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Politics and Society in Contemporary China

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Elizabeth Freund Larus

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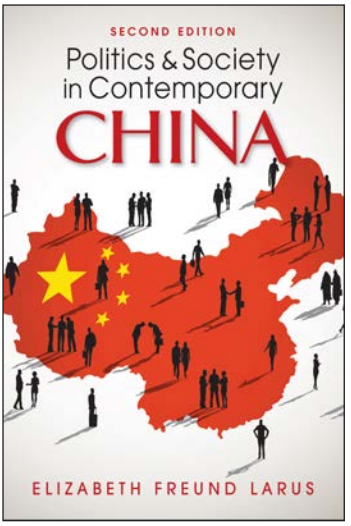

LYNNE RIENNER PUBLISHERS

1800 30th Street, Suite 314
Boulder, CO 80301 USA
telephone 303.444.6684
fax 303.444.0824

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Studying Chinese Politics

It is Saturday night in Shanghai, and the music is thumping at M1nt, one of the city's most popular nightclubs. The DJ is playing a lot of music I'm unfamiliar with, and then I hear Sia's hit "Move Your Body." Four inconceivably thin and beautiful Caucasian women in Mardi Gras–style costumes, complete with headdresses, start dancing on top of the bar. The mixed Asian-Western clientele loves it, raising glasses in a toast to the lithe and graceful young ladies. Then the women put on stilts and mingle with the crowd, posing for photographs and selfies with guests. "This is Communist China?" I silently ask myself. After a bit of dancing (on the dance floor, not on the bar), I leave, my ears ringing.

I return with a friend to the hotel, initially concerned about walking city streets after midnight. But I needn't worry. Shanghai, like most Chinese cities, is safe at night. I end up on the Bund, the fairytale-like stretch of colonial architecture along the Huangpu River, which separates old Shanghai from neon-lit Pudong across the river. The view is so stunning that I stop to drink it in. Even at this hour, Pudong is lit up like nobody's business. It is literally indescribable. The skyscrapers, the high rises, and the Oriental Pearl tower are so bright they create an optical illusion. They look as if they are across the street, not across a river, and I can touch them if I reach out just far enough. The massive crowds have left the waterfront promenade for the night, leaving a few couples here

and there and families with kids out long past their bedtime. It is beautiful and magical and illustrates the transition China has made from a poor, agricultural country devastated by war to a technologically driven marvel that boasts high-speed rail and a cashless society. It is the world's number one tourist destination.

How does one explain the vast political, social, and economic changes China has undergone over the previous forty years? How does one explain these changes to a generation of college students who have never known a China other than the urban, modern one? They will never know a China where everyone but the highest government and party officials rode bicycles as the primary means of transportation, where most urban Chinese families lived cheek by jowl in humble apartments or homes that lacked running water, and possibly heat, if they lived south of the Yangtze River. Students will not have heard that very few individuals held passports, all Chinese needed to acquire permission to leave the country, nearly everyone worked for a state firm, and private enterprises were illegal.

Today, China is the world's second-largest economy. China has more internet users than the United States has people. The Chinese Communist Party has jettisoned socialist economics for the marketplace. More Chinese work for private firms than for state enterprises, a twist on a generation ago. Millions of private entrepreneurs have joined China's Communist Party, creating perhaps the ultimate oxymoron: the capitalist communist, or the communist capitalist!

What accounts for these dramatic changes? What policies led to these changes, when were they implemented, and who made the key decisions? This book examines the dynamics of China's remarkable political, economic, and social changes. Never have so many people come so far, so fast. In 1949, when the People's Republic of China was founded, poverty and illiteracy were nearly universal, and life expectancy was only thirty-six years. Today, the poverty level has dropped to less than 1 percent of the population, literacy rates top 94 percent, and life expectancy is more than seventy-six years. Once occupied by foreign powers, China has joined those nations on the world stage of international affairs, trade, and finance. China holds the world's largest

Figure 1.1 Map of China

Source: ESRI 2008. Map by Stephen P. Hanna.

reserves of foreign currency and contributes mightily to the global economy.

