



NORTHEAST ASIA

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Officer Block 2 and Enlisted Block 3

# An Introduction to the Northeast Asia Region

CENTER FOR ADVANCED OPERATIONAL CULTURE LEARNING

# **Regional, Culture, and Language Familiarization (RCLF) Program**

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## Introduction

One must distinguish between the study of regions, countries, and cultures. Chapters 1 through 6 in this document introduce a region and provide some information about its countries and their relationships. They do not introduce a culture or cultures. Those chapters simply provide knowledge about the region and the environment in which people with different cultures live.

Regions and states do not have a single culture; instead they have multiple, diverse cultures. Cultures are not necessarily bound by national borders. There may be multiple cultures in a single state, while people sharing a single culture may live in more than one state.

The case study in Chapter 7 is about one specific culture in the region. Building upon the information provided in chapters 1 through 6, Chapter 7 introduces one of the many cultures in the Northeast Asia region, using concepts discussed in the Operational Culture General document.

## Why This Region is Relevant to You as a Marine

According to Admiral Samuel J. Locklear, USPACOM's actions in the nation's rebalance toward the Asia-Pacific region are a visible and enduring demonstration of U.S. commitment to the region. Actions are reflected in a continued and steady investment in forces, infrastructure, and engagement in the Indo-Asia-Pacific and are designed to defend the homeland, strengthen and modernize our alliances and partnerships, maintain our access to the global commons, deter aggression, and prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.<sup>1</sup>

Northeast Asia is the most populous region on earth, with a population over 1.6 billion.<sup>2</sup> Urbanization is moving at an unprecedented pace, with rural space being swallowed up into large cities. China alone now has more than 170 cities with a population over 1 million.<sup>3</sup>



Marines pause during renovation work on the Erdmiin Oyun High School as part of Exercise Khaan Quest 2013 in the Nalaikh District of Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. (Source: USPACOM)

The importance of the region to the United States cannot be understated. China is the number one trading partner of the U.S., and has surpassed the United States as the world's largest economy by most indicators.<sup>4</sup> It is also home to the world's most populous military, with 2.3 million active duty military personnel. Japan is home to 85 U.S. military installations and South Korea hosts some of the largest U.S. military bases in the world. The reclusive and opaque government of North Korea continues to threaten regional stability, and Mongolia and Taiwan engage in regular bilateral exercises with the U.S. military.

The impact of natural disasters in the region directly affects the United States. The U.S. has large economic investments throughout the region, therefore property destruction and human casualties from natural disasters also have a considerable impact on the U.S. economy. Furthermore, due to extensive bilateral cooperation with the region's militaries, when disasters strike, the U.S.

military is a first responder to these catastrophes; and often remains at the disaster scene to support the recovery, clean-up, and reconstruction. As a Marine assigned to the Northeast Asia region, your understanding of the cultural and security-related aspects of this particular region gives you the tools to help you navigate should you be deployed to the region.

## Geographic Overview

### Why a Geographic Overview Matters to You as a Marine

Geographic features include physical and biological factors tied to location, topography, climate, soil, environmental hazards, flora, and fauna. These features influence human and social characteristics such as beliefs, behaviors, social organization, economy, and politics, to name a few. This is not to say that geography determines how people and societies behave; but rather, that it has varying effects on what they believe and do.

The locations of rivers, mountains, deserts, and coasts have great influence on where people live, what crops can be raised, and what modes of transportation are suitable. Climate and weather influence how people dress, work, and earn a living. Natural disasters like hurricanes, flooding, and earthquakes can devastate a region, and dislocate a great number of people.



(Source: CAOCL)

The Northeast Asia region stretches across more than 4 million kilometers and is bordered by India to the west, Russia to the north, and the Pacific Ocean to the east. The region includes China (Beijing), Japan (Tokyo), Mongolia (Ulaanbaatar), North Korea (Pyongyang), South Korea (Seoul), and Taiwan (Taipei).

The official name of North Korea is the Democratic Peoples' Republic of North Korea, while the official name of South Korea is the Republic of Korea. In the United States, you will find most media outlets will use North and South Korea; however, most official reports and international sources will use DPRK and ROK, respectively.

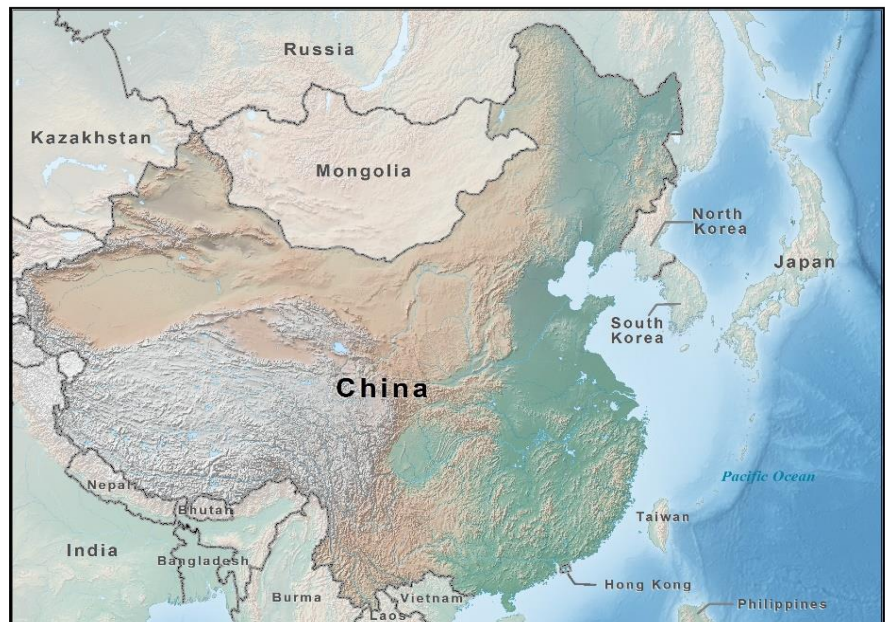
The region is home to the world's largest population as well as the most closed nation, the world's largest cities as well as the world's most nomadic society, and everything in between. From country to country, the geographic, political, social and economic characteristics are some of the most diverse on earth.

## Topography

The entire Northeast Asia region spans across six lines of longitude and is home to long rivers, plateaus, steppe and grasslands, and expansive tropical forests, one of the world's largest deserts, and the world's highest mountain ranges. In addition to geographic diversity, the region is also prone to natural disasters. Inland areas of northeast Asia are susceptible to drought as well as flooding. The numerous active fault lines across the region have not only caused some of the largest earthquakes in history, but fault lines on the ocean floor have generated catastrophic tsunamis. Because of robust U.S. military presence in the region, the United States is typically among the first responders to many natural disasters in the region.

## *China*

The Himalayan mountain range forms a natural border between China and India, Nepal, and Bhutan. In western China these extremely high mountains are the area's most prominent geographical feature, where in the autonomous region of Tibet, the range is about four times the size of Texas. While most of the range and the world's tallest peak, Mount Everest, lies across the border in Nepal, a significant portion of it lies in Tibet. Northern



Source: CAOCL

Tibet is more arid at the higher elevations than in southern Tibet. The area is covered in grasslands and glacial lakes. From these lakes flow China's longest rivers – the Yellow River and the Yangtze River. Tibet's administrative capital Lhasa is at 11,975 ft. (3,650 m) above sea level.



North of the Tibetan plateau area are desert and dry basins. Rain is very sparse in this area due to it being so far inland. The Gobi Desert in northern China and Mongolia blends into the Euro-Asian Steppe. The steppe is subject to frigid northern winds that prevail in winter and have an impact as far away as the Korean Peninsula and Japan.

Except where it runs through the Altai Mountains in the west, Mongolia's border with China is drawn through the desert. Several north-south mountain ranges separate Tibet and eastern China. These same mountains form the border between China and Burma/Myanmar. To the east are the Qinling Mountains, named after the Qin Dynasty, which united northern and southern China during the BC 200s. The Qin grew to prominence on the Guanzhong Plain located just north of the mountains. South of the Qinling Mountains is the Sichuan Basin, surrounded on all sides by mountains. The secluded basin is famous for its year-round, wet rice cultivation, and natural gas deposits.

Much of eastern China's landscape is comprised of plains that taper gradually into the ocean. Fed chiefly by the Yellow and Yangtze rivers, this area supports the majority of China's agricultural production, and is where most of China's population is located. Southeastern China receives much higher levels of precipitation due to increased influence of the monsoon winds and North Pacific typhoons (tropical cyclones).

## ***Mongolia***

Separating Russia and China, Mongolia is a country slightly smaller in size than the state of Alaska. It is completely landlocked and characterized mostly by desert, rolling grass plains, and rivers. Mongolia's terrain has vast semi-desert and desert plains, with grassy steppes, mountains in the west and southwest and the Gobi Desert located in the south-central part of the country. There are numerous rivers and lakes



Source: CAOCL

located across its northern half. Mongolia is home to over 4,000 rivers, with the major rivers flowing into three separate basins: the Northern Arctic Basin, Pacific Ocean Basin, and the Central Asian Internal Basin. The Selenge River is Mongolia's largest river, traversing most of the northern territory on its way into Russia. The Onon River is the only river in Mongolia that drains into the Pacific Ocean.



## ***Korean Peninsula***

The northeastern part of the Asian continent is home to the Korean Peninsula. The peninsula extends some 600 miles (1,000 km) into the sea, forming the edge of a gulf called the Yellow Sea to the west and the East Sea to the east. The East Sea is commonly known as the Sea of Japan. The name of this ocean is contested between South Korea and Japan. The peninsula is sea-bound on three sides, east, west, and south and is home to some 4,198 islands.

The peninsula's terrain is predominantly mountainous. Approximately 80 percent of the land consists of mountains and uplands. The Yalu River at the northern tip of the peninsula serves as the border between North Korea and China, and the Duman River separates North Korea and Russia. Since the Armistice that aimed to halt hostilities of the Korean War, the demilitarized zone (DMZ) has served to separate communist North Korea from democratic South Korea roughly at the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel.



Source: CAOCL

South Korea has implemented enormous land development initiatives in recent decades. One such endeavor is the Great Four Rivers Project, designed to connect and expand use of waterways. The Han River has already been dredged and connects to a canal called the Gyeongin Boat Road. Cargo and tourist boats now can sail back and forth inland from the East Sea/Japan Sea to Seoul. Earth removed from river dredging and land development projects for decades has been transported to and dumped into the sea along the east coastline steadily extending the peninsular mainland of South Korea.

## ***Japan***

About 120 miles (200 km) east of South Korea are the four “home islands” of Japan: Hokkaido, Honshu, Shikoku, and Kyushu. These islands, as well as their narrow coastal areas and coastal plains,

are heavily populated. There are also several active volcanoes located on the islands, which are part of the Pacific Ring of Fire.

A chain of several small islands extends from the home islands of Japan in the direction of Taiwan. Most are reachable by ferry and airplane. Okinawa, the location of U.S. military bases, is part of this island chain called the Ryuku Islands. The Kuril Islands extend to the north from Japan's home islands. Some of these islands have been contested by Japan and Russia, in a dispute known as the North Islands dispute. As Russia has become increasingly aggressive in recent years, this dispute, likewise, has become increasingly heated (For more about territorial disputes, please refer to the Regional Security chapter)

### ***Taiwan***

Taiwan is located approximately 100 miles (160 km) off the southeastern coast of China, and has a mountainous spine that runs along its north-south axis. The mountains fall sharply into the Pacific Ocean on the east, and open onto a plain in the west. The island has been controlled by the Republic of China government since 1945, and became the government's home base in 1949, when the Nationalists fled mainland China. The Republic of China (ROC's) capital had switched between various cities on mainland China during the war with the communists and Imperial Japan. After Japan was defeated and the communist takeover appeared imminent, the ROC established Taipei as its capital.



Source: CAOCL

The United States does not support Taiwan independence. Maintaining strong, no official relations with Taiwan is a major U.S. goal, in line with the U.S. desire to further peace and stability in Asia. The 1979 Taiwan Relations Act provides the legal basis for the unofficial relationship between the United States and Taiwan, and enshrines the U.S. commitment to assist Taiwan in maintaining its defensive capability. The United States insists on the peaceful resolution of cross-Straits differences, opposes unilateral changes to the status quo by either side, and encourages dialogue to help advance such an outcome.

- Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, Department of State

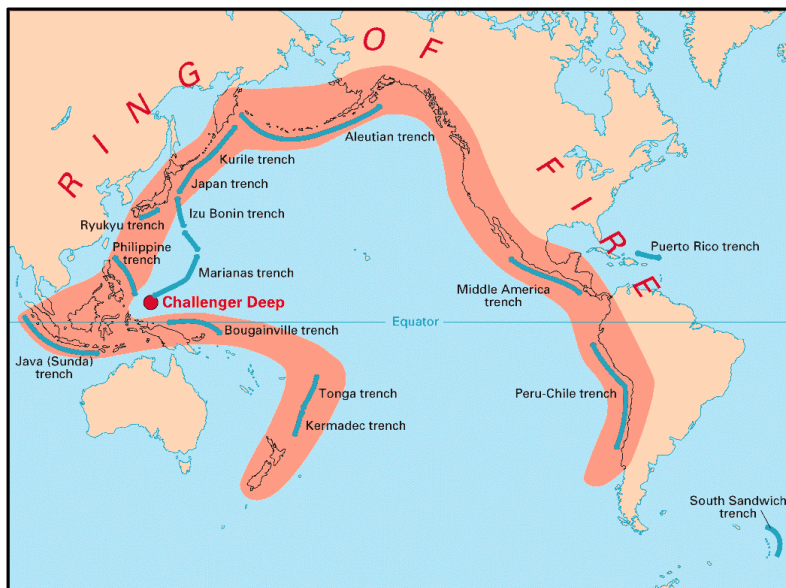
## Maritime Region

The largest rivers in China are important for trade, transport, and irrigation, as they are navigable for thousands of miles inland. River deltas form large natural harbors on the coastline, which have been centers for international commerce and trade for centuries. However, heavy siltation from landslides and mudflows, and industrial, agricultural, and sewage pollution are problems for China's waterways. In other countries, riverine transport is less important because rivers are short and narrow. North Korea and Mongolia have few riverine waterways, all of which freeze during winter. South Korea is developing and implementing plans to expand transportation lines in the country by further dredging and developing its waterways.

The maritime region south of mainland China and Taiwan is known as the South China Sea, where certain areas and territories are disputed among China, Taiwan, and several other countries to the south. The region's oil and natural gas reserves make it attractive to countries whose expanding economies need energy to stay powered through the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Defending shipping lanes in the Yellow, East China, and South China seas, as well as in the Taiwan Strait is crucial to national economies of the region, as countries rely almost exclusively on maritime shipping to import and export goods.

## Earthquakes

Because of its proximity to the Ring of Fire and numerous fault lines, the region is prone to earthquakes. China and Japan are home to five of the top ten most catastrophic earthquakes in recorded history. Furthermore, because of the population density in the region, death tolls from quakes have consistently been higher than those of the same magnitude in other regions. The Shaanxi earthquake in China in the 15<sup>th</sup> century is still the record holder for the largest loss of life due to a



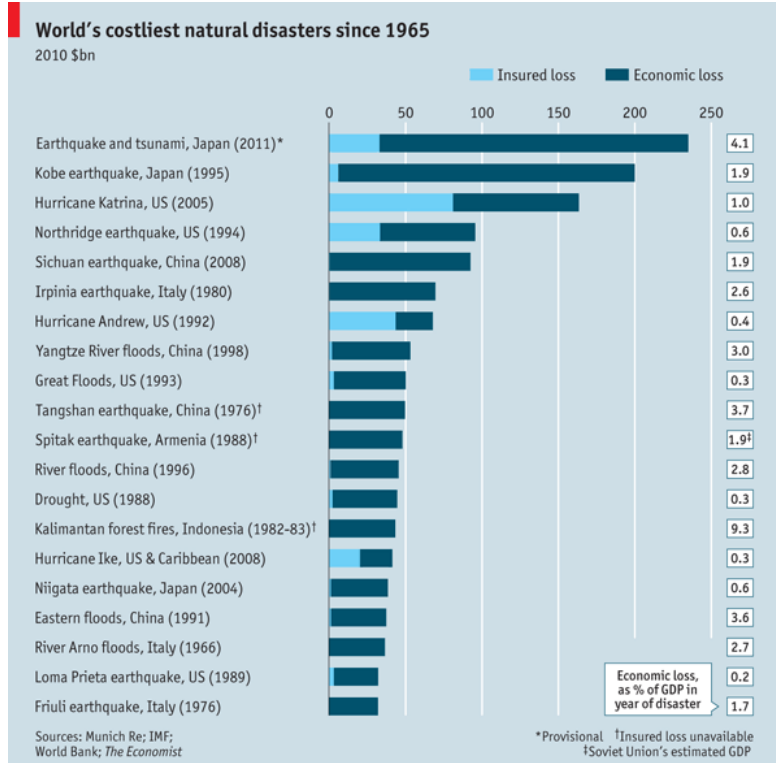
Source: U.S. Geological Survey

natural disaster, with more than 830,000 people killed. The 1976 Tangshan earthquake holds the number three spot with nearly 250,000 casualties.<sup>5</sup>

In March 2011, the 31<sup>st</sup> MEU was critical to the relief efforts during Operation Tomodachi providing food, water, and comfort items to the victims of the earthquake and tsunami that resulted in the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster. Within two weeks of the disaster, the Japanese government's official count of deaths had exceeded 10,000, and by the end of 2011 the total death count sat at nearly 20,000.

## Environmental Degradation

Many countries in the Asia Pacific face environmental degradation, and the countries in Northeast Asia are no exception. In addition to underdeveloped rural areas that rely on wood fuels for cooking and heating, increased industrialization throughout Asia as a whole has increased the demand for natural resources, contributing to deforestation and air pollution. Deforestation in China began in the mid-1950s, during the Great Leap Forward, when more than a third of the trees in the country were destroyed in the name of industrialization.<sup>6</sup> Deforestation that began a half century ago is blamed as one of the major contributors of urban pollution today.



## **Historical Overview**

### **Why History Matters to You as a Marine**

History provides a knowledge of how people, institutions, and states in a region evolved into what they are today. It also provides insights into people's collective memory about their group and others. In other words, history not only shapes a region's current affairs, but also tells us something about the historical roots of the individual and group identities of its inhabitants.

History does not predict how groups, institutions, and states in a region may behave in the future. Instead, it provides insights into what is possible and probable.





