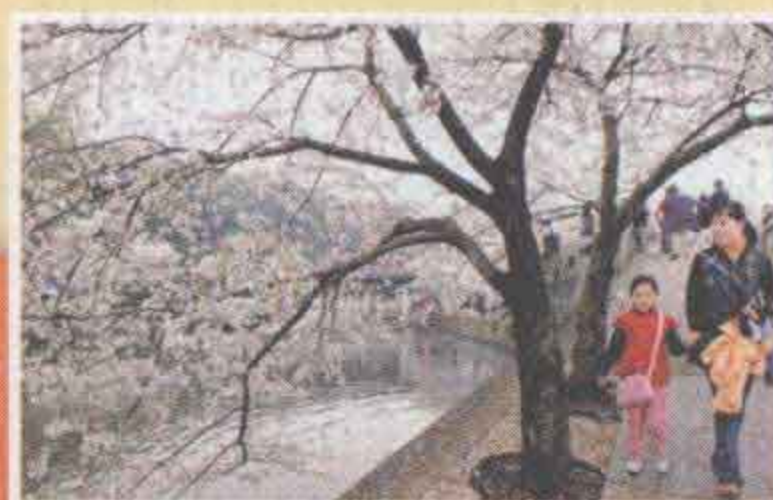


# CHINA

## FACTS & FIGURES

**T**he People's Republic of China is situated in the eastern part of the Asian Continent on the western coast of the Pacific. With a total land area of around 9.6 million square km, China is the largest country in Asia and the third largest in the world, next to Russia and Canada.



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顾问: 郭长建 黄友义  
主编: 王刚毅 吴伟 李建国  
中文编辑: 兰辛珍 丁志涛  
数据整理: 张亦兵 王新森 王煦  
图片编辑: 王新森 王煦 李建国  
英文翻译: 姚斌 丁志涛 丁文蕾  
闫威 刘宇 潘小乔

封面设计: 王新森  
版式设计: 王新森 郭传山 许华  
排版制作: 爱宝龙威图文设计制作公司  
印刷: 北京京都六环印刷厂  
印务: 王新森  
督印: 张亦兵

### 图书在版编目(CIP)数据

中国: 事实与数字. 2007: 英文 / 兰辛珍等编; 姚斌等译.  
—北京: 外文出版社, 2007  
ISBN 978-7-119-05044-7  
I. 中... II. ①兰... ②姚... III. 社会主义建设—  
成就—中国—2007—英文 IV.D619

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字 (2007) 第 107048 号

### 中国: 事实与数字 (2007)

\*

北京周报社编译制作  
外文出版社出版  
(中国北京百万庄路 24 号)  
邮政编码: 100037  
2007 年 (32 开) 第一版  
(英)

ISBN 978-7-119-05044-7 (外)  
17-E-6801P

定价: RMB 58.00 元 (含 CD-ROM 光盘)

First Edition 2007

ISBN 978-7-119-05044-7

Published by Foreign Languages Press

24, Bai Wan Zhuang

Beijing 100037, China

*Printed in the People's Republic of China*

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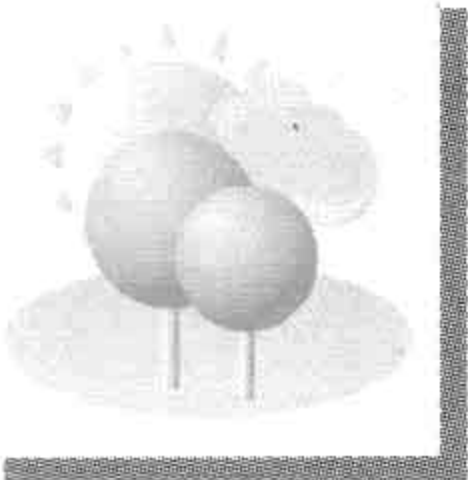
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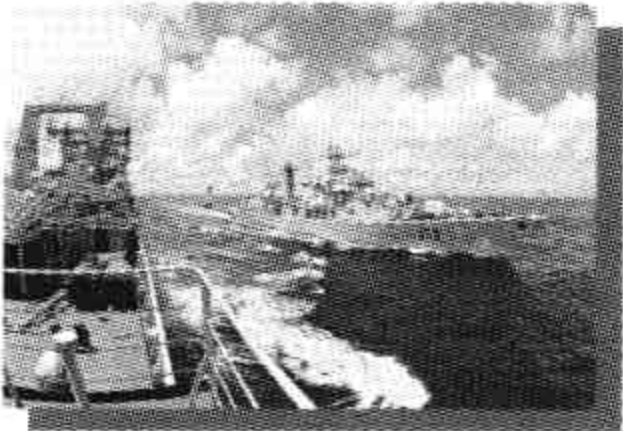
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CHAPTER

1



LAND, POPULATION  
AND  
ETHNIC GROUPS

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## CHAPTER 1 LAND, POPULATION AND ETHNIC GROUPS

### 【Location and Territory】

The People's Republic of China is situated in the eastern part of the Asian Continent on the western coast of the Pacific. With a total land area of around 9.6 million square km, China is the largest country in Asia and the third largest in the world, next to Russia and Canada.

