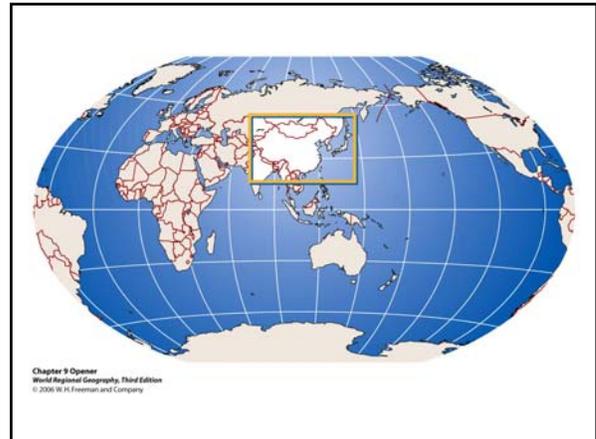


Lydia Mihelic Pulsipher • Alex Pulsipher

## World Regional Geography Third Edition

### Chapter 9: East Asia

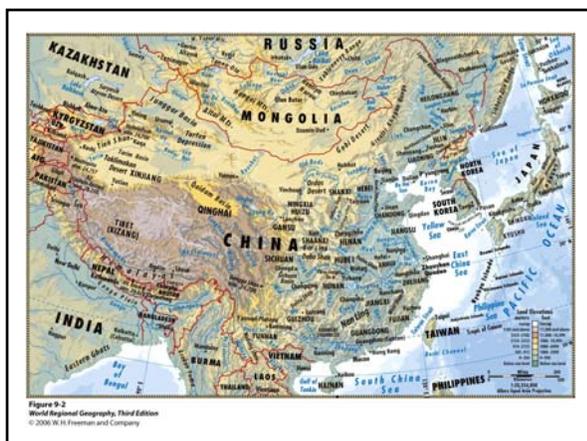
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## I. THE GEOGRAPHIC SETTING A. Physical Patterns

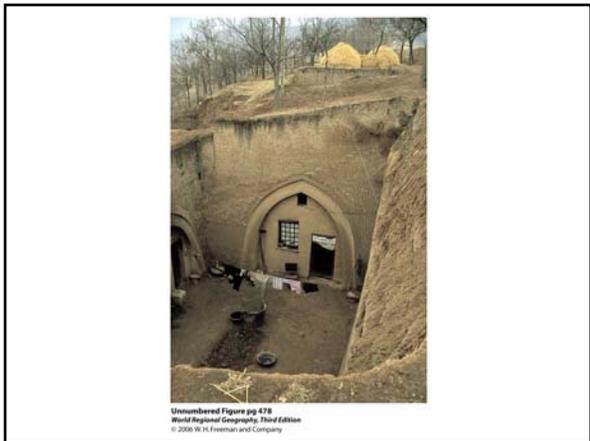
### • Landforms

- Of the few flat surfaces in this region, many are either too dry or cold to be useful to humans; thus, people are particularly inventive in creating space for agriculture.
- The landforms of East Asia form four steps:
  - The Plateau of Tibet
  - A broad expanse of basins, plateaus, and low mountain ranges that include upper portions of the Huang He and Chang Jiang
  - Broad coastal plains and the deltas of China's great rivers, with intervening low mountains and hills
  - Continental shelf and numerous islands



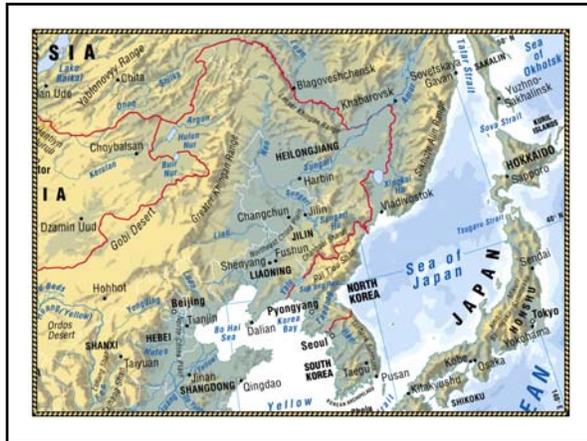
## Chinese Landform

The Loess Plateau is covered by a fine yellowish windblown soil. It drifted into what used to be deep mountain valleys, creating an undulating plateau. The North China Plain is the largest and most populous expanse of flat cultivatable land in China. The Yunnan-Guizhou Plateau is characterized by a rough landscape of deeply folded mountains where landforms are unstable. Lower parts of the plateau are characterized by karst deposits.



