

1 hr 30 mins

NAME: _____

CLASS: _____

**2015 Temasek Junior College
China Studies in English
Higher 2**

9733/1

JC2 Preliminary Exams

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

Answer all questions.

Begin the answer to each new question on a fresh sheet of paper.

Write your answers on TJC writing paper. At the end of the examination, fasten your answer script securely together with your cover sheet

INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES

The number of marks is given in brackets [] at the end of each question.

Identity in modern China

Source A

As the anniversary of Japan's surrender draws near, President Xi Jinping has called for stepped-up efforts to preserve and study the history of both Japan's invasion of China and China's resistance, saying the country needs a national-level plan to coordinate efforts. Xi's vision includes more academic research, more collection and organization of historical records, and more publicity efforts to shape public discourse. The end goal, is both to "let history talk" and "use historical facts to speak." But in Xi's formulation, which emphasizes a "correct view of history," it's clear that the second function – using historical facts to spread Beijing's message – is the more important one.

The CCP has promoted a narrative in which its forces lead the resistance against Japan's invasion, and thus claim responsibility for the ultimate victory. The War of Resistance – China's victory after its "century of humiliation," during which it repeatedly lost battles to foreign armies – marks the beginning of the "great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation," what Xi calls the "China dream." Beijing also wants to emphasize the War not only as a unique Chinese experience, but as part of the shared global war against fascism. In this way, the CCP wants to remind Western countries that they fought together against Japan – and that Japan was associated with Nazi Germany. With the War portrayed as of "great significance" both domestically and internationally, all that remains is for the CCP to claim credit for that victory. For the Party, this may be the single-most important historical task. Though the CCP has been more willing to acknowledge the KMT's role recently, it can't give itself anything less than center stage in the wartime narrative, given how important the War is to China's national identity. To admit that the CCP was not, as Xi called it, "the backbone of the resistance force," would threaten the Party's political legitimacy.

- *From the Diplomat, an international current affairs magazine, 2015*

Source B

Confucianism is seen as a potential source of stable cultural identity and soothing historical continuity in a turbulent modern world. To mark Confucius 2,565th birthday, President, Xi Jinping, paid homage to the sage at an international conference convened for the occasion. "Confucianism," Xi said, is key to "understanding the national characteristics of the Chinese as well as the historical roots of the spiritual world of present-day Chinese. The "rise of China" has returned it to historical greatness, connecting the Chinese present with its past, including Confucianism. A decade ago, President Hu Jintao began to extoll China as a "harmonious society," resonant with Confucian idealism. More recently, President Xi has regularly cited classic texts to bolster his image as a learned exemplar of civilized leadership.

But these official references to Confucius, cannot counteract the much more powerful social and cultural changes sweeping across China. Rapid modernization in all of its manifestations – commercialization, urbanization, the rise of the individual – have fundamentally transformed the contours of Chinese society. A yawning generation gap has opened up. Younger people take for granted certain freedoms and are too busy competing for spots in elite universities or vying for the best jobs to attend to filial duties. Family and social bonds are fraying. Nursing homes are a growth industry. There is much talk of a "moral crisis" in a society that has lost its normative bearings as the economy and societies precipitously shatter and reconstitute. All that was solid in the Confucian past has melted into air. In the tumult of the present, Confucius has returned, but only as a vague yet unattainable desire for a more stable cultural identity.

- *Views of a US academic on Confucianism in China, 2014*

Source C

Officially, China is an atheist country but that is changing fast as many of its 1.3 billion citizens seek meaning and spiritual comfort that neither communism nor capitalism seem to have supplied. Christian congregations in particular have skyrocketed since churches began reopening since the end of the Cultural Revolution in 1976. Less than four decades later, some believe China is now poised to become not just the world's number one economy but also its most numerous Christian nation. Experts believe that number will swell to around 160 million by 2025. By 2030, China's total Christian population, including Catholics, would exceed 247 million, placing it above Mexico, Brazil and the United States as the largest Christian congregation in the world.

