

# China Story Yearbook 2013

## CIVILISING CHINA



Edited by Geremie R. Barmé and Jeremy Goldkorn

As China becomes wealthier and more confident on the global stage, it also expects to be respected and accommodated as a major global force — and as a formidable civilisation. Through a survey and analysis of China's regional posture, urban change, social activism and law, mores, the Internet, history and thought — in which the concept of 'civilising' plays a prominent role — *China Story Yearbook 2013* offers insights into the country today and its dreams for the future.

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中国的故事

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CHINA STORY YEARBOOK 2013  
Civilising China

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中国全球研究中心

AUSTRALIAN CENTRE ON  
CHINA IN THE WORLD



ANU College of Asia & the Pacific  
Canberra, Australia

SINCE THE late nineteenth century, efforts to create modern societies in East Asia have involved redefining ancient civilisations and integrating new ideas into old cultures. The project of ‘civilising’ is not unique to the region. Worldwide, governments, businesses and educators have long tried to mould the economic, social and political behaviours of their citizens (or consumers, sometimes blending the two concepts). The Chinese Communist Party uses the expression ‘civilisation’ (*wenming* 文明) within China to improve civic standards, promote patriotism, evoke pliable cultural and political traditions and limit dissent. As China becomes wealthier and more confident on the global stage, it also expects to be respected and accommodated as a major global force — and a formidable civilisation.

白 十九世纪晚期，东亚各国当道者多在致力于重振其固有文明，企图将新思潮与旧文明融合共铸。此种文明攻略，事实上并不仅限于亚洲。循此，世上众多政权和商财团体，以及思想教育者们，均以再造国民大众（或消费阶层，两概念有时又是相互混合的）之经济、社会乃至政治的惯常行径为其所盼。在当代中国，「文明」一词含义丰富，囊括了改善社会交际规则、提升公民素质、弘扬爱国情怀，以及有机地利用无形的文化和政治遗产在推进国家现代化的同时规范异见。中国正在世界舞台上扮演愈来愈重要的角色。在中华民族复兴的过程中，人们理所当然地期盼并且实际上也正在受到众国的礼遇和尊重；于是全球在接纳和适应崭新大国同时，亦在调整其文明概念。



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# INTRODUCTION

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彭寨村

PENGZHAI VILLAGE

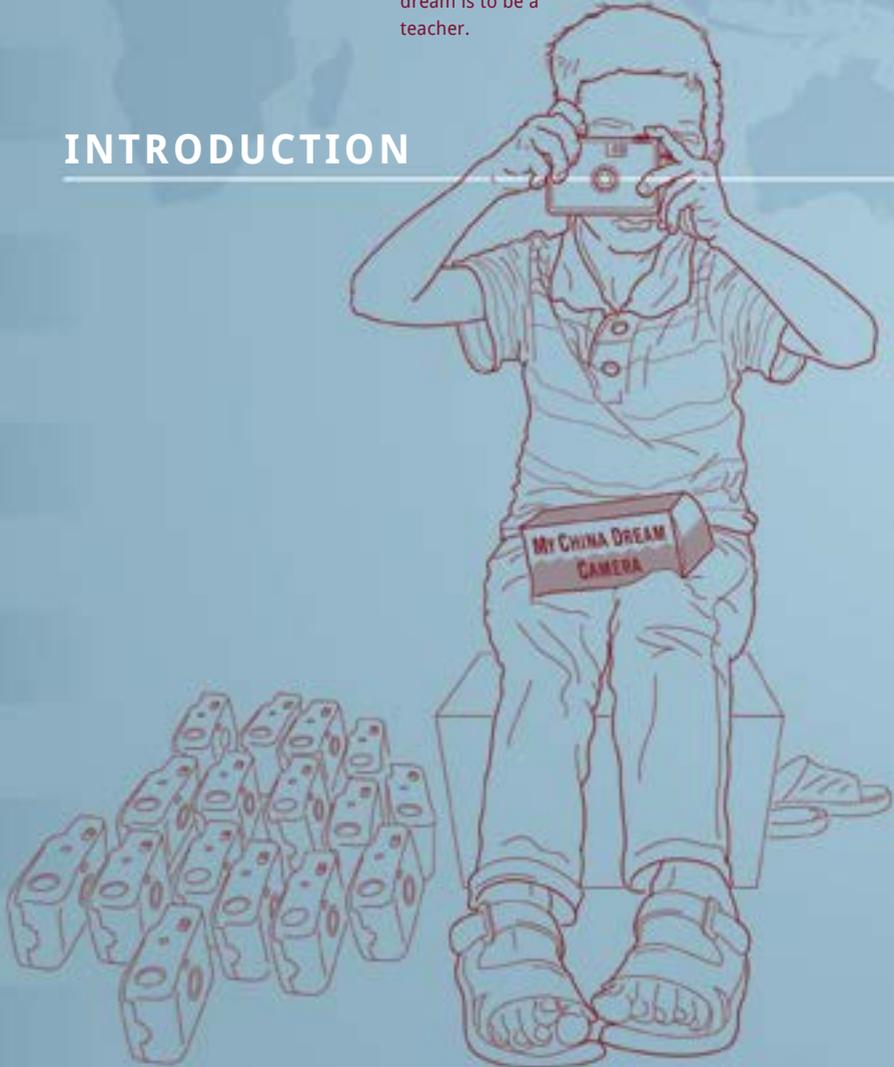
Xinhua News Agency launched a nationwide photography contest asking participants to capture 'My China Dream'; numerous middle and high schools held essay contests to see which students could write most convincingly about what the China Dream meant to them. At the Pengzhai primary school in Guizhou province, Ma Lingtong's dream is to be a teacher.

17 MAY 2013

## INTRODUCTION

# ENGINEERING CHINESE CIVILISATION

Geremie R. Barmé



This second China Story Yearbook covers the period during which the fifth generation of Chinese leaders took control of the Communist Party, in late 2012, and then the government of the People's Republic in early 2013. Xi Jinping became the new General Secretary of the Party and later President of the People's Republic, and Li Keqiang was appointed Premier.

In the years leading up to the 2012–2013 power transfer, Chinese thinkers, commentators and media activists speculated widely about the path the new leaders were likely to take. Many offered advice on what that should be. Some argued that the previous decade-long era under Hu Jintao and Wen Jiabao, although significant in many ways, had failed to confront or successfully deal with such major issues as income disparities, the environment, economic restructuring, political reform, population policy and foreign affairs. Others with a more neo-Maoist bent (whose views featured in China Story Yearbook 2012), criticised the government for what they saw as its neo-liberal agenda of rabid marketisation that, in their eyes – and for all the Communist Party's rhetoric to the contrary – betrayed the Party's traditions of frugality, following the 'Mass Line' (that is engaging with grassroots opinions and needs) and the upholding of socialist ideals.

As the new leadership took command, it became clear that it would neither lurch to the right (the more liberal end of the political spectrum)

nor return to the radical politics of the past. Instead they would continue what they celebrated as the China Way (Zhongguo daolu 中国道路), which focuses on economic reforms while maintaining stern Party domination of politics and the public sphere.



A billboard promoting a Civilised Chaoyang district, with the burned out hotel of the CCTV tower in the background. The hotel was damaged by fireworks in 2009.

Photo: Jim Gourley/rudenoan

## Transforming the National Character

Towards the end of May 2013, a Chinese tourist, a teenager, carved his name into the wall of the 3,500-year-old Luxor Temple in Egypt, sparking an uproar of outrage and self-reflection in China. China's new Vice-Premier, Wang Yang, was already so concerned about the harm badly behaved travellers were doing to China's image abroad that he had spoken about it publically just a few weeks earlier. According to a news report,

### Ding Jinhao was Everywhere

On 24 May 2013, a Sina Weibo user named 'Independent Sky Traveler' uploaded an image he said caused him to feel shame and loss of face. A graffito reading 'Ding Jinhao was here' (*Ding Jinhao dao ci yiyou* 丁锦昊到此一游) defaced an ancient frieze at the Luxor Temple complex in Egypt.

An animated discussion on social media ensued about this vandalism, which many felt had caused all of China to lose face. Within a day angry Internet users discovered that Ding Jinhao was a fourteen-year-old boy living in Nanjing. Ding's parents apologised on his behalf and asked for forgiveness from the public. But the debate raged on; within a week the original post was forwarded almost 100,000 times and generated close to 20,000 comments expressing anger, embarrassment and deep sadness.

This came amid an explosion of Chinese outbound tourism. According to the World Tourism Organization, a UN body, Chinese tourists took ten million international trips in 2000; this grew to eighty-three million in 2012. In the wake of the incident, the *China Daily* pointed out that Chinese tourists have in recent years been associated with bad manners such as spitting and littering, damaging China's image abroad.

The issue of uncivilised behaviour – particularly graffiti – by Chinese tourists is a very common problem within China as well. A few days after the Ding Jinhao story broke, Yunnan province's *Spring City Evening News* (*Chuncheng wanbao* 春城晚报) reported on the scourge of 'Chinese-style I was here' graffiti, which it said was all over the scenic areas of Yunnan. The newspaper dispatched reporters to a range of tourist destinations, where they found evidence of 'I was here' (*dao ci yiyou* 到此一游) and other types of graffiti on old buildings, trees and bamboo, toilets and tourist facilities.

Such reports regularly appear in Chinese newspapers, often couched in a mournful tone, accompanied by soul-searching. In October 2012, Shanghai's *Youth Daily* (*Qingnian bao* 青年报) reported that some of the 200,000 visitors to the Sunflower Festival during the Golden Week holiday in Zhejiang province had vandalised row after row of the flowers by scratching smiley faces on them. After every holiday, the Chinese media reports on the mountains of garbage left behind at tourist spots, and reflects on the general lack of civility and asks what can be done.



'Ding Jinhao was here' scrawled on the ancient frieze at Luxor Temple.  
Source: Sina Weibo 空游无依 @1440641483

on 16 May 2013, in the course of an official teleconference organised to promote a new tourism law:

Wang Yang emphasised that due to the popularisation of tourism among the Chinese, an increasing number of people were traveling overseas, where they are generally welcomed by the countries of the world. But some tourists display poor quality and breeding, and display uncivilised conduct such as shouting in public spaces, carving graffiti on tourist sites, crossing against the light and spitting. They're frequently criticised by the [foreign host] media, to the detriment of the image of their countrymen.

Wang Yang's solution: enhance the civilised qualities of China's citizens.

### The Origins of 'I was here' Graffiti

In the classical novel *Journey to the West* (*Xiyou ji* 西游记), the Buddha fools the Monkey King (*Sun Wukong* 孙悟空) by promising that if he can manage to leap out of the Buddha's palm, he can occupy the Celestial Throne. The overconfident Monkey King accepts the challenge, jumps into the Buddha's palm and then does an almighty somersault, tumbling through the air for thousands of miles. Finally, coming to rest at a place where five massive pillars reach into the sky, the Monkey King promptly scratches the following characters into the middle pillar to prove he was there:



Monkey King enactment encountered in southern China.

Photo: Trey Ratcliff (Stuck in Customs)

老孙到此一游 (*Lao Sun dao ci yiyou* 'Old Sun was here')

The Monkey King then takes another almighty leap back where he came from, and lands back in the Buddha's palm – or so he thinks. But to his great consternation, he looks down at the bottom of the Buddha's middle finger, where he sees the characters he himself had just carved: 'Old Sun was here'. He had in fact never left the Buddha's palm, and had merely defaced the latter's middle finger.

For nearly a century, efforts to modernise Chinese society have focused on the issues of the quality (*suzhi* 素质) and level of civilisation (*wenming* 文明) of China's population.

### *Suzhi* 素质

'*Suzhi*', 'quality' or 'human quality', is a term frequently used in defence of paternalistic rule, or what we today call the 'nanny state'. It was common during China's Republican era (1912–1949). *Suzhi* also crops up in internal debates about whether China is a civilised country. It describes a person's qualities measured in terms of behaviour, education, ethics/ambition. It is related to the concepts of 'breeding' (*jiaoyang* 教养) and 'personal cultivation' or refinement (*xiuyang* 修养). Yet it is distinct from *zhiliang* 质量, which also means 'quality', but refers to a more straightforward good-or-bad evaluation (as in food or manufactured products) and is not normally used to describe a person. People can have or lack *suzhi*, and for the narrow minded or bigoted, if a person is without *suzhi*, due to perceived innate qualities, background, appearance or personal history, nothing can be done about it.

In general, however, it is argued that a person's *suzhi* can be cultivated or trained. The concept of *suzhi jiaoyu* 素质教育 is often translated as 'quality education' but it is closer in meaning to 'moral education' or even 'a well-rounded education' (including ideological and physical education). It involves an attempt to move away from test-oriented teaching toward critical thinking, problem solving, and other analytical skills. In his work on 'quality education', the educator Yan Guocai classifies *suzhi* into eight types spanning three categories:

#### Natural quality (*ziran suzhi* 自然素质)

This is innate, and encompasses one's physical state (*shenti suzhi* 身体素质)

#### Psychological quality (*xinli suzhi* 心理素质)

This is a combination of innate and nurtured emotional and mental states

#### Social quality (*shehui suzhi* 社会素质)

This is nurtured, and encompasses one's political level 政治素质, intellectual ability 思想素质, moral nature 道德素质, vocational attainment 业务素质, sense of aesthetics 审美素质 and labour skills 劳技素质.

On the flip side, rudeness and bad behaviour are commonly considered marks of 'low quality'. As China's population increasingly encounters the world, the official media attacks bad behaviour and the government launches initiatives to 'enhance the quality of the nation'. The government frequently cites the 'poor quality' of the citizenry as a justification for delaying democratic reforms. This view extends beyond the official sphere: in a notorious blog post made at the close of 2011, the outspoken young blogger Han Han wrote:

Citizens of low quality [*suzhi di* 素质低] will not prevent the arrival of democracy, but will determine its future quality [*zhiliang* 质量]. No one wants Rwandan-style democracy.

Late-Qing thinkers like Liang Qichao (1873–1929) spoke too of the need to remake the national character (*guominxing* 国民性) so that China could slough off tradition and become a vibrant, modern state. During the Republican era, in 1934, the Nationalist leader Chiang Kai-shek launched a ‘New Life Movement’ to counter the influence of Communist ideology and to correct backward aspects of traditional public behaviour; it promoted such qualities as orderliness, cleanliness, simplicity, frugality, promptness, precision, harmoniousness and dignity and was partly influenced by Chiang’s Christian beliefs. (After Chiang was baptised in 1929, foreign observers joked that there was ‘Methodism in his madness’.)

After invading China in 1937, the Japanese attempted to impose their version of modern Asian behaviour on the country. When, in the late 1940s, the Chinese Communist Party came to power, it also quickly moved to clean up the vestiges of what it called ‘feudal’ China to create a model, new, socialist People’s Republic. Meanwhile, after Chiang’s

### The New Life Movement

(*Xin shenghuo yundong* 新生活運動)

Recent concerns over corruption, low morale, and the civic standards echo past anxieties. The plans of the Central Guidance Commission for the Building of Spiritual Civilisation for creating a civilised contemporary Chinese society share many of the efforts and goals outlined in the New Life Movement that Nationalist leader Chiang Kai-shek (1887–1975) launched in 1934. Influenced by Chiang’s newfound Christianity and decades of missionary efforts in China, the movement aimed to regenerate the nation by ‘rectifying’ and strengthening the lives of Chinese people who had been ‘polluted’ with Communism.

The Movement promoted eight qualities: orderliness, cleanliness, simplicity, frugality, promptness, precision, harmoniousness and dignity. People were to demonstrate these virtues in the key aspects of everyday life: *shi* 食 (food/eating), *yi* 衣 (clothing or dressing), *zhu* 住 (housing/living) and *xing* 行 (behaviour/action). Aiming to ‘substitute a rational life for the irrational’, Chiang also announced a long code of behaviour based on the four cardinal Confucian virtues of *li* 禮 (propriety or decorum), *yi* 義 (uprightness or righteousness), *lian* 廉 (integrity or honesty) and *chi* 耻 (the sense of shame). Propagandists and movement activists admonished people not to spit, urinate or sneeze in public. They were to adopt good table manners and not make noises when eating. They should avoid pushing and crowding, behave in an orderly manner in public, not smoke, laugh or talk loudly on boats or buses, and observe many other detailed injunctions concerning cleanliness and polite behaviour.



Ensuring the watermelon is cut just right.  
Photo: Hsing Wei

government retreated to Taiwan, campaigns to transform the citizenry continued, not always with great success, as the satirist and historian Bo Yang noted in his controversial 1985 book *The Ugly Chinaman* (*Chouloude Zhongguoren* 丑陋的中国人).

During the Maoist years (1949–1978), frequent civic campaigns aimed to transform the Chinese into a people who put the collective before the individual, production before consumption and the Party above all else. People may recall the mass destruction wreaked by the movement to ‘Destroy the Four Olds’ (*po siju* 破四旧: Old Customs, Old Culture, Old Habits and Old Ideas) during the first phase of the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976). But it is now generally forgotten that the destruction was supposed to clear the way for the people to ‘Establish the Four News’ (*li sixin* 立四新): New Customs, New Culture, New Habits and New Ideas. In other words, to create a transformed, and universally applicable, Chinese civilisation under the guiding light of Mao Zedong Thought — though the word ‘civilisation’ itself was eschewed. Meanwhile, on Taiwan, and in direct response to the Cultural Revolution on the Mainland, the authorities launched a campaign to revive Chinese culture (*Zhonghua wenhua fuxing yundong* 中華文化復興運動). It was used to promote traditional ethical norms and cultural values in ways both that harked back to the New Life Movement of the 1930s and presaged the language of revivalism that has become a feature of life on the Mainland today.

