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# Profile

## Introduction

Representatives of the Wu culture are concentrated in a small area along China's eastern coast, where they form approximately 8% of the country's population. They speak Wu, a language that originated around Suzhou, a center of culture in eastern China since the 5th century B.C.E. Increasingly, the Chinese who speak Wu as their main language also use Mandarin, the government-sanctioned language used for official purposes and in news broadcasts.<sup>1,2</sup> Still, Wu linguistic and cultural traditions remain deeply embedded in this section of China. The roots of this society extend back to the Wu kingdom (222–280 C.E.) and an agricultural empire that existed centuries earlier.<sup>3,4</sup> In modern times, the people of this area benefit from being heir to the region's longstanding political, economic, and artistic practices. Grounded in highly developed foundations, Wu culture provides a visible link to the illustrious past of China's eastern Yangtze Delta region.



Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons  
Suzhou skyline

## Geography

Wu language speakers in China today live in an area that encompasses Shanghai, Zhejiang Province, southeastern Jiangsu Province south of the Yangtze River, and Chongming Island in the Yangtze River Delta. Wu is spoken as far north as Nantong and as far east as Zhenjiang, both cities in Jiangsu Province. Its reach does not include the nearby city of Nanjing (Nanking), where Mandarin is the main language. The southern extent of Wu is around the city of Wenzhou in Zhejiang Province.<sup>5,6</sup>



© Keith Marshall  
Shanghai skyline

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<sup>1</sup> Ethnologue: Language of the World. Gordon, Raymond G., Jr., Ed. "Chinese, Wu: A Language of China." 2005. [http://www.ethnologue.com/show\\_language.asp?code=wuu](http://www.ethnologue.com/show_language.asp?code=wuu)

<sup>2</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. "Wu Language." 2008. <http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-9077590/Wu-language>

<sup>3</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. "Three Kingdoms." 2008. <http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-9072285/Three-Kingdoms>

<sup>4</sup> GIS Development. The Institute of Remote Sensing Technique & Application, ECNU. Prof. Liu Shuren Yu Guopei. "A Remote-Sensing Study on the Distribution Pattern of Ancient Platform-like Ruins and Earth-mounded Graves of the WU Culture in Southern Jiangsu, China and its Relationship with Palaeogeographical Evolution." 1992. <http://www.gisdevelopment.net/aars/acrs/1992/ps1/ps006.asp>

<sup>5</sup> Ethnologue: Language of the World. Gordon, Raymond G., Jr., Ed. "Chinese, Wu: A Language of China." 2005. [http://www.ethnologue.com/show\\_language.asp?code=wuu](http://www.ethnologue.com/show_language.asp?code=wuu)

<sup>6</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. "Wu Language." 2008. <http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-9077590/Wu-language>

## Geographical Divisions

Wu territory lies mostly in Zhejiang Province in central-eastern China. This region consists of moderately low hills, agricultural plains, and the Yangtze River Delta.<sup>7</sup>

### *Hills*

The western and southern parts of the Wu region consist of rolling hills and low mountains that generally do not exceed more than 1,000 m (3,280 ft) in height.<sup>8,9</sup> In Zhejiang Province, which constitutes most of the Wu region, hills comprise over 70% of the total land area.<sup>10</sup> The land is mountainous toward the southern part of the region, where the coastline is very rocky and indented. Forests and groves of bamboo carpet the hills, plateaus, and valleys in many areas, and the wood is harvested for trade.



© 2 dogs / Flickr.com  
Hills in the Zhejiang Province

### *Middle-Lower Yangtze Plains*

The Middle-Lower Yangtze Plains begin east of the Wushan mountainous area in southwestern China and extend eastward to the coast. Formed by alluvial soil deposits of the Yangtze River and linking tributaries, the plains' average elevation is less than 50 m (164 ft), and many areas are almost at sea level. Considered a very watery region, the plains are scored with lakes, rivers, canals, and irrigation ditches. Although the land is generally flat, hills and low mountains are interspersed among the plains.<sup>11</sup>

### *Yangtze River Delta*

The Yangtze River Delta (Chang Jiang Delta) empties into the East China Sea near the city of Shanghai. Surrounded by the most fertile soils in the entire country, the Yangtze Delta is one of the world's most populated regions. The land surrounding the delta is flat and intersected by a network of canals and irrigation waterways. At the river's mouth, which is the entrance to the delta, silt that has accumulated over centuries has formed numerous sandbars and islands both large and small. The Yangtze River Delta opens up

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<sup>7</sup> ChinaDaily.com. "The Physical Geography of Zhejiang." 9 October 2003. [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/english/doc/2003-10/09/content\\_336632.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/english/doc/2003-10/09/content_336632.htm)

<sup>8</sup> University of Washington. Ebrey, Patricia Buckley. "China Proper." No date. <http://depts.washington.edu/chinaciv/geo/proper.htm>

<sup>9</sup> China.org. "Natural Conditions – Geographical Features." No date. <http://www.china.org.cn/english/en-sz2005/zr/dltz.htm>

<sup>10</sup> ChinaDaily.com. "The Physical Geography of Zhejiang." 9 October 2003. [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/english/doc/2003-10/09/content\\_336632.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/english/doc/2003-10/09/content_336632.htm)

<sup>11</sup> China.org. "Natural Conditions - Plains." No date. <http://www.china.org.cn/english/en-sz2005/zr/dltz-py.htm>

into Hangzhou Bay to its south. This area is sprinkled with hundreds of islands and the site of China's richest fishing grounds.<sup>12, 13</sup>

## Climate

Wu territory is part of China's eastern monsoon climatic zone, characterized by humid, subtropical conditions. There are four distinct seasons, the coldest in January and the warmest in July. Average daily temperatures range between 15–18°C (59–64°F). Both sunshine and rainfall are abundant, with most of the rain occurring in May and June. The rainfall in Hangzhou, located approximately in the middle of the Wu region on the coast, reaches around 1,450 mm (57 in) yearly. This area is also subject to annual typhoons in mid-summer.<sup>14, 15, 16</sup>



© spacewings / Flickr.com  
Light rain on the West Lake in Hangzhou

## Topographical Features

### *Putuo Shan (Mountain)*<sup>17</sup>

Putuo Shan (also called Putuo Mountain) is a small, scenic island in Hangzhou Bay. It is located east of Zhoushan (Chou-shan) Island, the largest island in the Zhoushan Archipelago. Putuo Shan is one of China's four sacred Buddhist mountains and the only one located in the sea. Founded around 916, it became a pilgrimage site in the Song Dynasty (960–1279 C.E.), associated with the cult of Avalokitesvara (Chinese Guanyin), goddess of mercy. Guanyin's image was brought to Putuo Shan from a Buddhist center on the mainland nearby. During the 11th century, a temple in honor of the goddess Guanyin was reconstructed and expanded and it later became one of Chan (Zen) Buddhism's major temples.



© The Philosophy of Photography / Flickr.com  
A Buddhist temple on Putuo Shan

Due to its location, Putuo Shan experienced busy sea traffic with Japan, which in turn led the island to develop connections with Zen Buddhist centers there. Monks from Putuo

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<sup>12</sup> ChinaBusinessWorld.com. "Jiangsu Province." 1998–2006.

<http://www.cbw.com/general/gintro/jiangsu.html>

<sup>13</sup> ChinaDaily.com. "The Physical Geography of Zhejiang." 9 October 2003.

[http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/english/doc/2003-10/09/content\\_336632.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/english/doc/2003-10/09/content_336632.htm)

<sup>14</sup> ChinaBusinessWorld.com. "Jiangsu Province." c.1998–2006.

<http://www.cbw.com/general/gintro/jiangsu.html>

<sup>15</sup> ChinaDaily.com. "The Physical Geography of Zhejiang." 9 October 2003.

[http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/english/doc/2003-10/09/content\\_336632.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/english/doc/2003-10/09/content_336632.htm)

<sup>16</sup> AsiaRooms.com. "Geography of Hangzhou." c.2008. <http://www.asiarooms.com/travel-guide/china/hangzhou/hangzhou-overview/geography-of-hangzhou.html>

<sup>17</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. "Zhoushan Archipelago." 2008. <http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-9082373/Zhoushan-Archipelago>

Shan were later employed as mediators by the Mongol conqueror Kublai Khan in the 13th century, when he tried to establish rule over Japan. Raiding Japanese pirates damaged the structures in the region during the reign of the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644). In 1580, the temples were restored and the Qing Dynasty (1644–1911) granted them imperial recognition. Today, Putuo Shan is a favorite site to visit for its many historical shrines, monasteries, and cave temples that remain from earlier years.

### *Chongming Island*<sup>18</sup>

Administratively part of Shanghai municipality, Chongming Island lies in the Yangtze River Delta. Over the centuries, the Yangtze River carried dirt and sand from its upper and middle reaches, and this accumulated silt formed an island at the river's mouth. The first reference to this site was in the 7th century, when it was in the form of three large sandbanks. Eventually, these sandbanks joined to form a single island. In the 10th century, a garrison named Chongming was built on the island's western side. In 1369, the island received county status, administered from districts on the mainland.

Flooding has been a problem over the centuries, requiring the construction of protective seawalls and dykes. With the population dwindling by World War II, administrators worked to fortify the island against flooding. They repaired the dykes and built new ones, planted trees, reclaimed potentially productive areas, and built drainage and irrigation ditches. They first planted cotton, which resists alkaline growing conditions, and later began cultivating vegetables, fruits, and grain. This island is a supply source for the growing Shanghai market located nearby—providing vegetables, grains, and poultry products.

### *Zhoushan Archipelago*<sup>19</sup>

The Zhoushan archipelago (island chain) is located in the southern Yangtze River Delta in Hangzhou Bay. It extends in a northeasterly direction off the coast from the city of Ningbo, and its many islands are actually the submerged peaks of mountain ranges in Zhejiang and Fujian provinces. Rugged and steep, they were at one time part of the southwestern Korean peninsula mountain ranges. Set among a much larger number of islands off China's coast, there are hundreds of islands in this group, the largest being Zhoushan (Chou-shan).<sup>20</sup> Because they lie at Hangzhou Bay's entrance, they accumulate large amounts of silt from the delta of the Yangtze River, slightly to the north. Over the



© Ming Xia  
Zhoushan City

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<sup>18</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. "Chongming Island." 2008. <http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-9082541/Chongming-Island#913110.hook>

<sup>19</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. "Zhoushan Archipelago." 2008. <http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-9082373/Zhoushan-Archipelago>

<sup>20</sup> The largest number of islands off China's coast are offshore of Zhejiang Province, which forms most of the Wu region. Source: ChinaDaily.com. "The Physical Geography of Zhejiang." 9 October 2003. [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/english/doc/2003-10/09/content\\_336632.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/english/doc/2003-10/09/content_336632.htm)

years, mud banks have encircled some of the islands, connecting them to the mainland. The waters that surround the Zhoushan Archipelago are teeming with fish and sea life, forming the largest of China's inshore fishing grounds and supporting numerous fish farms. Seaweeds and other sea products are harvested for their commercial value, and rice crops are cultivated twice yearly on the islands.<sup>21, 22</sup>

During the 8th century, the islands of the Zhoushan Archipelago became administered by the Chinese government, with later administration centered in Shanghai. The islands were valuable for their sheltered harbors, supporting a lucrative trade that linked Japan with the Zhejiang ports of Hangzhou and Ningbo. Beyond the commercial trade, Putuo Shan Island was a Buddhist pilgrimage site and has remained so over the years.

## **Bodies of Water**

### *Yangtze River (Chang Jiang)*

The Yangtze is China's largest river and the world's third largest. Its source is located in Qinghai Province in central-western China around Geladaindong, the Tanggulashan Mountains' highest peak. The Yangtze flows east through mountain ranges and plains until it reaches the East China Sea. At 6,300 km (3,900 mi) in length, it roughly divides the country into north and south China. It has several tributaries and its combined drainage area accounts for over 18% of the country's total area. It is one of China's major transportation and inland shipping arteries, and its yearly runoff equals over half of the nation's total water runoff from rivers.<sup>23</sup>



### *Tai Lake (Taihu)*<sup>24, 25</sup>

One of China's five largest freshwater lakes, Tai Lake's surface area covers 2,425 sq km (936 sq mi). Approximately 59 km (37 mi) east to west and 70 km (45 mi) south to north, the lake holds a number of small, populated islands. Their inhabitants are small farmers who have traditionally subsisted mainly on fish they catch from the lake, and vegetables and fruit that they cultivate. Since the time of the Northern Song Dynasty (960–1127), the area surrounding Tai Lake has been a silkworm base and center of silk production. The lake is close to the Grand Canal and also supports a network of irrigation canals and

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<sup>21</sup> ChinaBusinessWorld.com. "Jiangsu Province." c.1998–2006.  
<http://www.cbw.com/general/gintro/jiangsu.html>

<sup>22</sup> ChinaDaily.com. "The Physical Geography of Zhejiang." 9 October 2003.  
[http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/english/doc/2003-10/09/content\\_336632.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/english/doc/2003-10/09/content_336632.htm)

<sup>23</sup> China.org. Natural Conditions. "Rivers, Lakes and Water Resources – Yangtze River." No date.  
<http://www.china.org.cn/english/en-sz2005/zr/dltz-sh.htm>

<sup>24</sup> ChinaBusinessWorld.com. "Jiangsu Province." 1998–2006.  
<http://www.cbw.com/general/gintro/jiangsu.html>

<sup>25</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. "Lake Tai." 2008. <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/580536/Lake-Tai>



ditches that date to the 7th century. Through the years, the irrigation system has been expanded and improved to support agriculture in the region.

Long known as the “pearl of East China,” Tai Lake’s natural attractions have drawn tourists for many years. Several of the islands in the lake’s eastern area are renowned historical Buddhist and Taoist religious sites, attracting pilgrims and other visitors. In recent years, pollution has become a problem, marring the lake’s tourist and resource value. Toxic algae from improper sewage and chemical disposal have formed on the water surface, and nearby residents who used the lake for drinking water have had to switch to cleaner sources of water. The Chinese government addressed this growing problem in 2007 when it budgeted funds for cleanup. In a five-year plan intended to improve the quality of water, the government also shut down polluting factories around the lake and strengthened regulations that govern local water treatment.

### *East China Sea*

An extension of the Pacific Ocean, the East China Sea borders the mainland of East Asia and receives the waters of the Yangtze River at the Yangtze River Delta. The East China Sea is connected to the South China Sea by the Taiwan Strait, a shallow body of water lying between the island of Taiwan and the Chinese mainland. Spreading in a northeasterly direction from the Taiwan Strait, the East China Sea extends as far east as the Ryukyu Islands off Okinawa, beyond which lies the Philippine Sea to the east. North of the East China Sea is Kyushu, Japan’s southernmost main island. The northern boundary that separates the East China Sea from the Yellow Sea is roughly the line that runs between Shanghai and Cheju Island, located off South Korea.<sup>26</sup>



### *Hangzhou Bay*

Located just south of Shanghai and the mouth of the Yangtze River, Hangzhou Bay (also called Hang-chou Bay) is an inlet of the East China Sea. Within the bay are several hundred mostly small islands known collectively as the Zhoushan Archipelago. This region is one of China’s richest fishing grounds. The bay is also a zone prone to typhoons and is the site of the Qiantang River tide, one of Earth’s three biggest tides, marked by rushing incoming high water with large waves.<sup>27</sup>

The six-lane Hangzhou Bay Bridge that spans the bay, cutting short the travel time between Shanghai and Ningbo, opened to travel in May 2008. At 36 km (22 mi) in length, it is the world’s longest sea-crossing bridge. Because it lies in a “complicated sea

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<sup>26</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. “East China Sea.” 2008. <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/176576/East-China-Sea>

<sup>27</sup> Road Traffic Technology. “Hangzhou Bay Bridge, China.” 2007. <http://www.roadtraffic-technology.com/projects/hangzhou/>

environment” and an area susceptible to typhoons, the construction of this bridge was complex. Built in a cable-stayed design considered most likely to withstand the unique environmental conditions, it took a team of over 800 engineering and planning experts nine years to design the bridge. Construction began in 2003, and the bridge’s service life is designed to last 100 years.<sup>28, 29</sup>

*Grand Canal*<sup>30, 31, 32, 33</sup>

The Grand Canal, over 1,700 km (1,100 mi) in length, links the city of Hangzhou to Beijing. It is a north-south artery that has served transportation, shipping, and military purposes for centuries. In ancient China, it was heavily used for grain transport, connecting central and southern China’s agricultural center to the northern empire’s political center. Its oldest section was built in the 4th and 5th centuries B.C.E. in the Zhou Dynasty, and it was expanded around 600 C.E. in the Sui Dynasty. Of the six million men who worked on the canal, approximately half died in the process of building it, which contributed to the demise of the Sui Dynasty.



© Tomtom08 / Wikipedia.org  
Grand Canal south of Yangtze

The Grand Canal flows through the cities of Wuxi and Suzhou and connects rivers, including tributaries of the Yangtze River. It contains approximately 60 bridges and 24 locks and is still undergoing restoration. Known as the world’s earliest artificial waterway, the Grand Canal is now navigable only in the southern section that connects Hangzhou and Beijing, dynastic centers of past years.

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<sup>28</sup> Scandnet AB. “Hangzhou Bay Bridge.” 2008. <http://www.hangzhoubaybridge.com/bridge.asp>

<sup>29</sup> Road Traffic Technology. “Hangzhou Bay Bridge, China.” 2007. <http://www.roadtraffic-technology.com/projects/hangzhou/>

<sup>30</sup> University of Washington. Ebrey, Patricia Buckley. “China Proper.” No date. <http://depts.washington.edu/chinaciv/geo/proper.htm>

<sup>31</sup> China.org. Natural Conditions. “Water Resources – Beijing-Hangjhou Grand Canal.” No date. <http://www.china.org.cn/english/en-sz2005/zr/dltz-sh.htm>

<sup>32</sup> Asia for Educators. Columbia University. Knapp, Professor. “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>33</sup> ThinkQuest. “The Grand Canal.” ©1998. <http://library.thinkquest.org/20443/grandcanal.html>

## Major Cities

*Shanghai*<sup>34, 35</sup>

With a population of 17.4 million reported for 2004, Shanghai is China's largest city.<sup>36, 37</sup> Because of the high number of migrant and unregistered workers, it is difficult to pinpoint the actual population figures. Like three other large cities in China, Shanghai is considered a municipality with provincial-level status. As such, the Shanghai municipality is administered independently and reports directly to the central government of China.<sup>38</sup> Its physical territory covers the city proper and its suburbs, as well as the surrounding farmland, much of which is being turned to industrial use.

A city of momentous change, Shanghai sits on the bank of the Huangpu River, a tributary of the Yangtze, near the mouth of the Yangtze River. Shanghai, which translates to “on the sea,” began as a fishing village over 1,000 years ago. Today it is China's largest port and the first to open to trading with the West. It became an international city partly as a result of war reparations from the First Sino Japanese War (1894–1995), which forced China to allow Japan and Western nations to make direct investment in the country. The French, British, and Americans had been awarded small territorial zones in Shanghai, immune from Chinese law, after the end of the first Opium War between China and Britain in the mid-1800s. It was in the late 19th century, however, when Shanghai's international community began to grow substantially. In the early 20th century and beyond, Shanghai became home to powerful international houses of finance and commerce.



© Kirill Mazin  
Shanghai as viewed from the Jin Mao Tower

Shanghai was also a center of political struggle. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) was founded in Shanghai, which was full of labor strife that centered on the textile industry. Life was further disrupted by the Japanese occupation and ultimately dizzying inflation before the Nationalist government fled to Taiwan. After the CCP came to power, Beijing viewed Shanghai as an example of decadent capitalist development and remade the city as an industrial hub.

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<sup>34</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. “Shanghai.” 2008.

<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/538506/Shanghai>

<sup>35</sup> MSN Encarta Online Encyclopedia. “Shanghai.” c.1993–2008.

[http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia\\_761569265/Shanghai.html](http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761569265/Shanghai.html)

<sup>36</sup> The Scottish Government. Public Sector. “Shanghai.” Note: Source reported statistics from *China Statistical Yearbook 2005*. July 2006. <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Government/International-Relations/china/Regional-Links/shanghai>

<sup>37</sup> The population of Shanghai's urban area exclusively is somewhat smaller, estimated closer to 12.8 million for 2003. Source: MSN Encarta Online Encyclopedia. “Shanghai.” c.1993–2008.

[http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia\\_761569265/Shanghai.html](http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761569265/Shanghai.html)

<sup>38</sup> Asia for Educators. Columbia University. Knapp, Professor. “Chinese Geography – Readings and Maps.” Political Divisions. No date. <http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/china/geog/maps.htm#4b>

Today the Shanghai municipality is China's leading manufacturing and industrial center and the home of the world's most modern stock exchange.<sup>39</sup> Shanghai is also one of China's leading cultural centers, full of scenic gardens, museums, theaters and performing arts centers, libraries, and publishing houses. It is home to numerous research facilities and 58 universities,<sup>40</sup> and holds a branch of the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

*Suzhou*<sup>41, 42</sup>

Around the 5th century B.C.E., the Wu language originated near Suzhou, a city that has since been a center of Wu culture and was briefly part of a Wu state. Located near the Grand Canal and Tai Lake, Suzhou attained prosperity as a center for silk production beginning in the 14th century. It was also a tourist site, favored for its elaborate gardens, arching bridges, and many picturesque canals. Several of its classical gardens are listed today in the World Heritage List of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization. Much of the city and its structures have been preserved in their ancient form, with streets and waterways designed as they were in earlier centuries. Suzhou also remains a center of literary and artistic achievement, renowned for its art schools and their students who produced poetry, calligraphy, and paintings.



Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons  
Humble Administrator's Garden in Suzhou

Although the old city was destroyed by Taiping rebels between 1860 and 1863, residents rebuilt the city and used it as a treaty port. With Shanghai lying to its east, the city expanded its industries after 1949. Its manufactured products include embroidered fabrics, cotton and silk cloth, chemicals, and electronic goods.

*Wuxi*<sup>43, 44</sup>

Situated slightly northwest of Suzhou in southern Jiangsu Province, Wuxi is also a center of early Wu culture. Crossed with a network of canals and waterways, Wuxi was a center of agricultural production in the Ming (1368–1644) and Qing (1644–1911) dynasties and a major supplier of rice to the people of those dynasties. It has also been an important cultural center for the entire nation.

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<sup>39</sup> Lonely Planet. "Shanghai: History." 2008.

<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/worldguide/china/shanghai/history>

<sup>40</sup> The Scottish Government Public Sector. "Shanghai." 12 July 2006.

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Government/International-Relations/china/Regional-Links/shanghai>

<sup>41</sup> MSN Encarta Online Encyclopedia. "Suzhou." ©1993–2008.

[http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia\\_761561384/Suzhou.html](http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761561384/Suzhou.html)

<sup>42</sup> TravelChinaGuide.com. "Suzhou Travel Guide." 2008.

<http://www.travelchinaguide.com/cityguides/suzhou.htm>

<sup>43</sup> Chinadaily.com. "Wuxi." 1995–2007. [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2006-05/28/content\\_602052.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2006-05/28/content_602052.htm)

<sup>44</sup> Jiangsu.net. "Wuxi." 2006–2008. <http://wuxi.jiangsu.net/>

In the early 20th century, industry began to replace agriculture and Wuxi became an early center for textile production. The city later expanded into high-tech industry and is now the site of eight or more industrial parks with many facilities located next to Tai Lake. This led to problems that erupted in 2007, after ongoing water pollution forced thousands of the local residents to begin using bottled water rather than natural sources for drinking. In response, the government shut down many of the industrial plants that were polluting and has taken steps to relocate them and rehabilitate the lake environment. Wuxi's economic growth has continued, and its industrial sectors include machinery, textiles, pharmaceuticals, and chemicals.