Despite these advances, China is still a developing country and struggles with the problems typical of those countries. Although China has more millionaires and billionaires than at any time in its history, it is still a poor country. The average per capita income is less than $11,000 a year, and the average rural per capita income is even less.[1] Income distribution has become more unequal in recent decades as China has moved from a socialist economy to a market-oriented one. Income disparity persists between rural and urban areas and between interior and coastal areas, and life is still hard in rural areas. Rural health care, once rudimentary but widely available, has become scarce. The overwhelming majority of rural residents have no health insurance, and fees are beyond the reach of most rural residents. Poor living conditions and lack of services in

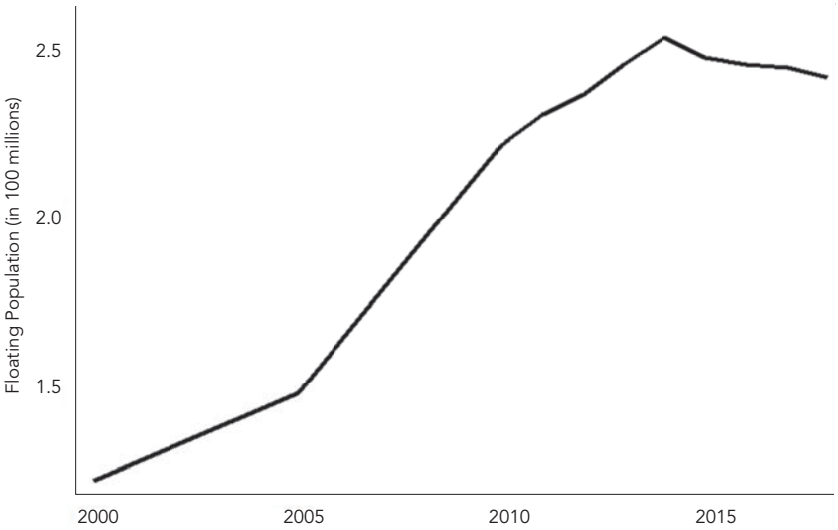
rural areas and the draw of opportunities in the cities have caused migration on a massive scale. Like an ocean tide, a number of Chinese nearly equal to the entire US population migrate seasonally to China's urban and coastal areas in search of work and then flow back home again to help with the farms (see Figure 1.2). Although these migrants provide cheap labor for construction companies and factories in the cities and coastal areas, their relocation often results in fractured families, the spread of disease, and sometimes increased crime.

Education and technology have a brighter outlook. Shanghai produces some of the best students in math and science in the world. Shenzhen, near the Hong Kong border, is China's Silicon Valley. China is producing high-speed rail, telecommunications equipment, electric vehicles, and high-tech surveillance tools such as facial recognition technology, not to mention cheaper alternatives to the Apple watch, for much of the world.

China's contemporary history makes a fascinating story. Ruled by emperors for thousands of years, China has an imperial history rich with warring kingdoms, court intrigue, overseas exploration, and foreign trade. In the nineteenth century, both domestic forces and foreign encroachment took their toll on China's imperial order. China's imperial system collapsed in the early 1900s and was replaced by a republican form of government. The new nationalist government lacked cohesion, however, and soon China descended into years of chaos in which the strong ruled and the weak submitted. Out of that chaos rose one man ultimately stronger than the others, General Chiang Kai-shek, who reunited China and restored some semblance of order. This order was shortlived because imperial Japan entered China in the early 1930s and occupied it during World War II. Forced by Japan to retreat into China's interior, Chiang's Nationalist government could only nominally govern the country during the war.

In China's vast, rural countryside, another force—Communism—was gathering strength. Under the leadership of Mao Zedong, the Chinese Communists organized the peasantry in revolution. In 1949, they succeeded in overthrowing the Nationalist government and established a new government in which a

Figure 1.2 China's Floating Population



Source: NBS of China, *China Statistical Yearbook 2019,* Table 2-3, 32.

small, elite group of Chinese Communists wielded tremendous power over the vast population. The Chinese Communists promised the destruction of the capitalist economy and class-based social system, a new order in which the workers were the masters of society, with lifelong job tenure and state-provided benefits, education and literacy for rich and poor alike, improved hygiene and public health, equality between the sexes, and peaceful foreign relations. The promise of the revolution was betrayed, however, by earth-shattering political campaigns that destroyed lives and tore China's social fabric. By the time of Mao's death in 1976, the Chinese people were exhausted.

