

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

1. When Sun Yat-Sen and Yuan Shikai died, China was left without a leader.
2. Two rivals emerged: a follower of Sun Yat-Sen named Chiang Kai-Shek, and Mao Zedong, the leader of the communist party.
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.
4. Fortunately for China, Japan was defeated by the United States.
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.



Mao Zedong (right) defeated Chiang Kai-Shek (left) in China's civil war (1927-49). This is why communism started in China.

J. Communism: The Dream and the 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. This can be called the “dream” of communism. It’s just not real.
4. In reality, communism is a form of government. That means the government decides who has ability—and what they must provide, and who had needs—and what they will receive.
5. Everywhere this has been tried, from Russia to China, to North Korea and Cuba, the results have been disastrous.
6. From 1958-62 in China, Mao Zedong ordered the people to do the kinds of work he was sure would produce results. The program was known as “The Great Leap Forward.”
7. In four years of this plan, however, **45 million** people died, because the plan stopped farmers from growing enough food, and then punished them for not doing it!

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

1. Throughout the four thousand 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. This led the Chinese to believe China is the “Middle Kingdom” of the world. (This means they think it is the best 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 no longer the best; instead it was dominated by others.
4. Ever since, China has been trying to restore itself to “first place” in the world.
5. Mao Zedong promised that communism would do it. 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 a country and allow people to trade privately again.
7. China is, however, still communist. There are no democratic elections and no guarantees of individual rights. The government still has absolute power.
8. In 1989 protesters against communism in Beijing’s Tiananmen Square who wanted democracy were massacred by the government, which shows us there is still no freedom.
9. The Chinese people 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. No one knows for sure how America and China will be able to get along in the future.