

# PART ONE

## PRE-COMMUNIST CHINA

Let us begin with what you already know about modern China. Try doing this quiz before you read any further. Then check your answers and work out your score using the key on page 47.

### Quiz

Cross out the answers you think are wrong. (NB Some questions have more than one answer.)

- 1 China is smaller than/about the same size as/much bigger than Europe.
- 2 The capital of China is Hong Kong/Tokyo/Beijing/Manila/Rangoon.
- 3 Most Chinese are Communists: true/false.
- 4 The Chinese language is understood by more people in the world than any other language: true/false.
- 5 Most Chinese live in communes: true/false.
- 6 Chinese people read and write in vertical lines from the top right hand corner to the bottom left hand corner of a page: true/false.
- 7 The Chinese unit of money is the Yen/Yuan/Rupee/Dong/Won.
- 8 The Irrawaddy/Yangzi/Yellow/Ganges are rivers in China.
- 9 China possesses nuclear weapons: true/false.
- 10 All Chinese workers are paid the same wages: true/false.
- 11 The most commonly drunk beverage in China is wine/vodka/tea/beer/soup.
- 12 The most common religion practised in China is Buddhism/Christianity/Islam/Ancestor Worship/Daoism.
- 13 There are fewer motor cars per head in China than in any other country in the world: true/false.
- 14 China has the largest army in the world: true/false.
- 15 The most commonly eaten foods in China are noodles/rice/cheese/fruit/poultry.
- 16 Chinese houses are generally made of paper and wood in case of earthquakes: true/false.
- 17 Hand-shaking/kissing/bowing/hugging/clapping are the two most common forms of greeting in China.
- 18 Chinese people invented all the following except: gunpowder/the suspension bridge/spectacles/paper money/the computer.
- 19 China is the world's biggest producer of all the following except: rice/cotton fabric/millet/tea/tobacco.
- 20 Nearly a quarter of all human beings today are Chinese: true/false.

You now know – if you didn't know it already – that nearly a quarter of all the human beings alive today are Chinese. The quiz will also have shown you that the country in which they live is very different from the English-speaking countries of the West. Yet the average quiz score shows that many of us in the West don't know very much about a quarter of the human race.

It is always easier to understand other people when you know something about their history. The aim of this book is to help develop your understanding of the Chinese people by looking at the remarkable events of the past century. We will start in the year 1900 – the Year of the Rat in the Chinese 'cycle of the years' – as China was preparing to enter the twentieth century.