Under a new leader, Deng Xiaoping, China jettisoned socialist economics and political campaigns and engaged in bold economic reform. By the end of Deng's life, in 1997, China was the world's fastest-growing economy and was becoming a major player on the world stage. China's economy continued this momentum into the twenty-first century, slowing its rate of growth only in recent years. An export-oriented development

model, in which China became the factory to the world, propelled the Chinese economy forward and raised living standards for the common people. In recent years, however, demographics have shifted, and China's workforce is contracting. Wages have increased, as have the costs of production, compelling some Chinese firms to move operations offshore to lower-wage countries. Some foreign firms moved operations out of China as a consequence of the novel coronavirus that infected China in 2019–2020. The virus adversely affected China's economy, although the extent and duration of the economic fallout remain to be seen. No-holds-barred economic growth also resulted in widespread and appalling economic degradation, with which China's leaders are only beginning to grapple.

At the center of contemporary China's economy, politics, and society is the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). The core leadership of the CCP has instigated all of China's economic reforms and political campaigns since 1949. This centrality of power is consistent with Chinese history. All of China's leaders, from emperors and empresses to leaders of the People's Republic of China (PRC) to the chairmen of the CCP today favor a strong central state over political competition. As in antiquity, a handful of powerful men run China. The CCP's 90 million members answer to a handful of men who sit near the apex of party power. Decisionmaking at any level remains the prerogative of the party leaders and lacks transparency. The overlap of party membership with government employment means that government at every level—national, provincial, and local—carries out CCP decisions.

There have been efforts in China, however, to make local politics more democratic. As early as the 1980s, the government implemented electoral reform by allowing villages to elect committees to make decisions on their behalf. Electoral reform has not advanced beyond the township level, however, and most Chinese elections remain indirect. The lack of opportunity for people to participate in government decisionmaking results in people having limited means of voicing their opinions. Chinese rulers since antiquity have preferred administrative petitioning instead of pluralism or litigation. Chinese citizens use this nonlegal means of resolution to

bring their grievances directly to the government rather than express themselves through elections. Although Chinese rulers like this method because it is less adversarial than fractious elections or litigation, it rarely solves petitioners' problems.

The Chinese people have another method of expressing grievances, however: participation in protests. Since the beginning of the reform era in the late 1970s, both the number and scale of public protests have sharply increased. The protesters air a variety of grievances. In the 1980s many people protested inflation, government and party corruption, and party control of civic organizations. The transition from socialism to a market-oriented economy has created winners and losers. The privatization of state-owned enterprises (SOEs) in particular has resulted in unpaid back wages, loss of benefits and pensions, and layoffs. Frustrated by their employer's treatment and their inability to reverse the trend toward privatization, former state workers have taken their grievances to the street in demonstrations. Other grievances they protest are not rooted in economics but in human rights. The Chinese government regularly violates the human rights of the Chinese people. Although China's constitution explicitly states the rights and liberties of the Chinese people, it also limits those rights when the leaders of the state feel threatened. The most egregious violations in recent years have occurred against ethnic minority groups and religious organizations. Grievances over human rights violations have grown since the ascension of Chinese leader Xi Jinping in 2012.

My goal in this book is to introduce students to the contemporary politics, economy, and society of the PRC. I leave much of China's long and colorful past to the historians and focus instead on the foundations of its contemporary politics, economy, and society.