*Wenzhou*<sup>45, 46, 47</sup>

The area around Wenzhou represents the southernmost reach of Wu language and culture, which spread here from the area around Suzhou to the north. Located in southern Zhejiang Province, Wenzhou is a coastal town on the shore of the East China Sea. The town was named in 675 C.E. but was known by different names as early as 2000 B.C.E., when the area was famous for its pottery production.



Wenzhou became a treaty port in 1876 and has remained engaged in mostly local trading on and off since that time. For a brief period, international tea trading flourished, then declined. Wenzhou was one of China's few ports to remain under Chinese control during the war between China and Japan, from 1937 to 1942. After the war its port activity fell, but by the 1970s coastal activity with Shanghai had picked up, leading to a busy export trade in goods from Zhejiang Province. Exports include locally manufactured or processed products such as tea, paper, and food products. Wenzhou today is also a busy food processing center for dairy and meat products, winemaking, and oil extracting.

*Hangzhou*<sup>48, 49</sup>

Located on the northern side of the Qiantang (Ch'ien-t'ang) River estuary that empties into the entrance of the Hangzhou Bay, the city of Hangzhou occupies the inlet's narrowest point. Hangzhou is capital of Zhejiang Province and is a short distance southwest of Shanghai. Although it was formerly a port city, this status ended after so

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<sup>45</sup> Chinahotelsreservation.com. "Wenzhou Travel China, Wenzhou Tour Guide." 2001–2008. [http://www.chinahotelsreservation.com/China\\_Wenzhou\\_travel.html](http://www.chinahotelsreservation.com/China_Wenzhou_travel.html)

<sup>46</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. "Wu Language." 2008. <http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-9077590/Wu-language>

<sup>47</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. "Wen-chou." 2008. <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/639622/Wen-chou>

<sup>48</sup> MSN Encarta Online Encyclopedia. "Hangzhou." 1997–2008. [http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia\\_761576160/Hangzhou.html](http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761576160/Hangzhou.html)

<sup>49</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. "Hang-chou." 2008. <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/254275/Hang-chou>

much silt accumulated in Hangzhou Bay in the 14th century that ships could no longer navigate the waters near the city. Still, the city had extensive inland transportation routes and made good use of them. The southernmost point of the Grand Canal, Hangzhou is connected to other waterways and canals that link to the Yangtze River Delta. With railroads and modern roads built in the 20th century, the transportation systems ensured that the city would remain active in commerce. Hangzhou has been an agricultural hub for rice growing and a silk manufacturing center for hundreds of years. In recent years, industrialists have modernized the silk industry and expanded business into production of goods such as cotton textiles, machine tools, steel, chemicals, and processed foods.

Hangzhou is a center of culture as well as industry. In past times it was an imperial retreat, celebrated for its gardens, scenic landscapes, and monasteries. Many writers and painters have practiced their art here. The Venetian explorer Marco Polo visited here in the 13th century and reportedly referred to Hangzhou as “the most beautiful city in the world.”<sup>50</sup> Also, Hangzhou University, Chekiang University, and Chekiang Agricultural University are located in Hangzhou and have deep roots in the region.

### *Ningbo*<sup>51</sup>

One of China’s oldest cities with a history that dates back close to 7,000 years, Ningbo is located near the south shore of the Hangzhou Bay. Since the Song Dynasty (960-1279), this ancient walled city has been a port involved in foreign trade. In the 19th century, it became one of China’s top five ports that were first opened after the signing of the Treaty of Nanjing in 1842.



Modern Ningbo has retained its cultural connections to the past. It has a strong Buddhist influence and several Buddhist temples are located in the city. At least two of them, Asoka Temple and Tiantong Temple, are over 1,500 years old. Traditional handicrafts, including bamboo carvings and sculpture, are still part of the local economy.

By invitation of the Chinese government, England’s University of Nottingham established a campus in Ningbo in 2004. It is China’s first foreign independent campus, resulting from legislation that the Chinese government passed in 2003. All classes are taught in English, and the campus accommodates up to 4,000 students.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> MSN Encarta Online Encyclopedia. “Hangzhou.” c.1997–2008.  
[http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia\\_761576160/Hangzhou.html](http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761576160/Hangzhou.html)

<sup>51</sup> TravelChinaGuide.com. “Ningbo Travel Guide.” 1998–2008.  
<http://www.travelchinaguide.com/cityguides/zhejiang/ningbo/>

<sup>52</sup> The University of Nottingham. “Ningbo – China.” No date.  
<http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/about/campuses/china.php>

## *Nanjing (Nanking)*<sup>53</sup>

Nanjing, where Mandarin is spoken, is not part of the Wu linguistic region today, but it was the capital of the Wu kingdom between 229 and 280 C.E. Its influence even broader, Nanjing was southeastern China's cultural and political center during the entire period of the Three Kingdoms (Wu, Shu-Han, and Wei) that followed the collapse of the Han Dynasty (206 B.C.E.–220 C.E.). With an economy based on agriculture and the production of silk, brocades, paper, tea, and pottery, the city thrived and grew to have a large population. International scholars came to study, and artists from the region were renowned for their works of calligraphy, painting, literature, philosophy, and Buddhist scriptures.

Nanjing's status as a powerful city lasted through the years. In 1368, Nanjing became the capital of a unified Chinese nation, and almost five centuries later the treaty that ended the Opium War was signed here, in 1842. Taiping revolutionaries conquered the city in 1843, turning it into a "commune practicing universal brotherhood, equality of the sexes, and communal ownership of property."<sup>54</sup> After rival forces overthrew Nanjing in 1864, they destroyed much of the city. Nanjing recovered, however, becoming the seat of government of the new Republic of China (later moved to Beijing). The city suffered greatly under Japanese occupation in World War II. After the war it became capital of the Nationalist government of Chiang Kai-shek.

## **History**<sup>55, 56, 57</sup>

Although much of the history of the Wu region is linked to China's broader history, it has developed within a particular geographic region in southeastern China. Wu history throughout its early stages was concentrated in southeastern Jiangsu province, the Shanghai area, and to a lesser extent in Zhejiang Province.<sup>58</sup> Today its rich influence spreads throughout the Chinese nation.



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<sup>53</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. "Nanking." 2008.

<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/402596/Nanking/16085/History>

<sup>54</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. "Nanking." 2008.

<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/402596/Nanking/16085/History>

<sup>55</sup> MSN Encarta Online Encyclopedia. "China." c.2003–2008.

[http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia\\_761573055\\_16/China.html](http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761573055_16/China.html)

<sup>56</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. "Chekiang." 2008.

<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/108412/Zhejiang/71226/History>

<sup>57</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. "Shanghai." 2008.

<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/538506/Shanghai>

<sup>58</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. "Chekiang." 2008.

<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/108412/Zhejiang/71226/History>

### *Early History and the Wu Kingdom*

The origin of the Wu cultural and linguistic area is the region around the city of Suzhou, near Tai Lake. As early as the 8th century B.C.E., the western part of what is now Zhejiang Province was part of Wu territory. Between 222 and 280 C.E., the Wu kingdom became formally established in China's Yangtze Delta region, centered near present-day Nanjing. This dynasty followed the disintegration of the Han Dynasty (206 B.C.E.–220 C.E.) in a period of Chinese history known as the Three Kingdoms, each being named after one of the three large post-Han states that China had divided into. The Wei kingdom rose in northern China, the Shu-Han in western China, and the Wu in the east, south of the Yangtze River. Each of these three warring states survived for only a short time. The Wu kingdom left a unified culture marked by language that has survived into modern times, and it influenced southern China's commercial and political development. More specifically, it was the start of the "progressive Sinicization of the region south of the Yangtze River, which before that time had been a frontier area inhabited mainly by non-Chinese tribal peoples."<sup>59</sup>

### *The Sinicization of Southeastern China*

In the 12th and 13th centuries, the Wu region, then centered around the city of Hangzhou (the present capital of Zhejiang Province), was China's richest area. This prosperity was the result of intense irrigation and cultivation of the land, productive fisheries off the coast, and other natural resources. Construction began in 604 C.E. on the first segment of the Grand Canal linking Hangzhou to the north. The canal improved



© Jason Powers  
The Grand Canal in Hangzhou

communication and enabled growers to transport their agricultural products, especially rice, to substantial markets in the North China Plain region.

Around this same time, the central government of China under the short-lived Sui Dynasty (581–618 C.E.) was becoming stronger. Sui officials curtailed the practice in which local officials named their own subordinates to govern and instead put in place a new civil service testing procedure. Called the Examination System, it allowed all men, regardless of their connections or family backgrounds and positions, to test for civil service employment. This system had the effect of making the central government more stable and independent of local influence.

Under the Tang Dynasty (618–907 C.E.) that followed the Sui, China became a militaristic regime as well as the cultural center of East Asia. Using a volunteer army made up of farmer-soldiers, the Tang extended China's influence westward as far as present-day Afghanistan and northward to Korea. Defending these faraway boundaries later proved a burden to the state, causing it to rely on professional armies and foreign

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<sup>59</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. "China – The Six Dynasties." 2008.  
<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/111803/China/71661/The-Six-Dynasties>



forces. This led to disunity and a splitting of the state into competing military fiefdoms or regimes that had formed to protect their local territories.

### *Development of the Yangtze River Basin*

Within this national context and beginning midpoint in the Tang Dynasty, a commercial revolution was taking place around Tai Lake and the Yangtze Valley that was based on intense rice cultivation. Extending through northern Zhejiang Province, it was accompanied by growth of population and cities. This activity continued beyond the Tang and into the Song Dynasty (960–1279 C.E.), which saw increased agricultural yields, development of an urban lifestyle, and specialization of the urban workforce. Shanghai in particular transformed during this period from a small fishing village into a dynamic city and deepwater port. Population continued to grow in the entire southeastern region around the Yangtze River Delta as a result of a migration of Chinese fleeing southward, trying to escape the Mongol invasion in the north.<sup>60</sup> Shanghai grew to become a county seat by the end of the 13th century, within Jiangsu Province's jurisdiction.

### *The Ming Dynasty*

In the period known as the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644 C.E.), the entire Wu region continued to lay the foundations of a solid economic and social infrastructure. It was during these years that Zhejiang Province was formally established and named. Although Zhejiang's southern mountainous region has remained undeveloped, its northern region has been part of the prosperous agricultural terrain that reaches into southern Jiangsu Province and the Shanghai area. The cultivated land around Shanghai during the Ming Dynasty years was reclaimed by cotton growers to supply the city's growing silk and cotton textile industry.

### *Western Imperialism and the Opium Wars*

After the overthrow of the Ming Dynasty, the Manchu Qing Dynasty (1644–1911 C.E.) gained control, reaching the zenith of its centralized power in the mid 1800s and then declining. Faced with problems associated with population growth and declining revenues, the Qing rulers tentatively entered into commercial relations with Great Britain and western nations in the late 1700s. Britain, however, wanted more than the limited trade it received and resorted to introducing opium into China, which produced a profitable market. Opium addiction became widespread and acute in China by the 1830s, and the Chinese government attempted to stop the illegal trade. The British retaliated with armed warships and the first of two of China's Opium Wars began in 1839. The First Opium War ended in 1842 with the signing of the Treaty of Nanjing, which



Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons  
Signing of the treaty of Nanjing

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<sup>60</sup> The Mongols were the first conquerors of China who were non-Chinese, from a nomadic tribe in present-day Mongolia. They established the Mongol Yuan Dynasty in China, which lasted from 1279 to 1368 C.E.

ceded Hong Kong and five “treaty ports,” including Shanghai and Ningbo, to foreign residence and unrestricted trade. China’s sovereignty weakened further when the United States, Japan, and Russia gained treaties similar to that held by Britain. The Second Opium War concluded in 1860, legalizing the opium trade and opening new ports to foreign trade. Also, foreigners gained the right to follow their own laws rather than being subject to Chinese laws.

### *Shanghai Moves into the 20th Century*

Shanghai came out of the Opium Wars resembling an international city. It was also China’s main port by this time, accounting for close to one-fourth of the nation’s inbound and outbound shipping by 1860.<sup>61</sup> European banks and businesses became established in the city, and after the Sino-Japanese War (1894–1895), foreign investment steadily increased. In 1913, a railroad was built that linked Shanghai to Hangzhou, increasing shipping into the interior.

### *Communism and the Modern Era*

Many of the 20th century political changes that buffeted China were concentrated not only in Shanghai but throughout the Wu region. After Chinese nationalists overthrew the Qing Dynasty and established the Republic of China in 1911–1912, Zhenjiang Province came under the control of warlords, as the republican rule was not firmly established. The same province became the power base for the Kuomintang (Nationalist Party) power base in the 1920s, led by Chiang Kai-shek.



Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons  
PLA forces enter Beijing

In Shanghai, the growing working class became politicized by foreign control of their city and by labor strife. The political and economic struggles led students, intellectuals, and working people in Shanghai to found the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in 1921. The Kuomintang tried to destroy the CCP in Shanghai in 1927, using gangs in the Shanghai underworld to kill communists and members of labor unions in the city. In 1949, Shanghai fell to the People’s Liberation Army after Mao Zedong and his peasant army defeated the Kuomintang and proclaimed the People’s Republic of China (PRC).

Shanghai’s growth had also been interrupted by World War II and Japanese occupation. After the CCP came to power, they set to work repairing war damage, clearing the city’s notorious slums and gambling and opium dens, and trying to rehabilitate the large number of opium addicts. They moved forward with industrialization, remaking Shanghai into an industrial center which remitted 80% of its revenues to Beijing as part of its planned economy. This made its residents as poor as the rest of China. After the reforms were introduced in the 1980s, however, Shanghai was allowed to retain most of the

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<sup>61</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. “Shanghai.” 2008.  
<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/538506/Shanghai>

money generated within its borders and this paved the way for a construction boom. In 1984 Shanghai was made an “economic development zone” in which foreign investment would be privileged. Shanghai today has China’s most skilled labor force and has attained prominence as the nation’s center of technological and scientific research.

Under Communist rule, Chinese society in general experienced reorganization. Women gained from new laws that barred men from having more than one wife, and extended women’s rights in employment, divorce, and property ownership. The CCP redistributed property, took control of religion, social life, and business, and suppressed foreign and capitalist activity. Assisted by the U.S.S.R., the Chinese government promoted heavy industry, trying to rapidly develop the nation. Party leaders also organized agriculture into collectives and mobilized society to produce more industrial output. After 1960, relations with the Soviet Union declined, and China became politically isolated. Foreign relations improved in the 1970s after China gained a seat in the United Nations, and modernization has continued to the present time.

## **Economy** <sup>62, 63, 64</sup>

### *Overview of the National Economy*

Beginning in 1950, the CCP created a planned economy under which the government determined pricing, distribution of services and products, and production schedules. In the late 1970s, officials—aware of the need for reform—redirected the planned economy into a socialist market economy over a period of years. Under this system, the state sector remained in control alongside elements of a free market economy and foreign investment. The government also replaced collective farming with an individual household contracting system, giving farmers a motivation to cut costs and produce more. In 1984, the state extended reforms to urban areas. From these and other changes, economic growth resulted. In the 1980s, China’s average national gross domestic product (GDP) was among the world’s highest at 10.2% yearly.<sup>65</sup> China became a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2001, and the private sector continued to grow rapidly. The country’s high rate of GDP continued into the 21st century, although it dropped to 10.1% for 2004 and 9.9% for 2005.<sup>66</sup> Even more indicative of high growth



© Kirill Mazin  
Shanghai as viewed from the Jin Mao Tower

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<sup>62</sup> EIA. Energy Information Administration. “China: Background.” August 2006.  
<http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/China/Background.html>

<sup>63</sup> MSN Encarta Online Encyclopedia. “China.” 2003–2008.  
[http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia\\_761573055\\_16/China.html](http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761573055_16/China.html)

<sup>64</sup> CIA World Factbook. “China.” 19 June 2008. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ch.html#Econ>

<sup>65</sup> MSN Encarta Online Encyclopedia. “China.” c. 2003–2008.  
[http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia\\_761573055\\_16/China.html](http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761573055_16/China.html)

<sup>66</sup> EIA. Energy Information Administration. “China: Background.” August 2006.  
<http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/China/Background.html>

expectations, China's foreign direct investment (FDI) doubled between 2001 and 2005, and its merchandise trade surplus for 2005 was three times higher than the figure for 2004.<sup>67</sup>

Although the country's economic growth rate has been high, it has not translated into widespread distribution of wealth or a greater national standard of living. China has remained a rapidly developing country with an extremely high population. Problems associated with these two factors include low wages and greater economic gaps between rich and poor, inflation, and high unemployment or underemployment.<sup>68</sup> Other byproducts of China's accelerated development include loss of arable land and wide scale pollution that has had disruptive economic and social effects.

### *Economic Features of the Wu Region*<sup>69, 70</sup>

China's economic growth has been uneven, with urban coastal regions such as Shanghai experiencing a greater share of development than other areas. The area's natural resources, including an abundant water supply and the Yangtze River and its delta, have also supported intensive agricultural practices and a fishing industry.

### **Agriculture and Sericulture**

Historically, the area around the Yangtze River Delta and to the south has been a powerhouse of agricultural growth. This includes Zhejiang Province's northern region, along with the prosperous lands that reach into the Shanghai area and southern Jiangsu Province. For centuries, a highly developed irrigation system that includes the Grand Canal and a network of waterways sustained agriculture in the region. In 1949, farmers in northern Zhejiang and southern Jiangsu provinces began cultivating two rice crops yearly. In Zhejiang Province, approximately 80% of the arable land is under irrigation, one of southern and eastern Asia's highest irrigation ratios. Agricultural output here is diversified and includes rice, barley, wheat, sweet potatoes, and corn. Industrial crops such as jute, cotton, tobacco, sugarcane, and rapeseed are grown for manufacture.



© Alexandra Moss  
Villagers harvesting tea leaves

Tea, grown in hilly areas that have plenty of water, is also a major source of income. The tea plants suffered damage in World War II, when they were left untended for long periods. In the 1950s, however, tea growers rehabilitated the fields and introduced new

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<sup>67</sup> EIA. Energy Information Administration. "China: Background." August 2006.  
<http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/China/Background.html>

<sup>68</sup> "Underemployment" refers to working in jobs that are temporary, part-time, low paying, or lacking security and benefits.

<sup>69</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. "Chekiang." 2008.  
<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/108412/Zhejiang/71226/History>

<sup>70</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. "Shanghai." 2008.  
<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/538506/Shanghai>

methods of processing and cultivation, and the industry recovered. Zhejiang Province is now China's leading producer of tea, well known for a particular tea called "Longjing."

Sericulture, producing raw silk by raising silkworms, is also a longstanding tradition in the Wu region. Historically, the main growing areas have been around Tai Lake, in southern Jiangsu Province. The silk industry is also important in Zhejiang Province, which now produces one-third of the country's raw silk.<sup>71</sup> As with the tea industry, new and improved methods of growing were introduced after World War II and the civil war, and this had the effect of raising production. Many peasants who farm for a living also grow silkworms in the spring, when farm production is slack.

### **Aquaculture and Fishing**

Northern Zhejiang Province, the offshore Zhoushan Archipelago, and the Yangtze Delta together comprise one of the world leading centers of aquaculture, the farming of fish (especially carp), shrimp, shellfish, and scallops. Plants such as edible algae and seaweeds are also harvested. Besides the many large aquaculture facilities, small ponds are also a source of farmed marine products. Many cultivators in Zhejiang Province have small lakes or ponds where they raise fish, supplementing their income from farming.



© Marc van der Chijs  
Fishermen on the Yangtze River

Ocean fishing, too, is a major industry around the islands and in the delta. The water off the Zhejiang coast receives a mingling of currents from the Pacific, plus the Yangtze and other rivers deposit organic materials into the shallow waters of the delta. Given these unique conditions, the area is a spawning ground and over a hundred different kinds of fish populate the waters over the continental shelf. To protect the area from overfishing, the government has established quotas for fishing and gathering shellfish.

### **Industry**

Industry in the Wu region developed around textiles and other light industry. The Depression of the 1930s weakened the Chinese economy, and industries in Shanghai were especially hard-hit for years to follow. After the People's Republic of China (PRC) was established and Shanghai fell to the People's Liberation Army (PLA) in 1949, the Communist-led government located some heavy industry in Shanghai to create a balance and achieve self-sufficiency in production. However, economic dislocation continued as a result of inflation, war damage, and an inefficiently-run industrial base that consisted largely of many small shops. The economy also suffered from a lack of planning for industrial recovery.

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<sup>71</sup> The Free Dictionary by Farlex. "Zhejiang: Economy." 2008. <http://encyclopedia.farlex.com/Zhejiang>

In the 1950s, the iron and steel industry was expanded and integrated more with machine manufacturing, and further improvements followed. After the economic reforms were introduced in the 1980s, industry gradually left Shanghai as the value of land increased. Today Shanghai has become the commercial capital of China, which may one day challenge Hong Kong as the country's financial center.

China's leading manufacturing and industrial center, Shanghai in 2005 produced 5.3% of the national GDP and 8% of China's industrial output.<sup>72</sup> This level of activity has resulted from the presence of a highly trained workforce, effective transportation networks, a well-established research base that supports industry, and modern communications systems. Shanghai's modernized machine tool industry produces precision instruments, lathes, and assembly equipment for electronics and computers. The city's textile mills have been reorganized to maximize their productivity and Shanghai is a primary source of cloth manufacturing, producing cotton, silk, and other fabrics.



© Maarten Kools  
A silk factory in Shanghai

In Zhejiang province, timber is harvested in the hilly region and lumber is one of the main industries. Around the city of Hangzhou, major industries produce electronic goods, machinery, agricultural tools, and textiles. Ningbo also is an industrial center, producing goods such as farm equipment, petrochemicals, and electronics.<sup>73</sup>

## Exports and Imports

The world's busiest port, Shanghai ships out 11.8% of all exports from China.<sup>74</sup> With respect to its national market, the city imports more goods than it ships out. However, the opposite is true with Shanghai's foreign trade, where the value of exported goods is greater than the value of goods imported. Nationwide, most Chinese goods are shipped to the U.S. (21%), Hong Kong (16%), and Japan (9.5%).<sup>75</sup> Exports from Shanghai's



© ddefranza / Flickr.com  
Entering the Port of Shanghai

manufacturing plants have been increasing in recent years, and this trend is expected to continue. In other parts of the Wu region, exports include a range of products from lumber, textiles, and electronic equipment to traditional handicrafts such as bamboo

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<sup>72</sup> The Scottish Government Public Sector. "Shanghai." 12 July 2006.

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Government/International-Relations/china/Regional-Links/shanghai>

<sup>73</sup> The Free Dictionary by Farlex. "Zhejiang: Economy." 2008. <http://encyclopedia.farlex.com/Zhejiang>

<sup>74</sup> The Scottish Government Public Sector. "Shanghai." 12 July 2006.

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Government/International-Relations/china/Regional-Links/shanghai>

<sup>75</sup> CIA World Factbook. "China." 19 June 2008. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ch.html#Econ>

goods, brocades, porcelain, and carved wooden figures. For 2005 Zhejiang Province produced 10.3% of the country's total exports.<sup>76</sup>

According to 2005 statistics, 15.5% of all imports into China enter through Shanghai.<sup>77</sup> Imports received include construction materials, medical equipment, salt, oils, tobacco, and raw cotton. This major port also receives industrial imports such as coal and petroleum, steel, and pig iron.