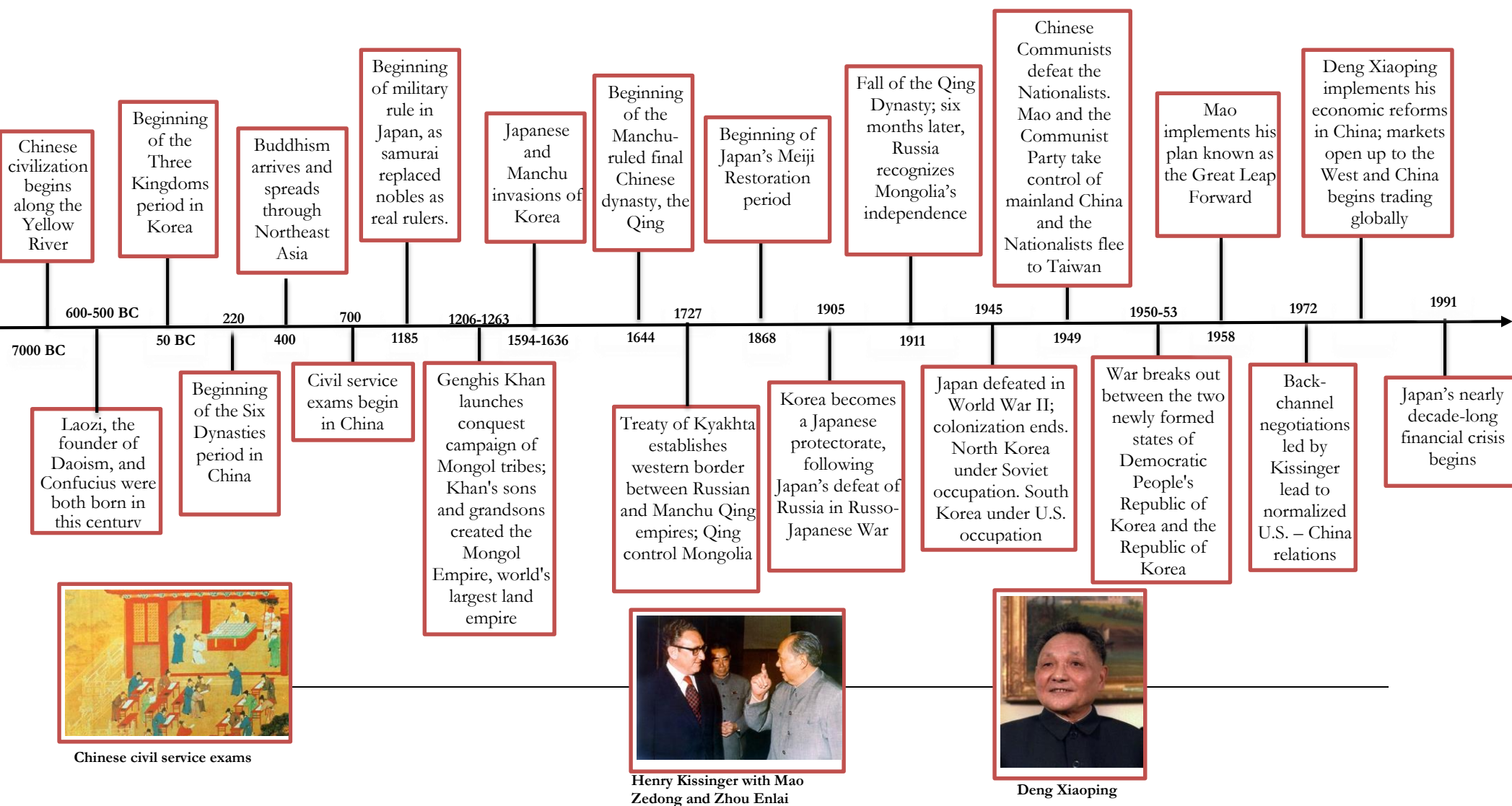
Emperor Meiji of Japan



Puyi, the last emperor in his puppet role as leader of Manchuria



Giant statues in Pyongyang of Kims Il-Sung and Jong-I





## Asia's Bronze Age

During the Bronze Age, civilizations began to mine and smelt copper and tin to make bronze weapons and tools. In Neolithic times (before the Bronze Age), people had made tools out of stone and hunted and gathered their food. However, in the Bronze Age people learned how to farm and produce enough extra food to feed other workers — such as miners, bronze-smiths, weavers, potters and builders who lived in towns — and to feed the ruling class who organized and led society.

While the first real documented Chinese civilization is the Shang Dynasty, ancient Chinese texts describe two previous civilizations: a period known as the Three Sovereigns and Five Emperors that spanned from approximately 2850-1600 BC. The Shang Dynasty (1600-1100 BC) recorded the first Chinese characters, written on bronze and bone artifacts, known as oracle bones. The Chinese character system was the basis for the spread of Chinese culture and administrative control, which extended to parts of modern-day Japan, Korea, and Vietnam. In addition to developing writing, the Shang were renowned for their divination rituals and wide spread practice of human sacrifice — sometimes burying hundreds of slaves alive with its royalty.

While the Shang emerged along the Yellow River Valley, Korean society migrated from Manchuria and established the Ko-Chosun Kingdom (Ancient Chosun Dynasty 2333-108 BC) in the Liaoning area. Rice agriculture developed in Japan around 1000 BC and the Yayoi period (400 BC – 250 AD) saw a bronze and Iron Age culture develop near current day Tokyo.

Over the next 3,000 years, China was ruled by a series of dynasties. Beginning in the Eastern Yangtze or Yellow River basins dynasties expanded westward and southward. Eventually, barbarians attacked and occupied the fringes, shrinking the dynasty back to the East. A period of anarchy and chaos followed. The occupying barbarians eventually lost their grip on power and were pushed out by nationalist sentiment, but the ruling dynasty lost central control. Excessive corruption, warring, spending, disorder, and failing public works convinced the populace that the rulers had lost the “Mandate of Heaven.” Finally a rival took over: authority and order were restored, administrators replaced, public works engaged, land redistributed, and taxes reformed.

## The Silk Road

China has produced silk for several thousand years. When Alexander the Great's empire expanded into the Ferghana Valley, on the western edge of modern-day China around 300 BC, the west was introduced to the commodity and developed a taste for it. In 138 BC Chinese General Zhang Qian began his series of travels into Central Asia. He was dispatched by the Han emperor Wudi and traveled as far west as modern-day Uzbekistan and as far south as India. His travels brought him into contact with the Hellenistic culture, and initiated the exchange of people and goods between Central Asian states and the Han Empire. It also introduced China to better horses and livestock and new agricultural products. The establishment of the Silk Road was the first major interaction between the east and west.

The Silk Road's importance peaked during the Tang dynasty. By the 7<sup>th</sup> century AD, the road had become a well-traveled route for trade between China and civilizations to the south and east. Chang'an was the city at the start of the route in China and the 754 AD census showed that five thousand foreigners lived in the city; including Turks, Iranians, Indians, as well as Japanese, Koreans and Malays.

The majority were missionaries, merchants or pilgrims, and they brought with them rare plants, medicines, spices and other goods. Despite the influx in population and goods, the Chinese still regarded foreigners as barbarians and outsiders.

### **Korea – The Three Kingdoms (540-918 AD)**

In the centuries following the fall of the Gojoseon kingdom in 108 BC, three great Korean kingdoms gradually formed and consolidated power on the Korean Peninsula: Goguryeo in the north, Baekje in the southwest, and Silla in the southeast. These kingdoms continually warred with one another and rebuffed repeated invasions by the Chinese. Eventually, however, Silla allied with the Tang Chinese to defeat an alliance comprised of the forces of Yamato Japan, Baekje, and Goguryeo. In 668 AD, Silla managed to unify the Korean Peninsula, thus beginning the era often called Unified Silla. This critical period in the development of Korea also witnessed the consolidation of Chinese Buddhism, Confucianism, and use of Chinese script throughout Korea.

### **The Mongols**

The thirteenth century saw a major change in rule across Northeast Asia. The Mongol Empire began its expansion throughout eastern and central Asia beginning in the 11<sup>th</sup> century, starting in modern-day northern China. However, China was only one section of a vast Mongol empire, which they structured into a hierarchy of four groups. The Mongols ranked at the top; followed by the non-Han, mostly Islamic population, largely brought to China by the Mongols; then the northern Chinese; and lastly, the southern Chinese. The Mongol rulers were distrustful of the Confucian scholar-officials of China, and as a result, scholars and other native Chinese, were not eligible for the top positions in the ruling government.

Having conquered northern China, Mongols invaded and conquered Korea's Goryeo Kingdom by 1258. The defeated Goryeo Kingdom is said to have endured during this time, because Goryeo kings continued to enjoy some sovereignty over domestic matters while under Mongol domination. The Joseon Dynasty emerged from the aftermath of the Chinese Ming Dynasty's defeat of the Mongols. Partly in response to large-scale invasions of Korea by Japan in the 1590s, Joseon Korea enacted a strict isolation policy. Turning inward, the "Hermit Kingdom" experienced about 250 years of relative tranquility and peace.

During this entire period, Korea continued to absorb Chinese culture, especially Daoism and Neo-Confucianism, which became the state religion of Joseon. The Confucian model of meritocratic civil service was also successfully adopted during this time period.

### **Meiji Restoration and Japanese Occupation**

The Meiji Restoration period in Japanese history brought about the fall of the Tokugawa shogunate and returned control of the country to direct imperial rule under the emperor Meiji. This revolution brought about the modernization of Japan, and its warming to Western influences. Europe and the United States played a significant role in the restoration. At the time the Meiji emperor was restored as head of Japan in 1868, it was militarily weak, largely agrarian, and enjoyed little technological development. It was controlled by hundreds of semi-independent feudal lords. The Western powers had forced Japan to sign treaties that limited its control over its own foreign trade and required that

crimes concerning foreigners in Japan be tried not in Japanese but in Western courts. However, these influences also brought a highly structured form of government, a modernized military, higher education rates, improved infrastructure, and a robust industrial sector.

The mid-19<sup>th</sup> century saw the beginning of Japan's expansion of power across Northeast Asia. Its expanded control began on the Korean peninsula. Though Korea had already faced considerable pressure from the French and Americans to end its seclusion policy and trade internationally, it was a newly industrialized Japan which finally pried open the doors of the Hermit Kingdom in 1876. Japan gradually consolidated its control over Korea and was determined to utilize Korea as both a source of raw materials and a market for Japanese finished goods. Japan formally converted Korea into a Japanese protectorate in 1905, and a colony in 1910.

The first Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895) was fought between Meiji Japan and the Qing Dynasty over the control of Korea. However, the failure of the decaying Qing Dynasty to modernize its military essentially led to certain defeat by the newly revived Japanese military forces. At the conclusion of the war, the Japanese navy defeated a Chinese fleet off the Yalu River and gained control of Port Arthur. Not only did the Japanese force China to relinquish control of Korea, but also seized Taiwan and Southern Manchuria. The loss of Korea as a vassal state, and the defeat by a traditionally weak neighbor sparked intense nationalism in China and a hate for Japan that exists still today.

Japan's annexation of Taiwan was strategic as well as economic. Tokyo hoped that the island would provide raw materials for its expanding economy, while at the same time becoming a market for Japan-manufactured goods. The location of the island was also seen as a gain as well, as the island could form a hub of defense from which to safeguard southern China and the rest of Southeast Asia.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, Japan sought to improve the island's economy, industry, and to some extent, its culture. By annexing Taiwan, the Japanese Empire intended to turn the island into a "model colony".<sup>8</sup>

## **Western Influence and the end of Chinese Dynasty Rule**

By the beginning of the 19th century, westerners had truly arrived in China. They came as traders, diplomats, missionaries, and entrepreneurs. The Chinese, who were used to being the superior in nearly all bilateral interactions, initially welcomed the "barbarians," assuming they would be easy to control and contain.<sup>9</sup>

In 1793 the British sent an envoy to establish ports in China for trade. Britain's appetite for tea, porcelain, and silk was enormous, and China was the main supplier of these items. The envoy, Lord Macartney, brought with him soldiers and a large consignment of items to be used for negotiating. However, they were accepted as tribute, or gifts, and were informed by the emperor, Qian Long, that the west had nothing of value for which China wanted to trade.<sup>10</sup> It was around this time, however that opium had found its way into Chinese ports, and the Chinese developed a taste for it. The British found their commodity for which the Chinese would trade.

The opium trade grew at an alarming rate to the Qing government. From the turn of the century until 1838, it increased by 40 percent in 1836 and to over 90 percent by 1873.<sup>11</sup> Smuggling was rampant, and crime and corruption spiraled out of control. Adding to the national crisis of opium addiction, the rise in the ratio of silver to Chinese currency began to cripple the Chinese economy. At that time,

both import and export taxes had to be paid in silver. There was far less silver coming into the country as export taxes on tea than there was leaving the country as import taxes on opium.

In 1839, a Chinese court official wrote a letter to Queen Victoria of England asking to cease and desist any imports of opium into China. Because of the lack of response, it was assumed the letter was never delivered, and this resulted in the first Opium War (1839-1842). It was a lopsided naval war, weighted heavily in favor of the much stronger British navy and their European allies. The Chinese were defeated and the Treaty of Nanjing resulted in the Chinese being forced to open even more ports to foreign trade and the ceding of Hong Kong to the British.<sup>12</sup>

The Nanjing Treaty was only one of a series of “unequal treaties” that granted extraterritoriality and opening of ports to European countries including Britain, France, and Germany. The opium trade grew with the opening of these new ports, and the increasing discontent with the unequal treaties resulted in the Second Opium War (also known as the Anglo-French War). While the Qing fought a respectable battle, they were ultimately defeated again by the British and French and forced to open ten more ports along China’s east coast, and the rights of foreign missionaries and traders to travel further into China’s interior to live and work.

China’s humiliation at the hands of the Europeans created a deep sense of domestic distrust and discontent with the Qing government. Large-scale revolts began to break out across China. The Taiping Rebellion, headed by Hong Xiuquan, a Christian convert who claimed to be the brother of Jesus, resulted in somewhere between 20 and 30 million deaths, still the bloodiest civil war in world history.<sup>13</sup> The Boxer Rebellion came in the late 1890s and with the support of the Qing government, was directed at foreigners residing in the country. The uprising was quelled by an alliance of eight western governments and the Qing government was ordered to pay huge reparations for the damage to foreign diplomatic installations and businesses.

The Qing’s failure to deal with these series of crises ultimately resulted in a huge show of Han Chinese nationalism that led to the stepping down of the Manchu led government and ultimately the more than 4000 year old dynastic system in China in 1911. As a result, the country fell into a period of initial revolution and then a complete lack of governance. Revolutionary leaders like Sun Yat Sen (who later founded the Kuomintang) feuded with other factions in the north and with the absence of a true head of state, China found itself ruled by warlords for the next twenty years.

After the fall of the Qing dynasty, Mongolia was ruled by Chinese warlords as well. This was also a time when Russia was in the midst of a communist revolution. In 1921 White Russian soldiers took control of Mongolia while retaining the Bogd Khan as a puppet ruler. However, White Russian rule was no better than that of the Chinese, and with the help of the advancing Bolshevik forces, Mongolian nationalists effectively expelled the White Russians. On November 26, 1924, Mongolia officially became a communist country.

The White Army was a loose confederation of anti-communist forces that fought the Bolsheviks in the Russian Civil War (1917–1923) and, to a lesser extent, continued operating as militarized associations both outside and within Russian borders until roughly the Second World War.

For the next 70 years Mongolia was a satellite country to the Soviet Union. Religious figures, and anyone who might be a threat to the communist party was killed or exiled to Siberia. Monastery lamas

were executed and monasteries demolished, and much of Mongolia's cultural heritage was looted or destroyed.

## **World Wars I and II Era**

At the same time the U.S. and its allies were engaged in the World Wars, the countries of Northeast Asia were embroiled in their own bloody domestic struggles. The events of the first Sino-Japanese War led to deep-seated animosity between Japan and its neighbors, and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century did little to alleviate those tensions.

A dispute near the Chinese city of Mukden (modern-day Shenyang) precipitated events that led to the Japanese conquest of Manchuria. On September 18, 1931, an explosion destroyed a section of railway track near the city of Mukden. The Japanese, who owned the railway, blamed the Chinese and used the opportunity to retaliate and invade Manchuria. The Chinese believed, however, that the explosion was orchestrated by the Japanese to justify military action. Within a few months, the Japanese army had overrun the region and consolidated its control on the resource-rich area. The Japanese declared the area to be the new autonomous state of Manchukuo, though the new nation was in fact under the control of the local Japanese army. In response, U.S. Secretary of State Henry Stimson issued what would become known as the Stimson Doctrine, stating that the United States would not recognize any agreements between the Japanese and Chinese that limited free commercial intercourse in the region.<sup>14</sup>

Perhaps the most notorious event in the minds of the Chinese people was the Nanking Massacre. In late 1937, over a period of six weeks, the Japanese Army brutally murdered hundreds of thousands of people – both soldiers and civilians – in the Chinese city of Nanking (or Nanjing). It is estimated that between 20,000 and 80,000 women were sexually assaulted. Nanking, then the capital of Nationalist China, was left in ruins, and it would take decades for the city and its citizens to recover from the brutal, large-scale attacks.<sup>15</sup>

China was mired in its own civil war at that time as well. The Communists, led by Mao Zedong, engaged in a bloody, low-tech guerilla battle with the Nationalists, led by Chiang Kai-shek, for control of both the territory and ideology of China. On October 1, 1949, Mao declared the creation of the People's Republic of China (PRC). The announcement ended the costly full-scale civil war which had broken out immediately following World War II, and had been preceded on and off by conflicts between the two sides since the 1920's. The creation of the PRC also completed the long process of governmental upheaval in China initiated by the fall of the Qing Dynasty. The establishment of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) led the United States to suspend diplomatic ties with the PRC for decades.

Tokyo's control over Korea ended with Japan's defeat by the Allies in World War II. In 1945, after the defeat of the Empire of Japan in World War II, Taiwan was placed under the control of the Republic of China (ROC) with the signing of the Instrument of Surrender as a part of official surrender ceremonies throughout the Asia-Pacific region.

## The Korean War and Cold War Era

At about the same time, and after the end of World War II, China and Eastern Europe fell to Communism, followed by North Korea and Cuba. The U.S. and Soviet Union and their respective allies became engaged in a Cold War which would last until the fall of the Soviet Union in late 1991. The West's Domino Theory asserted that once Communists established a political foothold in one country, neighboring states would eventually buy in to communist ideology.

The **domino theory** was prominent in the 1950s to the 1980s, and was used by successive United States administrations during the Cold War to justify the need for American intervention around the world. President Eisenhower put the theory into words during an April 7, 1954 news conference, when referring to communism in Indochina.

Most Koreans expected an independent united republic at the close of WWII, but it was not to be. Instead, the Allies replaced Japanese control over Korea by dividing the peninsula arbitrarily at the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel, and agreeing to Soviet occupation in the north and American occupation in the south. The UN negotiations that attempted to establish a single government failed. In 1948, the Soviets installed Kim Il Sung as leader of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), a communist client state of the Soviet Union. The United States similarly supported Syngman Rhee's drive to draft a constitution, set up the Republic of Korea (ROK), and get elected as its first president, even if through unfairly rigged elections.

Following several years of minor border hostilities, in 1950 North Korea invaded South Korea with the intent of unifying the country, and with material support from the USSR and moral support from Communist China. The U.S. and a considerable coalition of countries operating under UN auspices supported the ROK. Fearing U.S. domination of the entire Korean Peninsula, the Chinese entered the war fully when UN victory became imminent. Two years of stalemate centered on the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel resulted, and ended only when an armistice agreement was signed in 1953 between the DPRK, PRC, and the UN. Since the ROK refused to sign the agreement, a state of war technically still exists.

It was also during this period that China-Russia relations cooled. Following Stalin's death in 1953, Mao viewed himself as the senior communist leader in the world. Mao grudgingly acknowledged Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev as the leader of the global communist movement; however, Khrushchev's activities and ideological statements angered Mao, and the relationship was all but severed by 1959. The final blow to the relationship came during the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962. Mao openly criticized Khrushchev for backing down, and Khrushchev responded that Mao's policies would lead to nuclear war. The Soviets also openly supported India in its conflict with China. By June 1963 communications had completely ceased between the two parties.

In 1958, Mao launched an economic and social campaign intended to move agrarian China into the modern industrialized world. Mao predicted that in a five-year period, China would be capable of competing with countries like the United States and the Soviet Union by becoming an industrial and export powerhouse. The plan included relocating millions of Chinese to work on farms or in manufacturing. By the end of 1958, more than 700 million people had been moved into communes. There, people were encouraged to set up home-based production of steel, timber, and farming. The lack of resources and technology, however, resulted in poor agriculture yields and shoddily-produced goods, which were made by melting down household utensils and cookware in homemade furnaces. A



widespread drought in 1960 further added to the impact of the failed plan. Harvests were insufficient to feed the country's population, resulting in one of the biggest famines in world history. The plan was finally declared a failure with austere economic readjustments in 1961. While there are no official numbers, it is estimated that 20-30 million people died during the failed Great Leap Forward.

