successful marriage, such as joy, prosperity, selflessness, or unity. If one is fortunate enough to be invited to such an event, it is the perfect time to congratulate the bride and groom.



© Sven Laqua  
Bride in traditional dress

**Exchange 19:** Congratulations on your wedding!

<b>Soldier:</b>	Congratulations on your wedding!	goong Shee nen je fen le!
<b>Local:</b>	Thank you so much for attending our wedding.	Sheeya Sheeya nen lie tsan ga ngo go fen le

Quite often, people do not have the means to pay for an elaborate wedding or banquet. Thus, they choose to keep the arrangements simple and minimal. Also because weddings and the amount of planning involved can be quite costly, depending on the family's social position, many men wait until they are older to marry. In this way, they can save money to host an appropriate wedding. The higher the family's status, the more elaborate the wedding.



© NotLiz / flickr.com  
Food at a wedding

Chinese funerals vary regionally and according to different religious influences, including Buddhist, Confucian, Taoist, and local folk traditions. Throughout China, a strong belief has existed that the dead should be buried. Communist ideology has altered this belief, associating it with feudal practices. Communist party members claimed that burial wasted valuable farmland for graves and wasted wood for coffins. The CCP played a significant role by dismissing the need for burial, emphasizing cremation in its place. In funerals today, a blend of these competing influences may be present to different degrees.



© Jack Parkinson  
Tomb of a Buddhist monk

It is common for families to move a dying person into a special room in the house, one where most people do not congregate socially. Family members gather around as their relative is dying, and after death occurs, they mourn here. They may post a notice on their home or hand out more formal notices that provide information about the deceased.

**Exchange 20:** Sorry for your loss.

<b>Soldier:</b>	Sorry for your loss.	je ngaay suen beeyen
<b>Local:</b>	Thank you for your concern.	Sheeya Sheeya nen go gwon Sheen

Funerals are carefully planned because it is believed that improper arrangements can bring ill fortune to a family. The customs for burial and funeral rites are complex, depending on marital status, social position, and age of the deceased. The customs are also influenced by the cause of death. Age is a factor in that traditionally a younger person does not receive the same respect an older person receives. Therefore, the burial of a young child or a baby requires neither an elaborate ceremony nor funeral rites. The burial of an elderly person, however, follows strict protocols in deference to the person’s age and status.



© Michael / flickr.com  
Wife in mourning

<sup>205</sup> Facts and Details. “Funerals in China.” 2008. <http://factsanddetails.com/china.php?itemid=101&catid=3>

<sup>206</sup> Dallas News. “Chinese Funeral Traditions Often Link to Ancestors.” 21 June 2007. [http://www.dallasnews.com/sharedcontent/dws/dn/localnews/columnists/ewu/stories/DN-wu\\_21met.ART.West.Edition1.4435faf.html](http://www.dallasnews.com/sharedcontent/dws/dn/localnews/columnists/ewu/stories/DN-wu_21met.ART.West.Edition1.4435faf.html)

<sup>207</sup> “A Chinese Funeral.” Wood, Lee A. 2000–2011. <http://www.bearspace.info/h/tra/ch/fun.html>

In highly populated areas, cremation of the body is a common practice. Burial in a coffin is more common in rural areas. Often, a cremation box or urn is then buried in an elaborate tomb.

Before the funeral takes place, guests visit the home of the deceased and bring offerings, which the deceased's family will leave in a conspicuous place, such as the courtyard. A funeral procession may take place at a later date, although this is a tradition associated more with northern China than the southern Gan region.



© Axel Kirch  
Offerings for the dead

After the funeral, family members show their grief in various ways. They do not participate in celebrations, and they avoid wearing colorful clothing. Those closest to the deceased may mourn for a period up to three years, at which time it is believed the soul reaches its final place of rest.

**Exchange 21:** He is in a better place.

<b>Soldier:</b>	He is in a better place.	je tsao toh le
<b>Local:</b>	Yes, he's in peace now.	si ah, je Shen dzay ngan Shee le

Ancestor worship is a common, deeply traditional practice. Family members visit the graves or tombs of their ancestors frequently, if possible. They care for the area and take offerings to the deceased, showing their reverence. They also honor the dead on special occasions such as Chinese New Year or on Tomb Sweeping Day. Members of family clans will gather at an ancestor's shrine as a practice to solidify family ties.

### **Do's and Don'ts**<sup>208</sup>

**Do** be aware of all official regulations and follow them.

**Do** remove your shoes before you enter a temple or mosque or private home.

**Do** use only your entire *right* hand to summon a person. Keep your palm down and wave downward.

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<sup>208</sup> Cultural Savvy. Millett, Joyce. "Chinese Culture, Etiquette, & Protocol." 1999–2009. [http://www.culturalsavvy.com/chinese\\_culture.htm](http://www.culturalsavvy.com/chinese_culture.htm)

**Do not** point your foot at a Buddhist image or statue.

**Do not** sit with your feet elevated on a coffee table or desk.

**Do not** criticize or show any disrespect to Chinese officials or citizens.

**Do not** engage in religious arguments or political discussions about Tibet or Taiwan.

**Do not** engage in overt expressions of affection with the opposite sex.

**Do not** touch a Chinese person casually; it is a violation of personal space.

**Do not** point to anybody with a finger. Use the entire *right* hand instead.

**Do not** snap your fingers at someone to get their attention.

**Do not** point upward with the middle finger. It is obscene in the U.S. and equally so in China.

**Do not** use obscene or indecent language within earshot of Chinese citizens. Many are familiar with American slang.

### **Self Study Questions:**

Honor and prestige in Confucian China were accorded to only those with hereditary privilege.

*Guanxi* is the fundamental way in China to accomplish objectives by trading favors.

If a Chinese person does not offer to shake hands, it does not indicate hostility or lack of manners.

Among the Chinese, direct eye contact is often considered disrespectful.

The communication style of Chinese people is not aggressive, assertive, or confrontational.

## Urban Life

### Urbanization<sup>209, 210, 211</sup>

The Gan linguistic region is mostly rural, with few major cities except Nanchang in Jiangxi Province. Formally, Nanchang was a thriving commercial center for all of China because important transportation routes linked to it. After alternative routes were developed, Nanchang's economic activity declined. It was not until after 1949—when the new communist government began to promote industrialization—that Nanchang and other cities began to grow again. Nanchang is now a center of heavy industry, energy generation, manufacturing, and textile production.



© Cathy Stanley-Erickson  
Nanchang skyline

In the 1990s the Chinese government promoted Nanchang's growth by approving a high technology zone in the city. In 2000 the city was granted another development zone. Nanchang also has transport corridors that link to the Pearl River Delta, one of China's most economically productive areas.<sup>212</sup> This link helped to boost urbanization in the city. The economy of the entire Jiangxi Province is growing, creating more job opportunities and greater economic security within the cities. The potential for a better life draws people from the countryside seeking both education and employment.

### Urban Labor Issues

China's working environment is changing as a result of the 2009 global economic downturn. Although Prime Minister Wen Jiabao, in his recent annual report, praised the country's rapid development, he also warned about the unstable world market. The downturn has adversely impacted China's growth in many ways: worker layoffs, rising urban land prices, and mass evictions as speculators buy up property. In some areas, layoffs led to labor shortages, causing companies to try and rehire employees. In Jiangxi Province, the outlook is mixed. A number of factories are moving inland from costly coastal areas. Some of these companies recently relocated in Jiangxi Province. They bring more job opportunities to the area, and possibly higher wages.<sup>213, 214</sup>



© Shawn de Raaf  
Business in the Jiangxi Province

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<sup>209</sup> Invest in JiangXi China. "Brief Introduction." 2009. <http://www.investjx.com.cn/>

<sup>210</sup> Invest in JiangXi China. "Investment Environment." 2009. <http://www.investjx.com.cn/investment-environment.html>

<sup>211</sup> Alibaba.com. "Province Introduction of China: Jiangxi." 1 April 2009.

<http://news.alibaba.com/article/detail/business-in-china/100085696-1-province-introduction-china%253A-jiangxi.html>

<sup>212</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. "Nanchang." 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9054751>

<sup>213</sup> New York Times. Wines, Michael. "China Premier Details Economic Plan." 5 March 2010.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/03/06/world/asia/06wen.html?ref=global-home>

## *The ACFTU: Unionizing in China*

Many urban workers in China are union members, represented by the All China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU). Union branches can be formed for wage or salary workers when a minimum number of 25 workers apply in writing or when business managers and labor leaders agree to unionize. The ACFTU, which provides community services for its members, is a government-sponsored union with ties to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). It is the only union the government permits to legally represent workers in China, and it collaborates with China's Labor Ministry to write labor legislation.<sup>215</sup>



One example of this support system involved an American based company, Wal-Mart. The ACFTU began organizing Wal-Mart employees after the first store appeared in 1996. In 2006 Wal-Mart workers in Fujian Province (which borders Jiangxi) was the first to unionize with the ACFTU. Wal-Mart tried to block unionization in China, in line with its international management policies, by discrediting the ACFTU or threatening to lay off workers who unionized. However, working with the ACFTU, the Chinese workers employed counter strategies. One tactic involved meeting outside the stores at night or after working hours in order to organize. On one occasion, the ACFTU threatened to charge Wal-Mart with violating China's labor laws. During a conflict at the store located in the Nanchang region, Wal-Mart management demanded certain concessions, but the union opposed the demands and won. Eventually, Wal-Mart backed down and began allowing stores to unionize and by mid-2007, over 70 labor unions had been established.<sup>216, 217</sup>

## *Working Conditions: Overtime, Sweatshops, Discrimination, and the Law*

In contrast, many labor advocates and foreign unions reported that the ACFTU lacks sufficient commitment to workers' rights. These advocates have pushed for stronger rights for workers, but success has been minimal, and labor violations are regularly documented. Workers suffer physical injury on the job from accidents involving equipment and chemicals, and strikes at manufacturing facilities are common. The National Labor Committee



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<sup>214</sup> China.org.cn. Li, Pang. "Labor Shortages Driving Up Wages." 27 February 2010.

[http://www.china.org.cn/business/2010-02/27/content\\_19484595.htm](http://www.china.org.cn/business/2010-02/27/content_19484595.htm)

<sup>215</sup> Wal-Mart Watch. "Breaking From Tradition: The Unionization of Wal-Mart China." 2008.

[http://walmartwatch.com/img/blog/unionization\\_of\\_walmart\\_china.pdf](http://walmartwatch.com/img/blog/unionization_of_walmart_china.pdf)

<sup>216</sup> Wal-Mart Watch. "Breaking From Tradition: The Unionization of Wal-Mart China." 2008.

[http://walmartwatch.com/img/blog/unionization\\_of\\_walmart\\_china.pdf](http://walmartwatch.com/img/blog/unionization_of_walmart_china.pdf)

<sup>217</sup> Talking Union. "Wal-Mart Wins Round Three Against Chinese Union Federation." 27 September 2008.

<http://talkingunion.wordpress.com/2008/09/27/is-union-reform-possible-in-china/>

reported that children as young as 12 were induced to work overtime yet were paid less than the legal minimum wage. For these and other reasons, the rate of unionization is increasing in China.<sup>218, 219</sup>

Many labor issues involve several large companies in China. One of these is Nike, which has operations in Nanchang. Accusations of work violations include pressure at Nike's manufacturing plants to work excessive overtime, often as much as 72 hours or more per week.<sup>220, 221</sup> At other factories, stated violations include discrimination in hiring, safety practices, falsification of audit records, denial of annual leave, and forced labor.<sup>222, 223</sup> Complaints of sweatshop conditions are also been filed.<sup>224, 225</sup>

Workplace discrimination has been a common practice throughout Chinese cities. Although laws exist to prohibit various kinds of workplace discrimination in China, in practice they are not strictly enforced. China's main legislation, the *Labor Law of PRC*, prohibits employer discrimination on grounds of race, religion, gender, and ethnic group. Other laws exist to specifically bar employers from discriminating against disability or gender. However, PRC law does not provide clear remedies or guidelines for victims of discrimination. Consequently, when workers experience discrimination in the workplace, often for age or gender, they do not have any legal recourse to stop it.<sup>226</sup>

#### *2008 Labor Law: Protection of Worker Rights*

As the economy grows, labor conditions and some urban workplace practices have shown signs of change. A new labor law took effect in 2008, offering stronger regulation



© televisus / flickr.com  
City workers

<sup>218</sup> Wal-Mart Watch. "Breaking From Tradition: The Unionization of Wal-Mart China." 2008.

[http://walmartwatch.com/img/blog/unionization\\_of\\_walmart\\_china.pdf](http://walmartwatch.com/img/blog/unionization_of_walmart_china.pdf)

<sup>219</sup> China Sourcing News. "Nike OEMs Show Poor Labor Practices in China." 4 February 2010.

<http://www.chinasourcingnews.com/2010/02/04/141973-nike-oems-show-poor-labor-practices-in-china/>

<sup>220</sup> China Sourcing News. "Nike OEMs Show Poor Labor Practices in China." 4 February 2010.

<http://www.chinasourcingnews.com/2010/02/04/141973-nike-oems-show-poor-labor-practices-in-china/>

<sup>221</sup> Leather.Indiabizclub.com. "Product Details." No date.

<http://leather.indiabizclub.com/catalog/524428~nike+sneakers++nike+jordans++puma+dunk+shox++gucci+www.super-saler.com~nanchang>

<sup>222</sup> China Labor Watch. "Wal-Mart: Standards Fail, Workers Suffer—Report Shows Violations in Five Suppliers" and "Take Action! Tell Disney, Mattel and McDonald's to Improve Conditions at Merton." No date. <http://www.chinalaborwatch.org/>

<sup>223</sup> New York Times. Kahn, Joseph and David Barboza. "China Passes a Sweeping Labor Law." 30 June 2007. <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/06/30/business/worldbusiness/30chlabor.html>

<sup>224</sup> China Labor Watch. "Textile Sweatshops; Adidas, Bali Intimates, Hanesbrands Inc., Pilege Co. (Felina Lingerie), Quiksilver, Regina Miracle Speedo, Walcoal America Inc., and Wal-Mart Made In China." 20 November 2007. <http://www.chinalaborwatch.org/200711204textile.htm>

<sup>225</sup> China Labor Watch. "Investment That Creates Workers' Misery and Poverty; Kohlberg Kravis Roberts & Col (KKR)." No date. <http://www.chinalaborwatch.org/>

<sup>226</sup> Jun He Law Offices. Li, Adam and Zhang Hong. "Employment Discrimination, Whistleblowing and Related Trends: New Threats for Multinational Employers—China's Perspective." 2006.