### **Tourism** <sup>78, 79</sup>

The Wu region is one of China's most popular tourist destinations. Jiangsu Province has a large number of historical cities, such as Nanjing and Suzhou, and many structures in these cities date back to antiquity or have historical significance. The area holds many Buddhist temples and relics as well as scenic attractions such as Tai Lake and other lakes, bridges and canals in the cities, and Suzhou's classical gardens.



© Marc van der Chijs  
Fishermen on the Yangtze River

Shanghai is one of China's gateway cities and the country's premier center of international commerce. It is a popular tourist destination for these reasons and for its picturesque location on the Yangtze Delta as well as for its old quarters and historical vestiges of the international settlements. The city's tourism revenue in 2006 was up by 13%, and the Shanghai Municipal Tourism Administrative Commission reports yearly growth of 15–20% for American, British, and Canadian tourists.<sup>80</sup> Leading up to the 2010 World Expo which will be held in Shanghai, luxury hotels, boutiques, and services are being developed, mainly for the international market.

### **Energy**

China's energy demands have been surging nationwide. Countrywide, China is the third largest oil importer (for net imports) in the world, after the U.S. and Japan.<sup>81</sup> For 2006, the country's oil consumption was projected to increase to "38% of the total growth in world oil



© 2 dogs / Flickr.com  
Tanker on the Yangtze River

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<sup>76</sup> The Scottish Government Public Sector. "Zhejiang." 12 July 2006.

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Government/International-Relations/china/Regional-Links/zhejiang>

<sup>77</sup> The Scottish Government Public Sector. "Shanghai." 12 July 2006.

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Government/International-Relations/china/Regional-Links/shanghai>

<sup>78</sup> ChineseBusinessworld.com. "Jiangsu Province." 1998–2006.

<http://www.cbw.com/general/gintro/jiangsu.html>

<sup>79</sup> TTG Asia. "Luxe Booms in Shanghai." 11–17 January 2008.

[http://www.ttgasia.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=13894](http://www.ttgasia.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=13894)

<sup>80</sup> TTG Asia. "Luxe Booms in Shanghai." 11–17 January 2008.

[http://www.ttgasia.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=13894](http://www.ttgasia.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=13894)

<sup>81</sup> EIA. Energy Information Administration. "China: Background." August 2006.

<http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/China/Background.html>

demand.”<sup>82</sup> Since the economies of coastal areas such as those around Shanghai and the Yangtze Delta have developed faster than other areas of China, much of the energy demand is in those regions.

Although China has some sizable oil reserves and produces oil, most of it is not in the Wu region. The largest reserves are in northeastern China. Offshore, where production is considerably less, the main reserves are in the South China Sea and Bohai Bay.<sup>83</sup> Some low-grade coal reserves are mined in Zhejiang Province, but few minerals have been found there outside of coal.<sup>84</sup>

## Linguistic Background in Wu Region

*Wu*<sup>85, 86, 87, 88</sup>

The Wu region has been defined by linguistic parameters since the 5th century B.C.E., when the language originated around Suzhou, a center of culture in eastern China. It has remained stable in the region that broadly surrounds the Yangtze Delta and reaches to the south. 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. Today, the Wu cultural and linguistic region extends through Zhejiang Province, southern Jiangsu Province, and the area in and around Shanghai.

*Shanghainese*<sup>89, 90, 91</sup>

A dialect of Wu, Shanghainese is the language of approximately 100,000 people located in the city of Shanghai. Unlike Mandarin or Standard Chinese, the Shanghai dialect mainly utilizes only two registers or tones, one low and one high. Because of its distinct

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<sup>82</sup> EIA. Energy Information Administration. “China: Background.” August 2006.  
<http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/China/Background.html>

<sup>83</sup> EIA. Energy Information Administration. “China: Oil.” August 2006.  
<http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/China/Oil.html>

<sup>84</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. “Chekiang.” 2008.  
<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/108412/Zhejiang/71226/History>

<sup>85</sup> Ethnologue: Language of the World. Gordon, Raymond G., Jr., Ed. “Chinese, Wu: A Language of China.” 2005. [http://www.ethnologue.com/show\\_language.asp?code=wuu](http://www.ethnologue.com/show_language.asp?code=wuu)

<sup>86</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. “Wu Language.” 2008. <http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-9077590/Wu-language>

<sup>87</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. “Three Kingdoms.” 2008. <http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-9072285/Three-Kingdoms>

<sup>88</sup> GIS Development. Prof. Liu Shuren Yu Guopei, The Institute of Remote Sensing Technique & Application, ECNU. “A Remote – Sensing Study on the Distribution Pattern of Ancient Platform – like Ruins and Earth-mounded Graves of the WU Culture in Southern Jiangsu, China and its Relationship with Palaeogeographical Evolution.” 1992. <http://www.gisdevelopment.net/aars/acrs/1992/ps1/ps006.asp>

<sup>89</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. “Shanghai Dialect.” 2008.  
<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/112557/Chinese-languages/75036/Shanghai-dialect>

<sup>90</sup> Pinyin News. “Further Restrictions Against Language in Shanghai.” 23 February 2006.  
<http://pinyin.info/news/2006/further-restrictions-against-language-in-shanghai/>

<sup>91</sup> Shanghai Star. “Open Society, Open Language.” 28 November 2002.  
<http://app1.chinadaily.com.cn/star/2002/1128/cu18-1.html>



sound system, it is not mutually intelligible with Chinese dialects outside the Wu system, and many consider it difficult to master. For visitors, however, speaking this dialect simplifies the process of doing business in Shanghai and communicating with the local residents. Furthermore, the dialect is linked to regional performing arts, such as a style of ballad singing and storytelling known as *Pingtan* and also to traditional styles of opera.

As a result of China's nationalist views and concurrent increasing emphasis on Mandarin as a unifying language, the Shanghai dialect is disappearing with each new generation. It bears around a mere 31% lexical similarity to Mandarin,<sup>92</sup> and the Chinese government has restricted its usage. To preserve the Shanghai dialect, linguists have been compiling a dictionary of Shanghainese. It is designed to be compatible with language software so that it can be used online for translation purposes.<sup>93</sup>



© shanghaistreets / Flickr.com  
A warning sign in simplified and Pinyin characters

*Mandarin*<sup>94, 95</sup>

Also known as Standard Chinese and *Putonghua*, Mandarin is China's national language and is used by between 50–70% of the country's populace. It is spread across mainland China and Taiwan and is also the main language of Chinese populations in countries such as Indonesia, Singapore, Cambodia, U.S.A., United Kingdom, and the Philippines. Even though Mandarin is China's national language, it exists alongside 1,500 Han Chinese dialects that are often mutually unintelligible. Because of the language fragmentation and the need for a common language, Mandarin remains the academic language that children learn in Han China and in Taiwan. It is also the official language of government and mass media, according to a national language law that the government passed in 2001.

Mandarin also uses a transcription system known as *pinyin* to encourage use of the dialect used 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 government of China requires its use in diplomatic documents and official publications

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<sup>92</sup> The 31% lexical similarity cited between Mandarin and Shanghainese is similar to the disparity between French and English, according to linguists. Source: International Herald-Tribune. Asia-Pacific. French, Howard W. "Mandarin, Lost in a Maze of Dialects." 11 July 2005.

<http://www.iht.com/articles/2005/07/10/news/china.php>

<sup>93</sup> Small Swords Magazine. "The New Shanghainese Dictionary." 2007.

<http://smallswordsmagazine.com/articles/text/shanghainesedictionary.html>

<sup>94</sup> International Herald-Tribune. Asia-Pacific. French, Howard W. "Mandarin, Lost in a Maze of Dialects." 11 July 2005. <http://www.iht.com/articles/2005/07/10/news/china.php>

<sup>95</sup> Ethnologue.com. "Chinese, Mandarin: A Language of China." 2008.

[http://www.ethnologue.com/show\\_language.asp?code=cmn](http://www.ethnologue.com/show_language.asp?code=cmn)

that are translated in countries where English is spoken. It has also been useful for standardizing names of places and people.<sup>96</sup>

## **Ethnic Groups**<sup>97</sup>

The Han Chinese are China's largest ethnic group, forming almost 92% of the country's population. Of the 55 non-Han ethnic minorities who make up the remainder of the population, most live in northwestern, northeastern, and southwestern China.<sup>98</sup> A smaller number of ethnic minorities are scattered through the Wu region of Southeast China.

### *Han*<sup>99, 100</sup>

Besides being China's largest ethnic group, the Han Chinese are the largest ethnic group in the world. In China, they are concentrated along the Yangtze River as well as China's other main river valleys of China and in the Northeast Plain. Their language is Mandarin Chinese, and in the Wu region they also speak the Wu dialect of Chinese.



© Ming Xia  
Ethnic Han street vendor

The Han lifestyle is one of the world's oldest civilizations and remains very traditional. Since the Chinese empire was founded, the Han have dominated, forming the entire Mandarin upper class and the bureaucratic power elite. Their main philosophical beliefs are Taoism and Confucianism, often combined. Staple foods of the Han are wheat and rice, both served in several different ways, and fish along the Yangtze Delta.

### *Zhuang*<sup>101, 102</sup>

China's largest ethnic minority group, the Zhuang people live mainly in southwestern China. Some are scattered through the Wu region, living west and also south of Shanghai and along the southern shore of Hangzhou Bay. The main areas that the Zhuang inhabit came under the central authority of the Chinese around 2,000 years ago. In the 11th century, the Zhuang helped fight back invaders in China's southern frontier region. They also fought in the Taiping Army during the Taiping Revolution, a large peasant uprising in 1851, and they joined in the 1911 Revolution led by Dr. Sun Yat-Sen.

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<sup>96</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. "Pinyin Romanization." 2008.  
<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/461271/Pinyin-romanization>

<sup>97</sup> National Geographic. "Beyond the Han." pp. 126–7. May 2008.

<sup>98</sup> TravelChinaGuide.com. "Ethnic Groups." c.1998–2008.  
<http://www.travelchinaguide.com/intro/nationality/>

<sup>99</sup> Minnesota State University eMuseum. Jetzman, Jon. "Han Chinese."  
<http://www.mnsu.edu/emuseum/cultural/oldworld/asia/hanchinese.html>

<sup>100</sup> TravelChinaGuide.com. "Han." c.1998–2008. <http://www.travelchinaguide.com/intro/nationality/han/>

<sup>101</sup> East Asia. People & Places. "Zhuang People." No date.  
<http://easia.imb.org/peopleplaces/upg/zhuang.htm>

<sup>102</sup> China.org. "The Zhuang Ethnic Minority." No date. <http://www.china.org.cn/e-groups/shaoshu/shao-2-zhuang.htm>

Zhuang culture is distinct from the surrounding Han culture, even though in urban areas they have adopted the lifestyle and language of the Han. They are famous for their folk literature and their singing, accompanied by unique instruments such as wind pipes, gongs, and a stringed instrument crafted out of the bones of horses. Their religious practice is animism and polytheism, worshipping nature in its many forms. Many were attracted to Taoism, which is now part of their belief system.

*Tujia*<sup>103, 104, 105</sup>

Most of the Tujia people live in south central China, where their ancestors migrated around 2,000 years ago. In the Wu region, the Tujia are found in communities south of Hangzhou Bay. Although they speak Chinese and have integrated with the Han people, they also have their own language, related to Burmese and Tibetan. The fact that the Tujia language lacks a written form has led them to adopt Chinese.



Their religious beliefs have included ancestor worship, Taoism, and shamanism associated with gods, demonic spirits, and ghosts. Their old customs have included a number of taboos, including keeping cats away from worship ceremonies as their meowing was believed to bring bad luck. Other taboos were forbidding pregnant women or young girls from sitting on thresholds, and forbidding men from entering a house if they were carrying empty buckets or hoes. Typically when a person died, a wizard was called into the house to exorcise ghosts and harmful spirits.

*Hui*<sup>106</sup>

The Hui people are one of China's largest ethnic minorities. They are especially prevalent in northern and central-northern China, and in the Wu region, where they mainly live in the Shanghai municipality. The ancestors of the modern Hui descended from Arabs, Persians, and Islamic people who were mostly compelled to migrate to China by Mongol raids and expeditions. Some were civilians who had become military scouts for the Mongols. Leaving behind lives as merchants, artisans, scholars, and officials, the Hui became livestock breeders in China. Although their ethnic name is similar, the Hui are different from the Huihe (Ouygurs) people who came to China during the Tang Dynasty (618–907 C.E.) and were the forbears of the Uyghurs of modern times.

The Hui have contributed to Chinese culture in the areas of astronomy, architecture, diplomacy, politics, and scholarship. During their close association with the Han, the Hui

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<sup>103</sup> TravelChinaGuide.com. "Tujia." c.1998–2008. <http://www.travelchinaguide.com/intro/nationality/tujia/>

<sup>104</sup> East Asia. People & Places. "Tujia People." No date. <http://easia.imb.org/peopleplaces/upg/tujia.htm>

<sup>105</sup> China.org. "The Tujia Ethnic Minority." No date. <http://www.china.org.cn/e-groups/shaoshu/shao-2-tujia.htm>

<sup>106</sup> China.org. "Hui Ethnic Minority." No date. <http://www.china.org.cn/e-groups/shaoshu/shao-2-hui.htm>

began to speak the language of the Han and dress in similar styles. They have typically remained Muslim, however, and their social activities revolve around their mosques.

*Subei*<sup>107, 108</sup>

The Subei people of northern Jiangsu Province form an ethnic minority that constitutes a large number of Shanghai's urban poor. Many immigrated to Shanghai to find work after severe flooding in their region in 1911, 1921, and 1931. The Chinese government does not count them as a separate ethnic group but simply includes them among the Han, so their number in Shanghai is unknown. However, the Subei consider themselves a separate group and their population was estimated to be around one fifth of the city's population in 1949. They speak Mandarin and other Chinese dialects.



© nerdgirl.com / Flickr.com  
Subei Rickshaw driver

In Shanghai, these people dominate unskilled laboring jobs and live on the edge of the city in “informal housing,” or makeshift protection from the elements. They usually take the jobs of lowest pay and status, such as pig farmers, bathhouse attendants, and pedi-cab drivers. The Subei face discrimination and prejudice and live at the bottom of the social order. Even their name “Subei” is used as a term of derision. In the Shanghai dialect, it is an insult, referring to someone who is poor, unschooled, and dirty.

*Miao*<sup>109, 110</sup>

Many members of the Miao ethnic group live in the Wu region southwest of Shanghai and south of Hangzhou Bay in Zhejiang Province. Their main concentration, however, is through south central and southwestern China. The Miao have lived in China for around 2,000 years, and their frequent migrations have led to subdivided ethnic groups and dispersion of their culture. This has resulted in a wide variance in their names, styles of dress, festivals they celebrate, and dialects that they speak. Their language belongs to the Chinese-Tibetan family of languages and is broken into three main dialects. Many Miao, however, speak dialects of Chinese.

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<sup>107</sup> Yale University Press. Honig, Emily. “Creating Chinese Ethnicity: Subei People in Shanghai, 1850–1980.” 2008. <http://yalepress.yale.edu/book.asp?isbn=9780300051056>

<sup>108</sup> AsiaHarvest.org. “Subei.” No date. <http://www.asiaharvest.org/pages/profiles/china/chinaPeoples/S/Subei.pdf>

<sup>109</sup> East Asia. People and Places. “Miao.” No date. <http://easia.imb.org/peopleplaces/upg/miao.htm>

<sup>110</sup> China.org. “The Miao Ethnic Minority.” No date. <http://www.china.org.cn/e-groups/shaoshu/shao-2-miao.htm>

# Religion

## Overview and Background<sup>111, 112</sup>

China is the birthplace of Confucianism and Taoism, which are considered philosophies as well as religions. As early as the Ch'ou Dynasty (1111–255 B.C.E.), Confucianism was widely taught. In later years, the Han Dynasty (206/202 B.C.E.–220 C.E.) was the first to make it part of the foundation of state ideology, a position that Confucianism retained until imperial China ended. Before one could hold an official post of importance, it was necessary to study and learn the *Five Classics of Confucius*. Taoism also developed early in China. It was influenced and shaded by local traditions and became an integral part of the nation's spiritual, social, and political life. Both of these religions have been deeply embedded in the Wu region of China.

Buddhism (Mahayana branch) also became predominant among the Chinese people, arriving from India around the 1st century C.E. During the later years of the Tang Dynasty (618–907 C.E.), the Buddhist religion was weakened by persecution when a Taoist emperor seized Buddhist 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 modified Buddhist practice in China, but it still remained a popular religion.



The Chinese people today are acculturated in these religio-philosophical systems as well as in the ideology of the Communists, who associate religion with feudalism and foreign rule. Throughout China, the Communist Party has been hostile to all religion, indigenous or otherwise, and discourages its practice. This situation changed somewhat after the end of the Cultural Revolution. At this time, the People's Republic of China wrote freedom of religion into its 1978 Constitution, with a few exceptions. For instance, religious groups will encounter government opposition if they challenge the state. The Falun Gong, which practices faith healing combined with physical and mental exercises, is an example of such an organization. It ran afoul of the government, was named an “unlicensed religious group” in 1999, and was eventually banned.<sup>113</sup>

Other religions practiced in China include Catholicism, various Protestant denominations, and Islam. The Chinese government retains the right to intervene, however, and appoint its own religious leaders if it feels challenged by a leader, such as the Catholic Pope.

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<sup>111</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. “China. People. Religion.” 2008.

<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/111803/China>

<sup>2</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> Asia for Educators, Columbia University. “Living in the Chinese Cosmos: Understanding Religion in Late Imperial China (1644–1911).” 2007. <http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/cosmos/bgov/today.htm>

Religious conflict has played out between the Chinese government and followers of the Dalai Lama who practice Tibetan Buddhism. Ethnic minority groups who are authorized to practice their regional beliefs have also experienced state suppression of their religious activities. The Uyghurs living in Xinjiang Province practice Islam, and the government regulates and monitors public order in this and other areas where non-Han ethnic minority groups live.<sup>114</sup>

A Jewish community thrived in Shanghai before and during World War II, and a small community remains today. Most practitioners meet in private homes to worship, because Judaism is not officially recognized in China and there is little access to synagogues. During the war, approximately 30,000 Jews who escaped Nazi persecution in Europe received refuge in the city. The community had seven or more synagogues there, as well as its own newspapers and schools. After World War II ended, most of the Jewish people left Shanghai and the synagogues fell into disrepair, and were torn down or used for other purposes. One is now being restored in a government effort to “revive Jewish heritage” in a city that was at one time a refuge for thousands of Jews.<sup>115</sup>



© monkeytime / Flickr.com  
Jewish memorial in Shanghai

## Major Religions in China

### *Confucianism*<sup>116</sup>

Confucianism, which developed in the early centuries B.C.E., has been described as a philosophy, a way of life, a religion (although not organized), and a social ethic. Because it emphasizes a political and moral system that will govern order among social relationships, all centered around a ruler, it was favored by early Chinese dynasties. Its ethical values regarding human interaction have strongly influenced life in China for over 2,000 years. They can be seen in family life as well as in government, education, and societal institutions.



Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons  
Confucius from Tang Dynasty

Confucius (551–479 B.C.E.) did not found Confucianism but rather transmitted traditional Chinese values that had existed in the earlier Ch’ou 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 rulership by kings or dynastic leaders was the ideal that

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<sup>114</sup> Asia for Educators, Columbia University. “Living in the Chinese Cosmos: Understanding Religion in Late Imperial China (1644–1911).” 2007. <http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/cosmos/bgov/today.htm>

<sup>115</sup> Boston.com World News. Bodeen, Christoher. “Shanghai Restores Historic Synagogue.” 9 February 2007. [http://www.boston.com/news/world/asia/articles/2007/02/09/shanghai\\_restores\\_historic\\_synagogue/](http://www.boston.com/news/world/asia/articles/2007/02/09/shanghai_restores_historic_synagogue/)

<sup>116</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. “Confucianism.” 2008. <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/132104/Confucianism>

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 one's life was essential to stability and a just social order.

Confucius' ancestors compiled his sayings in a book called the *Analects*. His followers divided 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. The study of this book became necessary if one wished to advance in the bureaucracy. Over the centuries, Confucianism became a foundational part of Chinese culture. Although it came under attack by communists during the Cultural Revolution, it has remained embedded in China's political and cultural life.

### *Buddhism*

#### Mahayana and Theravada

After its founding in the 6th century B.C.E., Buddhism remained undifferentiated for many years. However, it eventually developed into two main streams—Mahayana and Theravada. Mahayana emerged between the 1st century B.C.E. and the 1st century C.E. It gained influence in central and northern Asia, finding a home in countries such as China, Tibet, Japan, and Korea. In the 3rd century B.C.E., Theravada Buddhism became



© Michael Hansen  
Buddhist monks in Shanghai

prominent in Sri Lanka and gradually spread throughout southern Asia. Although both branches of Buddhism are similar in basic beliefs, Mahayana (practiced in China) tends to be more expansive, generally speaking. It refers to a broader range of Buddhist scriptures as authoritative sources and has many rituals that are locally influenced.<sup>117, 118</sup>

#### Buddhist History and Beliefs<sup>119, 120</sup>

Buddhism was founded by Siddhartha Gautama Sakyamuni (later called “the Buddha”) in the 6th century B.C.E. Born in India in 560 B.C.E., Siddhartha was a prince who gave up his family and his life of luxury to pursue enlightenment. He followed an ascetic path for many years and eventually arrived at awareness of the cause of suffering and ways to

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<sup>117</sup> BuddhaSasana. Ven. Dr. W. Rahula. “Theravada – Mahayana Buddhism.” 1996.

<http://zencomp.com/greatwisdom/ebud/ebdha125.htm>

<sup>118</sup> Religion Facts. “Differences Between Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism.” 2004–2008.

[http://www.religionfacts.com/buddhism/fastfacts/differences\\_theravada\\_mahayana.htm](http://www.religionfacts.com/buddhism/fastfacts/differences_theravada_mahayana.htm)

<sup>119</sup> Shippensburg University. Dr. C. George Boeree. “The Basics of Buddhist Wisdom.” No date.

<http://webspaceship.edu/cgboer/buddhawise.html>

<sup>120</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. “China. People. Religion.” 2008.

<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/111803/China>

overcome it. He dedicated the rest of his life to passing this knowledge on to others. Buddhism arrived in China around the 1st century C.E., adapted to the culture, and became one of the country's core religious philosophies. Within political institutions, rulers who organized around Buddhist beliefs sometimes competed in China with those affiliated with Taoism.

The focus of Buddhism is on humankind, rather than on a god or gods. It holds the central premise that humans can escape from 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 therefore ends any sense of suffering, according to Buddhist scripture and belief.

The Buddha further taught that people should avoid extremes in their lives. This includes extremes in austerity as well as pleasures. Following the Middle Way is the ideal, staying unattached from strong passions while keeping the mind and body healthy and attentive to the present moment. This combines with what is known as the Four Noble Truths, which together define desire as the cause of suffering. The Fourth Noble Truth outlines specific steps that people can and must take to end their suffering, in a teaching called the Eightfold Path.