The main theme of the book is China's dramatic transformation under the CCP. In the ninety-plus years since its creation, the CCP has become the world's largest communist party. Once hunted down and then exiled to the Chinese countryside, CCP members in 1949 overthrew the existing republic and established the world's largest communist country. Under the leadership of

Mao Zedong, the CCP rebuilt and then restructured China's economy and reformed and then revolutionized Chinese politics and society. Mao's economic reforms were just as revolutionary as the communists overthrowing the existing political order. Mao initially supported China's traditional, small-scale, "bottom-heavy" economy, in which individual households were the primary unit of agricultural and nonagricultural production. Less than a decade later, however, Mao did an about-face and socialized rural production, obliterating farm communities. Mao and the CCP also abolished socioeconomic classes in the cities by eliminating private enterprise. Deng Xiaoping would undo nearly all of this with his reforms after 1978.

Mao Zedong's political campaigns were no less radical. They were often brutal, isolating or crushing opposition to the party and causing massive suffering for the Chinese people. By the time of Mao's death in 1976, the CCP's legitimacy was in question. Despite challenges to its legitimacy, party membership continues to grow. It is virtually impossible to join the ruling and upper managerial class without being a party member. New recruits to the CCP are pragmatic. Unlike previous generations, who joined the CCP for ideological reasons, young recruits now join the party to advance their careers. But today's CCP is not their grandfather's party. The party is becoming increasingly capitalist in view and membership, necessitated by Deng Xiaoping's reforms. Beginning in 1978, Deng inaugurated a series of economic reforms that gradually jettisoned socialism for some odd variation of state-led capitalism. Out went most of the lumbering state business, and in came foreign investment in private or joint ventures. Foreign-funded businesses exploded in southern China, providing a seemingly inexhaustible supply of cheap labor from the countryside. Increasingly, many Chinese left state employment for private firms or started their own businesses. Party members even jumped into the sea of private business. The party's embrace of capitalism made it necessary to extend membership to private entrepreneurs. China's capitalists found it logical to have a seat at the economic and political table by joining the party or running for elective office. After they were seated at

the table, China's capitalists had a hand in shaping policy to support their interests, thereby changing both the nature of the CCP and the dynamics of the Chinese government.

The post–Deng Xiaoping years have brought remarkable economic growth but stunted political reform. China's economy expanded at a double-digit rate of growth for thirty years as China became the factory to the world and the world's number-one destination for foreign investment. Foreign tourists flooded China, injecting more cash into China's economy. At the same time, Chinese citizens became tourists both in and outside China as household incomes grew. Foreign cities welcomed Chinese tour groups, flush with cash, who spent more per person than tourists from other countries. Sales of luxury goods flourished in China as the Chinese nouveau riche flooded the shops of Louis Vuitton (LV), Chanel, Bulgari, Burberry, and Cartier, among others. Government officials supported the market for luxury goods by exchanging luxury goods for contracts or bribes. Approximately one-quarter of all luxury spending in China consisted of gifts purchased with state money. Chinese people embraced social technology as eagerly as they did tourism and luxury goods. Cell phones quickly became nearly universal, and China became a top market for Apple iPhone sales. Chinese entrepreneurs established e-commerce platforms to serve online shoppers.

Many of these trends continued in the twenty-first century under Xi Jinping. Household incomes rose in both urban and rural areas, and Chinese continued to travel, shop, and use social media. Foreign investment continued to pour into China, but even more Chinese money left the country in investment elsewhere, making China the world's second-largest overseas investor after the United States. China's development into a high-income country seemed certain, and China appeared to be overtaking the United States as the world's largest economy. China watchers began to notice some significant changes in the Xi years, however. The rate of economic growth, although still high compared with that of developed economies, began to slow. An aging society meant fewer workers, and China began to experience a labor shortage just a few years into the twenty-first century.

Prices began to rise, as did the cost of doing business in China. The sale of luxury goods, although still robust, began to slow as Xi began his anticorruption campaign. With prosecution hanging over officials' heads, it no longer seemed like a good idea to give luxury goods to seal a deal.

