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China

William A. Joseph

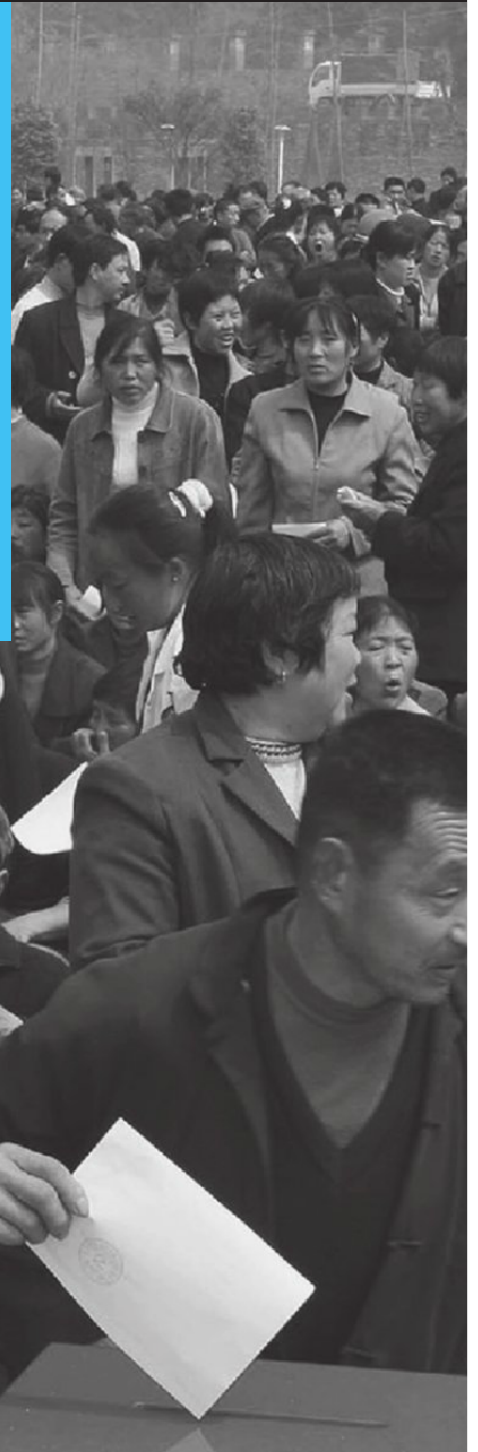
SECTION 1 The Making of the Modern Chinese State

SECTION 2 Political Economy and Development

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Official Name: People's Republic of China (Zhonghua Remin Gongheguo)

Location: East Asia

Capital City: Beijing

Population (2010): 1.3 billion

Size: 9,596,960 sq. km.; slightly smaller than the United States



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CHRONOLOGY of China's Modern Political Development

| 1700 | 1900 | 1910 | 1920 | 1930 | 1940 | 1950 |
|------|------|--|--|--|--|---|
| | | | 1912 Sun Yat-sen founds the Nationalist Party (<i>Guomindang</i>) to oppose warlords who have seized power in the new republic | 1927 Civil war between Nationalists (now led by Chiang Kai-shek) and Communists begins | 1937 Japan invades China, marking the start of World War II in Asia. | |
| | | 1911 Revolution led by Sun Yat-sen overthrows 2,000-year-old imperial system and establishes the Republic of China | | 1921 Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is founded | 1934 Mao Zedong becomes leader of the CCP; formally elected chairman in 1943 | 1949 Chinese Communists win the civil war and establish the People's Republic of China. |

SECTION 1

THE MAKING OF THE MODERN CHINESE STATE

Focus Questions

Why did China's 2000-year old imperial system collapse in the early twentieth century?

How did the Chinese Communist Party come to power in China?

What impact did Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping have on China's political and economic development?

In what ways might China be compared to other countries?