*Taoism (Daoism)*<sup>121, 122</sup>

Around the 2nd century C.E., Taoist beliefs were emerging in China. They became prominent during the Han Dynasty and subsequent dynasties. This religious-philosophical system is indigenous to China, developing alongside folk religion and sharing many of the same beliefs. Taoism deeply influenced some schools of Buddhism that were trying to adapt to China's culture, such as the Chan (Zen) school.



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Inside a Taoist temple

Taoism emphasizes an attitude of yielding, noninterference, acceptance, reconciliation, and willingness to explore different sides of reality. It is more contemplative and metaphysical (questioning truth and realism) when compared to the pragmatism and orderly institutional nature of Confucianism. The two are related, however, and Taoism provides a connection between Confucianism and Chinese folk religion. Some Taoist traditions merge into mysticism, exploring the occult and practices such as alchemy (linking metals to gold, and curative or spiritual qualities).

The early Taoists were hermits who retreated from the world to find sanctuaries in nature where they could practice contemplation as a way of life. Due to its deep presence in Chinese culture, Taoism also found its way into the imperial courts. It sometimes took on

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<sup>121</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. "Taoism." 2008. <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/582972/Taoism>

<sup>122</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)



extreme political manifestations. During the Tang Dynasty (618-907), the Taoist emperor Wu-tsung over a three-year period seized Buddhist properties and closed temples, changing Buddhism's course in China. Because of its contemplative nature, however, Taoism tended less toward political forms and generally synthesized with Buddhism and Confucianism.

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, Zhuangzi (or Zhuang Zhou). The *Tao-te Ching* has been widely translated into English and other Western languages.<sup>123,124</sup>

### *The Role of Religion in the Chinese Government*<sup>125</sup>

The Chinese government is led by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), which banned religion when the People's Republic of China (PRC) was founded in 1949. The state officially proclaimed atheism at that time. CCP members are prohibited from subscribing to religious beliefs, and if a party member is found to be a member of an organized religion, he or she will likely be expelled from the CCP. Family members of party officials are also discouraged from belonging to religious groups or publicly taking part in religious activities.



Although the CCP is officially atheist, it has continued to allow religious practice as long as such practice is under control of the government.<sup>126</sup> In the last 20 years, the party has become generally more lenient in religious matters. 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>127</sup> Also, the State Council in 2005 passed new religious regulations allowing approved organizations to be freely active in promoting 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.

Even CCP members sometimes participate in religion without meeting opposition from other party officials. As long as they stay within state-sanctioned activities in their

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<sup>123</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. “Taoism.” 2008. <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/582972/Taoism>

<sup>124</sup> Asia for Educators, Columbia University. “Living in the Chinese Cosmos: Understanding Religion in Late-Imperial China (1644–1911).” 2007. <http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/cosmos/ort/daoism.htm>

<sup>125</sup> Council on Foreign Relations. “Religion in China.” 16 May 2008. <http://www.cfr.org/publication/16272/>

<sup>126</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. “China: Religion.” 2008. <http://original.britannica.com/eb/article-258961/China>

<sup>127</sup> Council on Foreign Relations. “Religion in China.” 16 May 2008. <http://www.cfr.org/publication/16272/>

religious practice, they are allowed to hold religious views. In some areas, it is estimated that up to one fourth of CCP members practice religion in some form.<sup>128</sup>

To monitor religious activity, the CCP uses an organization called State Administration for Religious Affairs (SARA). The SARA is used to find ways to restrict religious freedom, using loopholes in the law. In this manner it has flexibility to find exceptions to laws which protect religious freedom, thus weakening such laws.

### *Influence of Religion on Daily Life*<sup>129, 130</sup>

In accordance with government policy, five religions have official status in China: Buddhism, Taoism, Islam, Protestantism, and Catholicism. Even though the constitution supports religious freedom, religious groups in general are under government control that can assert itself at any time. The government's purpose in monitoring religious activities is to make sure that churches do not threaten or challenge the state's authority in any real or perceived way. Religious practitioners are not allowed to pledge their loyalty to a foreign person, such as the Pope or the Dalai Lama. Further, if a religion is not authorized, those who practice it do so at their own risk, for they may be harassed, intimidated, and detained at will, although 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.

Within this state control, religion—both official and unofficial—remains important in the lives of many Chinese. The most widely practiced religion is Buddhism, with approximately 100 million followers. Taoism in its traditional forms also has a wide number of adherents. According to government figures for the number of religious practitioners, China has 20 million Muslims, 15 million Protestants, and 5 million Catholics.<sup>131</sup> Although the sanctioned Catholic Church cannot have official ties with Rome, in reality the Pope does recognize many Catholic bishops, and priests operate under Vatican approval to manage and issue the sacraments. Still, tension exists between the churches and the government. Many Christians practice their religion underground, attending services in private homes to avoid state scrutiny. However, unapproved religions flourish in many areas without interference from the authorities simply because some regions are more flexible than others. In rural areas, for instance, control over religion may be much more lax than in urban areas.



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<sup>128</sup> Council on Foreign Relations. "Religion in China." 16 May 2008. <http://www.cfr.org/publication/16272/>

<sup>129</sup> U.S. Department of State. Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs. "Background Note: China - Human Rights and Religion." April 2008. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/18902.htm>

<sup>130</sup> Council on Foreign Relations. "Religion in China." 16 May 2008. <http://www.cfr.org/publication/16272/>

<sup>131</sup> U.S. Department of State. Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs. "Background Note: China - Human Rights and Religion." April 2008. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/18902.htm>

Tibetan Buddhism is officially led by the Dalai Lama and its adherents have experienced ongoing government persecution. This became especially acute after the Chinese government took over Tibet in 1959, establishing military control.<sup>132</sup> The Dalai Lama has been the head of a Tibetan government in exile in India since 1987, and the group has successfully lobbied internationally to gain support for Tibetan independence. In Tibet, Buddhist monks and their followers have demonstrated against the Chinese government, and the demonstrations have sometimes turned violent. For these reasons, the CCP rigidly controls Tibetan Buddhist religious activity in China as well as Tibet.

Falun Gong followers have also experienced government repression. In 1999 the CCP outlawed this Chinese religious practice that incorporates Buddhism, Taoism, and spiritual Qigong exercises. Its adherents face arrest, imprisonment, and sometimes torture. They may be sent to labor camps for “reeducation” in an attempt to dissuade them of their beliefs. The CCP officially explained that it has been punishing and controlling Falun Gong because the group was “spreading fallacies” and “advocating superstition.”<sup>133</sup> However, many analysts claim that the real reason behind the CCP’s persecution is the Falun Gong’s high level of group organization, which the government considered threatening.

### *Religious Events and Holidays*<sup>134</sup>

Traditional religious festivals and elaborate rituals take place throughout China, with many in the Wu region. Some of these events are public holidays, meaning the government offices, banks, post offices, and airlines are closed.

#### *Chinese New Year*

Chinese New Year, also referred to as Spring Festival or Lunar New Year, is the predominant traditional celebration in China and for Chinese people internationally. Signifying an auspicious beginning to a year that will be prosperous and filled with good fortune, it is celebrated in China and wherever large numbers of ethnic Chinese reside. The date of this 15-day “season” is determined by the astronomical Chinese calendar, which follows the movements of the celestial bodies. In 2008, the first day of Chinese New Year fell on 7 February, and in 2009 the first day of the New Year celebration will be 26 January.<sup>135</sup>



© Stephen Zopf  
New Year's festivities in Shanghai

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<sup>132</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. “China: Religion.” 2008. <http://original.britannica.com/eb/article-258961/China>

<sup>133</sup> Council on Foreign Relations. “Religion in China.” 16 May 2008. <http://www.cfr.org/publication/16272/>

<sup>134</sup> Religion Facts. “Chinese Holidays and Festivals.” 2004–2008. [http://www.religionfacts.com/chinese\\_religion/holidays.htm](http://www.religionfacts.com/chinese_religion/holidays.htm)

<sup>135</sup> China the Beautiful. “Chinese New Year by the Chinese Calendar.” 1 February 2008. <http://www.chinapage.com/newyear.html>

Housecleaning, decorating in red, and paying past debts are acts that precede the New Year activities, which are celebrated most in the first three days of the 15-day season. During the first three days, families visit each other with wishes for good fortune in the year ahead. A festive family reunion dinner is held on the eve of the New Year, and the next day, people celebrate using lanterns and fireworks to drive away harmful spirits. (It is believed that such spirits are exorcised by noise and light.) Children receive gifts of money placed in small red packets. Celebrants also mark this day with another feast, usually vegetarian accompanied by ritual foods such as mandarin oranges, which represent good luck and wealth. Public celebrations include traditional lion dances and elaborate dragon dances that are the highlight of the entire observance.<sup>136</sup>

Two other important days of Chinese New Year mark additional important occasions. On the 7th day, everyone has a birthday and is considered to be one year older. On the 15th day, a Buddhist Lantern Festival takes place in which children walk around in the evening carrying colorful lanterns representing hopefulness and luck.

### *Chinese Buddhist Festivals*

The Chinese observe approximately 25 Buddhist holidays celebrating a variety of occasions, such as the day the Buddha received enlightenment or a day of renunciation.<sup>137</sup> Several birthdays are observed, including the Buddha's as well as the birthdays of others who are important historical figures in Buddhism. In general, these Buddhist holy days entail visiting temples to pray, donate money, or offer gifts such as fruit, incense, and flowers.

### *Autumn Moon Festival*

This festival usually takes place in late September (“the 15th day of the 8th month of the Chinese lunar calendar”) when the moon is full, which symbolizes harmony in the family. Members of the family and their friends gather on this day to share food (mooncakes and fruit), visit places of natural beauty, and observe the moon at night. Children often walk around with bright lanterns, and farmers rejoice in their harvest.

Many people believe the origin of this event is the celebration of the Moon Goddess in ancient times. Others believe that it honors 14th century Chinese rebellions against the Mongols and the actual use of mooncakes as part of the strategy. According to legend, the Chinese rebels often hid tactical instructions inside the small cakes (which were not part of the Mongol diet), using them to communicate with each other.



© Andy Chang  
Autumn Moon Festival lantern

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<sup>136</sup> Feng Shui Times. “Traditions of Chinese New Year.” 2000-2008.

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

<sup>137</sup> Worshippers give up something or their attachment to worldly things for spiritual enlightenment.

### *Ghost Festival*

This traditional holiday is held in the 7th lunar month (called Ghost Month), on the 15th day. The Chinese believe that during this month, spirits of the dead visit the living. The Ghost Festival, the culmination of other celebrations in this month, symbolizes bonds between the living and dead, the soul and the body, and heaven and earth. On this solemn day, people participate in various rituals. They place lanterns or paper boats in moving water to symbolize directions for ghosts that may be lost, and they offer them gifts of food or burn money in their honor. The festival is directed not only toward ghosts but also to ancestors and gods.

This celebration has both Buddhist and Taoist origins. For Buddhists, it is related to an Indian legend that was embellished by the Chinese, telling the story of a merchant 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 this suffering. Eventually she does, entering the cycle of rebirth as a well-cared-for family pet (a dog).

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

Also called Ching Ming Festival (Pure Brightness Festival) and All Souls Day, this traditional holiday takes place 106 days into the winter solstice, in mid-spring. It is a sacred day to honor people's ancestors by sweeping their graves, praying to them, and offering them gifts of food and drink. It is also an obligation in that many Chinese believe that if they do not take care of the spirits of the dead, those spirits will become "hungry ghosts" that haunt the living and make mischief against them.

### *Buildings of Worship*<sup>138</sup>

Buddhist temples in general are multipurpose facilities, not simply places to worship. The temple complex includes several rooms or buildings and serves as a community meeting place and study or lecture center, as well as serving other functions. The temples may also hold murals and symbols of the Buddha's life. A statue or statues of Buddha is always present, with his position representing different meanings. A seated Buddha indicates meditation, and if the right hand is lifted with the palm facing outwards, the Buddha is communicating peace. If it is the left hand that is raised and the palm faces upwards, the Buddha is teaching, and if both hands rest downward, he has gained enlightenment<sup>139, 140</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> TravelChinaGuide.com. "Buddhist Temples." 1998–2008.

<http://www.travelchinaguide.com/intro/architecture/styles/chinese-buddhist-temples.htm>

<sup>139</sup> Lotus Sculpture. "Mudras, Hand Positions of the Buddha." No date.

<http://www.lotussculpture.com/mudras.htm>

<sup>140</sup> Buddha-Images.com. "Hand Gestures of the Buddha (Mudras), Buddha Iconography." No date.

<http://www.buddha-images.com/hand-gestures.asp>

Many historic Buddhist temples are found in China, and a large number of them are located in the highly cultured Wu region. They were traditionally built in the mountains, and also in cities. In China's Cultural Revolution between 1966 and 1976, many religious buildings were destroyed or damaged and later turned into unofficial museums. Some have been restored to functional usage today.<sup>141</sup>

In Shanghai, the Jade Buddha Temple is an example of a traditional religious structure that is still in restricted use. Built in the late 19th century and relocated to Shanghai in 1900, this Chan (Zen) temple suffered destruction in the 1911 Revolution, when part of its complex was burned. The city later provided restoration funds for the entire temple complex. During the Cultural Revolution, it remained undamaged by the Red Guard, who in general were destroying cultural sites that symbolized China's dynastic history but left this particular one alone. In the modern era, tourists visit this temple, which houses monks who run a Buddhist study center. The temple holds two white jade Buddhas that remain objects of reverence today, with many people visiting to burn incense and offer prayers.<sup>142</sup>



© Eric Tai  
Inside the Jade Buddha temple, Shanghai

Another Buddhist temple in Shanghai, this one surrounded with more activity than Jade Buddha Temple, is Longhua Temple, built in 247 C.E. but restored many times over the years. Although visitors may not enter the interior of its famous 10th century pagoda, people come to the temple grounds to pray and burn incense. Monks gather here daily to participate in a prayer ceremony for the spirits of the dead.<sup>143</sup>

A Taoist temple and a Confucian temple also attract many visitors and supplicants in Shanghai. Also known as Temple to the Town God (a name common to other Taoist temples in China), the Taoist temple was founded in 1403, with its latest restoration completed in the 1900s. Worshippers come here to burn incense and pray.<sup>144</sup> In Shanghai's old quarters, a Confucian temple still stands, built between 1271 and 1368 and restored in the 20th century. Many of its structures have been reproduced, as the Red Guard attacked this temple during the Cultural Revolution. It has served not only as a temple but also as a school for scholars studying Confucianism, and a center for meditation.<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> Living and Teaching in China. Gale, Fred. "Photo Gallery: Temples and Churches in China." No date. <http://hometown.aol.com/lumabner/china/temples.htm>

<sup>142</sup> University of Maine Farmington. "Jade Buddha Temple." February 2007. <http://hua.umf.maine.edu/China/pshang3/9999bincenscJadeTemple.html>

<sup>143</sup> Sacred Destinations Travel Guide. "Longhua Temple, Shanghai." c.2005–2008. <http://www.sacred-destinations.com/china/shanghai-longhua-temple.htm>

<sup>144</sup> Sacred Destinations Travel Guide. "Temple of the Town God (Chenghuang Miao, Shanghai)." 2005–2008. <http://www.sacred-destinations.com/china/shanghai-temple-of-town-god-chenghuang-miao.htm>

<sup>145</sup> Sacred Destinations Travel Guide. "Wen Miao (Confucius Temple), Shanghai." 2005–2008. <http://www.sacred-destinations.com/china/shanghai-wen-miao.htm>

*Behavior in Places of Worship*<sup>146</sup>

Statues and images of the Buddha are sacred and should be approached quietly and with a respectful attitude. They represent China's religious and cultural background.

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

<b>Soldier:</b>	May I enter the temple?	mo kwee ching dzing yaama?
<b>Local:</b>	Yes.	kooyeh

Visitors should dress modestly, with awareness that Chinese culture is quite conservative. Also, strict rules apply in Buddhist temples worldwide not only about conduct but also about appearance. Visitors who enter a temple should not wear skimpy, revealing, or dirty clothing. The dress code includes clean shirts and long pants for men and long skirts or pants along with blouses or sweaters that cover the shoulders for women. Both should remove their shoes before entering (unless they observe that it is customary to leave them on) and refrain from touching paintings or statues.



© le niners / Flickr.com  
Visitors inside a Buddhist temple

**Exchange 2:** Must I take off my shoes?

<b>Soldier:</b>	Must I take off my shoes inside the temple?	ching dzimyo wuyo taa tsabaa?
<b>Local:</b>	Yes.	yo tagha

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<sup>146</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)

Just as in visiting a Buddhist temple, it is also important to dress conservatively when visiting a Taoist or Confucian temple or a Christian church. Women’s clothing should be loose fitting, and skirts should be no shorter than knee length. Men should wear loose fitting pants and a shirt. All clothing should always be clean and neat. Unless they observe others doing so, women do not need to cover their head with a scarf.

**Exchange 3:** Do I need to cover my head?

<b>Soldier:</b>	Do I need to cover my head?	oyo taa oojee mowa?
<b>Local:</b>	Yes.	yo tagha

In general, visitors to any temple should follow protocols that are posted in writing or that they see others observing. Once inside, if people are praying or meditating, visitors should observe silence as talking can interrupt prayers or be interpreted as rude behavior. They should not bring food or drink into a temple, nor should they point their feet directly at a Buddha statue or symbol, as this is considered offensive. Finally, they should not take photographs inside or outside places or worship without permission.



© le niners / Flickr.com  
Visitors inside a Buddhist temple

Visitors also need to be aware of China’s restrictions concerning general religious conduct, whether inside places of worship or outside of them. They should avoid any kind of proselytizing, and avoid passing out religious materials or even giving them away occasionally to a local person. Visitors should also discourage conversations about religion and avoid any kind of religious socializing in groups, unless it is sanctioned by the government. Visitors should never invite a Chinese national to attend a religious service with them. Finally, if they wish to attend a religious service, they can do so only if it is state-approved.<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>147</sup> Mormon Times. “People’s Republic of China: Visitor Guidelines.” 29 June 2008. [http://mormontimes.com/WC\\_aroundChurch.php?id=1426](http://mormontimes.com/WC_aroundChurch.php?id=1426)



# Traditions

## Traditional Economy<sup>148, 149, 150, 151</sup>

With its rich floodplain soils and monsoon climate, the Wu region of China has traditionally been a farming society. China's agricultural heart since early times has been the river valleys, especially the Yangtze River Valley. Because of intense early irrigation and cultivation of the land, peasants in early centuries were able to support themselves by growing rice and other crops. The Grand Canal, running through the Wu region, enabled growers to transport their produce from the south to markets in the North China Plain, reaching the political center of the northern empire. Around the Wu cities of Wuxi and Suzhou, the land was covered with a network of canals that helped to make it a center of agricultural production in dynasties from the 14th through early 20th centuries. Hangzhou also has long been a center for rice growing. Situated at the southernmost point of the Grand Canal, Hangzhou is connected to other waterways and canals that link to the Yangtze River Delta near Shanghai. This access to water and transportation networks ensured Hangzhou's predominance as a farming and shipping center.



© few pigeons in suburbia / Flickr.com  
Rice paddies near Nanjing

The traditional economy of Hangzhou and Shanghai is also based on their fisheries off the coast and other natural resources of the Yangtze River Basin. The water surrounding the islands of Zhoushan Archipelago are full of sea life, and this region eventually became the largest of China's inshore fishing grounds. For many years, fish farms have been an important part of the economy. Farmers harvest seaweeds as well as fish and shellfish, either as a main source or a second source of income.

Shanghai's traditional economy is based not only on its rich farmlands and fishing resources but also on its status as an international city. After fighting the First Opium War with Britain in the mid-1800s, the weakened Chinese government ceded treaty ports and awarded small zones in Shanghai to the French, British, and Americans. The government then was forced to allow Japan and Western nations to directly invest in the country after the First Sino Japanese War (1894–1895). In the late 19th century, Shanghai's international community expanded, and the city soon became home to powerful international corporate and financial enterprises. The Chinese Communist Party tried to suppress excesses of this commercial environment and build on its profit-making

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<sup>148</sup> Jiangsu.net. "Wuxi." 2006–2008. <http://wuxi.jiangsu.net/>

<sup>149</sup> MSN Encarta Online Encyclopedia. "Suzhou." 1993–2008. [http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia\\_761561384/Suzhou.html](http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761561384/Suzhou.html)

<sup>150</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. "Hang-chou." 2008. <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/254275/Hang-chou>

<sup>151</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. "Shanghai." 2008. <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/538506/Shanghai>

potential at the same time. They turned Shanghai into an industrial center after they took control of China in 1949.

In the region around Suzhou, silk production, another facet of the Wu region’s traditional economy, was widespread in early centuries. The Tai Lake area was a silkworm base in the time of the Northern Song Dynasty (960–1127 C.E.). Hangzhou, farther to the south, has also been a silk manufacturing center for centuries. After World War II, China modernized its silk industry, and much of the Wu region remains productive in this area today.

**Greetings and Communication**<sup>152, 153, 154, 155</sup>

Chinese often greet foreigners with a handshake. If the visitor initiates this greeting, he or she should shake hands with the eldest person first. If a male is shaking hands with a Chinese woman, the grip should be very light, and not prolonged. Embracing or kissing on the cheek is not acceptable except among family members. Also, because direct eye contact is considered disrespectful, similar to an invasion of privacy, many Chinese will look at the ground as they greet another person.



© Philippe Semanaz  
Greeting a local elder

Good manners suggest that visitors should be polite and friendly in their interactions. Also, knowing something about the culture and being openly willing to learn about it indicates respect. This approach is likely to lead to the most cooperation from local people.

**Exchange 4:** Good morning.

<b>Soldier:</b>	Good morning.	nong tsaw
<b>Local:</b>	Good morning.	nong tsaw

<sup>152</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>153</sup> Cultural Savvy. Millett, Joyce. “Chinese Culture, Etiquette, & Protocol.” 1999–2008.

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

<sup>154</sup> China Travel Tour Guide. “Chinese Etiquette and Courtesies.” 2003–2006. <http://www.china-travel-tour-guide.com/travel-tips/etiquette.shtml>

<sup>155</sup> Kwintessential Cross Cultural Solutions. “China – Language, Culture, Customs, and Etiquette.” No date. <http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/resources/global-etiquette/china-country-profile.html>

Communication in China tends to fall within collective social networks (*guanxi*, loosely translated) rather than within individuals. If one has *guanxi* within a network alliance, he or she exchanges information, ideas, or services with someone out of willing obligation, and the exchange is always reciprocated. Although Chinese people below the age of 30 have grown up under the “one-child policy” and are more individually inclined to speak openly with strangers, *guanxi* still prevails as a general social dynamic. Thus, if someone such as a foreign reporter wants to communicate with local people, he or she may have to use a local intermediary who understands access to particular groups. Others outside of connected groups will not receive the same *guanxi* consideration that they would receive if they had connections inside such a group.

The concept of “saving face” is also a powerful underlying force when communicating with Chinese people. A visitor can speak in a way that causes the recipient to either lose face, resulting in negative outcomes, or save face, resulting in more positive communicative outcomes. In the former case, losing face is caused by interacting rudely, showing lack of respect, disagreeing publicly, or speaking in a confrontational way. Alternately, it is possible to give face or cause another to save face by speaking politely, showing up to support someone, showing one’s respect. This clearly is the route to getting things done in cooperative ways.



