

CHINA IN CLASSROOM



CONTENTE

China ABC

1. National Flag and National Emblem
2. Physical Geography
3. Population, Ethnic Groups and Language
4. Brief History
5. Administration Division

Chinese Culture

1. Public Holidays and Most Popular Traditional Festivals in China
2. Chinese Zodiac
3. The Chinese Dragon
4. Historical Sites and Scenery in China
5. Beijing Opera
6. Calligraphy and Chinese Paintings
7. Chinese Traditional Papercuts

China ABC

1. National Flag And National Emblem

国旗

The national flag of China



The national flag of China is red in color which symbolizes revolution; the five stars on the flag symbolize the great unity of the Chinese people under the leadership of the Communist Party of China(CPC).

国徽

The national emblem of China



The national emblem of China is Tian'anmen in the center illuminated by five stars and encircled by ears of grain and a cogwheel. Tian'anmen symbolizes the Chinese nation and the ears of grain and the cogwheel represent the working class and peasantry.

2. Physical Geography

Position and Area

China is situated in the eastern part of Asia, on the west coast of the Pacific Ocean.

China has a total land area of 9.6 million square kilometres, next only to Russia and Canada in size. The nation is bordered by Korea in the east; Mongolia in the north; Russia in the northeast;

Kazakhstan, Kirghizia and Tadzhikistan in the northwest; Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan in the west and southwest; and Myanmar, Laos and Viet Nam in the south. Across the seas to the east and southeast are the Republic of Korea, Japan, the Philippines, Brunei, Malaysia, and Indonesia.

The Chinese mainland is flanked by the Bohai, the Huanghai (Yellow Sea), and the East China and South China seas in the east and south. The territorial waters of the People's Republic of China extend 12 nautical miles out from the base line drawn where China's land territories and interior waters border the sea. More than 5,000 islands are scattered over China's vast territorial seas, the largest being Taiwan with an area of 36,000 square kilometres, and the next largest, Hainan with an area of 34,000 square kilometres. Taiwan and Hainan are two provinces of China. The coast of the mainland, 18,000 kilometres long, is dotted with excellent harbours and ports, the most famous of them, from north to south, being Dalian, Qinhuangdao, Tianjin, Yantai, Qingdao, Lianyungang, Nantong, Shanghai, Ningbo, Wenzhou, Fuzhou, Xiamen, Guangzhou, Zhanjiang and Beihai. Among them Shanghai is the largest city in China with a population of 13.56 million and well-developed industry, commerce, finance and ocean transportation.

Questions:

1. Where is China situated?

- a. In Africa.
- b. In America.
- c. In the eastern part of Asia, on the west coast of the Pacific Ocean.

2. Is China the biggest country in the world?

- a. Yes.
- b. It is the second largest country in the world.
- c. It is the third largest country in the world.

Topography

The topography of China is complex, high in the west and low-lying in the east. Mountains, hills and plateaus account for 65 percent of the country's land area. Among the world's 19 mountain peaks, China has seven in which Mt. Qomolangma, the world highest peak and the main peak of the Himalaya, is 8,848 metres above sea level.

China also abounds in rivers and lakes. The total length of rivers runs to 220,000 kilometers. More than 5,000 rivers have a catchment area exceeding 100 square kilometers. More than 2,800 lakes are more than one square kilometer in size, among which 13 have a water surface of more than 1,000 square kilometers.

The Yangtze River (Changjiang), 6,300 kilometres long, is the largest river in China. It has a catchment area of 1,800,000 square kilometres, and is the major inland-river transport artery in China. The Yellow River (Huanghe), stretching over 5,464 kilometres, is China's second largest. Its catchment area, covering more than 750,000 square kilometres, is the birthplace of ancient Chinese civilization and has a wealth of historic sites and relics, many of them buried underground.

Questions:

1. Which mountain is the highest peak in the world?

- a. Qomolangma.
- b. Himalaya.
- c. Taihang.

2. Which river is considered as the birthplace of ancient Chinese civilization?

- a. Yangtzi River (Changjiang).
- b. The Yellow River (Huanghe).

Climate

Most of China is situated in the temperate zone. Some parts of south China are located in tropical and subtropical zones while the northern part is near the frigid zone. In north China, summers are warm and short and winters long and cold. In the tropical and subtropical south, trees and other vegetation remain green all year. The eastern coastal regions of China are warm and humid and have four distinct seasons. But the temperatures in the interior areas of northwest China change greatly during the daytime. There is a saying: "People wear fur coats in the morning and silk at noon." Because of its high elevation, the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau area, a special alpine-cold zone, has low temperatures all year round.

Fauna and Flora

China has the greatest diversity of wildlife in the world. There are more than 4,400 species of terrestrial vertebrates, more than 10 percent of the world's total. There are 1,189 known species of birds, nearly 500 animal species, more than 210 species of amphibians and 320 species of reptiles. Among the wild animals, there are many rare species found only in China. These include the giant panda, golden monkey, white-lipped deer, takin, Chinese river dolphin and Chinese alligator.

Giant pandas, recognized as one of China's "national treasures," live in the remote mountain areas of Sichuan, Gansu and Shaanxi provinces and feed on bamboo. The panda, called a "living fossil," is a remnant species which thrived during the glacier period of the Quaternary.

China has 7,000 species of woody plants, of which 2,800 are arbors. The metasequoia, China cypress, cathaya, silver fir, China fir, golden larch, Taiwan flousiana, Fujian cypress, and eucommia are trees found only in China. The metasequoia grows to 35 metres in height. Commonly found in East Asia, North America and Europe one hundred million years ago, it became extinct by the glacial period of the Quaternary. In 1941, China discovered more than a thousand metasequoias on the Sichuan-Hubei border. This was one of the greatest botanical discoveries of the 20th century. After 1949, metasequoias were introduced to other countries of the world.

In a concerted effort to protect the nation's zoological and botanical resources, China had established 932 nature reserves covering 79.71 million hectares by 1999. Sichuan's Wolong, Jilin's Changbai Mountains, Guangdong's Dinghu Mountains, Guizhou's Fanjing Mountains, Fujian's Wuyi Mountains, Hubei's Shennongjia, Inner Mongolia's Xilingol, Xinjiang's Mt. Bogda,

Yunnan's Xishuangbanna and Jiangsu's Yancheng serve as bases for international scientific research projects; Heilongjiang's Zhalong, Jilin's Xianghai, Dongting Lake in eastern Hunan, Jiangxi's Poyang Lake, Qinghai's Bird Island and Hainan's Dongzhai Harbour have been included in the listing of the world's important waterfowl wetlands. In addition, rescue centres for animals close to extinction have been established in Beijing, Kunming, Guangzhou and elsewhere. To date, China has succeeded in breeding more than 60 species of animals close to extinction, a great contribution to the world's efforts to save such creatures.

Question:

1. Which animal in China is called a "living fossil"?

- a. Giant panda.
- b. Golden monkey.
- c. Chinese dolphin.

3. Population, Ethnic Groups and Language

China has more people than any other country. By the end of 2000, China had a population of 1.26583 billion (excluding Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macao), about one-fifth of the world's total population, 22 times of the UK population and 6 times of the US population. China's population density (130 people per square kilometre) is relatively high. Distribution, however, is uneven: the coastal areas in the east are densely populated, with 400 people per square kilometre; the plateau areas in the west are sparsely populated, with fewer than 10 people per square kilometre.

China is a united multi-ethnic nation of 56 ethnic groups. According to the Fourth National Population Census taken in 1990, the Han people made up 91.96 percent of China's total population and the other 55 ethnic groups, 8.04 percent. The 55 minorities are: Zhuang, Hui, Uygur, Yi, Miao, Manchu, Tibetan, Mongolian, Tujia, Bouyei, Korean, Dong, Yao, Bai, Hani, Kazak, Dai, Li, Lisu, She, Lahu, Va, Shui, Dongxiang, Naxi, Tu, Kirgiz, Qiang, Daur, Mulam, Gelo, Xibe, Jingpo, Salar, Blang, Maonan, Tajik, Pumi, Nu, Achang, Ewenki, Jino, Ozbek, Jing, Deang, Yugur, Bonan, Moinba, Drung, Oroqen, Tatar, Russian, Gaoshan, Hezhen, and Lhoba. The Zhuang ethnic group, the largest of the 55 ethnic groups, has 13.38 million people, while the Lhoba, the smallest, has only 2,312 people.

The national language of China is *putonghua* (the common speech), which is used by the largest number of Chinese, but many of the 55 minority nationalities have their own languages.

Question:

1. In how many people of the world's population is there a Chinese?

- a. 20
- b. 5
- c. 15

2. How many ethnic groups are there in China?

- a. 55
- b. 40
- c. 56

3. Which is largest ethnic group in China?

- a. Han people
- b. Zhuang people
- c. Hui people

4. Brief History

Ancient Times (from antiquity to 1840 A.D.)

From archaeological findings we know that about 500,000-1,000,000 years ago, there were primitive human beings such as Yuanmou Man, Lantian Man and Peking Man in the wide expanse known today as China. After the long period of primitive existence, the Xia Dynasty, the first in Chinese history, was established in the 21st century B.C., heralding the beginning of a slave society in China. The following Shang and Western Zhou dynasties saw further development of the slave society. Then came the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods (i.e., the Eastern Zhou Dynasty), periods of transition from slave to feudal society.

In 221 B.C., Qin Shi Huang, the First Emperor of the Qin Dynasty, ended the rivalry among the independent principalities in the Warring States Period and established the first centralized, unified, multinational state in Chinese history--the Qin Dynasty. Subsequently, one dynasty replaced another. They included the Han, Wei, Jin, Southern and Northern Dynasties, Sui, Tang, Five Dynasties, Song, Yuan, Ming and Qing. China remained a feudal society until the Opium War in 1840.