Following Mao's death in 1976 and the formal end of the Cultural Revolution with its extremist politics, civilisation began to feature in Chinese politics and public discourse once more. In his National Day speech for 1979, at the time when the Party was launching the Open Door and Reform policies, the People's Liberation Army leader Marshal Ye Jianying recalled the devastation of the Cultural Revolution years and called on the country not only to build the economy — its 'material civilisation' (*wuzhi wenming* 物质文明) — but also to reconstruct China's 'spiritual civilisation' (*jingshen wenming* 精神文明). In drawing a distinction between these two forms of civilisation, Ye's words harked back to a debate about creating modern Asian societies that had been going on for at least a century.

The Sino-Japanese word for 'civilisation', *wenming* in Chinese pronunciation and *bunmei* in Japanese, written in both cases as 文明, was coined in 1867 by the Japanese thinker Fukuzawa Yukichi (1835–1901), who had been influenced by François Guizot's 1828 *General History of Civilisation in Europe*. Fukuzawa elaborated on the concept in his book *An Outline of the Theory of Civilization*:

### Anti-spitting Campaigns

There have been numerous unsuccessful attempts to eliminate spitting in public (*suidi tutan* 随地吐痰) in the name of civilisation and modernity, and not only at the time of the New Life

Movement in the 1930s. Anti-spitting campaigns proliferated in the 1950s. Deng Xiaoping again attacked 'this unhealthy habit' in the 1980s. Beijing held public education events on the subject before the 2008 Olympics, and the city of Shenyang in the northeastern Liaoning province sponsored its own anti-spitting campaigns in 2010 and 2012.

There are parallels between the early twentieth-century efforts to stop bad habits and step out of 'backwardness' and many twenty-first-century national and provincial campaigns to promote etiquette and manners. For example, in preparation for the 2008 Beijing Olympics, the eleventh day of each month was proclaimed 'Queuing Day' (*paiduirì* 排队日), and government employees marshalled people who were not used to lining up for anything to queue in an orderly fashion. In 2009, reviving a formula first introduced in 1995, Shanghai launched a 'Seven Nos' campaign that prohibited spitting, littering, vandalism, damaging greenery, jaywalking, smoking in public places and swearing. Also, before the opening of the 2010 Shanghai World Expo, officials distributed booklets on one hundred ways to improve manners as part of the 'Let's Become Lovely Shanghainese' campaign.



Anti-spitting sign in Shanghai.

Photo: R. Reichle

What, then, does civilization mean? I say that it refers to the attainment of *both* material well-being and the elevation of the human spirit. It means both abundance of daily necessities and esteem for human refinement. Is it civilization if only the former is fulfilled? The goal of life does not lie in food and clothes alone. If that were man's goal, he would be no different from an ant or a bee. This cannot be what Heaven has intended for man. ...[T]here must be both material and spiritual aspects before one can call it civilization.

While it carries this historical and philosophical baggage, in common parlance, *wenming* is often used in a sense that is more akin to the concept of 'civility' or 'decorum'. It is this sense that is summoned by the frequent civic campaigns against 'uncivilised behavior' (*buwenming xingwei* 不文明行为) like spitting, littering, jaywalking, loitering and treading on the grass.

## Constructing Socialist Civilisation

Deng Xiaoping, the paramount leader and acclaimed 'general engineer' (*zong gongchengshi* 总工程师) of China's post-1978, post-Cultural Revolution Reform era, described spiritual civilisation as encompassing education, science, culture, communist ideology, morality, a revolutionary attitude and other abstract ideas. He warned against the dangers of 'spiritual pollution' (*jingshen wuran* 精神污染), including dangerous ideas from the West ('flies and mosquitoes' that would come in through China's Open Door) and, in 1983, unleashed a nationwide campaign against it. At the same time, the authorities promoted 'Five Behavioural Standards, Four Points of Beauty' (*wu jiang si mei* 五讲四美), with 'civility' (*jiang wenming* 讲文明) as the very first standard, defined to include courtesies such as saying 'please' and 'thank you' that had fallen out of use in the Mao era when such niceties were denigrated as bourgeois.

The authorities regarded the reintroduction of the concept of civility as crucially important for the rebuilding of public life following the long years of political infighting, fear-mongering campaigns and general brutishness. Fears that the Anti-Spiritual Pollution campaign could revive political stridency into Chinese life and possibly stifle nascent economic reforms led to leaders cutting the purge short, but the long tail of ideological rectitude and anti-Western attitudes continued to have an influence in subsequent campaigns (the 1987 attack on 'bourgeois liberalisations' and the post-4 June 1989 purge of dissidents), and do so to this day.

The Party Central Committee incorporated the new long-term campaign to promote party-ordained social principles into its 1986 'Resolution on Guiding Principles for Building a Socialist Society with Spiritual Civilisation' (*Zhonggong zhongyang guanyu shehuizhuyi jingshen wenming jianshe zhidao fangzhende jueyi* 中共中央关于社会主义精神文明建设指导方针的决议). This campaign would unfold in tandem with a gradual revival of traditional, conservative social values and authoritarian politics, creating the ideological bedrock of contemporary China.

In 1997, the Party established a Central Guidance Commission for Building Spiritual Civilisation (*Zhongyang jingshen wenming jianshe zhi-*

### Learning Etiquette



Beijing School of Etiquette.  
Photo: Sara Jane Ho

In early 2013, Hong Kong native and Harvard Business School graduate Sara Jane Ho established a Beijing School of Etiquette to teach Chinese good 'international' manners, charging US\$3,200-16,000 for classes. There are also less expensive avenues for acquiring social graces. China's Ministry of Education recently devised an etiquette curriculum for Chinese students. Lessons for younger schoolchildren cover good table manners and how to show respect for one's elders. Older students will learn about interacting politely with members of the opposite sex, introducing themselves to strangers as well as basic principles for dealing with foreigners. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has also published volumes devoted to appropriate ways to interact with foreigners, whether in China or abroad.

*dao weiyuanhui* 中央精神文明建设指导委员会), the activities of which feature throughout this *Yearbook*. Its operational arm, the Central Office of Spiritual Civilisation (known as *Zhongyang wenming bangongshi* 中央文明办办公室), is typically headed up by a deputy director of the Party's Central Publicity Department (in less media-savvy times known in English as the Central Propaganda Department). In April 2006, China's major state-run news portals released a joint 'Proposal for a Civilised Internet' (*Wenming banwang changyishu* 文明办网倡议书) in which they pledged to promote 'mainstream values' and cultivate a 'healthy online environment'. They took President Hu Jintao's 'Eight Honours and Eight Shames' (*ba rong ba chi* 八荣八耻) as their guiding principles, which were also heavily promoted by the Office of Spiritual Civilisation.

In 2007, the Commission launched a national campaign to 'Welcome the Olympics, Promote Civility, and Create a Favourable Social Environment' (*ying Aoyun jiang wenming shu xinfeng* 迎奥运 讲文明 树新风), and it continues to promote both national and local good behavior campaigns. The Office sponsors the Civilised Cities (*wenming chengshi* 文明城市) project, which assesses cities based on a wide range of 'civilised' criteria. Civilisation has traditionally been so closely identified with cities that there are now initiatives to 'send civilisation to the countryside' (*wenming xia xiang* 文明下乡), involving technological and medical assistance as well as culture and entertainment for people living in rural areas.

The Party has championed other aspects of civilisation in the wake of its Eighteenth Party Congress in 2012, turning the phrase 'ecological civilisation' (*shengtai wenming* 生态文明), for example, into an environmental buzzword. With the advent of the new leadership, a 'civilising' austerity drive was launched as well. This time around calls to fight against widespread corruption were linked to the viability of the Communist Party and the army itself and they were accompanied by dire warnings that if the cancer was not cut out, or severely limited, the People's Republic would be facing an existential crisis.

## Frugality as Civilised Behaviour

Close on the heels of Xi Jinping's calls to limit lavish government spending and corruption came a 'civilised dining table' (*wenming canzhuo* 文明餐桌) initiative to discourage over-ordering and encourage diners to clean their plates. Xi himself is said regularly to request meals consisting of a meagre 'four dishes and one soup course'.

The expression 'four dishes and one soup' (*si cai yi tang* 四菜一汤) has been in common bureaucratic parlance since the fourteenth century when the founding ruler of the Ming dynasty, the Hongwu emperor (Zhu Yuanzhang, 1328–1398), decided to do something about the excessive winning and dining among his own officials. In the early years of the Communist Party's Reform era, much too was made of limiting official meals to 'four dishes and one soup course'.

In fact, drives for frugality date back to the Party's days in Yan'an in the early 1940s. Yet due to a lack of independent supervision and sustained political will, they usually peter out after a suitable interval. None-

theless, Xi Jinping has made a point of attempting to reconcile the economic boom generated by the Reform policies with the Communist values of plain-living and frugality championed in the early years of the People's Republic under Mao. After coming to power, the new Party General Secretary signalled his intention to honour both the legacy of what is known as the Maoist 'first three decades' of the People's Republic (1949–1978) and that of the 'second three decades' of the Reform era (1978–2008) by retracing Deng Xiaoping's 1992 Southern Tour and then, half a year later, visiting Xibaipo, Hebei province, the last way station of the Communist Party under Mao as it prepared to move on Beijing in 1948.

The German sociologist Norbert Elias famously noted in his work on 'the civilising process' that curbing and guiding social behaviour is regarded by many as a mark of 'civilisation', which may be defined as the opposite of barbarity. In January 2013, Xi Jinping himself said it was necessary to 'keep power restricted in a cage of regulations' (*ba quanli guanjin*



Dongguan Times reporting on Xi Jinping's Southern Tour, 12 December 2012.  
Source: DgTime.timedg.com

### Xi Jinping's Southern Tour and Xibaipo

From 7 to 11 December 2012, newly installed Party General Secretary Xi Jinping embarked on a 'Southern Tour' (*nan xun* 南巡), evoking an imperial tradition started by Qing-dynasty emperor Kangxi (r. 1661–1722), whose first Southern Tour took him to Suzhou and Jiangning (now Nanjing) in Jiangsu province in 1684. Xi's trip was an explicit reference to a more recent Southern Tour. By stopping in Shenzhen, Zhuhai, Foshan and Guangzhou, he revisited the sites of Deng Xiaoping's Southern Tour of 1992. That tour, following the military crackdown on public protest in 1989, was devised to rebut conservative elements within the Party who sought a return to a planned economy and to build consensus on expanding market-based economic reforms. It was intended to deliver

the message, as described in a popular saying often misattributed to Deng himself, that 'to get rich is glorious' (*zhifu guangrong* 致富光荣). By most accounts, Xi Jinping undertook his trip with similar goals: to affirm his commitment to the further privatisation of public enterprise as well as to the continued role of foreign investment and market reform in the Chinese economy. He also emphasised the need to fight corruption within the Party.

On 11 July 2013, Xi visited Xibaipo, Hebei province, a place symbolising the Communist Party's pre-1978 leftist ideals. Xibaipo was the final base of the Red Army before it occupied the former imperial capital Beijing in late 1948. It was also where Mao Zedong finalised the process of 'land reform' (the often violently enforced redistribution of land previously held by wealthy, or relatively wealthy landholders to the peasantry) by issuing his 'Principles of Chinese Land Law' (*Zhongguo tudifa dagang* 中国土地法大纲).

Rebuilt after flooding during construction of the Gangnan Reservoir (*Gangnan shuiku* 岗南水库), Xibaipo is now a 'Red holy site' (*hongse shengdi* 红色圣地), a popular destination for 'Red tourism' (*hongse luyou* 红色旅游). Here, Xi gave a speech declaring 'we must never allow the Party to change its essence nor allow the Red of our mountains and lakes to fade' (*shi womende dang yongyuan bu bianzhi, womende hongse jiangshan yongyuan bu bianse* 使我们的党永远不变质、我们的红色江山永远不变色).

*zhidude longzili* 把权力关进制度的笼子里) adding this to his Eight-point Code (*Baxiang guiding* 八项规定) of official conduct. To many this sounded like a formula for even greater amounts of red tape and bureaucracy. Although the anti-corruption push was a feature of Xi's first year in power (and reached a high-water mark in late August 2013 with the trial of Bo Xilai, the Party Secretary of Chongqing and rising star until his ouster in March 2012), there was little indication from the new leader about how he might address the longstanding dilemma of one-party rule: in the absence of a free press, how effectively can a ruling party operating above the courts and parliament police itself? To date, Xi Jinping's answer has been to reinspire the Party (and nation) through greater attention to ideology, instituting stricter controls on its members and emphasising its positive Maoist traditions related to social welfare and populist politics.

During the December 2012 meeting of the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection of the Communist Party, the body entrusted with guarding the operational purity of the Party, the official Han Henglin said that the Party should try harder to win public trust. For months party leaders and writers had been warning that overly rapid reform could hasten the collapse of the political status quo. Han referred to the nervous speculation that China was facing a crisis of political confidence. The official media reported on Han's remarks:

'A recent report shows that the public's trust in the Party and the government has fallen to a critical level.'

Han said he had read *The Old Regime and the Revolution*, by Alexis de Tocqueville (1805–59), a book recommended by commission secretary Wang Qishan. The book analyzes French society before the revolution of 1789.

'The book showed that the revolution was caused by a collapse of public trust.'

## Civilising China and Civilising the World



South China International Materials City, Pinghu, Shenzhen.  
Photo: Robert S. Donovan

Since the late nineteenth century, efforts to create modern societies in East Asia have involved redefining 'civilisation' itself and imposing new ideas on old cultures. Of course, the project of 'civilisation' is not unique to the region. Worldwide, governments, businesses and educators have long tried to mould the economic, social and political behaviours of their citizens (or consumers, sometimes blending the two concepts). The Chinese Communist Party may be tireless in using the expression 'civilisation' within China to promote improved civic standards and limit dissent (perceived as harmful to society), but as the country becomes wealthier and more confident on the global stage, China also desires to be respected and accommodated as a major global force — and civilisation. In this, we hear echoes of the past.

## POLITICAL KEYWORDS OF 2012

In December 2012, the official Xinhua News Agency published a list of what it called 'Keywords in China's Sociopolitical Landscape 2012':

### Changeover of Personnel

(*huanjie* 换届)

This refers to the institution of a system for replacing party and state officials, with special reference to the Eighteenth Party Congress and the turnover in personnel. Its use emphasises the implementation of regularised political procedures in the Communist Party.

### The China Dream: the way determines fate

(*Zhongguomeng: daolu jue ding mingyun* 中国梦: 道路决定命运)

The China Dream is Xi Jinping's signature (although not new) formulation. It draws on aspirational statements made during and after the Eighteenth Party Congress by President Xi and others as part of the 'great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation'.

### Systematisation: enacting laws for the People

(*zhiduhua: li fa wei min* 制度化: 立法为民)

Xinhua noted that 2012 marked the thirtieth anniversary of the China's 1982 Constitution. It further says (in the original English) that: 'China has continued up to today with the legal concept of scientific development'.

### 'Are You Happy?'

(*xingfu: zhe shi yige zhen mingti 'ni xingfu ma?' 幸福: 这是一个真命题 '你幸福吗?'*)

According to Xinhua, this question flows from an increased focus at the Eighteenth Party Congress on people's livelihoods, the provision of medical care, the development of a social safety net, social pension insurance, and so on.

### Pure and Clean: taking it to a new level

(*'chunjiexing': tizhi xin gaodu* '纯洁性': 提至新高度)

Another signature Xi political formulation; as Xinhua put it, this consists of 'a renewed emphasis on anti-corruption and purity in the Party'.

Dynastic China was one of the world's greatest ancient civilisations, with deeply embedded cultural norms and unique forms of social organisation. As the historian Wang Gungwu recently remarked on Chinese ideas of universal values and the revival of the traditional concept of *Tianxia* 天下, 'All-Under-Heaven':

Empires stand for conquest, dominance and control, although the degree of actual control may vary from one empire to the next. *Tianxia*, in contrast, depicts an enlightened realm that Confucian thinkers and mandarins raised to one of universal values that determined who was civilized and who was not. It is not easy to separate *tianxia* from the Chinese idea of empire because *tianxia* was also used to describe the

foundation of the Qin-Han empire. By itself, *tianxia* was an abstract notion embodying the idea of a superior moral authority that guided behavior in a civilized world. The concept could be loosely applied to other universal systems of ideas, even those derived from secular philosophies or from various religions, for example Buddhism, Christianity or Islam. When secular, it could refer to recognized authority that has been legitimized to check and moderate state violence and political and military dominance. When applied to religion, it could highlight the underlying moral values behind acts of faith.

China's growing wealth is having a profound impact on the world. This takes many forms, from large-scale investment in Africa and Latin America to the global reach of Chinese tourists, to the changing consumption patterns of wealthy Chinese who are becoming world leaders in the market for luxury goods, be they cars, clothes or speciality products. As Chinese consumers acquire global tastes, they will potentially fashion and change what those tastes are: a recent Australian documentary, *Red Obsession*, shows, for example, how increasing demand in China for Bordeaux wines is influencing the fate of the famous French wine-growing region. Just as the policies of the People's Republic challenge the political and economic status quo of the post-WWII order, so do the actions of Chinese producers and consumers.

