

LEVELED BOOK • L

# China



Written by Travis Reid

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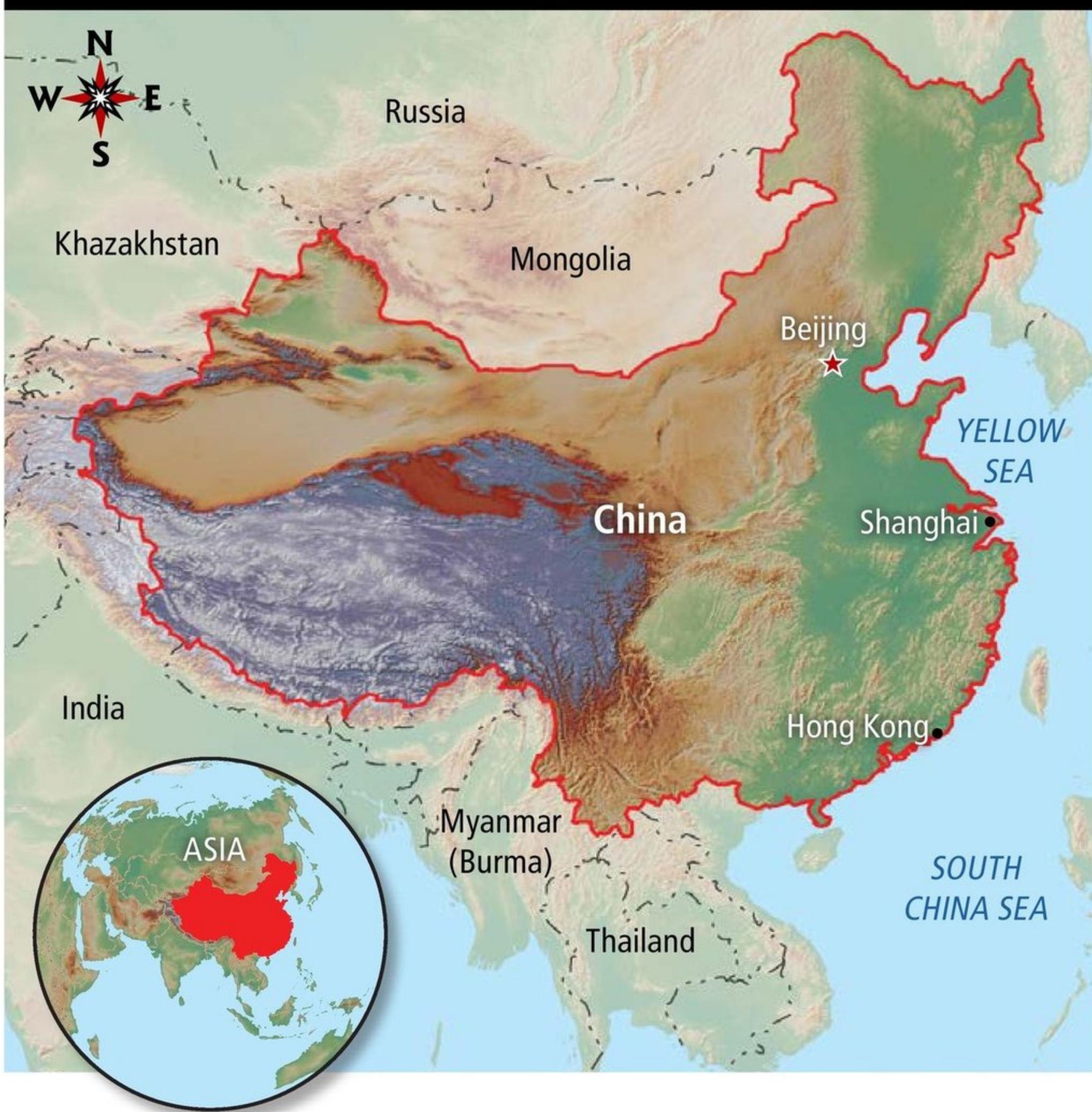
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## China



### Where Is It?

The People's Republic of China is one of the biggest countries in the world. Along with Russia, it makes up a big part of Asia. Many other countries share a **border** with China.



Beijing is one of China's largest cities.

**Beijing is the capital of China.**  
The city is more than three thousand years old. More than fifteen million people live there.



## Mandarin Characters

Here are the Mandarin characters for some words.

fire

火  
山  
森  
女

mountain

forest

woman

In Mandarin, the characters of some words look like what they mean.

## People

More than one billion people live in China. More people live in China than in any other country in the world. Seven out of ten Chinese people speak Mandarin. People also speak many other languages, including English.

Chinese writing does not use the letters of the English alphabet. Instead, it uses thousands of **characters** that stand for words or parts of words.