The Chinese people saw some political changes as well. Xi now called on China's state and private media to serve the party above all else. China expanded its use of artificial intelligence surveillance to reward good behavior and punish bad. Although Xi's government embraced green energy, it began to build more coal-fired power plants than any country in the world, thereby further compounding China's environmental woes. He appeared to oversee increased persecution of religious groups and ethnic minorities, particularly in Tibet and the Muslim Northwest. In foreign affairs, Xi expanded China's diplomatic space by investing heavily in less-developed countries through his new Silk Road initiative and by bringing into the fold some of Taiwan's former diplomatic partners. Xi strengthened and flexed China's military muscle by restructuring the military and by deploying it farther from home. Under Xi, China is more assertively pursuing its claims to the South China Sea, creating significantly more tension between China and some of its maritime neighbors.

In this book, I challenge students to understand a country other than their own that is growing in world power and influence and that will almost certainly affect their lives from either a political, economic, or military standpoint. Why is it important to study China? First, China is important to know from a comparative politics perspective. China's political system differs greatly from the democratic polities with which most students in the West are familiar. For example, China is a centralized state. Political power flows from the top down, resting in the hands of a few individuals, with the top echelon of the Communist Party at its core. As a centralized polity, China emphasizes the stability of the country over individual desires. Its most important political ideologies are conservative; that is, they seek to maintain the existing order. Political and social discourse might be welcome, but dissent is not. China has never experienced the political pluralism of Western democracies, in which civil society is organized in distinct interest groups and polit-

ical parties. Instead, the governing apparatus seeks to maintain social stability through state control. This might be done by creating a legal system that punishes behavior the state does not approve, orchestrating social peer pressure, controlling media to limit negative views, frustrating the creation of interest groups that might challenge the supremacy of the state, and controlling speech and public assembly to limit expression of dissent. Chinese leaders since antiquity prefer that citizens petition government officials rather than engage in political combat to resolve differences.

China is also a unified state where meaningful power emanates from the national government. Although China has administrative units similar to US states, Chinese subnational governments, unlike US states, do not have constitutions that allow those local governments rights distinct from the national (central) government. This unitary state keeps power concentrated at the top. Representation also differs in China from that in most Western countries. In China, citizens do not directly elect most of their representatives. Direct elections occur only at the lowest level of administration, in the villages and towns. All other elections are indirect, meaning that representatives to county, provincial, and national legislatures are selected by the elected representatives one level below. This system limits the amount of public political discourse.

Second, China is important to know from an economic perspective. China's 1.4 billion people are both producers and consumers. Under Deng Xiaoping, China became the world's factory. Its assembly lines and rural businesses stimulated China's economy, resulting in the fastest and longest economic expansion in history.[2] China's continued economic expansion is predicated on a continual flow of resources, particularly energy and natural resources. China is now the world's largest user of energy, importing much of it to feed its economic growth. In recent years, China has increasingly sought natural resources from abroad. Innumerable Chinese corporations have set up shop in Africa to take advantage of that continent's rich and vast resources. China's desire for resources has driven up the prices of commodities in recent years, affecting prices worldwide. China's consumer demand seems nearly as insatiable. Although Americans remain

the world's greatest individual consumers, the sheer number of Chinese simply drives more demand for goods. China's growing middle class is creating a huge demand for foods, commodities, and luxury goods, pushing up prices worldwide.

Students should also be familiar with China's economic development strategies. China in 1978 adopted an economic development strategy based on cheap, labor-intensive industry and its undervalued national currency (called the *yuan*). US businesses moved manufacturing jobs to China, arguing that they could not compete with other Western and Japanese firms that had moved their operations to China as well. In particular, US businesses and politicians blamed an undervalued yuan for their inability to compete. An artificially low currency makes exports cheaper, and many businesses complained that they could not compete with Chinese exports. Although China appreciated the yuan because of US pressure, the United States claims that the value of the currency is still too low. Frustrated with China's unwillingness to fulfill promises to open its markets more to US goods and services, the United States in 2018 began a series of tariff hikes on Chinese imports. China accused President Donald Trump of starting a trade war; Washington shot back that China began the economic war a long time ago by devaluing the yuan and keeping its doors closed to certain US industries. Following the onset of the trade war, some American businesses relocated back to the United States. Others moved to low-wage countries to escape the tariffs. Around the same time, China's leaders were making changes to the country's economy. Xi Jinping adopted an indigenous innovation policy that seeks to make China dominant in high-tech manufacturing by developing its own artificial intelligence, intellectual property, and proprietary technology. Western critics of the policy argue that China is developing this know-how by stealing intellectual property from Japan and the West, and that it shuts foreign firms out of participating in any of the new projects.

