

Glossary

abdication: to step down from the throne

accommodation: the act of negotiating and compromising in relations with foreign countries

agrarian: related to farming

astronomy: the scientific study of the universe through physics and observation

autonomous region: administrative area within China associated with a particular ethnic minority and nominally given rights and controls not extended to the provinces

barbarian: the translation of a term used by Han Chinese to describe anyone non-Chinese, especially someone who did not speak Chinese; a foreigner

big character posters: posters covered with writing that were hung in public places to communicate political messages

biological warfare: germ warfare that causes physical harm through the spread of deadly germs

bourgeoisie: the middle class; according to Marxist doctrine the capitalists who exploit the working class

Boxer Uprising: an uprising in 1900 led by the “Boxers United in Righteousness,” a Secret Society that formed in China in 1898, and which gained appeal with the landless, disbanded, and disempowered; during the uprising, foreigners and Chinese Christians were killed in Chinese cities

bureaucracy: the officials or administrators of a government or institution who carry out its rules and functions

cadre: a civil servant of bureaucrat in Communist China; someone who works for the government or Communist Party

Canton: former English name for Guangzhou

capitalism: an economic system based on the private ownership of the means of production of goods, characterized by a free, competitive market and driven by profit

cartography: the making of maps

Chinese Communist Party (CCP): the political party that has governed China since 1949; the CCP was formally organized at its first Congress in 1921

chinoiserie: a style of art and interior design, which reflects Chinese style and influence but was developed overseas

- civil service examination system:** a system of exams in China that was used to choose appointees to government positions. Chinese civil service exams began around the sixth century and were based on different classical Chinese texts at different times; however, the exams always included the Confucian classics
- class struggle:** The Marxist concept of struggle for political and economic power between the ruling (bourgeoisie) and working class
- collaborator:** an individual, a group, an organization, or a country that works with or another individual, group, organization, movement, or country; during wartime, the term has very negative connotations
- collective:** a group of farms managed as a unit, 1951–1958; farmers pooled their land and worked cooperatively; the product was shared primarily based on the amount of labor one had contributed
- commune:** a mutually shared community in which property, possessions, and responsibilities are shared; in the “people’s communes” organized in 1958 in China, all the land belonged to the government
- communism:** a system of government in which no individual owns property and wealth is shared in a classless society by the members of the community
- concubine:** a woman who is the lover of a wealthy married man, but who is not his wife; she has the status of a subordinate “wife”
- Confucian hierarchy:** a rigid social hierarchy that endured for centuries in China; it placed scholar-officials at the top of society, followed by peasants, artisans, and at the bottom, merchants
- Confucianism:** philosophy of ethics and morality based on the teachings of Confucius, designed to cultivate a civilized individual and to establish an ordered, civilized society
- Confucius:** (ca 551 B.C.E.–ca 478 B.C.E.) Chinese philosopher, whose philosophical teachings on ethics and morality became the foundation of the Chinese way of life
- connoisseur:** a person with expert knowledge and informed taste, especially in the fine arts
- conservative:** adhering to tradition and cautious about change
- coolies:** unskilled laborers in China (and India) often doing heavy work for very low wages
- counter-revolution:** opposing revolution; during the early decades of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) “counter-revolutionary” was a term used against individuals who opposed or questioned Party policies
- courtesan:** royal female attendant who practiced and had talents in the arts, such as music, dancing, and poetry
- cult of personality:** intense devotion to a person (often a leader) who is portrayed in an idealized, often heroic manner
- decentralized:** power or rule that is spread out among many regions or individuals
- Democracy Wall:** a wall near Tiananmen Square where posters with criticisms of society and the government were hung
- Democratic League:** A liberal party that existed along with the Guomindang and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in China; established in 1939, today it is one of eight legally recognized parties in the PRC

demographics: the distribution, density, vital statistics, etc. of a population

diaspora: the dispersion of a people sharing a common origin (in this case Chinese)