Some people live and work in the tall buildings in China's big cities. Others live on small farms and grow food. More people live in towns and villages than in other places.





The lion dance is thought to bring good luck to homes and businesses in the new year.

## Celebrations

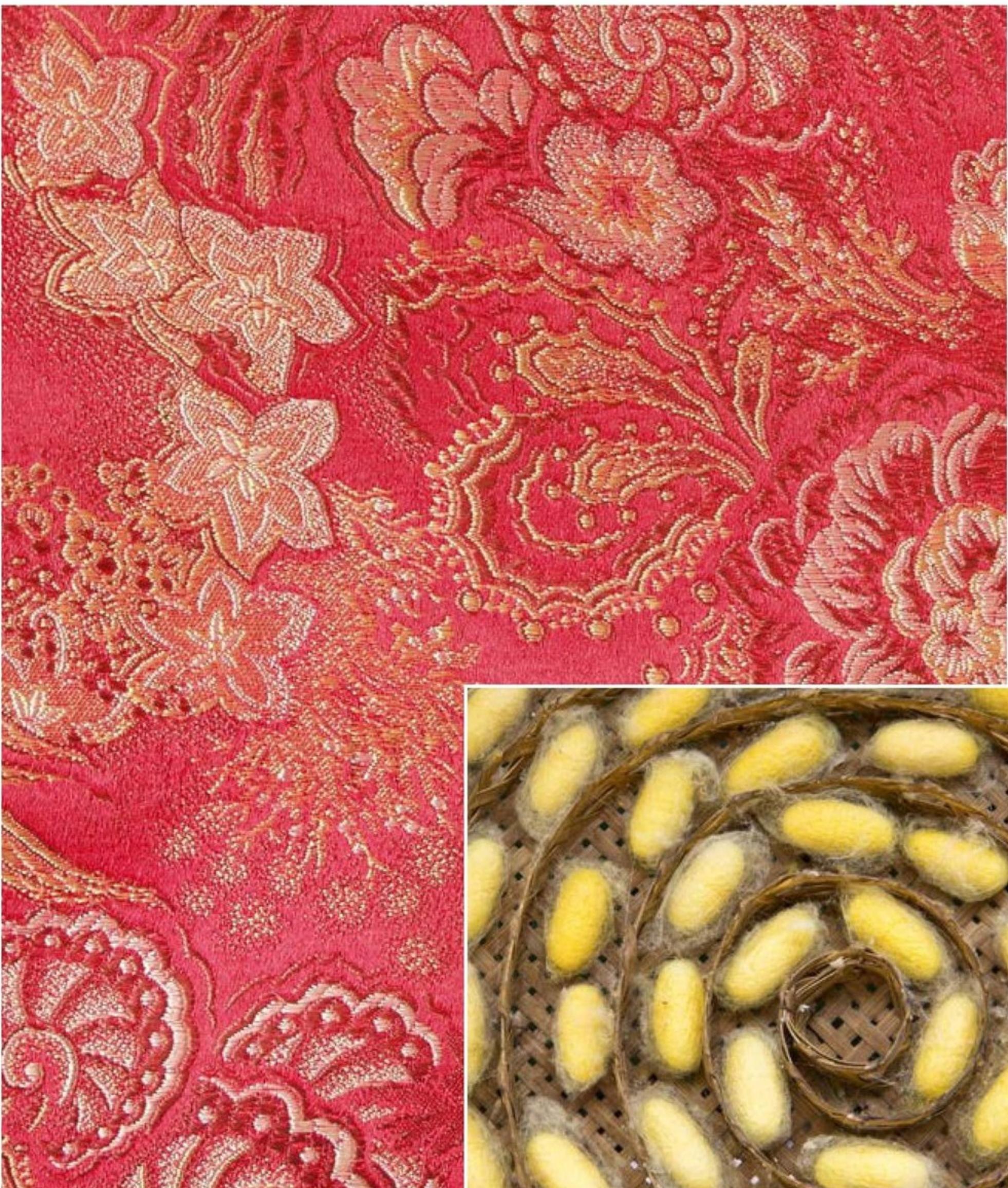
The Chinese New Year is one of the biggest celebrations in China. It takes place in late January or early February. Many cities hold parades. People dress up in colorful costumes. Some people dress up as lions or dragons. Many Chinese people believe lions and dragons bring good luck. People often shoot off fireworks, too.



The Great Wall of China is more than two thousand years old. Chinese rulers built it to keep out invaders.

## History

China has one of the oldest **civilizations** still around today. Experts think it began more than five thousand years ago. The **ancient** Chinese people created many things we still use today. They were the first to create paper. They were also the first to make gunpowder. We still use gunpowder in fireworks today.