A Brief Chinese Chronology

Dynasty Date ----- Xia c.21-16th century B.C. Shang c.16-11th century B.C. Western Zhou c.11th century B.C.-770 B.C. Eastern Zhou 770-221 B.C. (Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods) Qin 221-207B.C. Western Han 206B.C.-A.D. 24 Eastern Han 25-220 Three Kingdoms 220-265 (Wei, Shu and Wu) Western Jin 265-316 Eastern Jin 317-420 Southern and Northern Dynasties 420-589 Sui 581-618 Tang 618-907 Five Dynasties 907-960 Northern Song 960-1127 Southern Song 1127-1279 Yuan 1271-1368 Ming 1368-1644 Qing 1644-1911

Ancient China was fairly well developed in both economy and culture. During the apex of the Chinese feudal society--the Han and Tang dynasties--agriculture, handicrafts, weaving and shipbuilding were advanced. Transportation both by land and water was convenient; extensive economic and cultural relations were established with Japan, Korea, India, Persia, and Arabia. Papermaking, printing, gunpowder and the compass, four major creations of ancient Chinese science and technology, are embodiments of the wisdom and power of the Chinese people which have exerted an enormously profound influence on the history of mankind. Meanwhile, famous thinkers in ancient China such as Lao Zi and Confucius were influencing the traditional Chinese culture and even the world civilizations. Sun Zi's Art of War remains an invaluable reference for

people of the military and economic circles; Cao Xueqin's Dream of Red Mansions is considered the representative work of Chinese classical literature and continues to inspire research and study both at home and abroad. Great achievements were also made in the fields of astronomy, mathematics, geography and medicine. The Gan Shi Xing Jing (Gan Shi Catalogue of Stars) of the Warring States Period is the earliest catalogue of fixed stars in the world. Zhang Heng of the Han Dynasty invented the armillary sphere and seismograph. During the Southern and Northern Dynasties Zu Chongzhi calculated the value of PI to be between 3.1415926 and 3.1415927. He was the first person in the world to have accurately calculated the value of PI to seven decimal places. The Ben Cao Gang Mu (Compendium of Materia Medica) by Li Shizhen of the 16th century, records more than 1,800 kinds of herbal medicines and over 10,000 prescriptions.

Question:

1. Who invented the armillary sphere and seismograph?
 - a. Confucius
 - b. Zhang Heng
 - c. Zu Chongzhi

Modern Period (1840-1919)

The Opium War, which started in 1840, was a turning point in Chinese history. In the 17th and 18th centuries the major countries of Europe were looking around for markets for their merchandise and colonies. To protect its opium trade, Britain launched the war of aggression against China in 1840. In 1842 the corrupt Qing court signed the humiliating Treaty of Nanking with Britain, bartering away China's national sovereignty. This marked the reduction of China to a semicolonial, semifeudal country.

The Revolution of 1911, a bourgeois democratic revolution led by Dr. Sun Yat-sen, ended the rule of the Qing Dynasty. Thus, the monarchy that had existed in China for 2000 years came to an end, and the provisional government of the Republic of China was founded.

New Democratic Revolution (1919-1949)

In 1919 the May 4th Movement against imperialism and feudalism took place. In this movement, the Chinese working class for the first time appeared on the political scene. In 1921, at its first National Congress, delegates representing Communist groups from all parts of China including Mao Zedong, Dong Biwu, Chen Tanqiu, He Shuheng, Wang Jinmei, Deng Enming and Li Da, met in Shanghai and rounded the Communist Party of China. The Chinese people led by the Communist Party participated in a bitter struggle for many years, which included four periods: the Northern Expedition (1924-27), Agrarian Revolutionary War (1927-37), War of Resistance Against Japan (1937-45), and the National Liberation War (1945-49). In 1949 the Chinese people finally ended the rule of the Kuomintang headed by Chiang Kai-shek, achieving the victory of the New Democratic Revolution.

The People's Republic of China (1949-present)

On October 1, 1949, 300,000 people gathered at Tiananmen Square in Beijing for the ceremony formally declaring the new state. Mao Zedong, chairman of the Central People's Government, solemnly proclaimed the rounding of the People's Republic of China.

After a period of economic recovery in the first three years (1950-1952) following the rounding of the People's Republic, and then the basic realization of the socialist transformation of agriculture, the handicrafts industry, and capitalist industry and commerce between 1953 and 1956, the leading role of public ownership of the means of production had been defined, and the transition from new democracy to socialism realised. During the ten years from 1957 to 1966 China began large-scale socialist construction. Overall, great achievements were made in the national economy during this decade in spite of some serious mistakes in the economic construction. The nation's total industrial fixed assets quadrupled between 1956 and 1966, and the national income increased by 58 percent in constant prices. The output of essential industrial products, such as steel, coal, crude oil, generated electricity and metal-cutting machine tools increased by several or, in some cases, even a dozen times, and some new and developing industries such as electronics and petrochemicals were established; work in science and technology, particularly in atomic energy, jet technology, computers, semiconductors and automatic control, progressed rapidly. The "cultural revolution," which lasted for ten years from May 1966 to October 1976, brought great calamity to the country and the people, causing the most serious setbacks and most damaging losses to both since the rounding of the People's Republic of China.

Drawing on the support of the broad masses of the Chinese people, the Communist Party of China smashed the Jiang Qing counter-revolutionary clique in October 1976. The end of the disastrous "cultural revolution" marked the beginning of a new era in Chinese history. Since the Third Plenary Session of the CPC Eleventh Central Committee at the end of 1978, China has instituted a policy of reform and opening to the outside world. The errors of the "cultural revolution" and the earlier "Leftist" deviations were rectified. The focus was shifted to modernization centred around the economy; a socialist modernization road with Chinese characteristics was defined.

Question:

1. When is the national day of the People's Republic of China?
 - a. October 1
 - b. January 1
 - c. February 1

5. Administration Divisions

Administrative Units

According to the Constitution, China is divided for administrative purposes as follows: 1) The country is divided into provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities directly under the central government; 2) The provinces and autonomous regions are divided into prefectures, autonomous prefectures, counties, autonomous counties, and municipalities; 3) The counties and

autonomous counties are divided into townships and towns. Autonomous regions, autonomous prefectures and autonomous counties are autonomous places of various ethnic groups. The state can establish special administrative region as it sees necessary. At present, China is divided into 23 provinces, 5 autonomous regions, 4 municipalities directly under the Central Government and 2 special administrative regions.



Capital

Beijing is the capital of the People's Republic of China. It is not only the nation's political center, but also its cultural, scientific and educational heart and a key transportation hub.

Beijing has served as a capital for more than 800 years. The city has many places of historic interest and scenic beauty, including the Imperial Palace (also known as the Forbidden City), the largest and best-preserved ancient architectural complex in the world; the Temple of Heaven, where Ming and Qing emperors performed solemn rituals for bountiful harvests; the Summer Palace, the emperors' magnificent garden retreat; the Ming tombs, the stately and majestic

mausoleums of 13 Ming Dynasty emperors; and the world-renowned and genuinely inspiring Badaling section of the Great Wall. Large-scale construction since the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949 has brought great changes to Beijing. Today's Beijing still retains the alluring fascination of an ancient capital, but has added a small forest of skyscrapers and a complete range of municipal facilities, transforming itself into an attractively modern metropolis redolent of history.

Question:

1. Where is the capital of the P.R. of China?
 - a. Shanghai
 - b. Beijing
 - c. Nanjing

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) is composed of Hong Kong Island, Kowloon and the New Territories. It covers an area of 1,092 square kilometers and has a population of 6.31 million, 95 percent of whom are Chinese. Hong Kong is an international metropolis and an international finance, trade, navigation, tourism and information center in the Asian-Pacific region. It is called "the pearl of the Orient".

On July 1, 1997, the 150-year British colonialist rule over Hong Kong came to an end, and Hong Kong returned smoothly to the motherland, ushering in a new historical stage of "one country, two systems", "the administration of Hong Kong by Hong Kong people", and "command of its own affairs".

The Macao Special Administrative Region

Located to the west of the Pearl River estuary in Guangdong Province, 40 nautical miles to the west of Hong Kong, Macao's 17.5 square kilometers of territory comprises the Macao Peninsula, Taipa Island and Coloane Island. In 1553, the Portuguese bribed local government officials in Guangdong to gain permission to drop anchor in Macao's harbour and engage in trade. In 1557, the Portuguese began to settle nearby. In the period following the Opium War of 1840, taking advantage of the weakness of the debilitated Qing government, the Portuguese successively seized Taipa and Coloane islands to the south of the Macao Peninsula. In 1887, the Portuguese government forced the Qing government to sign the "Draft Agreement of the Sino-Portuguese Meeting" and subsequently the "Sino-Portuguese Treaty of Peking" which included the statement that: Portugal should administer Macao and subordinate areas in perpetuity, as any other region governed by Portugal. Since that time, Portugal has occupied Macao. The Chinese people have never recognized these unequal treaties. The government of the People's Republic of China has repeatedly enunciated the fact that Macao has always been a part of Chinese territory. On December 20, 1999, the Chinese government restored its exercise of sovereignty over Macao. Solving successfully the Hong Kong and Macao issues is an important progress for the Chinese people in the reunification of the motherland.