dictatorship: absolute power or authority by one individual, gained and/or maintained by force rather than election

diplomacy: skill at managing communication, negotiation, and relationships between nations

dissent: to differ in belief or opinion, to disagree

dissident: an individual who disagrees with an established political or religious system or organization

dynasty: a succession of rulers who are members of the same family

edict: a proclamation

elites: people of the highest class or greatest influence or authority within a larger group

eunuch: a man who has been castrated. In imperial China, eunuchs worked as choral singers, actors, servants, and were the only men permitted in the emperors living quarters or in the vicinity of the emperor's courtesans; some rose to powerful positions

extremist: an individual who holds extreme or radical political beliefs

factionalism: strife and dissent within a party

“factory”: the living and business quarters of foreigners trading in Guangzhou (Canton) up to the late 1840s

feudal: a social, economic or political system in which the people working the land do not own it and are often exploited by landowners

feudal Japan: period of Japanese history dominated by regional families and the military rule of warlords from the twelfth to the nineteenth centuries; during this period, the emperor remained but was kept to a figurehead position

floating population: low-paid migrant workers and poor rural laborers, who move to urban areas to fill factory and construction jobs

foot binding: a tradition that lasted some 1,000 years in China in which young girl's feet would be wrapped in tight bandages to dramatically alter the shape and limit the size of the foot; bound feet were considered highly desirable in a young woman; the feet would be so mutilated that a woman could not walk normally

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI): the investment of one nation's funds into another country

Gang of Four: Jiang Qing (Mao Zedong's wife) and three others considered responsible for the worst excesses of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution

Gaokao: National Higher Education Entrance Exam, the academic exam that students in China take in hopes of gaining a place at a Chinese undergraduate university

Generalissimo: the supreme commander of a combined military force of the air force, navy, and army; Chiang Kai-shek took on the title

gentry: the class of society who own land; upper class

geopolitical: a worldview approach to looking at politics or a political issue

Gross Domestic Product (GDP): the value of goods and services produced within a country's borders during the course of a given period

- Gross National Product (GNP):** the value of goods and services produced by a nation's businesses or citizens, whether production occurs within or outside the country itself
- gunboat diplomacy:** negotiations between nations that involve threats to use military force
- Guomindang:** also known as the Nationalist Party; the party organized by Sun Yatsen in 1912 and later led by Chiang Kai-shek; formerly spelled Kuomintang (KMT)
- Han Chinese:** the dominant ethnic group in China who make up more than 90 percent of the population; The name Han stems from the Han dynasty (206 BC–220 AD), considered among the high points in Chinese civilization
- hegemony:** leadership; dominance
- homage:** anything given or done to show respect or reverence
- hukou* (household registration) system:** Chinese system of assigning each family a residency status (*hukou*) in a particular place and limiting individuals' access to education and healthcare to the place of their family's registration
- human rights:** the basic rights and freedoms to which each human being is entitled
- ideology:** an organized system of beliefs, values and ideas that form a political philosophy or program
- immigrant:** an individual who has migrated to a country from a foreign country
- imperial power:** power of one country over other countries or colonies
- imperialism:** the practice of extending rule or authority over other countries or colonies
- incursion:** a brief, hostile invasion of another country
- indentured servitude:** a contract which commits an individual to serve a master for a specific time period
- indigenous:** originating within (native to) a particular place
- industrialized:** a society in which machine manufactured goods have replaced hand tools; one with large-scale industrial production
- inflation:** an increase in the supply of currency (money) leading to higher prices; leading to the money being worth less
- infrastructure:** the facilities or systems that serve a place, such as roads, power plants, and schools
- "iron rice bowl":** life-time job security in the PRC up until Deng Xiaoping's economic reforms
- Jesuit:** a Roman Catholic religious order of men known for their scholarship and commitment to education
- jia*:** [in Fei Xiaotong's context] a family unit; individuals related by blood or marriage
- kowtow:** to kneel and touch the forehead to the ground to show respect to a superior in traditional Chinese culture
- li*:** a traditional Chinese unit of distance about one-third of a mile or 500 meters
- literati:** intellectuals or the educated class; those involved with literature or the arts
- Little Red Book*:** printed by the millions during the Cultural Revolution, the small book contained quotations from Mao Zedong; red Guards and proper revolutionaries carried it with them all the time, studying and memorizing the words of Chairman Mao