[http://www.abanet.org/intlaw/calendar/spring2006/papers/THURS815930LI\\_552.doc](http://www.abanet.org/intlaw/calendar/spring2006/papers/THURS815930LI_552.doc)



of wages and protection of labor rights. The law limits the practice of hiring employees on contract and releasing them when the contract expires. It requires employers to provide more permanent employment. Finally, the new law also limits probationary periods and requires that employers prove cause to terminate employees. If wrongful termination occurs, penalties against the employer are more severe than before. Because these worker protections increase labor costs, they could likely result in more outsourcing of services to other countries. Another weakness in regard to the new law is the Chinese government's failure to enforce existing laws. Without enforcement, legal protections are negligible in the lives of workers.<sup>227, 228</sup>

### *Migrant Workers*<sup>229, 230, 231, 232, 233</sup>

Many rural or laid-off urban migrant workers have returned to their homes in Jiangxi Province to seek jobs. To ease this situation, the provincial government has assisted some of them to set up and run their own factories. To encourage private entrepreneurship and stimulate business, the government offers loans, tax cuts, or grants tax exemptions. Returning migrants most likely to succeed in running a private business are those who already possess business skills and some savings.<sup>234</sup>



© Preston Rhea  
Cable worker

Migrant workers have a mixed history in China, depending on the area. When economic reform became necessary in 1978, migrants began to appear in the nation's cities in large numbers. Local and regional governments responded by putting policies into place that could control population distribution between city and countryside. Their purpose was not only to reduce demographic pressure but also to manage the urban migrants.

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<sup>227</sup> Newsweek. "Labor: Chinese Union." 14 February 2008. <http://www.newsweek.com/id/111027>

<sup>228</sup> New York Times. Kahn, Joseph and David Barboza. "China Passes a Sweeping Labor Law." 30 June 2007. <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/06/30/business/worldbusiness/30chlabor.html>

<sup>229</sup> New York Times. Kahn, Joseph and David Barboza. "China Passes a Sweeping Labor Law." 30 June 2007. <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/06/30/business/worldbusiness/30chlabor.html>

<sup>230</sup> The US-China Business Council. Labor Issues and Corporate Responsibility in China. The China Business Review. Ye, Zhang. "Hope for China's Migrant Women Workers [p. 15]." March-April 2004. <http://www.uschina.org/public/documents/2006/11/labor-issues-corporate-responsibility.pdf>

<sup>231</sup> New York Times. Kahn, Joseph. "Chinese Economy's Underside: Abuse of Migrants." 26 August 2003. <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9A01E1D61239F935A1575BC0A9659C8B63&scp=6&sq=%22the+world%27s+sweatshop%22+china&st=nyt>

<sup>232</sup> The Courier. Irwin, James. "Shanghai's Migrant Millions." June 1999. [http://www.unesco.org/courier/1999\\_06/uk/dossier/intro17.htm](http://www.unesco.org/courier/1999_06/uk/dossier/intro17.htm)

<sup>233</sup> Spiegel Online International. Fichtner, Ullrich. "China's Peasants Gamble on the Future." April 2006. <http://www.spiegel.de/international/spiegel/0,1518,413091,00.html>

<sup>234</sup> The Hindu. "Crisis Turns Migrant Workers Into Businessmen." 10 January 2009. <http://www.thehindu.com/2009/01/10/stories/2009011055581400.htm>

Migrant workers typically end up working in the informal sector, selling produce from carts, hauling garbage, or working on construction projects. They also work in factories and foreign-owned companies. To alleviate potential social problems resulting from an expanding number of poor people, the city or state government may provide the bare essentials for survival. Each city makes its own local decisions, depending on how much migrant labor is needed. Conditions vary, and migrants' working and living conditions can be extremely difficult. Their access to medical care, the court system, or to education is precarious. Migrants without official household registration receive less pay and no benefits. They can also be evicted without warning, targeted and robbed of any possessions they have, or beaten by the police for perceived wrongdoing. Their housing is crowded, often limited to illegal squatter settlements that lack basic sanitation and services.



© Jared Stein  
Produce market in Jingdezhen

### Daily Urban Life

Neighborhoods in Nanchang feature little diversity because the majority of people are Han Chinese. People in urban areas of the Gan region socialize regularly with one another, frequently calling or visiting friends and neighbors. In Nanchang, communication is easy, as basic telephone and internet service are widely available.<sup>235</sup>

**Exchange 22:** What is your telephone number?

<b>Soldier:</b>	What is your telephone number?	nen go deeyen fa si doh so?
<b>Local:</b>	My phone number is 765-3821.	ngo go deeyen fa si chee deeyo umm-san ba ur yi

Alongside work and casual socializing, people who live in the cities of Jiangxi Province have a few other urban pastimes available. In Jingdezhan, they can visit parks or cultural sites associated with the production of porcelain, such as exhibition grounds and museums with historical artifacts. Those who live in Nanchang can take excursions outside the city to resort areas around Mount Lushan. In



© televiseus / flickr.com  
Side street in Nanchang

<sup>235</sup> Middle Kingdom Life: Foreign Teachers Guide to Living and Working in China. Johnson, Raymond Allan. "Living and Teaching English in Nanchang, Jiangxi Province." 15 April 2009. <http://middlekingdomlife.com/guide/living-teaching-english-nanchang-jiangxi.htm>

the city, they can visit Nanchang's library or museum or go to movie theaters. Locals can attend the Tea-Leaf Picking Opera when groups perform this style of opera in Nanchang. It is based on traditional music and dance that originated in the southern Gan region around 300 years ago. Another style of performing arts, Yiyang opera, may be offered around the city of Yiyang, in northeastern Jiangxi Province. It developed there in the 14th century and spread to other areas of China.<sup>236, 237, 238, 239, 240</sup>

### *Urban Housing*

Housing in Nanchang is a mixture of old and new styles, much of it built out of concrete in the tradition of Soviet post-war architecture. Some of the old buildings are walk-up apartments several stories high with plumbing that often does not work. Some of the newer apartment buildings have elevators and Western-style toilets (Chinese-style toilets are a hole in the ground covered with porcelain). The living space is small, divided into living room, dining area, bathroom with shower, and one or two bedrooms. Residents use gas for cooking and heating water. The cost for electric services, which runs higher during hot summer months, is consistent with other prices for mainland China. Basic phone services and wireless connection are available.<sup>241, 242</sup>



© Tim Zachemuk  
Rural life in Jiangxi Province

### **Health Care**

After the revolution in 1949, the Communist government centralized health care and offered it through employers. The party organized local and regional governments to provide funding for hospitals so health services were available at low cost. The *New England Journal of Medicine* reports that from 1952–1982, life expectancy in China increased from 35–68 years of age, and infant mortality fell from 200



© Caro / flickr.com  
Doctor in Fuzhou

<sup>236</sup> ChinaCities.com. "Nanchang: Introduction." 2008–2010.

<http://www.echinacities.com/cityguide/Nanchang/Liv/Entertainment/VisEntertainmentIndex.aspx>

<sup>237</sup> Middle Kingdom Life: Foreign Teachers Guide to Living and Working in China. Johnson, Raymond Allan. "Living and Teaching English in Nanchang, Jiangxi Province." 15 April 2009.

<http://middlekingdomlife.com/guide/living-teaching-english-nanchang-jiangxi.htm>

<sup>238</sup> ChinaA27.com. "Folk Art: Tea-Leaf Picking Opera of South Gan." 2009.

<http://china.chinaa2z.com/china/html/history%20and%20culture/2009/20090428/20090428163614511470/20090428164303155366.html>

<sup>239</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. "Jiangxi: Cultural Life." 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-71331>

<sup>240</sup> Chinatour.com. "Nanchang, Jiangxi Province." No date.

<http://www.chinatour.com/attraction/nanchang.htm>

<sup>241</sup> Middle Kingdom Life: Foreign Teachers Guide to Living and Working in China. Johnson, Raymond Allan. "Living and Teaching English in Nanchang, Jiangxi Province." 15 April 2009.

<http://middlekingdomlife.com/guide/living-teaching-english-nanchang-jiangxi.htm>

<sup>242</sup> CriEnglish.com. "Travel: Nanchang, a Revolutionary City." 23 March 2006.

<http://english.cri.cn/725/2006/03/23/202@65929.htm>

to 34 for every 1,000 live births.<sup>243</sup> These improvements are attributed to the availability of health care providers and services to the general public.

**Exchange 23:** Is Dr. Wong in?

<b>Soldier:</b>	Is Dr. Wong in, sir?	wong Sheen sen dzay maa?
<b>Local:</b>	No.	bo dzay

The socialist system was eliminated in 1994 as China transitioned from a planned economy to a more market-based one. People’s right to subsidized or free health care disappeared during this time. They were forced to pay for their own health care or to purchase medical insurance. Medical facilities fell back on providing most of their own financing. These changes have resulted in a very uneven system in which much of the urban population now has greater access to health care than those living in the countryside. After the late 1980s, more private providers began offering health care.<sup>244</sup> In 2003 around 45% of urban residents and almost 80% of rural residents had to pay out-of-pocket for their health care.<sup>245</sup>

As of early 2006, over half of urban residents had some level of employer-provided insurance as well as better quality of services, compared to minimal access and inadequate services in the countryside.<sup>246</sup> Poor and unemployed people, however, whether urban or rural, cannot obtain insurance. The type of employment also matters. For instance civil service jobs are most likely to offer health insurance. Industrial workers are also likely to have health insurance that covers hospitalization, disability, sick leave, and maternity leave.<sup>247</sup> No health care is available to those employed in the informal sector, where jobs do not provide health benefits.



© parkshr / flickr.com  
Traditional Chinese medicine for sale

<sup>243</sup> New York Times. French, Howard W. “Wealth Grows, But Health Care Withers in China.” 14 January 2006. [http://www.nytimes.com/2006/01/14/international/asia/14health.html?pagewanted=1&\\_r=1](http://www.nytimes.com/2006/01/14/international/asia/14health.html?pagewanted=1&_r=1)

<sup>244</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. “Jiangxi: Government and Society: Health and Welfare.” 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-71330>

<sup>245</sup> IBM Business Consulting Services. “Healthcare in China: Toward Great Access, Efficiency, and Quality [p. 3].” ©2006. <http://www-935.ibm.com/services/us/imc/pdf/g510-6268-healthcare-china.pdf>

<sup>246</sup> New York Times. French, Howard W. “Wealth Grows, But Health Care Withers in China.” 14 January 2006. [http://www.nytimes.com/2006/01/14/international/asia/14health.html?pagewanted=1&\\_r=1](http://www.nytimes.com/2006/01/14/international/asia/14health.html?pagewanted=1&_r=1)

<sup>247</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. “Jiangxi: Government and Society: Health and Welfare.” 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-71330>

General and specialized hospitals with modern equipment and technology are present in many of China’s cities, including Nanchang. A number of them are public hospitals, which offer treatment to a wide segment of the population.<sup>248, 249</sup>

**Exchange 24:** Is there a hospital nearby?

<b>Soldier:</b>	Is there a hospital nearby?	foo jeen yoo yi yooan maa?
<b>Local:</b>	Yes, in the center of town.	yoo dzay tsen le

Pharmacies are located in hospitals, clinics, and numerous other places. Some medicines and antibiotics can be purchased over the counter at various stores in the city, such as Wal-Mart and department stores in Nanchang.<sup>250</sup>

**Exchange 25:** Do you know what is wrong?

<b>Soldier:</b>	Do you know what is wrong?	tsu le si lee si?
<b>Local:</b>	No.	bo sheeyo de

**Education**<sup>251</sup>

In China, the roots of organized formal education date to the 16th century B.C.E., when a privileged few prepared to govern the country. For centuries, China’s civil service was the foundation of dynastic rule, and passing imperial examinations was necessary in order to work in the civil



© wuji9981/ flickr.com  
Elementary school in Jiujiang

<sup>248</sup> ChinaCities.com. “Nanchang: Special Hospitals & Clinics.” 2008–2010.

<http://www.echinacities.com/cityguide/Nanchang/Liv/Hospital/LivHospital.aspx?TypeID=3>

<sup>249</sup> Middle Kingdom Life: Foreign Teachers Guide to Living and Working in China. Johnson, Raymond Allan. “Living and Teaching English in Nanchang, Jiangxi Province: Healthcare.” 15 April 2009.

<http://middlekingdomlife.com/guide/living-teaching-english-nanchang-jiangxi.htm>

<sup>250</sup> Middle Kingdom Life: Foreign Teachers Guide to Living and Working in China. Johnson, Raymond Allan. “Living and Teaching English in Nanchang, Jiangxi Province: Healthcare.” 15 April 2009.

<http://middlekingdomlife.com/guide/living-teaching-english-nanchang-jiangxi.htm>

<sup>251</sup> TeachingTips.com. “25 Surprising Facts about China’s Education System.” 30 August 2009.

<http://www.teachingtips.com/blog/2009/08/30/25-surprising-facts-about-chinas-education-system/>

service. Curriculum was based on the philosophical and ethical teachings of Confucius. The goal was to prepare an educated elite to rule the country, but illiteracy was the norm for everyone else. The civil service exam system was not abandoned until 1905, when the late Qing Dynasty introduced modern reforms into education. Patterned to some degree after Western models, the reforms attempted to expand education to the general population and divide it into levels. The Nationalist Party under Sun Yat-sen took steps to centralize control of educational programs and institutions. The government was moving toward standardization to replace the chaotic educational policies that differed by region.<sup>252, 253</sup>

China's educational system further shifted following a Soviet model in 1949 and again when China broke with the Soviet Union.<sup>254</sup> Before 1949, illiteracy was widespread (80% of the population could neither read nor write). Now, the literacy rate is 99% for young people in China.<sup>255</sup>

### *Current Educational System*

China's current educational system is categorized into the levels of basic, higher, and adult education. The Compulsory Education Law requires every child to receive nine years of formal education. This applies throughout most areas of the country, including Jiangxi Province and the Gan linguistic region.

Basic education through high school includes preschool, primary school, and secondary school. Children attend preschool (kindergarten) beginning around age three and lasting until age six, when they start elementary school. When children enter secondary school, they can enroll in either an academic or a vocational-technical track. Their vocational studies prepare them for farming, skilled labor, technical, or managerial positions.