Taiwan Province

Located to the southeast of the Chinese mainland opposite Fujian Province, the island province of Taiwan is flanked by the Pacific Ocean to the east and the Taiwan Straits to the west. Covering an area of 36,000 square kilometers, Taiwan comprises China's largest island, Taiwan Island, and more than 80 other smaller neighboring islands and islets, the largest of which is the Penghu Islands. Taiwan was called Yizhou and Liuqiu in ancient times. Taiwan's early development by the Chinese people has been recorded in many historical books and documents. The Chinese governments through the past ages set up administrative organizations to exercise its jurisdiction over Taiwan. Traditional Chinese culture has been continuously passed on during the development of Taiwanese society, even during the 50 years of Japanese occupation. After the Chinese people won the War of Resistance Against Japan in 1945, the Chinese Government restored the administrative organs of Taiwan Province. On the eve of the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, the Kuomintang authorities retreated to Taiwan from the mainland. In 1950 the Korean War broke out and the United States dispatched its Seventh Fleet to invade Taiwan and occupy the Taiwan Straits. In 1954, the government of the United States and the Taiwan authorities signed a "Defence Treaty" bringing about the separation of Taiwan from the mainland. But all the facts and laws about Taiwan prove that Taiwan is an inalienable part of Chinese territory. The government of the People's Republic of China naturally should fully enjoy and exercise China's sovereignty, including its sovereignty over Taiwan.

Chinese Culture

1. Public Holiday and Most Popular Traditional Festivals in China

Public holidays in China are New Year (January 1st); Spring Festival (the lunar New Year), International Working Women's Day (March 8th), International Labour Day (May 1st); Chinese Youth Day (May 4th); International Children's Day (June 1st); Army Day (August 1st); Teachers' Day (September 10th); and National Day (October 1st).

China's most popular traditional festivals include:

Spring Festival (Chinese New Year)

When we think about Chinese holidays, Chinese New Year comes to mind first. And, it should. That's because Chinese New Year is by far the largest, most festive holiday of the year. While we refer to it as "Chinese" New Year, it is widely celebrated in Asia and also cause for celebration wherever people of Chinese descent can be found in the world. When you stop and think about the fact that about 1/3 of the world's population is of Asian descent, that's a lot of celebrating!

Spring Festival, or Chinese New Year, is the celebration of the beginning of the lunar year of the Chinese calendar. It usually occurs in late January or early to mid-February. The Chinese calendar

is different from the Gregorian(or western) calendar which begins each year on January 1st and ends on December 31st. The Chinese calendar based upon the (lunar) cycles of the moon and as a result, starts on a different date each year, between January 21st and February 19th. The lunar calendar repeats over twelve years.

Days before the New Year, every family is busy giving its house a thorough cleaning, hoping to sweep away all the ill-fortune there may have been in the family to make way for the wishful in-coming good luck. People also give their doors and window-panes a new paint, usually in red color. They decorate the doors and windows with paper-cuts and couplets with the very popular theme of "happiness", "wealth", "longevity" and "satisfactory marriage with more children". Paintings of the same theme are put up in the house on top of the newly mounted wall paper. In the old days, people put various kinds of food as tributes on the altar of ancestors.

The Eve of the New Year is very carefully observed. Supper is a feast, with all members coming together. One of the most popular course is jiaozi, dumplings boiled in water. "Jiaozi" in Chinese literally mean "sleep together and have sons", a long-lost good wish for a family. After dinner, it is time for the whole family to sit up for the night while having fun playing cards or board games or watching TV programs dedicated to the occasion. At midnight, the whole sky will be lit up by fireworks and firecrackers make everywhere seem like a war zone. People's excitement reach its zenith. Very early the next morning, children greet their parents and receive their presents in terms of cash wrapped up in red paper packages from them. Then, the family start out to say greetings from door to door, first their relatives and then their neighbors. It is a great time for reconciliation. Old grudges are very easily cast away during the greetings. The air is permeated with warmth and

friendliness. During and several days following the New Year's day, people are visiting each other, with a great deal of exchange of gifts. The New Year lasts fifteen days when the Lantern Festival sets in.

Lantern Festival

Lantern Festival or Yuanxiao Jie is a traditional Chinese festival, which is fall on the 15th of the first month of the Chinese New Year. It is the last day of two weeks long Chinese New Year celebration. Yuan literally means first, while Xiao refers to night. Yuanxiao means the first time when we see the full moon in a new year. It is traditionally a time for family reunion. The most prominent activity of the Yuanxiao Festival is the displaying of all types of beautiful lanterns. So the occasion is also called the Lantern Festival. People with their family will gather in the show place to enjoy the beautiful lanterns displayed by individuals or the local municipal. Kids will carry their own lanterns to participate in the showcase. Usually there is competition for the most beautiful lantern. There are many different beliefs about the origin of the Lantern Festival. But one thing for sure is that it had something to do with religious worship.

Besides entertainment and beautiful lanterns, another important part of the Lantern Festival, or Yuanxiao Festival is eating small dumpling balls made of glutinous rice flour. We call these balls Yuanxiao. Obviously, they get the name from the festival itself. The fillings inside the dumplings

or Yuansiao are either sweet or salty. Sweet fillings are made of sugar, Walnuts, sesame, osmanthus flowers, rose petals, sweetened tangerine peel, bean paste, or jujube paste. A single ingredient or any combination can be used as the filling. The salty variety is filled with minced meat, vegetables or a mixture.

The following are some photos taken from the exhibitions of some Lantern Festival Shows:



A drum dance



A traditional dance



Lanterns and the reflection on the lake side



The Wall of Nine Dragons



A stage of dancers



A tower, temple and people



A traditional lantern



A tower, temple and people

Pure Brightness Day (Qingming)

Pure Brightness Day comes around April 5 every year. Qingming, meaning clear and bright, is the day for mourning the dead. This was originally a day set aside for people to offer sacrifices to their ancestors. By the time of the festival, the weather has turned warmer and the earth is covered in green. Friends like to go together to the outskirts of the city to walk in the green grass, fly kites and appreciate the beauty of spring. That is why Pure Brightness Day is sometimes also called the "Stepping on Greenery Festival."

Dragon Boat Festival (Duanwu)

As we enter the month of June, we find ourselves already in the middle of the year. However, according to the Chinese lunar calendar, the fifth month just begins and the Chinese people are preparing to celebrate another traditional festival—the Duanwu (Dragon Boat) Festival. The Duanwu Festival falls on the fifth day of the fifth month of the Chinese lunar calendar. For thousands of years, Duanwu has been marked by eating Zongzi and racing dragon boats.

It is generally believed that the festival originated to celebrate the memory of the ancient patriotic poet Qu Yuan. Qu Yuan, a native of the State of Chu during the Warring States Period, repeatedly offered his king proposals aimed at forestalling political corruption. Subsequently, slandered by treacherous court officials, he was sent into exile by the same king he had tried to help. In 278 B.C., the capital of the State of Chu was lost to its enemy the State of Qin and Qu Yuan drowned himself in despair on the fifth day of the fifth lunar month. Aware of the tragedy, the local people living beside the river went out in their boats to try to find his corpse. Every year thereafter on this day people continued to row dragon boats on their local rivers in memory of Qu Yuan's life and death, throwing sections of bamboo filled with rice into the river as an offering. Legend has it that someone once met Qu Yuan's spirit on the bank of the river and was told: "The food you have given me has all been taken away by the dragon. Hereafter, you should wrap the rice in bamboo

leaves tied with five-colored thread. These are the two things that the dragon is most afraid of." Thus, people began to make zongzi, glutinous rice wrapped in a pyramid shape using bamboo or reed leaves. Today, zongzi is the traditional food for the Dragon Boat Festival still eaten in memory of Qu Yuan.

Mid-Autumn Festival

One of the most important Chinese festivals is the Mid-Autumn Festival. Chinese ancestors believed that the seventh, eighth, and ninth lunar months belong to autumn. So the Mid-Autumn Festival falls on the 15th day of the eighth lunar month. In ancient times, people used to offer elaborately made cakes to the moon spirit on this day. After making this symbolic offering, a family would enjoy eating the cakes together. The festival eventually came to carry the idea of a happy family reunion and the custom has been passed down to this day. On this mid-autumn night, the full moon is especially bright. The whole family may sit together beneath the clear moonlight eating tasty moon cakes and appreciating the beauty of the fully rounded moon. Of course, those who are far away from their homes that night are only too easily reminded of their families when they look up at the luminous moon. The words of the great Tang Dynasty poet Li Bai are often recited on such evenings, even today: "I raise my head to gaze at the bright moon, and I drop my head to think of my old home."

There are many beautiful legends about the moon, the most popular one tells how a goddess named Chang'e ascended to the moon.

A long, long time ago, a terrible drought plagued the earth. Ten suns burned fiercely in the sky like smoldering volcanoes. The trees and grass were scorched. The land was cracked and parched, and rivers ran dry. Many people died of hunger and thirst.

The King of Heaven sent Hou Yi down to the earth to help. When Hou Yi arrived, he took out his red bow and white arrows and shot down nine suns one after another. The weather immediately turned cooler. Heavy rains filled the rivers with fresh water and the grass and trees turned green. Life had been restored and humanity was saved.