Politics in Action

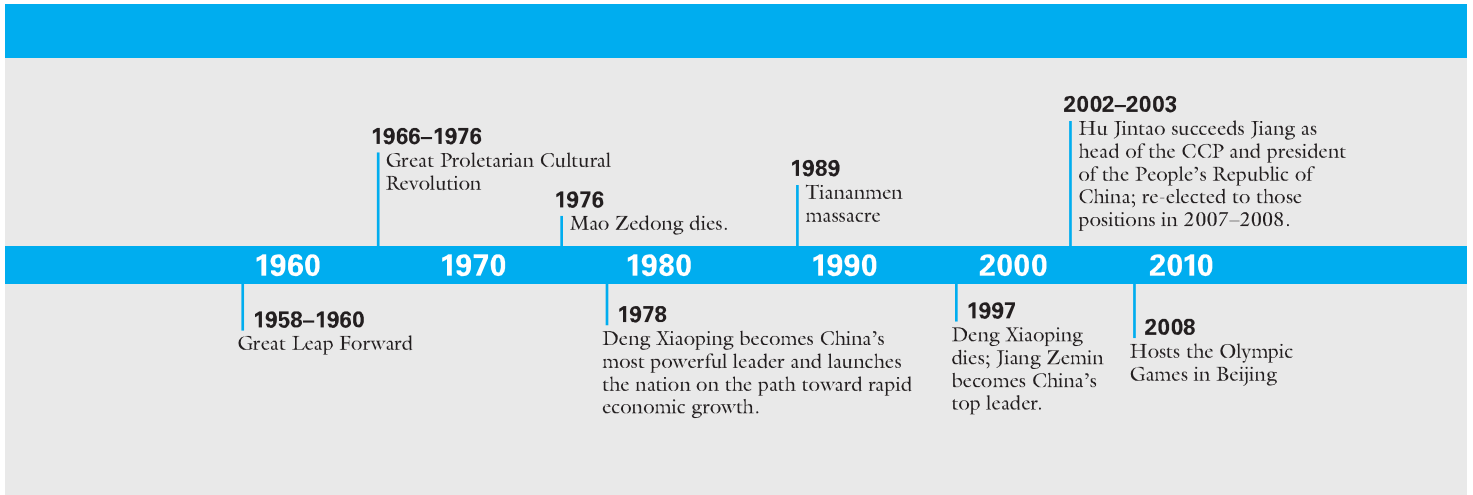
In late 2010, the Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to Chinese writer and political activist Liu Xiaobo. Liu was the first citizen of the People's Republic of China (PRC) ever to win any kind of Nobel Prize,¹ which is also given in fields such as economics, medicine, and literature. The Peace Prize is one of most important global honors that can be given to anyone involved in politics. Past recipients have included Woodrow Wilson, Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela, and Barack Obama.

According to the award citation, Liu Xiaobo received the Prize for "for his long and non-violent struggle for fundamental human rights in China." But Liu could not attend the awards ceremony in Oslo, Norway, because he was in a Chinese prison. His place at the ceremonies was symbolically filled by an empty chair. The Chinese government denounced the Nobel Peace Prize committee for insulting China by honoring a man they said was a criminal who had been tried and sentenced according to the law.

Liu was trained as a scholar of literary theory. He participated in pro-democracy demonstrations in Beijing's Tiananmen Square in 1989, which were violently crushed by the Chinese army. If not for his efforts to get many protesting students to leave the Square before the crackdown, the death toll would have been much greater. Liu was arrested for "counter-revolutionary incitement" and spent about 19 months in prison. In subsequent years, he was jailed numerous times for his political activities.

In December 2008, Liu was among the leaders of a group of prominent Chinese citizens who drafted Charter 08 calling on China's leaders to abide by the United Nations Declaration of Universal Human Rights and declaring that "democratic political reform can be delayed no longer." Even before its official public release, Liu and other activists were taken into custody. A year later he was put on trial and found guilty of "inciting subversion of state power." He was sentenced to 11 years in prison, which is why he couldn't accept the Nobel Peace Prize in person or even publically acknowledge the honor bestowed upon him.