China's leadership worry about how the religious landscape might shape China's political future, despite the clause in the country's 1982 constitution that guarantees citizens the right to engage in "normal religious activities". As a result, a close watch is still kept on churchgoers, and preachers are routinely monitored to ensure their sermons do not diverge from what the Party considers acceptable. Many government officials viewed religion as "a sickness" that needed curing, and feared it could be used by "Western forces to overthrow the political system. It is predicted that Churches were likely to face an increasingly "intense" struggle over coming decade as the Communist Party sought to stifle Christianity's rise. "They do not trust the church, but they have to tolerate or accept it," said a church leader. "The number of Christians is growing..... (the party) do not want the 70 million Christians to be their enemy."

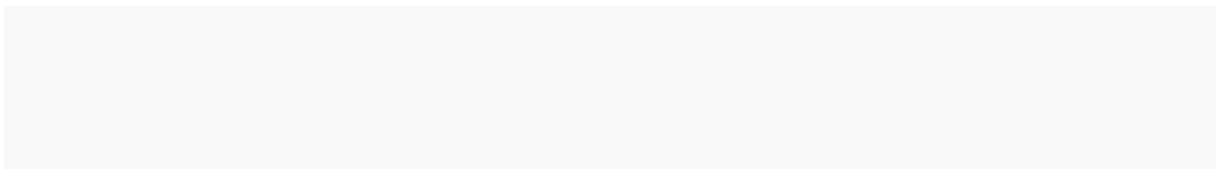
- *The Telegraph, a UK-based news daily, 2014*

Source D

Protests in Taiwan over textbook revisions which students say aim to brainwash them into accepting a "one China" view of history underscore the island's growing sense of independence from its vast neighbor and geopolitical foe. Hundreds of youths stormed the ministry of education compound and dozens were still camped out in the courtyard as students bid to repeal changes to history books. The protests reflect a surge of nationalism among Taiwan's youth, who are far more likely than their elders to identify as Taiwanese rather than Chinese. The textbooks are said to warp historical episodes such as agreements establishing Republic of China sovereignty over Taiwan after World War Two and denigrated the influence of Japan, the island's colonial ruler and traditional foe of Beijing. The protests echo last year's Sunflower Movement in which thousands of young people occupied parliament for weeks to oppose growing economic ties with China.

They also reflect the same fears about Beijing's "one country, two systems" formula under which Hong Kong, a former British colony, returned to Chinese rule in 1997 and which Beijing aims to impose upon Taiwan. Months of pro-democracy protests on Hong Kong streets last year threw that formula under a harsh light and became a huge embarrassment for Beijing.

- *Report by Reuters, an international news agency, 2015*



Source E

Much of China's historical sites have been destroyed in China, and worse yet, few people care whether they exist. When I visit the Forbidden City, the Summer Palace etc, I can barely make out the couplets inscribed on the buildings. The traditional form of the written Chinese characters means that only those with a background in the discipline can recognize the engravings. In my own self-assessment, I feel that a significant amount of my intellectual influences are not Chinese. The bookshelf in my home has nothing on Chinese culture. I have but a few lines of classical poetry to recite, I've never read the Twenty-Four Histories or the Dream of the Red Chamber, let alone Confucius' Analects. What then, makes me Chinese?

What would the poet Li Bai, of the Tang Dynasty, say if he saw modern China? China would be a foreign country to Li Bai. The language that Li Bai wrote in is not the language of today. The street signs, in simplified Chinese characters, would be incomprehensible to him. If George Washington visited today's America, he would at least be able to communicate with the country's inhabitants.

In the explicit naming of unique social interactions as a feature of Chinese culture, we can find stark examples of customs which overwrite the concept of civility. The social practice of turn-taking, of being able to wait in line without anyone cutting to the front is one that is constantly violated at home and by Chinese abroad. This Chinese civilization that we speak so often of ended a long time ago.

- *Commentary by Han Song, a Chinese writer, 2015.*

Answer all questions

- a) With reference to Source A, explain the significance of history for the Chinese government. [4]
- b) How useful is Source C depicting the power of the Communist party in regulating the growth of Christianity in China? [6]
- c) 'The Chinese civilization that we speak so often of ended a long time ago.' With reference to Sources B and E and your knowledge, assess the validity of this statement. [8]
- d) You are a social commentator on China. Using the sources and your knowledge, identify TWO most significant challenges to the establishment of Chinese identity. Suggest recommendations to overcome these challenges and critically assess the impact that your recommendations might have. [12]