One day, a charming young woman, Chang'e makes her way home from a stream, holding a bamboo container. A young man comes forward, asking for a drink. When she sees the red bow and white arrows hanging from his belt, Chang'e realizes that he is their savior, Hou Yi. Inviting him to drink, Chang'e plucks a beautiful flower and gives it to him as a token of respect. Hou Yi, in turn, selects a beautiful silver fox fur as his gift for her. This meeting kindles the spark of their love. And soon after that, they get married. In order to enjoy his happy life with Chang'e forever, Hou Yi decides to look for an elixir of life. He goes to the Kunlun Mountains where the Western Queen Mother lives. Out of respect for the good deeds that he has done, the Western Queen Mother rewards Hou Yi with elixir, a fine powder made from kernels of fruit which grows on the tree of eternity. At the same time, she tells him: If you and your wife share the elixir, you will both enjoy eternal life. But if only one of you takes it, that one will ascend to Heaven and become immortal. Hou Yi returns home and tells his wife all that has happened and they decide to drink the elixir together on the 15th day of the eighth lunar month when the moon is full

and bright. A wicked and merciless man named Feng Meng secretly hears about their plan. He wishes Hou Yi an early death so that he can drink the elixir himself and become immortal. His opportunity finally arrives. One day, when the full moon is rising, Hou Yi is on his way home from hunting. Feng Meng kills him. The murderer then runs to Hou Yi's home and forces Chang'e to give him the elixir. Without hesitating, Chang'e picks up the elixir and drinks it all. Overcome with grief, Chang'e rushes to her dead husband's side, weeping bitterly. Soon the elixir begins to have its effect and Chang'e feels herself being lifted towards Heaven. Chang'e decides to live on the moon because it is nearest to the earth. There she lives a simple and contented life. Even though she is in Heaven, her heart remains in the world of mortals. Never does she forget the deep love she has for Hou Yi and the love she feels for the people who have shared their sadness and happiness.

Chongyang Festival

The Chongyang Festival falls on the ninth day of the ninth month of the Chinese lunar calendar, so it is also known as the Double Ninth Festival. The festival is based on the theory of Yin and Yang, the two opposing principles in nature. Yin is feminine, negative principle, while Yang is masculine and positive. The ancients believed that all natural phenomena could be explained by this theory. Numbers are related to this theory. Even numbers belong to Yin and odd numbers to Yang. The ninth day of the ninth lunar month is a day when the two Yang numbers meet. So it is called Chongyang. Chong means double in Chinese. Chongyang has been an important festival since ancient times.

Since nine is the highest odd digit, people take two of them together to signify longevity. Therefore, the ninth day of the ninth month has become a special day for people to pay their respects to the elderly and a day for the elderly to enjoy themselves. It has also been declared China's day for the elderly.

Question:

1. Which is the most important traditional festival in China?

- a. Lantern Festival.
- b. Spring Festival.
- c. Dragon Boat Festival.

2. In which festival people eat moon cakes?

- a. Dragon Boat Festival.
- b. Pure Brightness Day(Qingming).
- c. Mid-Autumn Festival.

National Costumes

56 Varieties: An Exhibition of the National Costumes



China is a country composed by 56 different minoric nationalities. China's diverse ethnic culture has been gradually formed throughout its long history. National costumes are an important part of the identity of the ethnic groups: they communicate their different lifestyles, history and culture. Costumes permit us an superficially understand the main minorities in China. Thus, they are a window on Chinese nationality



The First Chinese National Dress and Adornments Exhibition was held in July, 2000 in Kunming, Yunnan

Province. On display were a total of 3,405 costumes and more than 15,000 pieces of jewelry and accessories from 27 provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities. It was the first exhibition to be held on such a large scale since the founding of the country in 1949.



Of all national costumes, women's dresses are predominantly more distinctive. Subsequently a large part of the exhibition was devoted to the display of women's national dress. These clothes made from traditional materials and boasting bright colors displayed impressive dressmaking skills. Through time, the quality of material and production has improved.

Ethnic women of the Man nationality learn to embroider from childhood. Their traditional love of beauty is expressed in their artistic creations. Women from the Miao ethnicity begin to sew and embroider their wedding dresses under the guidance of their mothers since they are very young. When the wedding dress is completed, it is also the time for the young Miao woman to get married. Those who can finish several sets of wedding dresses before they get married are



the most proud ones.

The development of national dress has given a lot to the present world of fashion. In the past, the sleeves and waist of the "qipao" (traditional Chinese dress of the Man ethnicity) were loose, not revealing nearly as

much womanly shape as modern qipao. based on the original. As time passed, the sleeves and the lower hem of the qipao were shortened and the waist nipped in. Fitted qipao is strikingly elegant.

Chinese Qipao(cheongsam)



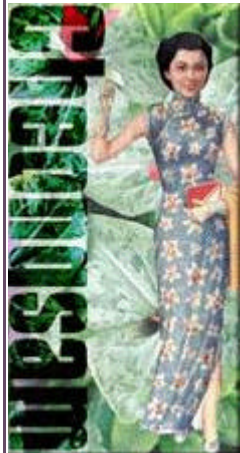
Qipao is a female dress with distinctive Chinese features and enjoys a growing popularity in the international world of high fashion.

The name "cheongsam," meaning simply "long dress," entered the English vocabulary from the dialect of China's Guangdong Province (Cantonese). In other parts of the country including Beijing, however, it is known as "qipao", which has a history behind it. When the early Manchu rulers came to China proper, they organized certain people, mainly Manchus, into "banners" (qi) and called them "banner people" (qiren), which then became loosely the name of all Manchus. The Manchu women wore normally a one-piece dress which, likewise, came to be called "qipao" or "banner dress." Although the 1911 Revolution toppled the rule of the Qing (Manchu) Dynasty, the female dress survived the political change and, with later improvements, has become the traditional dress for Chinese women.

Easy to slip on and comfortable to wear, the cheongsam fits well the female Chinese figure. Its neck is high, collar closed, and its sleeves may be either short, medium or full length, depending on season and taste. The dress is buttoned on the right side, with a loose chest, a fitting waist, and slits up from the sides, all of which combine to set off the beauty of the female shape.

The cheongsam is not too complicated to make. Nor does it call for too much material, for there are no accessories like belts, scarves, sashes or frills to go with it.

Another beauty of the cheongsam is that, made of different materials and to varying lengths, they can be worn either on casual or formal occasions. In either case, it creates an impression of simple and quiet charm, elegance and neatness. No wonder it is so much liked by women not only of China but of foreign countries as well.



2. Chinese Zodiac

The 12 Animals Representing Years

The mouse, or rat, is the first in the cycle of 12 animals representing years. The others are, chronologically, the ox, the tiger, the rabbit, the dragon, the snake, the horse, the goat, the monkey, the rooster, the dog and the pig.

How come animals designate years? Why 12, no more or less? And why are these specific animals?

There are different explanations about their origin. A popular legend says that long long ago, a certain god ordered all the animals to pay him a visit on New Year's Day, that is, the first day of the first lunar month. He said he would give the first 12 animals to come the title "King of the Animal World" and let each hold the title for one year. The 12 winners happened to be those mentioned above.

Another theory holds that the animals originated from the 28 constellations or the Lunar Mansions, which are named after animals. Every two or three constellations stand for a year and the most commonly known animal in each group was chosen for that year. Thus we have the 12 animals.

A more convincing theory maintains that using animals to symbolize years began from totems of minority peoples in ancient times. Different tribes had different animals as their totems, gradually these animals were used as a means to remember the years.

Alongside the increasing exchanges between the hinterland and the border regions, the custom of using animals to designate years made its way to the hinterland and was adopted by the Han people, the largest national group in China.

At that time, the Hans were using the 10 Heavenly Stems and the 12 Earthly Branches to designate years. They took one from each series to make a pair for one year and developed a system based on a 60-year cycle. Every 60 years it is back to square one and the cycle begins again.

When the method of using animals to represent years was introduced into the hinterland, the ancient Chinese married them to the 12 Earthly Branches, one to each. So 12 animals were used. And animals officially began to be used to designate years during the Later Han of the Five Dynasties Period a little more than 1,000 years ago.

The New Year visit-to-the-god story explains how the unpleasant Mouse managed to become the first of the 12. As the story goes, when the Ox heard of the God's decree, he said to himself: "It's a long journey to visit that God. I am not a fast traveler and I'd better start early." So he set out on the eve of the Lunar New year. The Mouse heard the Ox and jumped onto his back, without being noticed. The Ox, sweating all over, was so glad to be the first to arrive at the God's place. But just

as he was about to be the first to arrive at the God's place and to express his New Year greetings to the God, the Mouse jumped down over the Ox's head and became the first to kowtow to the God. So he was appointed the first King of the Animals and consequently, the first of the 12 animals to designate years.

A more authentic explanation says, the Earthly Branches are divided into two categories: Yin and Yang. Each of them is paired with an animal of the same "gender". The gender of the animal is determined by the number of a specific part of its body. Odd numbers are Yang and even numbers are Yin. The tiger, the dragon, the monkey and the dog, all have five toes on each foot or paw, and the horse has one hoof. So we know they are Yang animals. The cloven-hoofed species such as the ox, the goat and the pig fall into the Yin category because their hoofs are divided into two parts. The rooster is also Yin since it has four toes on each foot. The rabbit has two upper lips and the snake has a two-point forked tongue. So they are Yin, too. The mouse had been a problem. It has four toes on each fore leg and five on each hind leg. It has both Yin and Yang qualities and there seemed to be no place to put it. Fortunately, the first of the Earthly Branches, Zi(子) can be considered both Yin and Yang. The branches were also used to designate days and hours, and when symbolizing the hours, this branch covers a period from eleven in the evening to one o'clock in the morning. PM is Yin and AM is Yang. So the mouse goes together with this first branch. It is this double-gender feature, a kind of split personality, you might say, that makes the little mouse the leader among his colleagues.

Now you may be wondering why there is no Year of the Cat, especially since cats have been popular as pets for thousands of years in China as well as in many other countries. Well, in the legend, the Cat failed to be chosen because he was a day late getting to the God's place. The Mouse had played a trick on him. He lied to the Cat, telling him the wrong date for the competition. The cat was not pleased and has hated the Mouse ever since.