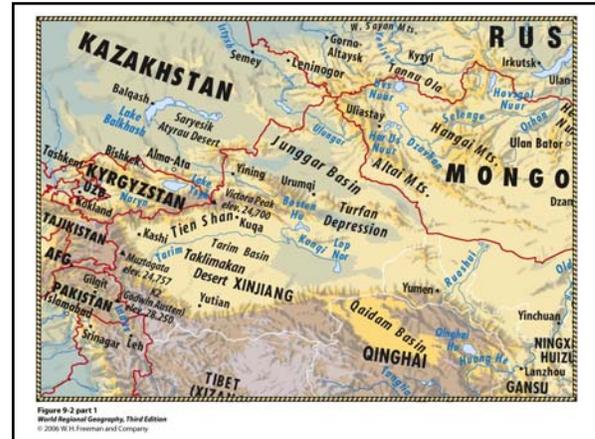
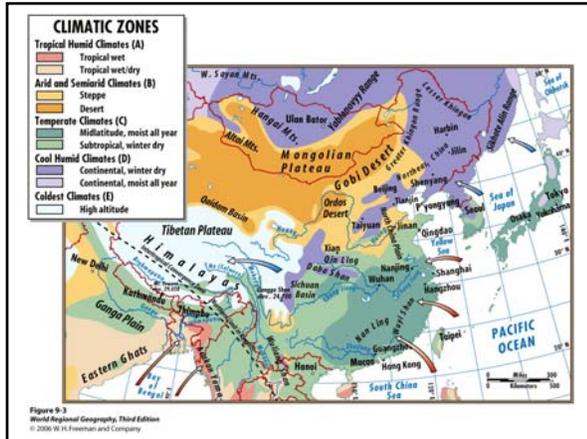
### East Asia Landforms

- Only 18 percent of Japan can be cultivated because it is so mountainous and is prone to severe earthquakes, and disastrous tropical storms.
- Taiwan has a mountainous spine. A steep escarpment faces east and a gentler slope faces west, where most of the population lives along the coastal plain.
- Low-lying mountains cover nearly 70 percent of Korea. There is little level land for settlement, and communication is difficult



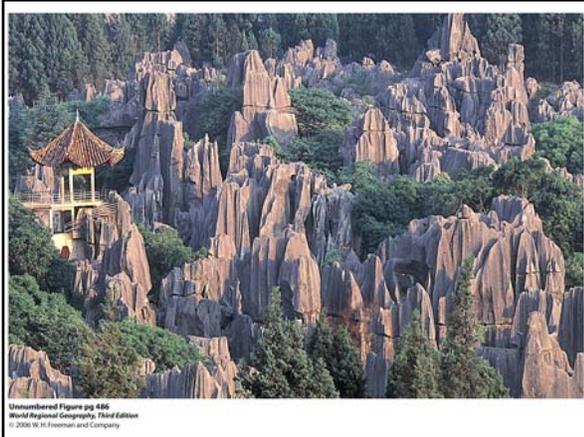
## Physical Patterns

- *The Dry Interior*
  - This region experiences extremes of a continental climate.
  - The dry interior is characterized by grasslands, deserts, scattered forests, and large, uninhabited areas.



## Physical Patterns

- *The Monsoon East*
  - During the winter monsoons, dry, frigid arctic air can result in a long, bitter winter. During the summer, warm tropical air from the Pacific Ocean picks up a huge amount of moisture, which is deposited as rain.
  - Forests in this area vary from coniferous to tropical rain forests; however, agriculture has destroyed many ecosystems and development threatens remaining natural areas.



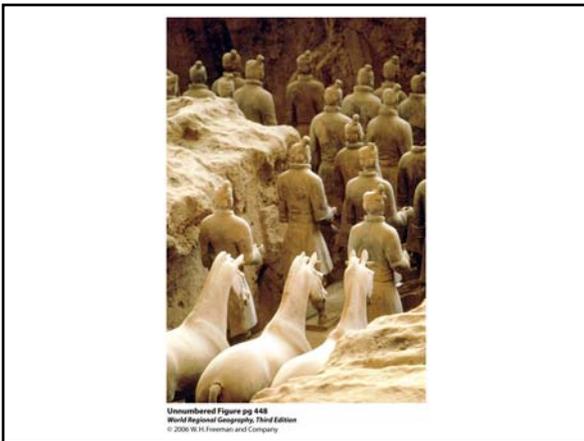
## B. Human Patterns Over Time

- East Asia is a region of ancient civilizations, and until the twentieth century, China was the source of wealth, culture, and technology for the region.
- Not all areas were influenced equally by China, as the Chinese saw Mongolians as alien and uncivilized. Korea, Japan, and Taiwan were isolated enough that they developed distinct cultures, allowing them to advance politically, economically, and militarily.

## Human Patterns over Time

### • The Beginnings of Chinese Civilization

- Agricultural societies developed a feudal system nearly 4000 years ago until a new order emerged between 400 and 221 B.C. that laid the foundations for great Chinese empires.
- The Qin dynasty increased agricultural output because people worked harder to farm land they now owned; the salaried bureaucrats who replaced their former masters were more responsible in building and maintaining public works.





