



**ETHNIC COUNCIL  
OF SHEPPARTON AND DISTRICT Inc.**

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Reg. No. A6321

## **Chinese Community Profile**



**August 2015**

# Country Background

## Official Name

People's Republic of China

## Location

China is situated between latitudes 18° and 54° North and longitudes 73° and 135° East, which is in Eastern Asia. Fourteen countries share boundaries with China. The total land boundaries of China measures 22,117 kilometres (13,743 miles) long.

With a population of over 1.3 billion residents, the People's Republic of China is the most densely populated nation in the world. China consists of twenty-two provinces, four municipalities, five autonomous regions, and two specially administered regions. The capital of China is Beijing.

The total area of China is 9,640,821 square kilometres (3,704,427 square miles). In terms of land area, the People's Republic of China is the second largest country in the world and in terms of total area, the fourth largest country in the world. China's shoreline extends approximately 14,500 kilometres (9,000 miles), the eleventh longest shoreline in the world. China is bordered by the South China Sea to the southeast and by the East China Sea towards the east, separating China from Korea, Taiwan, and Japan. <sup>1</sup>



## Population

China, officially the People's Republic of China, is comfortably the largest country in the world today. In January 2013, the Chinese Government released data confirming that the population of China was an impressive 1,354,040,000, although this does not include Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macau. As of September 2013, that number had grown even further to 1,360,720,000. The current 2015 estimate based on United Nations projections, is just over 1.4 billion.

India, the next largest country, has 120 million fewer people, for a population of 1.28 billion. The United States, the third largest country in the world, has a much smaller population of 323 million. Estimates show that India will pass China as the most populous nation in the world by 2025.

Unfortunately, there isn't a really simple answer to the question of how many people live in China. That's because it is a country of several different parts, not all of which is governed by Beijing.

To understand China's population and demographics, it helps to understand its government a bit. The People's Republic of China (PRC) is governed by the Communist Party with its seat of government in Beijing, which exercises jurisdiction over 5 autonomous regions, 22 provinces, 4 direct-controlled municipalities and 2 primarily self-governing special administrative regions (Macau and Hong Kong). The PRC also claims Taiwan, which is controlled by a separate political entity called the Republic of China (ROC) as its 23rd province. This makes population figures a bit confusing.

The figure quoted at the top of this article, for example, doesn't include the island of Taiwan, which the PRC claims as a part of China. Nor does it include the former British and Portuguese colonies of Hong Kong and Macau, which are governed as special administrative regions.

As a whole, China has a population density of 139.6 people per square kilometre, or 363.3 people per square mile. This ranks 81st, despite the country itself being one of the largest in terms of size and the largest in terms of population.

The density figures change dramatically when you look at the largest urban areas, however. Shanghai, the largest city in the country and the world, has a population density of 3,700 people per square kilometre, or 9,700 people per square mile.

Surprisingly, none of China's cities make the list of the top 30 most densely populated cities in the world, most of which are in India, the Philippines, France and other countries. Macau, however, is the 36th most densely populated city with a density of 18,568 people per square kilometre (48,092 per square mile). Macau tops the list of sovereign states and dependent

territories in terms of population density. Despite this tightly packed area, it still has the second highest life expectancy in the world and remains one of the few areas in Asia to receive a "very high Human Development Index" ranking.<sup>2</sup>

## **History**

Written records of the history of China can be found from as early as 1200 BC under the Shang dynasty (c. 1600–1046 BC). Ancient historical texts such as the Records of the Grand Historian (ca. 100 BC) and the Bamboo Annals describe a Xia dynasty (c. 2070–1600 BC), which had no system of writing on a durable medium, before the Shang. The Yellow River is said to be the cradle of Chinese civilization, although cultures originated at various regional centres along both the Yellow River and the Yangtze River valleys millennia ago in the Neolithic era. With thousands of years of continuous history, China is one of the world's oldest civilizations.

