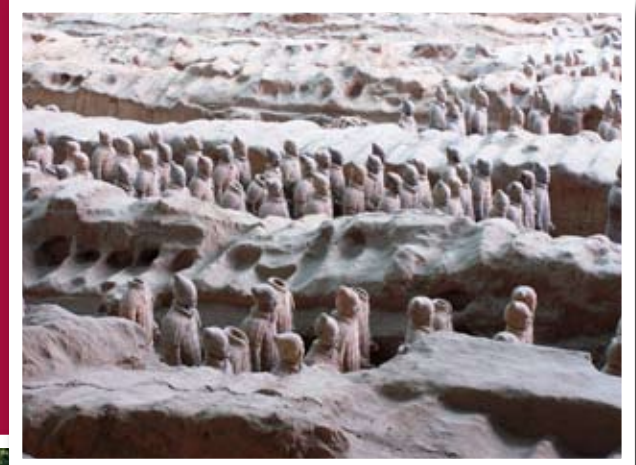
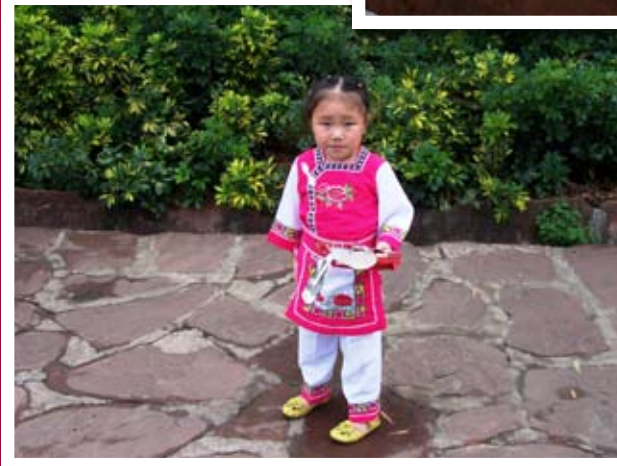


# Fun Facts about China

- ★ China has 1.3 billion people, a little over 20 percent of the world's population.
- ★ The Chinese New Year is the first day of the lunar calendar based on the cycles of the moon. The date varies from year to year but typically falls in January or February.
- ★ The twelve animals in the Chinese zodiac are the rat, ox, tiger, rabbit, dragon, snake, horse, sheep, monkey, rooster, dog, and pig, with each year represented by one of the animals. A full Chinese zodiac is twelve years. A complete calendar cycle is sixty years.
- ★ The money used in China is called *renminbi*, meaning the people's currency. The basic unit is the yuan.
- ★ Beijing will host the 30th World Congress of the International Board on Books for Young People in September 2006 ([www.cbby.org](http://www.cbby.org)) as well as the 2008 Summer Olympics. The 2006 nominees for the Hans Christian Andersen Awards from China are Zhang Zhilu and Tao Wenjie.
- ★ The Great Wall can be seen by the human eye from outer space.
- ★ Giant pandas are a national treasure in China. There are about 1,600 pandas living in the wild today.
- ★ The compass, paper, gunpowder, and printing are called the Four Greatest Ancient Chinese Inventions. Other Chinese inventions include fireworks and ice cream.
- ★ China is the homeland of tea, and its cultivation dates back two thousand years.
- ★ Mount Qomolangma (also known as Mount Everest), the highest point in the world, is located between China and Nepal.
- ★ In China, a person's family name comes first, followed by the first name. There is no middle name.
- ★ The three most popular Chinese family names are Li, Zhang, and Wang.
- ★ In ancient China, Chinese characters were written on animal bones, turtle shells, silk, or bamboo slices.



Above: The terra-cotta warriors of Emperor Qin Shi Huang (259–210 B.C.) in Xian



Left: A young girl in cultural dress inside the Yunnan Minorities Village

## Did You Know?

THE SILK ROAD was an ancient trade route established around 60 B.C.E. that continued to be used for many centuries. Silk products from China were traded along the road, hence the name Silk Road. It started in China and ended in western Europe, passing through many countries. It connected the East and the West, serving as a bridge between Eastern and Western cultures. Marco Polo (1254–1324), a famous traveler, left his mark on the road. In addition to silk products and other commercial goods, Chinese inventions such as the compass, paper, printing techniques, and gunpowder came to Europe. Meanwhile, Western music and painting, the calendar, astronomy, and other great Western achievements also entered China and became a part of the rich tapestry of Chinese culture.