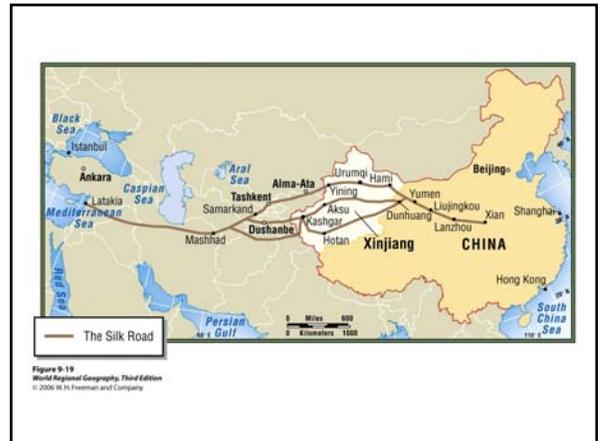
### Human Patterns Over Time

- Confucianism
  - Beginning 2500 years ago, Confucianism, which altered social, economic, and political geography, taught that the best organizational model was a hierarchy modeled after the patriarchal family. The emperor was seen as the source of all order and civilization.
  - Women were confined to domestic spaces and placed under the authority of others.
  - Confucianism served the interests of the political and economic elite, which transformed the social order and the way resources were used. The result was little incentive for agricultural improvements, industrialization, or entrepreneurialism.



### Human Patterns Over Time

- European Imperialism in East Asia
  - In the mid-1500s, colonizers brought a strong interest in commerce and new food crops. European influence increased as foreign merchants lobbied to get access to the huge Chinese market.
  - In the mid-1800s, Qing dynasty leaders tried to fight off the European incursion during the Opium Wars. The Qing dynasty's authority declined and China was defeated. The Qing empire collapsed after attempts at recovering from defeat in the Sino-Japanese War.



## Human Patterns Over Time

- China's Turbulent Twentieth Century
  - In the early twentieth century, the urban upper and middle class socialist Nationalist party (Kuomintang or KMT) was formed and led by Chiang Kai-shek. The rival Chinese Communist party (CCP), led by Mao Zedong, appealed to rural laborers.
  - Japan took advantage of the internal struggle in China and invaded. The KMT and CCP tried to unite against the common enemy, but when Japan surrendered to the Allied forces at the end of World War II, the two parties no longer cooperated.
  - The KMT was pushed out by the CCP and many KMT supporters fled to Taiwan, where they formed a government-in-exile. The CCP assumed control over the economy and brutally occupied Tibet (Xizang). Mao became a sort of emperor with unquestioned authority.



## Human Patterns Over Time

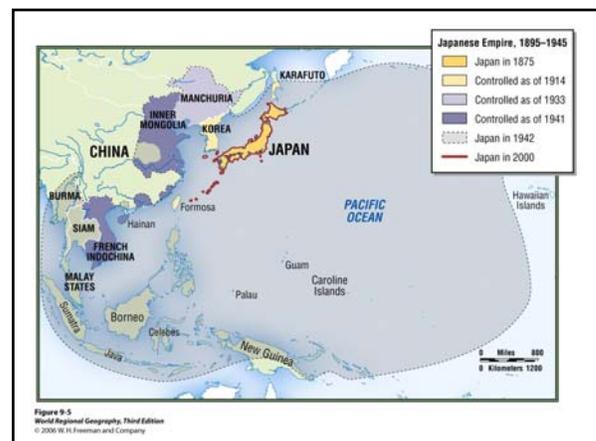
- China's Turbulent Twentieth Century
  - The communist revolution led to the reallocation of land and wealth, public works projects, and new opportunities for women. However, there were enormous human and environmental costs.
  - After Mao's death, Deng Xiaoping initiated a series of reforms to liberalize China's economy while maintaining communist political control.

## Human Patterns Over Time

- The Transformation of Japan
  - By A.D. 300, Japan was divided into military clans that established rule over most of what is now Japan.
  - Ideas and material culture were imported until about A.D. 800, when Japan turned inward and established a feudal system with a rigid class structure.
  - This isolation was reinforced; shoguns imposed a strict social class system and expelled foreigners.

## Human Patterns Over Time

- The Transformation of Japan
  - In the mid-1800s, Japan realized that centuries of isolation would have to end. The Meiji Oligarchs set Japan on a course of modernization, industrial development, and settlement expansion.
  - Japan colonized Korea, Taiwan, and Manchuria, which eventually led to its defeat in World War II and to the loss of its foreign territories.
  - Japan rebuilt rapidly after World War II and eventually became a giant in the global economy.