© Megan Walton  
A friendly smile

**Exchange 5:** How are you?

<b>Soldier:</b>	How are you?	nong hova?
<b>Local:</b>	Fine, very well.	mey haa

The communication style of Chinese people is not aggressive, assertive, or in any way confrontational. Such an approach by foreigners is usually met by an attitude of withdrawal from the conversation. In all instances, it is an affront to publicly criticize someone (thus causing that person to lose face) or display impatience or anger. A person should always deliver criticism to a Chinese person privately and tactfully, not in public. Sometimes an intermediary is used to deliver unpleasant news. This is a way of saving face and preserving surface harmony.

Simple, polite inquiries about another's wellbeing are always appreciated.

**Exchange 6:** Hello.

<b>Soldier:</b>	Hi, Mr. Wang	nong haw, waa shee saa
<b>Local:</b>	Hello!	nong haw!
<b>Soldier:</b>	Are you doing well?	nong hova?
<b>Local:</b>	Yes.	mey hova

It is often the case in Western culture for people to be casual and revealing with their emotional reactions, as seen in the expression “He wears his heart on his sleeve.” Such is not the case in Chinese culture, where it is customary to keep one's private feelings hidden and not display them to the world. Rather than communicating friendliness, for instance, a smile or a neutral expression may simply be a calm reaction to a variety of conflicting emotions that a Chinese person is feeling. It may reflect a desire or intention to allow harmony to restore itself naturally, without reacting or attempting to change anything. An impassive expression is common, because facial expressions and body language reveal one's thoughts, and group consensus is more important among the Chinese than individual feelings.



© Shannon Shue  
Friendly exchange between people

During initial exchanges with a Chinese person, it is important to ask about his or her family, without being overly personal or inquisitive.

**Exchange 7:** How is your family?

<b>Soldier:</b>	How is your family?	nong olyee shaang ying hova?
<b>Local:</b>	They are doing fine, thank you.	eela zeh meh hova, shayaa nu

In general, conversational exchanges should not be direct, but simply measured and polite. This is also true when asking questions of a Chinese person. The questioner should be subtle. For instance, it may seem rude and abrupt to directly ask “Do you understand?” as though demanding an answer. Instead, the questioner can rephrase the question in a softer way that requires a less direct response, such as “What do you think?” or “Is this how you would see it?” Conversation should take on a light and formal tone.

**Exchange 8:** Good afternoon.

<b>Soldier:</b>	Good afternoon.	nong haw
<b>Local:</b>	Good afternoon.	nong haw

Chinese people often will nod their head when speaking with others, but this does not mean they agree with what is being said or even that they understand it. It is mainly a neutral, accommodating gesture. It may be motivated by a desire to protect the speaker from losing face from having said something that the Chinese receiver does not understand.



© 2 dogs / Flickr.com  
Ambiguous facial expression

When addressing a Chinese person, use his or her honorific title and the family name (surname).

**Exchange 9:** Good night!

<b>Soldier:</b>	Good night!	tsey wey!
<b>Local:</b>	Good night!	tsey wey!

## Hospitality and Gift-Giving<sup>156, 157</sup>

Being invited into a Chinese person's home is a distinct honor, and the guest should acknowledge this by being on time and displaying good manners. When entering a Chinese home, visitors should observe the customs and behavior of the host and of others and follow what they do. Some customs are widely known in advance. For instance, guests should dress in clean and modest clothing, and they must remove their shoes before entering a home.

Visitors can acknowledge the hospitality of their host by making a friendly and polite statement of appreciation. Such statements, however, should not be excessive at the risk of making your host uncomfortable. Not inclined to express public emotions, Chinese people will often shrug off compliments.

**Exchange 10:** I appreciate your hospitality.

<b>Soldier:</b>	I really appreciate your hospitality.	chaajaa nong dzo dey
<b>Local:</b>	It is nothing.	vayaa kachee

It is customary (although not necessary) to bring a gift when invited into the home of a Chinese person. A gift should not be expensive, and it should not be a knife, letter opener, or similar sharp instrument, because these items symbolize ending a relationship (severing it). It should also not be a handkerchief or a clock, which are associated with funerals in Chinese culture. A memento from the visitor's home town would be appropriate (nothing with the tag "made in China," however). Because four is an inauspicious number, a guest should not give four of anything as a gift. When wrapping, any color of paper is appropriate except blue, white, or black. Further, the visitor should present the gift with two hands. Last, it is unlikely that the recipient will open the gift when he or she receives it. If the host does open it, the person giving should not expect from the recipient anything other than an unpretentious response that avoids expressing public emotion.



<sup>156</sup> China Travel Tour Guide. "Chinese Etiquette and Courtesies." 2003–2006. <http://www.china-travel-tour-guide.com/travel-tips/etiquette.shtml>

<sup>157</sup> Kwintessential Cross Cultural Solutions. "China – Language, Culture, Customs, and Etiquette." No date. <http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/resources/global-etiquette/china-country-profile.html>

**Exchange 11:** This gift is for you.

<b>Soldier:</b>	This gift is for you.	ka zu song pak nong gek
<b>Local:</b>	I cannot accept this.	va hoy ze soowa

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 personal rejection of the host.



If in doubt about something you are drinking or eating, simply ask what it is.

**Exchange 12:** What is the name of this dish?

<b>Soldier:</b>	What is the name of this dish?	ke zu saang?
<b>Local:</b>	This is Yellowfish.	kega zu wong

If a host offers snacks or a light lunch, a guest can show politeness by complimenting the host or hostess on the quality of the food.

**Exchange 13:** This food is very good.

<b>Soldier:</b>	This food is very good.	ku law haa cho ga
<b>Local:</b>	It's Qing Cao Huevo Nin.	kuga zu ching saw hooning

Chinese food is known for its nutritional value as well as its variety of colors, forms, and ingredients. It is an art form, following many different schools of cooking and methods of preparation. A guest’s interest in the food being served can lend itself to interesting conversation at a hospitable get-together or luncheon.

**Exchange 14:** What ingredients are used?

<b>Soldier:</b>	What ingredients are used to make yellow fish?	waang ipey kaas saam isoy?
<b>Local:</b>	Sugar, vinegar, and a little bit of soy sauce.	kaataang tsoo, tseh fong ingey cheya yoo

**Eating Customs and Habits** <sup>158, 159</sup>

There are many rules about dining etiquette in China, whether at a guest’s home or in a restaurant. Following the rules means that a guest gains face and also gives the host face as well. To start, guests should sit where they are directed. The host always faces 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.



© Scott Mark  
Dinner at a fancy restaurant

Chopsticks are the customary eating utensils and guests should spend some time learning how to use them. Chopsticks are not used, however, to take food out of common serving bowls. Instead, each diner uses a large spoon to dish up food out of the common serving platters. After dishing up a portion, the guest returns the serving spoon to its bowl for others to use. When eating with chopsticks, the utensils should be returned to the side of the guest’s plate after every few bites, or when the guest is speaking. They should never be used to gesture or point at others. They should also not be rested standing up in a rice bowl because such a form is emblematic of the way incense is placed and burned in funeral rituals.

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<sup>158</sup> China Odyssey Tours. “Some Basic Dining Etiquette & Customs in China.” 2004–2008. <http://www.chinaodysseytours.com/travel-guide-book/some-basic-dinning-etiquette-customs-in-china.html>  
<sup>159</sup> Kwintessential Cross Cultural Solutions. “China – Language, Culture, Customs, and Etiquette.” No date. <http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/resources/global-etiquette/china-country-profile.html>



A guest should try everything that is offered, but at the same time, it's not necessary to eat everything on the plate, just most of it. A host will likely keep offering more food as a gesture of good hospitality. It may be more than the guest is able to eat!

After a Chinese meal ends, it's a good rule of thumb to follow the lead of others who are leaving the dining table, remembering to thank and compliment the host. Lastly, the person who invited others to dinner is the one who pays for the dinner.

**Exchange 15:** The food tastes so good.

<b>Soldier:</b>	The food tastes so good.	ka maa zu law haa choga
<b>Local:</b>	Thank you.	shaa jaa

As for the food itself, it is cut up into small pieces so that it can be eaten with chopsticks. This is true of everything from vegetables and pieces of tofu to chicken and different kinds of meat. Meat is cooked until it is very tender and can be easily removed from the bone by using chopsticks.

Regional Shanghai food is found throughout Zhejiang Province. Shao Xing, a sherry wine produced in the region, is an ingredient used to flavor many of the dishes. Popular local favorites include wine chicken, drunken shrimp, pickled greens with pork, and sea cucumber served with shrimp roe, all often served as hors d'oeuvres.<sup>160</sup>

### **Dress Codes**<sup>161</sup>

In China, clothing should be adapted to the weather. The weather is often hot and humid in the Wu region, so light, cool clothes 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 fact many temples do not allow admittance to women unless they are wearing long pants. Blouses have sleeves although they are usually short because of the climate.



© 2 dogs / Flickr.com  
Typically dressed people in a metro station

<sup>160</sup> Encyclo Central. "Canton Shanghai Mandarin Sichuan Hunan Are Types of Chinese Cuisine to Explore." 2008. [http://www.encyclocentral.com/23887-Canton\\_Shanghai\\_Mandarin\\_Sichuan\\_Hunan\\_Are\\_Types\\_of\\_Chinese\\_Cuisine\\_To\\_Explore.html](http://www.encyclocentral.com/23887-Canton_Shanghai_Mandarin_Sichuan_Hunan_Are_Types_of_Chinese_Cuisine_To_Explore.html)

<sup>161</sup> China Travel Tour Guide. "What to Wear While Traveling in China." 2003–2006. <http://www.china-travel-tour-guide.com/travel-tips/clothing.shtml>

**Exchange 16:** How should I dress?

<b>Soldier:</b>	How should I dress?	mo yingey chu tsaa eeza?
<b>Local:</b>	Wear loose fitting clothes which cover your body.	chu ku tsu teeka eeza

In urban areas, more formal business attire is worn for meetings and official events. The clothing, always on the modest and conservative side, includes 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>162</sup> Fewer formal styles of clothing are seen in rural areas, where local people wear long or short-sleeved T-shirts, sandals and other comfortable shoes, and functional clothing in general.

If a visitor is uncertain as to what to wear, asking is a good policy!

**Exchange 17:** Is this acceptable to wear?

<b>Soldier:</b>	Is this acceptable to wear?	chu kagha ha sava?
<b>Local:</b>	Yes.	ha sagha

*Traditional Styles of Dress*<sup>163</sup>

Traditional Chinese dress styles in Shanghai have followed an interesting history. After the port of Shanghai opened to the world in the mid 19th century, a unique style of dress began to develop there. As western commerce and culture became prominent in the city, western fashion was not far behind. It blended with classical Chinese styles to produce something fresh and elegant for the developing merchant classes. A variety of factors unique to Shanghai shaped the emerging fashion industry. First, western fabrics such as lace and fine wool began entering the Chinese market. At the same time, fashion columns in magazines and newspapers suggested new visions and possibilities for clothing, and

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<sup>162</sup> Kwintessential Cross Cultural Solutions. "China – Language, Culture, Customs, and Etiquette." No date. <http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/resources/global-etiquette/china-country-profile.html>

<sup>163</sup> China Style. "The Vicissitudes of Shanghai Style Shopping." No date. <http://library.thinkquest.org/05aug/01780/clothing/shanghai-style.htm>

large department stores began holding regular fashion shows. Last, fashion models and famous actors who lived in the city or passed through offered people a glimpse of the latest designs. Shanghai quickly became China's center of fashion.

In the early years of the Republic of China (1911–1949), the predominant fashion for Chinese men was the *Ma Gua* (a gown worn with a Mandarin jacket). The long gown (*Chang Pao*) worn alone was also fashionable. Depending on the activity, the fabric and design varied from formal and elegant to more casual. Chinese men who worked for foreign companies also began wearing Western-style business suits.



© Andy Chang  
Female performers wearing Qi Pao dresses

Styles for women in the 1920s and 1930s included a dress known as *Qi Pao*, or *cheongsam*, a rather tightly-fitting gown that has a slit skirt and high neck. The original *cheongsam* was from Manchuria and had broad sleeves and fit loosely. The Shanghai version tightened the dress and shortened its length, and the new style became fashionable worldwide. Western touches were often added, such as draping a scarf around the neck, wearing a fur coat over the *Qi Pao*, or adding decorations.

Traditional clothing changed dramatically in the 1950s and 1960s, after the Communist Revolution. People's clothing became simple, usually gray or blue. Clothing later took on a militaristic look as many simply wore military-type uniforms. As China began to be more open to Western ideas in the 1980s, clothing once again became more stylish. Shanghai has again become an international center of fashion.

### Non-Religious Holidays <sup>164</sup>

There are a number of non-religious public holidays in China. New Year's Day on the first day of January is a secular worldwide holiday. More important to Chinese culture is the Chinese New Year (also called Spring Festival), marked as a holiday in 2008 from 7 February through 9 February. This begins a 15-day celebratory period 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 to chase away harmful spirits. The celebration also includes Chinese opera performances, family reunions, elaborate fireworks, and ceremonies to satisfy spirits of the ancestors.



© El Had / Flickr.com  
Fireworks during the Spring Festival in Shanghai

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<sup>164</sup> World Travel Guide. "China Travel Guide – Public Holidays." 2008.  
[http://www.worldtravelguide.net/country/58/public\\_holidays/Far-East-Asia/China.html](http://www.worldtravelguide.net/country/58/public_holidays/Far-East-Asia/China.html)

Other holidays include Labor Day on 1–3 May and National Day on 1–3 October. Labor Day is an international recognition of the achievements of labor, observed by most countries including China. National Day celebrates the establishment of the People’s Republic of China on 1 October 1949.<sup>165</sup> Other holidays are locally or regionally observed in China. They include International Women’s Day on 8 March, National Youth Day on 4 May, International Children’s Day on 1 June, and Army Day on 1 August.

## Social Events

### *Weddings*<sup>166, 167</sup>

Wedding traditions vary in China, depending on region and the degree to which old customs prevail in a district. In previous years, traditional weddings in general were arranged by the parents, but this is far less common now. Even though young people choose their marriage partner, the relationship involves two families, not simply two individuals. Many negotiations take place regarding background lineage of the marriage partners, the cost of the wedding, details as to how it will take place, the dowry, and arrangements for the reception. Usually, it is the groom’s parents who make most of the wedding plans.



Local and Confucian tradition (honoring family ancestors) is still part of the ceremony, generally speaking. Many modern traditions also apply. Modern 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, older traditions still hold an influence, with most traditional customs most apparent in the countryside. It remains quite common for the event planners to give consideration to astrological signs in an attempt to find the most auspicious date for a wedding. On the day before the wedding, the bride’s dowry is usually sent to the home of the bridegroom, and on the wedding day, the bridegroom leaves his house, often in the company of musicians. They play lighthearted songs as they walk to the bride’s home. There, the wedding ritual begins.

The main color used in weddings is red, which symbolizes joy. The bride often wears red shoes and a veil made of red silk. The bridegroom typically wears a long gown with a red sash. His shoes are also red.

At the reception held in the bride’s home, the groom distributes money in red packets to the bride’s sisters and her bridesmaid. She may then follow traditional custom in leaving

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<sup>165</sup> About.com. China Travel. Naumann, Sara. “October 1, National Day of the People’s Republic of China.” 2008. <http://gochina.about.com/od/eventsfestivals/a/NationalDay.htm>

<sup>166</sup> China Style. “Traditions of Arranged Marriages in China.” No date. <http://library.thinkquest.org/05aug/01780/folk-custom/chinese-marriage-custom.htm>

<sup>167</sup> Travel-Shanghai-Info.com. “Chinese Customs – Marriage Customs and Preparation.” c.2008. <http://www.travel-shanghai-info.com/chinese-customs.html>

for the groom's home in a sedan chair, shielded by a red parasol. A metallic mirror and a sieve hang from the back of the sedan chair, believed to ward off bad luck. Firecrackers also are set off to dispel evil spirits. Old customs dictate that the bride be shielded in her sedan chair, blocked from seeing inauspicious sights such as a widow, a cat, or a well, all associated with ill omens and bad luck.

At the wedding ceremony, the bride and groom go to the family altar and bow to their parents, their family ancestors, Heaven and Earth, and each other. A feast is held after the ceremony for family and friends who attended the wedding. Wine is served and the newlyweds toast all their guests.



© Adam Schorsch  
Newlyweds lighting a candle

If attending any of the pre-wedding ceremonies or simply upon finding out a couple is engaged, an offering of good wishes for their future life together will be well received.

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

<b>Soldier:</b>	I wish you both happiness.	tso naa ying fa
<b>Local:</b>	We are honored.	shaa jaa

When a wedding involves the eldest son, families spare no expense in planning and reception. Chinese families experience weddings as opportunities to “show face.” This is especially true when the eldest son is involved. If a lavish or elaborate wedding does not take place in this case, the entire family will lose prestige.

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

<b>Soldier:</b>	Congratulations on your wedding!	kung shee shing lang ku shing yang dzeh!
<b>Local:</b>	We are honored you could attend.	shaa jaa nu kwaa ling

Because weddings and the amount of planning involved can be quite costly, depending on the family’s social position, men often 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.

*Funerals* <sup>168, 169</sup>

Han customs, prevalent in the Wu region and throughout China, require that a mourning ceremony be held when an individual dies. At this ceremony, family and friends honor the deceased and frequently attend a family-hosted banquet. The gathering or wake is accompanied by singing and dancing, all of which shows respect for the person who died. All who are present mourn together, consoling the family.



**Exchange 20:** I would like to give my condolences.

<b>Soldier:</b>	I would like to give my condolences to you and your family.	motey nong ko naa uree shaang ying peyaw dzu eyda
<b>Local:</b>	Thank you.	shaa jaa

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. They are also influenced by the cause of death.

Age is a factor in that traditionally a younger person does not receive the same respect that 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 protocol in deference to the person’s age and status.

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<sup>168</sup> Travel-Shanghai-Info.com. “Chinese Funerals – Customs and the Wake.” 2008. <http://www.travel-shanghai-info.com/chinese-funerals.html>

<sup>169</sup> China Style. “Funeral Customs.” No date. <http://library.thinkquest.org/05aug/01780/folk-custom/funeral-customs.htm>

After a person dies, family members use red paper to cover all household representations of deities to shelter them from exposure to the body of the deceased or the coffin. Household mirrors are taken away because it is believed that if anyone views the coffin's reflection, that person's family will suffer a death in the near future. The family also hangs a white cloth across the entrance to the house.



© Meghan Elizabeth  
Funeral preparations at a Buddhist temple

The deceased is then washed and carefully dressed. All of his other clothing is burned. A yellow cloth is laid over the face of the deceased and a pale blue cloth over the body before placing it in the coffin. An offering of food is ritually placed at the front of the coffin for the benefit of the person who has died, and an altar with a lighted candle and burning incense stands at the foot of the coffin.

Many ritualized details prevail at the funeral wake. Family members avoid the impropriety of wearing any jewelry or red garments, as red represents a happy state of mind. They stand around the coffin, positioning themselves according to family rank. They also dress in symbolic ways for the occasion, with children or those who grieve most dressed in black and grandchildren dressed in blue. If there are great-grandchildren, they wear garments of pale blue.

**Exchange 21:** Please be strong.

<b>Soldier:</b>	Please be strong.	yaw chee jaang ey
<b>Local:</b>	We will try.	aala weyga

If invited foreign visitors attend the wake, they must bow to family members and light incense in honor of the deceased. They can also donate money to help cover funeral expenses, placing it in a donation box for that purpose.

In the evening, a Taoist or Buddhist monk will chant prayers as long as the coffin remains in the house (usually one day or more). The prayers are usually accompanied by music. Such recitations of scripture help the soul of the deceased experience a smooth passage to heaven.

## Do's and Don'ts

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

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

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

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

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

**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** 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 may be familiar with American slang.



© Jenny Webber  
Shoes outside a family home



# Urban Life

## Urban Labor Market and Workforce

Shanghai's labor market is highly diversified. Approximately 200 million people have moved from rural areas to China's cities in search of work,<sup>170</sup> taking advantage of lowered restrictions on internal migration. Many of these migrants in the 1980s and 1990s relocated to Shanghai and ended up being a major source of low-cost unskilled labor. They were attracted to Shanghai for a variety of reasons, beginning with the city's booming economy. Central government policy after 1949 had designated Shanghai as a manufacturing center, and market forces began to expand the economy after reforms that started in 1978. Shanghai and other principle cities in China also became more autonomous at that time and began to seek out higher levels of international investment and trade.<sup>171</sup> In the 1990s, growth in Shanghai accelerated even more, although it declined in some areas, such as textile production. The city's widespread transportation networks and modern communications systems have helped to promote economic activity. Not only has the Shanghai municipality become a center of technology, research, manufacturing, and industry, it is also one of China's strongest financial centers.<sup>172</sup> Besides attracting migrant workers, the powerful economy has attracted thousands of highly skilled workers and professionals. Relocating to Shanghai from all over the world, they have boosted the city's tax revenue by becoming working residents.<sup>173</sup>



© HKmPUA / Flickr.com  
Chinese workers at the end of their shift

Today, Shanghai has the most skilled labor force in China, with more than 80% of the city's workforce educated at least through the level of junior high school. Further, if one lacks job skills, there are a number of ways to acquire them through training and education. The city has over 250 independent research facilities and around 50 universities.<sup>174</sup>

Even with its diverse economy and job potential, however, there are many strains on the labor market in Shanghai. High labor costs and expectations by the middle class for such a standard to continue have put pressure on employers who are already pressured by China's competitive, increasingly globalized labor market. Because of the city's heavy traffic, there are increasing demands on the city's resources to build a new transportation

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<sup>170</sup> CIA World Factbook. "China." 19 June 2008. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ch.html#Econ>

<sup>171</sup> Applied Economics. Abelson, Peter. "Economic and Environmental Sustainability in Shanghai." c.2008. [http://www.appliedeconomics.com.au/pubs/papers/pa99\\_shanghai.htm](http://www.appliedeconomics.com.au/pubs/papers/pa99_shanghai.htm)

<sup>172</sup> Lonely Planet. "Shanghai: History." 2008. <http://www.lonelyplanet.com/worldguide/china/shanghai/history>

<sup>173</sup> People's Daily Online. "Foreign Employees in Shanghai Soaring." 18 October 2004. [http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/200410/17/eng20041017\\_160475.html](http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/200410/17/eng20041017_160475.html)

<sup>174</sup> Applied Economics. Abelson, Peter. "Economic and Environmental Sustainability in Shanghai." 2008. [http://www.appliedeconomics.com.au/pubs/papers/pa99\\_shanghai.htm](http://www.appliedeconomics.com.au/pubs/papers/pa99_shanghai.htm)

infrastructure.<sup>175</sup> Government pro-growth financial incentives and promotion of business parks have increased foreign investment in urban industrial zones, but the down side has been industrial crowding and rising property values.<sup>176</sup> All factors combined have caused increasing problems in Shanghai's labor market. Corporations and city planners have been working to integrate Shanghai's economy with that of the surrounding areas in Jiangsu and Zhejiang provinces. This regional planning would allow the Shanghai economy to develop its service industry and other sectors such as steel, chemicals, information technology, and biotechnology. At the same time, the city could move its industries that are more labor-intensive and costly to the surrounding provinces.<sup>177</sup>

Shanghai's labor market is additionally impacted by a large number of retirees, the segment of Shanghai's population that is growing fastest. Each year, 100,000 seniors retire, threatening not only the pension system but also the ability of the labor market to avoid labor shortages. This situation has motivated movement of factories inland, away from the eastern seaboard, to areas where the workforce is younger and less costly.<sup>178</sup>



© SocialTechnologies.com  
Chinese seniors playing cards in a park

Affecting not only Shanghai but all cities in China, workplace discrimination has been a problem for many employees. Although laws exist in principle to prohibit various kinds of workplace discrimination in China, they are not generally enforced. China's main legislation on this subject, stated in 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 legal recourse.<sup>179</sup> According to a study published in 2004 that surveyed discrimination against female university graduates in Shanghai, a significant level of discrimination was found in hiring practices. Women in Shanghai were less

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<sup>175</sup> The China Business Review. McDaniels, Iain. "A Critical Eye on Shanghai: Will the City's Extraordinary Growth Continue?" 1997–2008.

