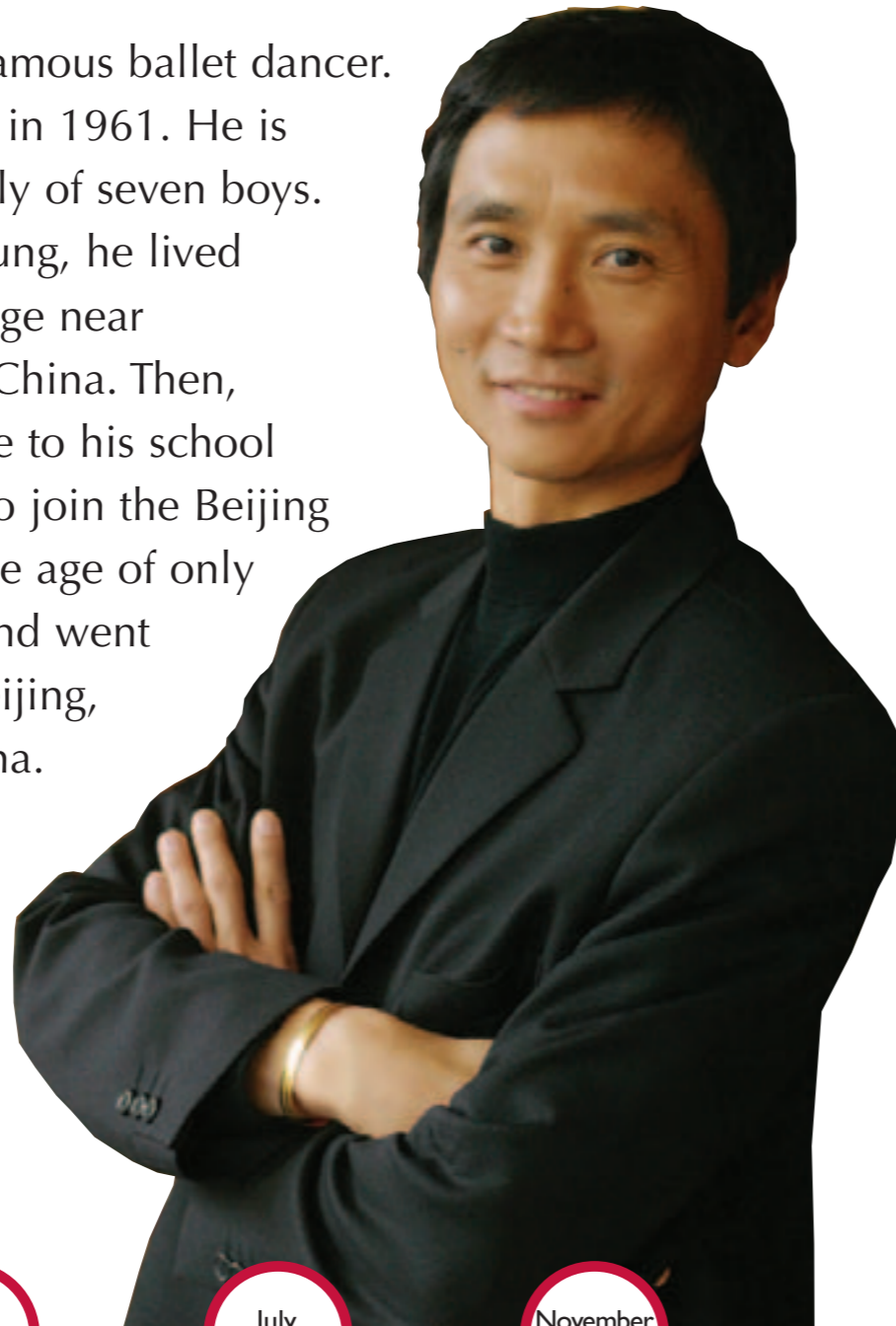


# Who Is Li Cunxin?

Li Cunxin is a world-famous ballet dancer. He was born in China in 1961. He is the sixth son in a family of seven boys. When he was very young, he lived in a poor farming village near Qingdao in northeast China. Then, one day, a visitor came to his school and chose Li Cunxin to join the Beijing Dance Academy. At the age of only 11, he left his home and went to live and study in Beijing, the capital city of China.



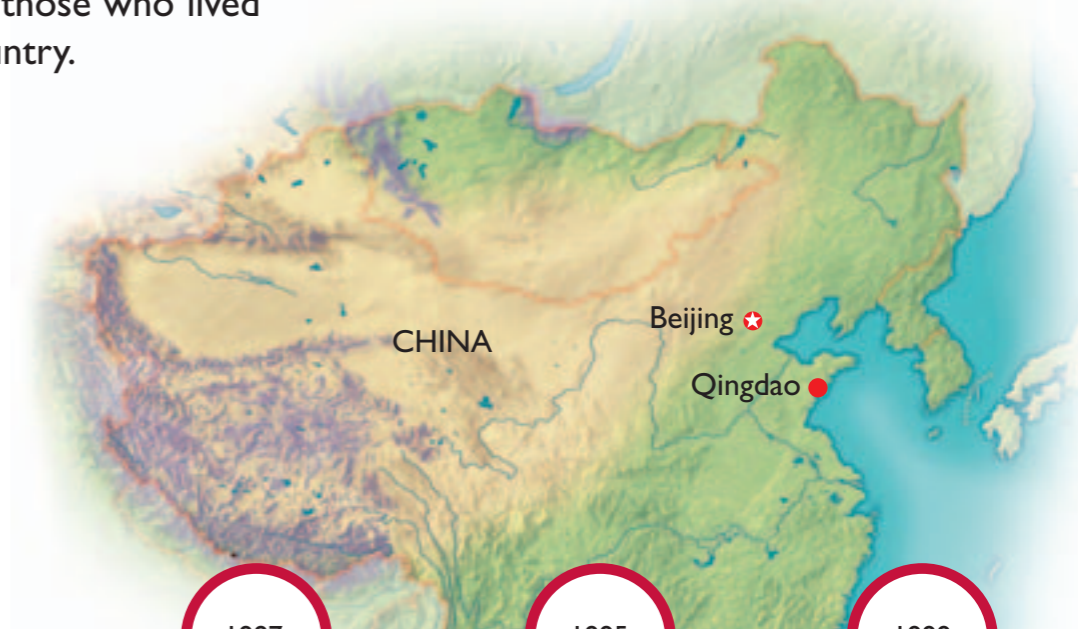
## Setting the Scene

### China in the 1960s and 1970s

Mao Zedong (right) was the leader of the Communist Party in China. China was under strict communist rule in the 1960s and 1970s. Communism is a way of organizing a country where the houses, businesses, land, and the food and other products of the land belong to the government or the community.



During this time, many people in China were poor and starving, especially those who lived in the country.



1961

Li Cunxin is born near Qingdao in northeast China.

1972

Li is chosen to attend ballet school at the Beijing Dance Academy.

July, 1979

Li is chosen to dance in the U.S.A. for six weeks with the Houston Ballet.

November, 1979

For the second time, the Chinese government gives Li permission to dance in the U.S.A.—this time for one year.

1981

Li moves to the U.S.A. By 1984, he is a leading dancer with the Houston Ballet.

1987

Li marries his Australian dance partner, Mary McKendry.

1995

Li moves to Australia and becomes a lead dancer with the Australian Ballet.

1999

Li retires from dancing to begin a career in business.