## Human Patterns Over Time

- Conflict and Transfers of Power in East Asia
- *The Korean Peninsula*
  - From 1910 to 1945, Korea was a colony of Japan and a source of cheap minerals and agricultural raw materials.
  - Communist North Korea and capitalist South Korea were torn apart by a civil war. The war resulted in huge losses of life and devastated infrastructure.
  - North Korea closed itself off from the rest of the world, while South Korea evolved into a prosperous free-market economy.



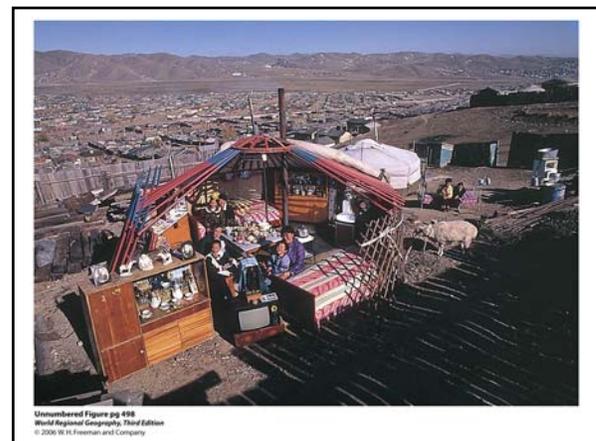
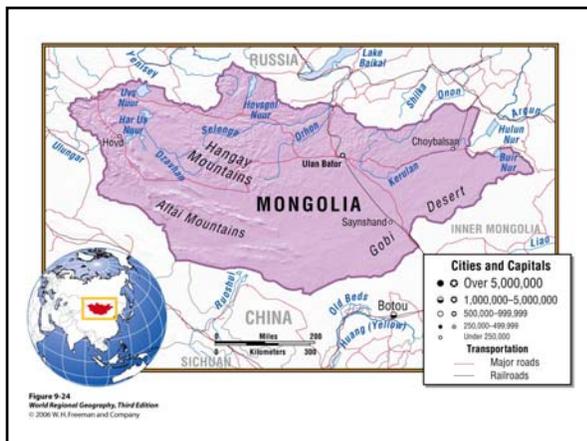
TABLE 9.3 Comparative statistics for North and South Korea

	North Korea	South Korea
Land area (square miles)	46,541	38,324
Population	21,700,000	47,300,000
Population per square mile	466	1,234
Human Development Index (HDI) rank	75 (in 1998) <sup>a</sup>	30 (in 1998) <sup>b</sup>
GDP per capita (adjusted for PPP in 1998 \$US)	1,000	13,478
Percent natural increase	1.5 to 9	0.9
Infant mortality (deaths per 1000 live births)	26	11
Life expectancy (years)	70	74

<sup>a</sup>2000 data not available for North Korea.  
<sup>b</sup>1998 data used to match that for North Korea.  
Sources: 2000 World Population Data Sheet (Washington, D.C.: Population Reference Bureau); and United Nations Human Development Report 1998 (New York: United Nations Development Programme).

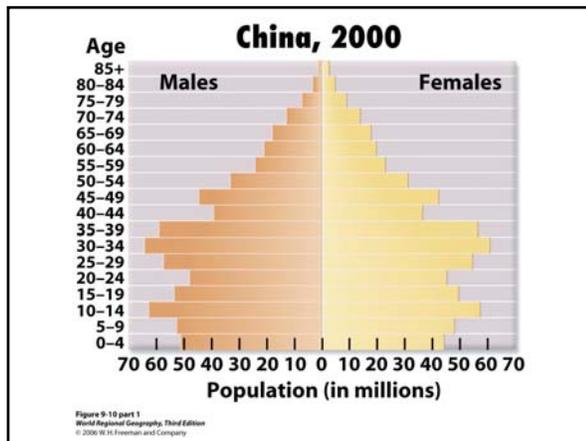
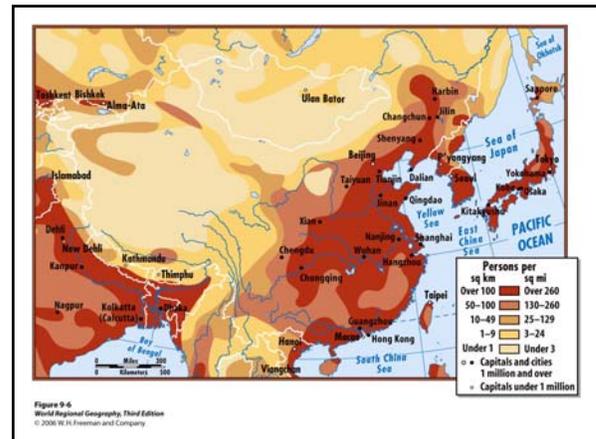
## Human Patterns Over Time

- *Mongolia*
  - Mongolia was colonized by China from 1691 until the early twentieth century.
  - Mongolia followed a communist system until the breakup of the Soviet Union and has since attempted to develop a free-market economy.