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loess: a fine-grained, yellowish-brown, extremely fertile loam deposited by the wind and sometimes by floods

magistrate: a scholar-official in imperial China responsible for provincial affairs, including administering the civil service exams, tax collection, public safety, and administering justice; sometimes used as a synonym for a scholar-official

Manchu: the name a people from what are now China's northeastern provinces gave themselves after they invaded China in the early seventeenth century and established the Qing dynasty (1644–1912)

Manchuria: region of Northeastern China now Liaoning, Heilongjiang, and Jilin provinces

Mandate of Heaven: for millennia, Chinese tradition dictated that a leader/emperor had to have legitimate authority from the gods in order to rule the country; huge natural disasters or civil disorder were seen as signs that a ruler had lost this mandate

manifesto: a public declaration of motives and intentions by a person or group who have some public importance

mausoleum: a large tomb or burial monument

maxim: general rule, principle or truth

Meiji Restoration: a tremendous transformation in Japan in the late nineteenth century; as a result Japan built a powerful militarized and industrialized nation

memorial: a written appeal to a government official

migrant worker: a worker from another region (in the context of this book)

Ming dynasty: ruled China from 1368-1644; the era is known for its remarkable arts and culture and a vibrant commercial and urban life that contributed to great prosperity for some. In the late sixteenth century, however, rural populations were suffering as a result of government mismanagement and natural disasters

mission schools: schools funded by foreign Christians and usually operated by foreign missionaries

missionary: somebody sent to another country by a church to spread its faith or to do social and medical work

modernization: the process of technological, industrial, and intellectual progress or advancement in a country

Mongols: nomadic people of (Inner and Outer) Mongolia, at various points in history, enemies of the Chinese empire

monsoon: a seasonal wind of the Indian Ocean and South Asia, blowing from the southwest from April to October, and from the northeast during the rest of the year, generally bringing heavy rains

multilateral: many-sided; involving more than two countries

multinational company: one that conducts business in two or more countries

nationalism: loyalty and belief in one's country; (can be) excessive narrow patriotism

Nationalist: (in China) a member of the Guomindang, the Chinese Nationalist Party, the party organized by Sun Yatsen in 1912 and later led by Chiang Kai-shek; formerly the Kuomintang (KMT)

occupation: the control of a country or area by enemy or outside forces

party-state: form of government in which one political party controls all political organizations and institutions of the state

Peking: former English name of Beijing, present-day capital of China

pension: a retirement benefit paid from an investment account to which a person or employer has contributed during their working years

“Ping-Pong Diplomacy”: In 1971, at the 31st World Table Tennis Championships in Japan, Chinese players invited the American team to visit and play in China, which they did (in both cases with government support). The ping-pong players were the first American group allowed into China since 1949. The United States subsequently announced plans to end the trade embargo with China. Then the Chinese team reciprocated by visiting the United States. These were the first steps in the resumption of Sino–U.S. relations

politburo: one of the highest levels within the Chinese Communist Party made up of between five and nine members, it effectively sets national policy and controls all administrative, legal, and executive appointments

progressive: advocating social, economic or political reform

proletarian: the working class in Communist terminology

propaganda: the use of words, symbols, music, art or any communication specifically to influence people’s thinking and behavior; to promote a policy, doctrine or cause

proselytize: to try to convert somebody to a religious faith or political doctrine

province: highest-level administrative division of China

purge: to remove or overthrow opponents, rulers, or people considered undesirable