[http://www.chinabusinessreview.com/public/0401/shanghai\\_letter.html](http://www.chinabusinessreview.com/public/0401/shanghai_letter.html)

<sup>176</sup> Business-in-Asia.com. "Tips and Market Trends for China Industrial Zone." 2008. [http://www.business-in-asia.com/china/china\\_ip.html](http://www.business-in-asia.com/china/china_ip.html)

<sup>177</sup> The China Business Review. McDaniels, Iain. "A Critical Eye on Shanghai: Will the City's Extraordinary Growth Continue?" c.1997–2008.

[http://www.chinabusinessreview.com/public/0401/shanghai\\_letter.html](http://www.chinabusinessreview.com/public/0401/shanghai_letter.html)

<sup>178</sup> International Herald Tribune, Asia-Pacific. French, Howard W. "As China Ages, a Shortage of Cheap Labor Looms." 30 June 2006. <http://www.ihrt.com/articles/2006/06/30/asia/web0630aging.php>

<sup>179</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)

likely than men to be hired in civil service positions and their salaries were lower than those of their male counterparts.<sup>180</sup>

### *New Labor Law*

Labor conditions are changing throughout the country as the economy grows, and it is difficult to predict how the urban workplace in general will change. A new labor law went into effect in China in 2008, offering stronger regulation of wages and protection of labor rights. The law limits the practice of hiring employees on contract and releasing them when the contract expires, instead requiring employers to provide permanent employment.

The new law also limits a probationary period and requires that employers prove cause when they terminate employees. If wrongful termination is proven, penalties against the employer are more severe than they were previously. Because these worker protections have increased the cost of employees for the employer, they are considered likely to result in more job outsourcing within China.<sup>181, 182</sup>



### *Migrant Workers*

A major base in Shanghai's labor market is the large number of temporary migrants who have left rural areas to seek jobs in cities without prior permission. They often do not have a legal right to take up residence in the areas where they work, and are referred to as the "floating population."<sup>183</sup> They began to appear in Shanghai and other cities around 1978, when China began to make economic reforms. China's urbanization policies have aimed to strictly control populations between the city and countryside not only to reduce demographic pressure but also to control the urban migrant population. Those workers who plan to stay more than three days in Shanghai (or other cities) have been required to pay a fee and register for residence for a specified period of time, which can then be extended.<sup>184</sup>

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<sup>180</sup> China Daily. Li, Cao. "Shanghai: Sex Bias Exists in Local Job Market." 9 August 2004.

[http://chinadaily.com.cn/english/doc/2004-08/09/content\\_363321.htm](http://chinadaily.com.cn/english/doc/2004-08/09/content_363321.htm)

<sup>181</sup> Business-in-Asia.com. "Tips and Market Trends for China Industrial Zone." 2008. [http://www.business-in-asia.com/china/china\\_ip.html](http://www.business-in-asia.com/china/china_ip.html)

<sup>182</sup> IAOP (International Association of Outsourcing Professionals). "IAOP Chapters: East China (Shanghai City). Chairman's Summary—October 23, 2007." 2008.

<http://www.outsourcingprofessional.org/content/23/162/1227/>

<sup>183</sup> IIASA. "Arguments – Trends, Urbanization." 1999.

[http://www.iiasa.ac.at/Research/LUC/ChinaFood/argu/trends/trend\\_30.htm](http://www.iiasa.ac.at/Research/LUC/ChinaFood/argu/trends/trend_30.htm)

<sup>184</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)

Migrant workers typically work in the informal sector, selling produce and fruits from carts, hauling garbage, and working on construction projects. To alleviate social problems that could result from an expanding population of the very poor, the Shanghai or state government provides a bare minimum of survival protections. This also helps to guarantee or underwrite this source of extremely cheap labor. Still, the migrants' working and living conditions are exceptionally difficult. Their access to medical care, the courts, or education is precarious. Migrants working in Shanghai who do not have an official household registration will receive less pay and no benefits. They can also be evicted without warning, targeted and robbed for any possessions they have, or beaten by the police for perceived wrongdoing. Their housing is crowded, often existing in squatter settlements that are illegal and lacking in basic sanitation. It is possible for migrants to eventually obtain permanent residence in Shanghai, but this would require buying a residence and obtaining corporate sponsorship, which are both highly unlikely.<sup>185, 186</sup>



### Daily Urban Life and Living Conditions

The entire Shanghai municipality is divided into three population zones; the most crowded being the inner city, with 126,500 people living in 1 sq km (0.4 sq mi).<sup>187</sup> In some areas, the density has risen as high as 160,000 people per sq km.<sup>188</sup> Because the inner city is so crowded, housing prices there are four times higher than the prices found in the city's periphery.<sup>189</sup> The city government is engaged in regional planning to alleviate the crowding, which is also found in the suburbs. In general, people accept the close quarters and routinely go about their business. Shanghai is an international city, with a wide variety and blending of social traditions found throughout the metropolis. Generally, neighborhoods are characterized by few ethnic concentrations since the majority of people are Han Chinese.<sup>190</sup>

People in cities socialize easily with one another in such crowded quarters, frequently calling or visiting friends and neighbors.

<sup>185</sup> The 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>186</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>187</sup> Courant.com. Chen, Xiangming. "Lessons From, For Shanghai." 18 May 2008.

<http://www.courant.com/news/opinion/commentary/hc-plcchen1.artmay18,0,6885129.story>

<sup>188</sup> Applied Economics. Abelson, Peter. "Economic and Environmental Sustainability in Shanghai." c.2008.

[http://www.appliedeconomics.com.au/pubs/papers/pa99\\_shanghai.htm](http://www.appliedeconomics.com.au/pubs/papers/pa99_shanghai.htm)

<sup>189</sup> Courant.com. Chen, Xiangming. "Lessons From, For Shanghai." 18 May 2008.

<http://www.courant.com/news/opinion/commentary/hc-plcchen1.artmay18,0,6885129.story>

<sup>190</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. "Shanghai." 2008.

<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/538506/Shanghai>

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

<b>Soldier:</b>	What is your telephone number?	nong aatee wo da zu toosa?
<b>Local:</b>	My phone number is 62385458.	no dee wo da zu law liyang se pa im sen pa

Besides working and socializing, urban dwellers have a choice of many other pastimes. Families walk in the parks and gardens and attend or participate in sports events in the playing fields that are present in all sections of the city. They visit libraries and attend dance, drama, and music performances including ballets and symphonies, plays, folk operas, puppet shows, and other cultural events. People of all ages go to movies, recreational clubs, and shopping malls. The city's many historical sites, temples, and gardens provide a respite for tourists and residents alike.<sup>191</sup>



Communication is easy in Shanghai and other large cities, as there is an extensive telephone and cell phone network.

**Exchange 23:** May I use your phone?

<b>Soldier:</b>	May I use your phone?	moo koowee yawng yung nom tee wooba?
<b>Local:</b>	Sure.	koowee gaa

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<sup>191</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. "Shanghai." 2008.  
<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/538506/Shanghai>

Housing, however, can be hard for residents to find in Shanghai because of spiraling property values. City officials have responded to the problem in targeted ways. Many people who have lived in the same neighborhood for years have been relocated from the inner city to make room for income-generating businesses. These residents are often not satisfied with their relocation sites on the fringes of the city, as shown by the number of protests and petitions to the city. Along with the disruption of their social networks, they have found transportation in their new neighborhoods to be a problem. City planners have acknowledged these relocations as a “significant problem” in their redevelopment programs.<sup>192</sup> The demolitions have been ongoing, taking place against rundown, old houses and dilapidated tenements known as *shikumen*. Built around the turn of the 20th century, the tenements housed Chinese people who lived in Shanghai’s western section. The space these buildings occupied has often been replaced with boutiques, bars, and restaurants.<sup>193, 194</sup> City planners, sometimes working with business enterprises, have also replaced slum areas with new housing and have built residential complexes close to work areas or factories in the suburbs.<sup>195</sup> Since the mid 1990s, many of the state-owned units have been sold to private individuals, and the private sector is increasingly involved in providing new housing.<sup>196</sup>



© kafka4prez / Flickr.com  
Shikumen in Shanghai

Environmental conditions have deteriorated because of Shanghai’s congestion and rapid growth. Most of the urban water supply is from the Huangpu River, and industrial discharge in the delta region has created high levels of water pollution. Raw sewage resulting from inadequate treatment facilities has also created widespread water pollution. The Shanghai Environmental Protection Bureau and other government agencies have tried to clean up the water by reducing industrial discharges and creating sewage treatment projects. Although the effectiveness of these projects has been minimal, tap water is chemically treated and is not considered a source of disease. The city’s air quality has also declined over the years because of widespread burning of low-grade coal, and also from heavy traffic and vehicle emissions. In general, the dangers to health in Shanghai and other urban areas are considered to be higher from air pollution than from water pollution.<sup>197</sup>

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<sup>192</sup> All Academic Research. Abstract to: “Protection of the Right to Housing During Housing Relocation of Residents: Forced Relocation in Shanghai.” He, Weidong. 25 July 2007.

[http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p\\_mla\\_apa\\_research\\_citation/1/7/7/7/2/p177720\\_index.html](http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p_mla_apa_research_citation/1/7/7/7/2/p177720_index.html)

<sup>193</sup> Figure Ground. “Shikumen Houses.” October 2003. <http://figure-ground.com/china/shikumen/>

<sup>194</sup> Shanghai Star. Lu, Maggie. “Moving Experiences.” 9 October 2003.

<http://app1.chinadaily.com.cn/star/2003/1009/fo6-1.html>

<sup>195</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. “Shanghai.” 2008.

<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/538506/Shanghai>

<sup>196</sup> Applied Economics. Abelson, Peter. “Economic and Environmental Sustainability in Shanghai.” 2008.

[http://www.appliedeconomics.com.au/pubs/papers/pa99\\_shanghai.htm](http://www.appliedeconomics.com.au/pubs/papers/pa99_shanghai.htm)

<sup>197</sup> Applied Economics. Abelson, Peter. “Economic and Environmental Sustainability in Shanghai.” 2008.

[http://www.appliedeconomics.com.au/pubs/papers/pa99\\_shanghai.htm](http://www.appliedeconomics.com.au/pubs/papers/pa99_shanghai.htm)

## Health Care<sup>198, 199, 200</sup>

After the revolution in 1949, the Communist government centralized health care and began to offer it through the workplace. The party organized local and regional governments to provide funding for hospitals and health services at little cost. The New England Journal of Medicine reports that between 1952 and 1982, life expectancy in China increased from 35 to 68 years of age, and infant mortality fell from 200 to 34 for every 1,000 live births.<sup>201</sup> These improvements resulted from widespread availability of health care providers and services to the general public.

### Exchange 24: Is Dr. Chen in?

<b>Soldier:</b>	Is Dr. Chen in?	sang yee saa laa hey va?
<b>Local:</b>	No.	va la heh

The socialist system was eliminated in 1994 as China transitioned from a planned economy to a more market-based economy, and people's right to subsidized or free health care disappeared. They were forced to pay for their own health care or purchase medical insurance, and medical facilities were forced to provide most of their own financing. This has 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. In 2003, those who had to pay for healthcare out of pocket consisted of around 45% of urban residents and almost 80% of rural residents.<sup>202</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>203</sup> Poor people, whether urban or rural, cannot obtain insurance unless they are employed. The type of employment is also significant,



<sup>198</sup> Economist.com. "Losing Patients." 21 February 2008.

[http://www.economist.com/world/asia/displaystory.cfm?story\\_id=10727824](http://www.economist.com/world/asia/displaystory.cfm?story_id=10727824)

<sup>199</sup> MedHunters.com. Moreton, Michael J., M.D. "Healthcare in China." 19 July 2004.

<http://www.medhunters.com/articles/healthcareInChina.html>

<sup>200</sup> Asia Times. Jiangong, Zhou. "Red Hue to China's Health Care." 23 August 2007.

<http://www.atimes.com/atimes/China/IH23Ad01.html>

<sup>201</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>202</sup> IBM Business Consulting Services. "Healthcare in China: Toward Great Access, Efficiency, and Quality [p. 3]." 2006. [http://www-03.ibm.com/industries/healthcare/doc/content/bin/Healthcare\\_in\\_China.pdf](http://www-03.ibm.com/industries/healthcare/doc/content/bin/Healthcare_in_China.pdf)

<sup>203</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)

with civil service jobs being the most likely to offer health insurance. No health care is available to the urban migrant population employed in the informal sector, where jobs do not provide health benefits.

**Exchange 25:** Is there a hospital nearby?

<b>Soldier:</b>	Is there a hospital nearby?	kataao vojing yo eeyu vaa?
<b>Local:</b>	Yes, in the center of the city.	yoo ga, chu laa dzo shing

General and specialized hospitals with modern equipment and technology are present in wealthy cities such as Shanghai and other urban areas. Still, there are few smaller facilities, and the lack of clinics or private doctor’s offices has resulted in a shortage of primary care for the general population. Large hospitals are also less cost-effective in that they require more funds to operate than clinics, thus adding to the overall cost of healthcare. One way hospitals have tried to recoup financial losses is by prescribing expensive drugs and diagnostic procedures such as MRIs.<sup>204</sup>



A large number of pharmacies with over-the-counter remedies can be found in Shanghai and other large cities in China. Many doctors also have private general and specialized practices in Shanghai.

**Exchange 26:** Can you help me?

<b>Soldier:</b>	My arm is broken, can you help me?	mo soo bee kwa tsaala, nong koo yee pang pang ovaa?
<b>Local:</b>	Yes, I can help you.	koowee gaa

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<sup>204</sup> IBM Business Consulting Services. “Healthcare in China: Toward Great Access, Efficiency, and Quality [p. 4].” 2006. [http://www-03.ibm.com/industries/healthcare/doc/content/bin/Healthcare\\_in\\_China.pdf](http://www-03.ibm.com/industries/healthcare/doc/content/bin/Healthcare_in_China.pdf)



During a 2003 outbreak of SARS, a severe and contagious respiratory disease, the government became aware of the severity of China's healthcare problem. Many people refused to seek treatment because they were uninsured and could not afford it, at a time when an epidemic was threatening the country. Attempting to address this destabilizing issue, the government has scheduled an overhaul of the country's healthcare system, announcing a completion date of 2010. By this time, all citizens will be covered by basic health insurance, according to government plans. Details on how this plan will be funded are still unclear, and government subsidies as well as patient copayments are under consideration as part of the solution. The reform began in pilot cities and will be extended throughout the country.

## **Education**<sup>205</sup>

In China, the roots of organized formal education date as early as the 16th century B.C.E., based on preparing a privileged few 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 service. Education was classical, with much of the exam material based on the philosophical and ethical teachings of Confucius. While a small, educated elite was prepared to rule the country, the rest of the population remained illiterate. The civil service exam system was not abandoned until 1905, when the late Qing Dynasty introduced some modern educational reforms. Patterned to some degree on Western educational models, the reforms attempted to expand education within the general population, divide it into levels, and add technological studies.<sup>206</sup>

China's educational system continued to evolve first through a Soviet model in 1949, and then using other policy changes that followed China's break with the Soviet Union.<sup>207</sup> In its present form, China's formal education is categorized into the levels of basic, higher, and adult education. According to the country's Compulsory Education Law, every child is required to receive nine years of formal education.

The basic system through high school includes preschool, primary school, and secondary school. Children attend preschool (kindergarten) from age three to six, when they start elementary school. After they complete elementary school and enter the secondary level, students can enroll in either an academic or a vocational-technical track. Their vocational studies prepare them for farming, skilled labor, technical, or managerial positions.

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<sup>205</sup> China Education and Research Network. "Education System in China." 3 December 2004.

[http://www.edu.cn/introduction1\\_1403/20060323/t20060323\\_111891.shtml](http://www.edu.cn/introduction1_1403/20060323/t20060323_111891.shtml)

<sup>206</sup> Kansas State University. David B. Surowski, Ed. "History of the Educational System of China." 2000.

<http://www.math.ksu.edu/~dbski/publication/history.html>

<sup>207</sup> Kansas State University. David B. Surowski, Ed. "History of the Educational System of China." 2000.

<http://www.math.ksu.edu/~dbski/publication/history.html>

Students enrolling in higher education (post high school) have many options in Shanghai, the nation's higher education center. They can attend junior colleges with two- or three-year programs, or a variety of universities, many with master's and PhD graduate programs. There are numerous research and technical institutes in Shanghai as well, and many factories there are linked to training centers. This allows workers to enroll in work-study education through their jobs.<sup>208</sup>



Defined as the ability to read and write over the age of 15, the national literacy rate for adults in China was 90.9% in 2000. This breaks down by gender into 86.5% for females and 95.1% for males.<sup>209</sup> This contrasts with figures for 1949, when around 80% of China's population was either illiterate or had very low levels of reading and writing ability.<sup>210</sup>

### Transportation and Traffic<sup>211</sup>

Traffic in Shanghai is very heavy and congested, making it a major source of noise and air pollution. In 1990, there were 212,000 motor vehicles on the road, and that number is projected to increase to 1.4 million by 2010.<sup>212</sup> Many people also ride bicycles and motorcycles. The city has grown far more rapidly than its infrastructure, and many of the roads are too narrow, which greatly slows traffic down. For this reason, bus service is not the most popular means of transportation, although it is an easily available option.



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<sup>208</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. "Shanghai." 2008.

<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/538506/Shanghai>

<sup>209</sup> CIA World Factbook. China. 24 July 2008. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ch.html>

<sup>210</sup> Shanghai Star. Lin, Rosanne. "Long Road to Literacy." 2002.

<http://app1.chinadaily.com.cn/star/2002/0711/cu18-1.html>

<sup>211</sup> Applied Economics. Abelson, Peter. "Economic and Environmental Sustainability in Shanghai." 2008.

[http://www.appliedeconomics.com.au/pubs/papers/pa99\\_shanghai.htm](http://www.appliedeconomics.com.au/pubs/papers/pa99_shanghai.htm)

<sup>212</sup> Applied Economics. Abelson, Peter. "Economic and Environmental Sustainability in Shanghai." 2008.

[http://www.appliedeconomics.com.au/pubs/papers/pa99\\_shanghai.htm](http://www.appliedeconomics.com.au/pubs/papers/pa99_shanghai.htm)

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

<b>Soldier:</b>	Will the bus be here soon?	kong gon chee dzoo chee law ley lavaa?
<b>Local:</b>	Yes.	chee law leylaa

The city has resorted to managing traffic, limiting usage on some of the roads during peak hours, and creating one-way lanes of traffic. In some areas, pedestrians, cars, and bicycles have been separated in order to make travel more orderly.

In the 1990s, the city invested in transportation projects such as bridges, a tunnel, roadways, and a subway system. The subway has proved to be a popular and efficient means of transportation. Train service can also be found in Shanghai, with bullet train service operating to other parts of the country.

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

<b>Soldier:</b>	Is there a train station nearby?	kataao vojing yo hoo soo zey va?
<b>Local:</b>	No.	ma

Regular taxis running on a meter are easy to find in Shanghai and other large cities. When using a cab, the traveler should ask in advance how much the fare is and whether the cab driver will go to the desired destination. It is a good idea to write down the destination in Chinese and show it to the driver, who may not speak English.

Because the roads are so crowded, it can be difficult to get a cab. It is always an option to ask someone if they are willing to share a cab.

Cars are available to rent in Shanghai and other large cities, although authorities do not recognize international licenses and it is necessary to get a state driver's license. This written examination requires that the driver provide specific documents, such as a passport, current national driver's license, and other official information. It is possible to avoid bureaucratic complications by renting a chauffeur-driven car. The rates for hiring a

personal driver are competitive when costs of parking and fuel are added in. Tipping the driver is not necessary; all such charges are added into the quoted price.<sup>213</sup> Car rental agencies are located near airports and major hotels.

**Exchange 29:** Where can I rent a car?

<b>Soldier:</b>	Where can I rent a car?	saa deefaa tsoo ta za too dza?
<b>Local:</b>	Downtown.	dzeh too shing

Drivers should plan their trip 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 in case this happens. If the car breaks down while driving and the driver does not already know where to go for help, he or she should ask someone where the nearest mechanic is located



© J Lian  
Overturned vehicle on the way to Hangzhou

**Exchange 30:** Is there a good auto mechanic nearby?

<b>Soldier:</b>	Is there a good auto mechanic nearby?	kataao vojing yovey yu hoyey yingaa chee soo shu lee gung?
<b>Local:</b>	Yes.	yu gha

There is a continual crowded mix of vehicles, speeds, and aggressive driving on the roads in Shanghai. For these reasons, driving is dangerous and leads to many accidents.

**Restaurants and Marketplaces**

*Restaurants*

In Shanghai, restaurants appeal to a local and international range of modern and traditional tastes and eating styles. Shanghai cooking is famous for its



© Paolo Vasta  
Inside a busy restaurant

<sup>213</sup> Travel-Shanghai-Info.com. "Shanghai Car Rental – The How-To Guide." c.2008. <http://www.travel-shanghai-info.com/shanghai-car-rental.html>

regional specialties, which include a large variety of seafood, creative rice preparations, and use of rice wine for seasoning and lotus leaves for steaming.<sup>214</sup> If a diner orders a meal and is not certain of all the ingredients in it, the waiter can be a good source of information.

**Exchange 31:** What type of meat is this?

<b>Soldier:</b>	What type of meat is this?	ku zeh saa ghanyo?
<b>Local:</b>	Lamb.	yaang yu

All restaurants offer a variety of drinks, including specialty teas from different regions of China.

**Exchange 32:** I would like coffee or tea.

<b>Soldier:</b>	I would like coffee or tea.	muyaa lengey kaafee wa tey so
<b>Local:</b>	Sure.	haw gha

Depending on the time of day and type of restaurant, diners may have to adjust their eating expectations.

**Exchange 33:** Are you still serving breakfast?

<b>Soldier:</b>	Are you still serving breakfast?	naa hey kong ing tso bey vaa?
<b>Local:</b>	Yes.	koo eengaa

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<sup>214</sup> Travel-Shanghai-Info.com. "Shanghai Cuisine – Be Tempted!" 2008. <http://www.travel-shanghai-info.com/shanghai-cuisine.html>

A group of people eating at a restaurant may wish to pay their bill separately or put it all on one tab. Regardless of the manner of payment, the patrons should find out in advance what kind of payment method is accepted and have it available when they ask for the bill. Hotel restaurants and mid-level to expensive, upscale restaurants generally take credit cards. Otherwise, it is necessary to have cash.



**Exchange 34:** Can I have my total bill, please?

<b>Soldier:</b>	Can I have my total bill, please?	haw chi tsaang lawa?
<b>Local:</b>	Yes, of course.	haw gha

Tipping is not the normal practice in Shanghai or anywhere in mainland China. It is not expected for service when dining in restaurants because service charges are already added into the final bill.<sup>215</sup>

*Marketplaces*<sup>216, 217</sup>

Although some stores have fixed prices, bargaining is the norm when purchasing goods in Shanghai. Advertised prices are usually more than the seller expects to receive for the product, and vendors expect customers to ask for a discount or bargain for a lower price. It's not a good idea for the buyer to state up front what he or she wants to pay; better to wait until the end of the bargaining process.