## C. Population Patterns

- Most couples in China are limited to one child. As a result, the birth rate is lower than the world average; however, the population will continue to grow because so many people are just entering their reproductive years.
- With relatively fewer births, the average age of the population will rise fairly quickly. This will cause a problem in China that Japan is already facing – a very large elderly population.
- Because of rugged, dry, or cold regions, 90 percent of the region's population is clustered on only one-sixth of the land. People extract a very high level of agricultural production – with considerable environmental costs – from this land.



## Population Patterns

- Population and Health Issues: HIV-AIDS and SARS
  - East Asia is experiencing a potentially explosive HIV-AIDS epidemic. Reported cases have increased significantly recently.
  - Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) appeared in southeastern China in 2002, infecting people in 29 countries in 6 months. This caused global alarm which some argue is an example of the dark side of globalization



## II. CURRENT GEOGRAPHIC ISSUES

### A. Economic and Political Issues

- After World War II, the communist regimes of China, Mongolia, and North Korea relied on central planning, while Japan, Taiwan, and South Korea established market economies.
- More recently, China and Mongolia have adopted reforms that allow market forces; however, despite the benefits, this transition has caused hardships for many.

## Economic and Political Issues

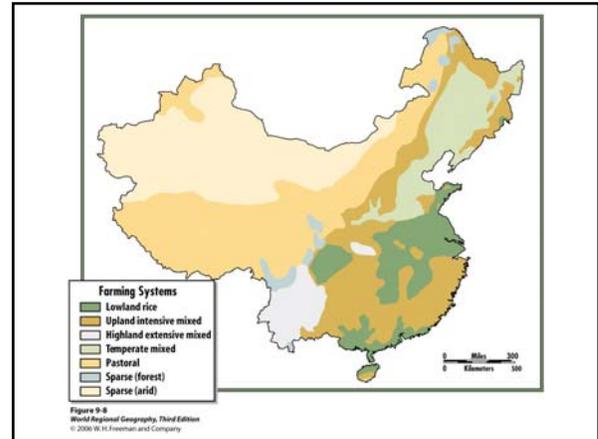
- The State-Aided Market Economy Countries
  - The economies of Japan, Korea, and Taiwan grew tremendously in the twentieth century.
  - Credit for this economic success belongs mostly to Japan, which began to develop the model of a government-guided free-market economy.

## Economic and Political Issues

- The Communist Command Economy
  - After World War II, China, Mongolia, and North Korea abolished private property and the government took control of the economy.
  - These sweeping changes proved less successful than was hoped.

## Economic and Political Issues

- *The Commune System*
  - In China, the priority was to improve both agricultural and industrial production.
  - Land was taken out of the hands of landlords and given to landless farmers.
  - Because this proved inefficient, farmers were put into cooperatives to share labor and pool resources. Full-scale communes took over all aspects of life.



## Economic and Political Issues

### *Focus on Heavy Industry*

- The focus was on heavy industry, not consumer goods. Funds for industrial development were diverted from the already inefficient agricultural sector.
- Although nearly everyone was guaranteed a job for life, these systems led to conformity and lack of innovation, and people were not allowed to consume more than the bare necessities.

## Economic and Political Issues

- *Regional Self-Sufficiency in China*
  - Regional self-sufficiency encouraged each region to develop independently, building agricultural and industrial sectors of equal strength to even out the distribution of income.
  - This resulted in a waste of time and resources because funds were used to establish industries in nearly every province, regardless of practicality.

## Economic and Political Issues

- Globalization and Market Reforms in China
  - In the late 1970s, China pursued a more efficient and market-oriented economy.
  - China has become a participant in the global economy as a significant producer of manufactured goods, and it represents a market of more than 1 billion customers.

**TABLE 9.1** Changes in access to telecommunications in China, 1990 to 1998–2001

Telecommunications method	1990	1998–2001
Rural telephone lines	1.4 million	34 million
Internet hosts	0	1264
Internet users	0	23.4 million
Mobile phone subscribers	0	110 million
Regular phone lines	7.5 million	137 million
Personal computers	0	11.3 million

Sources: United Nations Human Development Report 2000 and 2003 (New York: United Nations Development Programme), Table 12; R. Benewick and S. Donald, "Access to information flows," in *The State of China Atlas* (New York: Penguin, 1999), pp. 198–200; Craig S. Smith, "China arrives at a moment of truth," *New York Times* (April 1, 2001): 5.