Much of Chinese culture, literature and philosophy further developed during the Zhou dynasty (1046–256 BC). The Zhou dynasty began to bow to external and internal pressures in the 8th century BC, and the kingdom eventually broke apart into smaller states, beginning in the Spring and Autumn period and reaching full expression in the Warring States period. This is one of multiple periods of failed statehood in Chinese history, the most recent being the Chinese Civil War that started in 1927.

Between eras of multiple kingdoms and warlordism, Chinese dynasties have ruled parts or all of China; in some eras control stretched as far as Xinjiang and Tibet, as at present. In 221 BC Qin Shi Huang united the various warring kingdoms and created for himself the title of "emperor" (huangdi) of the Qin dynasty, marking the beginning of imperial China. Successive dynasties developed bureaucratic systems that enabled the emperor to control vast territories directly. China's last dynasty was the Qing (1644–1912), which was replaced by the Republic of China in 1912, and in the mainland by the People's Republic of China in 1949.

The conventional view of Chinese history is that of alternating periods of political unity and disunity, with China occasionally being dominated by steppe peoples, most of whom were in turn assimilated into the Han Chinese population. Cultural and political influences from other parts of Asia and the Western world, carried by successive waves of immigration, expansion, foreign contact, and cultural assimilation are part of the modern culture of China.<sup>3</sup>

# Ethnicity, language and religion

## Ethnicity

China officially recognizes 56 distinct ethnic groups, the largest of which are the Han Chinese, who constitute about 91.51% of the total population. The Han Chinese – the world's largest single ethnic group – outnumber other ethnic groups in every provincial-level division except Tibet and Xinjiang. Ethnic minorities account for about 8.49% of the population of China, according to the 2010 census. Compared with the 2000 population census, the Han population increased by 66,537,177 persons, or 5.74%, while the population of the 55 national minorities combined increased by 7,362,627 persons, or 6.92%. The 2010 census recorded a total of 593,832 foreign citizens living in China. The largest such groups were from South Korea (120,750), the United States (71,493) and Japan (66,159).<sup>4</sup>

## Language

There are as many as 292 living languages in China. The languages most commonly spoken belong to the Sinitic branch of the Sino-Tibetan language family, which contains Mandarin (spoken natively by 70% of the population), and other Chinese varieties: Wu (including Shanghainese), Yue (including Cantonese and Taishanese), Min (including Hokkien and Teochew), Xiang, Gan, and Hakka. Languages of the Tibeto-Burman branch, including Tibetan, Qiang, Naxi and Yi, are spoken across the Tibetan and Yunnan–Guizhou Plateau. Other ethnic minority languages in southwest China include Zhuang, Thai, Dong and Sui of the Tai-Kadai family, Miao and Yao of the Hmong–Mien family, and Wa of the Austroasiatic family. Across northeastern and northwestern China, minority ethnic groups speak Altaic languages including Manchu, Mongolian and several Turkic languages: Uyghur, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Salar and Western Yugur. Korean is spoken natively along the border with North Korea. Sarikoli, the language of Tajiks in western Xinjiang, is an Indo-European language. Taiwanese aborigines, including a small population on the mainland, speak Austronesian languages.

Standard Mandarin, a variety of Mandarin based on the Beijing dialect, is the official national language of China and is used as a lingua franca in the country between people of different linguistic backgrounds.

Chinese characters have been used as the written script for the Sinitic languages for thousands of years. They allow speakers of mutually unintelligible Chinese varieties to communicate with each other through writing. In 1956, the government introduced simplified characters, which have supplanted the older traditional characters in mainland China. Chinese characters are romanized using the Pinyin system. Tibetan uses an alphabet based on an

Indic script. Uyghur is most commonly written in a Perseo-Arabic script. The Mongolian script used in China and the Manchu script are both derived from the Old Uyghur alphabet. Modern Zhuang uses the Latin alphabet.<sup>4</sup>

## Religion

Over the millennia, Chinese civilization has been influenced by various religious movements. The "three teachings", including Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism, historically have a significant role in shaping Chinese culture. Elements of these three belief systems are often incorporated into popular or folk religious traditions. Freedom of religion is guaranteed by China's constitution, although religious organizations that lack official approval can be subject to state persecution.