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Liu Xiaobo's empty chair in Oslo spoke volumes about politics in the People's Republic of China. For all of its truly remarkable economic progress, the country remains one of the world's harshest dictatorships. The rift between China's authoritarian political system and its increasingly modern and globalized society is deep and ominous.

Geographic Setting

China is located in the eastern part of mainland Asia, at the heart of one of the world's most strategically important regions. It is slightly smaller than the United States in land area, and is the fourth-largest country in the world, after Russia, Canada, and the United States.

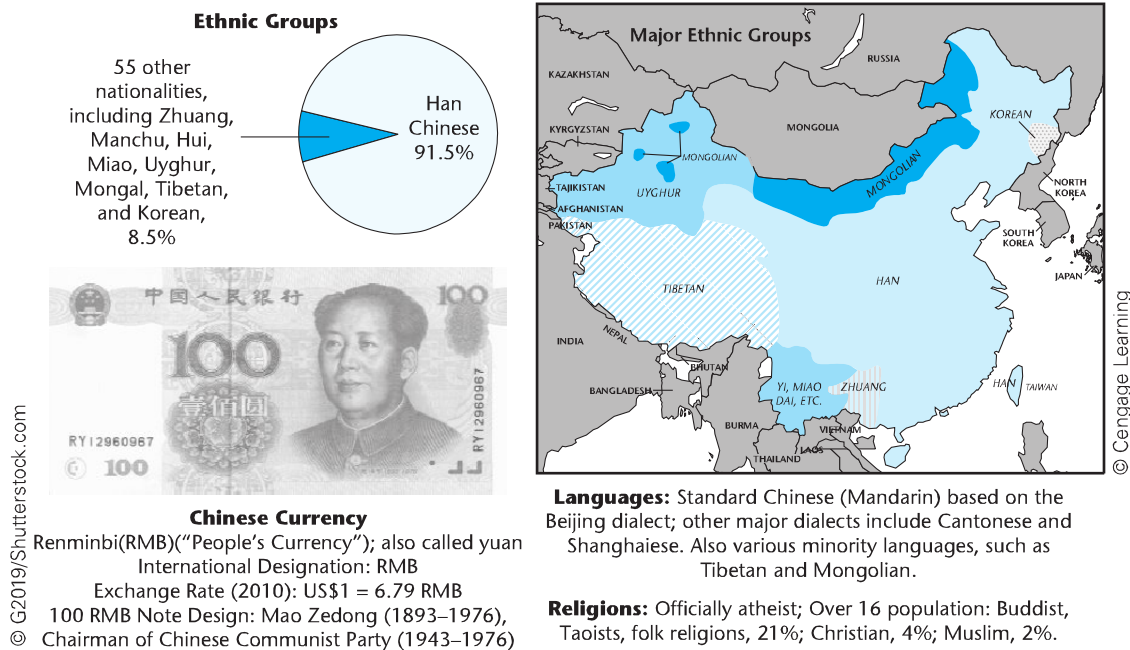


FIGURE 14.1 The Chinese Nation at a Glance

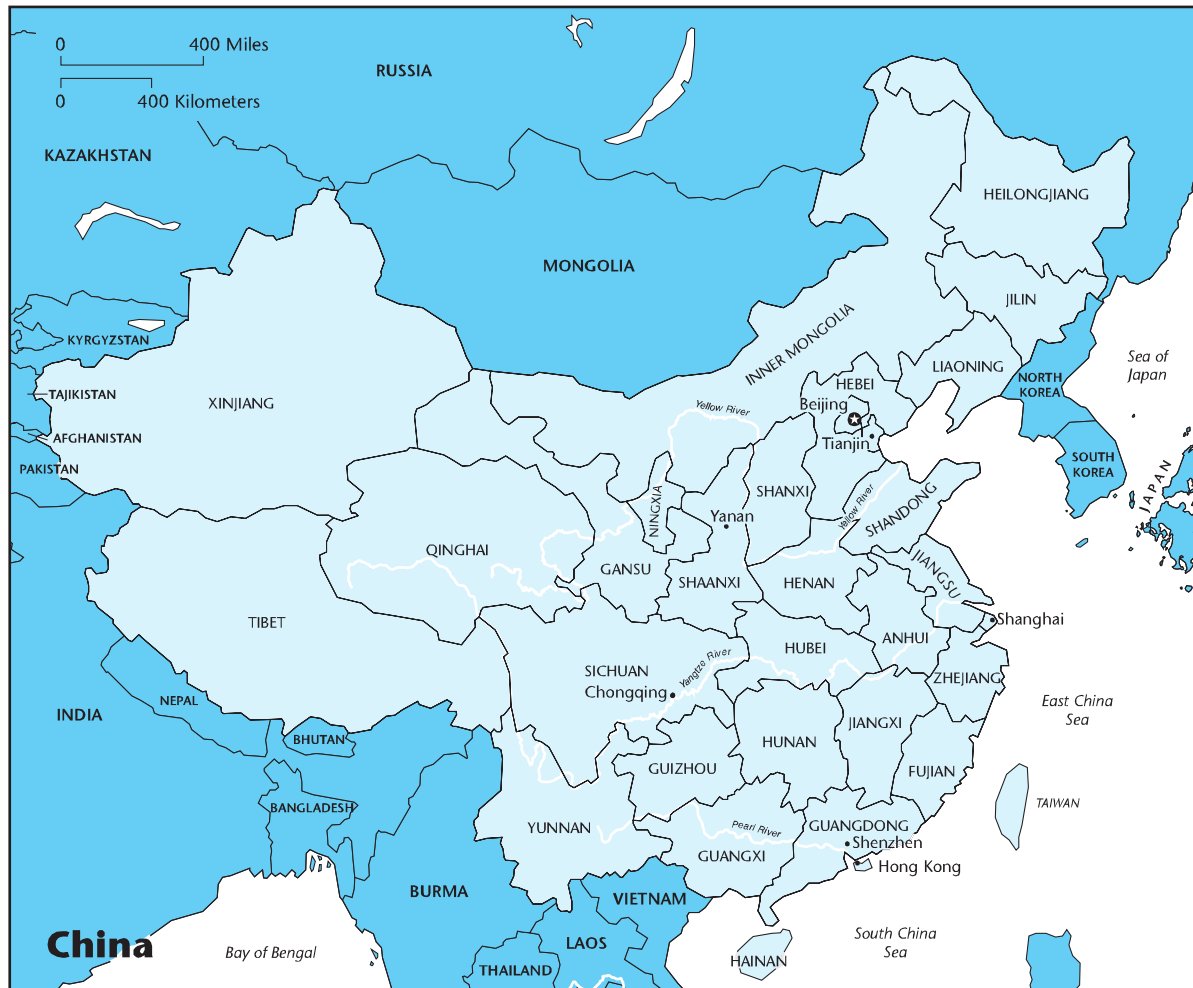
| Table 14.1 Political Organization | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Political System | Communist party-state; officially, a socialist state under the people's democratic dictatorship. |
| Regime History | Established in 1949 after the victory of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in the Chinese civil war. |
| Administrative Structure | Unitary system with twenty-two provinces, five autonomous regions, four centrally administrated municipalities, and two Special Administrative Regions (Hong Kong and Macao). |
| Executive | Premier (head of government) and president (head of state) formally elected by legislature, but only with approval of CCP leadership; the head of the CCP, the general secretary, is in effect the country's chief executive, and usually serves concurrently as president of the PRC. |
| Legislature | Unicameral National People's Congress; about 3,000 delegates elected indirectly from lower-level people's congresses for five-year terms. Largely a rubber-stamp body for Communist Party policies, although in recent years has become somewhat more assertive. |
| Judiciary | A nationwide system of people's courts, which is constitutionally independent but, in fact, largely under the control of the CCP; a Supreme People's Court supervises the country's judicial system and is formally responsible to the National People's Congress, which also elects the court's president. |
| Party System | A one-party system, although in addition to the ruling Chinese Communist Party, there are eight politically insignificant "democratic" parties. |

autonomous region

A territorial unit that is equivalent to a province and contains a large concentration of ethnic minorities. These regions, for example, Tibet, have some autonomy in the cultural sphere but in most policy matters are strictly subordinate to the central government.