The Great Leap Forward damaged Mao's credibility, but despite the massive devastation and loss of life, Mao stayed in power. Mao believed that the progress China had made since the establishment of the CCP had led to the development of a privileged class of intellectuals that were complacent and lacked revolutionary spirit. In 1966, Mao launched the Cultural Revolution to re-establish his credibility as a communist leader and reinvigorate his personality cult. He called for the destruction of the "Four Olds" – Old Customs, Old Culture, Old Habits, and Old Ideas. Mao also shut down the nation's schools, and mobilized students to confront intellectuals and party leaders for their lack of communist values. The movement quickly escalated, as students formed paramilitary groups known as the Red Guards. The Red Guards began to destroy personal property, centuries-old historic sites and artifacts, Buddhist temples, and government buildings. They harassed and violently attacked China's elderly and intellectual population. The Cultural Revolution continued in various phases until Mao's death in 1976, and it is estimated that 1.5 million people were killed during this period, while millions more suffered imprisonment, torture, and property seizure. The widespread physical destruction and psychological damage has left a still-evident scar on modern Chinese society.

## People and Society

### Why People and Society Matter to You as a Marine

Missions across the range of military operations require Marines to understand, and work with, foreign populations. Knowing the people in the region, including their ethnicities, languages, and religions, as well as the way they live in social entities, enables Marines to create a mental picture of the human dimension of the region.

### Population Growth / Demography

#### Population

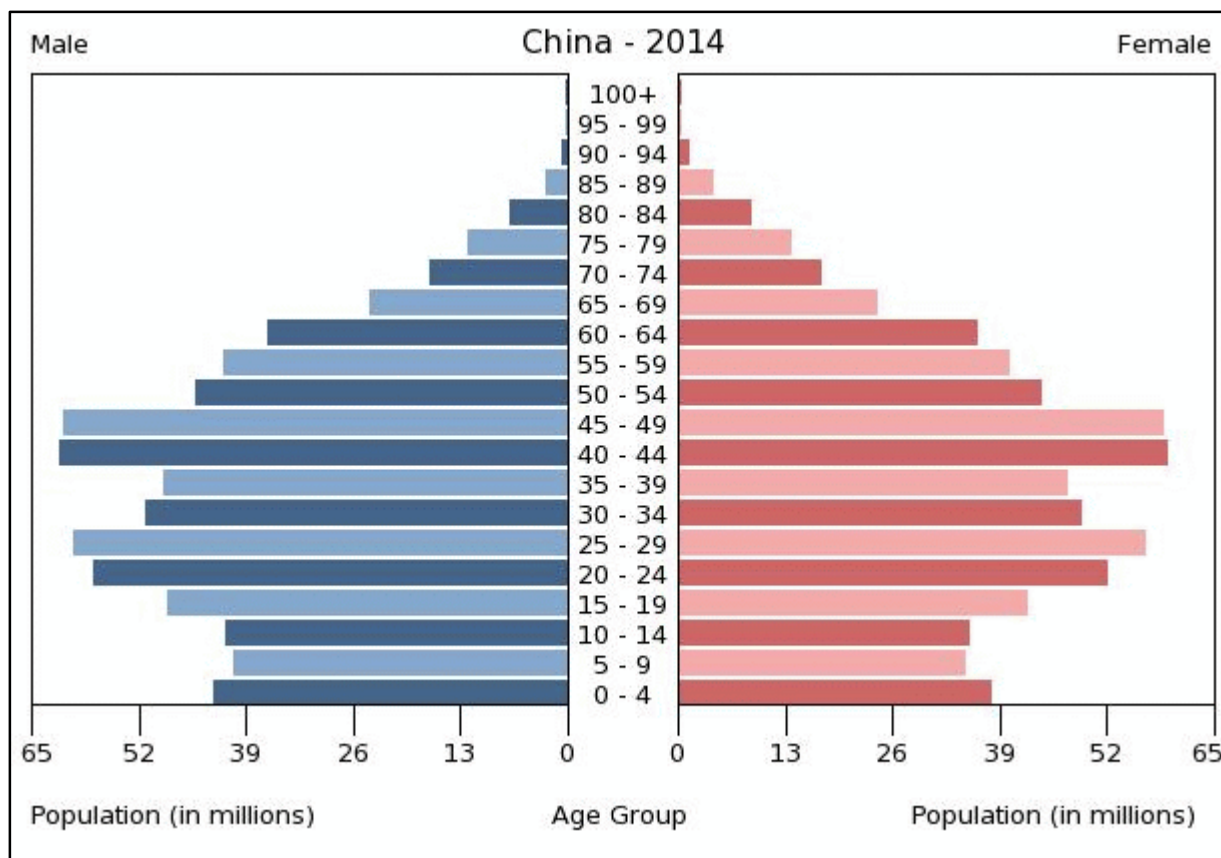
The region is home to more than 1.6 billion people. More than 80 percent of that population is located in mainland China.<sup>16</sup> Industrialization in Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan was, by and large, responsible for the rapid population growth in these countries during the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. However, in recent decades, population density has declined due to an increase in birth control practices, first birthing at older ages, and general propensity toward having smaller families.

#### China's Population Policies

As the most populous country in the world, China adopted a one-child-per family policy in 1980. This policy was designed to stabilize the population by the end of first half of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Not only was the policy effective in curbing the growth rate, but violations have recently proved lucrative for the government, as the Chinese have amassed more wealth. The government imposed fines for violating the policy, and wealthy Chinese who were willing to pay the fines flagrantly violated it. The government saw revenues increase by as much as \$2.7 billion in one year due to fines imposed for having more than one child.<sup>17</sup>



One Child Policy government advertisement (Source: PBS)



Gender ratios in China, 2014 (Source: Index Mundi/CIA World Factbook)

The one-child policy was not without significant problems. These included forced abortions, sterilizations, and infanticide. Abortion of female fetuses and killing of female infants became common due to the traditional preference for males. As a result, statistics have shown a steady imbalance in the ratio of men to women over the past decades. As of 2013, the overall ratio was 106 men to 100 women. At younger ages it is as high as 117 males to 100 females.<sup>18</sup> The one-child policy also created a crisis for today's aging population. Single children, many of whom migrated to larger cities for work, have been unable or unwilling to be the sole caretakers for a set of aging parents. Faced with compounding social problems created by this policy, the Chinese government eliminated it in late 2015 and began to allow all couples to have two children.

## Population Distribution

Approximately two-fifths of China's population is urban – up from one-fourth in 1975. Population density varies across China with the greatest number of people living in the eastern half and the least number of people living in the west and northwest. Between 2000 and 2030, it is estimated that more than 400 million people will migrate from rural to urban residences. As a result, China is expected to account for half of the world's building construction activity during that period.

Urban areas in Northeast Asia are densely populated because of employment opportunities and available services and amenities. However, rich agricultural land and water availability also influence choice of location. North Koreans settled along the coastlines, leaving sparse settlement areas in the interior. The urbanization rate in South Korea is estimated to be 83.2 percent as of 2013.<sup>19</sup> Taiwan's

heavily populated urban areas have extended past the official city limits, forming large metropolitan areas, which are now home to nearly 70 percent of Taiwan's total population. Conversely, the population in the northern basins of the Orhon and Selenga rivers in Mongolia is approximately ten people per square mile, while some desert areas have no inhabitants at all.

## Ethnic Groups

The six countries that make up Northeast Asia have relatively homogenous populations. Despite being largely homogeneous, some of the countries face problems due to ethnic rivalry. Taiwanese aborigines continue to press the government of Taiwan for self-government. The Halh ethnic grouping comprises 81.5 percent of the Mongolian population, with eight other ethnic groups that make up the remaining population.<sup>20</sup> While Mongolians generally get along with their northern Russian neighbors, many resent the growing presence of Chinese in their country.

Like Japan, both North and South Korea have nearly 100 percent homogenous populations. Although the two Koreas share the peninsula, history, language, and ethnicity, they are in direct opposition in their political ideology. South Korea operates democratically and is economically successful, whereas North Korea is bound to communism, and a generational, hereditary-succession dictatorship by the Kim clique, with hatred directed at Japan and the United States. Due to the economic stability in South Korea that resulted from the government-led development programs of the 1960s and 1970s, an increasing number of workers from Asian countries (and even Russia) regularly enter South Korea for work.



Uighur farmers at a local market in Xinjiang (Source: Wikipedia)

Each of China's 56 distinct ethnic groups is officially recognized, but some harbor resentment toward the ethnic Han people, who make up 91.5 percent of the population. Tibet and Xinjiang provinces, the native populations of which are ethnically and culturally different from the main Han population, have repeatedly found themselves at odds with the policies of the Chinese government. Xinjiang was incorporated into China when the Communists established the PRC in 1949. While it was not a mutual agreement, the annexation was non-violent and accomplished through political means. Tibet was annexed almost two years later, though less peacefully and through military force. Peoples Liberation Army (PLA) units surrounded and outnumbered Tibetan forces in a conflict that cost thousands of Tibetan troops.

## Inter-Country Ethnic Tensions

While many Westerners make the mistake of regarding "Asian" as a generic ethnicity, the countries of Northeast Asia are ethnically separate and often take offense at being compared to or confused with those from another part of the region. Because of historical occupations, conflicts, and oppressions,

tensions between many of the countries run very deep and are a source of cultural and political conflicts even in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. At some point in time, Japan occupied or invaded either part or all of the countries in the region. These countries have not forgotten.

## Languages

Many of the region's languages have a basis in written Chinese with many loanwords that operate as a thread of commonality among peoples of the region. Although Chinese characters are not used in texts composed in North Korea, their use is prolific, but written in Korea's phonetic *hangul* letters. The literate elite of South Korea often write using the Chinese script to clarify content and expedite reading of written texts. The Japanese language also makes extensive use of Chinese characters, though it has its own phonetic alphabet. Scripts used in Japan are *kanji* (Chinese characters), *hiragana* (Japanese alphabet), and *katakana* (used to express foreign scripts).

Soon after the Chinese Communist Party established the People's Republic of China as the sole government on the mainland, it designated the Mandarin dialect to be *Putonghua*, or the common and national language. It also decreed that the written script would use a system of abbreviated forms of the Chinese characters used in China's classics. In short, all classical characters would be shortened and standardized. In southern China and in Hong Kong, Cantonese is spoken, and characters are still written in the traditional (long form) style. While the people of Taiwan also speak the Mandarin dialect of Chinese, they also continue to write Chinese using classic forms of the characters, with full strokes for each character. Although Taiwanese Hokkien is spoken by 70 percent of the island's inhabitants, there are also 20 other languages spoken on the island.

Halh Mongolian is the name of the national language of the Mongolian People's Republic. The language is one of three subfamilies of the Altaic language grouping. Mongolian has its own script, which was developed during the 12<sup>th</sup> century. Daur is the language spoken in parts of northeastern Mongolia and it preserves complete sets of grammar forms of old Mongolian. Russian and Chinese are also spoken in the country.

Korea's written language has a combination of Chinese ideograms and Hangul, which, unlike ideograms, is phonetic. The proliferation of telecommunication systems, such as television, radio, cell phones, etc., has reduced the gap between dialects spoken in Korea, except for the Jeju Island dialect. Meanwhile, the disparity continues to grow between Korean spoken in the North and South as the result of political and physical divisions.

The word **ideogram** originates from the Greek "idea" and "to write", and is a graphic symbol that represents an idea or concept, independent of any particular language, and specific words or phrases. Most Chinese and Japanese characters are comprehensible only by familiarity with prior convention; however, some convey their meaning through pictorial resemblance to a physical object.

The Japanese written language uses a combination of traditional Chinese characters, a phonetic Japanese alphabet called *hiragana*, and a corresponding one used mostly for loanwords, called *katakana*. While the spoken language is largely standardized throughout the nation, there are categories of language that nearly resemble dialects. This is noticeable in the different words and word endings for women, men, addressing superiors, formal writing, and news reporting, for example.



## Religion

Religions and beliefs run the gamut in Northeast Asia, with most people practicing a mixture of several kinds of religions. However, fewer than 50 percent admit to having any religious affiliation at all. The most practiced religions or systems of belief are Taoism, Buddhism, Islam, Shintoism, Christianity, shamanism, geomancy, animism, and “Heavenly Way” (*Cheondogyo*). Other indigenous folk beliefs are often mixed in with more formal religious practices.



St. Francis Cathedral in Xi'an, China (Source: Wikipedia)

Although freedom of religion is a right in China and North Korea, the practice of religion is highly regulated by the state. The United States Commission on International Religious Freedom in 2013 designated China and North Korea as Tier 1 Countries of Particular Concern for their inferences in religious practice.<sup>21</sup> The communist regime of North Korea has constitutionally confirmed freedom of religion but in practice does not allow it. Autonomous religious activities are now almost nonexistent. Government sponsored religious groups exist merely to provide the illusion of religious freedom. Meanwhile, missionaries from South Korea work to facilitate North Koreans who manage to escape oppression in the North.

The Chinese government is officially atheist, but religious observance is on the rise, with more than 30 percent of the population identifying as observers. The government recognizes only certain state-approved religions, which are Buddhism, Taoism, Islam, Protestantism, and Catholicism (though for political reasons, the Chinese Catholic Church is not associated with the Roman Catholic Church). Although the State Council passed Regulations on Religious Affairs which allow

religious organizations to possess property, publish literature, train and approve clergy, and collect donations as long as they have registered with the state, these organizations are still heavily monitored and regulated by the Communist Party. However, Muslim Uighurs, Buddhist Tibetans, unregistered Christians, and groups that the party brands as cults, such as Falun Gong, face stiff persecution and repression from the government.

**Animists** believe that the universe contains three worlds: the past, present, and future. These are parallel worlds that cross each other. Animists or “traditional believers” tend to seek harmony between these worlds. There are no animist holy texts, nor official places of worship. Instead, the rituals are considered part of believers’ ethnic identity.

**Shamanism:** A shaman has great skill, knowledge, and power and has the ability to communicate with and control spirits, even to allow a spirit to enter into the body or eject from it.

**Geomancy:** This is commonly known as Feng Shui in this region. Literally translated as 'wind and water,' it is the ancient Chinese art of selecting an auspicious site to provide the most harmonious relationship between human and earth.



Although religion in Japan does not play a major role in everyday life, Shintoism and Buddhism are religions practiced by most Japanese. Many of the festivals celebrated in Japan have origins in early Shinto rituals that go back as far as 400 BC to 250 AD. One of the popular festivals in Japan is the Bon Festival, or the O-bon as it is also known. People visit temples and decorate alters of the departed. The festivals are characterized by displays of energy, noise, food, and exultation. The expression: “We live as Shintoists, but die as Buddhists.” is a common saying among the Japanese.<sup>22</sup>

Shamanism in Mongolia involves its practitioners – known as *shamans* – entering a trance during which an external spirit enters their body to take over it. In the trance, the shaman has dialogue with the spirit that others in the vicinity can hear and witness. Shamans, with their ability to have dialogue with spirits of all sorts commonly perform exorcisms, ridding individual people of spirits from their body so as to relieve pain, illness, and bad luck in their lives.

Another belief stemming from ancient times is geomancy, or the reading of the layout of the land with regard to the flow of the *ch'i/qi*. The belief remains significant even today in Japan, China, and Korea where geomancers are called upon for their services. In connection with geomancy is the Korean belief that mountains have spirits. When the Japanese colonized Korea, they would remove the statues of these mountain spirits in order to disrupt the flow of *ch'i*.

In traditional Chinese culture, *qi* or *ch'i* is an active principle forming part of any living thing. The Chinese character *qi* (气) literally translates as “breath” or “air” and figuratively as “material energy”, “life force”, or “energy flow”. *Qi* is the central underlying principle in traditional Chinese medicine and martial arts.

## Healthcare

### China

Although traditional Chinese herbal medicines and practices are still relied on in China, its rural health care plan took off in the 1950s when the country implemented the completely government funded and operated “barefoot doctors” system. That system covered as much as 90 percent of healthcare coverage at the time. In the late 1970s privatization was allowed, but coverage shifted to urban areas.



Modern medical facilities at Fudan University in Shanghai (left) versus rural healthcare in Shaanxi province (right)  
(Source: Wikipedia)

The healthcare system all but collapsed by the 1980s, when nearly all healthcare providers left rural areas for cities. In 2009, China embarked on a new healthcare system, investing as much as \$126 billion in the “four beams” of reform: public health care, medical care, essential drugs, and health insurance. Today, although the program is well underway, many problems linger on, such as inadequate drug cost reimbursement, high co-payments, and limited risk protection, although there are provisions for people below the poverty line.

### ***North Korea***

Traditional medical practices, use of herbal medicines, acupuncture, etc. still exist in North Korea as well. The state of North Korea’s hospitals and clinics has been assessed by Amnesty International to be among the worst in the world, with the regime spending “under US \$1.00 per person per year.”<sup>23</sup> Hospitals lack medicines and years of food shortages have left many North Koreans starving and suffering from malnutrition; that being so, the elite continue to live fairly comfortably.

### ***South Korea***

Folk medicine and traditional medical treatment practices still exist in South Korea too, but they are very expensive. Some of Asia’s highest quality hospitals are operated in Seoul and are equipped with state of the art medical technology and world class doctors and nurses. People from Europe, the U.S. and other countries visit Korea specifically to receive medical treatment. In addition to first-rate, western-style hospitals, the entire country has specialty clinics throughout the provinces, counties, and village neighborhoods. South Korea’s health system is government-operated and supported by industry and individuals.

### ***Mongolia***

Mongolia’s transition to being an independent nation has had a serious impact on its healthcare system. In effect, it had to start anew from the days when the Soviet Union supplemented medical support to Mongolia. Medical treatment is available in the public and private sectors, but still not accessible to many. The only access to medical treatment some Mongolians have is the annual visit by the Korean Open Doctors Society that visits Mongolia to provide medical treatment.<sup>24</sup> Mongolia’s constitution designated primary health care for all citizens as a right, and the Ministry of Health and the Asian Development Bank are in the fifth phase of implementing the Health Sector Development Program that began in 1998. The program utilizes both modern medical and traditional Mongolian medical theories and practices. International organizations are helping Mongolia provide medical care.

### ***Japan***

Health and health care in Japan is excellent. In fact, Japan was rated as the healthiest country on earth for both men and women in 2012. Most people in Japan consider good health to be a normal phenomenon and attribute good health to good diet and exercise. This attitude, combined with world-class hospitals and doctors, make Japan an extremely healthy country. In 2012, Japan celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of its inexpensive and universal health insurance system called *kaihoken*. Nevertheless, Japan’s healthcare system relies on new people coming into the system, and as its birthrate declines, continued government funding is becoming a matter of concern.

## Taiwan

Hospitals in Taiwan, especially the top rated ones, are turning to the international medical treatment market for business. Taiwan introduced a 15-day health/medical tourist package. As a result many Chinese from the mainland and other parts of Asia travel to Taiwan for diagnoses and treatment. Internal to Taiwan, however, is a problem of aging population and healthcare. People are calling for the government to improve medical services for holistic healthcare since the system that now exists is not adequate. The elderly make up 11.2 percent of Taiwan's population, making Taiwan among the most rapidly aging countries in the world.

## Education

Until the fall of imperial China in 1912, *jinsbu* (scholar officials) skilled in the *Confucian Classics* and vetted through rigorous examination were appointed to the Chinese bureaucracy. This age-old tradition in China has had a lasting effect throughout Asia. People across the Northeast Asia region take great pride in achievement through learning, scholarship, public service, individual competition, and hard work. Performing well is highly valued. Northeast Asians are proud of their national public universities, which are seen as more prestigious than private universities. Earning a spot at a top national university is the same as receiving the government's recognition of one's intellectual talent.