Qing: the Qing dynasty (1644–1911), also known as the Ch’ing or the Manchu dynasty, was the last dynasty in China

queue: long, braided ponytail worn by the Manchus of central Manchuria, and imposed upon the Han Chinese during the Qing dynasty, as a sign of submission

radical: an individual who favors making sweeping or extreme economic, political, or social changes

reactionary: an opponent to liberal or progressive social and political changes or reforms

“red”: Communist (when used in reference to China)

Red Guards: students who participated in the Cultural Revolution and took up Mao Zedong’s call to destroy the Four Olds—old customs, old habits, old culture, old thinking; many were involved in extensive violence and destruction

Re-education camp: “re-education through labor” according to the Chinese Ministry of Public Security is a system of reform through compulsory education for those who have committed minor offenses not considered legally criminal; the system was put in place in 1957 and it is not unusual for it to be used for political dissidents; conditions are harsh

reform: social and political changes or improvement enacted by law

reparation: compensation for a wrong-doing given to one group or country by another

Republic of China (ROC): the name for China between 1912 and 1949; also the name of the government Chiang Kai-shek formed on Taiwan after his defeat by the Communists on mainland China in 1949

restoration: the return of something that was removed

revisionist: under Mao, a pejorative term referring to people or ideas that deviated from orthodox Marxist principles

rickshaw: a small two-wheeled carriage with a seat, pulled by a person

rural: agrarian or farming areas; having to do with the countryside

scholar-official: individuals who had passed China's civil service examinations and held government positions; educated in the Confucian classics, they were often amateur artists, and connoisseurs or patrons of the arts

Security Council: the organ of the United Nations comprised of five permanent members (China, the United States, Russia, the United Kingdom, and France) with veto power, and ten temporary members, charged with maintaining international peace and security

sent-down youth: approximately 12 million teenagers sent to the countryside between 1968 and 1975 (during the Cultural Revolution) to live, work, and be re-educated by the peasants

simin: the four classes of people in traditional Chinese society: scholar-officials, peasants, artisans, and merchants

socialism: a political system that promotes government intervention to ensure a more fair distribution of jobs and resources in a society and usually characterized by some public ownership of industries

socialist: an individual who believes in socialism or belongs to a socialist party

sovereignty: authority or rule; independence from others

soviet (as in Jiangxi Soviet, for example): an area under communist control; the Jiangxi Soviet began in 1928 as a hideout for Mao Zedong and a small enclave escaping the Guomindang

Special Economic Zones (SEZ): geographical zones within China established for foreign investment; foreign enterprises receive tax breaks and other incentives

state-run economy: an economic system planned and run by a central government

struggle sessions: meetings during which individuals suspected of harboring "rightist" views that were not in line with communist ideology were forced to confess and "struggle" to rid themselves of their bourgeois ways; these meetings were sometimes violent, especially during the early years of the Cultural Revolution

sustainable development: economic progress that can be maintained over time without damaging the environment

tael: approximately one ounce of silver, formerly used as Chinese currency

tariff: a duty or tax on imported or exported trade

Treaty of Versailles: The 1919 peace treaty that officially ended World War I

treaty: a formal negotiated agreement between countries

tributary relationship: a relationship between two states in which one acknowledged the other to be superior and paid tribute by sending representatives bearing gifts

unilateral: decided or acted upon by only one involved party or nation

vernacular: commonly spoken, everyday language

“victim literature”: writings of individuals who experienced or witnessed terrible abuse during the Cultural Revolution; these books were for a while encouraged under Deng Xiaoping as a way for some to express their anguish; some scholars note that these works, as a whole, give a one-dimensional emotional view of that period

warlords: military rulers that had control over regions of China during the Early Republican period

World Trade Organization (WTO): the organization that oversees the rules of trade between nations worldwide

yuan: basic monetary unit of the People’s Republic of China