

## I. The Chinese Civil War (& 1927-49)

1. When Sun Yat-Sen and Yuan Shikai died, China was left without an obvious leader.
2. Two rivals emerged to define the path of China through modern history: a follower of Sun Yat-Sen named Chiang Kai-Shek, and Mao Zedong, the leader of the communist party (a new group that had arisen in the universities of China where European ideas were taught, including *The Communist Manifesto*, by Karl Marx).
3. The civil war between these two groups began in 1927, and was made that much worse by the invasion of China by Japan during World War II. Each side not only had to fight the other, but also the Japanese invaders.
4. Fortunately for China, Japan was defeated by the United States. Then the civil war resumed as the main concern.
5. In 1949, the communists triumphed, and Chiang Kai-Shek escaped to the island of Taiwan to establish a separate government which still exists today.
6. Mao Zedong promised China a new benevolent despotism based on communism.



Chiang Kai-Shek (left) and Mao Zedong (right) were the leaders of the two sides in China's civil war (1927-49), which resulted in the triumph of Mao, and the imposition of *Maoism* on China.

## J. Communism: Utopia and Reality

1. When Karl Marx had imagined a perfect society of communism in some far distant future, he had said that such a society would have no private property. Instead it would be a society where all property is held *in common*.
2. The people of such a society, Marx said, would live by a simple rule: "*From each according to his ability. To each according to his need.*"
3. Those who subscribe to communism have accepted this as a description of an ideal world, a "utopia."
4. The history of communism, however, is devastatingly clear.
5. In reality, communism is a form of government. That means the government decides who has ability—and what they must provide, and who has needs—and what they will receive.
6. Everywhere this has been tried, from Russia to China, to North Korea and Cuba, the results have been disastrous.
7. From 1958-62 in China, Mao Zedong implemented his program of industrial progress for China on a communist model. (This specific form of Chinese communism is generally called "Maoism," after him.) He was convinced he knew how to make China great again. He ordered the people to do the kinds of work he was sure would produce results. The program was known as "The Great Leap Forward."

8. In four short years, the Chinese people, forced to live according to this plan, were decimated. The greatest problem seems to have been famine induced by prioritizing industrial projects instead of agriculture.
9. The human cost is hard to measure, because the Chinese government refuses to face the reality of what happened and allow a true accounting. Historians estimate that **45 million** people died.

K. 1978: Deng Xiaoping and the Hoped-For Restoration of China

1. Throughout the four thousand plus years of Chinese history we have studied, Chinese civilization was more advanced than those of all its neighbors and the distant civilizations such as those of the “Tai Xi” (the “Far West,” i.e. Europe).
2. The antiquity and stability of China under its long-lived system of benevolent despotism had led to a characteristically Chinese view of the world: the belief that China is the “Middle Kingdom” of the world. (As the phrase suggests, it literally means that China was—and is—considered to be the center of the universe, and the greatest civilization in the world.)
3. Following the **First Opium War (1839-42)** all that changed. China was *subordinated* by the West. In other words, it was displaced from its presumed place of primacy in the world, and dominated by others.
4. Ever since, China has been trying to restore itself to its perceived proper place in the world.
5. Mao Zedong promised that communism would provide the means. The devastation caused to China by Maoism, however, showed how horribly wrong he was. Thus, after his death, it fell upon new communist leader Deng Xiaoping to devise a new path for China.
6. His remarkable choice was to abandon the communist idea of how to organize the production and trade of a country and allow private enterprise again.
7. China is, however, still communist, in the sense that there are no democratic elections and no guarantees of individual rights. The government still has absolute power.
8. In 1989, a dramatic illustration of this reality was provided for the world to see, when protesters against communism in Beijing’s Tiananmen Square who wanted democracy were massacred by the government.
9. The Chinese have the government’s *permission* to trade with the world for now. They do *not* have the freedom to do so.
10. Can this China become the “Middle Kingdom” again? The world has a different “Middle Kingdom” now. It is the United States of America. This leads many people to wonder if the future can be one of friendship and cooperation. It will depend on whether or not America continues to help China through trade while tolerating its oppressive government at the same time, and whether or not China’s *post-Maoist* formula for success can continue to create progress.