The PRC consists of twenty-two provinces, five **autonomous regions**, four centrally administered cities (including the capital, Beijing), and two Special Administrative Regions (Hong Kong and Macau) that are indirectly ruled by China. The vast, sparsely populated western part of the country is mostly mountains, deserts, and high plateaus. The north is much like the U.S. plains states in its weather and topography. This wheat-growing area is also China's industrial heartland. Southern China has a much warmer climate. In places it is even semitropical, which allows year-round agriculture and intensive rice cultivation. The country is very rich in natural resources, particularly coal and petroleum (including significant, but untapped onshore and offshore reserves). It has the world's greatest potential for hydroelectric power. Still, China's astounding economic growth in recent decades has created an almost insatiable demand for energy resources. This, in turn, has led the PRC to look abroad for critical raw materials.

Although China and the United States are roughly equal in area, China's population of 1.3 billion is more than four times greater. Less than 15 percent of its land, however, can be used for agriculture. The precarious balance between people and the land needed to feed them has been a dilemma for centuries. It remains one of the government's major concerns.



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China has nearly 120 cities with a population of a million or more. Beijing, the capital, has 19.6 million registered residents, while Shanghai, the economic heart of the country, has 23.0 million. Nevertheless, about 55 percent of China's people—700 million—live in rural areas. The countryside has played—and continues to play—a very important role in China's political development.

In 1997, the former British colony of Hong Kong, one of the world's great commercial centers, became a Special Administrative Region (SAR) of the PRC. Hong Kong and China's other SAR, Macau, a former Portuguese colony with a thriving casino economy that became part of the PRC in 1999, have a great deal of autonomy from the government in Beijing in most matters other than foreign relations and defense.

The great majority (about 92 percent) of China's citizens are ethnically Chinese. The remaining 8 percent is made up of more than fifty ethnic minorities. Most of these minority peoples live in the country's geopolitically sensitive border regions, including Tibet. This makes the often uneasy and sometimes hostile relationship between China's minority peoples and the central government in Beijing a crucial and volatile issue in Chinese politics today.

Critical Junctures

Traditional Chinese culture was based on the teachings of the ancient philosopher, Confucius (551–479 BCE). Confucianism emphasizes obedience to authority, respect for superiors and elders, as well as the responsibility of rulers to govern benevolently, and the importance of education. In 221 BCE, several small kingdoms were unified by the man who would become the first emperor of China. He laid the foundation of an empire that lasted for more than twenty centuries until it was overthrown by a revolution in the early twentieth century. During those many centuries, about a dozen different family-based dynasties ruled China.

The country went through extensive geographic expansion and other significant changes during the dynastic era. But the basic political and social institutions remained remarkably consistent throughout the history of the Chinese empire. One of the most distinctive aspects of imperial China was its national bureaucracy, which developed much earlier than similar government institutions in Europe. Imperial officials were appointed by the emperor only after they had passed a series of very difficult examinations that tested their mastery of the classic teachings of Confucianism.

Imperial China experienced many internal rebellions, often quite large in scale. Some led to the downfall of the ruling dynasty. But new dynasties always kept the Confucian-based imperial political system. In the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, however, the Chinese empire faced an unprecedented combination of internal crises and external challenges. A population explosion (resulting from a long spell of peace and prosperity) led to economic stagnation and growing poverty. Official corruption in the bureaucracy and exploitation of the peasants by both landlords and the government increased. This caused widespread social unrest. One massive revolt, the Taiping Rebellion (1850–1864), took 20 million lives and nearly overthrew the imperial government.