Table 9-1  
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## Economic and Political Issues

- *The Reforms in Overview*
  - Responsibility systems gave managers of state-owned enterprises the right and responsibility to improve the efficiency of their operations.
  - Managers and entrepreneurs have taken advantage of the different resources and opportunities in different areas of the country.

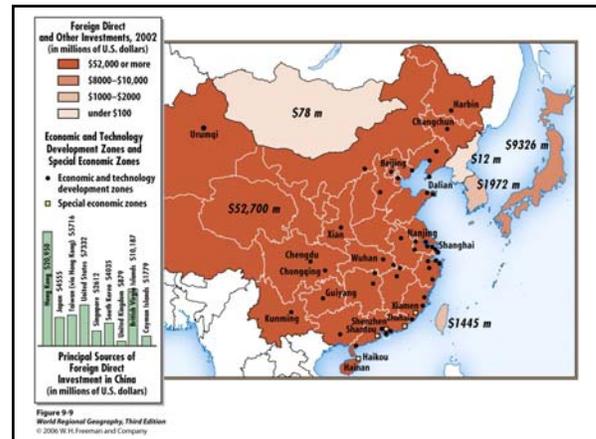
## Economic and Political Issues

- *The Persistence of Regional Disparities*
  - The Chinese economy has become more productive overall; however, reform has proceeded slowly.
  - Long-term disparities in wealth between China's regions are increasing.



## Economic and Political Issues

- *International Trade and Special Economic Zones*
  - Special economic zones (SEZs) and economic and technology development zones (ETDZs) are central to the new market reforms in China.
  - SEZs and ETDZs function as free-trade zones and have brought international investment and industry.
  - SEZs and ETDZs are major growth poles, as many coastal cities have grown into some of the largest urban areas in the country.



Shenzhen SEZ



## Economic and Political Issues

- *Life in the Growing Cities*
  - Millions of young migrants leave rural villages to work in SEZs. Many come intending to send money back home and eventually return home to improve their communities. However, workers are often paid less and work longer hours than the recruiters promised.
  - Concern is growing over the floating population of jobless or underemployed people who have left rural areas, without permission under the hukou system, and are now unaccounted for.

## Economic and Political Issues

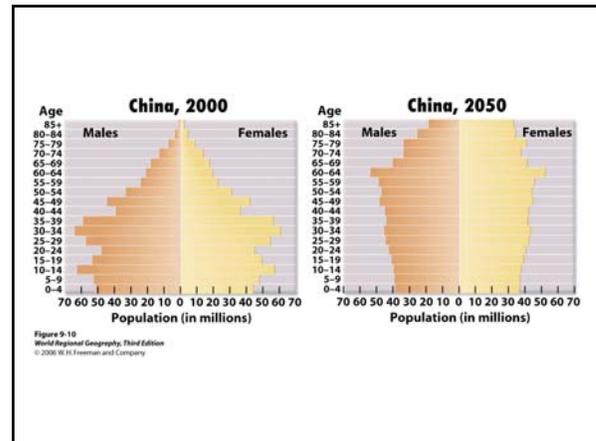
- *China and the World Trade Organization*
  - Dramatic economic changes allowed China to be admitted to the World Trade Organization (WTO); this organization seeks to remove barriers to global trade.
  - The inclusion of China in the WTO is highly controversial. China has brutally suppressed separatist movements, committed human rights abuses, and much of its growth is based on environmentally destructive activities and abuses of workers.

## II. CURRENT GEOGRAPHIC ISSUES B. Sociocultural Issues

- Population Policies and the East Asian Family
  - By 2000, women in Japan, Taiwan, and South Korea were bearing fewer than 2 children on average.
  - In the 1970s, in China especially, leaders realized that the rapidly rising population was sapping its ability to progress.

## Sociocultural Issues

- *The One-Child Policy in China*
  - The one-child policy created a major challenge in a society that placed great value on the extended family.
  - The prospect of having only one child and having it be a daughter can cause great despair. Thus, Chinese policy makers have been trying to overturn prejudices against women by empowering them economically and socially.
  - Incentives are offered to couples who have only one child, while those who have additional children are often penalized.
  - Population control has been effective; the one-child family is now in the majority. However, the policy has never been popular because it is unevenly enforced.

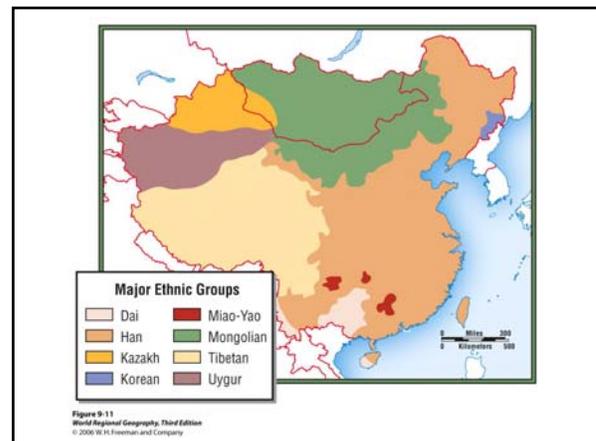


## Sociocultural Issues

- *Gender Attitudes and Population Control*
  - The number of male children significantly exceeds the number of female children. This can be because births of girls may have gone unreported, girl babies may have died in infancy because of neglect or infanticide, or some parents choose to abort female fetuses.