At home, the Chinese Communist Party describes its transformation of society in the language of Marxism-Leninism: a socialist values system, nationwide civilised city campaigns and the new socialist village movement that would transform the rural environment along urban lines. It also promotes usefully rejigged elements of China's political, historical and cultural heritage. Internationally, it insists on global acceptance of its particular interpretation of China's ancient culture as well as the historical narrative that the Communist Party rescued China from a political and economic decline that began in the nineteenth century and for which both Western and later Japanese imperialism must take a significant share of the responsibility. Both at home and abroad, its outlook is informed by a combination of insist-

ence on the legitimacy of its one-party system, hybrid economic practices and the ethos of state-directed wealth creation.

Wang Gungwu points out the paradox at the heart of China's renewed interest in civilisation:

Since the 1980s ... there have been two remarkable developments. There has been an avalanche of new books and essays to renew enthusiasm about Chinese culture and civilization. Underlying this stress on civilization is also an interest in the idea of *tianxia*. This is occurring in the midst of calls for a new patriotism that can be seen in efforts to arouse nationalist fervour. Some such calls are linked with the commitment to reunification with Taiwan, an echo of *tianxia yitong* [天下一统] but they are actually appeals to the modern idea of national sovereignty. However, there is more to that. After the fall of the Soviet Union, Chinese scholars have been divided between those who have renewed their Marxist interest in the capitalist roots of empire and think that empire is now disguised as globalization, and those who reject narrow definitions of the nation-state and would like the Chinese multinational republic to re-discover the ideals of shared universal values in the idea of *tianxia*.

The government of the People's Republic of China reasonably believes that the norms and behaviours of the dominant economic powers should not be regarded as the sole global standard; it argues that those of emerging (or in its case re-emerging) nations like itself are equally important. Accommodating to (official) Chinese views, standards and interpretations, therefore, broadens and enriches the existing global order and challenges it at the same time.

The old order, as represented by such Western capitalist democracies as the US, Canada, the UK, Europe and Australia, may stand in awe of China's economic prowess. Yet state socialism and its authoritarian politics are anathema to its own concepts of civilisation. The Communist Party's ongoing efforts to redefine and refine Chinese civilisation, to promote *wenming*

*Zhonghua* 文明中华, literally a civilised China, and the notion of sagacious one-party rule as an integral part of this civilising process is thus of great importance and interest to the world at large — not to mention other parts of the Sinosphere, such as Taiwan, which holds competing notions of Chinese civilisation and the role of the Communist Party in its promotion.

## The China Story Yearbook

The *China Story Yearbook* is a project initiated by the Australian Centre on China in the World (CIW) at The Australian National University (ANU). It is part of an enterprise aimed at understanding what we call The China Story (*Zhongguode gushi* 中国的故事), both as portrayed by official China and from various other perspectives. CIW is a Commonwealth Government-ANU initiative that was announced by then Australian Prime Minister, the Hon. Kevin Rudd MP, in April 2010 on the occasion of the Seventieth George E. Morrison Lecture at ANU. The Centre was created to allow for a more holistic approach to the study of contemporary China — one that considers the forces, personalities and ideas at work in China when attempting to understand any major aspect of its sociopolitical or cultural reality. The Centre encourages such an approach by supporting humanities-led research that engages actively with the social sciences. The resulting admix has, we believe, both public policy relevance and value for the engaged public.

Most of the scholars and writers whose work features in *Civilising China* are members of or associated with CIW. They survey China's regional posture, urban change, politics, social activism and law, economics, the Internet, cultural mores, history and thought. Their contributions cover the years 2012–2013, updated to September 2013; they offer an informed perspective on recent developments in China and what these may mean for the future. *Civilising China* provides a context for understanding the ongoing issues of modern China, issues that will resonate far beyond the year they describe.

The *China Story Yearbook* is produced in collaboration with the Danwei Media Group in Beijing, a research organisation that has been collecting and collating Internet and media information in and on China for CIW and this project since 2010. The chapters are arranged thematically and they are interspersed with Information Windows that highlight particular words, issues, ideas, statistics, people and events. Forums, or ‘interstices’, provide discussions on relations between the politics on either side of the Taiwan Straits, on top ten lists and official Chinese views on China’s achievements, as well as issues of social, political and cultural interest. The list of People and Personalities and the Chronology at the end of the volume provide an easy reference for words, peoples and events featured in the body of the text. Footnotes and the CIW–Danwei Archive of source materials are available online at: [thechinastory.org/yearbook/dossier/](http://thechinastory.org/yearbook/dossier/).

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## The Cover Image

The cover features four Chinese characters, read from the top right-hand corner, top to bottom. The character *wen* 文 (‘pattern’, ‘design’, ‘the written’) features a writing brush; the word *ming* 明 (‘bright’, ‘illuminated’) contains a Huawei mobile phone with an iconic image of the model People’s Liberation Army (PLA) soldier Lei Feng on its screen (the fiftieth ‘Learn from Lei Feng Day’ was celebrated on 5 March 2013). Together these words form *wenming*, ‘civilised’ or ‘civilisation’. The main vertical stroke of the next character, *zhong* 中 (‘central’, ‘middle’, ‘China’), features a high-speed train, while the word *hua* 华 (‘flourishing’, ‘embellished’, ‘China’) is in the calligraphic hand of the Tang-dynasty monk Huaisu (725–799CE). It is taken from a ‘grass-script’ version of the *Thousand-character Classic* (*Qianziwen* 千字文) written in the last year of the monk’s life.



Cover of *China Story Yearbook 2013* with calligraphy of Tang-dynasty monk Huaisu (怀素 725–799CE).  
Artwork: Markuz Wernli





**FORUM**

**DREAMS  
AND  
POWER**

## **DREAMS AND POWER**

Chinese Dreams

· GEREMIE R. BARMÉ

Civilised Tourism

· SHIH-WEN CHEN

The Leadership Transition

· GERRY GROOT

The Hu-Wen Decade and Reasons for  
Falling from Power

## CHINESE DREAMS (*Zhongguo meng* 中国梦)

Geremie R. Barmé

Xi Jinping summed up the ideals of the party-state (the Communist Party-led government of the People's Republic) as what he called the 'China Dream'. Speaking as the new President of China in March 2013, he discussed this catch-all vision in the following way (the official Xinhua News Agency translation is followed by an interpretation free of Party-speak in square brackets):

In order to build a moderately prosperous society, a prosperous, democratic, civilized and harmonious modern socialist country to achieve the China Dream of great rejuvenation of the nation, we need to achieve national prosperity and revitalization of the happiness of the people, which deeply reflects the Chinese people's dream today and is in consistence with our glorious tradition.

*[In other words: Only by pursuing economic reform to improve living standards and maintaining national stability by enforcing social harmony can China become both a wealthier country and a great power. This is what the Chinese people want and it will allow us to return to our former greatness.]*

The realization of the China Dream must rely on a China Way which is Socialism with Chinese Characteristics. The China Way does not come easy, it originated from the great practice of reform and opening up for the past 30 years and 60 years of continuous exploration since the founding of the



Department store in Beijing from the series 'Great Mall of China' 中华商城.  
Photo: Adrian Suddenly Gordon

People's Republic of China, as well as the course of 170 years of the development of the Chinese nation in modern times...

*[The China Way means a party-state that pursues constant economic transformation while maintaining state control over key industries and economic levers. We call this 'Socialism with Chinese Characteristics' (juyou Zhongguo teshede shehuizhuyi 具有中国特色的社会主义); it has been devised on the basis of the successes and failures of the Mao years, as well as on experiences of the post-Cultural Revolution Reform era. We have also learnt much about politics, economics, social harmony and Western attitudes to China since the time of the First Opium War in 1840.]*

The China Dream fundamentally is the dream of the Chinese people, the realization of the China Dream closely relies on the people's effort and in return benefiting the people... . In order to build a moderately prosperous society, a prosperous, democratic, civilized and harmonious modern socialist country and to achieve the China Dream that will see the great rejuvenation of the nation, we need to achieve national prosperity and the revitalization as well as the happiness of the people. These things profoundly reflect the dreams of the people of China today and they are in accord with our glorious traditions.

*[The Chinese can realise their individual dreams only if they also accept the common national goals devised by the Chinese Communist Party.]*

China's dreams in recent years tend to be couched in the language of revivalism, continuity with past glories and the realisation of long-held hopes. This is a characteristic of a culture that traditionally looks to the past to articulate its future: even the officially promoted goal of achieving a 'moderately prosperous society' (*xiaokang shehui* 小康社会) draws its phrasing from a classical Confucian text. The China Dream also echoes the 'American Dream' — an expression popularised by James Turslow Adams who, in his 1931 *Epic of America* spoke of 'that dream of a land in which life should be better and richer and fuller for every man, with opportunity for each according to his ability or achievement ... unhampered by the barriers which had slowly been erected in the older civilizations, unrepressed by social orders which had developed for the benefit of classes rather than for the simple human being of any and every class'.

Both the Chinese leadership and the media have previously used the word 'dream' (*meng* 梦) metaphorically to describe the country's re-emergence as a major power and other contemporary national aspirations. They celebrated the 2008 Beijing

Olympics, for example, as realising a century-old dream, and its slogan was 'One World, One Dream' (*Tong yige shijie, tong yige mengxiang* 同一个世界同一个梦想). Prior to Xi Jinping taking up the idea, various books and articles discussed what the China Dream might be. Among the most noteworthy are the People's Liberation Army Colonel Liu Mingfu's 2010 book, *China Dream: The great power thinking and strategic positioning of China in the post-American age* (*Zhongguo meng: hou Meiguoguo shidaide daguo siwei zhanlue dingwei* 中国梦: 后美国时代的思维战略定位). A professor at Beijing's National Defense University (*Guofang daxue* 国防大学), Liu employs examples from dynastic and



Logo for the 2008 Beijing Olympics.  
Source: Yanocorax

modern history to discuss the present predicament of the Communist Party, celebrates the country's 'militaristic spirit' (*shangwu jingshen* 尚武精神) and warns that corruption and too supine an approach to international affairs could undermine China's rise as a global power. There is speculation that some key themes of Xi Jinping's present program are drawn from Liu Mingfu's work; others claim that an October 2012 article by Thomas Friedman in the *New York Times* titled 'China needs its own dream' was a more direct source of inspiration.

Although Xi Jinping calls the 'Great Renaissance of the Chinese Nation' (*Zhonghua minzu weidade fuxing* 中华民族伟大的复兴) the core aim of the country's twenty-first century dream, that phrase has featured in official rhetoric for over a decade (and in Taiwan for many decades). Related exhortations urging national revitalisation such as 'Revive China' (*Zhenxing Zhonghua* 振兴中华) have been part of the official landscape for far longer. Its historical antecedents include the revolutionary Sun Yat-sen's Revive China Society (*Xingzhonghui* 兴中会). Founded in Hawaii in 1894, the Revive China Society played a



A contemporary rendering of a Feng Zikai painting: 'The heart has lofty thoughts, but one's feet are firmly on the ground'.  
Source: Wenming.cn

central role in the 1934 Republican-era New Life Campaign mentioned in the introduction to this *Yearbook*.

While the Party promotes a consensual vision for China in terms of a 'national dream', from the end of 2012, independent writers and thinkers have been speaking of other long-cherished dreams — for constitutional governance (*xianzheng* 宪政), greater freedoms, and the rule of law — that have been quashed by successive governments since the 1910s.

### Same Bed, Different Dreams

The *Southern Weekly* (*Nanfang zhoumo* 南方周末) is an influential newspaper based in Guangzhou, Guangdong province, known for its pro-reform, relatively liberal stance. It has a tradition of publishing a special editorial at the beginning of each year. In December 2012, inspired by Xi Jinping's use of the China Dream as a political concept that he said the Party would use in the years to engage and motivate the nation, a lead writer drafting the New Year's editorial for 2013 took up the theme. However, he made one critical, and controversial, addition. The draft editorial was titled 'Dream of China, a dream of constitutionalism' (*Zhongguo meng, xianzheng meng* 中国梦, 宪政梦). The local propaganda chief ordered the text changed; what readers saw was a brief, error-ridden message introducing a bland, pro-party editorial titled 'We are closer to our dream than ever'. The controversy surrounding the editorial and the crude intervention of the authorities, at a crucial phase in the country's political transition, highlighted how issues surrounding media freedom, one-party rule, individual rights and political reform were already bedeviling the new leadership.

China's media and micro-blogsphere buzzed with criticism of this interference in the mainstream media by party hacks. Petitions circulated in support of the paper, even as defenders of the intervention pointed out that all papers ultimately belong to the Party and operate at its discretion.

What enraged the editors and readers of *Southern Weekly*, however, was not the everyday reality of government censorship so much as the lack of consultation with which the censors had operated. Other journalists and liberal-leaning microbloggers supported the editors' position. The fact that a number of high-profile, ordinarily apolitical entertainers such as the actress Yao Chen joined in the criticisms amplified their impact.

On the evening of Sunday, 6 January, under pressure from the Party, the paper claimed, through its official microblog account, that contrary to online rumours the editorial had in fact been written by a newspaper staffer. Editors rebelled against this disingenuous capitulation, threatening a walkout unless the truth was acknowledged. On 7 January, they

staged a protest outside the *Southern Weekly's* offices, joined, according to online accounts, by upwards of 1,000 reporters, staff and members of the public. On the same day, the *Global Times* (*Huanqiu shibao* 环球时报) — a tabloid offshoot of the official *People's Daily* — posted an editorial characterising the protests as the isolated actions of a small group of misguided individuals spreading falsehoods and supported by traitorous dissidents inside and outside China. The authorities ordered this article to be republished widely, but in a show of solidarity with the *Southern Weekly*, a number of prominent media outlets declined to run it.

By 9 January, the incident was quietly resolved. Provincial censors made vague assurances that they would be more hands-off in the future, and journalists went back to work. Independent commentators recalled the old Chinese expression: ‘we might share the same bed, but we dream different dreams’ (*tong chuang yi meng* 同床异梦).

## Constitutionalism

The expression ‘constitutional governance’ has a century-long pedigree in Chinese political discourse. Used by commentators today, it represents a powerful challenge to the authorities, who maintain that the success of the Chinese Way depends on strong, unified one-party rule.

Following the 1911 revolution that saw the end of dynastic rule in China, a short period of democratic government was ushered in. Its demise was marked by the assassination of the Nationalist Party politician Song Jiaoren in May 1913, supposedly at the behest of his political enemies. It was an anniversary solemnly marked by Chinese public intellectuals in 2013.

Song Jiaoren's revolutionary colleague, Sun Yat-sen, is acknowledged both in China and Taiwan as the father of modern China. During the early years of the Republic, after it became evident that democratic hopes were threatened by disunity and strongman politics, Sun envisaged the new Republic of China passing through three phases of political development. Initially, there would be a necessary period of military rule (*junzheng* 军政), during which the fractious country would be unified and territorial



‘The Chinese Dream ... My Dream’. A government billboard in Taiyuan, Shanxi province.  
Source: ImagineChina

issues resolved. This was to be followed by an era of political tutelage (*xunzheng* 训政) in which a one-party state would guide the country to greater material prosperity and political maturity. Finally, China would usher in an era of constitutional governance (*xianzheng* 宪政), participatory democracy and the rule of law. When the editors of the *Southern Weekly* employed the expression ‘constitutional rule’ alongside the new official slogan about the China Dream, they were, in essence, endors-

ing political reform and calling for a curb on the power of the Communist Party. The controversy was a sign that the new leaders would confront continued pressure to follow economic reform with political reform and greater media openness — topics of debate and contestation in China since the late 1970s. In the months that followed, party leaders attempted to limit public discussion of media freedom and political pluralism, promoting instead their China Dream. On 4 April, the Chinese Academy of



Primary school students during a class exercise on how to be civilised (*jiang wenming* 讲文明). The students in the back row hold signs that say being civilised means helping other people, giving up your seat for seniors and helping the elderly cross the street.

Source: ImagineChina

Social Sciences extended research grants to scholars to study the idea of the China Dream from ‘various perspectives and in various disciplines’, while, on 17 May, the Xinhua News Agency launched a nationwide photography contest asking participants to capture ‘My China Dream’, and numerous middle and high schools held essay contests on the same theme. Despite its rhetorical echoes of the

American Dream, the China Dream does not represent any sort of ideological shift toward Western-style individualism or values. In one study of the way users of Sina Weibo talk about the China Dream, Chris Marquis and Zoe Yang of the Harvard Business School found that seventy-two percent of private Chinese citizens’ independent (‘non-propaganda-influenced’) micro-blogs viewed the China Dream as a vision for the people

as a whole. The study also found that Chinese Internet users, while admiring the American Dream’s success in uniting and guiding the American people, scorned it as too narrow, valuing only individual comfort and success.

For many citizens, however, ‘China Dream’ remains just another slogan. There are wags who joke online that the real Chinese dream is to buy into a part of the American Dream — to emigrate, or at least send your children to school in the US. As for their part, from mid-2013, the authorities began cautioning people not to allow their individual aspirations to clash with the collective dreamscape of China.