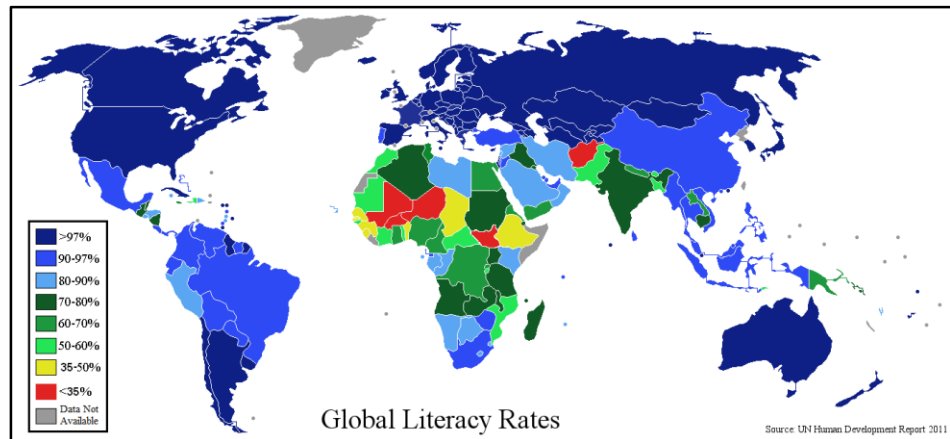
Enrollment in primary and secondary school is high. Dropout rates are generally low, and usually indicate the financial situation of a student's family, rather than his or her lack of commitment to education. Enrollment is higher in urban areas than in rural areas and slightly higher for men

than for women. Schools throughout the region seek to instill in individuals a national mindset comprised of the values and skills necessary to maintain a structured and stable society.

For some students, having connections to wealthy friends, family, and people in positions of authority in government helps educational advancement. This is expected among ruling elites, especially in North Korea and China, whose authoritarian governments tend to place more value on loyalty to the ruling regime than merit. Both male and female students are encouraged to excel in school, and parents are very involved in their children's education. Mathematics and the natural sciences, such as biology, chemistry, and physics, are popular courses at all grade levels.

## Family

Many of the cultures of Northeast Asia until late last century and early this century were largely agrarian. During this time, most villagers across Northeast Asia lived in multigenerational family



groups that provided financial support and help with elder care and child rearing. The Mongolian peoples are the exception. Being herders over the centuries, the Mongolians have tended to have large, but not extended families.

Family structures and dynamics have undergone dramatic changes during the transition from being agricultural to industrial and postindustrial societies. Most Northeast Asians in urban areas prefer nuclear families today; however, family members are bound traditionally, morally, socially, and in many cases by law to support their aged or disabled family members. Such a structure is a hallmark of cultures throughout the region. Extended families function as a kind of social security system, critically important when men and women leave their families in search of work and when women become divorced or widowed.

### ***Family Values***

The philosophy and values of Confucianism highly influence family values. The philosophy stresses five basic relationships that are fundamental to social and political life: father and son, elder and young brother, husband and wife, friend and friend, and ruler and subject. Although many other precepts are involved, the societal position structure begins with filial piety of the son for the father. Confucian thought is the basis for a social structure in which a person interacts with others based on relative social position. Language and grammar of China, Korea, and Japan over centuries supported that interaction with specific honorific markers and verb forms, much of which was done away with in communist China soon after its victory over the Kuomintang (KMT). Nevertheless, such honorific markers live on in the Korean and Japanese languages still fortifying one's position, behavior, and propriety day-by-day through speech.

In Confucian philosophy, **filial piety** is a virtue of respect for one's father, elders, and ancestors. In more general terms, filial piety means to be good to one's parents; to take care of one's parents; to engage in good conduct not just towards parents but also outside the home so as to bring a good name to one's parents and ancestors.

Families are usually larger in rural areas than in cities. This is even true in China, which has a one-child policy, a policy that is often overlooked or ignored in rural areas among minorities. Traditionally, the concepts of group harmony and mutual security were more important than that of the individual, and family life was valued more highly than individual accomplishment. With the transition to more capitalist economies, however, these values are changing.

### ***Extended Family Kinships***

Kinship is a fundamental element of family throughout Northeast Asia. Members of the extended family are expected to help each other on a reciprocal basis, both in everyday life and in crisis. Although sometimes difficult, this relationship provides vital support in various aspects of life. Family members often go to the extreme to help one another, even borrowing great sums of money at high interest rates—formally or informally—if urgent enough.

In China, helping each other on a reciprocal basis is referred to as ***guanxi***. This term can mean something as simple as a personal connection between two people in which one is able to ask the other to perform a favor or service, or as extreme as one person or group bribing another to perform a service. Family relationships form ideal connections in the name of ***guanxi***.



## Marriage

In general, marriage is an important rite of passage, which confers a social status of adulthood on individuals. Marriage is thought of as a union of not just a man and a woman, but of their families and a means to ensure the continuity of the husband's family line. Although the majority of urban marriages are created without use of a matchmaker, rural men and women still employ the help of a matchmaker. Even in Japan, where love matches are the norm, it is still not uncommon for a family friend, relative, or mentor to act as a go-between.

A primary consideration in marriage in South Korea is the compatibility of class origins. A wealthy family whose family head is an executive at a large corporation would not settle for his son marrying the daughter of a butcher. During the Chosun Dynasty, the butcher belonged to the lowest, near non-human position of that society. That mindset lingers on today. So marriage in South Korea by and large involves both parties having their *chokbo* (family trees) investigated for acceptability.



Traditional Japanese wedding (Source: Wikipedia)

Although polygamy was banned in 1949, instances can still be found in China, but generally polygamy is limited by the number of available women as well as the financial ability to support more than one wife. With China's newly found wealth comes the potential for to engage in polygamy. While polygamy is illegal, the phenomenon of affluent Chinese men keeping second and third wives has become somewhat commonplace. From Shenzhen to Rowland Heights, California, there are neighborhoods of single "second" wives, referred to as "Ernai Villages".<sup>25</sup> In Mongolia, there have been discussions about legalizing polygamy to counter the imbalance of the male and female populations and to expand its population overall.

## Divorce

China's divorce rates more than doubled between 1980 and 1995. Some 2.87 million couples divorced in 2012.<sup>26</sup> Factors contributing to this include the New Marriage Law, economic reform, and changing attitudes toward divorced women. Middle-aged divorce in Japan is on the increase as well. More than 45,000 couples married for 20 years or more divorced in 2002 – three times the level of three decades ago, according to the welfare ministry. This may be partly due to a change in the law that entitles divorced women to receive a portion of their former husband's pension. In 2010, there were 251,000 divorces; that is 1.99 per 1,000 population. Divorces

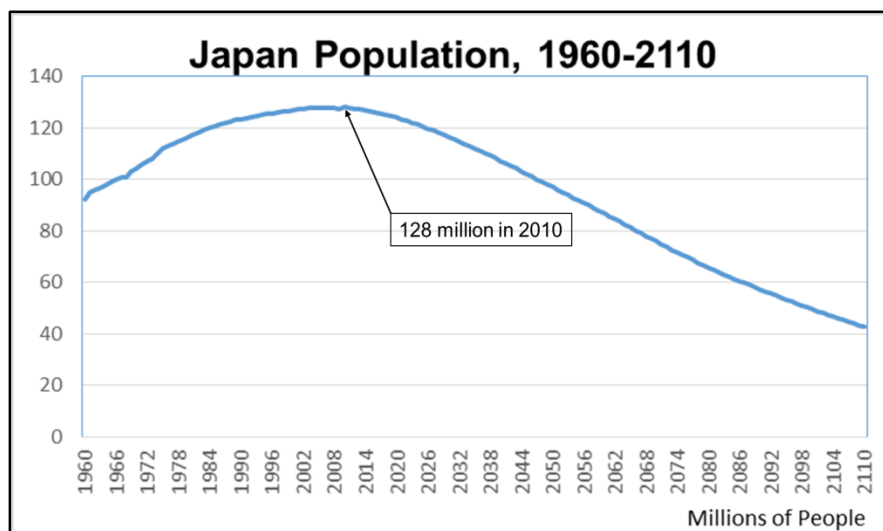
The New Marriage Law was updated in 1980 by the Second Marriage Law, which liberalized divorce, introduced the one-child policy, and instructed the courts to favor the interests of women and children in property distribution in divorce. Further updates in 1983 legalized marriage with foreigners and interracial marriage. It was amended in 2003 to outlaw married persons' cohabitation with a third party, aimed at curbing a resurgence of concubines in major cities with large numbers of wealthy Chinese.

among older couples have been rising in South Korea from 19.1 percent in 2006 to 23.8 percent by 2010.<sup>27</sup>

## ***Children***

Obedience, cooperation, respect for elders, and devotion to parents are major values taught in a child's early years. Children, particularly sons, maintain a strong sense of dependence on their parents throughout adolescence and after marriage. The preferential treatment sons receive from their parents is considered a source of the gender structure in Northeast Asian society, where women are likely to be more self-reliant than men.

Traditionally, it was more important for the woman to produce a male heir. For this reason, the incidence of abortions, female infanticide, and depositing baby girls at orphanages was high. There was a lower likelihood that healthcare would be sought for females, which adversely affects the health and survival of young girls. However, particularly in China, where the gender imbalance is adversely affecting society, these values are shifting. After a decade-long period of prolific adoptions of female infants by foreign couples, the Chinese government has ceased almost all overseas adoptions of healthy children and now offers incentives for the adoption of baby girls by domestic couples.



Source: UN Population Division

Japan has been struggling with a birthrate decline for decades. Because of costs and the pressure of long and demanding work schedules, many Japanese opt not to have children. It is predicted that Japan's population will shrink to 87 million from its current size of 127 million by the year 2060, and of those 87 million Japanese, as high as 40 percent of the population could be 65 or older.<sup>28</sup> The current

administration has become increasingly focused on this social crisis, and has even considered relaxing its very strict immigration policy to increase its declining and ageing population.

## ***Gender***

Traditional gender roles in the majority of Northeast Asia were based on the man being the head of the household and Confucianism often solidified clear divisions in male and female roles. The wife was responsible for domestic duties, including raising the children. Both genders worked in the fields as required. Modernization and rapid urbanization, growing exposure to other cultures via the Internet, television and increased communications means have expanded educational opportunities for women who are now challenging traditional rigid roles. In rural areas, tradition and Confucianism



tend to hold gender roles in check, but in urban areas, with more and more frequency, women are breaking into previously male only roles.

### ***Women in the Workplace***

Japan has one of the highest education levels in the world, yet continues to lag behind in workplace gender equality. Once married, many forego their careers for the responsibility of running the household, caring for family. To meet career goals, many Japanese women are either postponing or foregoing marriage altogether. But even this is hampered by Japan's workforce system, which divides new recruits into career track positions and general clerical work. More than 80 percent of women are hired in the clerical work track.

Women have been active participants in China's rapidly growing economy. As a result of Mao's original classless society, women have had much more latitude in business and economic mobility than in many other countries. China is open and accommodating to women's success in business, government, and the communist party. However, the increased workplace opportunities for women have resulted in many of the same problems faced by women in Japan. Postponing family is becoming more commonplace, and caring for elderly family members is less of a priority. This in turn has created a significant problem for the government as it struggles with how to care for an aging population.

Economic pressures in South Korea are changing the traditional views of women in the home and men in the workplace. Even with more women working, female professionals at the highest levels are still very rare. The majority of working women, many with top degrees, are found in secretarial, accounting, or educational work. Single women often receive less respect than married women, who are able to rise in society due to ties to their husband.

In North Korea, jobs are assigned by the state in accordance to its judgment of family, rank, ability, and qualifications. Although the constitution states that "women hold equal social status and rights with men," and women are represented equally in the labor force, few women reach high levels in government. They are also expected to continue their domestic chores in the home. Mongolian women historically enjoy fairly high status and freedom, but women continue to juggle housework and childcare as well as labor for wages. Recent trends in Taiwan, such as delayed marriages, higher divorce rates, fewer children, and higher educational attainment, reflect an increase in women's power and status.



Yurt Quarter on the outskirts of Ulaanbaatar (Source: Wikipedia)

### **Status and Class Structure**

Class structure differs from country to country. The People's Republic of China for a half century preached a classless society hostile to capitalism. Despite asserting a classless society, China in fact had

a class society in effect. Party members, especially the party elite headquartered in the nation's capital and provincial capitals, were privileged. With China's booming economy and the contemporary success of the Communist Party, this problem is exacerbated. China created 40,000 new millionaires in 2013, bringing the total in the country to 1.09 million,<sup>29</sup> yet it still has more than 82 million people living below the poverty line.<sup>30</sup>

Large corporations called *Zaibatsu* in Japan and the *Chaebol* in South Korea employ thousands of workers that earn middle-class incomes, while other workers who are employed at smaller businesses and enterprises earn less. The result is a class structure of sorts. In Mongolia, the elites, or those people having established wealth, economic and political power, are investing and growing Mongolia's economy, while many migrants live just on the edge of the capital city with no running water or developed infrastructure, causing a newly emerging class system as well.

## Government and Politics

### Why Government and Politics Matter to You as a Marine

Most people live in states governed by formal and informal institutions. Marines need to know how power and authority are distributed in the state by studying the formal and informal structures of governments in the region. In addition, Marines need to understand how people, groups, and institutions exercise power and authority; in other words, what comprises politics in the states.

Northeast Asia has seen significant political transformation since the end of WWII. But while the growing economies of the region have reduced poverty and fostered the growth of middle classes, some countries in the region still grapple with levels of political unrest. This creates regional instability, and leads to a lack of cooperation between governments.

The types of government in this region range from democracies to dictatorships. None of these types of governments are without flaws. Personal connections based on tradition, religion, and centuries of practice are important and affect the region's social and political functions. These kinds of relationships are so intertwined that they have lasting implications for the political systems of Northeast Asia's various countries.

### Taiwan

Under Chiang Kai-shek, Taiwan evolved into an economic powerhouse, and became one of the famed Four Asian Tigers. However, economic success brought demands for real political representation. Genuine political opposition finally appeared in 1986 with the formation of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP). While Taiwan now has a robust political party system, there is still corruption and patronage in government. Most people in Taiwan want “de facto” independence, keeping the *status quo* without upsetting the PRC. The KMT still has not officially relinquished its claim on both mainland China and Mongolia.

The economies of Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan are commonly known as the four **Asian tigers**. These countries have consistently maintained high levels of economic growth since the 1960s, fueled by exports and rapid industrialization, which enabled these economies to join the ranks of the world's richest nations.

It should be noted that Taiwan's "status quo" is not the same as the notion of status quo held by the U.S. (refer to p7). The United States' policy toward Taiwan over the past several years could be characterized as a form of "strategic ambiguity", while Taiwan views the status quo as maintaining a position of no-threat to its sovereignty.

## China

The Peoples Republic of China is a communist state and is relatively young compared to the United States. Founded in 1949, it is still only in its second and third generation of leaders. When Mao Zedong founded the republic, he installed in the highest government posts his comrades from the Red Army. These leaders included his contemporaries like Zhou Enlai, Liu Shaoqi, and the future leader of the party, Deng Xiaoping. Mao's government was firmly communist and severed all previous diplomatic ties with democratic countries.

From the beginning, the Peoples Republic of China never recognized the legitimacy of the Republic of China; however, from its inception, most major countries and the UN formally recognized the ROC as the sole legitimate government of all of China, and therefore established bilateral, formal diplomatic relations. However, that all changed in 1971, when the United States and major countries accepted a UN resolution to recognize the PRC as the sole legitimate government of China, including Taiwan. The following year, President Richard Nixon made a trip to China, formally establishing diplomatic relations with the PRC.

Rapid economic growth has brought prosperity to the country but has also increased environmental and political costs. China is burning almost as much coal as the rest of the world combined. In the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, China relentlessly pursued development and profits while focusing very little on environmental consequences. Most of its energy comes from coal, producing toxic air and greenhouse gases. Rapid domestic sales of automobiles has significantly contributed to Chinese oil demands and the rise of global oil prices. By 2010, the government, faced with harsh criticism from its own citizens and the international community, began to implement programs to deal with its environmental crisis.

Environmental damage is not the only serious challenge facing the Communist Party. Corruption is widespread throughout all levels of government. A large portion of contemporary China's government is made up of the children and relatives of the original founding party members. These descendants, known as Princelings, have virtually inherited the government, making up the majority of the Politburo Standing Committee. Furthermore, these Princelings and their families enjoy lives well outside the reach of the average Chinese citizen. Their college-age children often attend prestigious universities overseas, drive exotic cars, and live in penthouses. These ubiquitous displays of wealth by civil servants highlight the disparaging income gap and serve as constant reminders to regular citizens of the levels of corruption in the government.

Generally speaking, the Communist Party enjoys a relative amount of stability, but unresolved social issues stand to destabilize the government if progress is not made to eradicate the problems. Furthermore, the protests in Hong Kong in 2014 served to further illustrate that not all citizens of China are happy with a one-party communist system.

Occupied by the UK in 1841, Hong Kong was formally ceded by China the following year; various adjacent lands were added later in the 19th century. Pursuant to an agreement signed by China and the UK on 19 December 1984, Hong Kong became the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) of the PRC on 1 July 1997. In this agreement, China promised that, under its "one country, two systems" formula, China's socialist economic system would not be imposed on Hong Kong and that Hong Kong would enjoy a "high degree of autonomy" in all matters except foreign and defense affairs for the subsequent 50 years.

CIA Factbook

## Japan

During the Meiji Period, Japanese adopted political systems that were common in Western Europe in order to convince the West that Japan was a civilized country and deserved to be treated as an equal. For several years during this period, Japanese leaders traveled around Europe and the United States studying political systems, constitutions, and education systems.

Following WWII, Allied powers occupied Japan after its military forces were demobilized. The Occupation, led by General Douglas MacArthur, sought to turn the government into a democracy, and in 1947 a new constitution was adopted with two key provisions: sovereignty was transferred from the emperor to the people, and Japan renounced war and the right to build a military force.

The name for the Japanese parliament in English is the Diet, as Japan has a parliamentary system of government like that of the United Kingdom and Canada. Citizens do not elect a president directly; rather, Diet members elect a prime minister from among themselves. The prime minister forms and leads the cabinet of ministers of state.

Japan continues to be a major strategic ally and trade partner of the United States. The Japanese generation of younger leaders, now taking over from the post-WWII leadership, are called Prosperity's Children. While they share many of the conservative values of their elders, their biggest concern is domestic economic reform. They wish to remake traditional modes of Japanese capitalism that prolonged the recession in the 1990s. This generation is more receptive to Japanese defense forces participating more in international peacekeeping or nation-building missions. Also, the traditional slavish roles of students, salaried workers, and women, are changing.

## Mongolia

By treaty, today's Mongolia became an autonomous province of China in 1915 and was granted independence in 1945. The country adopted a communist government and remained strongly aligned with the Soviet Union until its collapse in 1991. The Mongolian government adopted its most recent constitution in 1992, which calls for democracy with a multi-party system. The six chapters of the constitution are: Sovereignty of the State, Human Rights and Freedoms, Structure of the State, Administrative and Territorial Units, The Constitutional Court, and Amendment of the Constitution.

Today, Mongolia remains aware of its precarious and geostrategic location between two giants – China and Russia – and is trying to reassert itself internationally. While remaining carefully neutral, Mongolia has demonstrated that it leans toward the West by engaging its military in international peacekeeping

operations such as participating in the Operation Iraqi Freedom coalition and bilateral exercises with the U.S. military like Khaan Quest.

## **South Korea**

While Syngman Rhee's regime survived the Korean War, its days were numbered by the combination of endemic corruption, considerable incompetence, and the herculean task of rebuilding a country thoroughly destroyed by war. Unequal to the challenge, Rhee was driven from office by massive street protests in 1960. A one-year period of parliamentary democracy followed. This brief democratic experiment, which was marked by ongoing protests and mass unrest, was put to an end by a military coup. The leader of the coup, Major General Park Chung-Hee, would rule Korea until his assassination in 1979.