© randomox / flickr.com  
Student at Zaimen primary  
school in Fedeng

Students enrolling in higher education (post high school) have several educational options. They can attend junior colleges or a variety of universities in Nanchang. Among the more than 30 universities in Jiangxi Province are Jiangxi Normal University and Nanchang University, the latter being the province's leading college. Specialized programs at Nanchang University include clinical medicine, mechanical engineering, and food science. Jiangxi Agricultural University is also a good option for students, with its

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<sup>252</sup> Kansas State University. "History of the Educational System of China." David B. Surowski, Ed. 2000. <http://www.math.ksu.edu/~dbski/publication/history.html>

<sup>253</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. "Education: Revolutionary Patterns of Education: China: From Confucianism to Communism: Education Under the Nationalist Government." 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-47696#303394.hook>

<sup>254</sup> Kansas State University. "History of the Educational System of China." David B. Surowski, Ed. 2000. <http://www.math.ksu.edu/~dbski/publication/history.html>

<sup>255</sup> TeachingTips.com. "25 Surprising Facts about China's Education System." 30 August 2009. <http://www.teachingtips.com/blog/2009/08/30/25-surprising-facts-about-chinas-education-system/>

main campus in Nanchang and several branches throughout the province.<sup>256, 257</sup> The Chinese government formerly paid college costs for students, but a new system requires that students compete for scholarship funding and pay for part of their education.<sup>258</sup>

## Transportation and Traffic

Traffic in Nanchang is congested, and driving by private vehicle is risky. As in much of China, drivers do not follow traffic rules. They are, for instance, likely to drive on the wrong side of the road. Combined with lack of traffic planning and controls, these practices create an often chaotic situation. Motorcyclists drive erratically and pedestrians cross the streets at random, which means that brakes and horns are heavily used. In some areas, city planners built lane fences to cut down on gridlock at intersections that have no signals and also to block drivers from crossing lanes improperly.<sup>259</sup> If one wishes to drive oneself, despite the potential dangers, several car rental agencies are available.



© Cathy Stanley-Erickson  
Busy street in Nanchang

### Exchange 26: Where can I rent a car?

<b>Soldier:</b>	Where can I rent a car?	ngo dzaay la le ko-ee dzoo tsa?
<b>Local:</b>	In a city.	dzaay tsen le

To rent a car, a driver must show a Chinese driver's license to the clerk or official at the rental agency. Because of this restriction, it may be preferable to hire a driver when renting a car.<sup>260</sup>

It may be more convenient to avoid individual driving and use public transportation, even though buses also drive erratically.

<sup>256</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. "Jiangxi: Government and Society: Education." 2010.  
<http://search.eb.com/eb/article-71329>

<sup>257</sup> Alibaba.com. "Province Introduction of China: Jiangxi: Education." 1 April 2009.  
<http://news.alibaba.com/article/detail/business-in-china/100085696-1-province-introduction-china%253A-jiangxi.html>

<sup>258</sup> TeachingTips.com. "25 Surprising Facts about China's Education System." 30 August 2009.  
<http://www.teachingtips.com/blog/2009/08/30/25-surprising-facts-about-chinas-education-system/>

<sup>259</sup> Middle Kingdom Life: Foreign Teachers Guide to Living and Working in China. Johnson, Raymond Allan. "Living and Teaching English in Nanchang, Jiangxi Province: Driving." 15 April 2009.  
<http://middlekingdomlife.com/guide/living-teaching-english-nanchang-jiangxi.htm>

<sup>260</sup> ChinaCities.com. "Nanchang: Transport: Auto Rental." 2008–2010.  
<http://www.echinacities.com/cityguide/Nanchang/Liv/GettingThere/VisAutoRental.aspx>

**Exchange 27:** Will the bus be here soon?

<b>Soldier:</b>	Will the bus be here soon?	goong gong chee tsa maa song lie maa?
<b>Local:</b>	Yes.	do-ee

Bus service is inexpensive and available for long-distance trips as well as commutes through the city. Railway transportation is another good option, with trains linking to other cities in eastern China. Tickets for bus and train service are easy to purchase in Nanchang at ticket outlets throughout the city.<sup>261</sup>



© Ji Ruan  
Busy street in Nanchang

**Exchange 28:** Is there a train station nearby?

<b>Soldier:</b>	Is there a train station nearby?	foo jeen yo for tyeh dzan maa?
<b>Local:</b>	No. We don't have railway facilities here.	mo yo ngo min goh le mo yo tyeh loo

Train service and transportation in general are also well-established in Pingxiang, a city in western Jiangxi Province. Two state highways intersect in Pingxiang, and another main highway crosses the city.<sup>262</sup> A well-developed roadway network also leads in and out of Nanchang.<sup>263, 264</sup>



© mars / flickr.com  
Train in the Jiangxi Province

<sup>261</sup> Middle Kingdom Life: Foreign Teachers Guide to Living and Working in China. Johnson, Raymond Allan. "Living and Teaching English in Nanchang, Jiangxi Province: Transportation and Travel." 15 April 2009. <http://middlekingdomlife.com/guide/living-teaching-english-nanchang-jiangxi.htm>

<sup>262</sup> HTDC. "Pan-Pearl River Delta (Pan-PRD): Pingxiang (Jiangxi): Introduction." 14 August 2009. <http://www.hktdc.com/info/vp/a/pprd/en/2/2/1/1X06B6JZ/Pan-Pearl-River-Delta--Pan--PRD-/Pingxiang--Jiangxi-.htm>

<sup>263</sup> ChinaCities.com. "Nanchang: Transport: Introduction." 2008–2010. <http://www.echinacities.com/cityguide/Nanchang/Liv/GettingThere/VisGettingthereIndex.aspx>



**Exchange 29:** Is there a gas station nearby?

<b>Soldier:</b>	Is there a gas station nearby?	foo jeen yo ga yo dzan maa?
<b>Local:</b>	Yes.	yoo

Flagging down a taxi is another option for transportation in the city. Taxi service is considerably more expensive than bus service.<sup>265</sup> It is a good idea to write down the destination in Chinese and show it to the driver, who may not speak English.

If it is difficult to find a taxi, ask a local person where to wait or call for one.



**Exchange 30:** Where can I get a cab?

<b>Soldier:</b>	Where can I get a cab?	ngo dzaay la le ko-ee da tao tsu dzoo tsa?
<b>Local:</b>	Over there.	dzaay heh beeyen

Drivers should plan trips ahead, study maps, and know which roads to take. They should also consider the possibility of mechanical breakdowns and ask the car rental agency in advance what to do if this happens. If the car breaks down while driving and the driver does not know where to go for help, she should try to find out where the nearest mechanic is located.

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<sup>264</sup> ChinaCities.com. "Nanchang: Business Environment: Municipal Infrastructure: Roads." 2008–2010. <http://www.echinacities.com/cityguide/Nanchang/Biz/Env/BizInfrastructure.aspx>

<sup>265</sup> Middle Kingdom Life: Foreign Teachers Guide to Living and Working in China. Johnson, Raymond Allan. "Living and Teaching English in Nanchang, Jiangxi Province: Transportation and Travel." 15 April 2009. <http://middlekingdomlife.com/guide/living-teaching-english-nanchang-jiangxi.htm>

**Exchange 31:** Is there a good auto mechanic nearby?

<b>Soldier:</b>	Is there a good auto mechanic nearby?	foo jeen yo how go chee tsa sho lee dzan maa?
<b>Local:</b>	Yes.	yoo

While driving, people should remember they are likely to encounter a continual crowded mix of vehicles, speeds, and aggressive driving practices. For these reasons, it is a good idea to drive defensively.

## Restaurants and Marketplace

### *Restaurants*

In Nanchang, a wide variety of restaurants can be found, from formal to casual. Besides Chinese restaurants, Japanese and Korean restaurants are popular. Local food is often rich and flavored with garlic, peppers, and ginger. It is always possible to order fresh vegetables and fruits, rice noodles, seafood, and meat such as lamb, pork, or beef. Rice is often the central dish.<sup>266</sup> Cooking methods range from baking or roasting over a spit to braising or boiling. But stir frying is the typical Chinese method of preparation.<sup>267</sup>



© Preetam Rai  
Fish dish

If curious about any of the ingredients in a meal you have ordered, ask the waiter.

**Exchange 32:** What type of meat is this?

<b>Soldier:</b>	What type of meat is this?	goh si shi lee nyoo?
<b>Local:</b>	Pork.	dzoo nyoo

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<sup>266</sup> Middle Kingdom Life: Foreign Teachers Guide to Living and Working in China. Johnson, Raymond Allan. "Living and Teaching English in Nanchang, Jiangxi Province: Eating, Drinking and Nightlife." 15 April 2009. <http://middlekingdomlife.com/guide/living-teaching-english-nanchang-jiangxi.htm>

<sup>267</sup> China Travel Tour Guide. "Chinese Food." 2003–2009. <http://www.china-travel-tour-guide.com/travel-tips/food.shtml>

Most restaurants offer coffee and a variety of specialty teas from different regions of China.

**Exchange 33:** I would like coffee or tea.

<b>Soldier:</b>	I would like coffee or tea.	ngo Sheeyon heh kaafee hoh tsa
<b>Local:</b>	Sure.	how de

Other kinds of beverages, such as soft drinks or alcoholic drinks, are available at most restaurants. Mineral water is also an option.

**Exchange 34:** May I have a bottle of mineral water?

<b>Soldier:</b>	May I have a bottle of mineral water?	mo yo yi peen kwan chien so-ee?
<b>Local:</b>	Yes, right away.	how ma song lie

Western-style desserts such as cake and ice cream are not part of a Chinese meal. In China, dessert may consist of a bowl of fruit or some kind of specialty food. If you want to order something sweet, ask the waiter what is available.

**Exchange 35:** Do you have something sweet?

<b>Soldier:</b>	Do you have something sweet?	yo teeyen deen maa?
<b>Local:</b>	Yes, we have red bean soup and fruit plates.	yo fon dou tong hoh soo-e goh poen

Diners who are all part of one group at a restaurant may wish to pay their bills separately or put it all on one tab. (Usually, it is the custom for the host to pay.) Whether dining alone or in a group, a patron should find out in advance what kind of payment method is accepted and have the payment available when he or she asks for the bill. Hotel restaurants and mid-level to expensive, upscale restaurants generally take credit cards. Otherwise, it is necessary to have cash on hand.



© Robyn Lee  
Red bean soup

**Exchange 36:** I will pay the bill.

<b>Soldier:</b>	I will pay the bill.	ngo my dohn
<b>Local:</b>	Okay, I'll bring it to you.	how ngo la gay nen

Tipping is not usually practiced in China. At mid-range and upscale restaurants, service charges are generally already added into the final bill.<sup>268</sup> At some establishments, however, the practice of tipping may be gaining credibility. If uncertain, try to ask someone you know in advance whether tipping is expected at a particular restaurant.<sup>269, 270, 271</sup>

*Marketplace*

Stores line many of the local Nanchang streets, which are often named after the items the stores specialize in. On some streets, the majority of stores sell artifacts such as items made of porcelain manufactured in Jingdezhen. On other streets, stores specialize in women's wear, shoes, or jewelry and trinkets. A wide variety of arts and crafts are not difficult to find.<sup>272, 273</sup>



© Kurt Groetsch  
Ceramics for sale in Jingdezhen

<sup>268</sup> Lonely Planet. "Money & Costs." 2008. <http://www.lonelyplanet.com/worldguide/china/money-and-costs>

<sup>269</sup> China Travel Tour Guide. "Tipping Practice in China." 2003–2009. <http://www.china-travel-tour-guide.com/travel-tips/tipping.shtml>

<sup>270</sup> Cultural Savvy. Millet, Joyce. "Chinese Culture, Etiquette & Protocol: Wine & Dine." 1999–2009. [http://www.culturalsavvy.com/chinese\\_culture.htm](http://www.culturalsavvy.com/chinese_culture.htm)

<sup>271</sup> China Odyssey Tours. "China Travel Guide Book: Safety and Security: Tipping." 2004–2010. <http://www.chinaodysseytours.com/travel-guide-book/tipping.html>

<sup>272</sup> Middle Kingdom Life: Foreign Teachers Guide to Living and Working in China. Johnson, Raymond Allan. "Living and Teaching English in Nanchang, Jiangxi Province: Transportation and Travel." 15 April 2009. <http://middlekingdomlife.com/guide/living-teaching-english-nanchang-jiangxi.htm>

**Exchange 37:** Do you sell porcelain?

<b>Soldier:</b>	Do you sell porcelain?	nen yo maay tsee chee maa?
<b>Local:</b>	Yes.	yoo

Buyers should examine items closely to be sure the quality matches the price they are willing to pay. Also, a buyer needs to make certain any antiques purchased do not date before 1795 C.E.; these are illegal to sell or export. If the products were created between 1796 and 1949, a small red seal should appear on them certifying that they are genuine. The items should be accompanied by a Certificate for Relics Export, provided by the regional Cultural Relics Bureau. Without this certificate, it is illegal to take such objects out of China.<sup>274</sup>



© John Pasden  
Pottery district in Jingdezhen

**Exchange 38:** May I examine this close up?

<b>Soldier:</b>	May I examine this close up?	ngo len la jeen dya dzi khun maa?
<b>Local:</b>	Sure.	ko-ee

There is no obligation to buy goods, even after browsing and asking about prices. People often shop around and return to a certain store later, after comparing prices. When customers know an item's worth they are in a better position to make a reasonable offer.

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<sup>273</sup> China Connection Tours. "Nanchang Shopping." No date. <http://www.china-tour.cn/Nanchang/Nanchang-Shopping.htm>

<sup>274</sup> China Odyssey Tours. "Shopping Guide in China." 2004–2010. <http://www.chinaodysseytours.com/travel-guide-book/shopping-guide-in-china.html>

**Exchange 39:** If you lower the price, I'll take it.

<b>Soldier:</b>	If you lower the price, I'll take it.	nen so suan dya dzi ngo jo my
<b>Local:</b>	Okay, if you want, I lower it 100 yuan.	how, loo goh ni yo, so nen yi ba koaay

It is customary in the marketplace for a buyer to bargain with a seller for a lower price. Often the seller will lower his price to make the sale.

**Exchange 40:** Too much, I don't want it.

<b>Soldier:</b>	Too much, I don't want it.	tay go-ee, ngo bo yo
<b>Local:</b>	Okay, I lower it 80 yuan.	how ba, suan nen ba se koaay

Food is available at numerous street stalls along the major streets in Nanchang. Patrons can buy fried food snacks at most of these eateries. Typical ingredients include vegetables, beans, lotus root, and meat. One popular snack is sweet, rich dough twisted into traditional shapes and then deep fried. The food at such places is inexpensive, and customers must pay in cash.<sup>275</sup> More substantial meals are also available from fast food stands located throughout Nanchang.