Despite these trade frictions, it is increasingly likely that more and more Americans will work for US, foreign, or Chinese firms in China or for Chinese firms in the United States or overseas as

a result of Chinese foreign investment worldwide. China's overseas investments have increased exponentially in recent years, and Chinese firms are well invested in the United States. With trillions of US dollars in foreign reserves, China had been investing in or outright buying US companies until the US government suspected Chinese espionage. In recent years, the US Congress has held innumerable hearings on Chinese espionage on US corporations and US government agencies, including hacks into the US Departments of Defense and Homeland Security and the Office of Personnel Management computer systems. With their investments under a microscope, many Chinese investors steered their money away from the United States.

Third, China is important from a military perspective. China is a key player in Asia, and Xi Jinping seeks to rejuvenate China's status as a powerful actor in the Asia Pacific. Reaching this goal requires that China modernize its military, particularly its navy. Beijing's large investment in its military has raised eyebrows among China watchers. A particular area of concern is the South China Sea, where China disputes sovereignty over maritime structures there and makes ambiguous claims to the waters. In recent years, Western analysts have noticed a much more aggressive stance on these claims. Chinese ships have harassed ships of Asian neighbors in disputed territories, compelling some of them to respond with live-fire war exercises, further heightening tensions in the region. China's neighbors are particularly concerned with China's naval expansion in the Asia Pacific and are strengthening military relations with the United States to counter China's rise.

Fourth, China is more engaged in the world than ever. In foreign affairs, China promotes itself as a responsible member of the global community. Its membership in international organizations (IOs) has blossomed in recent decades. China's economic rise is helping Beijing wield increasing influence in global issues. Its economic and military weight makes ignoring China impossible for Western powers. China is increasingly using its voice in foreign affairs, from nuclear proliferation on the Korean Peninsula to international intervention in Sudan and Libya to debt forgiveness for heavily indebted, poor countries. The West finds China's

engagement with nondemocratic governments, particularly in the developing world, particularly irksome. In recent years, China has cut deals with several nondemocratic governments, offering foreign aid in exchange for access to raw materials for its economic expansion. China offers this aid without conditions for political and economic reform, legitimizing nondemocratic governments in the developing world. Western governments blame China for undoing or undermining much of their work to advance democratic government in the developing world.

China's engagement is likely to challenge the US position in the world. China's increasing stature in international organizations such as the World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), and World Trade Organization (WTO) is likely to change US dominance in those organizations. China's naval expansion is calculated to test US military strength in the Asia Pacific. Although it is unlikely that China would directly confront the United States in Asia, its military modernization and naval expansion could make the United States more hesitant to intervene in any confrontation in the region as it becomes more costly.

This book introduces students to topics ranging from the rise of the CCP and contemporary political institutions to the political economy of the Mao Zedong, post-Mao, and Xi Jinping years, and from human rights issues and civil liberties to national defense and foreign relations. Chapter 2 sets the stage for the rest of the book. In it, I provide context for understanding contemporary Chinese politics and society and familiarize the reader with China's imperial system to highlight the continuity of centralized government power in China. I then trace the progression from imperial order to republican and then communist government. I also trace the rise of the CCP and explain Mao's philosophy.

China's socialist era is commonly known as the Mao years. From the creation of the PRC in 1949 until Mao's death in 1976, China was embroiled in dramatic political, economic, and social revolution. In Chapter 3, I chronicle this dramatic era. The chapter begins with the organization of the early communist government and China's socialist transition. I then focus on several life-changing political campaigns and their impact on China's

government and society. I continue with the dynamics of the post-Mao reform era. I offer the reader an introduction to Deng Xiaoping's early economic reforms (which I examine in greater depth in Chapter 6). In Chapter 3, I also introduce the reader to Deng's successors. Much of the chapter is dedicated to political reform and the consequences of the failure of political liberalization.

