

# China

Capital: Beijing

Population: 1,280,000,000

1 in every 5 people in the world lives in just one country – China. It is the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest country in the world after Russia and Canada. Its history dates back to 5000 BC. Ruled by a succession of emperors, China became a communist state in 1949. Therefore, every aspect of life is controlled by the communists (state) and China has become a major industrial and military power. In recent years, it has begun to move towards a more competitive economy which encourages investments from other countries.

## Landscape

- the most fertile areas found in the south, e.g. Yangtze river
- dry deserts, e.g. Takla Makan
- high mountains, e.g. Kunlun Shan, Himalayas, Tibetan plateau

## Agriculture

- 60% of employment
- *rice* = the main crop grown in China (annual double-cropping), *cotton + silk*
- other important crops: *sweet potatoes, watermelons, cucumbers, pears, carrots*
- *sheep* and *cattle*
- Chinese gastronomy

## Industry

- over the last 20 years = transformation from 1 of the poorest nations to a rapidly expanding economy
- *textile, garment and electronic industry*
- *coal, iron ore, wolfram, oil, salt, non-ferrous metals (zinc, tin, lead)*
- *coal-fired power stations*
- *Shanghai* = main industrial and commercial centre, 1 of the free economic zones

## One child families

The Chinese population is growing by about 9 million a year (Sweden). In order to reduce this rapid population growth, the government introduced a policy in 1979 to limit each family to one child only. It has succeeded in towns but families in the countryside need labour in the fields.

## Tibet

Tibet has been a part of China since 1950. Tibetan's religion (Buddhism) was suppressed by the Communist Party, which discourages *any religious practice*.

## Hong Kong

British government returned Hong Kong under the Chinese rule in 1997. It occupies only a small area but 6 million people live on its rocky islands and mountainous mainland. It is 1 of the world's most important financial centres and has 1 of its most prosperous economies. It points to the production of high-tech, e.g. computers, digital cameras, watches and mobile phones.

## Macao

It was returned to China in 1999. When its Portuguese rulers gave up power – after almost 450 years – it was the end of the longest surviving European settlement in Asia. Casinos are a big tourist attraction because gambling is very popular among the Chinese. Gambling is a major industry and provide about 1/3 of the territory's income.