

# Henan Information

## Overview



Henan is located in north-central China. The capital and largest city, Zhengzhou, is situated just a bit south of a relatively wide portion of the Yellow River (Huang He). It is a mid-range province geographically, covering almost 65,000 square miles (167,000 sq km), which makes it the nation's 17th largest province. However, its population is the country's largest with over 97,170,000 people. The name Henan signifies the province's location, translating directly as "South of the River", referring to the Yellow River.

## Henan Geography

Henan Province encompasses a portion of the historic center of China, the North China Plane, centrally and in the east. The Taihang Mountain range descends over the northern part of the western border. The Qinling range dissipates about half way into central Henan, branching out at Funiu Mountain. The Dabie Mountains form the province's southerly border with Hubei. Henan also borders Shandong, Anhui, Sha'anxi, Shanxi, and Hebei provinces.

## Henan Demographics

Henan China is composed primarily of Han, who total 98.8% of the population. Hui make up another 1%. Mongol and Manchu are also present. There are no autonomous minority groups such as in other regions, but the Hui, Mongol, and Manchu are absorbed into the broader population.

## Henan History

Henan's position over the North China Plane and a central part of the Yellow River has placed it in the forefront of much of China's history. It is known as the cradle of Chinese civilization. The unconfirmed Xia Dynasty, possibly China's first dynasty, was based in Henan Province.

The Northern Wei Dynasty (386 AD – 534 AD) moved its capital to Luoyang in 493 AD. Subsequently, the construction of the Longmen Caves created what is now a World Heritage Site, as listed by UNESCO, with over 30,000 Buddhist statues and carvings, known as the Longmen Grottoes.

Kaifeng, in 364 BC, was the capital of the Wei state during the Warring States period and was known as Daling. Kaifeng primarily made its mark in Chinese history as a center of trade. It is also a popular tourist destination with its long history still visible in the Youguosi and Bo Ta pagodas.

The historic Shaolin Temple, birthplace of the Chinese martial art Kung Fu (Gongfu), is located in Henan at the base of Shaoshi Mountain of the Songshan Mountain range, one of China's five sacred mountains. The famous monk Bodhidharma (Damo) brought his ministry to Shaolin in the 5th or 6th century. He meditated in a nearby cave for nine years where, according to legend, he left the imprint of his shadow upon the wall. His teachings here gave rise to what is known in Chinese as Ch'an Buddhism, and more commonly to Westerners by its Japanese name, Zen. The Shaolin Temple and myriad other temples and schools in nearby Dengfeng, still offer traditional martial arts training today. The Shaolin Temple and the shadow of Bodhidharma are popular destinations for domestic and international tourists.

## **Henan Industry**

Henan is primarily an agricultural province, but this has not hindered its growth rate, which has kept pace with the Chinese average, around 10%, for the past couple of decades. The Yellow River and Huai He River provide the eastern, densely populated portion of the province with ample water supply for crop cultivation, especially since the construction of the Sanmen dam on the Huai He in the 1960s. The dam also provides the region with much of its energy. Coal is also important to the province's economy. Henan is a significant producer of energy, and hydroelectricity is of growing importance. Tourism in the ancient capitals of Luoyang and Kaifeng, as well as around Dengfeng contribute to the province's economy.