President Park began to set South Korea on a path to development and industrialization. As U.S. forces were about to withdraw from the peninsula, South Korean products were beginning to enter world markets. South Korea was engaging in development of a nuclear weapon and a missile delivery system when President Park was assassinated amid massive anti-government demonstrations. The subsequent government was established through another military coup by Lieutenant General Chun Doo-Hwan.

Though the Chun regime survived the unrest of 1980, massive protests broke out in Korean cities in 1987, leading Chun's military and political protégé, Roh Tae-Woo, to announce he would support free and fair elections later that year. Roh remained true to his word, and due to a split in the opposition, Roh won with just 36.6 percent of the popular vote. His administration continued carrying forth the political and economic policies of his predecessors, Presidents Park and Chun, and a robust economy emerged, based on the heavy chemicals, steel, and electronics industries, cars, and other items, all for export.

The election of Kim Young-Sam in 1992 marked the ROK's return to civilian government. The Asian Financial Crisis of 1997 hit the ROK economy at the end of Kim Young-Sam's presidency, paving the way for the election of his rival, Kim Dae-Jung. While Kim Dae-Jung's policies helped Korea claw its way back from the economic crisis, Kim is best known for greatly improving relations between the DPRK and the ROK. For his efforts in bringing about the first North-South summit, for example, he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2000.

## **North Korea**

The Sino-Soviet split and the intervention of China in the Korean War moved the DPRK toward the Chinese sphere of influence. However, fearing a loss of political and social control from exposure to South Korea or the West, Kim Il Sung closed North Korea off from virtually all outside contact and adopted a national ideology called Juche, or self-reliance. Isolation of the country went as far as setting all televisions and radios to government channels. Playing on Confucian tradition, Kim portrayed himself as an adored father figure and transformed the DPRK into a hereditary monarchy. Taking advantage of the ethnic homogeneity of North Korean society, Kim was able to create an obedient, disciplined, cult-like society and industrialized the country by the early 1970s.



However, after a brief peak in the 1970s<sup>31</sup>, the DPRK increasingly fell behind: its isolationism led to a lack of foreign investments and capital, and made it difficult to develop any goods or services to exchange on the world market for badly needed hard cash. Without cash, the DPRK could not buy the oil it needed for electricity generation and operating an industry. Moreover, its huge military buildup essentially bankrupted the economy. These problems revealed themselves during a severe famine from 1996 to 1999, during which 2-3 million people died of malnutrition and starvation in North Korea.<sup>32</sup>

It was Kim's son, Kim Jong Il's nuclear program that both threatened its neighbors and U.S. and Asian interests, leading President George W. Bush to label the DPRK a member of the Axis of Evil. Under tremendous diplomatic and economic pressure, in 2007, the DPRK signed an agreement to denuclearize, an agreement that it would later break.

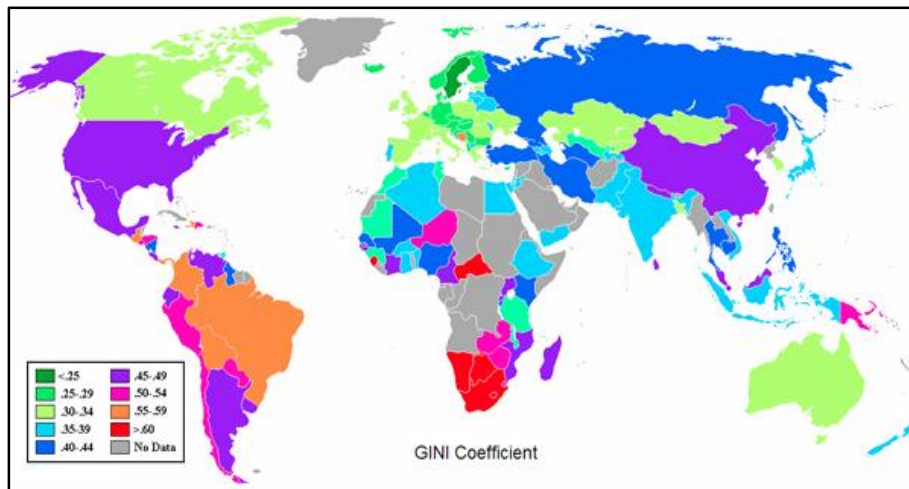
Kim Jong Il died on December 17, 2011. He was succeeded by his son Kim Jong Un. Kim Jong Un's rise to power reaffirms North Korea's political system of hereditary succession. Un has been accused of causing major shake-ups within the party's elite circles, including ordering the death of his uncle. Because it is such a reclusive state, very little about North Korea can be verified. But it is widely accepted that aside from the Kim family's close acquaintances, high ranking military, and others who make up the country's elite, the majority of people live in poverty and with little knowledge of the outside world.

## Economic Overview

### Why Economy and Infrastructure Matter to You as a Marine

The goods and services that people exchange, the infrastructure that people use to move them, and the formal and informal structures that make exchange possible all play critical roles in survival. A thorough understanding of a region is impossible without knowledge of its economy because the region's political, social, and cultural trends both reflect and shape economic developments and trends.

The economic climate in Northeast Asia has seen dramatic changes since the Vietnam War era. Most countries in the region have moved rapidly from being societies serving as suppliers to Western markets to being active and significant participants in the modern and global free market system. Northeast Asia's participation in the world economy over the last 50 years has led to staggering economic growth in the region. By most estimates, China has surpassed the United States as the world's largest economy in terms of purchasing power parity (PPP) and overall, Northeast Asia has made significant strides in the last decade to close the wealth gap. Most countries in the region now have an equal or better Gini coefficient than the United States.



Source: CIA

The Gini coefficient (also known as the Gini index or Gini ratio) is a measure of statistical dispersion intended to represent the income distribution of a nation's residents. This is the most commonly used measure of inequality.

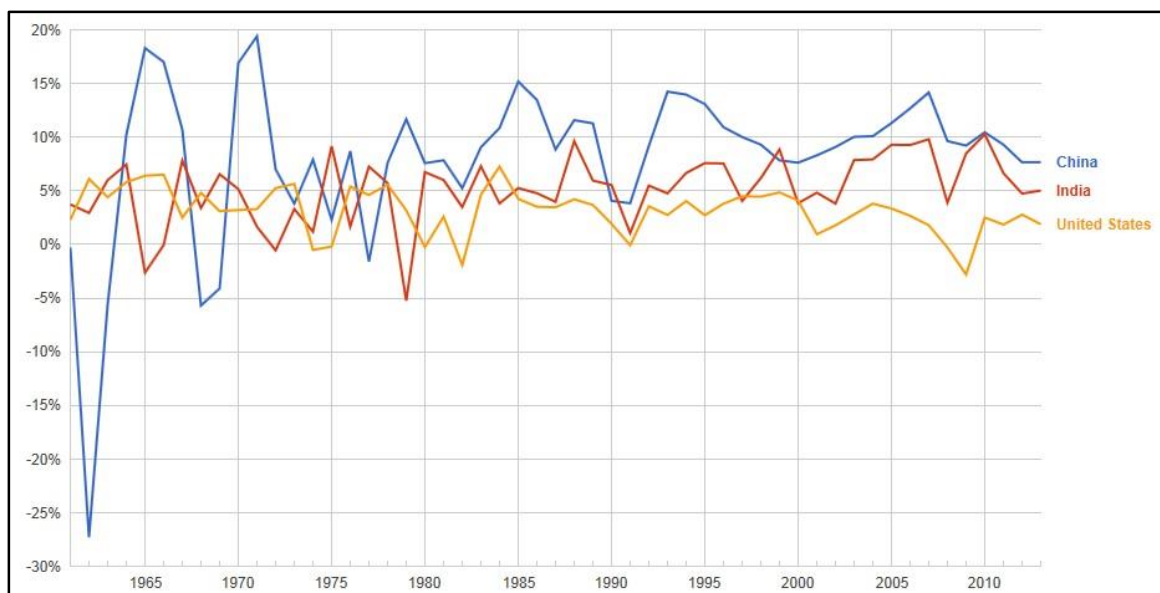
The significant changes in the region are primarily due to economic liberalization, globalization, and growing markets. China has moved from a centrally planned economy to one that takes advantage of market opportunities. Japan has become one of the most technologically advanced countries in the world and is the world's third largest economy. South Korea over the past four decades has grown to become a high-tech, industrialized economy. It is now the world's 12<sup>th</sup> largest economy. With the

exception of North Korea, most economies in the region have been growing steadily since the 1960s, although globalization trends have created new challenges for regional economies.

## China

The Chinese economy has undergone constant reforms since the late 1970s. As the most populous country on earth, it has a huge economic advantage in its supply of labor. It is no longer the outsourcing capital of the world and has become very much an economic giant in its own right. China has a voracious appetite for commodities of all kind, and its rapidly-developing economy exerts its own pressures on the country, such as burgeoning energy needs and transportation costs needed to maintain its current momentum.

Commodities are trade or commerce items, especially agricultural or mining products that can be processed and resold.



China's GDP Growth since 1965 (Source: World Bank)

## Mongolia

Landlocked Mongolia has a high dependency on intra-regional trade. Wedged between two regional giants, the country is still pulling itself out of 70 years of Soviet domination and economic mismanagement. Mongolia has a comparative advantage in coal and wool and is a major regional supplier of non-ferrous metals, copper, and gold. Although the majority of Mongolian manufacturers target the Chinese market, the country has to maintain a precarious balance between favoring Russian or Chinese markets at the expense of the other.

## Taiwan

The Taiwanese government is gradually decreasing its guidance of investment and foreign trade exports. Taiwan depends heavily on exports, as do the other countries of the region. It exports electronics, machinery, and petrochemicals. World demand for such goods has had a significant

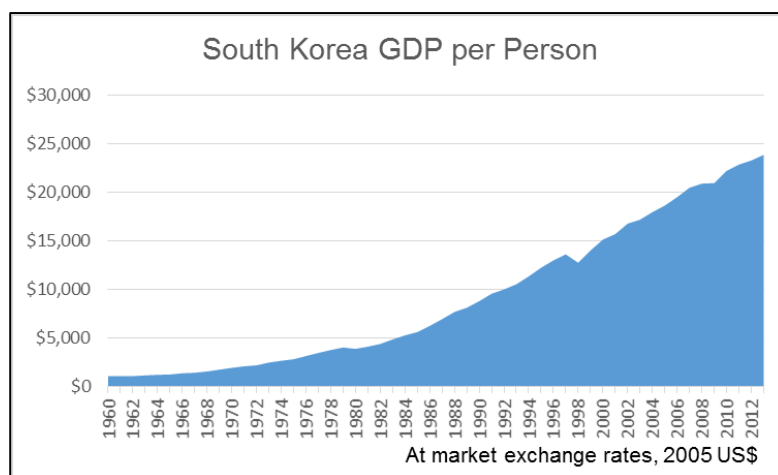
impact on Taiwan's economy. After a period of decline in 2009, 2010 saw Taiwan's GDP grow by 10.7 percent.<sup>33</sup>

## North Korea

North Korea has a command economy. That is, the economy of North Korea is planned by the Kim Jong Un regime, and people are given production quotas to achieve. Manufacturing, resources, prices, and product distribution are solely dependent upon the government's direction. The leadership often directs resources toward areas in which businesses or industries may not be competent. This lack of competency often results in the production of shoddy or substandard products. Wealth in the DPRK is limited to a select few that are the elite, among the leadership and in the higher military ranks. For the past several years, the North Korean military's first priority was to allocate resources, food for example, to the military under this policy, especially those of the higher ranks. Since reforms in 2002, the DPRK began to experience unemployment for the first time.

North Korean propaganda asserts that South Koreans live in dire poverty as a result of capitalist exploitation of the population. However, this image of the South as a country living in squalor and deprivation is being debunked as the truth about South Korea is being disseminated via the illegal DVDs and USB thumb drives that have been smuggled in and out of North Korea which contain more accurate information about both places.

## Japan and South Korea



Source: World Bank

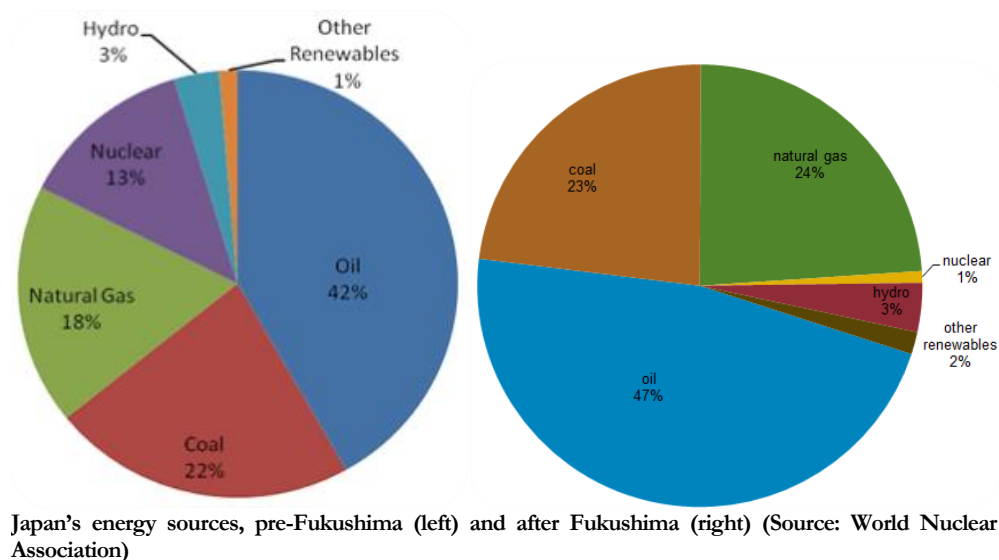
Vladivostok, Russia is one of the world's largest markets for second-hand Japanese cars, which are manufactured with right-hand drive steering wheels. However the roads in Russia are like those in China and the United States, where cars are driven on right hand side of the road. This can make for an interesting driving experience for those trying to adjust.

Japan is a regional economic powerhouse. Its market has a direct impact on other regional markets. Change in commodities in Japan affects prices of other Northeast Asia commodities. China and South Korea have increased their reliance on Japanese trade as something of a counterpoint to U.S. influence in the region and also because of its proximity. Capital goods, services, and technology are readily available in Japan and South Korea, as both countries have vast tech resources. For over a decade, Russia has been seeking technology and loans from Japan and South Korea. Trade with Russia's Far East has increased since the early 1990s, particularly in the energy sector. Japan, South Korea, and China account for over 75 percent of total Russian Far East foreign trade.

## Resources

The high rate of growth in Northeast Asia is accompanied by a need for resources that are not readily available or of sufficient quantity in the region. The exception is Mongolia, which produces an estimated 7 billion barrels of oil a day.<sup>34</sup> The need for oil and other petroleum products has grown substantially for countries in the region. Mongolia also has extensive mineral deposits and a mining sector. These two economic resources have contributed largely to the country's recent economic growth. Minerals such as gold, copper, coal, uranium, tin, tungsten and others have attracted foreign investment that helps develop Mongolia's economy.

China, like other countries throughout the world, has an increased dependency on imported natural resources to fuel its economy and production. Japan, Taiwan and South Korea all rely on importing fuel and other natural resources for their economies as well. South Korea joins the United States, China, and Japan as one of the world's largest oil importers. In fact, South Korea is the fifth largest importer of coal, which accounts for about 25 percent of its energy consumption. It is the world's second largest importer of liquefied natural gas. Only Japan imports more liquefied natural gas – about three times more.



With the exception of Mongolia, the other countries of Northeast Asia are maritime countries that rely heavily on marine products for consumption. Fish is the primary protein for many countries in the region and products grown and caught for consumption include not only

fish, but marine vegetation and shellfish. As the competition for these resources continue to increase, so have disputes over a number of islands and surrounding waters believed to contain oil and other valuable natural resources.

Since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Northeast Asia has been the primary region for nuclear energy development. Except for North Korea and China, all the states in this region have refrained from enriching uranium for nuclear defense purposes. U.S. security alliances have played a role in supporting allies such as Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan, which all have substantial nuclear energy infrastructure. Japan has historically been a regional and world leader in using efficient nuclear power as a renewable energy source. However, after the Fukushima reactor failure following the 2011 tsunami, Japan has significantly decreased its dependency on nuclear energy, and many countries in the region have stalled or downgraded plans for future nuclear installations.

## Agriculture

Northeast Asian countries are moving from agricultural-based economies to more advanced, industrialized economies. However, important agricultural resources in the region include rice, corn, vegetables, beets, milk, and fish. Farmers have learned how to yield more crops in order to feed the countries' growing populations. Japan, China, and South Korea are major participants in ocean fishing, being among the largest fish consumers in the world.

While China is a major producer of agricultural goods, it is a bigger consumer and importer. China is home to more than 1.3 billion people, and despite a total land mass of nearly 4 million square miles, only 11.86 percent of it is arable, with just over one percent of it hosting permanent crops.<sup>35</sup> The result is that it must import much of its agricultural needs from other countries.

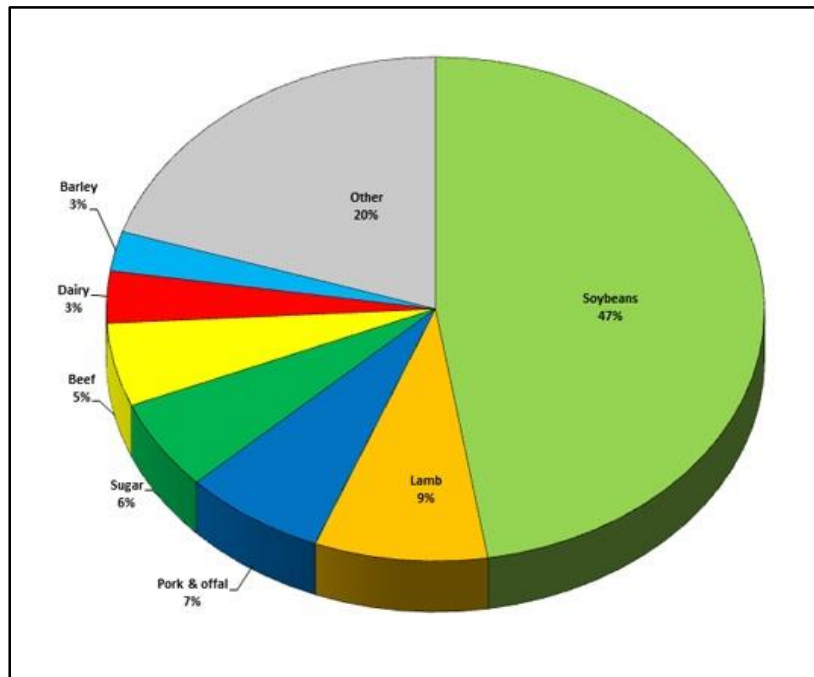
## Industry

Manufacturing is one of the strongest sectors in Northeast Asia, especially in South Korea and Japan, where large companies such as Samsung, Hyundai, Toyota, and Honda reside. Cars, electronics, game consoles, and computers all come from this region. Japan and Taiwan are advanced producers of electronic equipment as well. Despite superior industrial sectors, the countries import most raw materials to produce goods. South Korea is a major player alongside Japan in the tech industry. As of 2014, its Samsung brand was the world's largest Apple rival - producing and marketing smart phones and tablets that compete heavily with the iPhone and iPad.

A big portion of China's economic success has stemmed from manufacturing products for export. The U.S. relies heavily on imports from China, which include everything from toys to electronics to furniture. China has also rapidly developed an automobile production industry that exports to other countries throughout the world. North Korea's industry focuses on military products. This military spending uses resources which would otherwise support the civilian population. The regime also engages significantly in illegal arms trade that includes missiles.

## Informal Economy

Natural ingredients used in folk medicines are very expensive and in high demand in China, South Korea and Japan. These natural ingredients include parts of endangered animal species from Africa and Southeast Asia, which are smuggled in by rings controlled by organized crime syndicates.