**Exchange 41:** I'd like some hot soup.

<b>Soldier:</b>	I'd like some hot soup.	ngo Sheeyon lie dya le tong
<b>Local:</b>	Sure.	how de

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<sup>275</sup> China Connection Tours. "Nanchang Restaurants." 1987–2010. <http://www.china-tour.cn/Nanchang/Nanchang-Restaurants.htm>

It is a good idea to establish in advance the kind of currency a seller will accept. The “Renminbi” (RMB, or “People’s Currency”) is China’s official currency, and the yuan is the basic unit of currency.<sup>276, 277</sup>



© Jason Wesley Upton  
China's official currency the renminbi

**Exchange 42:** Do you accept US dollars?

<b>Soldier:</b>	Do you accept US dollars?	nen sho mee jeen maa?
<b>Local:</b>	No, we only accept Renminbi.	bo sho ngo min dzi sho Ren-Min-Bi

A buyer may have a currency denomination that seems too large for the cost of the item being purchased. In that case, asking in advance whether the seller can give change is advisable.

**Exchange 43:** Can you give me change for this?

<b>Soldier:</b>	Can you give me change for this?	nen ge le len dzao cheeyen maa?
<b>Local:</b>	No.	bo len

To change money, visitors can go to department store facilities, airports, or hotels where they are staying. Many ATM machines located in mid-size to large cities will accept credit cards to make cash withdrawals.<sup>278, 279, 280</sup>

<sup>276</sup> China Travel Tour Guide. “Money Issues in China.” 2003–2009. <http://www.china-travel-tour-guide.com/travel-tips/money.shtml>

<sup>277</sup> Lonely Planet. “Money & Costs.” 2010. <http://www.lonelyplanet.com/worldguide/china/money-and-costs>

<sup>278</sup> China Travel Tour Guide. “Money Issues in China.” 2003–2009. <http://www.china-travel-tour-guide.com/travel-tips/money.shtml>

<sup>279</sup> Lonely Planet. “Money & Costs.” 2008. <http://www.lonelyplanet.com/worldguide/china/money-and-costs>

<sup>280</sup> China.org.cn. “How to Exchange RMB in China.” <http://www.china.org.cn/english/travel/40380.htm>

*Solicitation*

Many beggars live and work in Nanchang and other cities of southern China. They may have moved from poorer, rural areas in search of jobs, and then end up begging full-time when they cannot find work. Sometimes they can earn enough to eat relatively well, although they lack permanent shelter.<sup>281</sup>



© Jared Stein  
Streets of Jingdezhen

It is best to ignore beggars. If you are seen reaching for your wallet, as a foreigner, you're likely to be swarmed by a larger crowd with extended hands.

**Exchange 44:** I need money.

<b>Local:</b>	I need money.	ngo Shee yo cheeyen
<b>Soldier:</b>	I don't have any.	ngo mo yo cheeyen

Beggars come from a variety of circumstances. Some are professionals who may try to approach foreigners who seem sympathetic to their plight. The professionals may use children who have been hired for this purpose or use other tactics to elicit sympathy. Other beggars are simply very needy people living in extreme poverty.

**Exchange 45:** Please look at this.

<b>Local:</b>	Please look at this, only 40 yuan.	nen khun, goh dzi yo szw se koaay cheeyen
<b>Soldier:</b>	Sorry, I have no money left.	do-ee bo chee, ngo mo yo cheeyn le

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<sup>281</sup> Spiegel Online International. Fichtner, Ullrich. "China's Peasants Gamble on the Future." April 2006. <http://www.spiegel.de/international/spiegel/0,1518,413091,00.html>



### **Self Study Questions:**

Nanchang is only one of many large cities located within the Gan linguistic area. True or False?

The All China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU) is a workers union sponsored by the Chinese government. True or False?

The provincial government of Jiangxi has assisted many former migrant workers in setting up and running their own factories. True or False?

When the socialist system was eliminated in China, people's right to subsidized or free health care disappeared. True or False?

Drivers in Nanchang do not follow traffic rules. True or False?

## Rural Life

### Rural Economy

Economic growth in China varies by region. Throughout the country, most people live in farming villages and are very poor.<sup>282, 283</sup> In large cities people earn, on average, over three times what rural residents earn.<sup>284, 285, 286, 287</sup>

Because of this income gap, migration from rural to urban areas continues today. At the same time, economic growth that has been concentrated in the eastern coastal provinces over the last three decades appears to be gradually spreading inland. Businesses and manufacturers are relocating to interior provinces because wages are lower there, helping to keep business costs down. China's national leadership has supported this trend by developing rural infrastructure and subsidizing business start-ups.<sup>288</sup>



© Sara Anderson  
Village in Ganzhou

In Jiangxi, this change affects urban and rural areas of the province differently. A number of firms and factories are relocating to Jiangxi from coastal areas such as Guangdong Province, leading to the prospect of higher wages for local employees.<sup>289</sup> Some firms have re-established themselves in Nanchang's new industrial zones, but new businesses are also shifting to small, rural towns where the cost of living and the costs of conducting business are lower. With factories moving inland, many laid-off urban migrant workers have returned to Jiangxi Province to seek jobs wherever they can find them. The provincial government has assisted some of them in setting up and running private businesses or small factories. To encourage private ownership and stimulate business, the government has cut taxes, granted tax exemptions, subsidized rent, or otherwise stimulated small business activity. Some people can secure loans from rural cooperative

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<sup>282</sup> CBW.com. "Jiangxi Province." 1998–2009. <http://www.cbw.com/general/g14/g14.htm>

<sup>283</sup> The Washington Post. Cody, Edward. "Across China's Countryside, 'Just Too Busy' for Olympics." 15 August 2008. [http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/08/14/AR2008081403169.html?nav=rss\\_world/asia](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/08/14/AR2008081403169.html?nav=rss_world/asia)

<sup>284</sup> BBC News. Chen, Shirong. "China Rural-Urban Wage Gap Widens." 16 January 2009. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/7833779.stm>

<sup>285</sup> National Post. Kurlantzick, Joshua. "Joshua Kurlantzick on The Beijing 2008 Olympic Games: Not All of China Is Cheering." 13 August 2008. <http://network.nationalpost.com/np/blogs/fullcomment/archive/2008/08/18/joshua-kurlantzick-on-the-beijing-2008-olympic-games-not-all-of-china-is-cheering.aspx>

<sup>286</sup> The International Herald Tribune. French, Howard W. "Dichotomies Endure, But the Pressure Builds." 18 January 2008.

[http://www.howardwfrench.com/archives/2008/01/19/dichotomies\\_endure\\_but\\_the\\_pressure\\_builds/](http://www.howardwfrench.com/archives/2008/01/19/dichotomies_endure_but_the_pressure_builds/)

<sup>287</sup> Institute of Economic Research. Hao, Yan. "Poverty and Exclusion in Urban China [p. 15]." April 2009. <http://bibliothek.wz-berlin.de/pdf/2009/i09-202.pdf>

<sup>288</sup> The New York Times. Wheatley, Alan. "Growth Spreads From China's Coast." 13 April 2009.

[http://www.nytimes.com/2009/04/14/business/global/14insideasia.html?\\_r=1&ref=global](http://www.nytimes.com/2009/04/14/business/global/14insideasia.html?_r=1&ref=global)

<sup>289</sup> China.org.cn. Li, Pang. "Labor Shortages Driving Up Wages." 27 February 2010.

[http://www.china.org.cn/business/2010-02/27/content\\_19484595.htm](http://www.china.org.cn/business/2010-02/27/content_19484595.htm)

credit sources. Unfortunately, many rural people eligible to take advantage of these programs lack the technical skills and business knowledge to make a new enterprise succeed.<sup>290</sup>

The local government of Jiangxi Province has taken other steps to improve its rural economy. To create jobs and raise incomes, the government has invested in forestry projects and sponsored employment fairs. These measures have created some jobs for migrants returning from cities.<sup>291</sup>



© Neville Mars  
Village built around a tea farm

**Exchange 46:** Does your wife work?

<b>Soldier:</b>	Does your wife work?	nen tay tay goong dzo maa?
<b>Local:</b>	Yes.	do-ee

In rural Jiangxi Province most people work in the agricultural sector, often as hired laborers. Many also manage and work their own farms, which consist of small plots of land. Farmers in Jiangxi grow tea, hemp, lotus seeds, and a variety of fruits and other vegetables. They sell their produce at small markets or from roadside stands or truck beds in the nearest local villages.<sup>292, 293</sup>

**Exchange 47:** Where do you work, sir?

<b>Soldier:</b>	Where do you work, sir?	Sheen sen, nen dzay la le goong dzo?
<b>Local:</b>	I am a farmer, sir.	ngo szi loan min

<sup>290</sup> The Hindu. “Crisis Turns Migrant Workers Into Businessmen.” 10 January 2009. <http://www.thehindu.com/2009/01/10/stories/2009011055581400.htm>

<sup>291</sup> The People’s Government of Jiangxi Province. “Jiangxi Government Departments to Help Migrant Workers Find Jobs in Hometowns.” 2009. [http://english.jiangxi.gov.cn/News/200902/t20090205\\_108964.htm](http://english.jiangxi.gov.cn/News/200902/t20090205_108964.htm)

<sup>292</sup> China Today.com. “China City and Province: Jiangxi Province.” 1995–2008. <http://www.chinatoday.com/city/jiangxi.htm>

<sup>293</sup> The Washington Post. Cody, Edward. “Across China’s Countryside, ‘Just Too Busy’ for Olympics.” 15 August 2008. [http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/08/14/AR2008081403169.html?nav=rss\\_world/asia](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/08/14/AR2008081403169.html?nav=rss_world/asia)

## Rural Land Distribution

In the late 1970s, China's government shifted away from a collective system and began to emphasize individual households to determine use of resources. Many rural households thus gained use of agricultural land. Ultimately, however, the reforms did not lead to greater productivity for the nation.



*Land Reform*<sup>294, 295</sup>

China's first land reforms were carried out after the People's Republic of China was founded in 1949. At that time, the state took ownership of all rural land. The government initiated a Soviet-style reform that appropriated land owned by landlords and wealthy owners and redistributed it to peasants who had no land. Reforms continued through the mid 1950s, when the government moved small peasant landowners into collectives, creating an institution known as the People's Commune. Under this system, property was centrally controlled, so individual farmers did not manage their own operations. This change resulted in persistently low production.

A new rural economic reform was instituted in China in the late 1970s. Breaking with the Soviet system, the Chinese government introduced the "household responsibility system," which endured for many years. Under this system, farmers contracted with large collectives to farm individual plots of land. They earned the right to make decisions on land use, as long as they successfully managed it. Under this system, the amount of land farmers could receive depended on family size. The individual household system temporarily stimulated agricultural production, but then dropped and stagnated for a little more than half a decade. The government continued to experiment with reforms that could address the inequalities of the household responsibility system. Four different models have been adopted by experimental districts. Under one system, reforms include extending lease terms to 30-year renewable leases and that allow subleasing. Some farmers also received permission to hire farm labor and exchange labor.



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<sup>294</sup> Institute of Economic Research. Hao, Yan. "Poverty and Exclusion in Urban China [p. 15]." April 2009. <http://bibliothek.wz-berlin.de/pdf/2009/i09-202.pdf>

<sup>295</sup> Sustainable Development Department, Food and Agriculture Organization, United Nations. Chen, Fu. "Land Reform in Rural China Since the Mid-1980s, Part 1." 1999. <http://www.fao.org/sd/Ltdirect/LTan0031.htm>

**Exchange 48:** Do you own this land?

<b>Soldier:</b>	Do you own this land?	gay koaay tee szi nen go maa?
<b>Local:</b>	No.	bo szi

Today, under the continuing household responsibility system, problems concerning property rights have led to rural unrest. A backlash against the government over China's land ownership and distribution system has arisen in many areas. Farmers have organized with intent to fully privatize the land they farm. Currently, the government owns all the land, denying farmers the right to sell land without government permission. Farmers argue that collective ownership deprives them of the right to inherit, negotiate over, and dispose of the land. They claim private ownership would encourage them to invest in the land, which could lead to greater productivity and higher levels of income for farmers.<sup>296, 297, 298, 299</sup>

**Rural Transportation**<sup>300, 301, 302</sup>

Highways and roads in the Gan region connect from cities such as Nanchang to other provincial capitals and into rural areas. Most villages can be reached by road, but roads—though sometimes reasonably well paved—are often in need of repair. Many villagers use bicycles for transportation on roadways. Trucks transport farm equipment, machinery, and consumer goods to rural areas and transport produce and locally manufactured goods from villages to market. Bus passenger service is also available, linking Nanchang to



© Harald Groven  
Roads in Xinyu

<sup>296</sup> The Washington Post. Cody, Edward. "Farmers Rise in Challenge to Chinese Land Policy." 14 January 2008. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/01/13/AR2008011302383.html>

<sup>297</sup> The Wall Street Journal. Batson, Andrew. "In China, Leaders Turn Focus to Farmers' Plight." 10 October 2008. [http://online.wsj.com/article/SB122357413898519675.html?mod=googlenews\\_wsj](http://online.wsj.com/article/SB122357413898519675.html?mod=googlenews_wsj)

<sup>298</sup> BBC News. Chen, Shirong. "China Rural-Urban Wage Gap Widens." 16 January 2009. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/7833779.stm>

<sup>299</sup> National Post. Kurlantzick, Joshua. "Joshua Kurlantzick on The Beijing 2008 Olympic Games: Not All of China Is Cheering." 13 August 2008.

<http://network.nationalpost.com/np/blogs/fullcomment/archive/2008/08/18/joshua-kurlantzick-on-the-beijing-2008-olympic-games-not-all-of-china-is-cheering.aspx>

<sup>300</sup> The People's Government of Jiangxi Province. "Transport Systems." 2008.

[http://english.jiangxi.gov.cn/ForVisitors/Transportation/200808/t20080826\\_83468.htm](http://english.jiangxi.gov.cn/ForVisitors/Transportation/200808/t20080826_83468.htm)

<sup>301</sup> TravelChinaGuide.com. "Nanchang Transportation." 1998–2010.

<http://www.travelchinaguide.com/cityguides/jiangxi/nanchang/getting-there.htm>

<sup>302</sup> China Tour Map. "Jiangxi Province Travel Guide." No date. <http://www.chinatourmap.com/china-travel-maps/jiangxi.html>

numerous cities and towns in Jiangxi Province and surrounding provinces.