Questions:


1. How many animals represent year in the Chinese Zodiac?
 - a. 10
 - b. 12
 - c. 6
 - d. 14


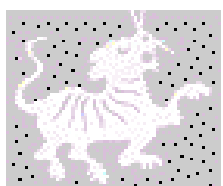


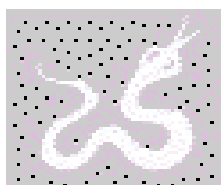
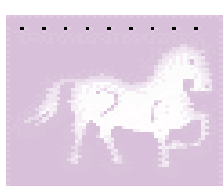
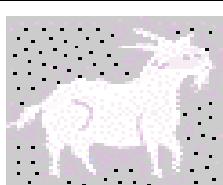

Your Animal in the Chinese Zodiac


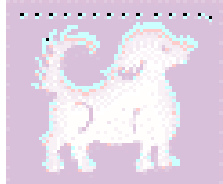
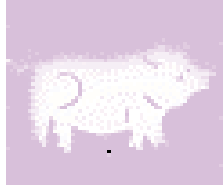
Your Animal in the Chinese Zodiac

There are 12 signs in Chinese astrology, each of which are represented by an animal.

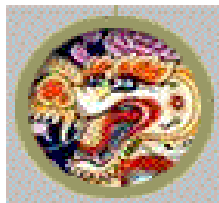
To locate your animal just look up your year of birth below.

	<p style="text-align: center;">RAT</p> <p>1900, 1912, 1924, 1936, 1948, 1960, 1972, 1984, 1996</p>
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	<p>OX</p> <p>1901, 1913, 1925, 1937,1949,1961,1973,1985, 1997</p>
	<p>TIGER</p> <p>1902, 1914, 1926, 1938, 1950, 1962, 1974, 1986, 1998</p>
	<p>RABBIT</p> <p>1903, 1915, 1927, 1939, 1951, 1963, 1975, 1987, 1999</p>
	<p>DRAGON</p> <p>1904, 1916, 1928, 1940, 1952, 1964, 1976, 1988, 2000</p>
	<p>SNAKE</p> <p>1905,1917, 1929, 1941, 1953, 1965, 1977,1989</p>
	<p>HORSE</p> <p>1906,1918,1930, 1942, 1954, 1966,1978,1990</p>
	<p>GOAT</p> <p>1907,1919,1931,1943,1955,1967,1979,1991</p>
	<p>MONKEY</p> <p>1908, 1920, 1932, 1944, 1956, 1968, 1980,1992</p>

	<p>ROOSTER</p> <p>1909, 1921, 1933, 1945, 1957, 1969, 1981, 1993</p>
	<p>DOG</p> <p>1910, 1922, 1934, 1946, 1958, 1970, 1982, 1994</p>
	<p>PIG</p> <p>1911, 1923, 1935, 1947, 1959, 1971, 1983, 1995</p>

3. The Chinese Dragon



The Myth

An ancient Chinese lexicon describes a dragon as "a long scaled creature which can render itself visible or invisible, small or large, short or long. It rises up to heaven at the spring equinox, and submerges into the deep waters at the autumn equinox." Dragons were meant to appear in the skies during the rainy season in spring and disappear during the dry season in autumn. Some scholars believe that the ancients had not actually seen an animal that looked like a dragon, but rather a flash of lightning in the sky. These majestic creatures are believed to roam the Chinese rivers, lakes, oceans, and skies.



Dragon Shapes



Different parts of a dragon's body resemble different animals. According to one Chinese saying, a dragon has the horns of a deer, the head of a horse, the eyes of a rabbit, the crown of a snake, the belly of a clam, the scales of a fish, the claws of an eagle, the palms of a tiger, and the ears of a rat. A dragon with five claws was used to symbolize the imperial family, and in the Yuan Dynasty (1271 - 1368 AD) the court decreed that commoners were banned from adorning their clothes with five-clawed dragons.

The Dragon Culture

The prevalence of dragons has led to Chinese culture often being called the "dragon culture" and Chinese people being known as "descendants of the dragon." In ancient times, the face of the emperor was called the "dragon's countenance" and his body the "dragon's body."

4. Historical Sites and Scenery In China

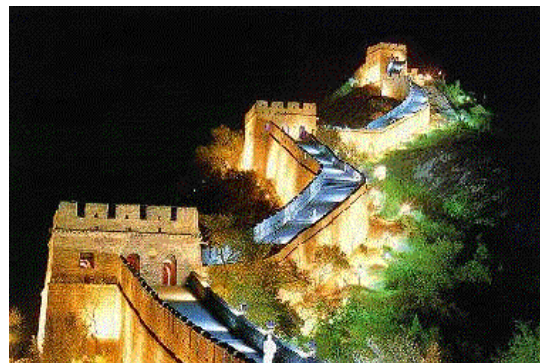
Since the time of Marco Polo, China has held a mystique that has fascinated travelers from around the world. Today, China is a world-class destination that offers several thousand years of history, brilliant cultural achievements, and spectacular historical sites. Meanwhile, China is also a country with beautiful scenery.

Historical Sites

China is home to one of the world's four ancient civilizations. Latest archaeological data show that primitive pictographic characters used by ancient Chinese date back 7,000 years, and that areas along the Yangtze as well as the Yellow River are the cradle of Chinese civilization. Places of historical interest and cultural relics can be found everywhere in the country. Those officially listed alone number more than 5,000.

The Great Wall

One of the most renowned projects of the world, the Great Wall to the Chinese nation is what the pyramids are to Egypt. It is a symbol of the country. Construction of the wall began around the 7th-4th century BC during the Spring and Autumn Period. At that time, feudal states built walls for self-defense against nomadic tribes. In 211 BC, Qin Shi Huang, the first emperor of the Qin dynasty, after unifying China, had the walls linked up, reinforced and extended. Renovations were carried out with local geographic conditions during the succeeding dynasties, creating many



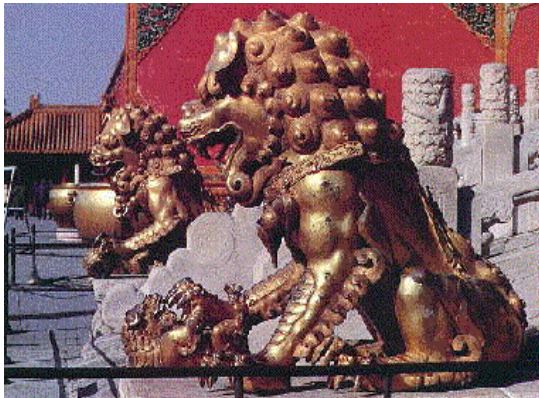
enchanting sights. The total length of the Great Wall is 6,700 km, traversing 8 provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions. Its historic and strategic importance is matched only by its architectural value.

The Palace Museum



As known as the former Forbidden City, built between 1406 and 1420 in the center of Beijing city proper. It had been the imperial residence of 24 emperors of the

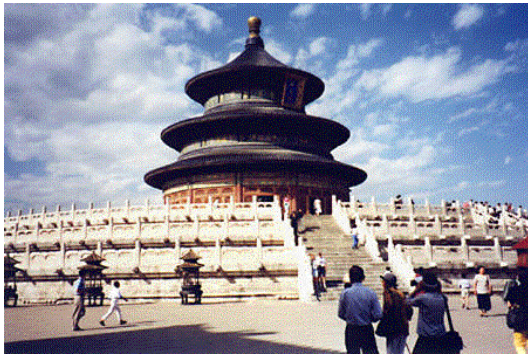
Ming and Qing (1368-1911 AD) dynasties. One of the largest and best-preserved palace complexes in the world, it has become the Palace Museum since the 1950s. Here are collected around a million rare and valuable objects. Covering an area of 720,000 square meters, the Palace



has a total floor space of some 150,000 square meters with 9,999 room units. The Throne Hall--Hall of Supreme Harmony --is China's tallest ancient palace building of timber, where during the reign of the Ming and Qing emperors all the important national ceremonies took place. With yellow tiles over red walls, gilded doors behind vermilion colonnades, and carved white marble balustrades around, the palace halls in symmetrical array represent the acme of China's ancient architectural art. About one million pieces of rare cultural relics and art works are housed in the museum.



The Temple of Heaven



About 2km southeast of the Forbidden City towers Tian Tan, or the Temple of Heaven. Started to be built in 1420, it was the place where the emperors of the Ming and Qing dynasties worshipped heaven and prayed for abundant harvests. As Chinese emperors called themselves Tianzi, or the son of heaven, they had to cede supremacy to the heaven in terms of abiding. The Temple consists of the Hall of Prayer for Good Harvests, the Imperial Vault of Heaven, the Circular Mound Altar, the Echo Wall and the Thrice-Reechoing Stone. Of exquisite architectural workmanship, the Temple of Heaven is the largest existing ancient architectural group for worshipping in China.

The temple plus subsidiary buildings and a surrounding garden covers an area five times the size of the Forbidden City. It has an area of 273 hectares with a layout in two squares one inside the other. Two walls divide the ground into the outer and inner parts. The outer wall is 6,416 meters long and the inner wall is 3,292 meters long. The northern part of the outer and inner walls is a semicircle and the southern part of them is square, declining from north to south to symbolize the traditional belief that Heaven was high and round and the earth was low and rectangular.