## CIVILISED TOURISM

Shih-Wen Chen

Chiang Mai — the setting of the 2012 Chinese blockbuster movie *Lost in Thailand* (*Ren zai jiongtu zhi Tai jiong* 人再囧途之泰囧) — has become a popular new destination for Chinese tourists. Despite welcoming the increase in tourist revenue, many Chiang Mai residents are appalled at the visitors' littering, spitting and other rude behaviours. It is not an unusual story.

By 2020, the number of Chinese travelling abroad is expected to rise to 100 million; China will become the fourth-largest source of overseas tourists worldwide. As with Thailand, many countries have already reaped great financial benefits from the influx of visitors from the People's Republic. But local citizens in a number of places have increasingly expressed concerns in various media regarding

the behaviour of Chinese tourists, using adjectives such as 'tasteless', 'obnoxious' and 'loud'. Chinese tourists have become so notorious that, in October 2012, the French fashion house Zadig & Voltaire announced that they would ban Chinese guests from their new luxury boutique hotel in Paris. (They quickly recanted after the Chinese public reacted with outrage.)

Wayne Arnold of the *New York Times* commented: 'The tide of travellers from China mirrors the emergence of virtually every group of overseas tourists since the Romans, from Britons behaving badly in the Victorian era and ugly Americans in postwar Europe to the snapshot-happy Japanese of the 1980s'. Aware of the negative image their citizens were projecting abroad, the Chinese

government launched a campaign for ‘civilised tourism’ (*wenming liyou* 文明旅游) in 2006, and the Party’s Central Guidance Commission for Building Spiritual Civilisation released official guidelines for travellers overseas. These range from ‘be polite and respectful’ and ‘wear appropriate clothes and don’t spit’ to ‘be quiet while eating’.

For over a century, there have been attempts to control the behaviour of Chinese going overseas. A comparison of the 2006 guidelines with a 1905 code of conduct distributed to Chinese students in Japan reveals many similarities. The early twentieth-century list included the following prohibitions: ‘Don’t spit just anywhere. Don’t urinate just anywhere. Don’t overshoot the toilet when urinating or defecating. Don’t greet friends noisily on the street, and don’t just stand around talking.’ More than half a decade has passed since the Spiritual Civilisation Guidance Commission promoted the notion of ‘civilised travel’. Yet reports of ‘uncivilised’ behaviour are multiplying. Among the list of frequently cited bad behaviours, besides littering, ‘speaking loudly’ and spitting, are ‘snatching bus seats’,

‘queue-jumping’, ‘taking off shoes and socks in public’, ‘bad temper and cursing’ and ‘smoking in non-smoking areas’.

### The Case of Taiwan

Ever since allowing group tours from the Mainland in 2008, Taiwan has become one of the most popular destinations for Chinese tourists because of proximity, shared language and cultural connections. Since 2011, Taiwan has also welcomed a limited number of individual travellers from the People’s Republic. According to the Taiwan Straits Tourism Association, 2.6 million visitors from the Mainland came in 2012, up 45 percent from 2011.

Representatives from both sides of the Taiwan Straits are discussing the possibility of increasing the quotas for Chinese visitors from the People’s Republic to 5,000 a day for those on group tours (up from 3,000 a day) and 2,000 for solo travellers (up from 1,000 a day). It’s still far from 10,000, the figure mooted by President Ma Ying-jeou during his 2008 election campaign when he argued that tourists from the Mainland, with their average daily spend of US\$300, would stimulate



Tourists from the Mainland pose right after shopping at Taipei 101, a landmark commercial centre and skyscraper in Taipei, March 2009.

Source: ImagineChina

Taiwan’s economy. According to one report, one job is created for every ten tourists who come into Taiwan, and that opens up three other employment opportunities. It is estimated that Chinese visitors will bring Taiwan approximately US\$330 million a year by 2013.

Although the financial gains are evident, some people in Taiwan are questioning whether the negative impact on the environment and quality of life there may be outweighing the

benefits. There are familiar complaints about mainland tourists shouting, queue-jumping, smoking in non-smoking zones, as well as chomping on *guazi* (瓜子, spiced watermelon seeds) during cultural performances, lacking respect for civic order, and disrupting the atmosphere and normal operations of the National Palace Museum, where they’re said to behave as if in a noisy night market. Although museum staff walk around the exhibitions holding signs requesting visitors to



**The Taipei Palace Museum.**  
Source: ImagineChina

speak softly, the tour groups treat them as if they were invisible. To cater for local visitors who do not want to squeeze through the chaotic throngs to contemplate the famed Jadeite Cabbage or other treasures, beginning on 15 June 2012, the museum extended its opening hours on Wednesday and Friday nights. No tour groups are allowed during the extended hours of operation. Some disgruntled local residents want the museum to dedicate an entire day for visitors to enjoy the

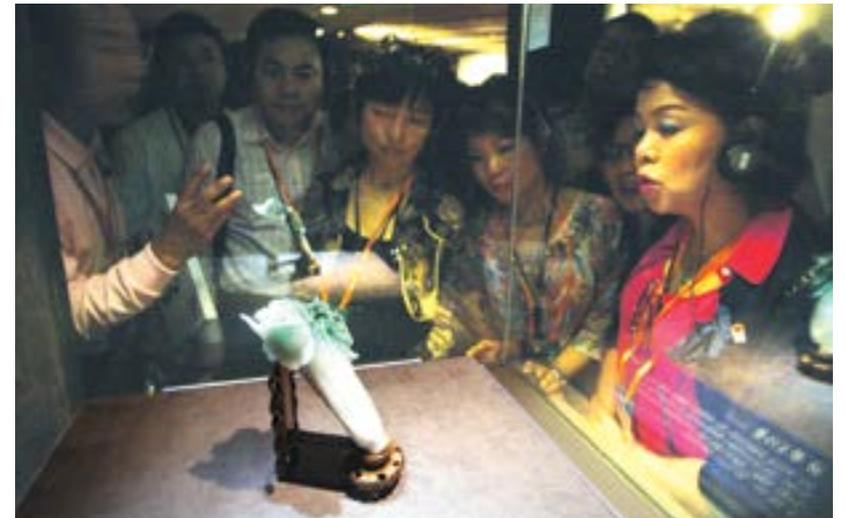
exhibits without interference from such groups. Angry Taipei resident Yang Wen-chung, echoing a popular saying from the Anti-Japanese War, 'Give me back China' (*huan wo Zhonghua* 還我中華), said, 'Give me back the National Palace Museum' (*huan wo Gugong* 還我故宮). In March 2013, when the National Palace Museum decided to raise its admission price from NT\$160 (US\$5.39) to NT\$250 (US\$8.42), people complained that the museum wanted to profit from the influx of mainland

tourists without considering whether this would create hardship for locals wanting to visit.

Many others have complained that mainland tourists have disrupted the peace and quiet that places such as Alishan or Sun Moon Lake famously enjoyed in the past. While hotel chains now operate at full capacity during peak seasons, family-owned hostels are losing business. The owner of a small bed and breakfast in Alishan that used to cater mainly to Japanese tourists is now mostly vacant because the Japanese refuse to return or to recommend it to their friends due to

the unpleasant experiences of having to tour the attractions with so many Mainlanders shoving and shouting on their cell phones or to one another as they take photos and compare shopping expenses.

Does allowing Chinese tourists to visit Taiwan promote cross-Straits understanding and improve relationships between the two regions? President Ma Ying-jeou has claimed that the tourists will be exposed to democracy and democratic values by watching Taiwanese television in their hotel rooms. Erika Guan, a student from Beijing currently living in Taipei, has said that mainland



**Tourists looking at the famed Jadeite Cabbage, Taipei Palace Museum.**  
Source: ImagineChina



Panorama image of Hung Hom MTR Station in Hong Kong, 30 July 2013.  
Photo: See-ming Lee 李思明, SML Photography, SML Universe Limited

tourists will be able to see how Taiwan society is 'really harmonious' — 'harmony' (*hexie* 和谐) being a stated goal of China's Communist leadership. Though she and President Ma are optimistic, those who interact with Chinese tourists on a daily basis tend to be less sanguine. Kao Hui-Ch'iao, a sixty-year-old volunteer at Taroko National Park stated to a reporter: 'They just aren't very civilised'. (For their part, Chinese tourists reportedly find Taiwan 'more civilised'.) Taiwanese have been shocked to see Chinese tourists carving their names and more on agave plants inside a botanical garden in Taitung City, into trees at a Buddhist temple and leaving graffiti on one of the famous Yeliu rock formations on Taiwan's northern coast. Although the Taiwan media has reported on the phenomenon of Chinese vis-

itors buying many tins of infant milk formula to take back home, the phrase Chinese 'locusts' (*huangchong* 蝗虫) has not caught on in Taiwan as it has in Hong Kong. There, more than 12,500 outraged people concerned about a milk powder shortage signed a petition to the White House entitled 'Baby Hunger Outbreak in Hong Kong, International Aid Requested'. Hong Kong mothers assert that infant milk powder has become so scarce they must travel to more remote areas to obtain this basic necessity.

While there have been calls to suspend the multiple-entry permit scheme for individual mainland tourists to prevent smugglers from coming into Hong Kong to purchase goods to sell back in China at exorbitant prices, National People's Congress deputy

Ambrose Lee Siu-kwong, Hong Kong's former security chief, said he 'hoped Hong Kong could remain an open city that welcomed travellers'. However, the baby milk controversy is not the only contentious issue. Conflicts have arisen here too over incidents of unacceptable behaviour. Several widely circulated Internet videos and media reports document disputes between Chinese tourists and Hong Kong residents. In these, Hong Kong residents are seen reprimanding Chinese visitors for behaviour such as allowing their children to eat on the Metropolitan Rapid Transit system (against the rules), or allowing their children to urinate in a bottle in a restaurant or defecate on the road. With anti-Mainland

sentiment rising in Hong Kong, officials worry about the loss of revenue should the Chinese tourists spend their money elsewhere.

Most places regard the new tourists as a mixed blessing. The balance between economic gain and 'quality of life' is a delicate one. Harvey Dzodin warns that the image of the 'ugly Chinese' may even wreck the nation's soft power efforts. However, as the *China Youth Daily* observes, the 'uncivilised behaviour of many Chinese people cannot be eradicated in just a few days. It needs long-term efforts.'



## THE LEADERSHIP TRANSITION

Gerry Groot

The most important political event in China in 2012 was the Eighteenth Party Congress of the Chinese Communist Party (*Zhongguo gongchandang dishibaci quanguo daibiao dahui* 中国共产党第十八次全国代表大会). Meeting from 8 to 14 November, it marked the official transition of leadership from Hu Jintao and Wen Jiabao to a younger and differently qualified ‘fifth generation’ headed by Xi Jinping and Li Keqiang. As China is a party-state in which party positions normally trump any other official ones, this meant that in March 2013, these party leaders would automatically take up equivalent positions in the government when the Twelfth National Peoples’ Congress (NPC) (*Quanguo renmin daibiao dahui* 全国人民代表大会) convened — making the

Party Congress a far more significant event than the NPC, although the latter may be referred to as ‘China’s parliament’.

Because of this significance, party officials go to immense trouble to settle most matters relating to the leadership transition as early as possible through a complex series of internal discussions and vetting. As a result, it has become possible to predict who is likely to be promoted and to what level with a high degree of confidence. Yet the process by which the final selections of candidates to the highest bodies are made remains opaque. It may be influenced by the preferences of different factions and current leaders as well as those of other party power brokers including those who are retired.



The Great Hall of the People in Beijing during the Eighteenth Party Congress.  
Source: Remko Tanis

The 2012 transition revealed the extent to which the process of the transfer of power has become 'normalised'. It has wide ramifications for the way that China will tackle such serious problems as economic policy, political restructuring and legitimacy, environmental degradation and many other issues. In all likelihood, the new leadership group will set the tone for policy-making for at least a decade and then influence the selection of the next generation.

### Unexpected Twists

The Congress's starting date, normally settled well in advance, seems to have been delayed by about a month as a re-

sult of the fallout from the arrest of the former Party Secretary of Chongqing, Bo Xilai. Bo was dismissed from office on 15 March 2012 after the arrest of his wife, Gu Kailai, who was later given a suspended death sentence for the 2011 murder of British businessman Neil Heywood. The trial of Bo Xilai himself, in August 2013, reported on the court's official microblog, mesmerised the nation with its sensational revelations and accusations. (Among other things, Bo accused his 'crazy' wife of having had an affair with his former police chief Wang Lijun, currently serving his own fifteen-year sentence.)

At the time of the Party Congress, the leadership was also having to manage the repercussions from a fatal

crash involving a Ferrari in Beijing in March 2012. The quick actions of the censors, who suppressed the names and details of the driver and his passengers and even banned searches for the word 'Ferrari', sparked rumours that the driver had been the son of a senior leader. Some speculated that he might have been the twenty-year-old son born out of wedlock to the powerful Politburo member Jia Qinglin. But microbloggers worked out early on that the young man killed at the wheel was Ling Gu — the twenty-three-year-old son of senior party leader Ling Jihua, a close confidant of Hu Jintao. The identity of the two female occupants of the car were later said to be Tashi Dolma (Zhaxi Zhuoma), the ethnic Tibetan daughter of a deputy director of the Qinghai provincial Public Security Department, and Yang Ji, also an ethnic Tibetan and a student at China University of Political Science and Law in Beijing. (Yang died in hospital.) Microbloggers also reported that one or both women had been naked in the dangerously-driven two-seater car that, obviously, no clean government official (or his son) should be able to afford — the model sells for something in the neighbourhood of US\$700,000.

Some speculated that the woman who died in hospital was actually murdered in an attempt to cover up the details.

Suspicion that the stench of corruption lay over the tragedy resurfaced later in the year when a head of the state-owned enterprise China National Petroleum Corporation made massive payouts to the dead women's families. That the driver was confirmed to be Ling's son after all prompted much speculation about what the scandal might mean for Hu Jintao's influence in the upcoming Congress. Ling was eventually made head of the Party's United Front Work Department (*Tongyi zhanxian gongzuobu* 统一战线工作部), which, though not an insignificant role, was, in effect, a demotion.

A much more mysterious event assumed to have contributed to the delay of the Party Congress was the disappearance from public view in September for two weeks of Xi Jinping himself. Xi's failure to meet as planned with both US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Singaporean Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong was never officially explained, giving rise to rumours, some more fantastic than the next. These included that he suffered a back injury as a result of being hit by a chair

in the crossfire of a fight among members of the ‘Red Second Generation’ (also known as ‘Red Boomers’) — the children of the first generation of party leaders, who have styled themselves as defenders of the Party’s legacy (see *Yearbook 2012*, p.270ff for a discussion of this group). Other hypotheses included ill health, an assassination attempt and the less-intriguing but not unlikely explanation that he was simply snowed under with preparations for the Congress.

### The Congress Confirms

By the time the Congress finally convened on 8 November, most of the important issues, including the selection of candidates for available positions, were settled. Following protocol, the 2,270 delegates representing the provinces, ‘autonomous regions’ and the People’s Liberation Army elected the prearranged 350-member Central Committee and endorsed the twenty-five-member Politburo. A Standing Committee was then drawn from the Politburo: it is this small group that includes the two top leaders and makes the country’s major policy decisions. The big surprise there was that the Con-

gress reduced the size of the Standing Committee from nine, under Hu Jintao, to seven, under Xi Jinping. Xi, as Party General Secretary, and Li Keqiang (whose additional role as Premier makes him the formal head of government as well) are at its apex. Because the Party commands China’s armed forces, the Congress also confirmed Xi as head of the Central Military Commission. Below Xi and Li are Zhang Dejiang, Yu Zhengsheng, Liu Yunshan, Wang Qishan and Zhang Gaoli.

This fifth generation is, on average, younger than previous ones. Born between 1946 and 1955, they tend to be well educated and more broadly so than the engineer-technocrats they replaced. Most have substantial experience in running major government or party bureaucracies around the nation. Most are also very well connected within the Party, either by descent, like Xi, or by marriage. Short biographies of key members, ranked in order of their importance and bureaucratic status as inferred from the order they were announced by Central China Television, are as follows:



**Zhang Dejiang.**  
Source:  
Baidu Baike

### Zhang Dejiang

Ranked number three in the Politburo Standing Committee, Zhang Dejiang (b.1946) appears to have a more orthodox or conservative communist ideological bent as indicated by his expertise on North Korea, where he studied economics, as well as the fact that he came from a military family background. In the late 1990s and early years of the new millennium he presided over the beginning of the economic boom in Zhejiang and Guangdong provinces, where he was responsible for suppressing dissent both in the media and among farmers dispossessed of their land by developers. A Vice-Premier, he also serves as the chair of the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress.



**Yu Zhengsheng.**  
Source:  
Baidu Baike

### Yu Zhengsheng

Yu Zhengsheng (b.1945) ranks number four in the Politburo Standing Committee. A graduate of Harbin Military Engineering Institute, he eventually rose through the Ministry of Electronics Industry and later Ministry of Construction. Yu has an extraordinary family background: a father who was once married to Jiang Qing (the woman who went on to become Mao Zedong’s wife); a brother who served as defence minister for the anti-communist leader of the Nationalist Party, Chiang Kai-shek; and another brother, a senior figure in China’s Ministry of State Security, who defected to the US in the mid-1980s. (The *Times* of London reported that Yu’s brother is rumoured to have been assassinated by Chinese agents in Latin America.) Yu has close links to the former president, Jiang Zemin.