Demographically, the most widespread religious tradition is the Chinese folk religion, which overlaps with Taoism, and describes the worship of the shen (神), a character that signifies the "energies of generation". The shen comprises deities of the natural environment, gods representing specific concepts or groups, heroes and ancestors, and figures from Chinese mythology. Among the most popular folk cults are those of Mazu (goddess of the seas), Huangdi (one of the two divine patriarchs of the Chinese race), Guandi (god of war and business), Caishen (god of prosperity and richness), Pangu and many others. China is home to many of the world's tallest religious statues, including the tallest of all, the Spring Temple Buddha in Henan.

A 2012 poll conducted by WIN/GIA found that 47% of Chinese self-identified as "convinced atheist". Scholars have noted that in China there is no clear boundary between religions, especially Buddhism, Taoism and local folk religious practice. According to the most recent demographic analyses, an average 30—80% of the Chinese population practice some form of Chinese folk religions and Taoism. Approximately 10—16% are Buddhists, 2—4% are Christians, and 1—2% are Muslims. In addition to Han people's local religious practices, there are also various ethnic minority groups in China who maintain their traditional autochthone religions. Various sects of indigenous origin comprise 2—3% of the population, while Confucianism as a religious self-designation is popular among intellectuals. Significant faiths specifically connected to certain ethnic groups include Tibetan Buddhism and the Islamic religion of the Hui and Uyghur peoples.<sup>4</sup>

## Family Values

Traditional Chinese culture values the family over individual well-being and personal rights. Values that form the social foundation of Chinese society include humility, emotional self-control, filial piety through reverence for parents, family recognition through achievement, and conformity to norms that avoid bringing shame to the family. Extended families are common, and two or three generations often live in the same household. Chinese society is traditionally patriarchal and hierarchical. Elders are highly respected and are addressed by their title and last name. Eldest males make most decisions, and females assume a subordinate role to men. When a woman marries, she becomes part of her husband's family. Older women have considerable power and often make family and household decisions. Additionally, older children tend to have authority over younger children. In general, families are private and may not discuss family-related matters with non-family members.

In China, sons are valued traditionally more than daughters and are perceived as an investment in the future. A son is considered a breadwinner, while a daughter, because she becomes part of a husband's family upon marriage, is often viewed as a drain on limited family resources. The preference for sons, combined with China's 1979 "One Child Only" policy, which restricts families to a single child regardless of sex, has produced a society that is "missing girls," because female fetuses are often aborted. However, resistance by Chinese families and international objections to the "One Child Only" policy have led to exceptions, including allowing couples in rural areas with a firstborn female to have a second child and allowing ethnic minority couples to have more than one child. Despite traditional views and restrictions on childbearing, the role of females in Chinese society continues to evolve. <sup>5</sup>

## Education and Economy

### Education

Since 1986, compulsory education in China comprises primary and junior secondary school, which together last for nine years. In 2010, about 82.5 percent of students continued their education at a three-year senior secondary school. The Gaokao, China's national university entrance exam, is a prerequisite for entrance into most higher education institutions. In 2010, 27 percent of secondary school graduates are enrolled in higher education. Vocational education is available to students at the secondary and tertiary level.

In February 2006, the government pledged to provide completely free nine-year education, including textbooks and fees. Annual education investment went from less than US\$50 billion

in 2003 to more than US\$250 billion in 2011. However, there remains an inequality in education spending. In 2010, the annual education expenditure per secondary school student in Beijing totalled ¥20,023, while in Guizhou, one of the poorest provinces in China, only totalled ¥3,204. Free compulsory education in China consists of primary school and junior secondary school between the ages of 6 and 15. In 2011, around 81.4% of Chinese have received secondary education. By 2007, there were 396,567 primary schools, 94,116 secondary schools, and 2,236 higher education institutions in China.