Chinese emperors had many other gods to worship apart from the god of heaven, including the gods of earth, water and war. They also worshipped their ancestors. As a result, religious activities were an important part of their busy work schedule. Temples of various kinds are scattered in Beijing. The best-known are the Temple of Heaven in the south, the Temple of Earth in the north, the Temple of Sun in the east, and the Temple of the Moon in the west. The Temple of Heaven is the grandest of them all. It is an outstanding representative of Chinese traditional architecture for its clever design and harmonious colors.

The Summer Palace



15 kilometers northwest of Beijing city center, the Summer Palace is one of China's largest and best-preserved imperial gardens. Ordered by the Empress Dowager Cixi of Qing Dynasty, the reconstruction of the garden was started in 1888 and completed in 1895. It covers a total area of 290 hectares with 3,000 palaces, galleries and pavilions, four-fifths of which are water surface. The design gives prominence to the greenery Longevity Hill and the clear Kunming Lake. It is a masterpiece of Chinese landscape garden design, integrating the natural landscape of hills and open water with manmade features



such as pavilions, halls, palaces, temples and bridges into a harmonious and aesthetically exceptional whole.



Mausoleum of the First Qin Emperor

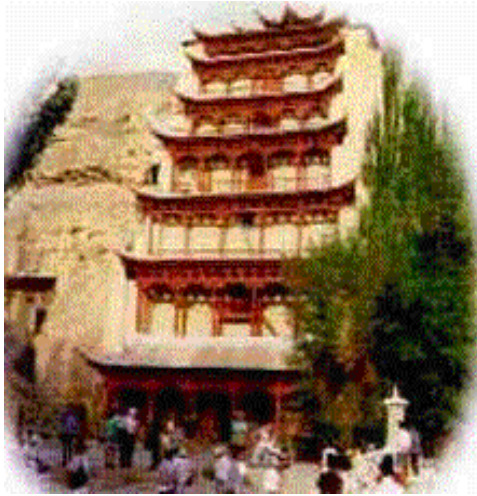


The Mausoleum of the first Emperor of the Qin Dynasty (221-206 BC) is located 36 kilometers east of Xi'an, capital of Shaanxi province, and 5 kilometers east of Lintong County. The entire mausoleum occupies an area of eight square kilometers and the mound stands 55 meters high. It is the first and largest imperial mausoleum in China.

Since 1974, three vaults containing terra-cotta figures have been found 1.5 kilometers east of the mausoleum. 8,000 terra-cotta warriors, hundreds of chariots and 10,000 pieces of actual weapon have been unearthed from the three vaults. The terra-cotta figures of warriors and horses are simple in style, but highly realistic and animated. And each warrior has different features and facial expression. In 1980, two sets of large bronze chariots and horses were excavated west of the mausoleum. Discovery of the buried legion has aroused great interest all over the world, making it "the eighth wonder of the world".



Mogao Grottoes in Dunhuang



Mogao Grottoes, also called the Caves of A Thousand Buddhas, are set into a cliff wall of Mingsha Mountain about 25km southeast of the oasis city in the Gobi desert, Dunhuang. Dunhuang lies at the western end of the Gansu Corridor, called Hexi Zoulang. The name Dunhuang originally meant "prospering, flourishing"--a hint that Dunhuang must once have been an important city. Its position at the intersection of two trade routes was what made Dunhuang flourish. The coming and going of horse and camel caravans carried new thoughts, ideas, arts and sciences to the East and West.



Mingsha Mountain

According to history record, in the year 336, a monk called Le Zun came near Mingsha Mountain and suddenly had a vision golden rays of light shining upon him like thousands Buddhas there. He started to carve the first grotto to memorize the accident and show his respect to the Buddha. Other pilgrims and travelers followed for the next thousand years.



The honeycombed caves, enjoying a millennium long construction from the 4th to the 14th centuries and marking the height of Buddhist art, are the world's richest treasure house of Buddhist sutras, murals and sculptures. At its height, the cave complex had thousands of wooden structures of the Tang and the Song Dynasties, thousands of lotus-shaped pillars and floral paving tiles, and over 250 residential caves. Almost every grotto exhibits a group of colorful clean-cut paintings of Buddha and Bodhisattvas, and other religious paintings, or social activities of different dynasties.

The caves carved on the cliff wall provide voluminous research materials for the study of all aspects of the social life, such as religion, art, politics, economics, military affairs, culture, literature, language, music, dance, architecture and medical science in mediaeval China. The splendid culture and art unearthed here stimulates worldwide interest and now a new international subject called Dunhuangology forms.



The treasure is one of the greatest cultural discoveries in the 20th century. It has long enjoyed the reputation of being the Bright Pearl of the Oriental Art, arousing the keen interest of historians, archaeologists and students of religion and art history.

Beautiful Scenery in China

The Classical Gardens of Suzhou



Suzhou is located in the south of the Yangtze River Delta and borders Taihu Lake to the west and Shanghai to the east. It is an oriental water city as well as a famous historical and cultural center with a history going back 2,500 years. It is also a source of the unique Taihu rocks and over a long period many officials built gardens here. In the Ming and Qing dynasties, there were some 200 gardens and the city was renowned both in China

and abroad for its small but elegant private gardens. They represent the quintessence of the gardens found in the southern area of Jiangsu Province and demonstrate the varied styles of the Song, Yuan, Ming and Qing dynasties (960-1911). Classical Chinese garden design, which seeks to recreate natural landscapes in miniature, is better illustrated in the four gardens in Suzhou --Pavilion of the Surging



Waves, Lion Grove, Garden of the Humble Administrator and Garden to Linger In. They are universally acknowledged to be masterpieces of the genre. Dating from the 16th-18th centuries, the gardens reflect the profound metaphysical importance of natural beauty in Chinese culture in their meticulous design.

The Old Town of Lijiang



Lijiang, the district's government seat, is an old city in beautiful surroundings in northwest Yunnan. It is situated on a plateau at an elevation of 2,600m and is impressive because of its scenery and lush vegetation. Adapted itself harmoniously to the uneven topography of this key commercial and strategic site, it has retained an historic townscape of high quality and authenticity.

Its architecture is noteworthy for the blending of elements from several cultures that have come together over many centuries. There is no other town in China like Lijiang which incorporates the folkways of so many people and the architectural styles of both north and south China. Lijiang also possesses an ancient water-supply system of great complexity and ingenuity that is still functioning effectively.



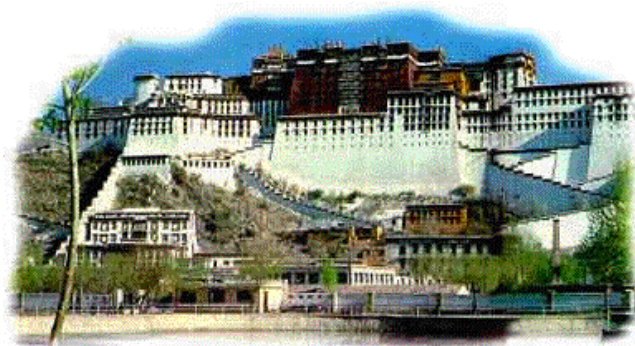
The people of Naxi, while developing their land of snow-clad mountains and turbulent rivers since ancient times, have to their credit the "Dong Ba Culture" seen as one of the world wonders, a culture all-embracing while unique. The home mainly of the Naxi nationality people, Lijiang is the Naxi Autonomous County seat.

The Potala Palace in Lhasa



Located on the Moburi Mountain northwest of Lhasa city, the palace is well-known as a palace and fortress. It is the essence of Tibetan architecture. It was built in the seventh century by King Songtsan Gambo for his bride, the Han nationality Princess Wen Cheng who was sent to him by the Tang court. The ancient regal complex is a rare example of architecture in traditional Tibetan style. Covering an area of 41 hectares, its stone-and-wood main building has 13 stories, measuring 110 meters in height.

The fine palace roofs are covered with gilded tiles of bronze. The Potala is composed of the Red Palace and the White Palace. The former is mainly for religious affairs, the latter for politics and daily life.



Mount Taishan



Situated in the middle of Shandong Province, the majestic Mount Tai is one of the national parks, and the first of the Five Sacred Mountains in China. It covers an area of 426 square kilometers. The main peak is 1,545 meters above sea level. In ancient China, many new emperors came here to perform grand sacrificial ceremonies in worship of Heaven. There are quite a lot of historical relics, the Wangmu Chi (Heavenly Queen Pool), Hongmen Gong (Red Gate Palace), Nan Tianmen (South Gate to Heaven), Bixia Ci (Azure Cloud Temple) and stone carvings from various dynasties. For a long time, poets, writers and artists have found from the beauties and elegance of Taishan abundant sources of

inspiration, imagination and creativities. After all, climbing 6000-plus steps to a height of 1400 meter above sea level can be a reinforcement of self-confidence. As Confucius once uttered the dictum stop Taishan - "The world is small".



Mount Huangshan



Situated in southern Anhui Province, Huangshan Mountain is designated as a national park, celebrated for having all the grandeur and beauty of mountain scenery. Its graceful pine trees, grotesque rocks, sea of clouds and hot springs have won the reputation of four unique views. The scenic attractions include two lakes,

three waterfalls, 24 streams and 72 peaks. Its main peak is 1,860 meters above sea level.

Mt. Emei and Leshan Giant Buddha



The first Buddhist temple in China was built here in Sichuan province in the first century in very beautiful surroundings atop Mt. Emei. The addition of other temples turned the site into one of the main holy places of Buddhism. Over the centuries, the cultural treasures grew in number. The most remarkable was the Giant Buddha of Leshan, carved out of a hillside in the eighth century and looking down on the junction of three rivers. As the popular saying goes: "The mountain is a Buddha, the Buddha is a mountain," it is also the biggest stone Buddha in the world.