**Liu Yunshan.**  
Source:  
Baidu Baike

### Liu Yunshan

Liu Yunshan (b.1947) is a previous director of the Party’s Propaganda Department and is today President of the Central Party School and Chairman of the Central Guidance Commission for Building Spiritual Civilisation. Liu studied, taught and then

worked for many years in government and party organisations in Inner Mongolia (including Hu Jintao's power base, the Communist Youth League). Like most of the others, Liu is also linked by marriage to other members of the party leadership.



### Wang Qishan

Once an historian, Wang Qishan (b.1948) married a daughter of party elder Yao Yilin and has wide-ranging experience of governance, including three years as deputy governor of Guangdong province. Named a director of the State Council General Office of Economic Reform in 2000, he is often regarded as relatively 'liberal' — inclined to market-oriented solutions for some economic problems — in a system in which liberal (*ziyoupai* 自由派) can be a term of abuse and therefore potentially harmful to career prospects. Yet he is also known as an efficient troubleshooter or 'fireman' able to sort out tricky problems: he was made mayor of Beijing in the aftermath of the SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) outbreak of 2003 and the lead-up to the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games. He is now also Secretary of the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection — the body in charge of party discipline and investigating corruption.

Wang Qishan, once a historian, now the Party's anti-corruption czar.  
Source: Baidu Baike



### Zhang Gaoli

Zhang Gaoli (b.1946), an economist born to a poor family in Fujian, has helped to guide economic development in both Guangdong and Shandong provinces, and used the opportunity of the 2008 economic stimulus to modernise Tianjin, where he was serving as Party Secretary, and where he cultivated an image of accessibility and openness to public opinion. Some critics have accused Zhang's reforms of being built on unsustainable levels of debt. He is currently China's first-ranked Vice-Premier.

Zhang Gaoli, economist and China's highest ranking Vice-Premier.  
Source: Baidu Baike

Two other key Politburo members, 'reformists' Wang Yang and Li Yuanchao failed to be promoted, defying expectations. Their omission was seen by some observers as a blow for reform — they were considered likely advocates of the sorts of reforms many Western observers think China needs. But the men (there are no women in the Standing Committee) surrounding Xi and Li seem well placed to rule China effectively within the constraints of the nation's rapidly increasing social and economic complexity. Indeed, in many respects, the new committee with Xi at its head seems more empowered to bring about change than its predecessor.

It does appear that the retiring party leader, Hu Jintao, along with his supporters in the Communist Youth League, were less influential in the current appointments than Hu's predecessor Jiang Zemin. Rules to force earlier retirements seem to have been of limited effect. The reduction of the Standing Committee to seven members was also unanticipated but whether this was intended to concentrate power or prevent certain promotions is unclear. As for signs of regularisation or institutionalisation of

the rules of succession, this Congress seems to have been two steps forward, one step back — the seemingly abrupt reduction of the nine-member Politburo to seven being one sign that arbitrary decisions still play a role in the process.

### The National Peoples' Congress

The convening of China's two parliamentary type bodies — the NPC and the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) (*Zhongguo renmin zhengzhi xieshang huiyi quanguo weiyuan hui* 中国人民政治协商会议全国委员会) — in March 2013 marked the final stage of the leadership change. The so-called 'two meetings' (*liang hui* 两会) allow for the changes in party leadership to be translated into their official state forms. Party General Secretary Xi thus became President of the People's Republic, although there was one vote against his confirmation, while Li Keqiang became Premier of the State Council (*Guowuyuan* 国务院). Li Yuanchao — the head of the Party's powerful Organisation Department — became Vice-President of the People's Republic.



**Xi Jinping,**  
General  
Secretary and  
President.  
Source:  
Baidu Baike



**Li Keqiang,**  
Premier.  
Source:  
Baidu Baike

The CPPCC is the highest manifestation of the Party's 'united front', representing in a visible way a much wider cross-section of the Chinese public than do the delegates of the NPC. Only one-third of delegates to the CPPCC are party members. Its roles are to guide and advise the NPC and the CCP, reflecting the key concerns of the members' constituencies (that is, religious believers, ethnic minorities, China's so-called eight democratic parties, private business people, artists from the Peking Opera, actors and other groups that fall outside of the Party's one-time key constituencies of 'workers, peasants and soldiers'). Hong Kong's Jackie Chan is a delegate. While just one person dared vote no to Xi Jinping's accession to the presidency, 112 delegates either voted against or abstained from confirming Ling Jihua as a CPPCC vice-president.

### Significance

The fifth generation leaders have already sought to set themselves apart from their predecessors. Acting on widespread anger about official corruption, one of their first policies was Li Keqiang's pledge to curb corrupt use of public funds for things like dining and drinking on the public purse (*gongkuan chihe* 公款吃喝). As noted in the Introduction to this *Yearbook*, Xi further advocated keeping official banquets to 'four dishes and one soup course' — a policy which reportedly has hit the country's higher end restaurants hard and is even blamed for reducing the GDP. Designed to win back the public trust lost in cases like that of Bo Xilai and Ling Jihua's son, a related series of declarations, slogans and policies include Xi's promise to punish corruption from the ground up, or as he put it, to 'swat flies and kill tigers at the same time' (*laohu cangying yiqi da* 老虎苍蝇一起打), as well as 'confine power in a cage of regulations'. These measures would tackle what Li Keqiang, echoing Mao Zedong, described as the 'four workstyle problems' (*si feng wenti* 四风问题) of formalism, bureaucratism, hedonism and extravagance (*xing-*

*shizhuyi, guanliao zhuyi, xiangle zhuyi he shemi zhi feng*, 形式主义、官僚主义、享乐主义和奢靡之风).

The other key idea — a major topic at both the NPC and CPPCC — is that of the China Dream and the renewal or revival of the Chinese nation. Xi has stressed the relationship of the two, insisting that the dream will be realised by maintaining the centrality of the party-state system: 'Our system will be improved and the superiority of our socialist system will be fully demonstrated through a brighter future,' Xi said. 'We should have firm confidence in our path, in our theories and in our system'.



## THE HU-WEN DECADE AND REASONS FOR FALLING FROM POWER

### THE SYSTEMIC BENEFITS OF THE HU-WEN DECADE

In March 2012, the website Consensus Network (Gongshi wang 共识网) at 21ccom.net published an article by Ding Yang entitled 'The systemic benefits of the Hu-Wen decade'. The benefits were:

- the abolition of the agricultural tax on 800 million peasants
- the expenditure of 100 billion yuan on agricultural subsidies and insurance
- the abolition of the system of forced repatriation of migrant workers and the facilitation of the flow of people between regions
- the promulgation of the 'Private Business Statute' and the protection of private property
- continued progress towards open government, with the result that people like 'Watch Brother' (*biaoge* 表哥) could 'fall from his horse' (for 'Watch Brother', see pages 335 and 377).
- improvements in the system for holding public officials accountable and the removal of offenders from their positions
- transformation of the functions of government and the expansion of the NGO sector
- persevering with Opening and Reform and refusing to retreat.

## 二奶需要呵护 谨防反目成仇



Cartoon in response to Liu Tienan's downfall mainly caused by an extra-marital affair with a woman surnamed Xu. The title reads 'Take care of your mistress and don't make her an enemy'.  
Source: Baidu/D.S.X.

## THE TOP TEN REASONS FOR FALLING FROM POWER

In December 2012, the China Economic Times (*Zhongguo jingji shibao* 中国经济时报), a daily newspaper published under the aegis of the State Council's Development Research Centre, carried an article listing the ten most common factors that led to the dismissals of county-level Communist Party secretaries that year. As expected, graft and bribes featured prominently, but so did drunken behaviour and inappropriate conduct in relation to the media:

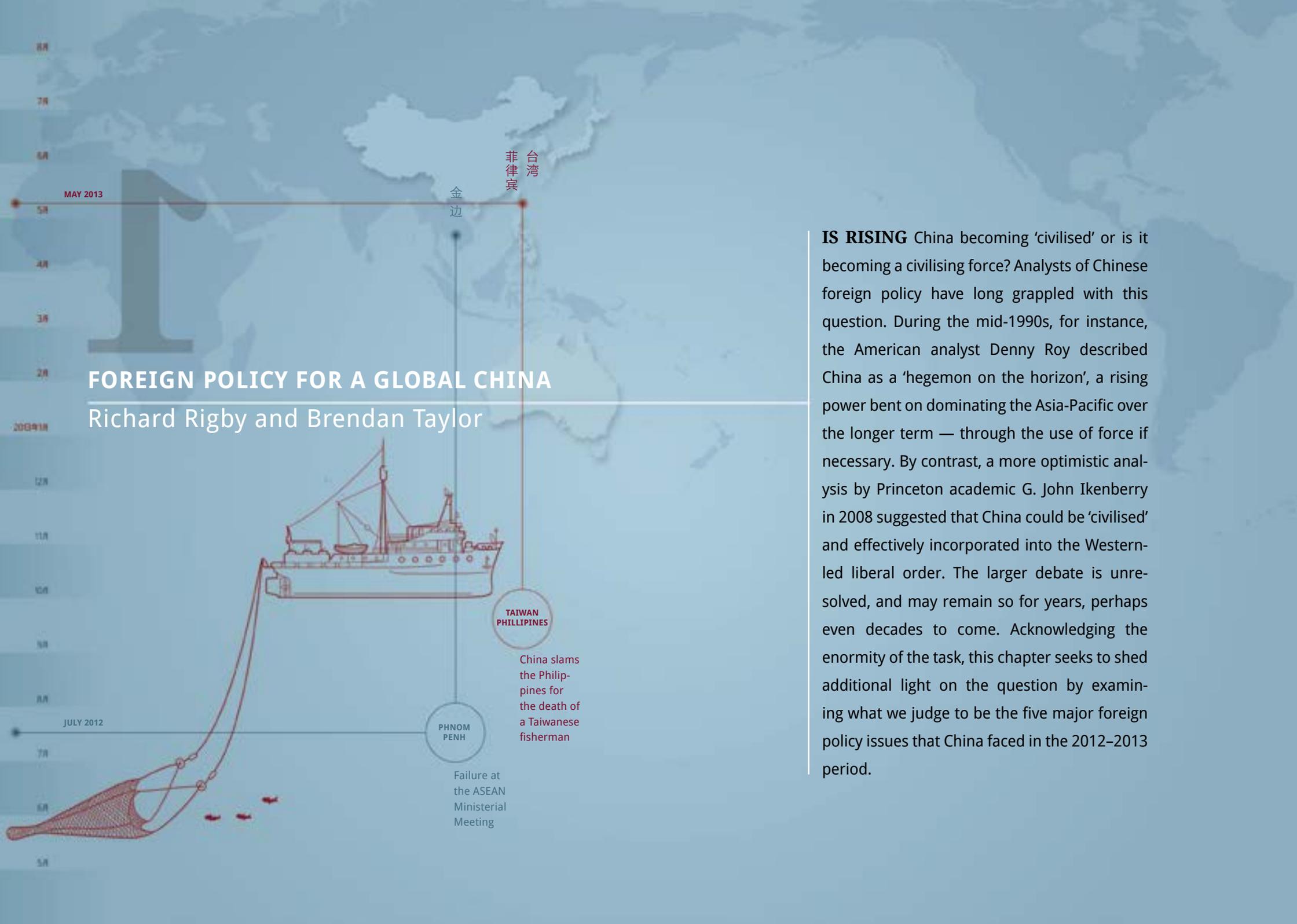
1. taking bribes, including the excessive exchange of Spring Festival [Chinese New Year] gifts, the selling of public offices and collusion
2. failure to placate public outrage, including demolishing people's houses without proper compensation and not handling mass incidents properly
3. safety scandals, including mining disasters
4. breaches of discipline, including rising through the ranks too rapidly and purchasing vehicles illegally
5. criminal offences, including murder and the deliberate injury of others
6. inappropriate behaviour towards the media, including the use of subpoenas to force journalists to go to Beijing, and posting illegal content on the Internet
7. inappropriate behaviour and speech while under the influence of alcohol (one instance of either of these is enough to lead to dismissal)
8. graft, including stealing public money or spending it for private purposes
9. embezzlement
10. any additional offenses revealed by investigations.



# 1

# FOREIGN POLICY FOR A GLOBAL CHINA

Richard Rigby and Brendan Taylor



台湾  
菲律宾

金边

MAY 2013

TAIWAN  
PHILIPPINES

China slams  
the Philip-  
pines for  
the death of  
a Taiwanese  
fisherman

PHNOM  
PENH

JULY 2012

Failure at  
the ASEAN  
Ministerial  
Meeting

**IS RISING** China becoming 'civilised' or is it becoming a civilising force? Analysts of Chinese foreign policy have long grappled with this question. During the mid-1990s, for instance, the American analyst Denny Roy described China as a 'hegemon on the horizon', a rising power bent on dominating the Asia-Pacific over the longer term — through the use of force if necessary. By contrast, a more optimistic analysis by Princeton academic G. John Ikenberry in 2008 suggested that China could be 'civilised' and effectively incorporated into the Western-led liberal order. The larger debate is unresolved, and may remain so for years, perhaps even decades to come. Acknowledging the enormity of the task, this chapter seeks to shed additional light on the question by examining what we judge to be the five major foreign policy issues that China faced in the 2012–2013 period.

## Will China Divide ASEAN?

In late 2011, a chorus of international commentators rushed to the conclusion that a rising China could be ‘civilised’ by its participation in Asia’s burgeoning multilateral institutions. The cause for their optimism was the East Asia Summit (EAS), held in November of that year. At this meeting, South-east Asian nations — with strong backing from a first-time EAS attendee, US President Barack Obama — convinced Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao to sit down with them to discuss the South China Sea and general maritime security issues.

### ePassports and Sovereignty BRIAN TSUI

On 15 May 2012, the Bureau of Exit and Entry Administration of the Ministry of Public Security (*Gonganbu churujing guanliju* 公安部出入境管理局) began issuing new biometric passports to mainland Chinese citizens. With these, the People’s Republic of China joined more than ninety other countries in embedding chips containing critical information like the holder’s name, date of birth and photo in its ePassports. The Hong Kong and Macao special administrative regions, which maintain separate immigration regimes, have been issuing passports with the same technology since 2006 and 2009 respectively.

What appeared to be a mundane administrative measure made international headlines half a year after it was launched. And, while the changes were made by the Ministry of Public Security, it was the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that had to deal with the not-inconsiderable international fallout. In November 2012, Vietnam and the Philippines lodged complaints that a watermark map on a visa page, which depicted a large swathe of the South China Sea as belonging to China, infringed on their sovereignty. India also voiced displeasure that Chinese-controlled Aksai Chin and parts of Arunachal Pradesh — which China calls South Tibet — were included in the map. Taiwan cried foul over the incorporation of landmarks under Republic of China rule, including Sun Moon Lake and Green Island as illustrations in the document. Indonesian Foreign Minister Marty Natalegawa revealed in March 2013 that his government, too, had lodged a protest with Beijing shortly after the passports were issued. The controversial Chinese map, Jakarta claimed, extended into Indonesia’s Exclusive Economic Zone in the Natuna Sea.

The international controversy surrounding the ePassport is both figuratively and literally a graphic illustration of China’s simmering territorial disputes with its neighbours. As Richard Ngoy and Brendan Taylor observe in this chapter, the last few years have seen Beijing robustly pursuing its territorial claims in the South China Sea. In diplomatic arenas and occasionally at sea, Beijing has been at loggerheads with both Hanoi and Manila. Meanwhile, despite the haltingly improving relationship between Beijing and New Delhi, the Indian media



The old passport and the new side by side.  
Source: Baidu Baike

The 2012–2013 period covered in this *Yearbook* commenced quite differently. A July 2012 ASEAN Ministerial Meeting in Phnom Penh failed for the first time in the organisation’s forty-five-year history to deliver a communiqué at the end of its proceedings. Tensions reportedly revolved around the fact that Manila wanted the South China Sea, and, in particular, the standoff between Chinese and Philippines vessels at Scarborough Shoal in March 2012, explicitly mentioned in the communiqué. The Cambodian chair allegedly opposed the inclusion.

have frequently reported on Chinese incursions into disputed border areas. Finally, Taiwan’s objection to having its tourist attractions featuring in mainland passports highlights the sensitive and contested nature of national identity on the island. The current Nationalist Party administration, while retaining sovereign claim on mainland China, rolled out its own biometric passport in 2009 that depicted only scenes from Taiwan and Kinmen county.

The different countries involved adopted divergent approaches in dealing with the situation. Vietnam said it sent a diplomatic note to the Chinese embassy in Hanoi demanding correction of the map and refusing to paste visas into the new passports. The Foreign Secretary of the Philippines told reporters that he also wrote a note of protest to the Chinese embassy. Like Vietnam, the Philippines refused to stamp the Chinese documents and recognise what it sees as Beijing’s ‘excessive’ territorial claim. While not lodging a formal complaint, India began affixing visas bearing its own map in Chinese passports. Indonesia, which enjoyed warming ties with China, opted for what its Foreign Minister called ‘nice low key diplomacy’ and refrained from issuing a public statement on the dispute.

In Taipei, the Mainland Affairs Council issued a statement reprimanding Beijing for including territories that the latter did not have ‘authority to govern’ (*tongzhiquan* 統治權). In a subsequent statement, the Council distinguished ‘authority to govern’ from Republic of China sovereignty (*zhuquan* 主權), which claims to cover mainland China. The convoluted definition of the controversial ‘one China with respective interpretations’ (*yi Zhong gebiao* 一中各表) principle meant, however, that Taiwan didn’t need to act to avoid implicitly endorsing sovereignty claims on the latest passports issued by the People’s Republic. Taiwan has always issued separate entry permits for mainland Chinese visitors to be used alongside mainland travel documents. Taiwan officials only place stamps on these permits.