## Sociocultural Issues

- Indigenous Minorities
  - Despite the fact that most countries have one dominant ethnic group, cultural diversity exists.
  - Han connotes a pride in Chinese culture and a sense of superiority over ethnic minorities and outsiders.
  - Theoretically, the largest minority groups have been granted autonomous status and can manage their own affairs; however, the Han-dominated Communist party has not allowed self-government.



## Sociocultural Issues

- *Turkic-Speaking Peoples*
  - Many of these people, such as the Uyghurs and Kazakhs, remain nomadic.
  - The Beijing government has sent hundreds of thousands of Han settlers to dilute the power of minorities and rid them of “unacceptable” cultural practices and distinctive identities.
  - Although assimilation might be the long-term outcome, for now there has been a rebirth of Islamic culture among these people.



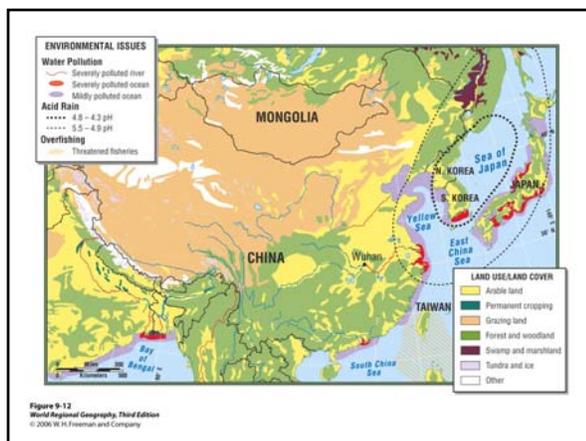
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## Sociocultural Issues

- *The Tibetans*
  - Tibetans are an impoverished ethnic minority in a territory that was divided by the Chinese government.
  - The Chinese government also suppressed the Tibetan Buddhist religion. The Dalai Lama and thousands of his followers were forced into exile in India.
  - Hundreds of thousands of Han were resettled in Tibet, where they control the economy and major cities, exploit resources, and force native Tibetans to adopt Han ways.

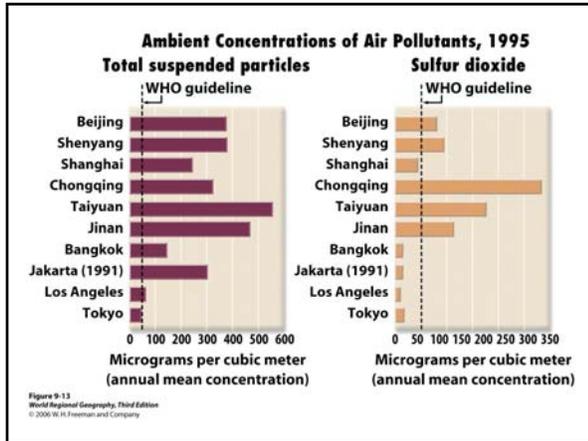
## II. CURRENT GEOGRAPHIC ISSUES C. Environmental Issues

- East Asia has a number of environmental concerns resulting from high population density, rapid economic development, poor resource management, and ineffective planning.
- China's record of improving well-being is slipping. China now has the most severe environmental problems on the planet; this could prevent future progress.



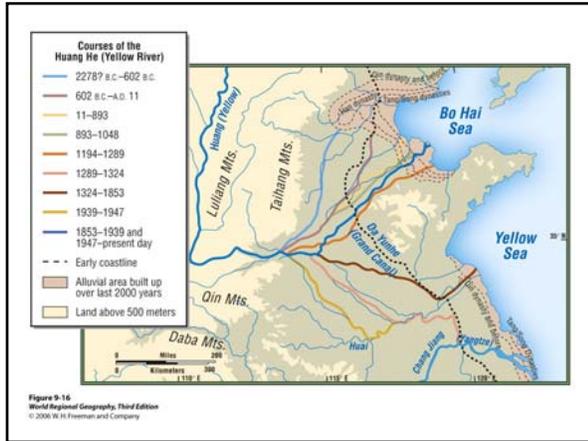
## Environmental Issues

- Air Pollution in China
  - Consumption of fossil fuels is increasing with industrialization. Coal burning is the primary cause of China's poor air quality.
  - Air pollution is converted into water pollution; acid rain is known to adversely affect many species of plants and animals.