As of 2010, 94% of the population over age 15 are literate, compared to only 20% in 1950. In 2009, Chinese students from Shanghai achieved the world's best results in mathematics, science and literacy, as tested by the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), a worldwide evaluation of 15-year-old school pupils' scholastic performance.<sup>3</sup>

## **Economy**

As of 2014, China has the world's second-largest economy in terms of nominal GDP, totalling approximately US\$10.380 trillion according to the International Monetary Fund. If purchasing power parity (PPP) is taken into account, China's economy is the largest in the world, with a 2014 PPP GDP of US\$17.617 trillion. In 2013, its PPP GDP per capita was US\$12,880, while its nominal GDP per capita was US\$7,589. Both cases put China behind around eighty countries (out of 183 countries on the IMF list) in global GDP per capita rankings.

From its founding in 1949 until late 1978, the People's Republic of China was a Soviet-style centrally planned economy. Following Mao's death in 1976 and the consequent end of the Cultural Revolution, Deng Xiaoping and the new Chinese leadership began to reform the economy and move towards a more market-oriented mixed economy under one-party rule. Agricultural collectivization was dismantled and farmlands privatized, while foreign trade became a major new focus, leading to the creation of Special Economic Zones (SEZs). Inefficient state-owned enterprises (SOEs) were restructured and unprofitable ones were closed outright, resulting in massive job losses. Modern-day China is mainly characterized as having a market economy based on private property ownership, and is one of the leading examples of state capitalism. The state still dominates in strategic "pillar" sectors such as energy production and heavy industries, but private enterprise has expanded enormously, with around 30 million private businesses recorded in 2008.

Since economic liberalization began in 1978, China has been among the world's fastest-growing economies, relying largely on investment- and export-led growth. According to the IMF, China's annual average GDP growth between 2001 and 2010 was 10.5%. Between 2007 and 2011, China's economic growth rate was equivalent to all of the G7 countries' growth combined. According to the Global Growth Generators index announced by Citigroup in

February 2011, China has a very high 3G growth rating. Its high productivity, low labour costs and relatively good infrastructure have made it a global leader in manufacturing. However, the Chinese economy is highly energy-intensive and inefficient; China became the world's largest energy consumer in 2010, relies on coal to supply over 70% of its energy needs, and surpassed the US to become the world's largest oil importer in September 2013. In the early 2010s, China's economic growth rate began to slow amid domestic credit troubles, weakening international demand for Chinese exports and fragility in the global economy.

In the online realm, China's e-commerce industry has grown more slowly than the EU and the US, with a significant period of development occurring from around 2009 onwards. According to Credit Suisse, the total value of online transactions in China grew from an insignificant size in 2008 to around RMB 4 trillion (US\$660 billion) in 2012. The Chinese online payment market is dominated by major firms such as Alipay, Tenpay and China UnionPay.

China is a member of the WTO and is the world's largest trading power, with a total international trade value of US\$3.87 trillion in 2012. Its foreign exchange reserves reached US\$2.85 trillion by the end of 2010, an increase of 18.7% over the previous year, making its reserves by far the world's largest. In 2012, China was the world's largest recipient of inward foreign direct investment (FDI), attracting \$253 billion. China also invests abroad, with a total outward FDI of \$62.4 billion in 2012, and a number of major takeovers of foreign firms by Chinese companies. In 2009, China owned an estimated \$1.6 trillion of US securities, and was also the largest foreign holder of US public debt, owning over \$1.16 trillion in US Treasury bonds. China's undervalued exchange rate has caused friction with other major economies, and it has also been widely criticized for manufacturing large quantities of counterfeit goods. According to consulting firm McKinsey, total outstanding debt in China increased from \$7.4 trillion in 2007 to \$28.2 trillion in 2014, which reflects 228% of China's GDP, a percentage higher than that of some G20 nations.