Controversial map in the new passport.  
Source: Baidu Baike

Many commentators attributed this outcome and the splintering of the ASEAN consensus to Chinese influence, suggesting that Cambodia had been swayed by the estimated US\$2.5 billion in investments and ‘soft loans’ provided to it by China. In the words of Stanford University academic Don Emmerson: ‘what happened in Phnom Penh evokes *divide et impera* with Chinese characteristics — divide ASEAN and rule the waves’. Emmerson’s observation here refers to Beijing’s preferred bilateral approach — as opposed to ASEAN’s favoured multilateral path — to addressing the South China Sea disputes. An analyst from the influential China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations (CICIR) concurred with Emmerson, observing that ‘we coordinated very well with Cambodia in that case and ... prevented an incident which would have been detrimental to China’. Ernest Bower of the Washington-based Center for Strategic and International Studies goes one step further, arguing that the significance of this episode lies in what it reveals about Beijing’s longer term intentions and aspirations. In his view, ‘what happened in Phnom Penh is a critical piece to answering questions about what China wants and what China wants to be’.

China’s use of the economic instruments of statecraft is not new. A new database launched by US researchers in April 2013, for example, revealed that China has committed US\$75 billion in foreign aid and developmental assistance to Africa over the last decade, allegedly with a view to making economic and political inroads on that continent. In Asia, throughout the ongoing North Korean nuclear crisis — which started over two decades ago — Beijing is rumoured to have used a combination of economic carrots and sticks to pressure Pyongyang back to the negotiating table. Similarly, following the diplomatic crisis sparked by the collision of a Chinese fishing trawler and a Japanese Coast Guard vessel in September 2010, Beijing reportedly cut off exports of rare earth elements to Japan. What differed in the case of the Phnom Penh episode, however, was the less discreet application of the economic instrument. Tighter restrictions imposed by China against the import of fruit from the Philippines at the height of the Scarborough Shoal standoff point toward a similar trend.

### Dogs and Other Undesirables

‘This shop does not receive The Japanese The Philippines The Vietnamese And dog’, reads the English translation of a sign in the window of a restaurant serving Beijing-style stewed pig offal in the city’s popular Houhai tourist area. A photo of the bilingual sign posted on Facebook on 22 February 2013 by Rose Tang — a New York-based painter and writer — went viral on China’s social media platforms and sparked a debate over how patriotism should be expressed in China today. The sign was reminiscent of the infamous notice ‘Chinese and Dogs Not Admitted’ (*Huaren yu gou bu de ru nei* 华人与狗不得入内) allegedly posted outside Shanghai’s Huangpu Park prior to 1940, and which featured in the 1964 party propaganda song-and-dance extravaganza *The East is Red*, as well as Bruce Lee’s 1972 film *Fist of Fury*. Contrary to popular belief, such a sign never existed.

Similar signs have, however, popped up over the last few years, often at restaurants, usually advising that entry is refused to Japanese people in response

to some action by the Tokyo government, or a statement about China made by a Japanese politician. On this occasion, the three countries named were all involved in maritime disputes with China in 2012. Mr Wang, the shop’s owner, told journalists that his actions had nothing to do with the government and that banning certain nationalities was an act of ‘patriotism’ that was supported by his Chinese customers.

In response, Vietnam’s state-run *Tuoi Tre* newspaper ran a story saying the sign had ‘ignited online fury’ and claimed many Vietnamese saw it as an example of Chinese ‘extreme nationalism that deserves to be condemned’. On 27 February, Raul Hernandez, spokesperson for the Philippines’ Department of Foreign Affairs, called the act the ‘private view’ of one citizen about the territorial disputes, and said there had been no reports from Filipino citizens in China of discrimination.

The sign was taken down on 28 February 2013.



Beijing restaurant sign reading ‘This shop does not receive The Japanese The Philippines The Vietnamese And dog’.

Source: Tianya.cn

Opinion differs over why China's foreign policy approach has exhibited, in Hugh White's terms, this increasingly 'ruthless' character — as epitomised in the Phnom Penh episode. Some analysts, such as White, see this as a sign of China's growing confidence and diplomatic influence in Asia and the Pacific. For others, however, Beijing's continued reliance on the economic instruments of statecraft reflects an acute consciousness of its inability to mount any meaningful military challenge to US military power in this part of the world. It also illustrates a difference in China's foreign policy and strategic approach more generally. As the prominent Tsinghua University professor Yan Xuetong observes:

... the rivalry between the Soviet Union and the United States was like a boxing match. They tried to knock each other down to the point of death. But China and the United States try to win a game by scoring points. They try to win with smartness, strength and good strategy. There will be no major violence.



Slogan on the façade of a building reading 'Diaoyu Islands belong to China'.  
Source: Wikimedia Commons

## Another Sino-Japanese War?

Tensions with Japan resurfaced during the 2012–2013 period that were arguably more serious than those resulting from the aforementioned fishing boat collision. Analysts speculated about the prospects for armed conflict between China and Japan. Writing in the prominent American journal *Foreign Policy*, then Foreign Minister Kevin Rudd and China savant described maritime tensions in the East China Sea between these two historically great powers of Asia as akin to a 'tinderbox on water'. Rudd likened the situation to that in Europe prior to the onset of the First World War. Michael Auslin, an analyst from the conservative American Enterprise Institute agrees, suggesting that 'the two seem to be moving themselves into a corner from which it will be very difficult to escape ... Asia could face its greatest crisis since World War II'.

Tensions between Beijing and Tokyo resurfaced in September 2012, following news that the Japanese government intended to purchase three of the disputed Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands from their private Japanese owner. From Japan's perspective, this step was intended as a stabilising move designed to prevent the notoriously nationalistic and anti-Chinese governor of Tokyo, Ishihara Shintarō, from acquiring them. However, China did not read the gesture this way. The news sparked boycotts of Japanese imports and the eruption of large-scale anti-Japanese protests in approximately one hundred Chinese cities.

Unlike in the South China Sea, tensions between Beijing and Tokyo rapidly assumed a military dimension. Numerous naval 'face offs' occurred, at first involving Chinese fishing boats, maritime surveillance vessels and the Japanese Coast Guard. Before long, a Chinese maritime patrol aircraft penetrated Japanese airspace near the disputed islands for the first time since 1958. Japan responded by scrambling F-15 fighter aircraft. Beijing subsequently reacted by deploying two of its own J-10 fighters to 'monitor these aircraft'. Analysts immediately began talking up the prospects for a replay of the April 2001 EP-3 incident — which sparked a protracted diplomatic crisis between Beijing and Washington after a US EP-3 reconnaissance plane and a Chinese F-8 fighter collided in international airspace over the South

## DIAOYU/SENKAKU ISLANDS DISPUTE



The *Diaoyu Islands* (Diaoyudao 钓鱼岛), known as the *Senkaku Islands* (Senkaku shotō 尖閣諸島) in Japan, are a group of uninhabited islands located in the East China Sea north-east of Taiwan. Records of the islands' existence date back centuries. The Chinese claim they have been under Chinese sovereignty from the fourteenth century, but Japan formally annexed them in 1895 following the

*Sino-Japanese War of 1894–1895*. Private interests owned the larger islands (the site of a failed bonito-processing plant) until the Second World War. The United States held custody of them until 1972, during which time they were used for bombing practice, returning them to Japan despite China's protests. The Kurihara family has been the nominal owner of the three largest islands since the 1970s. A proposal by the Mayor of Tokyo in April 2012 to buy back the islands, found in 1968 to be close to potential oil reserves, sparked the latest diplomatic battle between Japan and the People's Republic (with Taiwan a third player) over the question of sovereignty. Below is a brief timeline covering the progress of the dispute over the last year:

**16 April 2012**

Tokyo Mayor Ishihara Shintarō proposes that the city purchase the Senkaku Islands.

**7 July**

Japanese Prime Minister Noda Yoshihiko declares that the national government will consider purchasing and nationalising the islands. A budget is prepared.

**27 July**

The Tokyo government places an ad in the *Wall Street Journal* asking for US support in its bid to purchase the islands.

**15 August**

The Hong Kong-based Action Committee for Defending the Diaoyu Islands lands seven activists from the Mainland, Hong Kong and Macau on the largest island. The Japan Coast Guard detains fourteen Chinese nationals (those that landed and the crew on the boat) and repatriates them several days later. Mainland reports on the incident prominently feature a photo of the landing but tend to crop out the Taiwan Republic of China flag carried by one of the activists.

**16–19 August**

Small-scale demonstrations break out across China condemning Japanese imperialism and calling for the return of the Diaoyu Islands. In Shenzhen, some protesters smash Japanese cars and vandalise shops selling Japanese brands.

**19 August**

Ten Japanese citizens land on the largest island and tie a Japanese flag to the lighthouse.

**3 September**

The Japanese government enters into negotiations with the Kurihara family, the nominal owner of the three main islands; it is prepared to spend 2.05 billion yen (roughly US\$21.2 million).

**9 September**

At an informal APEC leadership conference, Hu Jintao talks with Noda Yoshihiko and tells him that China considers any Japanese purchase of the islands illegal and illegitimate.

**11 September**

Japan formally nationalises the three islands. China sends two patrol ships. China also begins issuing meteorological forecasts for the Diaoyu Islands and the surrounding area.

**15–16 September**

Over this weekend, anti-Japanese demonstrations break out in dozens of Chinese cities, including Beijing, Shanghai, Shenzhen, Guangzhou and Hong Kong. In many cities, demonstrators destroy Japanese vehicles and assault their drivers, set fire to Japanese factories and vandalise Japanese restaurants. Travel agencies cancel tours to Japan. China-based factories belonging to companies such as Honda, Nissan and Sony temporarily suspend operations.

**17–18 September**

Police and paramilitary exercise more visible control over the protests, protecting consulates and arresting perpetrators of violence and vandalism. In Beijing, protesters block a car carrying the US Ambassador Gary Locke from entering the Japanese embassy.

**18 September**

A small counter-protest is staged in Tokyo by Ganbare Nippon 頑張れ日本 ('Stand Firm, Japan') — a right-wing group.

**21 September**

China's State Oceanic Administration and the Ministry of Civil Affairs release a list of standardised names for the islands' geographic features.

**25 September**

The State Council Information Office releases the white paper *Diaoyu Dao [Islands], an Inherent Territory of China* and, on 28 September, publishes it in pamphlet form in English, Japanese and Chinese. In the area around the islands, seventy-five fishing boats from Taiwan clash with Japanese ships using water cannons and loudspeakers.

**January 2013**

Japan sends two F-15 fighter jets to the East China Sea in response to what it claims was a sighting of Chinese military planes there. China subsequently sends two J-10 fighter jets to the area. A Chinese naval vessel directed fire-control radar at a Maritime Self-Defense Force destroyer near the disputed islands and this was admitted in March.

**23 April**

Ganbare Nippon dispatches ten boats carrying about eighty activists to the islands, but they are escorted away by Japan's Coast Guard before they are able to land. China increases the number of its ships in the surrounding waters to eight.

**8 May**

The *People's Daily* publishes an op-ed by China Academy of Social Sciences academics Zhang Haipeng and Li Guoqiang calling for a reassessment of Japan's sovereignty over the Ryukyu Islands, which includes Okinawa (but not the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands).



A car sticker in Beijing reading: 'Japanese and DOG no Nearing.'  
Source: Baidu Baibe

China Sea — and feared that Beijing and Tokyo did not have the diplomatic machinery in place to navigate such a crisis successfully.

Tensions deepened in January 2013, when Japan alleged that Chinese vessels had locked fire-control radar — a step preceding the firing of a missile — onto a Japanese destroyer and ship-based helicopter in two

separate incidents. It was unclear whether these incidents were part of a deliberate Chinese strategy or whether they reflected a lack of government coordination and had been initiated by lower-level officers. In a widely cited report published under the auspices of the Lowy Institute for International Policy, seasoned China-watcher Linda Jakobsen argued that Sino-Japanese tensions over islands in the East China Sea were dangerous precisely because domestic politics had distracted China's leaders, leaving open the potential for dangerous miscalculations to occur. Reports in February 2013 indicated that China's approach to the Diaoyu Islands alleviated these concerns somewhat.

Complicating this situation is the potential involvement of Taiwan — an equally flammable subject from Beijing's perspective, notwithstanding the diplomatic truce that has largely remained in place since Ma Ying-Jeou's election as President of Taiwan in March 2008. In January 2013, a Japanese Coast Guard vessel fired water cannons at a Taiwanese boat carrying activists intending to land on the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands. In a similar episode involving the Philippines, another US ally, a diplomatic crisis erupted in May 2013 after a Taiwanese fisherman was shot dead by a Philippine law enforcement vessel in the disputed waters of the South China Sea.



A man holding an inflatable sign declaring that the Diaoyu Islands are Chinese sovereign territory, location unknown.  
Source: ImagineChina

## Responding to the 'US Pivot'?

Sino-Japanese frictions in the 2012–2013 period shined light on broader questions regarding the sustainability of the so-called US 'pivot' to Asia (the 'pivot' is a prominent foreign policy initiative, begun during the first term of the Obama administration, that involves a strategic 'rebalancing' of US attention away from Europe and the Middle East and towards East Asia). Most of the groundwork for this strategy was laid during the preceding twelve months. This included President Obama's November 2011 announcement in the Australian capital, Canberra, that up to 2,500 US marines would be rotated through facilities in the north of Australia, and Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta's statement at the June 2012 Shangri-la Dialogue in Singapore that the US would increase its naval presence in the Asia-Pacific.

International attention during 2011–2012 focused on these developments. Notwithstanding American denials to the contrary, many observers interpreted them as a direct response to rising China's growing assertiveness, discussed in the 2012 *Yearbook*. A major preoccupation of strategic commentators in 2012–2013 has been Beijing's response to the US pivot strategy. In July 2012, when China established the new city of Sansha in disputed waters of the South China Sea, for instance, Robert Manning of the Atlantic Council described this development as 'Beijing's Pivot'. Similarly, in November 2012, when China, Japan and South Korea agreed that they would be initiating trilateral Free Trade Agreement (FTA) negotiations, some commentators read this as Beijing's response to the Trans-Pacific Partnership that many Chinese analysts regard as the economic centrepiece of Washington's rebalancing strategy. An article published in the *Global Times* at the conclusion of the first round of FTA talks in March 2013 observed



Government building, Sansha city.  
Source: Baidu Baike

that: ‘The TPP pact is seen as the US reasserting its influence in the region to counter China’s rising economic and political power’.

Responses such as these on the part of Beijing prompted some analysts to question the prudence of the US pivot strategy, with some going so far as to suggest that it has sparked a new and deepening Cold War between the US and China. Most famously, the Harvard and Boston College professor Robert Ross wrote in *Foreign Affairs* that:

... if Washington continues on its current path, Chinese resistance to US policies will inevitably increase, preventing bilateral cooperation on crucial issues from trade to global economic stability. The outbreak of hostilities in the region will become a real possibility, as China pushes back against the United States’ growing presence on its borders.

Fudan University professor Wu Xinbo agrees, observing that: ‘To some extent, it was the US pivot that caused China to give even higher priority and devote more resources to the region’. An annual report published (in Chinese) under the auspices of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, concludes with the observation that Beijing shouldn’t underestimate the capacity of the US to sustain its re-engagement in the region.

Overall, these developments certainly suggest the emergence of an action–reaction dynamic in the Sino–US relationship. As Lanxin Xiang suggests in the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) journal *Survival*: ‘Obama’s “pivot” has merely produced a classic vicious cycle, where each side continuously misreads the other’s strategic mind, offering something the other side does not want ... or asking for something the other side cannot give’. This strongly suggests — in line with what Jakobsen and others have already argued — that Chinese foreign policy is predominantly reactive, not informed by any kind of larger grand design. It also supports the mounting speculation that the US pivot is increasingly unsustainable and could, ironically, have important and potentially positive ramifications for Sino–US relations.

## Xi Jinping’s Foreign Policy

The re-election of President Obama occurred around the same time as China’s leadership transition. Addressing an IISS gathering in December 2012, Kevin Rudd made the case that the coincidence ‘presents a unique opportunity for the US and China to forge a new strategic roadmap capable of guiding us through many of the shoals that lie ahead for all of us’.

China’s once-in-a-decade leadership transition unfolded over a matter of months and against the backdrop of the Bo Xilai scandal (discussed elsewhere in this *Yearbook*). The groundwork for the transition was laid approximately five years earlier, when now President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Keqiang were elected to the Politburo Standing Committee, China’s paramount leadership body. It formally commenced in November 2012 when the Eighteenth National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party elected a new 205-person Central Committee, as well as a twenty-five-person Politburo and seven-member Standing Committee. Almost immediately following the Party Congress, Xi Jinping was named Head of the Central Military Commission. The instantaneous nature of Xi’s appointment contrasts significantly with that of his predecessor, Hu Jintao, who had to wait two years after becoming president to take formal command of the armed forces. In March 2013, Xi and Li became China’s president and premier respectively, completing the transition.

