Guangdong Information

Overview

Guangdong’s capital and largest city is Guangzhou. It is the southernmost located province on the China mainland. Guangdong is China’s most populous province with 110,000,000 inhabitants. With an area of 76,000 sq mi (196,891 sq km) it is China’s 15th largest province. Its sub-tropic climate provides a comfortable 72°F (22°C) annual average. Cantonese is spoken by the majority of the population. Known nowadays for being a modern economic powerhouse and a prime location for trade, it also holds a significant place in Chinese history.

Guangdong Geography

Guangdong is located in the south of the country and faces the South China Sea. The long hilly coast stretches 2670 miles (4,300 km) totaling one fifth of the country’s coastline. There are hundreds of small islands located in the Zhu Jiang Delta, which is where the Dong Jiang, Bei Jiang and Guang Jiang rivers converge. Among these islands are Macao and Hong Kong, the latter of which stretches its political boundaries over a portion of the mainland as well. Hainan province, an island offshore across from the Leizhou Peninsula in the southwest, was part of Guangdong until 1988 when it became a separate province. Guangzhou and Shenzhen are both located on the Zhu Jiang River. Guangdong China borders Hunan, Jiangxi, Fujian, and Hainan provinces in addition to the Gunagzhuang Autonomous Region, Hong Kong, and Macao.

Guangdong Demographics

Guangdong China is composed of 99% Han, .7% Zhuang, and .2% Yao. The Hui, Manchu, and She make up most of the remaining .1%.

Guangdong History

Guangdong began its long transformation into the wealthy and worldly province it is today during the Qin Dynasty (221 BC – 206 BC). Prior to the Qin Dynasty, Guangdong China’s distance from the North China Plane, the center of ancient Chinese civilization, provided it with relative autonomy. During the warring period that ended the Qin Dynasty, giving way to the Han Dynasty (206 BC – 220 AD), Guangdong China enjoyed a period of independence and was known as Nanyue.

Around the turn of the millennium Buddhism had begun to find its way into China via the Silk Road as well as by sea from the south. Mouzi, whose writings in defense of Buddhism in China were among the first, is supposed to have lived in present-day Vietnam. During the Han Dynasty, Guangdong, Guangxi, and northern Vietnam composed the Jiao province.

Over the centuries due to a number of political changes and mass migrations Guangdong slowly became inundated with Han Chinese. Macau, off the coast of modern Guangdong, in 1557 became the first European settlement in China via the Silk Road as well as by sea from the south. Mouzi, whose writings in defense of Buddhism in China were among the first, is supposed to have lived in present-day Vietnam. During the Han Dynasty, Guangdong, Guangxi, and northern Vietnam composed the Jiao province.

Over the centuries due to a number of political changes and mass migrations Guangdong slowly became inundated with Han Chinese. Macau, off the coast of modern Guangdong, in 1557 became the first European settlement in China. Although Guangdong was historically a source for international trade, its relationship with the West proved to be one of the most trying. The opium trade through Guangdong China led to the Opium Wars (1839–42, 1856–60). Britain won the first war and a coalition of Britain and France won the second. The treaties of Tianjin in 1858, of which Russia and the United States were also involved, reached beyond trade relations and sanctioned the work of Christian missionaries in China.
Sun Yat-Sen, the founder of modern China, was from Guangdong. Accordingly, the Kuomintang (KMT) prepared for its great Northern Expedition, which began in 1926, in Guangdong.

**Guangdong Industry**

Guangdong, despite its prominent location for international trade, has suffered a stagnant economy due to policies put in place after the rise of Chinese communism. The reforms of Deng Xiaoping in 1978 loosened much of the communist’s economic autarchy. The reforms included a favorable tax system as retribution for to the policy-inflicted stagnation until the 1990s when the Chinese tax system was again reformed. The economy focuses primarily on manufacture and export. Its high-powered economic growth, which provides it with China’s highest provincial GDP making it one of the richest provinces in the nation, has begun to spread tepidly to many of the neighboring provinces. Its economic output totals approximately 12% of the national output. Three Special Economic Zones are located here, namely, Shenzhen, Shantou, and Zhuhai.