Carving started in 713 under the Tang Dynasty, and lasted until its completion in 803. It is 71 meters tall. Its shoulders are 24 meters wide, and its head is 11.7 meters high. Its ears are seven meters long and its nose, 5.6 meters long. Its ear hole can accommodate two men standing abreast. Its instep can hold more than 100 seated people. Mt. Emei, known as Beauty under Heaven, towering 3099 meters high with sheer precipices and overhanging rocks, is covered with ancient trees and unusual plants, ranging from sub-tropical to subalpine pine forests. Some of the trees are more than a thousand years old. It is famous as one of the four most famous Buddhist mountains in China. Once onto the top - the golden summit, you will enjoy a view of the Buddha's Halo; the sea of clouds and the wonderful sunrise.

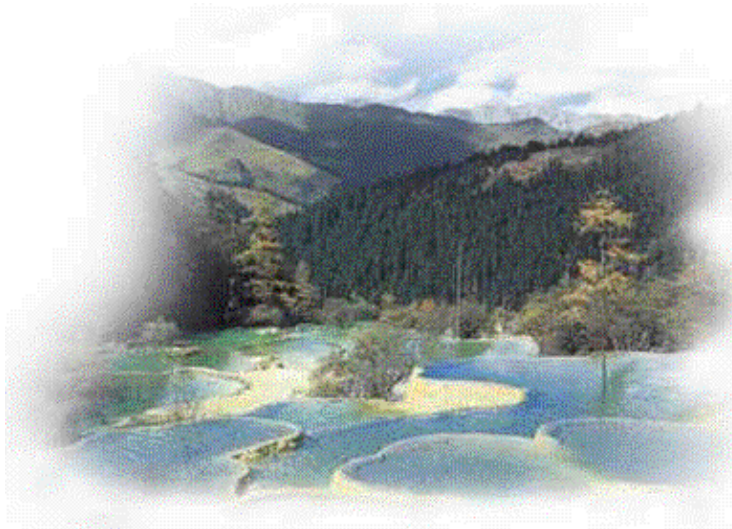
Jiuzhaigou

Encompassing an area of about 620 square kilometers, it lies in Nanping County in northern Sichuan Province. It is a deep valley more than 40 kilometers long in which there are nine Tibetan villages; hence the name. Secluded and uninhabited, it has a variety of natural scenery -- lakes, waterfalls, snowy mountains and luxuriant green forests. In the valley, there are one hundred lakes of various size and shape.



In Wuhua Hai (Five Flower Sea), waters appear in five colors, presenting a marvellous wonder of nature. 100-meter wide Nuorilang Waterfall's 30-meter drop is a spectacular view. The waters here are crystal clear and occasionally one can see fish swim in the lake while birds fly in the blue sky. Primitive, simple and uninhabited, it is a fairyland gifted by nature.

Huanglong Scenic Area



Situated northwest of Sichuan Province, the Huanglong area is made up of snow-capped peaks and the easternmost of all the Chinese glaciers. In addition to its mountain landscape, diverse forest ecosystems can be found, as well as spectacular limestone formations, waterfalls and hot springs.

The area also has a population of endangered animals, including the giant panda and the Sichuan golden snub-nosed monkey.

Lushan National Park

Mount Lushan in northern Jiangxi Province, occupies an area of 300 square kilometers. Buddhist and Taoist temples, along with landmarks of Confucianism, where the most eminent masters taught, blend well into a strikingly beautiful landscape which has inspired countless artists who developed the aesthetic approach to nature found in Chinese culture.



During the past thirteen years since 1986, the year after China began to apply for the acknowledgement of world heritages, China has submitted 30 sites to the World Heritage Committee. By the year of 2001, 27 famous scenic spots and historical sites in China have been included in the List of World Cultural and Natural Heritages by UNESCO. They are the Great Wall, the Palace Museum, the Temple of Heaven and the Summer Palace in Beijing, the Mogao Grottoes in Dunhuang, the Tomb of Emperor Qin Shihuang in Xi'an, the Peking Man at Zhoukoudian, the Temple, Cemetery and Family Mansion of Confucius in Qufu, Taishan, Huangshan and Emei-Leshan mountains, Lhasa's Potala Palace, Lushan National Park, the Mountain Resort of Chengde, Suzhou Gardens, the Ancient City of Pingyao, Huanglong and Wulingyuan scenic areas, the Old Town of Lijiang, Ancient Building Complex at the Wudang

Mountain and Jiuzhaigou, whose charming scenery is famed throughout the world.

Questions:

1. Which historical site was built for self-defense against nomadic tribes?

- a. the Great Wall
- b. the Forbidden City
- c. the Temple of Heaven
- d. the terra-cotta warriors

2. Which historical site is the place where the emperors worshipped heaven and prayed for abundant harvest?

- a. the Great Wall
- b. the Forbidden City
- c. the Temple of Heaven
- d. the Potala Palace

3. Where is the biggest stone Buddha in the world located?

- a. Mt. Taishan
- b. Mt. Huangshan
- c. Mt. Emei
- d. Mt. Lushan

4. How many scenic spots and historical sites in China have been included in the list of World Cultural and Natural Heritages by UNESCO?

- a. 21
- b. 30
- c. 25
- d. 27

5. Beijing Opera



China boasts more than 300 forms of traditional opera, of which Beijing Opera is the most popular. Beijing Opera is a comprehensive performing art. It is amazing in that it combines so many forms. It is a grand opera, ballet, an acrobatic show, and a historical play. It is actually not an opera like that in the west, where arias are the main and perhaps the only feature. The word "opera" is the most likely in English language but not best suited for this kind of art.

Beijing opera is a purely Chinese opera from which dates back to the year 1790. That year four local opera troupes of Anhui Province came to Beijing on a performance tour on the order of the imperial court. The tour was a hit and the troupes remained in Beijing and performed for the ordinary citizens. The artists absorbed the tunes of the Hubei local opera and drew on the best of Kun Qu, Qin Qiang and Bang Zi and other local operas. Based on Anhui Opera, Beijing Opera took shape as an independent opera form between 1840 and 1860. Having incorporated the merits of many other local dramas, Beijing Opera not only appeals to Chinese audiences but is warmly received by people all over the world.

With a history of over 200 years, there are more than 1,000 works in the repertoire. It is a unique Chinese theatrical art combining drama, singing, music, dancing and martial arts into one, and its roles can be classified in four categories: sheng, dan, jing and chou. "sheng" is the positive male role, "dan" is the positive female role, "jing" is a supporting male role with striking character and "chou" is the clown. Every type has its telltale facial makeup and decoration.



sheng

dan

jing

chou

The most intriguing thing about Beijing Opera is its abstract way of conveying meanings: the stage is bare, but an actor or actress, with movements and expressions accompanied by music, makes the audience feel that he or she is opening a door, riding a horse or being carried in a sedan chair, and enables them to follow the development of the plot. It is quite often that several actors on a bare stage can create the scene of a huge army going to war.

Facial Makeups Represents Different Characters

For the painted role, the different colors of the faces represent different characters and personality. Yellow and white represent cunning, red stands for uprightness and loyalty, black means valor and wisdom, blue and green indicate the vigorous and enterprising character of rebellious heroes and gold and silver represent mystic or super-natural power.





A plastic art peculiar to the Chinese stage, the facial makeups are various designs of lines and coloured patches painted on the faces of certain operatic characters. They follow traditionally fixed patterns for specific types to highlight the disposition and quality in the personages so that the audience may immediately know whether they are heroes or villains, whether they are kind or treacherous and wicked. The following describes briefly the major categories of facial makeups:

The red face shows bravery, uprightness and loyalty. A typical "red face" is Guan Yu, general of the period of the Three Kingdoms (220-280), famed for his faithfulness to his Emperor, Liu Bei.



The reddish purple face likewise shows a just and noble character, for instance, Lian Po in the well-known play Jiang Xiang He (The General Reconciled with the Chief Minister), in which General Lian was proud and impetuous and quarreled with the chief minister to whom he was ultimately reconciled.



The black face indicates either a rough and bold character or an impartial and selfless personality. Typical of the former are General Zhang Fei (of the Romance of the Three Kingdoms) and Li Kui (of Water Margin), and of the latter is Bao Gong (alias Bao Zheng), the semi-legendary fearless and impartial judge of the Song Dynasty.



Commonly seen on the stage is the white face for the powerful villain. It highlights all that is bad in human nature: cunning, craftiness, treachery. Typical characters are Cao Cao, powerful and cruel prime minister in the time of the Three Kingdoms, and Qin Hui, treacherous Song Dynasty prime minister who put the national hero Yue Fei to death.



For the clowns of traditional drama, there is a special makeup called Xiaohualian (the petty painted face), i.e., a small patch of chalk on and around the nose to show a mean and secretive character, such as Jiang Gan of the Three Kingdoms who fawned upon Cao Cao. It is also occasionally painted on a young page or an ordinary workingman, often to enhance his wit, humor or jesting and to enliven up the performance.



The facial makeups date a long time back to the Song (960-1279) and Yuan (1271-1368) dynasties at least. Simple patterns of painted faces are found in tomb murals of that age. During the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), improvements were made in the skills of drawing and in preparing the paints, leading to the whole set of colorful facial patterns that we see in today's Peking Opera.