By the early nineteenth century, European powers had surged far ahead of China in industrial and military development, and they were demanding that the country open its markets to foreign trade. China tried to limit the activities of Westerners. But Europe, most notably Britain, was in the midst of a great commercial and colonial expansion. Britain was exporting vast quantities of silver to China to pay for huge imports of Chinese tea. In order to balance the trade, the British used their superior military power to compel China to buy opium from the British colony of India. After a humiliating defeat by the British in the Opium War (1839–1842), China was forced to sign a series of unequal treaties. These opened its borders to foreign merchants, missionaries, and diplomats on terms dictated by Britain and other Western powers. China also lost significant pieces of its territory to foreigners (including Hong Kong). Important sectors of the Chinese economy fell under foreign control.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, many efforts were made to revive or reform the imperial government. But political power remained in the hands of staunch conservatives who resisted fundamental change. In 1911–1912, a revolution toppled the ruling dynasty, and brought an end to the 2,000-year-old Chinese empire.

Warlords, Nationalists, and Communists (1912–1949)

The Republic of China was established in 1912. Dr. Sun Yat-sen,* then China's best-known revolutionary, became president. The American-educated Sun however, could not hold on to power, and China fell into a lengthy period of conflict

* In Chinese, family names come *before* a person's given name. For example, Sun is Dr. Sun Yat-sen's family name; Yat-sen is his given name.

and disintegration. Rival military leaders, known as warlords, ruled large parts of the country.

In 1921, a few intellectuals, inspired by the Russian revolution in 1917 founded the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). They were looking for a more radical solution to China's problems than that offered by Sun Yat-sen and his Nationalist Party. The small CCP, advised by the Soviet Union, joined with the Nationalists to fight the warlords. After initial progress, this alliance came to a tragic end in 1927. Chiang Kai-shek, a military leader who had become the head of the Nationalist Party after Sun's death in 1925, turned against his communist partners. His bloody suppression nearly wiped out the CCP. By 1927, Chiang had unified the Republic of China under his personal and increasingly authoritarian rule. He did this largely by striking deals with some of the country's most powerful remaining warlords who supported him in suppressing the communists.

To survive, the Communist Party relocated its headquarters thousands of miles deep within the countryside. This retreat created the conditions for the eventual rise to power of Mao Zedong, who led the CCP to nationwide victory two decades later. Mao had been one of the junior founders of the Communist Party. Coming from a peasant background, he had strongly urged the CCP to pay more attention to China's suffering rural masses. "In a very short time," he wrote in 1927, "several hundred million peasants will rise like a mighty storm, like a hurricane, a force so swift and violent that no power, however great, will be able to hold it back."² While the CCP was based in the rural areas Mao began his climb to the top of the party leadership.

In late 1934, the CCP was surrounded by Chiang Kai-shek's army and forced to begin a year-long, 6000-mile journey called the Long March, which took them across some of the most remote parts of China. In October 1935, the communists established a base in an impoverished area of northwest China. There Mao consolidated his control of the CCP. He was a brilliant political and military leader, but he also sometimes used ruthless means to gain power. He was elected party chairman in 1943, a position he held until his death in 1976.

In 1937, Japan invaded China, starting World War II in Asia. The Japanese army pushed Chiang Kai-shek's government into the far southwestern part of the country. This effectively eliminated the Nationalists as an active combatant against Japanese aggression. In contrast, the CCP base in the northwest was on the front line against Japan's troops. Mao and the Communists successfully mobilized the peasants to use **guerrilla warfare** to fight the invaders. This leadership in wartime gained them a strong following among the Chinese people.

By the end of World War II in 1945, the CCP had vastly expanded its membership. It controlled much of the countryside in north China. The Nationalists were isolated and unpopular with many Chinese because of corruption, political repression, and economic mismanagement.