There have been hints that Xi Jinping’s foreign policy will follow an even harder-line patriotic or nationalistic trajectory than that which began with China’s so-called ‘assertive diplomacy’ in 2009. During a visit to the US before becoming president, for instance, Xi Jinping notably dispensed with the usual statements of ‘strengthening strategic trust’ and ‘smoothing over differences’ as key objectives in Sino–US relations. Instead, he introduced the phrase ‘control[ing] and manag[ing] any differences’. The respected China watcher David Shambaugh notes that, since becoming President, Xi has visited numerous military facilities. Embracing the rhetoric of a ‘strong nation and strong military’ mentality, he has called upon the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) to be prepared ‘to fight and win wars’. Consistent with this, Tsinghua’s Yan Xuetong predicts that ‘the first priority will be to put strategic

interests ahead of economic interests. Second, the administration will emphasise active involvement in international affairs and issues, rather than try to keep a distance from conflicts that are not directly related to China’.

Yet there is strong reason to believe there will be more continuity than change in Chinese foreign policy, at least during Xi’s initial five-year term. This is due to the influence of the formidable domestic and external constraints he faces. Internally, for instance, widespread anti-Japanese sentiment prevents China’s new leaders from deviating too far from their cur-

rent hardline stance towards Tokyo. As Fudan University professor Ren Xiaopu puts it: ‘when ordinary people with strong views on the Diaoyu issue are angry, no leader dares to be seen as “soft” toward Japan’. Externally, even as strategic distrust between China and the US intensifies, Beijing, like Washington, remains constrained by the high degree of their trade and financial interdependence. Speaking to a press conference at the Pacific Islands Forum in September 2012, for instance, Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Cui Tiankai explicitly rejected suggestions that China is intent upon competing with the

### China and the BRICS

In 2001, Jim O’Neil, an economist at Goldman Sachs, coined the acronym BRIC. BRIC stands for Brazil, Russia, India and China — four large and fast-growing developing countries that epitomise the shift in global economic power away from the developed countries that dominated the last half of the twentieth century. The concept appealed to leaders of the four countries, and on 16 May 2008, their heads of state held a summit meeting in Russia. In 2010, the group invited South Africa to join, and South African president Jacob Zuma attended the first BRICS summit (now with an ‘S’) in China in April 2011.

The fifth BRICS summit took place on 26–27 March 2013 in South Africa. China’s new president Xi Jinping attended the meeting as part of his first overseas trip as head of state. He stopped in Moscow and Dar es Salaam before arriving in South Africa and visited the Republic of the Congo (Congo-Brazzaville) on his way back to China.

The theme of the fifth BRICS summit was ‘BRICS and Africa: Partnership for Development, Integration and Industrialisation’. This was the first time that the annual BRICS meeting took place in Africa, and it completed a full cycle of each of the five member countries having hosted a summit meeting. The event in Durban was also significant for the tentative steps taken towards creating BRICS institutions, including the creation of a BRICS Development Bank, an idea upon which the five leaders agreed ‘in principle’, although there is no consensus yet on how such a bank would be funded or operate.

Other initiatives discussed at the Durban summit included:

- a Contingent Reserve Agreement to pool foreign reserves to insulate members against global financial crises, with China contributing \$41 billion, Brazil, India and Russia \$18 billion each and South Africa \$5 billion
- a Multilateral Agreement on Co-operation and Co-financing for Sustainable Development between the development/export–import banks of each member country
- a Multilateral Agreement on Infrastructure Co-financing for Africa and another on Green Economy Co-financing.

Following the pattern of previous BRICS summits, the leaders’ meeting in Durban discussed a wide range of subjects but initiated few, if any, concrete measures. Nevertheless, the first ‘African summit’ was notable for its focus on how the BRICS nations can support African industrialisation.

#### BRIC/BRICS summits:

2009: Yekaterinburg, Russia (no theme)

2010: Brasilia, Brazil (no theme)

2011: Sanya, China: *Broad Vision and Shared Prosperity*

2012: Delhi, India: *BRICS Partnership for Global Stability, Security and Prosperity*

2013: Durban, South Africa: *BRICS and Africa: Partnership for Development, Integration and Industrialisation*

The next summit is scheduled to take place in Brazil in 2014.



The leaders of the BRICS countries.

Source: Wikimedia Commons

## China–Africa Relations

In November 2006, Hu Jintao, then President of China, read out a declaration at the summit of the third Forum on China–Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) in Beijing. Flanked by dozens of African leaders, Hu announced both the creation of the China–Africa Development Fund to expand Chinese investment in Africa and more than US\$5 billion in concessionary loans to the continent. At the largest ever summit on African affairs held outside of Africa, China was presenting itself as a major economic partner for Africa. There have been two FOCAC summits since then: Egypt hosted the fourth in 2009 and the fifth again in Beijing in 2012.

On the face of it, the relationship between China and the nations of the African continent is based on a mutually beneficial economic exchange in which Chinese manufactured goods and investment are exchanged for African natural resources. Bilateral trade stood at just over US\$10 billion in 2000, the year of the first FOCAC meeting, held in Beijing. By 2012, this figure had rocketed to US\$198.5 billion, an increase of around nineteen percent on 2011 and far higher than the value of US–African trade, which was US\$108.9 billion in 2012. According to data cited by the independent Canadian think tank Global Research, China imports around 870,000 barrels of oil per day from Africa — a third of China's total oil imports. Angola is China's leading supplier of oil, the Democratic Republic of the Congo of cobalt and South Africa of manganese, chromium and platinum. South Africa is China's only African trade partner that also exports to China substantial amounts of manufactured goods.

Using conventional measurements of Outbound Foreign Direct Investment, Chinese investment in Africa is still far behind that of Western nations despite jumping from US\$100 million in 2003 to more than US\$12 billion in 2011. Yet, while investment from Europe and the US in Africa typically divides along the lines of private-sector direct investment on the one hand and Official Development Assistance (usually undertaken by the government sector with the goal of promoting welfare and development), China combines trade and investment with aid. Thus, China commonly makes use of natural resources-backed lines of credit; in other words, a Chinese policy bank like the Exim Bank uses preferential access to natural resources in Africa as collateral for infrastructure projects or as a means to repay loans.

A deal that China signed in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in 2001 set the tone for many more in the years to come: China would provide US\$280 million for dam construction and receive loan payments in oil. It concluded a similar deal in Angola in 2004 when Exim Bank provided US\$2 billion for the development of energy, telecommunications, railway and water infrastructure. As part of the repayment terms, Angola agreed to supply China with 10,000 barrels of oil per day. In a pattern that would be frequently repeated, one Chinese business was awarded contracts for the infrastructure projects, while rights for extracting natural resources accrued to another, a Chinese oil company. Following these agreements, Chinese contractors, extractors and other business people have flocked to Africa, extracting resources and building urban infrastructure, railways and mines. China constructed the grand 51,887-square-metre African Union headquarters in Addis Ababa, opened in January 2012, as a 'gift'.

Although the relationship is theoretically based on mutually beneficial exchanges, it has not been problem-free. For example, there have been labour disputes, including one particularly troubling instance in Zambia in 2010 when Chinese managers opened fire on their African workers. There have also been complaints in various African countries that some of the public buildings constructed by Chinese companies as part of resource deals have already started to crumble, and some African countries have grumbled about the large influx of Chinese labourers and business people. And clearly, not all Africans are enamoured by strong links with China. In an article in the *Financial Times* on 11 March 2013, Nigerian Central

Bank President Lamido Sanusi complained about the Sino–African trade relationship as being slanted in favour of China:

China takes our primary goods and sells us manufactured ones. This was also the essence of colonialism. Africa is now willingly opening itself to a new form of colonialism.



Chinese and African workers sit side by side.  
Photo: Sam Seyffert

Sanusi derided China's relationship with Africa as carrying a 'whiff of colonialism', and concluded that Africa must see China for what it is: a competitor.

Xi Jinping proceeded to Africa on his first foreign diplomatic trip as President of China in March 2013, and delivered a policy speech on China–Africa relations in Dar es Salaam on 25 March in which he reaffirmed China's commitment to be a faithful and valuable partner for Africa. In private diplomatic discussions, such as that with the Congolese President, Xi Jinping reportedly also made veiled references to Sanusi's claims by assuring his host of China's good intentions in Africa. Nevertheless, Sanusi's broadside did apparently cause some distress among Chinese officials, at least those in Nigeria. Quoting unnamed 'diplomatic sources', the Nigerian newspaper *This Day* reported in April that Sanusi's article had elicited complaints and denials from Chinese diplomatic staff in the country, and reported that some 'indications' seemed to suggest that the Chinese government may have embarked on a comprehensive review of its 'business role' in Nigeria.

In July 2013, the South African Minister of Public Enterprises, Malusi Gigaba, also expressed doubts about China's role in Africa, although in a slightly less provocative fashion than Sanusi. Gigaba called for greater scrutiny of funding from China and other BRICS countries for infrastructure investment in Africa, and warned Africans not to 'sell our souls' to secure funding in a world where finance was becoming less available for infrastructure. In Gigaba's view, Chinese funding should not be refused but nor should it come at the expense of the development of African skills and manufacturing potential. Some Western commentators and politicians have also painted China as a neo-colonial overlord in Africa.

The following are some of the most noteworthy events involving China and Africa over the past twelve months:

- August 2012: Thirty-seven Chinese criminal suspects are arrested in Angola and extradited to China for crimes carried out against other Chinese nationals in Angola.
- March 2013: In his first foreign trip as President, Xi Jinping visits Tanzania, South Africa and the Republic of Congo, signing a number of trade deals.
- May 2013: The Chinese government offers to provide 500 troops to the United Nations to bolster the peacekeeping force deployed in Mali. China previously contributed almost 2,000 peacekeepers to other UN operations, but this offer marks the first time it has put forward its peacekeepers for a role that has a strong probability of involving military action.
- June 2013: Ghana deports 3,877 Chinese miners during a clampdown on illegal mining. The Chinese miners, hoping to take advantage of a gold rush, are blamed for security problems in mining regions.

## China and Latin America

China's relationship with Latin America, like its relationship with Africa, represents an important aspect of the country's growing and more confident engagement with the developing world. As in Africa, China has vastly increased its trade and investment in Latin America, but the relationship stirs less controversy than do China's ties with Africa.

When China entered the World Trade Organization in 2003, annual trade between China and Latin America amounted to just US\$14.4 billion. By 2012, this had risen to US\$255.5 billion, which was also an eight percent increase on 2011. Sino-Latin American trade now grows faster than US trade with Latin America — which only increased 6.2 percent from 2011 to 2012 — although the volume of US trade with Latin America is still three times larger than that of China.

Latin American exports to China largely consist of raw materials such as oil (Venezuela), copper (Chile), iron ore (Brazil), and soybeans (Brazil and Argentina). Latin America, in turn, imports from China electronic items, equipment and machinery, auto parts and textiles. While there are parallels between the two, a significant difference between Sino-African and Sino-Latin American trade is that Latin America maintains a substantial trade deficit with China: US\$150 million in 2011 and blowing out to a full US\$6.6 billion in 2012. This illustrates how challenged Latin American manufacturers are in their home markets by Chinese imports. Over recent years, there have been sporadic protectionist moves in Latin America. For example, in September 2011, the Brazilian finance minister announced a thirty-point increase in the country's industrial product tax on imported cars in an attempt to stem the increasing flow of Chinese automobiles into the local market.

China's investment strategy in Latin America echoes its approach to Africa, although exact data is impossible to compile due to the fact that most Chinese investment in Latin America flows into tax havens such as the Cayman Islands and the British Virgin Islands. Nevertheless, according to the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, as much as ninety percent of China's confirmed investments in Latin America up to 2011 were aimed at the extraction of natural resources. Other targeted sectors include the automotive, financial, and chemical. Figures released at the Fifth China-Latin America Business Summit (an approximate Latin American equivalent of the Forum on China-Africa Relations) claimed that by the end of 2011, China's total investment in the region was approximately US\$23 billion. Yet according to a dataset compiled by the conservative US-based think tank the Heritage Foundation, Latin America received only 3.9 percent of total Chinese investment in 2011–2012, with the vast majority of that going to Brazil.

Since 2010, China has attempted to diversify its investments in Latin America to include deals in the manufacturing, infrastructure and services sectors. The Chinese tech firms Huawei, ZTE and Lenovo have become prominent investors in Latin American telecommunications and electronics, but other companies are involved as well. In February 2010, for example, Sany Heavy Industry, one of China's largest construction equipment manufacturers, ploughed US\$200 million into a factory in the Brazilian state of São Paulo. The Chinese auto manufacturers Zhongxing, Geely and Changan have all established auto manufacturing plants in Mexico. And China's ZTE has started producing smartphones in Argentina together with local white goods manufacturer BGH, and plans to make tablet computers in Brazil.

In recent months, both US and Chinese leaders have toured Latin America. President Barack Obama visited Mexico and Costa Rica in May, and Vice President Joe Biden called in on Colombia, Trinidad and Tobago and Brazil. Just after Biden left the region, China's President Xi Jinping toured Trinidad and Tobago, Costa Rica and Mexico. An op-ed in the *China Daily* in June 2013 gloated:

During his visit to Latin America and the Caribbean, President Xi offered more than \$5.3 billion in financing, with few conditions attached, to its newfound Latin American friends ... . Making available this financing comes on top of the already \$86 billion in financing provided by China to Latin American governments since 2003. Simply put, the US and the array of largely Western-dominated international financial institutions have been surpassed by China's financial strength ... . Welcome to the brave new world!

A current point of contention is a controversial Chinese project in Nicaragua, where a Chinese company aims to build the 'Nicaragua Canal' — a proposed waterway through Nicaragua that would connect the Caribbean Sea and Atlantic Ocean with the Pacific Ocean. A newly registered Hong Kong company, HKND Group, was officially awarded the concession agreement in June giving it the rights to construct and manage the canal and associated projects for fifty years. HKND is led by Wang Jing, who runs the company Xinwei Telecom and denies any connection with the Chinese government. The massive US\$40 billion project gained approval from Nicaragua despite criticism from environmental groups and widespread scepticism about its economic viability. Once the project commences, it will take Chinese involvement in the region to a new height and, in the words of *China Daily*, usher in a brave new world.



Alicia Bárcena, executive secretary of Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe (CEPAL), meeting with Vice Premier Hui Liangyu.  
Source: CEPAL ONU

US in the South Pacific. The regional backlash in 2012–2013 from Japan, the Philippines, Vietnam and other Asian countries in response to Beijing's approach to territorial disputes and military modernisation might be seen as a further external constraint upon Chinese foreign policy.

## A Charm Offensive

By the middle of 2013, there were indications that China's leaders were increasingly aware of the severe diplomatic damage caused by its assertive posture of recent years. Beijing may be on the cusp of initiating a new 'charm offensive'. Two examples support this hypothesis.

China has traditionally backed its longstanding North Korean ally in times of crisis, such as in the wake of the March 2010 *Cheonan* sinking where Beijing stridently opposed joint US–South Korean military exercises in waters adjacent to China. But there are signs that relations between Pyongyang and Beijing are fraying as the latter's patience wears thin in the face of the constant provocations from the North. Speaking at the opening ceremony of the Boao Forum for Asia in April 2013, Xi Jinping asserted in a statement widely interpreted as being directed at Pyongyang that 'no one should be allowed to throw a region and even the whole world into chaos for selfish gains'. Similarly, following North Korea's third nuclear test in February 2013, China supported a fresh set of United Nations sanctions (UN Security Council Resolution 2094) designed to punish Pyongyang. Of particular interest, according to statements issued by South Korean officials, Beijing has been performing uncharacteristically well in ensuring that these measures are implemented at the local government level.

A second example is the new 'strategic partnership' with China announced by then Australian Prime Minister, Julia Gillard in April 2013. Beijing reportedly offered a similar deal to Canberra during the tenure of the Howard government, which refused it. The partnership was allegedly prompted by a letter from Gillard to Xi in 2012 and followed up with a visit from her envoy, then Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Dennis Richardson. Gillard subsequently called Xi in the month prior to her visit. The agreement will see Australia's Prime Minister meet annually with the Chinese Premier, as well as separate annual dialogues between the two country's Foreign Ministers and Treasurers and 'working level' talks between the Australian Department of Defence and the People's Liberation Army addressing regional security issues.

However, there are, inevitably, many sides to every China story. Among the commentators who don't believe that such developments indicate any significant shift in Chinese foreign policy is Rowan Callick, the highly regarded Asia-Pacific editor of *The Australian* and the author of *Party Time: Who Runs China and How* (2013). Callick sees the 'strategic partnership' as nothing more than a Machiavellian ploy on Beijing's part to draw Canberra away from its longstanding strategic ally, the US. In his terms, 'this is a long-term strategy, which is easier for China's new leaders, who anticipate a ten-year term ahead, to conceive than the Australian government'. Similarly, sceptical analysts regard Beijing's current distance from North Korea as nothing more than a temporary, tactical gesture designed to rein in Pyongyang while deflecting American calls for Beijing to exert more forceful economic leverage against the North. From this perspective, North Korea's strategic importance as a buffer against American encirclement of China makes Pyongyang too precious for Beijing to consider abandoning — no matter how much of a liability it becomes.

## China 2013: Civilised or Civiliser?

This chapter suggests that efforts by other powers to 'civilise' China's foreign relations have largely failed. Indeed, a strong case can be made that they have proven counter-productive. ASEAN attempts to 'civilise' Chinese foreign policy through the use of multilateral mechanisms, for example, have arguably prompted Beijing to make a concerted and largely successful effort to undermine that body. It could also be argued that the US pivot has produced a similar backlash from Beijing. Given that China has regarded itself as the very pinnacle of 'civilisation' for most of its 2,000-plus year history, this outcome should not be surprising.