A buyer should examine an item closely to be sure that the quality matches the price he or she is willing to pay. Also, the buyer needs to make certain that any antiques purchased do not date prior to 1795 C.E., as 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. Also, the items should be accompanied by a Certificate for Relics

<sup>215</sup> Lonely Planet. "Money & Costs." 2008. <http://www.lonelyplanet.com/worldguide/china/money-and-costs>

<sup>216</sup> China Odyssey Tours. "China Travel Tips: Shopping Guide in China." 2004–2008. <http://www.chinaodysseytours.com/travel-guide-book/shopping-guide-in-china.html>

<sup>217</sup> Lonely Planet. "China: Money & Costs." 2008. <http://www.lonelyplanet.com/worldguide/china/money-and-costs>

Export, provided by the regional Cultural Relics Bureau. Without this certificate, it is illegal to take such dated goods out of China.<sup>218</sup>

**Exchange 35:** May I examine this close up?

<b>Soldier:</b>	May I examine this close up?	moo koowee tseh dzu shee zoo zoobaa ?
<b>Local:</b>	Sure.	kuwee ga

There is no obligation to buy goods, even after browsing and asking about prices. A buyer should shop around and return to a certain store later, after comparing prices and getting a better idea of what items are worth.

**Exchange 36:** How much longer will you be here?

<b>Soldier:</b>	How much longer will you be here?	nom lala kata eyaw tong too saa song kwa?
<b>Local:</b>	Three more hours.	eyaw tang sey ga tsung du

Food is available at numerous street stalls and from food carts in Shanghai. Patrons can buy snacks, tea, coffee, iced drinks, and complete meals from these outdoor eateries. The price at such informal places is fixed and cash is required.

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. In smaller cities, only RMB is accepted for transactions.




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<sup>218</sup> China Odyssey Tours. “China Travel Tips: Shopping Guide in China.” 2004–2008. <http://www.chinaodysseytours.com/travel-guide-book/shopping-guide-in-china.html>

**Exchange 37:** Do you accept US currency?

<b>Soldier:</b>	Do you accept US currency?	naa su mey ching waa?
<b>Local:</b>	No we only accept Renminbi.	lasu ala tasoo sa menbee

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. It is necessary to examine change that is made in large denominations from street vendors because counterfeit notes are known to circulate.

**Exchange 38:** Can you give me change for this?

<b>Soldier:</b>	Can you give me change for this?	nong haao paang o ney taw pyaw dyaw key ley vaa?
<b>Local:</b>	No.	tyaw va keh

If someone is insistent on making an unwanted sale to obtain money, the target of the sale should decline the offer with directness.

**Exchange 39:** Please, buy something from me.

<b>Local:</b>	Please, buy something from me.	ching tong wo getaa maa ngeyma zeh
<b>Soldier:</b>	Sorry, I have no money left.	vahaa yes, wo metsa yala



It is necessary to have one's passport available in order to change money. In Shanghai and other cities, mid- and upper-range stores (individual and in shopping malls) and more expensive restaurants generally accept major credit cards as payment. ATMs are available, although it is usually not possible to withdraw money on a credit card except at the Bank of China.

## Urban Crime

In Shanghai and other urban areas, poverty is widespread and stealing is common. Stealing generally occurs in crowded places, where the thief is more likely to get away undetected. Sales scams are also common, in which salespeople will misrepresent the goods they are selling, claiming the value is higher than it is.



© 2 dogs / Flickr.com  
Shanghai police officers

Criminal gangs are sometimes the source of forced begging rings in which small children are put on the streets to beg. The gangs require the children to work shifts of up to 12 hours, providing them room and board. Thus, the children can continue operating daily under conditions of forced labor.<sup>219</sup>

## Dealing with Beggars

Many beggars live and work in Shanghai, China's richest city. They move there in search of jobs from poor, rural areas, and often end up begging as a profession when they cannot find work. In past decades, beggars worked in large, organized rings and worked specific territories within the city, not trespassing beyond their designated "turf" or district. Operating outside of state control, they worked in orderly ways in competition with other begging groups or rings, sometimes earning enough to eat well even though they lacked permanent shelter.<sup>220</sup>



© Ethnocentrics / Flickr.com  
Beggars

It is best to ignore beggars if other beggars are around. The alternative is giving money to a larger group of people, for if they see you handing out money, they will vigorously pursue you.

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<sup>219</sup> BBC News. Luard, Tim. "Shanghai Police Call for Beggar Taskforce." 11 December 2003.  
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/3310085.stm>

<sup>220</sup> BNET Business Network. Lu, Hanchao. *Journal of Social History*. "Becoming Urban: Mendicancy and Vagrants in Modern Shanghai." 1999.  
[http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_m2005/is\\_1\\_33/ai\\_56027315/pg\\_14](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m2005/is_1_33/ai_56027315/pg_14)

**Exchange 40:** Give me money.

<b>Local:</b>	Give me money.	tyaw paa pong mo
<b>Soldier:</b>	I don't have any.	moo met tyaw paa

Some beggars are professionals who are especially inclined to approach foreigners, who may seem sympathetic to their plight. The professionals may hire children, rented out by their parents, or they may pretend to be monks or pregnant women.<sup>221</sup> Others are simply very poor people living in extreme poverty. Sometimes a well-dressed local person will intercede and give them a little money, along with a stern lecture, because they are embarrassed and worry that foreigners will feel all of China is poor and backward.

Elderly beggars are generally content with anything you give them. Younger ones may be more aggressive. If you don't want to give simply say, "I'm sorry" and keep going.

Police in recent years followed the practice of deporting beggars, sending them back to the rural areas they came from or chasing them away from certain areas. In 2003, however, it became illegal to detain or forcefully deport beggars. As an alternative, police were directed to send them to temporary shelters where some food would be provided.<sup>222</sup>

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<sup>221</sup> Guardian.co.uk. McVeigh, Tracy. "Shanghai's Guide to Spotting Fake Beggars." 25 September 2005. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2005/sep/25/china.tracymcveigh>

<sup>222</sup> BBC News. Luard, Tim. "Shanghai Police Call for Beggar Taskforce." 11 December 2003. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/3310085.stm>

# Rural Life

## Rural Economy

In the late 1970s, China's government shifted from a collective system to an emphasis on individual households, in order to determine use of resources. Even though rural households gained the use of agricultural land for their own benefit under these reforms, most of the post-reform<sup>223</sup> economic growth that China experienced has remained in the cities. According to 2006 estimates, over 21 million rural inhabitants live below China's "absolute poverty" line, earning around USD 90 per year, and another 35.5 million earn less than USD 125 per year.<sup>224</sup> Economic growth has also been uneven by region; for example, greater poverty is found in western China than in eastern China.<sup>225, 226</sup>



© sheilaz413 / Flickr.com  
Family sifting through garbage in a Jiangsu landfill

Although the Wu region of China is considered one of the wealthier parts of the country, the areas of greatest wealth are along the seacoast. Zhejiang Province, which constitutes most of the Wu region, is one of the fastest-growing provinces in China. Along its coastal area, which has better access to "opportunities related to marketization and globalization," economic progress is greater, even in rural areas.<sup>227</sup> Around Wenzhou, investments have been made in private, non-state models of industrialization and manufacturing. Small industries in Wenzhou and surrounding areas are managed by private entrepreneurs, often family networks.<sup>228</sup> Generally, however, the surrounding agricultural lands, especially in southwestern Zhejiang province, lend themselves to higher levels of rural poverty.<sup>229</sup> Here, the cultivated finished products include rice, timber, jute, cotton, and sugar. Other industries include the raising of silkworms, silk and tea processing, handicrafts, and canning. Many farmers also raise livestock, such as fowl and hogs. Aquaculture, or fish farming, is also a rural occupation, both in Zhejiang and

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<sup>223</sup> Post-reform refers to the shift, 1980s and 1990s, from the "collective state" to a more "open-market state."

<sup>224</sup> CIA World Factbook. "China." 19 June 2008. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ch.html#Econ>

<sup>225</sup> Rural Poverty Portal. "Rural Poverty in China." 7 March 2007.

<http://www.ruralpovertyportal.org/english/regions/asia/chn/index.htm>

<sup>226</sup> The World Bank. "China: Overcoming Rural Poverty." c.2005.

<http://poverty2.forumone.com/library/view/8077/>

<sup>227</sup> *Eurasian Geography and Economics*. Ye, Xinyue, and Yehua Dennis Wei. "Geospatial Analysis of Regional Development in China: The Case of Zhejiang Province and the Wenzhou Model [p. 344]." c.2005. <http://www.geog.utah.edu/~weiy/PDF/EGE05.pdf>

<sup>228</sup> *Eurasian Geography and Economics*. Ye, Xinyue, and Yehua Dennis Wei. "Geospatial Analysis of Regional Development in China: The Case of Zhejiang Province and the Wenzhou Model [p. 344–5]." c.2005. <http://www.geog.utah.edu/~weiy/PDF/EGE05.pdf>

<sup>229</sup> *Eurasian Geography and Economics*. Ye, Xinyue, and Yehua Dennis Wei. "Geospatial Analysis of Regional Development in China: The Case of Zhejiang Province and the Wenzhou Model [pp. 349, 352]." c.2005. <http://www.geog.utah.edu/~weiy/PDF/EGE05.pdf>

southern Jiangsu provinces. Many small farmers have ponds in which they farm fish as a sideline.

Some rice farms practice fish-rice farming, an ancient specialized practice in which fish are grown in the waters of the rice fields. The process relies on a mutually supportive, symbiotic environment for both rice and fish. However, this farming practice has been declining throughout China due to factors such as rural migration and use of chemical fertilizers. It has also been negatively affected by agricultural modernization, which typically is accompanied by a loss of traditional farming knowledge such as that needed to support fish-rice farming.<sup>230</sup>

In rural parts of Zhejiang and southern Jiangsu province, most people farm on small plots of land.

**Exchange 41:** Where do you work, sir?

<b>Soldier:</b>	Where do you work, sir?	shee sang, nong lek sa tee fang kong tsok?
<b>Local:</b>	I am a farmer, sir.	mozeno ming, shee saa

Technological progress in agriculture has led to higher crop yields, which, when combined with rising population, has resulted in a surplus of rural laborers. Thousands of these laborers from the Wu region's Zhejiang Province and southern Jiangsu Province have migrated to the large cities of the region, such as Shanghai. Here, they form a cheap labor pool and enter into the status of second-class citizens. Before they leave the countryside, however, they must get permission, in the form of a permit, in order to leave their original residence. Many acquire the permit, but are later forced to return home if the urban economy declines, or they simply do temporary, seasonal work in the city.<sup>231</sup> Back in their rural homes, they often remain unemployed or underemployed.



© Sam Toh  
Farm in Zhejiang province

The Chinese government still operates large state farms, cultivated by modern agricultural machinery. The farms are located in areas of low population density and are

<sup>230</sup> China.org.cn. "China's Rice-Fish Farming a Dying Trade." 10 June 2005.  
<http://www.china.org.cn/english/2005/Jun/131633.htm>

<sup>231</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)

used for experimentation with agricultural products as well as production of particular crops for export or urban markets.<sup>232</sup>

*Land Ownership and Reform*<sup>233</sup>

After the People’s Republic of China was founded in 1949, the state became the owner of all rural land and a series of land reforms was carried out. The first was a Soviet-style reform that consisted of appropriating land owned by landlords and wealthy owners and redistributing it to peasants who had no land. Reforms continued in the mid 1950s, when the government moved the small peasant landowners into collectives, creating an institution known as the People’s Commune. Under this system, property was controlled centrally, removing the individual farmers’ freedom to manage their own farming operations. The result of this change was a pattern of persistent low production.



© Ming Xia  
A farmer in Zhejiang Province

A new rural economic reform was instituted at the end of the 1970s. Breaking with the Soviet system, the Chinese government introduced the “household responsibility system,” which has endured for many years. Under this system, individual farmers contract with large collectives to receive usage rights to a plot of land that they can farm. They gain freedom to make decisions on land usage, linked to the results of their management. The amount of land they are entitled to receive depends on family size.

**Exchange 42:** Do you own this land?

<b>Soldier:</b>	Do you own this land?	kaa ta gha tee dzu nong wo vaa?
<b>Local:</b>	Yes.	dzuz ga

<sup>232</sup> MSN Encarta. China. “Agriculture: Agricultural Planning and Improvement.” 1993–2008. [http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia\\_761573055\\_10/China.html](http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761573055_10/China.html)

<sup>233</sup> FAO, United Nations. Sustainable Development Department, Food and Agriculture Organization. Chen, Fu, Professor, South China Agricultural University. “Land Reform in Rural China Since the Mid-1980s, Part 1.” 1999. <http://www.fao.org/sd/Ltdirect/LTan0031.htm>

The individual household usage system stimulated agricultural production through the mid 1980s. In 1985, however, grain production dropped and stagnated into the 1990s, exposing a number of weaknesses in the household responsibility system. First, it led to a number of small, fragmented units, some with better quality land and irrigation rights. Much of the land was wasted in the form of boundaries and paths that separated the plots. The second problem was that eligibility to receive land rested on one's status as a villager. This egalitarian principle held true no matter when such status was acquired and no matter who held it, whether a long-time village resident or a newly relocated spouse from a different village. This led to further fragmentation of the small plots and a costly redistribution system in which many farmers pursued short-term gain and exhausted the land. Last, many farms had too much land and not enough labor, while others were overstaffed, especially in areas that were urbanizing in the face of industrial growth. This led many farmers to leave the land and migrate to the cities in search of work.



Migrant workers in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province

**Exchange 43:** Do you know this area very well?

<b>Soldier:</b>	Do you know this area very well?	nong tey kaghaa tee chu so shey vaa?
<b>Local:</b>	Yes.	so shey gaa

In the mid 1980s, the government began to analyze the emerging problems revealed from the agricultural performance of the household responsibility system. Economists began discussing individual land use rights, individual ownership, collective ownership, or a blend of the different methods as a means to improving agricultural productivity in China. Further reforms that have taken place include extending lease terms to 30-year renewable leases as well as allowing subleases. The government, continuing to experiment with new models of land reform, has also allowed farmers to hire farm labor and exchange labor.

A rural backlash has grown in many areas against China's collective system of land ownership. Farmers in some provinces, including Jiangsu Province, have been attempting to privatize the land that they lease. Asserting their right to ownership of the land, the farmers who have revolted say that collective ownership deprives them of the right to inherit, negotiate over, and dispose of their land. The Communist Party opposes individual ownership, reminding people that in China's civil war, peasants fought the system in which they were exploited by "hated private landlords," and that the party

redistributed land for all. Peasants have responded by saying that party officials are now the new landlords, exploiting the land for their own purposes.<sup>234</sup>

### *Rural Transportation*<sup>235, 236</sup>

Roads in the Wu region connect from cities such as Shanghai to provincial capitals and into the interior, rural areas. Most villages can be reached by road, and the roads are sometimes reasonably well paved, but often in need of repair. Many villagers use bicycles for transportation on the roadways. Trucks are used to transport farm equipment, machinery, and consumer goods into rural areas and transport produce and locally manufactured goods from villages to market.

Water transportation is popular in the “water country,” the region in eastern Jhejiang and southern Jiangsu provinces near Tai Lake, the Yangtze River, and other waterways. The Grand Canal is a major shipping and transportation artery here that consists of a network of lakes and small canals at its southern end. Thousands of stone bridges of various ages, sizes, and shapes span the various rivers and canals. Boats are a major transportation method in this entire area, carrying people from the doors of factories and workplaces to their homes or from their homes to shops and government buildings. Most village homes have a boat, a cheap and reliable means of transportation. Villagers use them to travel in the countryside, go into town, visit the homes of friends and family, and go to work.<sup>237</sup> Also, they use steamboats to travel or transport their goods up and down the Yangtze River and its tributaries.

Railways are another important means of both rural and urban transportation and are the main method of hauling freight. Major routes such as the passenger service that connects Shanghai and Beijing also connect to networks that extend into heavily populated southeastern China. Railroads are operated and owned not only by the central government, but also by small state agencies that use the railways to stimulate economic development in the region.

The state-owned systems link rural farms, coal mines, forests, and factories.



© emdurso / Flickr.com  
Passenger trains in Hangzhou

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<sup>234</sup> 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>235</sup> MSN Encarta. “China: Transportation.” ©1993–2008. [http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia\\_761573055\\_12/China.html](http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761573055_12/China.html)

<sup>236</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. “China: Economy, Transportation and Telecommunications.” 2008. <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/111803/China/71009/Railways>

<sup>237</sup> China Style. “Bridges & Boats in the Water Country.” No date. <http://library.thinkquest.org/05aug/01780/transportation/index.htm>

Rural areas of China lack the same level of investment in medical services that urban areas receive. There are fewer hospitals and clinics in the countryside and also fewer physicians or medical personnel, especially those who practice Western medicine. Because the population has such inadequate access to health care, mortality rates are much higher in rural China. Many people receive no health care at all, because they cannot afford to pay for the services.



© Rochelle Ran  
Inside a hospital in Hangzhou

China's health care system began covering all citizens after 1949. The country was lauded for sending large numbers of "barefoot doctors" into rural areas to provide primary care where there had previously been no medical coverage. Approximately 90% of China's rural residents had medical coverage in subsidized clinics during this period.<sup>240</sup> The *New England Journal of Medicine* reports that between 1952 and 1982, life expectancy in China increased from 35 to 68 years of age, and infant mortality fell from 200 to 34 for every 1,000 live births.<sup>241</sup> Also, communicable diseases such as smallpox, plague, and cholera were either controlled or eliminated. Tuberculosis, hepatitis, and other infectious diseases have since put the population at risk in some areas.<sup>242</sup>

China later moved from a planned economy to a more market-based economy, and people's right to socialized or free health care disappeared in 1994. They were forced to pay for their own health care or purchase medical insurance. Those people who work for government-owned businesses (usually in urban areas) still receive free or low-cost health insurance. In the countryside, however, collectives that once provided access to health care have disbanded. As of 2004, only 10% of the rural population had health insurance, with variation among regions.<sup>243</sup>

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<sup>238</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. "China: Government and Society, Health and Welfare." 2008.

<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/111803/China/71009/Railways>

<sup>239</sup> MSN Encarta. "China: Social Services." ©1993–2008.

[http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia\\_761573055\\_12/China.html](http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761573055_12/China.html)

<sup>240</sup> Economist.com. "Where Are the Patients?" 19 August 2004.

[http://www.economist.com/research/backgrounders/displaystory.cfm?story\\_id=3104423](http://www.economist.com/research/backgrounders/displaystory.cfm?story_id=3104423)

<sup>241</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>242</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>243</sup> Economist.com. "Where Are the Patients?" 19 August 2004.

[http://www.economist.com/research/backgrounders/displaystory.cfm?story\\_id=3104423](http://www.economist.com/research/backgrounders/displaystory.cfm?story_id=3104423)



People who live in the countryside travel to the closest towns to receive medical care in a clinic or hospital, if they have the money to pay for it. Often the quality of medical services in small towns is very inadequate and they must travel to larger cities for effective treatment. If patients can afford to visit hospitals and clinics in and around Shanghai, the services and resources are among the best in China.<sup>244</sup>

**Exchange 44:** Is there a medical clinic nearby?

<b>Soldier:</b>	Is there a medical clinic nearby?	kataao vojing yo tsung tsoo vaa?
<b>Local:</b>	Yes, over there.	yowaa lala emee

Rural people typically treat illness with traditional Chinese medicine, the only kind of medicine many of them have known or can afford. This involves the use of herbs and acupuncture, and practitioners of these methods are widely found in the countryside. The government does provide health and social services in the countryside when natural disasters strike, such as earthquakes or crop failures.

*Rural Education*<sup>245, 246</sup>

Schools in rural areas must rely on self-funding, compared to urban schools, which receive state financing. Because of this inequity, the quality of rural education is generally lower throughout China, with regional variation. The Chinese government has reported that 8% of the country's rural residents are illiterate, and many regions, especially in the west, have no schools.<sup>247</sup> In the wealthier eastern part of the country (including the Wu region), rural schools are likely to be better funded.



© onekell / Flickr.com  
School children in Hangzhou

<sup>244</sup> Economist.com. "Where Are the Patients?" 19 August 2004.

[http://www.economist.com/research/backgrounders/displaystory.cfm?story\\_id=3104423](http://www.economist.com/research/backgrounders/displaystory.cfm?story_id=3104423)

<sup>245</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. "China: Government and Society, Education." 2008.

<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/111803/China/71009/Railways>

<sup>246</sup> China Daily. "China Struggles to Bridge Rural Education Gap." 28 February 2007.

[http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2007-02/28/content\\_815569.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2007-02/28/content_815569.htm)

<sup>247</sup> China.org.cn. "Rural Education to Receive Needed Aid." 20 September 2003.

<http://www.china.org.cn/english/culture/75576.htm>

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

<b>Soldier:</b>	Is there a school nearby?	katong vojing yo vo daamva?
<b>Local:</b>	Yes.	yo ga

As in the cities, nine years of education are compulsory in most rural areas. To promote technical skills, emphasis is given to the sciences as well as practical vocational subjects. The humanities and social sciences, seen as less practical, receive fewer resources.

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 the middle schools or the high schools are long distances from where families live, and this discourages attendance. Parents may have to pay the cost for their child's boarding at the school on weekdays, creating an expense that families cannot afford.

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

<b>Soldier:</b>	Do your children go to school?	naa shoning chee tosevaa?
<b>Local:</b>	Yes.	chee ga

The Chinese government has pledged resources to improve rural schooling. Boarding school conditions need to be improved, as the facilities are crowded and they often do not offer good nutrition for students. More teachers are needed, and school infrastructure often needs repair. Also, the rural schools may lack electricity and equipment such as computers, books, and writing supplies.

*Village Life and Gender Roles*<sup>248, 249</sup>

In rural areas close to cities, a close link exists between city and village. This is a pattern found within much of the Wu region. Peasants who live close to an urban market must adapt their agricultural production and lifestyle to the increasing demands of the growing market. There may be greater options for jobs in the cities, leading rural residents to migrate to the city in search of work. Sometimes they continue living on their farms and



© Emma Chen  
Woman working in Zhou Zhuang

simply commute regularly to the city for jobs or events that they wish to participate in. Although poverty is usually much higher in rural areas compared to urban, in some cases a village can become quite prosperous by linking to the urban economy. This happened in Huaxi Village, located in Jiangsu Province, close to Shanghai. The village transitioned from an agricultural economy to one based on industry and textile factories. In the process, the original villagers became well-off by Chinese standards, earning “25 times the national average for farmers” in 2005.<sup>250</sup>

Peripheral areas where cities are close to villages may be also be marked by industrial development that filters into parts of the countryside. The government may compensate a farmer for requisitioning of his land (known as a land grab) so that an industrial or chemical plant can be built there. Under these conditions, pollution of the land and water often becomes widespread, many people in the village fall ill, and enforcement of regulations is lax.<sup>251</sup> A study by Michigan State University in collaboration with Renmin University reports that in the last 10 years, land grabs in China have increased 15-fold.<sup>252</sup> When people are forced off their land, the compensation the government pays them is less than the productive value of the land, and they have to migrate to find work.