China's Agriculture Imports by Sector (Source: USDA)



Merchants aiming to avoid export and import taxes load legal and illegal items on fishing boats that deliver them to contacts on or off shore. Liquor and other commodities that are taxed highly in South Korea often find a way to enter the country illegally in large suitcases that pass through customs without notice.

Northeast Asia is also home to street vendor booths, particularly meals and snack carts. A variety of products also show up for sale on carts that are pulled around the streets by merchants. Shoe shine booths, both fixed and mobile, are a common site on busy city streets. While the government is authorized to regulate these mobile merchants, in most cases it does not.

The informal economy in the region also includes the manufacturing and sale of pirated goods and copies of brand-name products. While the government of China has official laws to combat pirating and illegal manufacturing, these laws are rarely enforced. North Korea is also a producer of not only pirated materials but illicit drugs as well. With China as its biggest consumer, North Korea illegally supplies synthetic drugs to an increasing population of Chinese drug users. In 2010, Chinese authorities seized \$60 million worth of North Korean drugs, and officials in Seoul said that this was only a fraction of what is actually smuggled.<sup>36</sup>



Wangfujing night market in central Beijing (Source: Wikipedia)

Human Trafficking is a major concern in the region. China has a thriving domestic black market in children. Most of the children are bought or kidnapped by gangs who force them into pick-pocketing and other non-violent crime in the larger coastal cities. Children might also end up in a prostitution network or illegal adoption. China's one-child policy established the preference for male children and continues to create a gender imbalance. It is estimated that there are currently 37,000,000 more males than females in China.<sup>37</sup> As a result, both infants and adults are bought and sold to counter the problem of gender imbalance. Women are trafficked domestically and from neighboring countries to the north and south of the mainland, and are usually sold as brides to young bachelors in rural areas unable to find a potential wife in their own community.

## Migration and Remittances

Worker migration is common in the region. Many people leave their home countries looking for higher paying jobs. Japan and South Korea are popular destinations for workers from other regions of the world. Workers come to South Korea from African countries, Central Asian countries, Southeast Asian Countries, and China. Generally, they either save their earnings or send what they can back to their home countries as remittances. Some marry in Korea and eventually become permanent residents. These foreign workers work well below what would have to be paid to a Korean worker and often work under harsher conditions and longer hours.

China has among the highest worker migration rates in the world – in 2005, 7.3 million people left China for work elsewhere, many going to the United States. Within China alone, the World Bank estimates that there are over 100 million migrant workers, referred to as the “floating population.” This floating population is a big part of China’s informal economy. Remittances are sent home by these migrant workers to their families, making China one of the top three remittance-recipient countries in the world. It receives more than \$25 billion annually, and by contrast, sends about \$3 billion out of the country every year.

A remittance is a transfer of money by a foreign worker to an individual in his or her home country. Money sent home by migrants competes with international aid as some of the largest financial inflows to developing countries.

## Free Trade Agreements

Free trade agreements (FTAs) have been expanding rapidly in the region since the 1990s, and impact the economies of the region by providing mutual benefits from imports, exports, and investments. These trade agreements can be bilateral, regional, and international. A key component in these trade agreements is the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) trading block. Countries such as Japan, China, and South Korea form ASEAN plus 3, and these countries are included in many ASEAN meetings.

ASEAN was established in August 1967 in Bangkok, Thailand, to promote economic growth, regional security, and social progress and cultural development in the region. The countries of Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand were the first signatories. Brunei Darussalam then joined in 1984, Vietnam in 1995, Lao PDR and Burma/Myanmar in 1997, and Cambodia in 1999.



Leaders at the 2014 APEC Ministerial Meeting in Beijing. (Source: Wikipedia)

The Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), established in 1989, is a forum for 21 Pacific Rim countries, including the United States, and was established to promote free trade and economic cooperation throughout the Asia-Pacific region. It was created in response to the growing interdependence of Asia-Pacific economies and the advent of regional trade blocs in other parts of the world. The forum meets annually at the APEC Economic Leaders' Meetings, and is attended by the heads of government from all member economies except Taiwan, which is represented by a ministerial-level official.

APEC member countries include: United States, Australia, Brunei, Canada, China, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Taiwan, Hong Kong\*, Mexico, Papua New Guinea, Chile, Peru, Russia, and Vietnam (Hong Kong entered the forum in 1999, when it was still a British colony).

Japan has pursued Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs), which establish free trade for most goods while protecting certain sectors, such as its beef and rice products. The increase in FTAs in the region could eventually lead to a region wide economic pact, such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) or the European Union (EU). The United States and Republic of Korea finally signed a Fair Trade Agreement on March 17, 2012 after many years of negotiations.

The Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) is a 21<sup>st</sup> century trade agreement that the United States is negotiating with 11 countries throughout the Asia-Pacific region (Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, and Vietnam). Initially proposed in 2005 as the Trans-Pacific Strategic Partnership Agreement, the TPP does not include any of the countries in the Northeast Asia region, except Japan. In response to the exclusionary nature of the TPP, China has led the charge in promoting yet another free trade agreement called the Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific (FTAAP), which would include a broader range of Asia-Pacific countries.

## Transportation

Transportation across Northeast Asia is generally well developed. All of the countries, with the exception of Mongolia, are maritime states with a well-developed sea transportation system. China, South Korea, and Japan are among the world's largest ship builders. Since the early 1990s, passengers have traveled by sea between South Korea and China, and sea transport of both cargo and people takes place between Japan and North Korea.

Railroad lines exist in all countries, with Mongolia's being the least developed. Japan, China, and South Korea all operate high speed railroads with trains traveling at speeds of over 100 miles per hour. China has been rapidly expanding its railroad networks in the last decade and operates bullet trains that reach speeds of 248.5mp/h (400km/h) over a track that is separate from China's regular rail network. Mongolia's railroad network has some 1,908 km of tracks. Of note, as of 2010, the Russian State Railway owned 50 percent of Mongolia's rail system.<sup>38</sup>



Chang'an Avenue in Beijing (Source: Wikipedia)

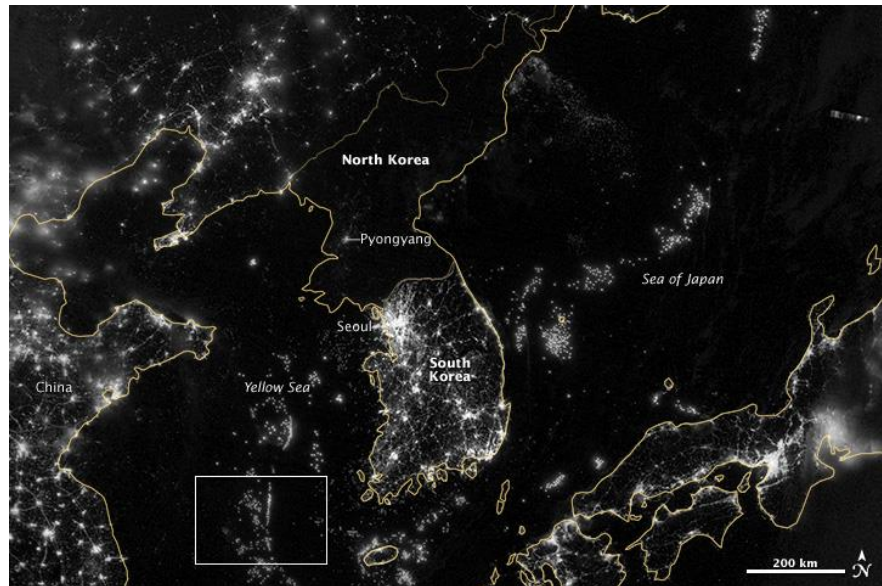


Traffic has become increasingly problematic because of the number of cars and trucks on the roads, particularly in China, Japan, and South Korea. Long delays are common during morning and evening traffic hours in the major cities.

## Utilities

China has implemented plans to develop urban areas away from larger cities, such as Beijing and Shanghai. New construction projects aim at installing sewage, water, natural gas, electricity and telecommunication systems throughout the country, mostly west of the more developed eastern seaboard area.

Japan and South Korea have fairly new natural gas pipelines, electricity distribution networks, sewage, and drinking water supply pipelines. In the case of natural gas distribution in South Korea, newly installed pipelines are rapidly replacing the system of delivering bottled natural gas using trucks and motorcycles. This will likely allow for more automobiles to travel more freely over South Korea's roads.



Korean Peninsula at night (Source: NASA Earth Observatory and NOAA National Geophysical Data Center)

North Korea's command economy and near failing state status has left it lacking in infrastructure development. Satellite photos taken from outer space of the Korean Peninsula at night show the lower part of the peninsula fully electrified, while darkness covers the northern part of the peninsula. Only in downtown areas of Pyongyang and other major cities do utilities approach satisfactory conditions. Utilities in Mongolia are in need of major development across the country. Mongolia generated about 4.5 billion kWh in 2010 from its power plants: 99.9 percent from fossil fuels.

## Communications

The Northeast Asia region has emerged over the past decades with a reputation of advanced telecommunications in all dimensions. China, Japan, and South Korea all have their own domestically-produced satellites. With the exception of Mongolia and North Korea, all of the other countries produce electronics semiconductors, circuit boards, equipment, computers, and peripheral devices. Taiwan and mainland China supply the market with name brand devices, many of which are not Chinese or Taiwanese companies, but have production bases there.

The telecommunications installations of China, Japan, South Korea and Taiwan are state of the art and will continue to accommodate electronic-based communications well into the future. Both China and North Korea engage in attacking other internet subscribers, including other governments, via its trained hackers. Both governments have electronic warfare units specifically tasked with exploiting commercial and government networks overseas.

Mongolia had 187,600 main lines of telephone trunks and some 2.9 million cell phones in use as of 2011.<sup>39</sup> Its telephone network is under development and has direct dialing available in many areas of the country. Fiber optics cable installation and improvements are ongoing and improving. Its state-operated radio and television networks are both publicly and privately owned and operated, and there are more than a hundred radio stations and broadcasts in a variety of languages.

## Regional Security Issues

### Why Regional Security Issues Matter to You as a Marine

A thorough understanding of a region is difficult without an account of its most significant security challenges. These challenges tend to affect not only relations between states in the region but also the behavior of its people and the choices they make. Regional security issues encompass a host of topics ranging from wars between states, to insurgencies, to organized crime, to weak institutions, to systemic corruption. Some of them involve violence, while others weaken states and societies and have the potential to turn low level conflicts into violent confrontations.

#### Introduction

The Northeast Asia region has a long history of interaction with Western powers, but unlike the rest of Asia, has no history of colonization by Western countries. The United States has had a significant presence in the region, since the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in Japan during the Meiji Restoration era, and then in a more contentious role beginning with World War II up through the Vietnam War. In recent decades, the U.S. has made great strides in re-establishing positive relationships and has long-standing commitments to countries in the Northeast Asia region. It

A territory is said to be “de facto independent” when it has its own government that exercises effective control of the territory, but the international community (that is, other countries) considers the territory to be part of another country. The difference between de facto independence and “de jure” (internationally recognized) independence is essentially a difference between informal rules and the formal rules (international law) at the international scale. For example, Taiwan has been de facto independent of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) since 1949, though both the government of Taiwan and the government of the PRC agree that Taiwan is legally part of China (Each government claims to be the legitimate government of all of China).

is signatory to an armistice that has suspended combat on the Korean Peninsula, a Mutual Defense Treaty with the Republic of Korea on that same peninsula, and a Mutual Security Treaty (MST) with Japan. Meanwhile, the Taiwan Relations Act of 1979 has sustained a security relationship between the United States and the island’s *de facto* Republic of China government. As such, the United States has significant national interests that can be impacted by regional events or trends. These threats include natural disasters, territorial disputes, political conflicts, trafficking, and cyber-threats. Therefore, the United States military is actively involved in measures to prevent threats and instability in the region.

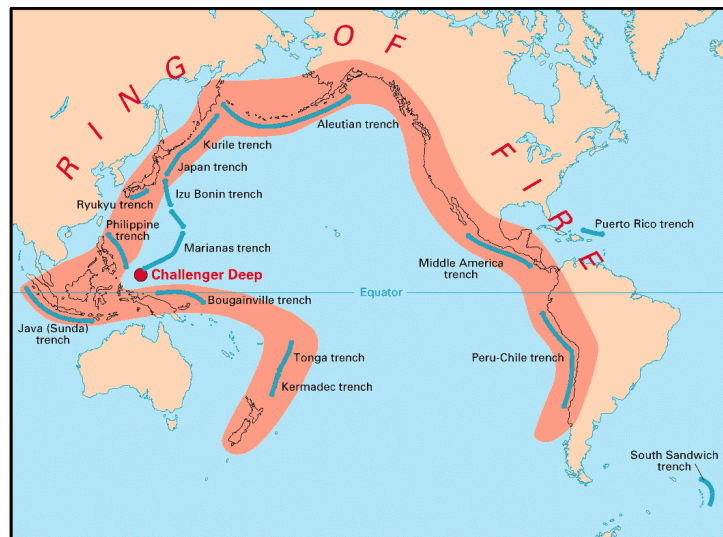


## Natural Disasters

The impact of natural disasters in Northeast Asia affect the United States directly. In addition to massive human casualties, natural disasters also affect the U.S. economy. Due to extensive bilateral cooperation with some of the region's militaries, when disaster strikes, the U.S. military is often a first responder to these catastrophes, and often remains at the disaster scene to support the recovery, clean-up, and reconstruction.

The Pacific Ring of Fire in Northeast Asia extends southward across the western Pacific Ocean, from the northern islands of Japan, past Taiwan, all the way beyond the South China Sea, to the west coast of Indonesia. The entire area is prone to seismic activity. Large earthquakes, tidal waves, flooding, and volcanic eruptions occur in the region.

China has experienced some of the largest earthquakes on record. In 1976, Hebei province was struck by a 7.5 earthquake. While not the strongest earthquake on record, it remains the third deadliest in recorded history, with more than 240,000 casualties. In 2008, Sichuan province was struck by a 7.9 earthquake that resulted in nearly 90,000 deaths.<sup>40</sup> Unlike most other countries in the region, China did not ask for or accept HADR assistance from outside sources. However, the economic impact of the event was staggering – resulting in nearly \$140 billion dollars in economic loss – affecting global markets. The Sichuan earthquake was second only to Japan's 2011 earthquake as the costliest disaster in history.<sup>41</sup>



Ring of Fire map (Source: USGS)

Perhaps the largest natural disaster in recent memory was the March 11, 2011 earthquake and resulting tsunami that struck the eastern coast of Honshu island, near Sendai, Japan. The 9.0 earthquake was followed by a tidal wave (tsunami) that resulted in the explosion and destruction of a nuclear power plant at Fukushima. The United States and Japan put into effect Operation Tomodachi on March 12, 2011. Marines of the 31<sup>st</sup> Marine Expeditionary Unit, 3<sup>rd</sup> Marine Expeditionary Brigade and others deployed to Oshima Island, Sendai Airport, and other locations to assist the Japanese Self Defense Force in cleanup operations.<sup>42</sup>

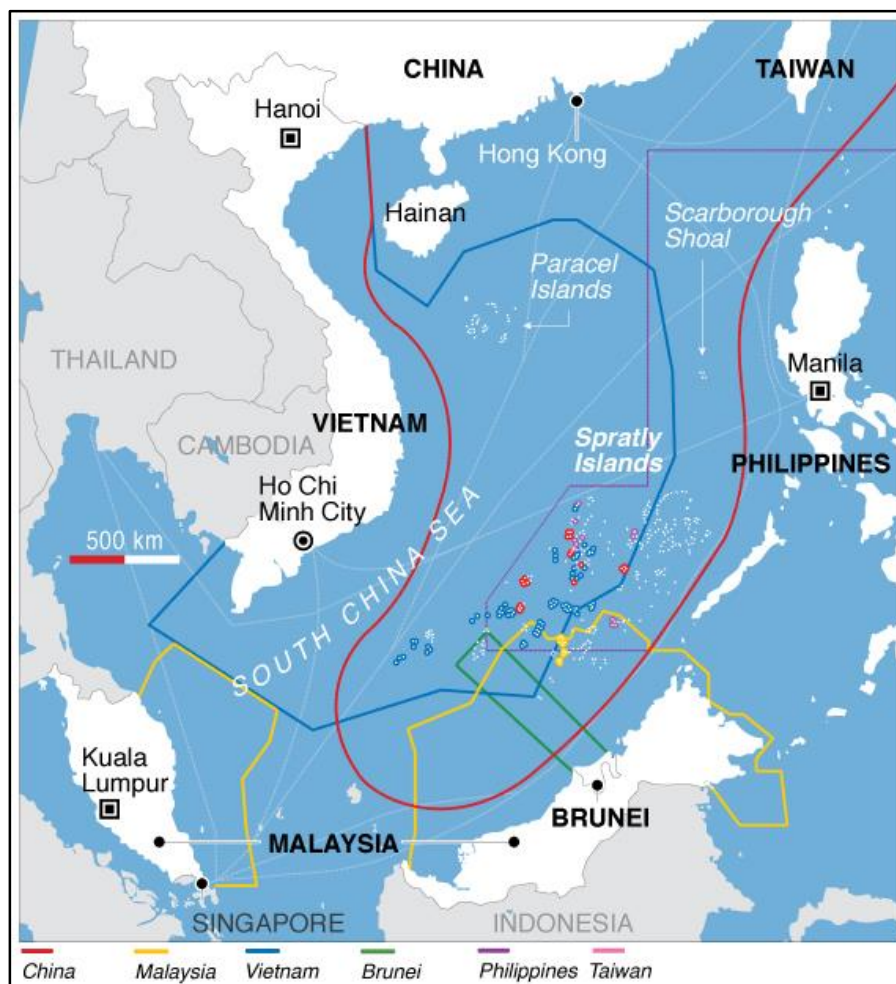
## Territorial Disputes

Since the end of the Cold War, a number of seemingly dormant territorial disputes have resurfaced. Many of the territorial disputes in the region involve islands. Most of the islands in question are uninhabited, but national pride and the exclusive economic zones (EEZ) that a country can claim around its territory make them valuable. There is also strong evidence of gas and oil reserves below

the seabed of these islands; therefore Japan, Taiwan, South Korea, China, and even Russia are all engaged in disputes over islands in the region.

The area within the so-called nine-dash-line is an area in the South China Sea that China claims as sovereign territory. It extends from the southern coast of China, down the east coast of Vietnam, to the northwest coast of Sabah and Sarawak, Malaysia, up the entire west coast of the Philippines, and to Taiwan. The history of this line is somewhat debated: Many argue that these claims date back officially to 1935, when the Kuomintang government published an official list of Chinese names for the islands in the South China Sea. Many Chinese, however, refer to a series of maps commissioned during the Qing Dynasty that show the entire area as belonging to China. Some members of the Chinese government argue that there is written proof of sovereignty going back several centuries B.C., though this assertion is contradicted by historical maps and documents possessed by other countries in the region.

An Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) is a concept adopted at the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea (1982), whereby a coastal state assumes jurisdiction over the exploration and exploitation of marine resources in its adjacent section of the continental shelf, taken to be a band extending 200 miles from the shore.



China is pressing huge territorial claims, outlined in red, in the South China Sea region. The Philippines, Vietnam and others are also making claims (Source: VOA)

All of the countries in this maritime region have overlapping claims with China. Disputes over these waters were infrequent until 1991, when China invoked international law to claim them as sovereign territory. In 2011, the United States officially condemned China's use of force in the South China Sea, and from that point forward, the number of skirmishes in this maritime region has increased.