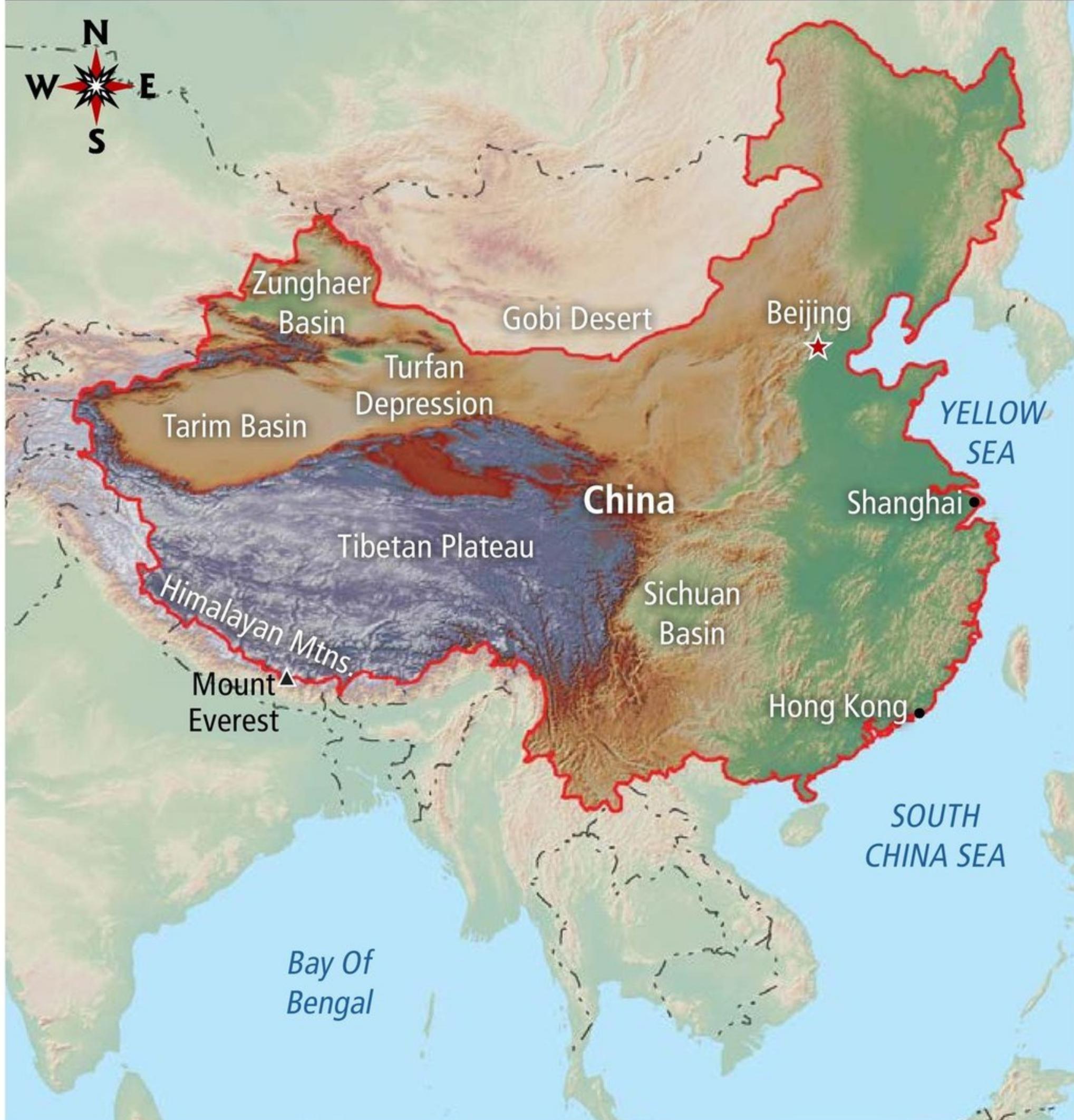


Silk cloth is made from thread taken from silkworm cocoons.



Chinese people also discovered how to make silk cloth. Long ago, people came to China from far away places to buy silk cloth. The road they used was called the Silk Road.

## China's Landforms



## Land

China is so large that it has many different types of land. The north is mostly desert. The south has some of the tallest mountains in the world.