Living close to cities, the husband may be gone for periods of time in search of income-generating work. He may opt for seasonal work away from his home, and other family members are likely to follow. When this happens, the family members who remain on the farm may lack the skill or strength to manage it well. This can lead to diminished productivity of the farm and its lands. Upkeep and maintenance are demanding. Work in the fields is hard because most farms are not mechanized, and planting and harvesting are done by hand. Difficulties also occur from splitting the family apart, which disrupts relationships within the family. The entire family may end up migrating to the city. Once

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<sup>248</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. “China: Government and Society, Health and Welfare.” 2008.  
<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/111803/China/71009/Railways>

<sup>249</sup> MSN Encarta. “China: Way of Life.” ©1993–2008.

[http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia\\_761573055\\_12/China.html](http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761573055_12/China.html)

<sup>250</sup> NPR. Lim, Louisa. “Chinese Village Provides Model for Prosperity.” 16 May 2006.

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=5406900>

<sup>251</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>252</sup> NPR. Lim, Louisa. “The End of Agriculture in China.” 19 May 2006.

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=5411325>

there, they do not receive the privileges that urban dwellers may have, such as health insurance or benefits for disability. Still, they may have a chance to earn more than they did working on their farm.

The husband is head of the household, and when he is away, the wife is in charge of all work in the home and on the farm. She defers this authority to her husband whenever he is present, and follows his lead when he is away. They share labor in all cases. Although rural women exclusively do housework and take care of the home and children, they also work in the fields alongside men.

*Who's in Charge*<sup>253</sup>

In rural villages, villagers hold elections to nominate members who will serve on a village committee. Many villages, including those in Zhejiang Province, have adopted an open election system in which villagers directly nominate the people whom they believe are best qualified. They also choose the village chief, the authoritative person who heads the committee and provides direction, resolves disputes, and helps visitors in rural areas.



© Ming Xia  
An elder man in a rural village

**Exchange 47:** Respected leader, we need your help.

<b>Soldier:</b>	Respected leader, we need your help.	tsawng ching aling daw alaa shuwa nong pang dzu
<b>Local:</b>	Yes.	haw ga

This leader or village chief is almost always male. Women are seldom elected, and if they are, it is usually to serve a subsidiary position on the committee in an area such as family planning. In addition, women's issues are not used as part of the electoral campaigns.

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<sup>253</sup> National Endowment for Democracy. He, Dr. Baogang. "How Democratic Are Village Elections in China?" 10 June 2003. <http://www.ned.org/forum/fellows/presentations/HePresentationSummary.pdf>

**Exchange 48:** Does your leader live here?

<b>Soldier:</b>	Does your leader live here?	naa ling daw dzi laaka tavaa?
<b>Local:</b>	Yes.	tey ga

Before village elections were implemented in China in 1978 on a trial basis and expanded to more permanence in 1998, the Chinese Communist Party held direct rural authority. It was followed by the village committee, and the village representative assembly, which takes up matters of rural citizenship. Now, under the new system, the village chief has gained authority that equals or exceeds that of the party secretary.

**Exchange 49:** Can you take me to your leader?

<b>Soldier:</b>	Can you take me to your leader?	nong koowee taangu chee chee naa ling dova?
<b>Local:</b>	Yes.	koowee ga

The Chinese Communist Party clearly 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**

Currently, there are no military checkpoints in the Wu region (Shanghai, North Jiangsu Province, and Zhejiang Province). If checkpoints are set up for any reason, drivers or pedestrians going through the checkpoint should comply with authorities, follow instructions, and politely produce any requested documents.



© Marc van der Chijs  
Shanghai - Hangzhou highway

# Family Life

## Family Structure<sup>254</sup>

Life in villages is based on the extended family and follows patrilineal descent. In traditional families of past years, the extended family included those related by blood and marriage, who combined their finances and shared quarters. Sons brought their wives to live in the father's household, and daughters left their natal families to marry and join the families of their husbands. When a son was born to the family, the child's mother gained status and security within the family group that she belonged to through marriage. Families devoted themselves to the family ancestors as well, extending ritual veneration to ancestral shrines that they placed in their homes.



© Eastern Law  
Family portrait in Shanghai

Today, families are usually smaller, but extended families 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 50:** How many people live in this house?

<b>Soldier:</b>	How many people live in this house?	ke zang la vaang zi lee dzi laa toosaw ying?
<b>Local:</b>	Ten.	tsaga ning

Alternately, family members may live in separate houses grouped together in one neighborhood. In this close family setting, children are likely to interact daily with a number of different relatives. From this close exposure to family members of all ages, children learn their roles as they grow into adulthood.

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<sup>254</sup> China Style. "Chinese Family." No date. <http://library.thinkquest.org/05aug/01780/essential/chinese-family.htm>

**Exchange 51:** Does your family live here?

<b>Soldier:</b>	Does your family live here?	naa eekaamen seh dzu laka tavaa?
<b>Local:</b>	Yes.	dzu ga

Established in 1979 as a temporary measure to limit growth of the population,<sup>255</sup> China's one-child policy has limited family size and still remains in effect. The ruling applies more strictly to urban Han Chinese; rural people and minorities are less likely to be affected. A second child is allowed in rural areas after the first child reaches the age of five, but sometimes only if the first child is female. In some remote areas, a third child is allowed.



© Bright Green Pants / Flickr.com  
Father and son

Millions of young Chinese without 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 of their own.<sup>256, 257</sup> Aside from these exceptions, the one-child policy is expected to remain in place for another decade.<sup>258</sup> The government enforces the measure by punishing families who violate the ban on second pregnancy. They receive fines, and women who violate the policy are pressured to have abortions.

**Exchange 52:** Is this your entire family?

<b>Soldier:</b>	Is this your entire family?	kaangey seh zinaa oleeshaa neengaa?
<b>Local:</b>	Yes.	dzua

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<sup>255</sup> At the time, China had one fourth of the world's population, but only 7% of its arable land. Source: New England Journal of Medicine. Hesketh, Therese, PhD., Li Lu, M.D., and Zhu Wei Xing, M.P.H. "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>256</sup> About.com. Rosenberg, Matt. "China's One-Child Policy." 18 June 2008.

<http://geography.about.com/od/populationgeography/a/onechild.htm>

<sup>257</sup> New England Journal of Medicine. Hesketh, Therese, PhD., Li Lu, M.D., and Zhu Wei Xing, M.P.H. "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>258</sup> The New York Times. Yardley, Jim. "China Sticking with One-Child Policy." 11 March 2008.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/03/11/world/asia/11china.html>

People living in rural areas are generally inclined to have more children in their family than those living in the cities. However, where wealth is greater, such as in Jiangsu Province, families have become more receptive to having only one child.<sup>259</sup> When the family patriarch dies, he leaves his estate (house and fields) to his son. This practice has remained in effect in rural China even though women are allowed to inherit as well.

**Exchange 53:** Did you grow up here?

<b>Soldier:</b>	Did you grow up here?	nom dzilaa kataa tsam duwa va?
<b>Local:</b>	Yes.	dzu ga

**Family Celebrations**

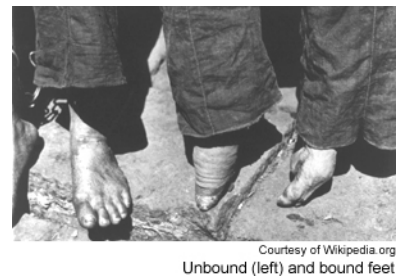
Families gather to celebrate for birthdays, marriages, and many other special events such as the mid-autumn Moon Festival. Their gatherings, which include the entire extended family and friends, are accompanied by large meals with specially prepared food for the occasion. At the Moon Festival, for instance, it is traditional to serve moon cakes, small pastries with sweet fillings sprinkled with sesame seeds. Banquets to celebrate more formal occasions are held in restaurants, and they involve several courses of elaborately prepared food.



**Status of Women, Elderly, and Children**<sup>260, 261, 262</sup>

*Women*

According to Confucian values, which were deeply embedded in China for centuries, women were considered subordinate to men in all respects. The custom of footbinding, wrapping girls' feet tightly in cloth at the age of seven to keep them immobile and align them with



<sup>259</sup> New England Journal of Medicine. Hesketh, Therese, PhD., Li Lu, M.D., and Zhu Wei Xing, M.P.H. "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>260</sup> Everyculture.com. "China." c.2007. <http://www.everyculture.com/Bo-Co/China.html>

<sup>261</sup> Chinese Cultural Studies. "Women in China: Past and the Present." August 1995. <http://acc6.its.brooklyn.cuny.edu/~phalsall/texts/chinwomn.html>

<sup>262</sup> Christian Science Monitor. Marqand, Robert. "Women in China Finally Making a Great Leap Forward." 17 December 2004. <http://www.csmonitor.com/2004/1217/p01s04-woap.html>



standards of beauty, did not end until 1901. Ironically, peasant women escaped this crippling practice, because they required full mobility to work in the fields.<sup>263</sup> In the Communist era, women gained legal rights such as equality at the workplace and in the home. New laws protected them in areas of inheritance, marriage, divorce, and banning the sale of brides and taking of concubines (unmarried female escorts) into a marriage. Still, traditional practices persisted, such as negotiating women into marriage or getting rid of female babies for economic reasons. Female children have traditionally been seen as both costly and temporary, since they leave the birth family when they marry. The practice of female infanticide or abandonment has often been replaced in modern times by sex-selective abortion (following an ultrasound) to ensure male heirs. Within the context of the one one-child-per-family rule, accompanied by the strong desire that the one child be a male, these practices are more likely to take place.<sup>264, 265, 266</sup>

A pattern has long existed in China of a disproportionate number of males to females. It declined in the Socialist era, but has been recurring since the 1980s. In 2006, the United Nations Development Program issued a report stating that the ratio of females to males is approximately 850:1,000 in China.<sup>267</sup> It is precisely this trend in gender imbalance that the Chinese government has tried to address when it began allowing a rural couple whose firstborn is a girl “to be exempted from the one-child rule.”<sup>268</sup>

In practice, women in the countryside have often been denied a right to hold contracted land even though the law permits them to do so. Under the system that came into place in the early 1980s, women were entitled to “equal rights to men in contracting land” according to the PRC law that protects women’s rights.<sup>269</sup> However, when women marry, they move out of their home village and local regulation causes them to lose the right to the land they were entitled to in their home village. Similar restrictive village regulations have often denied them the right to contracted land in the new village (their husband’s) in which they live. Some women have sued and, with difficulty, gained back this right by using the national law that guarantees their legal standing in this area.<sup>270</sup>

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<sup>263</sup> Everyculture.com. “China: Gender Roles and Statuses.” c.2007. <http://www.everyculture.com/Bo-Co/China.html>

<sup>264</sup> About.com. Rosenberg, Matt. “China’s One-Child Policy.” 18 June 2008. <http://geography.about.com/od/populationgeography/a/onechild.htm>

<sup>265</sup> MSN Encarta Online Encyclopedia. “Population: The One-Child Policy.” ©1993–2008. [http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia\\_761573055\\_5/China.html#s106](http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761573055_5/China.html#s106)

<sup>266</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>267</sup> Asia Times Online. Sparrow, William. “Asia: The Land of Raising Sons.” 24 May 2008. <http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Japan/JE24Dh01.html>

<sup>268</sup> Asia Times Online. Sparrow, William. “Asia: The Land of Raising Sons.” 24 May 2008. <http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Japan/JE24Dh01.html>

<sup>269</sup> BNET Business Network. “China: Rural Women Fight For Their Right to Land.” 2000. [http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_m2872/is\\_2\\_26/ai\\_62140831](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m2872/is_2_26/ai_62140831)

<sup>270</sup> BNET Business Network. “China: Rural Women Fight For Their Right to Land.” 2000. [http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_m2872/is\\_2\\_26/ai\\_62140831](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m2872/is_2_26/ai_62140831)

The division of labor in Chinese households in rural areas falls along gender lines. Women are responsible for running the household, socializing their children, and caring for the welfare of family members. Women are not confined to the household, however, and are fully expected to help with all stages of agricultural production.



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Woman carrying a child

Especially in urban areas, women also hold jobs outside the family, working in business, education, medicine, and other fields. Because jobs such as these require higher education, they are not usually within the reach of rural women, who have less chance to attend school beyond primary grades. Even when a woman holds a job outside the household, she keeps her fundamental role as family caregiver.

**Exchange 54:** Are you the only person in your family who has a job?

<b>Soldier:</b>	Are you the only person in your family who has a job?	naa olee shaa chyu nom eekaado yokun dzo va?
<b>Local:</b>	No.	va zu

Men often leave their families behind on the farm while they migrate to the cities or other regions in search of work. Under these circumstances, women try to hold the family together, taking on added labor until their husbands return. An absent husband may also be able to help out by sending money home regularly.

The lives of poor rural women can be exhausting, sometimes to a breaking point. In China, the suicide rate is 25% higher for women than for men, “and the rural rate is three times the urban rate.”<sup>271</sup> It is believed to be linked to feelings of desperation while facing difficulties that seem insurmountable. A 2002 study by the Beijing Suicide Research and Prevention Center found that the average level of schooling was five years for women who had attempted suicide. Further, their median household per-capita income was equivalent to 13 USD monthly, which is lower than average. The majority reported family conflict such as violence against women.<sup>272</sup>

<sup>271</sup> Washingtonpost.com. Fan, Maureen. “In Rural China, a Bitter Way Out.” 15 May 2007. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/05/14/AR2007051401506.html>

<sup>272</sup> Washingtonpost.com. Fan, Maureen. “In Rural China, a Bitter Way Out.” 15 May 2007. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/05/14/AR2007051401506.html>

## *Elderly*

In rural areas, where the majority of people in China live, elderly people do not receive disability or pensions. They live with their children whenever possible so that their children and grandchildren can help to care for them. It is the eldest son's duty to take care of his parents as they age.

**Exchange 55:** Do you have any brothers?

<b>Soldier:</b>	Do you have any brothers?	nom yo shong jeevaa?
<b>Local:</b>	Yes.	yo ga

Grandparents remain part of the workforce, working in the fields as long as possible. They also take on responsibility for their grandchildren. Sometimes they are the main caregivers when both parents migrate to the cities or other regions in search of income-producing work. The grandparents remain behind, and care for the children, overseeing their work in the house and the fields.<sup>273</sup>

China's one-child policy has created some difficulty for families, as the burden of caring for both the husband's and wife's parents falls on one family when there are no siblings. The children may not be able to take on the financial and physical demands of this responsibility.<sup>274</sup>



© Martin Stelbrink  
Old man and his granddaughter

## *Children*

In Chinese families, children are highly desired after a couple marries. From the time they are very young, rural children are given responsibilities to work on the farm and in the household. They are expected to help their parents and show deference to those who are older.

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<sup>273</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>274</sup> New England Journal of Medicine. Hesketh, Therese, PhD., Li Lu, M.D., and Zhu Wei Xing, M.P.H. "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>

### Exchange 56: Are these your children?

<b>Soldier:</b>	Are these your children?	yeelaa dzu nom gwaa shon yuma?
<b>Local:</b>	Yes.	dzu ga

Children are required to attend school for nine years, although the shortage of schools and teachers in rural China makes this less likely for children who grow up in such areas. Class sizes tend to be very large in country schools and many children have to walk or be transported long distances to their schools. Many rural children drop out of school or never attend, beginning agricultural work in the fields as early as six years of age. In such cases, they have few options in their lives, few possibilities of escaping poverty.



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Young students in Hangzhou

In kindergarten and primary school, children are taught traditional values associated with Chinese society, besides studying academic subjects. If they attend high school, they can pursue general academic education with an emphasis on science, or they can receive vocational training to learn about agriculture, mining, and other practical subjects.

### Marriage, Divorce, and Birth<sup>275</sup>

#### *Marriage*<sup>276, 277</sup>

Marriage customs in China were much more formalized in the past compared to the customs that exist today. However, some conditions that surround marriage have not appreciably changed. For example, marriage has been affected by a surplus population of males in Chinese society. The ratio of males to females balanced out during the socialist period, but has since returned. The intentional surplus is a result of the traditional devaluation of females and the need of a male heir to carry on the family name and care for elderly parents. In the past, the shortage of women led to the widespread abduction, sale, or negotiation of women for marriage. This linked to a custom known



© Stefan Schneider  
Traditional wedding clothes

<sup>275</sup> Everyculture.com. "China." c.2007. <http://www.everyculture.com/Bo-Co/China.html>

<sup>276</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>277</sup> Travel-Shanghai-Info.com. "Chinese Customs – Marriage, Traditions, Superstitions, & More." c.2008. <http://www.travel-shanghai-info.com/chinese-customs.html>

as the bridal lament, widely practiced in the Yangtze Delta region and other farming areas. Preceding the ritual, a family would arrange their daughter's marriage, with no input from the prospective bride. She would at some prescribed later date leave her birth home and become the property of her husband's family, not meeting her husband in advance of the wedding. The bridal lament, which involved sorrowful, ritualized crying, was performed for a three-day period in advance of the bride's departure. Following the institution of new marriage laws that protected women's right to marry after 1949, arranged marriages went into decline. As a result, the bridal lament died out in practice, turning into performance art.

In modern times, young people in the city and countryside choose their own marriage partners, but they still try to ensure family approval. They may also use matchmakers to determine compatibility, weighing practical considerations to reach a decision. Family involvement includes finding out as much as possible about the educational and social background of a prospective mate for a son or daughter. Once a marriage has been agreed upon, both families meet and negotiate details of the wedding and its cost.

**Exchange 57:** Are you married?

<b>Soldier:</b>	Are you married?	nom chiwang leva?
<b>Local:</b>	Local : No.	em maa

The families help to plan and arrange the wedding. If an eldest son is being married, the wedding will be as lavish as finances will allow. Many men put off marrying until they are older, in order to save money for the wedding, and because the event signifies an increase in status. Toward this end, every attempt is made to display wealth in a conspicuous manner when a wedding takes place.

In villages, the new husband and wife typically live in the husband's parents' household. It is more common in cities, however, for a newly married couple to set up their own nuclear family household. In both cases, married women become the center of the home and domestic values, responsible for bearing and raising children. In villages, they also work alongside their husbands in the fields, helping with harvesting and planting crops. Husbands become the heads of household, even as their wives hold jobs outside the home. Husbands may help with some of the household work, such as cooking and cleaning.

Husbands and wives do not demonstrate their affections publicly. This trait is in accordance with the Chinese principle of maintaining social harmony by controlling one's natural impulses. It is acceptable to show emotions inside the family, but public conduct should be subdued, indirect, and respectfully polite. Further, if there is conflict between partners in a marriage, it is treated as a private matter, not to be discussed with strangers.



© Tilman Schalmey  
An elderly couple enjoying an outing at the park

**Exchange 58:** Is this your wife?

<b>Soldier:</b>	Is this your wife?	kaawey dzu nom ta taava?
<b>Local:</b>	Yes.	dzu ya

*Divorce*

After 1949, the Chinese Communist Party put into effect a nationwide law allowing women to choose their own husband, as well as initiate divorce.

This right was often not upheld, however. In 1981, the New Marriage Law reformed marriage and divorce rights for women, making it easier for women to get a divorce for emotional reasons.<sup>278</sup> The reform resulted in a higher divorce rate, although this rate varied by region. Divorce rates for a period between 1982 and 1990 showed the lowest divorce rates existed on China's east coast in Jiangsu Province, and the highest was in the northwestern provinces. Other low rates were found along the east coast. Divorce rates were believed lower in areas that were more economically and socially developed (such as the coastal Wu region), where there were fewer instances of arranged marriage.<sup>279</sup> At the same time, legal reforms in 2004 struck down the need for married couples to ask their employers for permission to divorce, and the divorce rate subsequently increased in China.<sup>280</sup>

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<sup>278</sup> All Business. "Regional Analysis of Divorce in China Since 1980." 1 May 2000.  
[http://www.allbusiness.com/human\\_resources/3482638-1.html](http://www.allbusiness.com/human_resources/3482638-1.html)

<sup>279</sup> All Business. "Regional Analysis of Divorce in China Since 1980." 1 May 2000.  
[http://www.allbusiness.com/human\\_resources/3482638-1.html](http://www.allbusiness.com/human_resources/3482638-1.html)

<sup>280</sup> International Herald Tribune. "Reforms Increase Divorce Rate in China." 3 March 2005.  
<http://www.iht.com/articles/2005/03/02/news/divorce.php>

In the past, divorced women in China found themselves in extremely difficult positions socially and financially. They traditionally lost custody of their children when they divorced. The fathers were considered more economically able to raise their children, and the mother could even end up homeless with no source of income. This economic situation is still a reality for women in the countryside.<sup>281</sup> In urban China today, however, more options exist for both women and men, and attitudes are changing. Lifestyles in general are more mobile and women are becoming more independent. Their family roles are changing, becoming more powerful, because they are seen as capable of entering a profession that can benefit their entire family. Urban women are increasingly the ones to initiate divorce, and they retain greater control over their lives when they divorce, compared to previous years. Professional women in a city such as Shanghai have found it easier to divorce, being able to support themselves and remain independent.<sup>282</sup>



© softspot212 / Flickr.com  
Woman office worker

### *Birth and Birth Ceremonies*<sup>283</sup>

It is customary for newlyweds to look forward to the birth of a child, since life in China is still very family-centered. In poor villages and households, children represent a source of assistance. They can help the family with farm work, housework, and caring for younger brothers and sisters. Children are also seen as part of a social security network which ensures the parents will be cared for in their old age, especially if the child is a son.



© Andre Laubner  
Mother and newborn child

For these reasons, the birth of a child is an occasion for great celebration. The parents follow certain rituals, such as waiting until three days after birth before they bathe the child. This is a time for other family members to visit and view the newborn. When a male child is a month old, his parents hold a special event known as the First Moon party. They shave his head and wrap his hair in a red cloth. After 100 days have gone by, many parents throw the cloth with the hair in a river. According to traditional belief, this act protects the child.

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<sup>281</sup> The Tech. Wan, Elaine Y. "China's Divorce Problem." 10 November 1998. <http://www-tech.mit.edu/V118/N57/wan.57c.html>

<sup>282</sup> Christian Science Monitor. Marqand, Robert. "Women in China Finally Making a Great Leap Forward." 17 December 2004. <http://www.csmonitor.com/2004/1217/p01s04-woap.html>

<sup>283</sup> Everyculture.com. Culture of China. "Socialization: Infant Care." No date. <http://www.everyculture.com/Bo-Co/China.html>

## Naming Conventions<sup>284</sup>

A Han Chinese name includes two parts, a surname composed of one or two syllables and a given name often composed of two words. The surname is from the father's lineage. In ancient China, surnames were often linked to totems, animals or beings from nature that were worshipped for certain qualities. Also, they may have represented the name of a person's village of origin, a person's profession, or a season of the year.



© Nate Luzod  
Mother and son

The given name may represent a wish that the child being named will live a life free of misfortune. After the People's Republic of China was established, parents began naming their children in honor of historical events or activities with historical meaning. For instance, a common given name would be "Jianguo" which means "build the country," and in later years, "Chaoyang," meaning "toward the sun," became popular. Women's given names traditionally were linked with expressions or objects of nature or beauty, such as "Hua" (flower), "Mei" (enchanted), "Feng" (phoenix), or "Yin" (silver).

After marriage, a woman keeps her own family name that she brought to the marriage. When writing or introducing one's name, the surname (family name) is given first, followed by the given name.

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<sup>284</sup> China Style. "Chinese Names." No date. <http://library.thinkquest.org/05aug/01780/essential/chinese-names.htm>