Oil reserves in the sea are estimated to be in the billions of barrels. Fishing accounts for a large percentage of the region's GDP, with nearly a tenth of the world's fishing stock found in this small area. Furthermore, fish accounts for nearly 20-50

percent of the protein intake in Southeast Asia. Perhaps most important to the United States, however, is that maritime trade has doubled every decade since 1945, and three out of the 20 busiest ports in the world are in the South China Sea. Oil tankers originating in the Middle East and headed for the United States pass through the Strait of Malacca, at the southern tip of the Malay Peninsula, and out to the Pacific.

Economic growth has enabled military expansion by many Asian countries. China now patrols sea lanes of commerce, extending from its long coastline southward through the South China Sea, across the Indian Ocean to the Middle East. It has established weigh stations along the routes and is engaged in joint projects with other countries along the sea lanes of commerce to ensure safe passage of sea commerce.

China has steadily invested in its military. The country now has a deployed aircraft carrier and has converted an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) into an anti-ship missile with a range of some 1,500 km. China also engages in incursions into other countries' territorial waters. Its fishing boats often intrude into South Korean waters and confront the South Korean coast guard.<sup>43</sup>



Map of Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands (Source: Wikimedia Commons)

China's attempt to exert control within its nine-dash line has the potential to affect American interests because conflict in that region can impact freedom of navigation for trade and military vessels. It also threatens the right of countries, including the U.S., to exploit the mineral and fish resources outside of legitimate Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ). Furthermore, this control is often seen as a political threat to countries in the region with which the United States has mutual defense treaties.

In the last decade, China has also taken an increasingly assertive posture by claiming sovereignty over the Senkaku/Diaoyu, a small island chain located in the East China Sea. The dispute over these islands goes back more than 100 years. Prior to 1884, the uninhabited islands were unclaimed. That next year, Japan annexed Taiwan and the uninhabited islands after it defeated China in a brief war. Following Japan's defeat after WWII, the United States assumed control of these islands and used them for bombing practice.

The disputed islands are known as the Diaoyu islands by the Chinese and the Senkakus by the Japanese. The U.S. government officially refers to these islands as the Senkaku/Diaoyu islands to exhibit a position of neutrality in the dispute.

Shortly thereafter, oil and gas reserves were proven under the seabed surrounding the islands. China asserted a claim, as did Taiwan, which is closest to the islands (and which is also claimed by China).



China's claim is vague, based on ancient maps and documents.<sup>44</sup> In the 1970s, Japan and China began to argue over the sovereignty of the islands, but the dispute became contentious in 2012, after the Japanese government announced its intention to purchase back the islands from their private owner. The move incited large-scale protests across China and the two countries began to take a more militarized stance over ownership of the Diaoyu/Senkakus. China, Japan, Russia, and the U.S. have all engaged in naval exercises in the vicinity in recent years. In response, U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Martin Dempsey, during a visit to China in 2013, reminded the Chinese "that the U.S. has certain treaty obligations with Japan,"<sup>45</sup> referring to the U.S.-Japan Mutual Support Treaty.

To the north, Japan claims sovereignty over four islands known as the Southern Kurils in Russia, also referred to as the Northern Territories in Japan: Iturup, Junashir, Shikotan, and Haboma.<sup>46</sup> Japan bases its claim on a bilateral treaty with the Russian Empire concluded in 1855. The Soviet Union seized the islands in 1945, at the end of World War II. Japan has not signed a peace treaty with the Soviet Union to end World War II, nor has it signed a treaty with Russia since the breakup of the Soviet Union. Japan asserts that a peace treaty must reinstate its sovereignty over the four islands. Of note, the U.S. would have to be a signatory to any agreement to resolve territorial disputes.



Kuril Islands (Source: CAOCL)

Still other countries involved in territorial disputes with Japan are the two Koreas, one of which, South Korea, occupies and claims sovereignty over an island it calls Dokdo. The Japanese, who call the same island Takeshima, claim that the island belongs to Japan.<sup>47</sup> The Republic of Korea (South Korea) has claimed



Dokdo Islands (Source: Wikimedia)

sovereignty over the island since the country's founding in 1948. In the meantime, North Korea also claims sovereignty over the island. The disputes over these islands have primarily materialized in the form of government white papers and media rhetoric.

## Political Conflicts

### *Taiwan*

Since 1949, when the *Kuomintang* (KMT) fled to Taiwan, the relationship between China and Taiwan (commonly referred to as Cross-Strait Relations) has been characterized by tension and limited contact. In the early years, the two countries engaged in minor military conflicts, but in recent decades the conflict has been more of a diplomatic one, focused on the political and legal status of Taiwan and alternative prospects of either political unification with China or full Taiwanese independence.

In 1979, the United States and China signed the U.S.-PRC Joint Communiqué, switching diplomatic recognition from Taipei to Beijing. In the Joint Communiqué, the United States recognized the Government of the People's Republic of China as the sole legal government of China, acknowledging the Chinese position that there is but one China and Taiwan is part of China. The Joint Communiqué also stated that the people of the United States will maintain cultural, commercial, and other unofficial relations with the people of Taiwan.<sup>48</sup>

At that same time, the United States abrogated its Sino-American Mutual Defense Treaty with Taiwan and in April of that same year, signed The Taiwan Relations Act. This act states that “the United States will make available to Taiwan such defense articles and defense services in such quantity as may be necessary to enable Taiwan to maintain sufficient self-defense capabilities.”<sup>49</sup> However, the decision about the nature of defense services that America will provide to Taiwan is to be determined by the President and Congress. America’s policy has been to dissuade Taiwan from any unilateral declaration of independence, and to dissuade China from unilaterally unifying with Taiwan.

Between 1995 and 1996, China conducted a series of military exercises and missile tests in the vicinity of the Taiwan. The tests displayed China’s unhappiness with Taiwan president’s Lee Teng-hui visit to the United States in June of 1995. Further tests in March 1996 were carried out to intimidate Taiwan in the lead-up to a presidential election.<sup>50</sup> In addition to mobilizing conventional forces, China fired several surface-to surface missiles in the waters near Taiwan. The U.S finally responded by deploying two aircraft carrier battle groups to the vicinity of the Taiwan Strait to stabilize the situation. The scale of the U.S deployment in East Asia was the largest posturing of troops since the Vietnam War.

Since the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Cross-Strait relations have continued in an amicable direction. In 2008, China formally established with Taiwan the *san tongs* – transportation, commerce, and communications ties – that were proposed by Deng Xiaoping in 1979. Ma Ying-jeou, a member of the KMT party, assumed the Taiwan presidency in 2008. He said that he and the KMT favor eventual reunification, but that the KMT respects the opinions of Taiwanese people and independence is a choice for the people of Taiwan.

### *Tibet*

Tibet has been the scene of power struggles going back to the 14<sup>th</sup> century, with Russia, China, and Great Britain contending for varying levels of control early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. However, in 1951, shortly after the Communists established the People’s Republic of China, it officially invaded Tibet. Meanwhile, the Tibetan Government is in exile and contends that Tibet is independent and is under unlawful occupation. Tibet is a strategic location militarily, and is also rich in natural resources. Over

sixty years of oppression by China has scattered the people of Tibet around the world and reduced the native ethnic Tibetan population.

The 21<sup>st</sup> century has seen significant PRC economic and infrastructure developments in Tibet, which have completely changed the face of its capital, Lhasa. Initially opened in 2006, the railroad from Golmud to Lhasa is the highest rail line in the world. Costing more than \$4 billion, the tracks were built across 550km (340 miles) of permafrost, and at its highest point, it reaches an altitude of 5,000 meters (16,400 feet).<sup>51</sup> More than ten million people (mostly Chinese) visited Tibet in 2012, a number the Chinese government credited to “transportation and government promotion.”<sup>52</sup>

With massive infrastructure projects – which China credits to raising the standard of living for Tibetans – also came a suppression of Tibetan culture and human rights. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) began to clamp down on the practice of Tibetan Buddhism (not one of the official religions recognized by the CCP), by restricting that which is said in Buddhist temples and who is allowed to say it. From February 2009 to March 2015, nearly 140 Tibetans have self-immolated in Tibet and China as a response to the perceived repression of Tibetan culture in the region.<sup>53</sup>

### ***Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region***

China’s furthest northwestern province, Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region, makes up about one-sixth of China and is home to nearly 9 million people. Starting in the early 1950s, when the Turkic-speaking Muslims of Xinjiang called for self-government, Mao Zedong, then leader of China, opted for a policy of repression of the Uighurs.



Source: CAOCL

China’s policies of encouraging ethnic Han Chinese to migrate to the area and assimilation of Uighurs caused a widespread resentment. The CCP phased out the Uighur language in school curriculum in favor of the Chinese language and placed restrictions on the teaching of Islam and travel. It also banned women from wearing headscarves and men from wearing beards.

The events in the United States on September 11, 2001, coincided with a resurgence in the Uighur separatist movement and provided the CCP with a reason to revive its assimilation efforts in the region. The government’s “strike hard” campaign was via the arrest of hundreds of separatist “terrorists” in Xinjiang. Uighurs accused the government of arbitrary arrest, torture, and detention



without public trial, and summary execution. The Chinese government, meanwhile, has alleged that members of a shadowy “Eastern Turkestan Islamic Movement” have obtained funds and training from al-Qaeda.<sup>54</sup>

Tensions between Uighurs and the Chinese government have continued to increase. Coordinated knife attacks attributed to ethnic Uighurs have been on the rise, as are targeted bombings; the most notable of which was the 2013 car explosion in front of Tiananmen Square in Beijing. Whether all of these attacks were actually carried out by Uighurs is still unclear, as the Chinese government is not transparent with its investigations of these incidents. Government land-grabbing, environmental degradation, the stifling of free speech, and workplace safety issues also instigate outbursts of violence. Uighur academics and activists, in particular are accused of inciting the recent violence, and have been the target of arrests and criminal charges.

### ***North Korea***

For over half a century, a technical state of war has existed on the Korean Peninsula that started on June 25, 1950, with the invasion of the Republic of Korea by the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK), known commonly as North Korea. An armistice has been in effect since 1953, but from the time of the signing, North Korea has withdrawn six times and has provoked South Korea by covertly sending combatants into the South.

North Korea’s self-reliance (*juche*) plan for unification includes use of military force. In January 21, 1968, a day known as the Blue House Raid, in a single military operation managed to make their way all the way to the Blue House (South Korea’s presidential residence) in an attempt to kill the then president of South Korea, Park Chung-hee. The North Korean hereditary dictatorship has been unpredictable since its assumption of power. The Kims have exhibited behaviors ranging from absolute seclusion to military aggression. This unpredictability has caused the DPRK to remain a high security concern for the U.S. and its allies in the region.

North Korea is the object of sanctions imposed by the United Nations due to its insistence on developing and maintaining nuclear weapons, missiles to deliver them, and illegal arms trade. In 2013, a North Korean cargo ship was seized in the Panama Canal, carrying two Mig-21 jet aircraft and several jet engines. The military equipment was hidden beneath thousands of tons of sugar sacks. After the cargo seizure, the Panama Canal Authority imposed a \$700,000 fine on North Korea and charged three of the crew with arms trafficking. The United Nations determined the shipment violated sanctions imposed on North Korea for its nuclear weapons development.



Marines with 13th and 31st Marine Expeditionary Units talk with Republic of Korea Marines during an amphibious training raid in Pohang, South Korea (Source: 13thmeu.marines.mil)

On March 26, 2010 an ROK navy corvette named the *Cheonan*, sank off the country’s west coast in the Yellow Sea, resulting in the death of 46 of its 106 personnel. A multi-country investigation

concluded that the warship had been sunk by a North Korean torpedo. North Korea has also twice tested a multistage long-range rocket capable of hitting the United States, and has fielded military cyber warfare units. These activities appear to be a concerted effort by North Korea to increase its capability to directly threaten the United States and its allies militarily.

The seemingly irrational behaviors and decisions of North Korea's leadership has also rendered it one of the poorest economies in the world. North Korea often asks for and receives aid from other countries, including poor neighboring states like Mongolia. The food deficiency in North Korea often draws global attention. Internal strife leading to collapse of the regime is also a security concern for the U.S. and its allies in the region.

## **Trafficking**

Northeast Asia is a nexus for trafficking of various types – from human beings, to narcotics, to wildlife. Trafficking is not only a large part of the informal economy in the region, it also poses a real threat to regional and global stability.

### ***Drug Trafficking***

The Golden Triangle, a 150,000-square-mile, mountainous region located on the Burma/Laos/Thailand border, is the world's second largest producer of opium, behind Afghanistan. Insurgents and terrorists often fund their operations through drug trafficking, especially in poppy-growing areas. From these sources, illegal drugs are transported through China, a country that is also a major source for chemicals used to produce illegal drugs such as methamphetamine.<sup>55</sup>

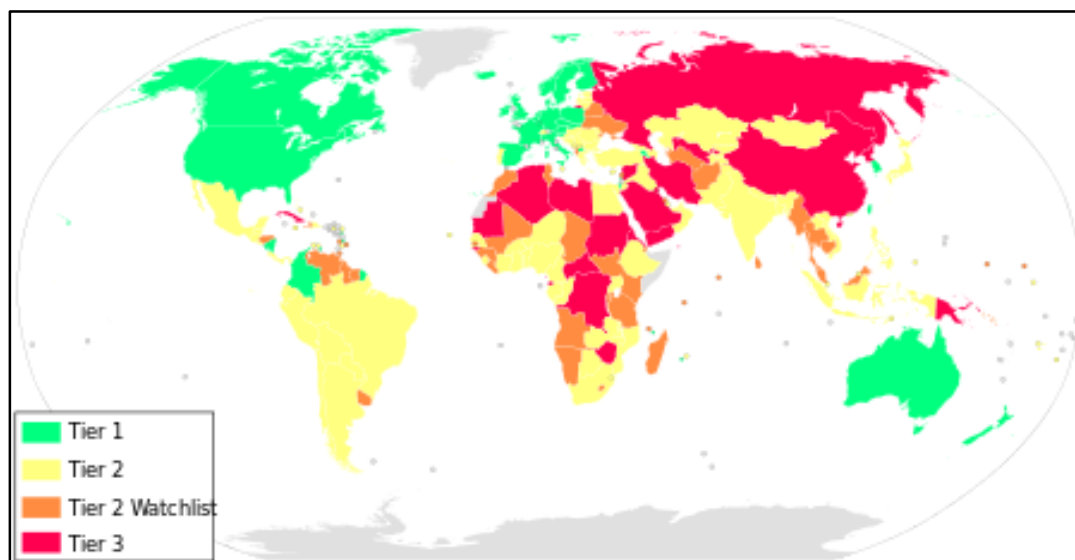
It is widely assumed that methamphetamine is a significant part of the informal economy for North Korea. There are reports from several countries that indicate the DPRK manufactures methamphetamine for illegal export through Mongolia and China and on to other areas of the world. Populations in China, Mongolia, Japan, and South Korea are consumers of drugs, but the largest illegal drug market is the United States.

### ***Human Trafficking***

Human trafficking is also a serious problem, with China being a major destination for people trafficked from neighboring countries – particularly North Korea, Laos, Vietnam, Cambodia, and Burma/Myanmar. China's One Child Policy created a severe gender imbalance. Because families preferred a son for an only child, abortions and infanticide of female babies left the country with far more males than females. Now that this generation of only children is of marrying age, the black market for importing women has increased drastically. Human trafficking organizations often take women and children by coercion or under false pretenses—such as offering legitimate education or job opportunities.

Throughout the region employers, employment agents, or informal labor recruiters commonly use debt bondage to indenture trafficking victims to their employers. Additionally, victims are often intimidated by confiscation of identity and travel documents and threats of deportation. Although most countries have laws against human trafficking, enforcement of those laws may be selective at best. Law enforcement officials may be more likely to punish or abuse the victims of trafficking than

the perpetrators. This can make victims reluctant to seek help, especially when they do not have the legal right to live and work in a country, or if their documentation has been confiscated.



Tier map from Trafficking in Persons report (Source: U.S. Department of State)

The State Department issues a Trafficking in Persons (TIP) report annually to review and monitor country's policies in regard to human trafficking. The TIP Report is a tool used to engage foreign governments in dialogues to advance reforms, combat trafficking, and target resources on prevention, protection and prosecution programs. The report places countries in tiers based on their efforts and abilities to combat trafficking. Tier 1 countries are considered to have no human trafficking problems and Tier 3 countries have the worst. The countries of Northeast Asia consistently rank among the worst in the world. The report is also used by international organizations, foreign governments, and nongovernmental organizations.

### ***Wildlife Trafficking***

Wildlife trafficking has increased dramatically in Northeast Asia in recent years, and is becoming a larger threat to regional and global stability. Illegal wildlife trade generates nearly \$19 billion a year. An investigation in Kenya African R concluded that illegal ivory funds as much as 40 percent of the operations of al-Shabaab, a militant Islamist organization with ties to al-Qaeda. Furthermore, the UN has drawn similar links between wildlife trafficking and al-Qaeda and the Lord's Resistance Army.<sup>56</sup>



Elephant tusks (Source: U.S. Fish and Wildlife)

Throughout Asia, there are many types of endangered animals or animal parts that are considered symbols of wealth and status or are valued as key components of traditional medicines. These include native species of both Asia and Africa, so many of the trafficking rings are transcontinental. The black market price in Asia for many animal parts such as rhino horns and elephant tusks can reach into the millions of U.S. dollars. Efforts to combat poaching in recent years have increased, but poachers are becoming increasingly sophisticated. A common thread with all types of trafficking is the link to both organized crime and terrorist organizations. Trafficking rings are often run by gangs and/or terrorist organizations, and the revenues generated from these illegal activities support these organizations.

## **Cyber Espionage**

Attacks on digital data systems is a growing security threat to the United States and other countries across the globe. The Northeast Asia region has been the scene of comparatively rapid economic and technological development. With that development comes installation of advanced telecommunications facilities in areas where telecommunications never before existed. In fact, state of the art telecommunications, digital switching, and digital data lines in parts of Northeast Asia are more advanced than in many areas of the United States.

New capabilities of information and technology (IT) are quickly assimilated, and use of the new technologies have quickly spread throughout the region. The Chinese PLA and the North Korea Peoples' Army (KPA) have trained cyber warfare units in action. They function to police their own states and project disruption of digital data systems of other countries. Both China and North Korea have been identified by the U.S. government as engaging in aggressive cyber activities directed at both governmental and commercial sectors in the United States.

In 2013, Mandiant, a private U.S.- based security firm, released the most comprehensive report to-date on the cyber activities by a unit known as APT1, a secret, resourced organization full of mainland Chinese speakers with direct access to Shanghai-based telecommunications infrastructure. The report indicates that the organization was directly connected with the PLA. It detailed APT1's multi-year, enterprise-scale computer espionage campaign, and provided a timeline of economic espionage conducted since 2006 against 141 victims across multiple industries, including government, manufacturing and transportation.<sup>57</sup>

## **Conclusion**

While the region is not without its problems, the bilateral relations between the United States and some of the key countries in the region have strengthened significantly over the last two decades. The United States' continued political, economic, and military engagement have served to solidify alliances in the region and create new partnerships. As the United States continues to pursue its Pivot to Asia strategy, the critical role that Northeast Asian alliances play in this strategy cannot be understated. The United States' future in the Asia Pacific region hinges largely on a secure and stable Northeast Asia.



## Case Study: The Culture of the Uighur people in Xinjiang Province, China

The case study in this chapter introduces a culture from the Northeast Asia region, using the concepts introduced in the Operational Culture General (OCG) document (see attached document).

### Introduction

China is home to a diverse population comprised of numerous ethnic, religious, and other cultural groups. While the country's population is overwhelmingly ethnic Han Chinese, there are minorities living in all of China's provinces and administrative regions. These minorities comprise around 7.1% of the total population.<sup>58</sup> The Uighur (sometimes spelled Uyghur) minority population is the largest minority population in China, totaling about 8 million.<sup>59</sup> Their numbers are primarily concentrated



Source: CAOCL

in the far western province of Xinjiang, officially known as Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (XUAR). Although there are ethnic Uighurs living in other regions throughout China, the largest concentration is in Xinjiang. The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the culture of the Uighur people living in Xinjiang province.