China ranked 29th in the Global Competitiveness Index in 2009, although it is only ranked 136th among the 179 countries measured in the 2011 Index of Economic Freedom. In 2014, Fortune's Global 500 list of the world's largest corporations included 95 Chinese companies, with combined revenues of US\$5.8 trillion. The same year, Forbes reported that five of the world's ten largest public companies were Chinese, including the world's largest bank by total assets, the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China.<sup>3</sup>

## Chinese in Australia

There were some early isolated contacts with Australia by the Chinese at least from the early nineteenth century. In the latter half of the century an increasing number of Chinese came to Australia firstly fleeing civil disorder, famine and floods in southern China and then attracted by the discovery of gold in Australia.

At the time of the 1861 Colonial Census, there were 38,258 China-born\* or 3.4 per cent of Australia's population, making it the second largest immigrant group after those from the British Isles.

Public animosity towards the Chinese influenced colonial and early federal governments to restrict their immigration. The immigration of Asians declined and by 1947 the China-born numbered 6404. Relaxation of immigration restrictions in the 1960s and 1970s led to an increase in Asian immigration and, at the 1976 Census the China-born numbered 19,971.

The active marketing of educational services in Asia by the Australian Government in the mid-1980s contributed to a rapid increase in the number of China-born private overseas students coming to Australia.

In 1983 there were 38 China-born overseas students and by 1990 this number had increased to 16,642.

The China-born population is one of the largest country-of-birth groups in Australia and it is concentrated in large cities, such as Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane. It should be noted that a significant proportion of people from some other countries, for example, Singapore and Malaysia, are also of Chinese ancestry.

Summaries for people born in Hong Kong and Taiwan are available separately; therefore they have not been included in this report.

\*China-born population excludes those from the Special Administrative Regions (SARs) and Taiwan.<sup>6</sup>

# The Chinese Community in Shepparton

## ***Population***

The Chinese community began to establish themselves in the area during the period of the Victorian gold rush in 1850's.

History records confirm that Ah Wong, a Chinese immigrant, set up a market garden, selling vegetable produce to Mooroopna and surrounding residents during the gold rush.

Chinaman's Garden Reserve is the site of this former vegetable garden and provides views of the Goulburn River.

The AH-Wong Bridge out of the town is named after this first Chinese gardener.

In February 2016, the Chinese community in Shepparton comprises about 200 families totalling approximately 1,000 people.

However, during fruit season thousands of Chinese people visit Shepparton from Taiwan, Malaysia, Hong Kong and Singapore on working holiday visas.

## ***Language***

The main languages spoken at home by the Shepparton Chinese community are Mandarin, Cantonese and other Chinese dialects.

More than 80 per cent of the Chinese people in Shepparton speak English very well or well.

## ***Education***

The older generation of Shepparton's Chinese Community has high school or post-secondary education while the younger members and new migrants of the community are well educated and have tertiary qualifications.

## ***Employment***

Almost everyone in the community is either engaged in businesses or in the work force.

The older generation is predominantly involved in business across every sector particularly retail and restaurant businesses while others are professionals such as doctors and other medical professionals, accountants etc.

## **Issues**

There are no significant issues identified in the Chinese community in Shepparton.

The Chinese community believes that they have the skills and financial strength to support the local economy but are looking for more opportunities to work closely with the wider community to build a sturdier relationship.

A need of a Chinese language class has also been identified.

## Contacts

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  - 2 <http://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/turkey-population/>
  - 3 <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/China>
  4. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/China#Ethnic\\_groups](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/China#Ethnic_groups)
  - 5 <http://www.cdc.gov/tb/publications/guidestoolkits/ethnographicguides/China/chapters/chapter2.pdf>
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