After the Japanese surrender, the Chinese civil war quickly resumed. The communists won a decisive victory over the U.S.-backed Nationalists. Chiang Kai-shek and his supporters had to retreat to the island of Taiwan, 90 miles off the Chinese coast. On October 1, 1949, Mao Zedong declared the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC).

guerrilla warfare

A military strategy based on small, highly mobile bands of soldiers (the guerrillas, from the Spanish word for war, *guerra*) who use hit-and-run tactics like ambushes to attack a better-armed enemy.

Mao Zedong in Power (1949–1976)

The Communist Party came to power in China on a wave of popular support because of its reputation as a party of social reformers and patriotic fighters. Chairman Mao and the CCP quickly turned their attention to some of the country's most glaring problems. A nationwide land reform campaign redistributed property from the rich

GLOBAL CONNECTION



The Republic of China on Taiwan

After its defeat by the Communists in 1949, Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist Party and army retreated to the island of Taiwan, just 90 miles off the coast of central China. The Chinese communists would probably have taken over Taiwan if the United States had not intervened to prevent an invasion. More than six decades later, Taiwan remains politically separate from the People's Republic of China and still formally calls itself the Republic of China.

The Nationalists imposed a harsh dictatorship on Taiwan, which lasted until the late 1970s. This deepened the sharp divide between the Mainlanders who had arrived in large numbers with Chiang in 1949 and the native Taiwanese majority, whose ancestors had settled there centuries before and who spoke a distinctive Chinese dialect.

But with large amounts of U.S. aid and advice (and military protection), the Nationalist government promoted rural development, attracted extensive foreign investment, and presided over impressive economic growth by producing globally competitive exports. This made Taiwan a model newly industrializing country (NIC). Nationalist policies laid the foundation for health and education levels that are among the best in the world. Its standard of living is now one of the highest in Asia.

After Chiang Kai-shek died in 1975, his son, Chiang Ching-kuo, became president of the Republic of China and head of the Nationalist Party. Most people expected him to continue authoritarian rule. Instead, he permitted some opposition and dissent. He gave important government and party positions, previously dominated by mainlanders, to Taiwanese. When he died in 1988, the Taiwanese vice president, Lee Teng-hui, became president and party leader.

Under President Lee, Taiwan made great strides toward democratization. Laws used to imprison dissidents were revoked, the media was freed of all censorship, and free multiparty elections were held.

The opposition Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) won both the presidential and parliamentary elections from 2000 to 2004, a significant sign of the maturing of Taiwan's democracy. The Nationalists were returned to power in 2008.

The most divisive political issue in Taiwan is whether the island should continue to work, however slowly, towards

reunification with the mainland, or should it move towards formal independence from China? The Nationalists favor eventual reunification; the DPP is regarded as a pro-independence party. Most people in Taiwan prefer the status quo in which the island is, for all intents and purposes (including its own strong military), independent of the PRC, but is not an internationally recognized country.

The PRC regards Taiwan as a part of China and has refused to renounce the use of force if the island moves toward formal separation. Nevertheless, the two have developed extensive economic relations. Large numbers of people go from Taiwan to the PRC to do business, visit relatives, or just sightsee.

The United States is committed to a "peaceful solution" of the Taiwan issue. But it continues to sell military technology to Taiwan so it can defend itself. The PRC often criticizes American policy toward Taiwan as interference in China's internal affairs. The Taiwan Straits—the ocean area between the island and the mainland—is still considered one of the world's most volatile areas in terms of the potential for military conflict.

Taiwan

| | |
|---|---|
| Land area | 13,895 sq mi/35,980 sq km (slightly smaller than Maryland and Delaware combined) |
| Population | 23 million |
| Ethnic composition | Taiwanese 84%, mainland Chinese 14%, aboriginal 2% |
| GDP at purchasing power parity (US\$) | \$823.6 billion, 20 th in the world, comparable Australia (#18) and to Argentina (#24) |
| GDP per capita at purchasing power parity (US\$) | \$35,800, comparable to France and Germany |

to the poor and increased agricultural production in the countryside. Highly successful drives eliminated opium addiction and prostitution from the cities. A national law greatly improved the legal status of women in the family. The CCP often used violence to achieve its objectives and silence opponents. Nevertheless, the party gained considerable legitimacy among many parts of the population because of its successful policies during the early years of its rule.