People who drive private vehicles or ride on buses should be aware that in both rural and urban areas of China the traffic accident rate is among the world's highest. Drivers often drive their vehicles in the wrong lanes and regularly ignore road signs. Road hazards are common, whether on city streets or country roads. Most Chinese drivers have little driving experience, and driving protocols are still being developed.<sup>303</sup>

Railways are another important means of both rural and urban transportation and are the main method of hauling freight. Passenger service is also readily available from cities into rural areas, and fares are low.<sup>304</sup> Major routes extend into heavily populated southeastern China, and plans are underway to build and extend more lines. The railroads link rural towns, coal mines, forest areas, and factories.



© Jiejun Tan  
Train station in Nanchang

Water transportation is important to passenger service as well as to cargo shipping. Since Poyang Lake and three navigable rivers are located in Jiangxi Province, transportation links taking advantage of these resources have been well developed. A large waterway network extends from the Chang Jiang (Yangtze River) in northern Jiangxi Province, through Poyang Lake and eastward to the ocean via Shanghai Port.

### **Rural Health Care**<sup>305, 306, 307, 308</sup>

Throughout China, investment in medical services is lower in rural areas, including the Gan region. There are fewer hospitals, clinics, and preventive services in the countryside and fewer physicians, nurses, and medical personnel. According to one source, twice as many doctors practice medicine in cities as in the



© Aaron Deemer  
Patients waiting to be seen at a clinic

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<sup>303</sup> Bureau of Consular Affairs, U.S. Department of State. "China: Traffic Safety and Road Conditions." 31 December 2009. [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>304</sup> Foreign Teachers Guide to Living and Working in China. Johnson, Raymond Allan. 15 April 2009. <http://middlekingdomlife.com/guide/living-teaching-english-nanchang-jiangxi.htm>

<sup>305</sup> World Health Organization. Parry, Jane and Cui Weiyuan. "Making Health Care Affordable in China." 2008. <http://www.who.int/bulletin/volumes/86/11/08-011108/en/>

<sup>306</sup> The Guardian. Branigan, Tania. "China's Huge Poverty Gap Slowing Growth, UN Says." 17 November 2008. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2008/nov/17/china-poverty-united-nations-growth>

<sup>307</sup> *The New England Journal of Medicine*, Vol. 353. Blumenthal, David and William Hsiao. "Privatization and Its Discontents—The Evolving Chinese Health Care System." 15 September 2005. <http://content.nejm.org/cgi/content/full/353/11/1165>

<sup>308</sup> The New York Times. French, Howard W. "Wealth Grows, But Health Care Withers in China." 14 January 2006. [http://www.nytimes.com/2006/01/14/international/asia/14health.html?pagewanted=1&\\_r=1](http://www.nytimes.com/2006/01/14/international/asia/14health.html?pagewanted=1&_r=1)

countryside.<sup>309</sup> Rural health care services are available through a system known as the Rural Co-Operative Medical System (RCMS), partly funded by the government. In contrast, people who live in cities have access to services funded jointly by employers and employees, a more comprehensive option than the rural system offers. In both urban and rural environments, those who are unemployed have limited access to health care.<sup>310</sup> In the countryside, many people cannot afford the cost of health care at all, regardless of employment.

**Exchange 49:** My arm is broken.

<b>Soldier:</b>	My arm is broken, can you help me?	ngo go ge pe tuon le, nen len bon ngo maa?
<b>Local:</b>	Yes, I can help you.	how, ngo len bon nen

China's health care system began covering all citizens after 1949, with the government owning and managing hospitals in cities, and clinics in rural areas. (Doctors became government employees.) *The New England Journal of Medicine* reports that from 1952 to 1982, the number of infants who died out of every 1,000 live births dropped from 200 to 34. In addition, life expectancy in China increased from 35 to 68 years of age.<sup>311, 312</sup>



© Sara Anderson  
Doctor lecturing to a medical group

Communicable diseases such as smallpox, plague, and cholera were either controlled or eliminated.<sup>313</sup>

Progress reversed after the introduction of liberal economic policies tied to privatization. In the early 1980s, rural cooperatives that supplied health care disintegrated when the communes that supported them were disbanded. As the national economy was privatized,

<sup>309</sup> Research and Markets. Frost & Sullivan. "Social and Infrastructure Analysis for the Chinese Healthcare Industry 2010." April 2009.

[http://www.researchandmarkets.com/reportinfo.asp?report\\_id=1206314&t=d&cat\\_id=](http://www.researchandmarkets.com/reportinfo.asp?report_id=1206314&t=d&cat_id=)

<sup>310</sup> Research and Markets. Frost & Sullivan. "Social and Infrastructure Analysis for the Chinese Healthcare Industry 2010." April 2009.

[http://www.researchandmarkets.com/reportinfo.asp?report\\_id=1206314&t=d&cat\\_id=](http://www.researchandmarkets.com/reportinfo.asp?report_id=1206314&t=d&cat_id=)

<sup>311</sup> The New York Times. French, Howard W. "Wealth Grows, But Health Care Withers in China." 14 January 2006. [http://www.nytimes.com/2006/01/14/international/asia/14health.html?pagewanted=1&\\_r=1](http://www.nytimes.com/2006/01/14/international/asia/14health.html?pagewanted=1&_r=1)

<sup>312</sup> *The New England Journal of Medicine*, Vol. 353. Blumenthal, David and William Hsiao. "Privatization and Its Discontents—The Evolving Chinese Health Care System." 15 September 2005.

<http://content.nejm.org/cgi/content/full/353/11/1165>

<sup>313</sup> The New York Times. French, Howard W. "Wealth Grows, But Health Care Withers in China." 14 January 2006. [http://www.nytimes.com/2006/01/14/international/asia/14health.html?pagewanted=1&\\_r=1](http://www.nytimes.com/2006/01/14/international/asia/14health.html?pagewanted=1&_r=1)

“...900 million rural, mostly poor citizens became, in effect, uninsured overnight.”<sup>314</sup>  
 Although the government later took steps to redress this lack of coverage, China’s public health system remained underfinanced and decentralized for the next 20 years.

In the early 21st century, China’s government recognized the need not only to control epidemics but also to strengthen the entire health care system. More rural residents now have medical coverage. Still, they must pay part of the cost, and many are unable to afford even a small amount. Although government financing for health care is increasing, it has had little overall effect on the lives of rural residents.

The quality of medical services in small towns is often lacking. This forces people to travel to larger cities for effective treatment, if they can afford the trip and cost of services.

**Exchange 50:** Is there a medical clinic nearby?

<b>Soldier:</b>	Is there a medical clinic nearby?	foo jeen yoo zen soh maa?
<b>Local:</b>	Yes, over there.	yoo, dzay a beeyen

**Rural Education**<sup>315</sup>

In Jiangxi Province, education has been an important part of the provincial infrastructure for a number of years. Today, the majority of people in the province are able to receive a primary education, and sometimes beyond.



© Gilles Tran  
 Jiangxi Agricultural University

**Exchange 51:** Do your children go to school?

<b>Soldier:</b>	Do your children go to school?	nen go hay dzi song hoh maa?
<b>Local:</b>	Yes.	szi de

<sup>314</sup> *The New England Journal of Medicine*, Vol. 353. Blumenthal, David and William Hsiao. “Privatization and Its Discontents—The Evolving Chinese Health Care System.” 15 September 2005.  
<http://content.nejm.org/cgi/content/full/353/11/1165>

<sup>315</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. “Jiangxi: Government and Society: Education.” 2010.  
<http://search.eb.com/eb/article-71329>



For adults in Jiangxi, the rate of literacy reflects the average literacy of the country. In the entire province, 66 institutions of higher learning serve the population.<sup>316, 317</sup>

The late 1950s marked the founding of Jiangxi Labour University, later renamed Jiangxi Agricultural University. The main campus in Nanchang is linked to several branches of the school located throughout Jiangxi Province. These campuses have been sites for developing innovative projects to establish new towns and villages, advance afforestation (planting new forests), and reclaim land. In addition, the campuses have supported construction of roads in remote, mountainous areas.



© 无忌王 \* / flickr.com  
School children in Jiujiang

However, many rural parents take their children out of school to help their families with housework or work on the farm as a matter of economic necessity. Often middle schools or high schools are long distances from where families live, and this also discourages attendance.

**Exchange 52:** Is there a school nearby?

<b>Soldier:</b>	Is there a school nearby?	foo jeen yoo hoh hwo maa?
<b>Local:</b>	No.	mo yoo

Schools in rural China have received fewer government resources than those in urban areas. For many years, rural education has been marginalized with primary education wholly dependent upon family, rather than government, support. Even before 1949 and the founding of the PRC, village schools were locally supported. Although this division particularly applies to primary education, it follows that higher education has also been impacted; youth in higher-income urban areas have received more opportunities and have been the main recipients of college education. The college dropout rate has been greater in the countryside. Although many rural parents want their children to receive a college education and may save money for tuition, economic and social circumstances often

<sup>316</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. “Jiangxi: Government and Society: Education.” 2010.  
<http://search.eb.com/eb/article-71329>

<sup>317</sup> Alibaba.com. “Province Introduction of China: Jiangxi.” 1 April 2009.  
<http://news.alibaba.com/article/detail/business-in-china/100085696-1-province-introduction-china%253A-jiangxi.html>

prevent college attendance.<sup>318</sup> The Chinese government recognizes these issues and has been examining new policies (even on the local level) to improve rural schooling and provide children with better opportunities. In addition, funding for education has become more diversified, including more money from NGOs and private sources.<sup>319, 320</sup>

## Rural Life<sup>321, 322, 323, 324</sup>

Survival in the countryside and rural areas of interior provinces such as Jiangxi is difficult for a number of reasons. Rural life requires that people devote long hours to farming and agricultural jobs for little return. Rural infrastructure is less developed and more poorly maintained than that of cities. Families often live in primitive conditions, such as one-room, minimally furnished dwellings that lack basic services. Houses are often constructed of stone or mud. Recently, the central government began investing resources to renovate dilapidated houses in rural areas throughout China. This project began in Guizhou Province, east of Hunan Province (Hunan's eastern border is part of the Gan region). To assist villagers, the government provided subsidies for reconstruction and furnishings. Although many rural people have benefited through improved living conditions, millions of others have not.<sup>325, 326</sup>



© Preston Rhea  
Young village boy

Since the rural collectives of the Mao era disbanded, villagers are now more reliant on their families and each other to meet their social and survival needs. If rural people are unemployed, for instance, they depend on their relatives for care and possibly for shelter. Formerly, organized collectives oversaw the distribution of services such as medical care or social welfare in general. Now, such responsibilities fall on individuals and their

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<sup>318</sup> East Asia Forum. Kipnis, Andrew. "Wanting an Education in Rural China." 5 March 2010.

<http://www.eastasiaforum.org/2010/03/05/wanting-an-education-in-rural-china/>

<sup>319</sup> China Perspectives. Fu, Teng Margaret. "Unequal Primary Education Opportunities in Rural and Urban China." July–August 2005. <http://chinaperspectives.revues.org/document500.html>

<sup>320</sup> The Guardian. Branigan, Tania. "China's Huge Poverty Gap Slowing Growth, UN Says." 17 November 2008. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2008/nov/17/china-poverty-united-nations-growth>

<sup>321</sup> National Post. Kurlantzick, Joshua. "Joshua Kurlantzick on The Beijing 2008 Olympic Games: Not All of China Is Cheering." 13 August 2008.

<http://network.nationalpost.com/np/blogs/fullcomment/archive/2008/08/18/joshua-kurlantzick-on-the-beijing-2008-olympic-games-not-all-of-china-is-cheering.aspx>

<sup>322</sup> The Guardian. Branigan, Tania. "China's Huge Poverty Gap Slowing Growth, UN Says." 17 November 2008. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2008/nov/17/china-poverty-united-nations-growth>

<sup>323</sup> BBC News. Wingfield-Hayes, Rupert. "China's Rural Millions Left Behind." 7 March 2006.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/4782194.stm>

<sup>324</sup> For photos of rural everyday life in China, refer to: The China Teaching Web. Vance, Robert. "Life in the Chinese Countryside." 2009. <http://www.teachabroadchina.com/life-in-chinese-countryside-pictures/>

<sup>325</sup> Xinhua News Agency. [www.chinaview.cn](http://www.chinaview.cn). "China Expands Rural Housing Program to Boost Demand Amid Financial Meltdown." 8 March 2009. [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-03/08/content\\_10971907.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-03/08/content_10971907.htm)

<sup>326</sup> Far Eastern Economic Review. Guidi, Chen and Wu Chuntao. "Crisis in China's Countryside." December 2004. <http://www.wellesley.edu/Polisci/wj/308S/crisis-countryside.html>

families, working with their private resources and whatever local services are available from the provincial government.<sup>327</sup>

**Exchange 53:** Are you the only person who has a job?

<b>Soldier:</b>	Are you the only person in your family who has a job?	nen szi ga lee wee yi yoo goong dzo go neen maa?
<b>Local:</b>	No, my father still works.	bo ngo ba ba hay dzay goong dzo

Thousands of young residents have left their villages to find jobs in the city leaving communities populated only by the very old and the young.<sup>328</sup> However, as the economy shifts and many are laid off, they generally return home to earn lower wages.



© kriswho / flickr.com  
Rural home in Jiangxi Province

**Exchange 54:** Did you grow up here?

<b>Soldier:</b>	Did you grow up here?	nen dzay goh lee zong tay go maa?
<b>Local:</b>	Yes.	do-ee

The rural areas also face environment hazards. Industrial development has led to widespread pollution of land and water. Pollution has caused sickness among many people in villages. Where regulations to prevent pollution exist, enforcement is usually lax. Rural pollution emanates from factories, chemical plants, and mines that dispose of untreated toxic wastes. Fertilizer and waste from livestock breeding are also sources of rural pollution.<sup>329</sup>



© kriswho / flickr.com  
Pollution in Jiangxi Province

<sup>327</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. "China: Government and Society, Health and Welfare." 2010.  
<http://search.eb.com/eb/article-71020>

<sup>328</sup> Peace Programs, The Carter Center. "Why Is Community Building Important in China?" 2010.  
[http://www.cartercenter.org/peace/china\\_elections/nav\\_question4.html](http://www.cartercenter.org/peace/china_elections/nav_question4.html)

<sup>329</sup> China Environmental Law. "China's Rural Pollution Problem." 11 August 2008.  
<http://www.chinaenvironmentallaw.com/2008/08/11/chinas-rural-pollution-problem/>

<sup>330</sup> Villagers have sometimes demonstrated against factories that pollute the local area. In an incident that took place in nearby Zhejiang Province in 2005, thousands of people rioted to force authorities to stop air and water pollution coming from a nearby industrial park.<sup>331</sup>

### Who's in Charge<sup>332, 333</sup>

In the previous 25 years, thousands of rural villages across China have moved toward a transparent election process in which residents can choose local representatives for village committees.<sup>334</sup> In 1988, during a period of rapid reforms that were transforming the nation's economy, the Chinese government began direct elections in villages. The government believed committees of elected villagers would provide stability during a time of intense change.