## Environmental Issues

- Water in China: Too Much, Too Little, Polluted
- *Flooding*
  - Summer monsoons can cause catastrophic floods, requiring elaborate flood control systems; however, flood control failed repeatedly in the late 1990s.
  - Flooding is a natural phenomenon, but it is exacerbated by human activities.



## Environmental Issues

- *Drought*
  - Droughts happen every year in China. They often cause more suffering and damage than any other natural hazard; they are made worse by human activities.
  - Water shortages threaten food security and economic growth.
  - As China's population, urbanization, and water consumption grow, water demand will increase. China needs to find new sources of water or find ways to conserve.

## Environmental Issues

- *Water Pollution*
  - A significant percent of the population does not have safe drinking water or access to sanitation.
  - One-half of the groundwater supplying Chinese cities is contaminated.

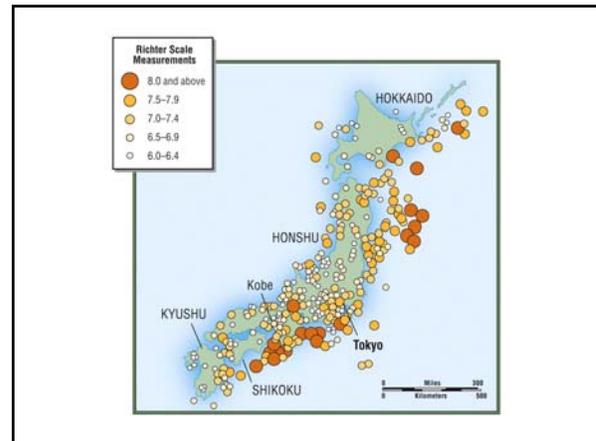
## Environmental Issues

- Environmental Problems Elsewhere in East Asia
  - All countries are experiencing water and air pollution associated with modern agriculture, industrialization, and urbanization.
  - North Korea has suffered from flooding as a result of deforestation. Crop failures related to environmental mismanagement have caused thousands to die.
  - Mongolians have always had to cope with arid conditions. In the late 1990s, thousands of acres of forests were lost to fires.

## Environmental Issues

### • Environmental Problems Elsewhere in East Asia

- Air pollution is a problem in cities in Japan, Taiwan, and South Korea. High population densities and rising lifestyle expectations make it difficult to improve environmental quality.
- Taiwan's extreme population density and high rate of industrialization have exacerbated pollution and related environmental problems.
- Japan is located along the Pacific Ring of Fire, causing it to experience volcanoes, earthquakes, and tsunamis.



## II. CURRENT GEOGRAPHIC ISSUES

### D. Measures of Human Well-Being

- More than most other regions, human well-being varies widely from country to country. Regional disparity of wealth is enormous.
- However, this disparity is somewhat misleading; socialist governments in North Korea, Mongolia, and China have attempted to provide basic necessities for their citizens.
- Assessing progress toward gender equality is difficult because patterns are irregular where figures are available.
- China has made gigantic strides since the 1970s in reducing infant mortality and increasing life expectancy.

TABLE 9.2 Human well-being rankings of countries in East Asian and other selected countries

Country (1)	GDP per capita, adjusted for PPP* in 2001 \$BLS (2)	Human Development Index (HDI) global rankings, 2002† (3)	Gender Development Index (GDI) global rankings, 2002‡ (4)	Female literacy (percentage), 2001 (5)	Male literacy (percentage), 2001 (6)	Life expectancy (years), 2001 (7)
Selected countries for comparison						
United States	34,320	7 (high)	5 (CEM = 10)	99	99	77
Mexico	8,430	55 (medium)	52 (CEM = 42)	90	94	75
East Asia						
China	4,020	104 (medium)	83	79	93	71
Hong Kong	24,850	26 (high)	26	90	97	81
Japan	25,130	9 (high)	13 (CEM = 44)	99	99	81
North Korea <sup>d</sup>	1,000	—	—	99	99	63
South Korea	15,090	30 (high)	30 (CEM = 63)	97	99	76
Macau <sup>e</sup>	19,400	—	—	92	97	82
Mongolia	1,740	117 (medium)	95	98	99	65
Taiwan <sup>f</sup>	16,100	—	—	94	94	76

\*PPP = purchasing power parity.

†The high, medium, and low designations indicate where the country ranks among the 175 countries classified into three categories by the United Nations.

‡Only 144 out of a possible 175 ranked in the world.

<sup>d</sup>Data constructed from several sources.

<sup>e</sup>2000 estimate.

<sup>f</sup>Source: Human Development Report 2003 (New York: United Nations Development Programme); 2003 World Population Data Sheet (Washington, D.C.: Population Reference Bureau).

Table 9-2  
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