The Chinese territory is around 5,500 km from the middle of the Heilongjiang River north of Mohe, Heilongjiang Province, in the north to Zengmu Ansha of the Nansha Islands in the south, and stretches for some 5,000 km from the confluence of the

*Plateaus, hills and mountains cover two thirds of China's land area. Pictured are Tajik women laboring on Pamirs Plateau.*





Heilongjiang and Wusulijiang rivers in the east to the Pamirs Plateau in the west. The land boundary extends for 22,800 km.

China boasts vast adjacent seas, with its mainland facing the Bohai Sea (nearly 80,000 square km), the Yellow Sea (380,000 square km), the East China Sea (770,000 square km) and the South China Sea (3.5 million square km) on the east and south. The area of China's territorial seas stands at 380,000 square km. According to the Comprehensive Survey of China's Isle Resources conducted between 1988 and 1995, China has under its jurisdiction 6,961 islands, each having an area of over 500 square meters, with 433 of them being inhabited and the rest remaining uninhabited. In line with the principle of "one country, two systems," another 411 islands are now under the jurisdiction of Taiwan and Hong Kong and Macao special administrative regions. The mainland coastline is 18,000 km and that of the islands is 14,000 km, giving China a total coastline distance of 32,000 km, the eighth longest in the world.

China is adjacent to 14 countries—the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Russia, Mongolia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Nepal, Bhutan, Myanmar, Laos and Viet Nam, sharing common land borders with them. It also has six neighbors across the sea—the Republic of Korea, Japan, the Philippines, Brunei, Malaysia and Indonesia.

## **【Geographical Features】**

China has various landforms, including magnificent plateaus, rolling foothills, vast plains and low-lying highlands, as well as basins of different sizes that are surrounded by hills. All these five basic landforms can all be found in the country, with mountainous areas making up two thirds of its total land area.

China has a terraced terrain, which descends from the west to the east step by step. The first, or the highest, terrace is the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, with an average elevation of over 4,000 meters. The Kunlunshan Mountains, the Qilianshan Mountains and the Hengduanshan Mountains, which are located to the north and east of the plateau, are the division of the first and the second terraces.

The second terrace is made up of large-scale basins and plateaus, averaging 1,000 to





*Pictured is the tranquil and beautiful scenery in Wuyuan County, Jiangxi Province.* ▲

2,000 meters above sea level. The Greater Hinggan Mountains, the Taihangshan Mountains, the Wushan Mountains, the Xuefengshan Mountains in the east are the boundary between the second and third terraces

The third terrace is composed mainly of plains below 200 meters above sea level, dotted with some hills and low mountains.

A topographical section of China along the parallel of 32 degrees north latitude shows clearly that the country's terrain descends step by step from plateaus in the west to basins in the central part then to plains in the east.

The third terrace of China's mainland extends to the sea in the form of sub-littoral zones on the continental shelf, which is the natural extension of the continent. It is not deep, with a grading slope and rich oceanic resources.

## 【Population and Ethnic Groups】

At the end of 2006, the population in China totaled 1.31448 billion, a year-on-year



increase of 6.92 million. Altogether 15.84 million babies were born and 8.92 million people deceased in the year, with the birth rate of 12.09 per thousand and the death rate of 6.81 per thousand. The natural growth rate of population was 5.28 per thousand in 2006.

China has 56 ethnic groups. These groups vary greatly in the number of population. Of them, the Han ethnic group has the largest population, while the other 55 ethnic groups, with smaller populations, are customarily called “ethnic minorities.”

According to the 1-percent national population sample census in 2005, the 55 ethnic minority groups had 123.33 million people, making up 9.44 percent of the national total. Of them, 18 ethnic minority groups have more than 1 million population. The Zhuang is the largest of them, with a population of nearly 16.1788 million, and the Lhoba is the smallest, having a population of only 3,000 or so.

The Hans are distributed all over China, though living in compact communities in the Yellow, Yangtze and Pearl river valleys and in the Songliao Plain. The ethnic minorities inhabit 60 percent of the Chinese territory, despite their small population. Over the ages, the Han people have established extensive political and economic ties and cultural

Population And Its Structure in 2006

Index	Year-end figure (10,000)	Proportion (%)
Total population	131448	100.0
Urban	57706	43.9
Rural	73742	56.1
Male	67728	51.5
Female	63720	48.5
0-14	25961	19.8
15-59	90586	68.9
60 and above	14901	11.3
65 and above	10419	7.9



exchanges with various ethnic minorities and they have formed an interdependent relationship for common development. People of all ethnic groups in China have made important contributions to the creation of a unified multiethnic country and the creation of the time-honored, splendid Chinese civilization, as well as Chinese historical development and progress.