© Bob Huberman  
Elderly men smoking

The process has received strong popular support, and today elections are held in approximately 600,000 villages in China.<sup>335</sup> Villagers nominate members who will serve on their village committees. In addition, every five years rural residents choose representatives who will serve in the People's Congresses, although this process is less transparent in phases of voting, campaigning, and nominating.

During village elections, voters choose a chairman of the village committee. This authority provides direction, resolves disputes, and helps visitors in rural areas.

#### Exchange 55: Does your village leader live here?

<b>Soldier:</b>	Does your village leader live here?	nen go tsun zong tsu dzay goh lee maa?
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<sup>330</sup> NPR. Lim, Louisa. "Arrival of Industry Brings Suffering to Countryside." 19 May 2006. <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=5416431>

<sup>331</sup> The New York Times. Yardley, Jim. "Rural Chinese Riot as Police Try to Halt Pollution Protest." 14 April 2005.

<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9C04E1D9133EF937A25757C0A9639C8B63&sec=&spn=&pagewanted=all>

<sup>332</sup> Peace Programs, The Carter Center. "What Is the Status of Democracy in China?" 2010. [http://www.cartercenter.org/peace/china\\_elections/nav\\_question1.html](http://www.cartercenter.org/peace/china_elections/nav_question1.html)

<sup>333</sup> Ace. ACE Encyclopaedia. "China: Village Committee Elections: First Steps on a Long March?" 1998–2010. [http://aceproject.org/ace-en/topics/es/esy/esy\\_cn](http://aceproject.org/ace-en/topics/es/esy/esy_cn)

<sup>334</sup> Peace Program, The Carter Center. "The Carter Center China Program." 2010. [http://www.cartercenter.org/peace/china\\_elections/index.html](http://www.cartercenter.org/peace/china_elections/index.html)

<sup>335</sup> Peace Program, The Carter Center. "What Is the Status of Democracy in China?" 2010. [http://www.cartercenter.org/peace/china\\_elections/nav\\_question1.html](http://www.cartercenter.org/peace/china_elections/nav_question1.html)

<b>Local:</b>	Yes.	si de
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Variations exist in the scope and level of authority that village leaders hold. In general, they oversee administrative and business issues, budgets, security and social order, and public utilities. Variations also occur in revenue collection. In some areas, the local authority has been found to take advantage of the local residents, charging numerous high fees and taxes.<sup>336</sup> According to researchers who reported on a particular region after studying lifestyle in rural China in 2004, “The variety of taxes and levies is shocking. According to government statistics, there are 93 kinds of fees and fund-raising levies related to farmers, formulated by 24 national ministries, committees, offices and bureaus at the central government level. Local governments levy 296 other kinds of fees.”<sup>337</sup>



© Bob Huberman  
Elderly villagers

To further cause confusion, the national government can override local authority. For instance, the Chinese government appropriated many rural resources to support the infrastructure of the 2008 Summer Olympic Games in Beijing. These changes often caused disruption in the countryside. The diversion of water to Beijing resulted in dead fish and low water levels for irrigation in some local regions. The construction of canals to divert water displaced many farmers and harmed their land. Resources such as coal were sent to Beijing, resulting in rural power shortages and power blackouts.<sup>338, 339</sup>

Above the local village level, political leaders are determined by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Members of the village Party committees are elected by CCP officials, not by the general public.

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<sup>336</sup> National Post. Kurlantzick, Joshua. “Joshua Kurlantzick on The Beijing 2008 Olympic Games: Not All of China Is Cheering.” 13 August 2008.

<http://network.nationalpost.com/np/blogs/fullcomment/archive/2008/08/18/joshua-kurlantzick-on-the-beijing-2008-olympic-games-not-all-of-china-is-cheering.aspx>

<sup>337</sup> Far Eastern Economic Review. Guidi, Chen and Wu Chuntao. “Crisis in China’s Countryside.” December 2004. <http://www.wellesley.edu/Polisci/wj/308S/crisis-countryside.html>

<sup>338</sup> The Washington Post. Cha, Ariana Eunjung. “China’s ‘Socialist Family’ Sacrifices.” 23 August 2008.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/08/22/AR2008082202696.html?hpid=artslot>

<sup>339</sup> National Post. Kurlantzick, Joshua. “Joshua Kurlantzick on The Beijing 2008 Olympic Games: Not All of China Is Cheering.” 13 August 2008.

<http://network.nationalpost.com/np/blogs/fullcomment/archive/2008/08/18/joshua-kurlantzick-on-the-beijing-2008-olympic-games-not-all-of-china-is-cheering.aspx>

**Exchange 56:** Can you take me to your village leader?

<b>Soldier:</b>	Can you take me to your village leader?	nen len daay ngo che jen tsun zong maa?
<b>Local:</b>	Yes.	len

Before these village elections were implemented in China, the CCP wielded direct authority over rural areas. Under the CCP are the Village Assembly and the Village Representative Assembly, which take up matters of rural citizenship.

**Exchange 57:** I would like to make an appointment.

<b>Soldier:</b>	I would like to make an appointment with the village leader.	ngo Sheeyon ghen tsun dzong yuh si gun jen meeyen
<b>Local:</b>	Yes.	how de

The CCP retains absolute authority at the national level. At the village level, however, it often devises ways to share power with members of the community.

**Checkpoints**<sup>340</sup>

Civil unrest occurs in China, and it is possible to come upon unexpected checkpoints. If such an incident should occur, drivers or pedestrians going through the checkpoint should comply with authorities and carefully follow instructions.



© Jim Fruchterman  
Police booth in Fuzhou

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<sup>340</sup> Bureau of Consular Affairs, U.S. Department of State. "China: Threats to Safety and Security." 31 December 2009. [http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis\\_pa\\_tw/cis/cis\\_1089.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1089.html)

**Exchange 58:** Please get out of the car.

<b>Local:</b>	Please get out of the car.	chung ha a tsa
<b>Soldier:</b>	OK.	how

If local police ask for information or official papers, drivers need to immediately and politely produce any requested documents.

**Exchange 59:** May I see your Passport?

<b>Local:</b>	May I see your Passport?	ngo len khun nen go foo dzo maa?
<b>Soldier:</b>	Yes.	ko-ee

At a checkpoint, it is possible that military or civil security personnel could ask for the car registration. It is important to have this document on hand.

**Exchange 60:** Show us the car registration.

<b>Local:</b>	Show us the car registration.	gay ngo meen khun nen tsa dzi go den jee dzen
<b>Soldier:</b>	OK.	how

## Land Mines<sup>341</sup>

China is one of the world’s largest producers of land mines, but reportedly has not planted new mines within the last decade. Most of the antipersonnel mines in the country lie along the borders with the Russian Federation, India, and Vietnam—remnants of war.



© Vladimir Menkov  
Rice fields in a valley in Mufu Mountains

**Exchange 61:** Are there landmines in this area?

<b>Soldier:</b>	Are there landmines in this area?	gay ge chee yoo tee loo-ee maa?
<b>Local:</b>	No.	mo yoo

China is not a signatory to the Mine Ban Treaty, although in 2008 it voted in favor of UN Resolution 63/42 stating that the Mine Ban Treaty should be universally implemented.

### Self Study Questions:

A number of firms and factories are relocating to Jiangxi from coastal areas. True or False?

The “household responsibility system,” endured for many years. True or False?

In the Gan region, investment in medical services is lower in rural areas. True or False?

Since the rural collectives of the Mao era disbanded, villagers are now more reliant on their families and each other to meet their social and survival needs. True or False?

Rural Chinese villages have no experience with transparent election processes. True or False?

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<sup>341</sup> Landmine Monitor. “China: Contamination.” 1998–2009.  
[http://lm.icbl.org/index.php/publications/display?act=submit&pqs\\_year=2009&pqs\\_type=lm&pqs\\_report=china](http://lm.icbl.org/index.php/publications/display?act=submit&pqs_year=2009&pqs_type=lm&pqs_report=china)



## Family Life

### Typical Household and Family Structure<sup>342, 343</sup>

Life in rural China follows a patriarchal family system that includes the extended family.

**Exchange 62:** Are these people part of your family?

<b>Soldier:</b>	Are these people part of your family?	gay She szi nen go ga neen maa?
<b>Local:</b>	No, they are our neighbors.	bo szi je meen szi ling joo

In traditional families of the past, life centered around the extended family, but this is less true today. Family included those related by blood and marriage, who combined their finances and shared a home. Sons brought their wives to live in their father’s household, and daughters lived at home until they left their birth families to join the families of their husbands.<sup>344</sup> Families honored their ancestry at shrines in their homes.



Today, although each individual family is smaller, an extended family may still include two or three generations. Parents, grandparents, children (including adopted children), and other family members may live under the same roof if the house is large enough.

**Exchange 63:** How many people live in this house?

<b>Soldier:</b>	How many people live in this house?	gay dze woo lee tsu le jee doh neen?
<b>Local:</b>	Five.	umm ge neen

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<sup>342</sup> National Center for Biotechnology Information, U.S. National Library of Medicine. Chen, Feinian and Susan E. Short. “Household Context and Subjective Well-Being Among the Oldest Old in China.” 2009. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2701306/>

<sup>343</sup> UN Chronicle Online Edition. Flamm, Mikel and Wendy Xie. “The Strength of Rural Women in China.” No date. <http://www.un.org/Pubs/chronicle/2006/issue2/0206p21.htm>

<sup>344</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. “Extended Family.” 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9033456>

Family members may be separated from each other by long distances and still retain close family ties. It is common for children to be sent to live with their grandparents, even in faraway villages, when both parents work outside the home. In this arrangement, children benefit from the care and presence of close family members. In the right circumstances, this situation is seen as preferable to one in which young children are left alone because both parents are working.<sup>345</sup>



© Andy Sitonen  
Rural family

**Exchange 64:** Do you have any brothers?

<b>Soldier:</b>	Do you have any brothers?	nen yoo Sheeong dee maa?
<b>Local:</b>	Yes, I have one brother. (older brother / younger brother)	yoo, ngo yoo yi goh goh / dee dee

If a child’s parents should die or go missing for some reason, extended family members (uncles, aunts, grandparents) will often raise the children. In the aftermath of the magnitude 7.9 earthquake in Sichuan that killed almost 70,000 people, thousands of children were left homeless. In many cases surviving family members took guardianship of the children.<sup>346</sup>

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<sup>345</sup> About.com. Naumann, Sara. “Chinese Culture Blog: The Extended Chinese Family—Grandparents, Relatives Help Raise Children in China.” 28 August 2009. <http://chineseculture.about.com/b/2009/08/28/the-extended-chinese-family-grandparents-relatives-help-raise-children-in-china.htm>

<sup>346</sup> Pound Pup Legacy. McClathy Newspapers. Johnson, Tim. “China’s ‘Quake Orphans’ Remain in Extended Families’ Tight Embrace.” 14 September 2008. <http://poundpuplegacy.org/node/21458>

*One-Child Policy*<sup>347, 348, 349, 350</sup>

The Chinese government established a national policy restricting family size in the late 1970s. This ruling was originally a temporary measure to slow down growth of the population because China held one-fourth of the world's population but only 7% of the Earth's arable land.<sup>351</sup> Still in effect, China's "one-child policy" (one per couple) regulates urban Chinese more strictly than rural Chinese. A second child is allowed in rural areas



© Erwyn van der Meer  
One child family

after the first child reaches the age of five, but sometimes only if the first child is female or disabled. In some remote areas a third child is allowed. Millions of young Chinese who have no siblings are now of child-bearing age, and the government has issued a new ruling that allows couples who have no siblings to bear two children themselves.<sup>352, 353</sup>

The government enforces the one-child policy by punishing families that have a second baby. Women who disregard this law receive heavy fines (called social compensation fees) or may be subject to more severe measures, such as forced abortion or sterilization.<sup>354</sup> The laws concerning punishment vary regionally. In Jiangxi Province, local regulations require "unspecified 'remedial measures' to deal with out-of-plan pregnancies."<sup>355</sup>

China is expected to keep its one-child policy in place indefinitely, even though debate about the need to ease restrictions has been ongoing. Some reports indicate that many couples now choose voluntarily to restrict their families to one child. However, other

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<sup>347</sup> About.com. Rosenberg, Matt. "China's OneChild Policy." 4 November 2009.

<http://geography.about.com/od/populationgeography/a/onechild.htm>

<sup>348</sup> U.S. Department of State. "2008 Human Rights Report: China (Includes Tibet, Hong Kong, and Macau): Respect for Human Rights, Section 1: Respect for the Integrity of the Person, Including Freedom from: f. Arbitrary Interference with Privacy, Family, Home, or Correspondence." 25 February 2009.

<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2008/eap/119037.htm>

<sup>349</sup> BBC News. Bristow, Michael. "Has China's One-Child Policy Worked?" 20 September 2007.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/7000931.stm>

<sup>350</sup> Facts and Details. Hays, Jeffrey. "One Child Policy in China." 2008.

<http://factsanddetails.com/china.php?itemid=128&catid=4&subcatid=15>

<sup>351</sup> *New England Journal of Medicine*, Vol. 353, No. 11. Hesketh, Therese and Li Lu, Zhu Wei Xing. "The Effect of China's One-Child Family Policy after 25 Years." 15 September 2005.

<http://content.nejm.org/cgi/content/full/353/11/1171>

<sup>352</sup> About.com. Rosenberg, Matt. "China's One-Child Policy." 4 November 2009.

<http://geography.about.com/od/populationgeography/a/onechild.htm>

<sup>353</sup> *New England Journal of Medicine*, Vol. 353, No. 11. Hesketh, Therese and Li Lu, Zhu Wei Xing. "The Effect of China's One-Child Family Policy after 25 Years." 15 September 2005.

<http://content.nejm.org/cgi/content/full/353/11/1171>

<sup>354</sup> About.com. Rosenberg, Matt. "China's One-Child Policy." 4 November 2009.