In Chapter 4, I examine in depth the organization of the CCP and the state governing apparatus at the national and local levels. I also examine local elections, rural politics, and prospects for China's democratization.

In Chapter 5, I explore what it is like to live in China. Chapter 5 begins with issues that directly affect individuals and Chinese families. I examine the impact of health-care reform and comment on the dire consequences for China's rural population, examining the consequences of population control policies. I follow these sections with one dedicated to civil society and social change. In this section, I chronicle and analyze the rise of China's middle class and its behavior. I also examine the current state of the arts, media, and internet in China, with special attention to government attempts to control each of these.

In Chapter 6, I also discuss ethnic minorities in China, emphasizing attempts by the central government to develop minority areas. I follow this section with one dedicated to human rights issues in China, with special reference to violation of the human rights of minorities. China's economic reforms have been no less dramatic. In Chapter 6, I chronicle the amazing economic reforms since 1978. I begin with the dramatic reform of industry and analyze the impact of the reform on Chinese workers. One of the major problems that evolved out of the reform era is the yawning rural-urban gap. In the early reform years, the Chinese government encouraged foreign investment in eastern China but failed to channel adequate state investment to rural China. As a result, millions of Chinese fled the countryside for jobs in eastern cities. Those left behind have become increasingly discontent as corrupt local officials confiscate their land for development. In the chapter, I analyze the problems associated with this rural-urban disparity and discuss the hollowing out of rural China. I examine

China's quest for energy for its continued economic development as well as the negative impact of development on China's environment, leading to China's growing environmental movement. I dedicate much of the chapter to China's growing presence in the global economy. China not only attracts significant foreign investment but invests handsomely in other countries. I examine China's efforts to build a new Silk Road, the Belt and Road Initiative, which will not only expand markets for Chinese goods but will extend Chinese influence across Central Asia into Europe. I also make special reference to growing problems in foreign trade and investment, such as violation of intellectual property rights, disputes over the value of Chinese currency, and China's foreign trade practices.

In Chapter 7, I address issues of national security and introduce the reader to China's military and national defense. I chronicle the creation and modernization of China's military and explain the structure of the military and national defense policy. I discuss recent developments in force projection, cyber warfare, China's space program, and the expansion of China's naval power. I hope students interested in this topic pursue their interest by referring to the end-of-chapter notes and many resources in the bibliography.

In Chapter 8, I look at China's foreign relations and global outreach. I begin with insight into China's foreign policymaking apparatus and then examine China's relations with various regions of the world and its major powers. China has increased its presence in every corner of the world over the previous forty years, and my goal is to illuminate the rise of China as a major world player. The chapter is rich in detail of the origins and execution of China's new Silk Road, formally known as the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Arguably the largest infrastructure project in history, the BRI expands Chinese goods and influence worldwide. I conclude the chapter with an examination of China's increasingly important role in international organizations, such as the United Nations and its associated bodies, and comment on China's efforts to remake the international system in its favor.

China is well on its way to becoming a rich and powerful nation. Chapter 9 asks the question of whether China will arrive at that destination. I raise questions about China's future and assess the challenges to China's politics and society, such as an aging society with a shrinking labor force, government corruption, and tremendous debt. In Chapter 9, I look at scenarios for the future direction of domestic politics and discuss prospects for democracy in China. Finally, I offer perspective on China's future in world affairs.

I strongly encourage students to explore the wealth of excellent scholarship available beyond this book. I have included a bibliography not only as a reference but as a guide to further reading on China's politics, economics, and society. These materials should serve the reader well because readers will likely have some encounter with China in the future. That encounter might be traveling to China, doing business with or working for a Chinese firm in the United States, investing in Chinese firms, or conducting research on China for US businesses or the US government. More and more Americans are living in China and working for US or Chinese firms. My intent in writing this book is to prepare readers for those experiences by helping them to understand China, or at least helping them to understand a world in which China is becoming an increasingly important player.

Notes

1. All dollar amounts are in US dollars throughout. International Monetary Fund, World Economic Outlook Database, October 2019.
2. Naughton, *Chinese Economy*, 2nd ed., 1.