The costumes in Peking opera are graceful, magnificent, elegant and brilliant, most of which are made in handicraft embroidery. As the traditional Chinese pattern are adopted, the costumes are of a high aesthetic value.



dress used in Beijing Opera



thick base and tiger-head boot used in Beijing Opera

Questions:

1. Beijing Opera dates back to

- A. 1590
- B. 1690

- C. 1790
- D. 1890

2. A red face in Beijing Opera represents

- A. cunning
- B. uprightness and loyalty
- C. valor and wisdom
- D. mystic and super-natural power

3. “sheng” is the

- A. positive male role
- B. positive female role
- C. supporting male role
- D. clown

6. Calligraphy and Chinese Paintings

Calligraphy

Calligraphy, as a common noun, refers to beautiful handwriting with which to express one's ideas. There are few countries like China which regard calligraphy as a form of art, and that is why calligraphy is generally used to refer to Chinese calligraphy.

Chinese calligraphy has a long history, and is usually considered as old as China itself. Most Westerners, even those who know a lot about Chinese painting and other Chinese arts, regard Chinese calligraphy as unfathomable. Unless one has grown up in the environment of traditional Chinese art, it is quite difficult to master Chinese calligraphy. Of course, with sufficient effort, one can study and master this art.

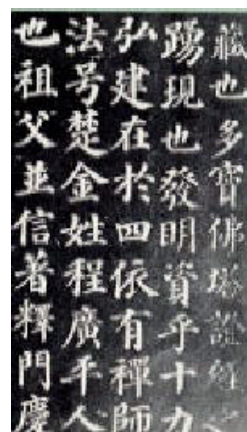
In China, calligraphy is the most popular art. In fact, it is a national hobby. A Chinese person is trained in calligraphy from early childhood, so the nation has a common habit of appreciating calligraphy. Good paintings, good melodies and good poems are seldom seen but excellent calligraphic works can be found in many places and from every period of history. Many Chinese regard calligraphy as a pleasant pastime and practice it often.

Chinese characters evolved from pictures and signs, and the unique Chinese calligraphy came into being during the development of writing. Using fine paper, brushes and ink, calligraphers have evolved a richly varied tradition of calligraphic styles, which have been handed down from generation to generation. The main styles of Chinese calligraphy are: Zhuanshu (Seal Script), Lishu (Official Script), Kaishu (Regular Script), Xingshu (Semi-Cursive Script, or Running Script) and Caoshu (Cursive Script).

Great calligraphers came to the fore in each dynasty. Their calligraphy and styles thus became representative of their time. The Tang Dynasty was a brilliant age of calligraphy. Yan Zhenqing

and Liu Gongquan were the master calligraphers of that time, and their works have been models for students of calligraphy to this day.

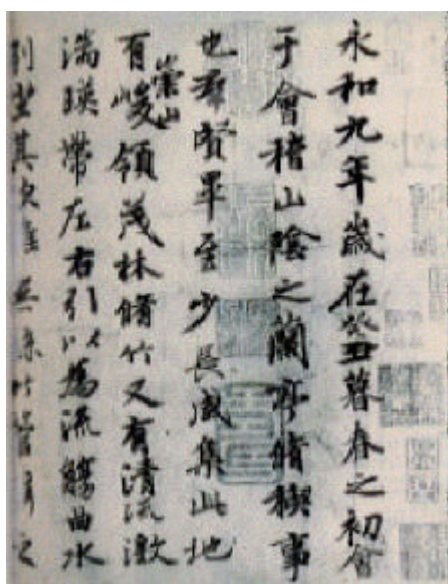
The Chinese Calligraphers' Association and local calligraphers' associations at all levels often stage competitions and hold exhibitions. Universities, enterprises and institutions have their own calligraphy associations.



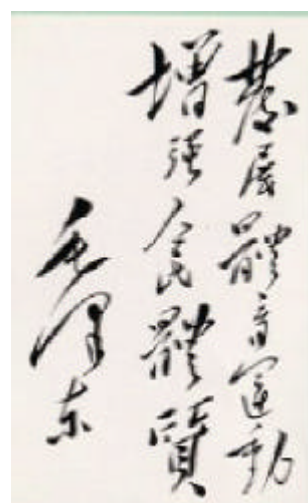
Lishu (Official Script) of the Han Dynasty (206 B.C. -A.D. 220) on the Yiyong Stone Tablet.

Xiaozhuan (Lesser Seal characters), an inscription of the Qin Dynasty (221 -206 B.C.) on a rock on Mount Tai.

Kaishu (Regular Script) by Yan Zhenqing (709-785) of the Tang Dynasty (618-907) on the Duobao Pagoda.



Xingshu (Running Script) by Wang Xizhi (321-379) of the Eastern Jin Dynasty.



Caoshu (Cursive Script) by Mao Zedong (1893-1976). The bold handwriting shows his personality as a great leader.

Chinese Paintings

The roots of Chinese painting can be traced back to paintings on Neolithic pottery, such as figures of fish, frogs, deer, birds, flowers, tree leaves and dances, 6000-7000 years old. The earliest Chinese characters were pictographs. Since similar tools and lines were used for the earliest painting and writing, painting is said to have the same origin as calligraphy. Thus, Chinese painting has an outstanding characteristic, that is to say, poetry or calligraphy are inscribed on paintings so that the three are integrated, giving people a keener enjoyment of beauty.

Many ancient Chinese paintings were executed on walls or decorative screens. Today, murals can be seen in tombs of the Han, Tang and other dynasties. Gu Kaizhi, a famous painter of the Jin Dynasty, was good at presenting historical themes. His painting «The Nymph of the Luo River » portrayed poet Cai Zhi's meeting with the goddess. The Tang and Song dynasties were the golden age of Chinese painting. The Tang painter Wu Daozi, called the "Sage Painter", was an expert at figure and landscape painting. "Riverside Scenes at the Qingming Festival", a genre painting of significant historical value done by the Northern Song Dynasty painter Zhang Zeduan, depicts the bustling scene in the then capital during the festival. The Tang painters Li Sixun and Li Zhaodao, who were father and son, used mineral substances as pigment to paint landscape paintings, which were called "magnificent landscapes." Wang Wei practiced watercolor painting with vigorous strokes depicting floating clouds and flowing water. Flower-and-bird painting is also an important traditional Chinese painting genre.

Contemporary painters have specialties. Some only paint figures of ladies, and some only paint animals, or even one kind of animal, such as cats, donkeys, or horses. As a result, the more they paint, the better their paintings become.

The Chinese painting world is very active. The China Art Gallery and other art galleries hold individual or joint art exhibitions year in, year out. Also, exhibitions of traditional Chinese paintings have been held in Japan, the Republic of Korea, Singapore, the U.S., Canada, and Europe. Different from Western oil paintings, traditional Chinese painting attracts foreign virtuosos and collectors with its Eastern artistic beauty.

China has also made great progress in Western-style painting, such as oil painting, woodcut, and water colours. Many Chinese painters have created works that combine traditional Chinese painting techniques with those of the West, adding splendour to Chinese painting.



Herding Horses, by Tang Dynasty Han gan



Horse, by outstanding modern artist Xu Beihong (1895-1953)



On the Grasslands of Inner Mongolia, a sketch by Ye Qianyu, 1980



Shrimps, by Qi Baishi (1864-1957), done at the age of 85.



The Sound of Autumn, by master painter Zhang Daqian, done in 1943.

Question:

1. How many main styles are there in Chinese calligraphy?

- a. 4
- b. 5
- c. 6
- d. 7

2. In ancient China, who is called the “Sage Painter”?

- a. Gu Kaizhi
- b. Wu Daozi
- c. Li Sixun
- d. Wang Wei

3. Which dynasty’s bustling scene does the genre-painting «Riverside Scene at the Qingming Festival» depict?

- a. Qing Dynasty
- b. Ming Dynasty
- c. Tang Dynasty
- d. Northern Song Dynasty

7. The Brief Introduction of Chinese Papercuts

The attraction of the traditional Chinese folk art of papercutting may lie in its apparent simplicity: a typical papercut requires no paints or brushes, only an ordinary pair of scissors or a knife, and a single sheet of paper. As the use of paper became well established throughout China, this art form came into being and has since enjoyed more than 1,500 years of popularity. Outstanding among Chinese folk arts, papercutting's influence in other fields and the number and variety of its products reveal the depth of its roots in popular culture as a means of beautifying the everyday environment of the broad masses of the Chinese people.

Papercuts can be seen everywhere in China. In many large cities one can find handicraft shops which sell papercuts characteristic of their area, usually rather delicate in design and made by local artisans from workshops or small factories. In smaller cities or market towns it is easy to find old women displaying every variety of papercut in their round bamboo baskets, cutting as they sell. These women specialize in making stencils for people to follow in embroidering shoes, children's hats and aprons.

In the countryside, particularly in some of the northern provinces, colorful papercut "window flowers" cover the white paper that the peasants paste over the latticework on their windows. These "window flowers" tell traditional folk tales, depict popular characters from operas or plays, or portray mythical birds and beasts side by side with cuts of the well loved domestic animals, flowers and plants from the peasant's immediate surroundings. These are the works of the peasants themselves, mainly at the hands of older peasant women or young girls, and seem to be windows into the hearts of the people, revealing to us their hopes and sense of beauty, and reflecting the sincerity of their feelings for life.

With its roots in the lives of the common people, the art of papercutting has a country charm, which is both simple and honest. Currently in China, however, papercuts are not only a popular art form, but have also attracted the attention of professional artists, who use these themes of everyday life to enrich their own work. At the same time, these artists promote the development of folk papercuts, increasing the variety of themes, and broadening the range of applications for papercutting. We can see the effects of the use of papercuts not only in paintings, literary illustrations, comic books, book layout and design, stamps, slides, stage sets, frontispieces and endpieces for magazines, etc., but also in the art of movie making, where vivid papercut cartoons bring a new spirit of youth and vigor to the art of papercutting as a whole.

Traditional paper-cuttings