<http://geography.about.com/od/populationgeography/a/onechild.htm>

<sup>355</sup> U.S. Department of State. "2008 Human Rights Report: China (Includes Tibet, Hong Kong, and Macau): Respect for Human Rights, Section 1." 25 February 2009.

<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2008/eap/119037.htm>

sources quote a recent statement by a government official who declared that many Chinese women oppose the restrictions.<sup>356, 357</sup>

**Exchange 65:** Is this your entire family?

<b>Soldier:</b>	Is this your entire family?	goh szi nen chooan ga maa?
<b>Local:</b>	Yes.	szi de

One effect of the law is a disproportionate ratio of males to females in China. Male children have been favored for both cultural and socioeconomic reasons. A male child carries on the family lineage. Also, he is believed likely to care for his parents in their old age, although daughters have become more responsible in recent years. To ensure the birth of a son, affluent parents frequently use ultrasound procedures to determine the child’s sex and then terminate the pregnancy if they choose.<sup>358, 359</sup>

**Status of Women, Elderly, and Children**

*Women*

Under China’s constitution, women and men enjoy equal rights, but reality does not always follow the law. Confucian values, which permeated China for centuries, hold women as subordinate to men. Although cultural traditions are changing, they continue to affect women’s status in China. Although women are protected legally and have the right to inherit, own property, and receive an education, these laws are not enforced. Women report workplace discrimination that includes wage discrepancies, unequal hiring and firing practices, demotion, and harassment. Socially, women experience gender discrimination in many ways that deeply affect the family. Experts believe these combined factors



© Hershel Gattis  
Rural Chinese family

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<sup>356</sup> The Washington Post. Olesen, Alexa. “China Sticking With One-Child Policy.” 23 January 2007. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/01/23/AR2007012300398.html>

<sup>357</sup> AsiaNews.it. “Chinese Women Oppose One-Child Policy, Want More Children.” 16 January 2009. <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Chinese-women-oppose-one-child-policy,-want-more-children-14234.html>

<sup>358</sup> National Center for Biotechnology Information, U.S. National Library of Medicine. Chen, Feinian and Susan E. Short. “Household Context and Subjective Well-Being Among the Oldest Old in China.” 2009. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2701306/>

<sup>359</sup> Intersections: Gender and Sexuality in Asia and the Pacific. McLaren, Anne E. “Competing for Women: The Marriage Market as Reflected in Folk Performance in the Lower Yangtzi Delta.” March 2008. <http://intersections.anu.edu.au/issue16/mclaren.htm>

contribute to a suicide rate that is three times higher for women than for men (in rural areas, it is as much as four times higher).<sup>360</sup>

The division of labor in Chinese households reflects gender roles, particularly in rural areas. The husband is head of household, and women are responsible for domestic work, cleaning and cooking, socializing their children, and caring for family members.

**Exchange 66:** Are these your children?

<b>Soldier:</b>	Are these your children?	gay She szi nen go hay dzi maa?
<b>Local:</b>	Yes.	do-ee

Men often migrate to other areas seeking work, and during these times, wives manage all work in the home and on the farm. A wife defers to her husband whenever he is present and follows his lead when he is gone. Wives share labor in all cases, including agricultural work in rural areas. Women are fully expected to help with most stages of agricultural production, even outside the house. In urban areas, women hold jobs outside the family: working in business, education, medicine, and other fields. Because these jobs require higher education, they are not usually within the reach of rural women, who have less opportunity to attend school beyond the primary grades. Even when a woman holds a job outside the household, she retains her fundamental role as family caregiver.



**Exchange 67:** Is this your wife?

<b>Soldier:</b>	Is this your wife?	goh szi nen tay tay maa?
<b>Local:</b>	Yes.	szi

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<sup>360</sup> U.S. Department of State. “2008 Human Rights Report: China (Includes Tibet, Hong Kong, and Macau): Respect for Human Rights, Section 4: Governmental Attitude Regarding International and Nongovernmental Investigation of Alleged Violations of Human Rights: Women.” 25 February 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2008/eap/119037.htm>

Women's rights to own land are unclear because rural land rights are often not documented for any owners or lessees, whether male or female. Many people are also unaware of legal protections enacted in 2002 to support land rights.<sup>361</sup> Women in the countryside have often been denied the right to hold contracted land even when the law permits them to do so. When women marry, they are likely to move away from their home village, and local regulation causes them to lose their right to contracted land in their home village. Similar restrictive village regulations have often denied women the right to any contracted land in the new village (their husband's) they live in.<sup>362, 363</sup>



© Erwyn van der Meer  
Three women walking together

To attain high social status, for many years Chinese women practiced footbinding. This practice was a passport to wealth or social mobility among the upper class. The process involved wrapping girls' feet tightly in cloth beginning around the age of seven, breaking the bones to make the feet tiny as they grew. Tiny feet were considered beautiful and desirable in pre-Communist China, but permanent damage reduced a women's mobility to a mere hobble. This gender tradition—imposing the social standards of beauty on women—did not end until 1912.<sup>364</sup> It is estimated that in the 19th century, 40%–50% of Chinese women had bound feet, and among the upper class the rate was closer to 100%.<sup>365</sup> Peasant women escaped footbinding because they needed full mobility to work in the fields.<sup>366</sup>



© johnbullas / flickr.com  
Chinese woman's bound feet

Women have the right to run for political office. In addition, the government has encouraged women to run for office in village elections and to exercise their voting rights. Despite these policies, few women have held influential positions in the Chinese

<sup>361</sup> Asia Society. "Struggle for the Land: Law and Property in Rural China." 10 April 2009. <http://www.asiasociety.org/policy-politics/international-relations/intra-asia/struggle-land-law-and-property-rural-china>

<sup>362</sup> LexisNexis. Liaw, H. Ray. "Comment: Women's Land Rights in Rural China: Transforming Existing Laws into a Source of Property Rights." January 2008. <https://litigation-essentials.lexisnexis.com/webcd/app?action=DocumentDisplay&crawlid=1&srctype=smi&srcid=3B15&dotype=cite&docid=17+Pac.+Rim+L.+%26+Pol%27y+237&key=a6b99158a34188a51b05b427694991c3>

<sup>363</sup> Encyclopedia.com. *Pacific Rim Law & Policy Journal*. Liaw, H. Ray. "Women's Land Rights in Rural China: Transforming Existing Laws into a Source of Property Rights." 1 January 2008. <http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1G1-175020621.html>

<sup>364</sup> NPR. Lim, Louisa. "Painful Memories for China's Footbinding Survivors." 19 March 2007. <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=8966942>

<sup>365</sup> NPR. Lim, Louisa. "Painful Memories for China's Footbinding Survivors." 19 March 2007. <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=8966942>

<sup>366</sup> NPR. Lim, Louisa. "Painful Memories for China's Footbinding Survivors." 19 March 2007. <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=8966942>

Communist Party.<sup>367</sup> In the Communist era, women gained legal rights such as equality at the workplace and in the home. New laws also protected them in areas of inheritance, marriage, and divorce, banning the sale of brides and the taking of concubines (unmarried female escorts) into a marriage.

*Elderly*<sup>368</sup>

In rural areas, where the majority of Chinese live, elderly people do not receive disability or pensions. They live with their children whenever possible so their children and grandchildren can care for them. It is the eldest son’s duty according to longstanding tradition to take care of his parents as they age.

**Exchange 68:** Does your family live here?

<b>Soldier:</b>	Does your family live here?	nen go ga nin tsu dzay ge le maa?
<b>Local:</b>	Yes.	szi de

China’s one-child policy has created hardship for some families. The burden of caring for both the husband’s and wife’s elderly parents may fall on only one family because there are no siblings. Although children are legally obligated to care for their parents, it may be difficult to take on the financial and physical demands of this responsibility.<sup>369, 370</sup>



© Marjolijn de Boer  
Elder Chinese woman

Grandparents often remain part of the workforce until they reach an advanced age. They also assume responsibility for their grandchildren when possible. They may become the primary caregivers if both parents migrate to a city or other region for income-producing work. The children remain behind in the countryside and work

<sup>367</sup> U.S. Department of State. “2008 Human Rights Report: China (Includes Tibet, Hong Kong, and Macau): Respect for Human Rights, Section 3: Respect for Political Rights: The Right of Citizens to Change Their Government: Elections and Political Participation.” 25 February 2009.  
<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2008/eap/119037.htm>

<sup>368</sup> National Center for Biotechnology Information, U.S. National Library of Medicine. Chen, Feinian and Susan E. Short. “Household Context and Subjective Well-Being Among the Oldest Old in China.” 2009.  
<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2701306/>

<sup>369</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. “China: Government and Society, Health and Welfare.” 2010.  
<http://search.eb.com/eb/article-71020>

<sup>370</sup> *New England Journal of Medicine*, Vol. 353, No. 11. Hesketh, Therese and Li Lu, Zhu Wei Xing. “The Effect of China’s One-Child Family Policy after 25 Years.” 15 September 2005.  
<http://content.nejm.org/cgi/content/full/353/11/1171>

alongside their grandparents in the house and the fields. The grandparents take on the role of teaching the children and overseeing their tasks.<sup>371</sup> If both parents are permanently gone and a person outside the family tries to adopt the child, the grandparents can legally stop the adoption. To exercise this right, however, they must be deemed eligible guardians considering their age and ability to care for a child.<sup>372</sup>

### *Children*

After a couple marries in China, they anticipate the birth of at least one child. Children are a cherished part of the family. Parents give them household responsibilities from an early age. They are expected to help when asked and show deference to those who are older.



© Sara Anderson  
Local children in Ganzhou

Children are required to attend school for nine years, but circumstances often prevent children from staying in school. In rural China, the shortage of schools and teachers has interfered with childhood education. Class sizes tend to be very large in country schools, and many children have to walk or be transported long distances to school. Many rural children drop out of school or never attend, beginning agricultural work in the fields as early as six years of age. Children in cities may drop out of urban schools and be out on the street. It is common for children of migrant workers to spend their days on the streets. In extreme cases such as these, the children have exceedingly limited options for escaping a lifetime of poverty.<sup>373</sup>

In kindergarten and primary school, children learn the traditional values of Chinese society, and they study academic subjects. If they attend high school, they can pursue a general education with an emphasis on science, or they can receive vocational training to learn about agriculture, mining, and other practical subjects.

When the family patriarch dies, his son inherits his estate (house and fields). This practice has remained in effect in rural China even though women also have an equal right to inherit property.

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<sup>371</sup> UN Chronicle Online Edition. Flamm, Mikel and Wendy Xie. "The Strength of Rural Women in China." No date. <http://www.un.org/Pubs/chronicle/2006/issue2/0206p21.htm>

<sup>372</sup> Pound Pup Legacy. McClathy Newspapers. Johnson, Tim. "China's 'Quake Orphans' Remain in Extended Families' Tight Embrace." September 2008. <http://poundpuplegacy.org/node/21458>

<sup>373</sup> U.S. Department of State. "2008 Human Rights Report: China (Includes Tibet, Hong Kong, and Macau): Respect for Human Rights, Section 4: Governmental Attitude Regarding International and Nongovernmental Investigation of Alleged Violations of Human Rights: Children." 25 February 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2008/eap/119037.htm>



## Marriage and Divorce

*Marriage*<sup>374, 375</sup>

Marriages in China were subject to more ritual in the past than today. Greater numbers of men than women in China have led to particular marriage customs. The devaluation of females and the desire for a male heir to carry on the family name created an imbalance of males to females. This imbalance largely disappeared during socialism but has since returned. In the past (and to some extent today) the shortage of women led to the widespread abduction, sale, or arranged marriages for women. These practices led to a centuries-old convention known as the bridal lament, customary in the Yangtze Delta region and other farming areas. First, a family would arrange for their daughter's marriage, with no input at all from the prospective bride. Later, she would leave her birth home and become the property of her husband's family without meeting her husband before the wedding. The bridal lament, which involved sorrowful, ritualized crying, was performed by a bride and her mother or sisters for a three-day period in advance of the bride's departure. When new marriage laws protected women's right to marry after 1949, arranged marriages went into decline and the bridal lament mostly died out in practice.



© Caro / flickr.com  
Couple posing for wedding photos

**Exchange 69:** Are you married?

<b>Soldier:</b>	Are you married?	nen je fen le maa?
<b>Local:</b>	Yes.	je fen le

Today, young people in the city and countryside generally choose their own mates for marriage but still seek family approval. They may also use matchmakers to determine compatibility. Parents who are involved in the process try to find out as much as possible about the educational and social background of a prospective mate for their son or daughter. Once a marriage has been agreed upon, both families meet and negotiate details of the wedding and its cost.



© Sara Anderson  
Chinese couple outside railway station

<sup>374</sup> Intersections: Gender and Sexuality in Asia and the Pacific. McLaren, Anne E. "Competing for Women: The Marriage Market as Reflected in Folk Performance in the Lower Yangtzi Delta." March 2008.

<http://intersections.anu.edu.au/issue16/mclaren.htm>

<sup>375</sup> China Today. Xinxin, Chen. March 2003.

<http://www.chinatoday.com.cn/English/e2003/e20033/marriage.htm>

**Exchange 70:** Does your wife have a job?

<b>Soldier:</b>	Does your wife have a job?	nen tay tay goong dzo maa?
<b>Local:</b>	Yes, she works at the bank.	je dzay neen hong goong dzo

For an eldest son, the wedding will be as lavish as finances allow. Many men put off marrying until they are older to save money for a wedding, because it is a significant occasion for gaining status. When a wedding takes place, every effort is made to conspicuously display wealth to gain status.