### 【Spoken and Written Languages】

The Chinese spoken and written language by the Han people is also the most commonly used language in China, as well as one of the most commonly used languages in the world. Chinese, also known as *Hanyu* or Han Chinese, comprises seven major dialect groups that are composed of over 100 sub-dialects. These dialects are major components of the splendid Chinese culture, playing a unique role in the formation and development of the Chinese nation.

*A father buys his daughter a piece of new year picture before the traditional Spring Festival.* ▼





Except for the Hui and Manchu peoples who use Han Chinese, the remaining 53 ethnic minorities have their own languages. Generally speaking, one ethnic group uses one language, but there are those that use two or more languages. Because of this, there are a total of 72 ethnic minority languages being used in China today.

These languages, except for Korean and Gin, whose relationships have not been classified, belong respectively to the Sino-Tibetan family, the Altaic family, the Austro-Asiatic family, the Austronesian family and the Indo-European family of languages.

Archaeological findings and research results indicate a total of 57 ethnic minority scripts have been used within the boundaries of China since ancient time, and 22 ethnic minorities in China are using 28 written languages of their own. In China, the spoken and written languages of ethnic minorities are widely used in the fields of law and justice, administration, education, political and social life, and other areas. When important meetings, such as national congresses of the Communist Party of China and sessions of the National People's Congress and the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, are held, the documents of the meetings are available in Mongolian, Tibetan, Uygur, Kazak, Korean, Yi and Zhuang, and simultaneous interpretations in those languages are also provided.

The minority groups of Mongolian, Tibetan, Uygur, Kazak, Kirgiz, Korean, Yi, Dai, Lahu, Jingpo, Xibe and Russian have their own scripts, most of which have a long history. Of these, Mongolians in the Mongolian-inhabited areas use alphabetic scripts, written vertically, while those living in Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region use different alphabetic scripts that fit local dialect features. The Dais in Yunnan Province use four kinds of scripts in different areas.

Most of the Lisu Christians use a Lisu script based on the Roman alphabet, which uses only upper case letters as well as inverted upper case letters. There are also a small number who use syllabic Lisu writing, created by locals. The Va Christians in Yunnan use a Va script based on the letters of Roman alphabet. Some Zhuang, Bai and Yao peoples use ethnic scripts that are prominently influenced by Han Chinese scripts.

The Mongolian, Tibetan, Uygur, Korean and Yi languages have coded character

sets and national standards for fonts and keyboard. Software in the Mongolian, Tibetan, Uygur and Korean languages can be run in the Windows operating system, and laser photo-typesetting in these languages has been realized. Applied software in languages of ethnic minorities are emerging one after another, and some achievements have been made in research into the OCR (optic character recognition) of languages of ethnic minorities and machine-aided translation.

## **【Religious Belief】**

China is a country with many religions, the most popular being Buddhism, Taoism, Islam and Christianity (both Catholicism and Protestantism). Currently, there are more than 100 million religious believers in China, with more than 100,000 sites for religious activities and 3,000-plus national and local religious organizations. Of about 300,000 religious clerics, 200,000 are Buddhist monks and nuns, 25,000 are Taoist monks and nuns, 40,000 are Islamic imams and akhunds (teachers), 4,000 are Catholic clerics and 20,000 are Protestant clerics.

## **Religious Policy**

The Constitution of the People's Republic of China stipulates, "Citizens of the People's Republic of China enjoy freedom of religious belief. No state organ, public organization or individual may compel citizens to believe in, or not to believe in, any religion; nor may they discriminate against citizens who believe in, or do not believe in, any religion. The state protects normal religious activities." Meanwhile, the Constitution also provides, "No one may make use of religion to engage in activities that disrupt public order, impair the health of citizens or interfere with the educational system of the state." Also, "religious bodies and religious affairs are not subject to any foreign domination."

Other Chinese laws also provide stipulations on religious belief, including the Law on Regional Ethnic Autonomy, the General Principles of the Civil Law, the Education Law, the Labor Law, the Compulsory Education Law, the Electoral Law of the National People's Congress and Local People's Congresses, the Organic Law of the Villagers'



Committees and the Advertising Law. Relevant stipulations are: All citizens, regardless of their religious belief, have the right to vote and stand for election; the legal property of religious organizations is protected by law; education and religion are separate and citizens, regardless of their religious belief, have equal chance to receive education according to law; ethnic groups shall respect one another's language, customs and religious belief; citizens shall not be discriminated against in employment because of different religious beliefs; and advertisements and trademarks shall contain no content suggestive of ethnic or religious discrimination.

On March 1, 2005, the Regulations on Religious Affairs promulgated by the State Council went into effect. These regulations were formulated in the form of legal document for the purpose of ensuring the rights of religious groups and citizens who believe in religions to engage in religious activities, establish religious schools, publish religious books and periodicals, manage properties related to religions and conduct outbound religious exchanges. They showcase the Chinese Government's respect for and

*Taoism is the only indigenous religion of China, with a history of more than 1,800 years. Pictured is a Taoist ritual.* ▼