Between 1953 and 1957, the PRC, with aid from the Soviet Union, implemented a **centrally planned economy** and took decisive steps towards **socialism**. Private property was almost completely eliminated through the takeover of industry by the government and the **collectivization** of agriculture. The Chinese economy grew significantly during this period. But Mao disliked the expansion of the government bureaucracy and the persistence of inequalities, especially those caused by a strong emphasis on industrial and urban development and the relative neglect of the countryside.

This discontent led Mao to launch the Great Leap Forward (1958–1960), which turned out to be “one of the most extreme, bizarre, and eventually catastrophic episodes in twentieth-century political history.”³ The Great Leap was a utopian effort to speed up the country’s development so rapidly that China would catch up economically with Britain and the United States in just a few years. It relied on the labor power and revolutionary enthusiasm of the masses while at the same time aiming to propel China into an era of true **communism** in which there would be almost complete economic and social equality.

But irrational policies, wasted resources, poor management, and the suppression of any criticism and dissent combined with bad weather to produce a famine in the rural areas that claimed at least 40 million lives. An industrial depression followed the collapse of agriculture. China suffered a terrible setback in economic development.

In the early 1960s, Mao took a less active role in day-to-day decision-making. Two of China’s other top leaders at the time, Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping, were put in charge of reviving the economy. They completely abandoned the radical strategy of the Great Leap and used a combination of government planning and market-oriented policies to stimulate production.

This approach did help the Chinese economy. Once again, however, Mao became profoundly unhappy with the consequences of China’s development. By the mid-1960s, the Chairman had concluded that the policies of Liu and Deng had led to a resurgence of elitism and inequality. He thought they were threatening his communist goals by setting the country on the road to capitalism. China also broke relations with the Soviet Union, which Mao had concluded was no longer a truly revolutionary country.

The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (1966–1976) was Mao’s ideological crusade designed to jolt China back toward his vision of communism. Like the Great Leap Forward, the Cultural Revolution was a campaign of mass mobilization and utopian idealism. But its main objective was not accelerated economic development, but the political purification of the nation through struggle against so-called class enemies. Using his unmatched political clout and charisma, Mao put together a potent coalition of radical party leaders, loyal military officers, and student rebels (called Red Guards) to support him and attack anyone thought to be guilty of betraying his version of communist ideology, known as Mao Zedong Thought.

In the Cultural Revolution’s first phase (1966–1969), more than 20 million Red Guards rampaged across the country. They destroyed countless historical monuments and cultural artefacts because they were symbols of China’s imperial past. They also harassed, tortured, and killed people accused of being class enemies, particularly intellectuals and discredited officials. During the next phase (1969–1971), Mao used the army to restore political order. Many Red Guards were sent to live and work in the countryside. The final phase of the Cultural Revolution (1972–1976) involved an intense power struggle over who would succeed the old and frail Mao as the leader of the Chinese Communist Party.

Mao died in September 1976 at age eighty-two. A month later, a group of relatively moderate leaders settled the power struggle. They arrested their radical rivals,

centrally planned economy

An economic system in which the state directs the economy through a series of bureaucratic plans for the production and distribution of goods and services. The government, rather than the market, is the major influence on the economy. Also called a command economy.

socialism

In a socialist regime, the state plays a leading role in organizing the economy, and most business firms are publicly owned.

collectivization

A process undertaken in the Soviet Union under Stalin in the late 1920s and early 1930s and in China under Mao in the 1950s, by which agricultural land was removed from private ownership and organized into large state and collective farms.

communism

A system of social organization based on the common ownership and coordination of production.