# Teacher's What do you know about People's Republic of China?

Note: People's Republic of China was founded in 1949 at the end of the last fight between the Nationalist and the Communist parties of China.

1. What type of government was the People's Republic of China?
   The Chinese Community Party became the governing party of the People's Republic of China.

2. Who was the head of the newly established Chinese government?
   Mao Zhedong

3. What do you know or can guess about the social and economical situation in China in the early 1950s immediately after the war?
   After eight years of Sino-Japanese War from 1937 to 1945 and the Civil War from 1947 to 1949, China was in extreme poverty. The environment and living condition for most people were polluted and unsanitary. When People's Republic of China was founded in 1949, Chinese illiteracy rate was 80 percent. Most people had no knowledge of infectious disease, especially in the rural areas. There was an increase in snail fever and hookworm disease in the countryside.

   On the other hand, people were excited that the war was finally ended. There was a spirit to build a new country and a better society for all the people.

4. Have you heard of "barefoot doctors" in China? Who were they? What did they do? Any guesses?.

   See the poster, audio, and interview video of a former barefoot doctor on "Serving the Community" web page of the *Against the Odds: Making a Difference in Global Health* (2008)online exhibition.

   "Barefoot doctors" were the health workers who went to the China's rural area as country doctors. Many of them were college students who responded the call from Mao during Cultural Revolution of going to countryside to serve the people. They were briefly trained and could perform tasks from simple wound case to minor operations. But their main focus was preventive medicine. They practiced primarily from 1966 to 1980. During the 1960s, they comprised 90 percent of health care available in China. By the 1980s, they occupied about 4% in China's health system.