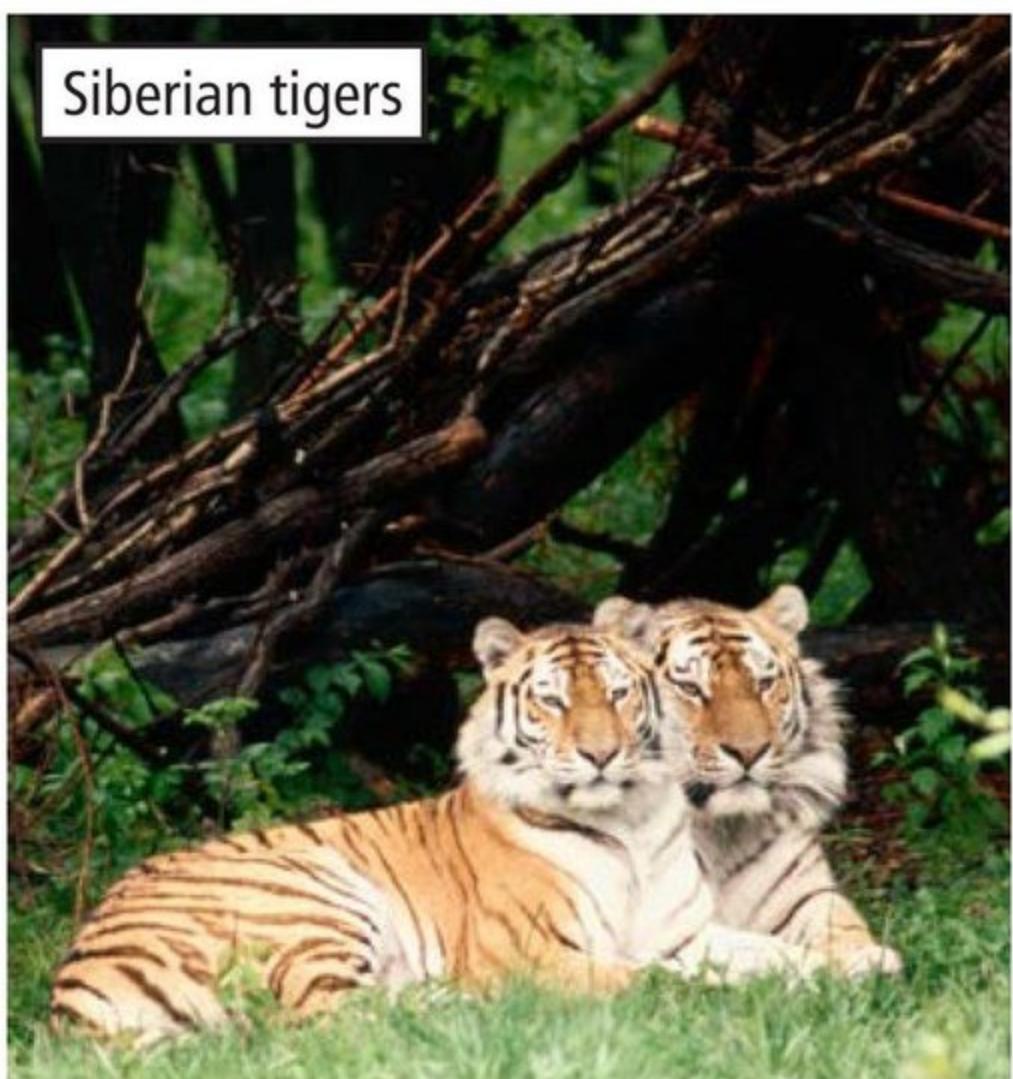


China's wetlands include areas along the Yellow River.

In other parts of China, forests cover the land. China also has large **wetlands** and flat areas covered with grass. Much of this land is used to grow food.



giant panda



Siberian tigers

## Animals

Many people know of giant pandas and Siberian tigers. Giant pandas live in **bamboo** forests in a small area in the center of China. They eat only bamboo.

Siberian tigers are among the largest cats in the world. They live in the forests in the east and the south of China. Both Siberian tigers and giant pandas are in danger of dying out. However, many people are working to protect them.



Every year at the lantern festival in Beijing, people create amazing ice and snow sculptures.

## Conclusion

China is a large country. Many different people and animals live in this land. People from all over the world come to explore China each year. If you were to visit China, what would you most like to see?



**Population:** 1,355,692,576

**Land:** 9,569,901 sq km (3,694,959 sq. mi.)

**Capital City:** Beijing

**Primary Language:** Mandarin

**Currency:** Yuan (yoo-WAHN)



Source: Central Intelligence Agency (July 2014), World Bank

## Glossary

<b>ancient</b> ( <i>adj.</i> )	from a very long time ago (p. 9)
<b>bamboo</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	a plant with long woody stems and long leaves (p. 13)
<b>border</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	the line that divides one country or area from another (p. 4)
<b>characters</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	letters or other symbols that are used in writing or printing (p. 6)
<b>civilizations</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	organized societies that have a stable food supply, government, social structure, culture, written language, and religion (p. 9)
<b>wetlands</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	areas of land that are marshy or swampy (p. 12)

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Front and back cover: Chinese students pose for a photo in front of a painting of China's Great Wall.

Title page: People celebrate Chinese New Year by going to a tea house.

Page 3: These Chinese boys are celebrating the Chinese New Year by wearing dragon hats.

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