Although officially a part of China, Xinjiang and its Uighur inhabitants identify much more closely with their ethnic kin living in Central Asian neighbor states. Xinjiang Uighurs are different from their Han neighbors in identity, dress, appearance, language, religion, and history.



Historically, Uighurs were the dominant ethnic group in Xinjiang. The region's name in Chinese literally means "New Frontier," and was only brought under Beijing's control during the 19th century rein of the Qing dynasty. Many ethnic Uighurs still often refer to the region as East Turkestan, a historical name for the region, which is Russian in origin. Uighurs have lived in the region for centuries, having descended from the Sogdian traders, the well-known merchants along the Silk Road. Throughout the centuries, Xinjiang has come in and out of Chinese control, but as Arab influence increased throughout Central Asia, the region was converted to Islam and Uighur, a Turkic language, became the lingua franca. The Qing dynasty gained control over the region in the 1700s, defeating the resistance of tribes in the north and sending Muslims from Gansu province to settle there. In 1884 the Qing government officially created a Xinjiang province.



Id Kah Mosque in the city of Kashgar (Source: WikiCommons)

## Physical Geography

Xinjiang shares a border with not only several other provinces, but quite a few other countries as well. It is bordered by the provinces of Qinghai, Gansu, and the Tibet Autonomous Region. It also shares a border with Afghanistan and Pakistan to the southwest, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan to the west, Kazakhstan to the northwest, Russia to the north, and Mongolia to the northeast. Xinjiang province can be divided into five regions: the Northern Highlands, the Junggar (Dzungarian) Basin, the Tian Shan, the Tarim Basin, and the Kunlun Mountains. These regions run from east to west, and high mountains alternating with large basins.

The region's high elevation and its distance from the seas determine its climate. The winters are very cold and dry. Winter temperatures in the Tarim Basin are about 20 °F (−7 °C), compared with 5 °F

(-15° C) in many parts of the Junggar Basin. In the summer, average temperatures north of the Tian Shan are lower than they are south of the mountains. In the Junggar Basin, summer temperatures vary from 70° F (21° C) in the north to 75° F (24° C) in the south.

The center of Xinjiang is home to the expansive Taklimakan desert, so much of the plant life in the region is fairly repetitive. The mountain ranges are home to pine forests, and there are drought resistant trees at the edges of the desert that include poplar and willow. In the non-desert regions of Xinjiang thousands of plant species have been identified, many of which have economic or medicinal value. Mountainous areas are home to antelope, ibex, elk, wild sheep, leopards, wolves, bears, lynx, and marmots. There are wild horses in the north, and wild camels and yaks in the southern and eastern edges of the Taklimakan Desert.

The topsoil is relatively fertile, but climate and a wide range of temperatures limit the variety of agricultural products cultivated in the region. The main crops grown in the region are wheat, corn, rice, and millet. Xinjiang is also one of China's main fruit-producing regions, and sugar beets are produced for the sugar-refining industry in northwestern China. Cotton is produced in the Tarim Basin, and silkworm cocoons are produced on a large scale for national and export markets.

### **The Economy of the Culture**

Due to physical and cultural isolation, the XUAR was historically underdeveloped economically. Nevertheless, the region has always been economically self-sufficient due to agriculture potential and natural resources. While China as a whole has been reaping the benefits of economic reforms, these reforms have been slow to reach rural Xinjiang, so Uighurs who live outside of the main urban areas still engage in agriculture as a primary source of income. However, the amount of arable land per capita is as low as 0.12 acres, and it continues to decrease due to the demand for land for construction.<sup>60</sup>

Up until the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the region was largely isolated from the rest of mainland China. Recent discoveries of mineral, petroleum, and natural gas reserves prompted the Chinese government to implement massive infrastructure projects in the region, including a railroad linking Xinjiang with the rest of the mainland, six new airports, new highways, and improved water infrastructure.

One of the most striking differences between the local Uighurs and the Han migrants in the region is in the participation in the formal and informal economies. Formal sector positions, both in private and state-owned enterprises, are largely held by Han Chinese, are officially recognized entities, and are subject to regulation and taxation. The informal economy, however, exists outside government affirmative action, workers' rights, and tax laws, and are the ones more commonly held by ethnic Uighurs. These types of positions are in agriculture, street vending, small-scale manufacturing, and day labor.

Another portion of the local economy is made up of remittances sent back home by family members who seek better employment opportunities elsewhere. Many Uighurs cope with economic hardship in rural areas by emigrating permanently or temporarily to work in Xinjiang's urban centers, or to other provinces in China. However, here too, the disparity between native Uighurs and Han newcomers is evident. The vast majority of seasonal migrant workers in urban areas who are young males, are paid lower wages on average than their Han counterparts for the same job. A 2006 survey showed that the

average Han Chinese laborer in Xinjiang earns a 57 percent higher salary than his/her Uighur counterpart.<sup>61</sup>

## ***Industries***

One of the reasons that the GDP of Xinjiang falls behind that of the rest of the country is partly due to the type of investment in the formal sector of the local economy, which is concentrated in the areas of natural resource extraction, financial services, and urbanization. Retail services are very limited in the rural areas. Auto-repair persons, hairdressers, shoemakers, and other non-agricultural service positions are virtually non-existent outside the urban centers.

In recent years, the region has become heavily militarized with the presence of *bingtuans*. These *bingtuans* are essentially military units that control industries, and the 38<sup>th</sup> regimental unit and the 224<sup>th</sup> regimental unit are both located in Xinjiang. These units are large and industrial, and look much like those in other city in China. The 38th Regiment of the 2nd Agricultural Division is part of the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps. This type of long-term deployment is based on a traditional Chinese system of settling military units in frontier areas so that they become self-sufficient. It controls an area twice the size of Taiwan, which is comprised of sub regions scattered around the province. The *bingtuan* operates its own schools, hospitals, media, courts, police and prisons. Eighty-six percent of the population of these *bingtuans* are ethnic Han, compared to Xinjiang as a whole, where Han Chinese make up just over 40 percent of the total population.<sup>62</sup>

## **Social Structure**

### ***Ethnic Identity***

Historically an agrarian society, the population was divided between crop cultivators and those who earned a living in animal husbandry. Most Uighurs share very few physical characteristics with their Han neighbors. Uighurs often have brown or red or even sometimes blond hair, light eye color, and light skin color. They also speak a language totally unintelligible to Mandarin speakers. In addition to linguistic differences, many facets of the Uighur peoples' identity are rooted in Islam and not the Daoist and Confucian principles adhered to in many other parts of China. The Uighurs' strength of ethnic identification, their Muslim identity, and their lack of knowledge of the Mandarin language affect their status in the eyes of ethnic Han Chinese.

As is true throughout all of mainland China, ethnic Hans are positioned higher on society's power axis than other minorities in the region. While Uighurs are the dominant minority in the province, Xinjiang is also home to other ethnic groups which include Kazakhs, Hui, Kyrgyz, Mongolians, Tatars, Xibe, Russians, Tajiks, and Uzbeks.



Uighur girl in customary striped dress (Source: Wikipedia)

Another element that shapes Uighurs' ethnic identity is the memory of the incursion of Han Chinese into the region starting after the founding of the PRC. The XUAR was formally demarcated in October 1955. Xinjiang was immediately divided into smaller sub regions to counterbalance the Uighurs' political and demographic weight.<sup>63</sup> From that point onward, Han Chinese began to emigrate to Xinjiang in increasing numbers. The aim of the directed migration was to promote the 'economic and cultural development' of those areas dominated by 'less advanced' minority populations.

The Han Chinese word for minority is *minzu* which literally means 'people of a clan or race'. The State Ethnic Affairs Commission is a department under the State Council of the Peoples Republic of China, and is responsible for relations between the Central Government and ethnic minorities in the country. This department is equivalent to a cabinet-level agency in the U.S. government, like the Department of Defense or Homeland Security.

### ***Social Status***

Uighurs, like other minorities in China, are given a "protected status" by the Chinese government through the provisions of the Regional Ethnic Autonomy Law enacted in 1984. This law was designed to guarantee numerous rights to minorities, including: self-government within designated autonomous areas; proportional representation in the government; freedom to develop their own languages, religions, and cultures; and power to adjust central directives to local conditions. The laws also grant to minorities greater control over local economic development than allowed in non-autonomous areas; the right to manage and protect local natural resources; and the right to organize local public security forces to safeguard public order.<sup>64</sup> However, the enforcement of this law has been unequal from region to region and from population to population. In Tibet and Xinjiang specifically, the Chinese government has failed to protect many of the rights of the minority populations and has received both domestic as well as international criticism for its actions in these regions.

Uighurs' self-perception as a disadvantaged and discriminated against community is reinforced by the continued influx of ethnic Han Chinese into the region, as well as the ever-increasing pressure from the Chinese government in its efforts to monitor daily activities in the lives of Xinjiang residents. Lack of knowledge of the Mandarin Chinese language, limited political representation in Beijing, lack of job opportunities, and a state apparatus that heavily monitors and restricts cultural, religious and educational activities, and effectively render Uighurs as second-class citizens in the country.

### ***Family***

Traditional Chinese society was based on Confucian values that provided a very hierarchical structure. The family unit was seen as the primary social unit. The relationships within the family were fundamental and were the models for all others. Confucianism outlines five sets of relationships on which society is based; three of which are found in the family structure: sovereign-subject; husband-wife; parent-child; elder brother-younger brother; friend-friend. In each of these relationships there is a subordinate and a superior. This model of interaction was fundamental to the Confucian concept of human relationships.

The Uighur family structure combines Confucian principles with traditional values of Islam. Uighurs place a high value on family. The family is considered the central social institution in society.<sup>65</sup>

Relationships with the extended family are very important, and the male is the head of household. As it is in other patriarchal societies, Uighur families are characterized by high fertility rates, early marriages, multiple generations living in one house, and a division of labor by gender.

Before the founding of the Communist Party in 1949, Uighur family structure resembled that of many other Muslim countries. Marriages were typically arranged by the families and a 20 year age gap between married couples was not uncommon. Uighur males were considered adults at the age of 12, and women at nine.<sup>66</sup> Polygamy was also common, and blood ties through the father were the most important link.

However, after 1949, the family structure in Xinjiang saw significant changes due to education, industrialization, urbanization, and immigration to the region. Arranged marriages became less common and males and females opted for later marriages. Nuclear, rather than extended families living under one roof, became more common. Nuclear families became smaller as well. By 2012, it was reported that women aged 35-49 usually had 5 or 6 children, while women aged 15-34 had 3-4 children.<sup>67</sup>

Although family structure is changing in many ways, many of the older preferences and traditions remain. For example, there is still a strong preference among Uighur women to have as many sons as possible. Extended family bonds are also maintained through childbirth and child-rearing. Typically, after a child is born, the mother and child will return to her parents' home for 40 days. It is not unusual for some children to stay with their maternal grandparents through their childhoods.

## ***Gender***

One of the primary goals of the Chinese Communist Party was to promote gender equality. As women were the subordinates in the husband-wife Confucian model, Chinese women historically had a lesser status than men. Communism's abrupt departure from Confucianism and its efforts to become a modern socialist state prompted the elevation of women to a more equal status with men. Mao's early efforts on this front were relatively effective, and as a result, the fully integrated role of women in the Chinese workplace predates even American progress on that front. The gender dynamics in Xinjiang, however, do not reflect those of other parts of mainland China.

Gender roles affect every aspect of daily life in Xinjiang. Because Uighurs have maintained their religious and cultural traditions, men enjoy more power in public and at home, and are expected to be the main wage earners. Uighur women are still likely to marry earlier than their Han Chinese counterparts, and once married will typically adopt the role of stay-at-home mothers. This greatly restricts both education and employment opportunities for Uighur women.

In the instances where Uighur women do work outside the home, the occupations they hold are typically lower-paying, lower-status positions. A survey showed that Uighur women are most commonly employed in occupations such as shoemakers, seamstresses, salesclerks, etc., while Uighur men fill the roles of teachers, bus drivers, government officials and the like.<sup>68</sup> Han Chinese typically occupy most of the higher-level positions in Xinjiang such as bankers, managers, and company executives.



## *Language*

Uighur is a member of the Altaic language family, which is similar to Turkish, Uzbek, Kyrgyz, Kazakh, and Tatar. Modern Uighur is based on a dialect spoken in Russia before the Russian Revolution of 1917. The written language has seen several iterations over the centuries. It was originally written in Arabic script, but was changed to a Latin alphabet in 1930, and in 1947, a modified Cyrillic alphabet was adopted within the Soviet Union. The Arabic script is the most widely used for writing Uighur since its reintroduction in 1983, as the official Uighur writing system.

The status of minority languages has been deeply affected by the policies of the Communist Party. With the establishment of the PRC in 1949, minority groups in China were confronted with government involvement in their languages. The newly established communist system focused on promoting nationalism in order to establish a harmonious communist society.<sup>69</sup> Language can be considered one of the defining characteristics of a “nationality,” so minority languages were viewed as problematic in establishing a national Chinese identity. Therefore, the minority non-Mandarin languages became a key focus of CCP policies.

Language control continues to be a method employed by the Chinese government to assimilate Uighurs into the mainstream Han culture. Mandarin Chinese (compulsory in Xinjiang schools) and Uighur have no linguistic similarities, so Uighurs must learn Chinese as a completely foreign language. In 2002, Xinjiang University, which offered courses taught in both Mandarin and Uighur, was ordered to cease teaching in Uighur. In June of that year, original texts and books printed in the Uighur language were confiscated from libraries and publishing houses and destroyed.<sup>70</sup> Furthermore, the Chinese government produced and distributed books, pamphlets and audio tapes in Mandarin Chinese denouncing separatism and illegal religious activities.

## **Political Structure**

During the Great Leap Forward, Mao pushed for a rapid cultural assimilation in Xinjiang in order to meet the goals of the movement.<sup>71</sup> Ethnicity itself was seen as an obstacle, and party leaders actively suppressed Islam and other “backward customs” of minorities.<sup>72</sup> In addition to the attacks on religious beliefs and customs, the policies of the Great Leap Forward had additional adverse effects for the region. The mass starvation in the interior of the country caused Han Chinese to migrate to the more fertile region of Xinjiang. More than 800,000 Han migrated to the region between 1959 and 1960, the highest number on record.<sup>73</sup> As a result, more than 60,000 ethnic Uighurs and Kazakhs fled across the border to the Soviet Union. The CCP feared this migration might result in Uighurs receiving military training, and working with the Soviet Union to eventually retake Xinjiang by force. In response, the government sealed the border and forcibly relocated Uighurs away from the border, replacing those populations with ethnic Han.

Although the region seems to be integrated into China’s political system, there is a great divide between the authorities and the population, and there is widespread discontent with the government at all levels. Formally the Chinese Communist Party is “a unitary multinational state created jointly by people of all its nationalities”.<sup>74</sup> The Regional Ethnic Autonomy Law allows for “minority nationalities, under unified state leadership, to practice regional autonomy in areas where they live in concentrated communities and set up organs of self-government for the exercise of the power of autonomy. Regional national autonomy embodies the state’s full respect for and guarantee of the right of the

minority nationalities to administer their internal affairs and its adherence to the principle of equality, unity and common prosperity for all its nationalities”.<sup>75</sup>

However, tensions in the XUAR have been cited for the party’s more direct intervention in the region. Violent attacks by Uighurs have been on the rise since the mid-1990s, and have increased in violence and frequency. In 2009, wide-scale protests erupted in the capital city of Urumqi, resulting in 197 deaths.<sup>76</sup> In October 2013, three Uighurs drove a jeep into Tiananmen Square in Beijing, killing five, and signaling the territorial expansion of attacks. The largest of the recent attacks occurred on May 22, 2014 when trucks drove through crowds at an open air market in Urumqi as explosives were tossed from the windows. Thirty-one people were killed and 94 injured.

Over a period of a decade, the attacks evolved, with trademarks of what is more commonly considered terrorism – suicide attacks, targeting civilians, Islamic ideology – all of which, China asserts, indicates involvement of terrorist groups abroad. This has recently led to other countries, including the United States, referring to such incidents as “terrorist attacks”, despite having traditionally refrained from using the term. The increased use of this terminology reinforces the Chinese government’s agenda to eradicate “religious extremism” in Xinjiang. The government has restricted Uighur weddings, funerals, and pilgrimages. Children under 18 are forbidden from entering mosques, and many Chinese work units in Xinjiang force Muslim employees to eat during Ramadan, citing health concerns.

In 2014, the Chinese government arrested and imprisoned Dr. Ilham Tohti, a respected, moderate Uighur intellectual. Dr. Tohti was a professor at Minzu University in Beijing and a member of the Communist Party. He was an outspoken advocate for Xinjiang remaining a part of China, and frequently criticized Uighur separatism and violence. However, he often called for clarification of the Law on Regional Autonomy. He also criticized the police crackdowns in the XUAR, and accused state policies of being the catalyst for the radicalization of young Uighurs. Dr. Tohti was detained shortly after the July 2009 Urumqi riots because of his criticism of the Chinese government’s handling of the matter. He was arrested again in 2014, and in September of that year, sentenced to life in prison on charges of “separatism.”

## **Belief System**

Uighurs live in a great physical isolation from the more populated regions in China, which are found mainly on the eastern coast. As such, Uighurs have historically been able to retain their unique traditions and belief system. In the last several decades, the Uighur society in Xinjiang has experienced great changes that have affected people’s behaviors and influenced their belief system.

## ***Historical memories***

The belief system of the Uighurs varies greatly from that of the CCP and the majority Han Chinese. One way this difference can be highlighted is in memories and history of the people. Uighurs believe that Xinjiang is their land and Uighurs have always lived in the region. Some Uighur nationalists claim that Uighurs have lived in what is now the XUAR for more than 6,000 years, and over the course of time, founded many independent states in or near the region. They assert that the interference of Han Chinese and the Chinese Communist Party determined that Xinjiang is a province of China and not an independent East Turkestan. When challenged with the Chinese narrative of history, nationalists have tried to restore the collective belief of an independent past to strengthen the resistance to Chinese

rule. However, in the early 1990s the Chinese government banned publication of Uighur historiographies, and ordered all published copies to be burned in the public square.<sup>77</sup>

### ***Symbols***

Before the Chinese Cultural Revolution, there were more than 5,500 mosques in the Kashgar district in southern Xinjiang.<sup>78</sup> After the destruction of the Revolution, only 392 mosques were still useable.<sup>79</sup> Under Deng Xiaoping's reforms, cultural policies were broadened and communities in Xinjiang rebuilt nearly two-thirds of the original mosques. Even more mosques were built throughout the 1980s. By the mid-1990s, the region had more than 9,600 mosques, causing the CCP to fear that the religion was getting out of control.<sup>80</sup> For the Uighurs, this restoration of new construction of mosques symbolized restored religious freedom and tolerance; for the Chinese government it was seen as a threat to regional stability and Communist Party authority. Today all mosques in Xinjiang are monitored by closed-circuit TV. Signs are prominently posted outside that read "State Cadres, Communist Party members, women and children under 18 may not enter the mosque during prayer periods."<sup>81</sup>

### **Conclusion**

You might have noticed that the case study does not include all, or even many, of the concepts discussed in the Operational Culture General document. This is only natural; a comprehensive body of literature devoted to the study of a single culture is rare. In fact, Marines are frequently called upon to operate in areas where current information on local culture is scarce. What the OCG and the chapters in this document do is help Marines learn about their assigned region and acquire skills and concepts that will assist them in operating effectively in complex cross-cultural situations in any part of the globe when information is scarce or rapidly changing.

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- <sup>77</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>78</sup> Bovingdon, 65.



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<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Michael Dillon, *Xinjiang – China's Muslim Far Northwest* (London: Routledge, 2014) 73.

<sup>81</sup> Paltiel, 62.