*Divorce*<sup>376, 377</sup>

Among the new laws the Chinese Communist Party put into effect after 1949 was a nationwide ordinance allowing women to choose their own husbands as well as to opt for a divorce.<sup>378</sup> This right was often not upheld or exercised, however. In the late 1970s, the situation began to change as economic reforms in the country led the way for more liberal social controls over marriage and divorce. The divorce rate increased after women found it easier to initiate a divorce. After a new marriage law came into effect in 2003, the process of divorce was further simplified. Legal reforms in 2003 and 2004 struck down the need for married couples to ask their employers for permission to divorce, and the divorce rate in 2004 increased by 21.2% over the rate for the previous year.<sup>379, 380</sup>

In the past and in many areas even today, divorced women in China have found themselves in difficult social and financial positions. Tradition dictates that custody of the children go to the father in the case of divorce. Fathers have usually been seen as having greater economic means to raise their children, while mothers could more easily become homeless with no source of income. This is still an economic reality for women in the countryside. In urban China, more options exist for both women and men, and attitudes



© Augapfel / flickr.com  
Rural Chinese family

<sup>376</sup> BBC News. “China Divorce Rate Rises by 20%.” 25 January 2008. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/7208385.stm>

<sup>377</sup> Facts and Details. “Concubines and Divorce in China.” 2008. <http://factsanddetails.com/china.php?itemid=108&catid=4&subcatid=20>

<sup>378</sup> HistoryLearningSite.co.uk. “History Learning Site: Modern World History: China 1900 to 1976: China 1949 to 1953.” 2000–2010. [http://www.historylearning-site.co.uk/china\\_1949\\_to\\_1953.htm](http://www.historylearning-site.co.uk/china_1949_to_1953.htm)

<sup>379</sup> International Herald Tribune. “Reforms Increase Divorce Rate in China.” 3 March 2005. <http://www.iht.com/articles/2005/03/02/news/divorce.php>

<sup>380</sup> Asia Times. Wu, Zhong. “Divorce, Chinese Style.” 18 July 2007. <http://www.atimes.com/atimes/China/IG18Ad01.html>

are changing. Lifestyles are more mobile, and women are becoming more independent. Their family roles are changing because women are increasingly seen as capable of entering a profession that can benefit their families. Urban women are often the ones to initiate divorce, and they retain greater control over their lives when they divorce compared to the past. Despite this, divorce carries a social stigma in China, although less so than before.

## Naming Conventions<sup>381, 382, 383</sup>

A modern Han Chinese name in mainland China includes two parts, a patrilineal surname, often one syllable, and a personal (given) name, usually written as one word even if it consists of two syllables. (In Taiwan, the given name is often hyphenated.) The surname comes first, as seen in the name “Deng Xiaoping.” In Western terms, he would be called Mr. Deng, rather than Mr. Xiaoping.<sup>384</sup> Some Chinese people reverse the traditional order of their names, placing the family name last to conform to English word order. Spelling of the same Chinese name may vary according to which language or transcription system is used.<sup>385</sup>



© Kwang Petp  
Chinese baby at New Year

After marriage, a woman typically keeps her own family name. She also adopts her husband’s surname and may place it before her birth surname. She may then use either of the two surnames, depending on the occasion.

Chinese personal (given) names are not gender-specific but have some unique qualities. Among some families, the personal name may include a particular character that siblings all share, indicating generation or gender. According to tradition the name a family chooses is seen as setting a person’s fate throughout life. Thus, naming a child was previously a formal occasion preceded by careful consideration of many factors. The focus of personal names changed after 1919. In addition, after the People’s Republic of China was established, parents feeling national pride began naming their children after historical or political events associated with the country. For instance, a common

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<sup>381</sup> Naming\_Practice\_Guide\_UK. “A Guide to Names and Naming Practices: 27. Chinese: a. Mainland.” March 2006. [http://www.fbiic.gov/public/2008/nov/Naming\\_practice\\_guide\\_UK\\_2006.pdf](http://www.fbiic.gov/public/2008/nov/Naming_practice_guide_UK_2006.pdf)

<sup>382</sup> About.com. “Chinese Personal Names.” 2010.

<http://genealogy.about.com/gi/o.htm?zi=1/XJ/Ya&zTi=1&sdn=genealogy&cdn=parenting&tm=85&f=10&tt=14&bt=0&bts=1&zu=http%3A//weber.ucsd.edu/~dkjordan/chin/hbnames-u.html>

<sup>383</sup> About.com. Chinese Culture. “Understanding Chinese Names.” 2010.

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<sup>384</sup> UniSA. Learning and Teaching Unit. “What Do I Call You? An Introduction to Chinese, Malay, and Hindu Names: Chinese Names.” 2 February 2009.

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<sup>385</sup> About.com. “Chinese Personal Names: The Brief Story.” 2010.

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personal name might be “Ai Guo,” which translates to “love the country.” Other personal names translated to concepts such as east, revolution, or soldier. Since women did not usually participate in public life, their names were generally less complex or less likely to have national or political qualities. Often they were referred to by only a surname.

Self Study Questions:

In traditional families of China, there were commonly fewer family members than today. True or False?

Family size is restricted by a national policy put into effect by the Chinese government. True or False?

Women in the countryside have often been denied the right to hold contracted land even when the law permits them to do so. True or False?

China’s one-child policy has created hardship for some families. True or False?

A modern Han Chinese name in mainland China consists of a single syllable. True or False?

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## Appendix A: Answers to Self Study Questions

Gan language speakers belong to what is probably China's smallest ethnic group.

**False:** Gan language speakers belong to China's largest ethnic group, Han Chinese. Even though 55 officially recognized minorities exist (and speak their own languages), they represent a little over 8% of China's population compared to Han.

The Gan Jiang is the primary drainage river for Jiangxi Province.

**True.** The Gan Jiang is the primary drainage river for Jiangxi Province. Beginning south of Jiangxi in Guangdong Province, where it is named the Zhang River, it flows into Jiangxi and meets the Gong River at the city of Ganzhou. From that point, the combined rivers are named the Gan River.

The region around Nanchang has been a center for political struggle and warfare.

**True:** Through the years, the region around Nanchang has been a center for political struggle and warfare. One of the most famous events took place in 1927, when a rebellion known as the Nanchang Uprising took place. The uprising led to the development of the People's Liberation Army.

Technological advances were discouraged during the Han Dynasty.

**False:** During the Han Dynasty, technological advances were numerous, including the sundial to measure time, the invention of paper, and the seismograph. The Han elevated learning, making prospective employees master the classical texts to be hired by the civil service.

After World War II ended, Jiangxi Province became a model for showcasing some of Mao's projects.

**True:** After World War II ended, Jiangxi Province was a model for showcasing some of Mao's projects. This included land reclamation to boost grain production and promotion of a work-study program for students to create a revolution in education. Because many government leaders in Jiangxi had close connections to the top CCP leadership in Beijing, they were able to gain support for projects to benefit their province.

The religion and culture of the people who speak the Gan Chinese language is the same as the Han Chinese.

**True:** The people who speak the Gan Chinese language are of Han descent, and their religion and culture are Han. The main philosophical beliefs of the Han Chinese are Taoism and Confucianism, often combined. Buddhism has played an influential role in the lives of the Han Chinese.

Buddhism is the only foreign religion that the Chinese people have ever widely adopted.

**True:** Buddhism (Mahayana branch) is a major religious system that became popular among the Chinese people. Arriving from India around the 1st or 2nd century C.E., it is the only foreign religion that the Chinese people have ever widely adopted.

The Gan region is the birthplace of Neo-Confucianism.

**True:** The Gan region is the birthplace of Neo-Confucianism, the ethical philosophy that has roots in Confucianism. Neo-Confucianism took hold during the Song Dynasty, and its founders lived and taught in Jiangxi Province. From there, the influence of Neo-Confucianism spread throughout China and Asia

In China, all individuals who belong to religious groups may operate freely without fear of government interference.

**False:** Although the constitution guarantees religious freedom, all individuals who belong to religious groups are under government control that can assert itself at any time. The government's purpose in monitoring religious activities is to make sure churches do not threaten or challenge the state's authority in any way. For example, religious practitioners are not allowed to pledge their loyalty to a foreign religious leader. This restriction applies to the Pope and the Dalai Lama.

The second most important holiday in China is the Autumn Moon Festival.

**True.** After Chinese New Year, the Autumn Moon Festival is the second most important holiday in China. Falling in late September or early October, this autumn festival takes place when the moon is full, symbolizing harmony and prosperity in the family. Relatives and friends mark this holiday by gathering in the evening to visit scenic locations where they can look upon the moon as they enjoy a light meal of fruit and mooncakes.

Honor and prestige in Confucian China were accorded to only those with hereditary privilege.

**False:** Honor and prestige in China were also accorded to those who advanced through their own efforts, rather than by hereditary privilege alone. Confucians valued learning, which was based on the study of the Confucian classics. During the imperial era of the Han Dynasty, mastering the classics was a way of developing "internalized moral guidance" which was more highly valued than external laws.

*Guanxi* is the fundamental way in China to accomplish objectives by trading favors.

**True:** *Guanxi*, which translates loosely as "relationships," is the traditional way to accomplish objectives by trading favors. *Guanxi* is a relationship involving obligations between individuals and the group(s) they belong to. In China, the most important group is one's family, and beyond that, friends and professional associates.

If a Chinese person does not offer to shake hands, it does not indicate hostility or lack of manners.

**True:** If a Chinese person does not offer to shake hands, it does not indicate hostility or lack of manners. Shaking hands may simply not be an appropriate custom for that particular place and circumstance. Rather than interpreting someone's reluctance to shake hands as a rejection, the visitor's immediate response could be an alternative form of greeting, such as a slight bow. A nod of the head, accompanied by a smile and a spoken greeting, can also be a good way to acknowledge another person.

Among the Chinese, direct eye contact is often considered disrespectful.

**True:** Among the Chinese, direct eye contact is often considered disrespectful, and an invasion of privacy. The level of eye contact allowed varies according to one's position in society. For example, people of lower rank may avoid direct eye contact with those in higher positions. For these reasons, many Chinese will look at the ground or avert their gaze as they greet another person.

The communication style of Chinese people is not aggressive, assertive, or confrontational.

**True:** Chinese people's communication style is not aggressive, assertive, or confrontational. If foreigners approach Chinese people aggressively, they generally will passively withdraw from the conversation. It is always an affront to publicly criticize someone (thus causing that person to lose face) or to display impatience or anger.

Nanchang is only one of many large cities located within the Gan linguistic area.

**False:** The Gan region is mostly rural with few major cities except Nanchang in Jiangxi Province. Nanchang was formerly a thriving commercial center for all of China because important transportation routes linked to it. After alternative routes were developed, Nanchang's economic activity declined.

The All China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU) is a workers union sponsored by the Chinese government.

**True:** The ACFTU, which provides community services for its members, is a government-sponsored union with ties to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). It is the only union the government permits to legally represent workers in China, and it collaborates with China's Labor Ministry to write labor legislation.

The provincial government of Jiangxi has assisted many former migrant workers in setting up and running their own factories.

**True:** Many rural or laid-off urban migrant workers have returned to their homes in Jiangxi Province to seek jobs. The provincial government has assisted some of them to set up and run their own factories. To encourage private entrepreneurship and stimulate business, the government offers loans, tax cuts, or grants tax exemptions.



When the socialist system was eliminated in China, people's right to subsidized or free health care disappeared.

**True:** In 1994, people's right to subsidized or free health care disappeared when the socialist system was eliminated in China. As the country transitioned from a planned economy to a more market-based one, people were forced to pay for their own health care or to purchase medical insurance. Medical facilities fell back on providing most of their own financing. These changes have resulted in a very uneven system in which much of the urban population now has greater access to healthcare than those living in the countryside.

Drivers in Nanchang do not follow traffic rules.

**True:** As in much of China, drivers in Nanchang do not follow traffic rules. They are, for instance, likely to drive on the wrong side of the road. Combined with lack of traffic planning and controls, these practices create an often chaotic situation. Motorcyclists drive erratically and pedestrians cross the streets at random, which means that brakes and horns are heavily used.

A number of firms and factories are relocating to Jiangxi from coastal areas.

**True:** A number of firms and factories are relocating to Jiangxi from coastal areas such as Guangdong Province, leading to the prospect of higher wages for local employees. Some firms have re-established themselves in Nanchang's new industrial zones, but new businesses are also shifting to small, rural towns where the cost of living and the costs of conducting business are lower.

The "household responsibility system," endured for many years.

**True:** Breaking with the Soviet system, the Chinese government introduced the "household responsibility system," which endured for many years. Under this system, farmers contracted with large collectives to farm individual plots of land. They earned the right to make decisions on land use. Under this system, the amount of land farmers could receive depended on family size.

In the Gan region, investment in medical services is lower in rural areas.

**True:** Throughout China, investment in medical services is lower in rural areas, including the Gan region. There are fewer hospitals, clinics, and preventive services in the countryside and fewer physicians, nurses, and medical personnel. According to one source, twice as many doctors practice medicine in the cities as in the countryside.

Since the rural collectives of the Mao era disbanded, villagers are now more reliant on their families and each other to meet their social and survival needs.

**True:** Villagers are now more reliant on their families and each other to meet their social and survival needs, since the rural collectives of the Mao era disbanded. Formerly, organized collectives oversaw the distribution of services such as medical care or social

welfare in general. Now, such responsibilities fall on individuals and their families, working with their private resources and whatever local services are available from the provincial government.

Rural Chinese villages have no experience with transparent election processes.

**False:** In the previous 25 years, thousands of rural villages across China have moved toward a transparent election process in which residents can choose local representatives for village committees. In 1988, during a period of rapid reforms that were transforming the nation's economy, the Chinese government began direct elections in villages. The government believed committees of elected villagers would provide stability during a time of intense change.

In traditional families of China, there were commonly fewer family members than today.

**False:** In traditional families of the past, life centered around the extended family, but this is less true today. Family included those related by blood and marriage, who combined their finances and shared a home. Sons brought their wives to live in their father's household, and daughters lived at home until they left their birth families to join the families of their husbands.

Family size is restricted by a national policy put into effect by the Chinese government.

**True:** The Chinese government established a national policy restricting family size in the late 1970s. This ruling was originally a temporary measure to slow the growth of the population because China held one fourth of the world's population but only 7% of Earth's arable land.

Women in the countryside have often been denied the right to hold contracted land even when the law permits them to do so.

**True:** Women in the countryside have often been denied the right to hold contracted land, even when the law permits them to do so. When women marry, they are likely to move away from their home village, and local regulation causes them to lose their right to contracted land in their home village. Similar restrictive village regulations have often denied women the right to any contracted land in the new village (their husband's) in which they live.

China's one-child policy has created hardship for some families.

**True:** China's one-child policy has created hardship for some families. The burden of caring for both the husband's and wife's elderly parents may fall on only one family because there are no siblings. Although children are legally obligated to care for their parents, it may be difficult to take on the financial and physical demands of this responsibility.

A modern Han Chinese name in mainland China consists of a single syllable.

**False:** A modern Han Chinese name in mainland China includes two parts, a patrilineal surname, often one syllable, and a personal (given) name, usually written as one word even if it consists of two syllables. The surname comes first, as seen in the name “Deng Xiaoping.” In Western terms, he would be called Mr. Deng, rather than Mr. Xiaoping.