At the same time, there's little evidence to support the proposition that China is emerging as a civilising force on the global stage. Its priorities remain focused quite close to home. As Yuan Peng of CICIR has observed:

In reality, China is not currently facing its greatest challenges, these challenges will arise in the next 5–10 years. These challenges will not come from the international scene or the Asian region, but instead will come from within; there will be a pressing need for internal reform or rectification of our social system. Real danger will not come from military confrontation or conflict, but instead will stem from the realms of the financial sector, society, the Internet and foreign affairs.

Evidence suggests that China remains quite a fragmented actor that is struggling to ‘civilise’ elements of its own foreign and national security machinery — particularly the military.

Internal Chinese debates on this subject have been lively. One concept being debated and discussed in intellectual circles is that of *Tianxia* — which translates literally as ‘All-Under-Heaven’ and has historically been used to connote both the country under the rule of a particular leader or power structure and the world at large. Developed by the philosopher Zhao Tingyang, and inspired by the model of the Zhou dynasty (1100–256 BC, tradition-



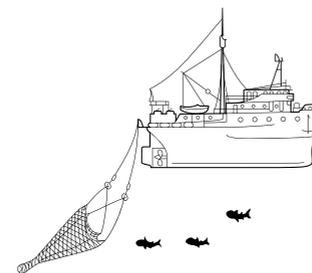
Flags of China and Brazil flying on Tiananmen Square.  
Photo: Fernando Jácomo

ally considered an ideal polity), *Tianxia* theory discussed in the Introduction of this *Yearbook* and in the following Forum, envisages a completely new, more inclusive vision of global order that champions ‘the world’ as opposed to the ‘nation state’ as the central unit of global politics.

Without associating himself with Zhao’s work, Tsinghua’s Yan Xuetong reinforces the view that foreign policy in China is a highly contested issue:

Western countries wonder what kind of leadership China is going to provide. Actually, this is very strange for a Chinese policy maker: ‘wait a minute, our policy is that we won’t provide any leadership ... . The question is: should China offer international norms? Should China take on international responsibility? Should China become the leader? Should China become a superpower? Before we discuss how we go about leading we must answer these questions.

In the final analysis, the 2012–2013 period has raised more questions that it has answered regarding China’s foreign policy approach and larger global role. Yan Xuetong’s observation suggests we could well be living with this reality for some time yet.



FORUM



## FORUM

POLITICS  
AND  
SOCIETY

## POLITICS AND SOCIETY

China's Political Spectrum

· SEBASTIAN VEG

*Tianxia*

· RICHARD RIGBY

Social Issues and Intellectual Trends

## CHINA'S POLITICAL SPECTRUM

Sebastian Veg

As the dust settled following the Eighteenth Congress of the Chinese Communist Party held in November 2012, and the transition period of party-state leaders drew to a close with the National People's Congress session in March 2013, it was time to reflect on the outcomes of the latest leadership turnover.

Many commentators have noted a change in style, beginning with Xi Jinping's relaxed attitude when announcing the new Standing Committee (in contrast with Hu Jintao's usual wooden delivery of his work report only days before), yet it remains doubtful that style will translate into substantial reform. Rather than focussing on the micro-politics and factional jostling of Zhongnanhai — an environment about which one is hard

pressed to produce anything more than informed guesswork — the following notes are the result of taking a step back from the minutiae of politics and speculation in China today and situating the transition within a larger social and intellectual context.

In the first place, the transition can be viewed from the two perspectives of institutionalisation and politicisation. An important question raised in the run-up to the Congress, especially in the context of the fall of the Chongqing Party Secretary Bo Xilai in March 2012, was to what extent the procedural mechanisms were strong enough to resist Bo's challenge, and whether the new leadership would propose a clear political line in response to those who aspire to reintroduce

politics into the Party's technocratic discourse of governance.

Although many commentators have criticised the new Politburo Standing Committee (PBSC) for its alleged conservatism, it may make more sense to highlight the evacuation of political factors in choosing the candidates. All members of the previous Politburo aged sixty-seven or under were up for promotion; however, rather than striking a balance between 'elite princelings' and 'populists', promotion took place strictly by age (aside from the two top leaders), with Politburo members young enough to enter the PBSC in 2017 being left out of (the 2012) selection. This provided a most convenient non-factional explanation for the decision to restrict it to seven members, allowing a 'depoliticised' compromise for PBSC membership. The institutionalisation of succession by age has attained a high degree of refinement: ten years in advance of the next transition, Hu Chunhua and Sun Zhengcai (both born in 1963) were preferred for induction into the Politburo over Zhou Qiang (b.1960). In this sense, we may say that the transition favoured institutionalisation

over politics. This was compounded by the setting of an historical precedent with Hu Jintao stepping down as head of the Central Military Commission at the same time as handing over the position of Party General Secretary.

Another perspective from which to view the post-Congress wash-up is the sociology of the elites, and the capacity of the Chinese Communist Party to absorb newly emergent and rising social groups. While admirers of China's 'authoritarian resilience' tend to highlight the meritocratic dimension of the party leadership-promotion system, in keeping with the growing 'institutionalisation' of non-democratic decision-making procedures, Xi Jinping's immediate symbolic call to fight corruption attests to how deeply the regime, including the arm devoted to economic policy and the governance of state-owned enterprises, is paralysed not only by egregious corruption, but also by factional infighting, patron-client ties and vested interests (*jide liyi* 即得利益 has become a catchword). While, in terms of the institutionalisation of succession procedures, the new PBSC may



Delegates voting at the Congress.  
Source: Xinhua

be seen as providing a successful example of the evacuation of political challenges within the system, on the sociological level, with the exception of Li Keqiang, it is dominated by offspring of former leaders ('princelings'). In this sense, the leadership risks being confronted by an ever-wider coalition of groups who feel excluded from the small circles of power that make decisions behind closed doors (China's urban 'white collars' may be fed up with being governed by 'black collars'

with their nexus of party-state power), and infighting for the next major PBSC turnover in 2017 has probably already begun.

The third perspective on the party-state power transition relates to state-society relations and the familiar alternating periods of *fang* 放 (relaxation) and *shou* 收 (repression). As many analysts have noted, there has been a documentable ratcheting up of repression since 2008, regardless of whether this was triggered by the Tibetan uprising, the Olympic



Voting at the Congress.  
Source: Xinhua

Games, the Ürümchi protests or the sixtieth anniversary of the People's Republic. According to the usual cycle, there is a good chance that it will be followed by a wave of *fang* — something perhaps suggested by the downgrading of the head of Political-Legal Committee from PBSC membership.

In recent years, the Stability Maintenance system, encompassing the Ministries of State and Public security and various other bodies under the overall responsibility of Zhou Yongkang, has been able to se-

cure huge funding for its activities, thus becoming one of the greatest entrenched interests of all. Hence, the recent announcement by the new head of the Political-Legal Committee, Meng Jianzhu, that the practice of Re-education Through Labor would be abolished probably also reflects a desire at the top to rein in the security apparatus and its rising costs. However, a phase of *fang* or relaxation will not necessarily mean less control overall, but rather simply control of a different nature. After all, the Party has become in-

creasingly interested in the pursuit of what we may call corporatism or 'incentivised authoritarianism'. This is an approach in which carefully vetted non-governmental structures are employed to pull certain sectors of society into the orbit of the state and then ultimately outsource control of society to them. This type of 'social management' (*shehui guanli* 社会管理), which can also be seen as a Chinese version of global managerialism, is evident both in the policing of the Internet and oversight of NGOs. We might see such forms of creative Party-directed social management strategies extended through a number of symbolic measures, such as *hukou* 户口 or household registration reform, the one-child policy or assets disclosure of government officials.

The questions of greater elite diversity and shifting social control from repression to the cooptation of society via vetted para-state organisations brings us back to the question of politicisation. Any reform agenda can only be successful, even in a limited way, if it can mobilise widespread support inside and beyond the Party. However, while in the 1980s there was a remarkable,

if temporary, consensus between a broad swathe of thinkers in China's intellectual world and a group of reformers and technocrats within the state bureaucracy, since 1989 consensus has proven elusive, even among intellectuals. This has been the case in regard to specific policy alternatives as well as for more fundamental questions such as the nature of the Chinese nation, the place of revolution in twentieth-century Chinese history, and the ideal institutional framework for the state in the twenty-first century. In recent years, we have seen a growing divergence between 'organic' intellectuals who keep a foot inside the system and the search for alternatives outside it in the arenas of legal and social activism, rights defence, as well as academic, journalistic or artistic research on 'vulnerable groups' (*ruoshi qunti* 弱势群体). Reform proposals for the polity as a whole have ranged from the most gradual to the most radical, like those of the authors and signatories of Charter 08 which called for political liberalisation. Where, if at all, can intellectuals inside and outside the system find the impetus for a new consensus?

The retired Peking University professor of Chinese literature Qian Liqun has proposed a useful typology of current intellectual positions, which he divides into six clusters:

- the 'China Model', based on nationalism, statism and populism: encouraged by the government, with a strong popular base
- Mao-nostalgia, supported by certain old cadres, intellectuals and laid-off workers
- 'New Democracy', brought back into the limelight in recent years by Liu Yuan and Zhang Musheng and supported by the 'Red Boomers', based on absolute preservation of the power of the Party but more flexible on policy matters
- Social democracy inspired by the theories of the late Xie Tao, allying constitutionalism and social protection, supported by publications like *Yanhuang Chunqiu* 炎黄春秋
- Liberal constitutionalism (Charter 08), supported by a strong majority of the metropolitan media and NGO workers
- New Confucianism, which supports a return of the state and the use of National Studies (*guoxue* 国学) as an element of soft power, with a strong anti-Western streak.

This typology is quite useful as it offers a more nuanced account than one-dimensional analysis of the 'New Left' and 'New Right', which in recent years have also been loosely aligned with the Guangdong and Chongqing 'models'. This kind of binary analysis structures (and strictures) the analysis and understanding of China's complex intellectual topography among many Western analysts. In

such a landscape, liberal constitutionalists are also advocates of privatisation and laissez-faire capitalism, while 'leftist' alternatives are found only on the side of pro-party intellectuals like Wang Shaoguang.

However, Qian Liqun does not specify how these groups or forces are situated on a political spectrum; such a classification would be useful in thinking about possible alliances.

These six groups could be arranged according to a classic left to right graduation: Neo-Maoists would be the furthest on the left, followed by New Democracy, Social Democrats, Liberal Constitutionalists, with New Confucians (a category which might be usefully broadened to include 'Neo-Traditionalists') furthest to the right. Supporters of the China Model seem versatile or apolitical, sharing a form of populism with the Mao-nostalgics, cultural nationalism with the Neo-Traditionalists and the primacy of the absolute power of the party with advocates of New Democracy.

Where, then, on this political spectrum might a new consensus emerge? Various options seem possible. On the right we might see a conjunction based on nationalism, anti-Westernism and the rejection of democracy, which could federate all groups except social democrats and liberals. An alliance to the left, however, might be based on the idea of corporatism: by co-opting carefully vetted NGOs and various other non-government groups and outsourcing the provision of social services to them (as Wang Yang success-

fully did in Guangdong), it could both increase control of society and, at the same time, improve social services, something advocated by proponents of the 'Chongqing Model' and the New Left.

The last option, which might seem the most desirable, also appears the most unlikely: an alliance of moderates at the centre, one which rejects both the neo-Maoist model of a state-controlled society and the capitalist jungle in favour of a framework that offers both constitutionalism and social justice. Such an alliance, which could bring together Liberals and the Chinese version of Social Democrats, with strong support within the modern media would, nonetheless, need to broaden drastically its appeal, not only to certain Neo-Traditionalists, but most importantly among princelings, technocrats or other groups whose support would be crucial for the realisation of the reforms such an alliance might advocate.



**TIANXIA**

天下

Richard Rigby

In its essence, *Tianxia* 天下, or ‘All-Under-Heaven’, can be taken as a concise way of speaking of the traditional Chinese vision of the world order. It is traditional in that its roots go back to philosophical texts as early as the Zhou period (1046–221 BCE). The world view summoned by *Tianxia* developed dynamically as the nature of the Chinese polity, sometimes represented by a grouping of rival states and other times a single mega-state, evolved. Confucian norms of hierarchy and morality deeply inform the concept of *Tianxia*, which remained a powerful influence through China’s dynastic history.

It continued to exert its influence in the Republican era (1912–1949) as well. It is encapsulated in Sun Yat-sen’s slogan *Tianxia wei gong* 天下

为公 — ‘The World is For All’, and was also the name of an important English-language journal of that period, *T’ien Hsia Monthly*. The contributors to that journal interpreted *Tianxia* as encompassing both patriotic aspirations and a generous spirit of cosmopolitanism. Many members of the Republican elite, who closely observed and commented on European and American cultural affairs as well as Chinese political and cultural trends, aspired to be equal members of the global community.

The concept of *Tianxia* reappeared in the outpouring of sentiment critical of the Communist Party and its policies in 1956–1957 during the ‘Hundred Flowers’ period: the celebrated journalist and editor Chu Anping warned that China had be-

come a ‘Party Empire’ (*dang tianxia* 党天下). The term largely disappeared from public discussion thereafter (along with Chu, who was labelled an ‘anti-Party, anti-people, anti-socialism bourgeois rightist’). It has now re-emerged as mainland scholars attempt to develop a uniquely Chinese approach to the theory and practice of international relations. We may situate this within the wider narrative of Chinese exceptionalism, the discussion of ‘Chinese characteristics’ and China’s search for ‘discursive authority’ (*huayuquan* 话语权) — that is, definitive ways of speaking about reality.

A series of articles and books by Zhao Tingyang of the Philosophy Department of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences explicates the contemporary, utilitarian form of *Tianxia*. Zhao argues that the world we know is still a ‘non-world’, inasmuch as it has not yet become a single entity, remaining in a Hobbesian state of chaos. The key problem is not failed states, but a failed world. The world needs ‘an institutionalized system to promote universal wellbeing, not simply the interests of some dominating nations’. By maintaining the

interests of nation states, globalisation exacerbates international conflict rather than promoting universal wellbeing. The United Nations, too, fails as a truly global institution by performing only as an organisation in which nations negotiate and bargain in their own interests; moreover, it lacks the power to resist domination by any superpower.

Enter the concept of *Tianxia*, first developed by the Zhou to govern the many culturally and ethnically diverse tribes and kingdoms under their rule. Zhao Tingyang acknowledges that this system eventually failed. He believes that it still provides the basis for the creation of a system the world sorely needs. His *Tianxia* is inclusive of all people and all lands; it understands the world as being physical (territory), psychological (national sentiment) and institutional (a world institution). It would rebuild the world on the model of the family, making it a home for all peoples, somewhat in line with Sun Yat-sen’s *Tianxia wei gong*. The ‘world institution’, as the highest political authority with global reach, is crucial to this model, which envisages a world characterised by harmony,



‘The World is For All’.  
Calligraphy by Sun Yat-sen, 1924.  
Source: Wikimedia Commons

co-operation, and without hegemony in any form. Zhao’s work has elicited both positive and critical responses within and beyond the borders of the People’s Republic. Reviewing Zhao’s two major books, Feng Zhang, an associate professor in the Department of International Relations at Tsinghua University, writes that Zhao’s work has ‘made him a star in China’s intellectual circles, helping to extend his influence beyond the confines of philosophy into the realm of international relations’. Feng Zhuang also credits Zhao’s *Tianxia* theory as having had a ‘huge impact’ on China’s international relations scholars. Internationally, Zhao’s theory is of sufficient importance to have warranted a major workshop at Stanford University in May 2011, with fourteen scholars from Asia and North America in attendance.

Zhiqun Zhu claims that the *Tianxia* theory, together with the radical thinking and reform movements of China’s nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and the traditional concept of the tributary system form the ‘three milestones of China’s ideational and practical development and therefore could provide rich nutrition

for a Chinese international relations theory'. Zhang Yimou's blockbuster film *Hero* (*Yingxiong* 英雄), which celebrates the ancient Qin dynasty quest for unity despite the cost: the obliteration of difference and opposition, offers a somewhat disconcerting, if subliminal vision of *Tianxia* to global and Chinese audiences alike.

Yet even some of Zhao's Chinese supporters acknowledge his concept as interesting, even beautiful, but criticise it as ultimately utopian and lacking any practical pathway to realisation. Others argue that it is based on a flawed understanding of the Zhou dynasty example. Still others have warned that the idea attempts to revive a China-centred hierarchical world order. Professor William A. Callahan of the London School of Economics reaches an identical conclusion: 'rather than guide us toward a post-hegemonic world order, *Tianxia* presents a new hegemony where imperial China's hierarchical governance is updated for the twenty-first century'. The international relations scholar Yan Xuetong of Tsinghua University, who himself draws deeply on Chinese traditions of statecraft and international relations in his work,



Zhao Tingyang's book *The Tianxia System: World Order in a Chinese Utopia*.  
Source: Wikimedia Commons

declares that in no way should Zhao be regarded as an international relations thinker: 'his books are about philosophy, rather than about the real world... . In fact I find it quite strange that Western scholars consider his work as part of the China IR schools.'

Yan's views notwithstanding, the concept of *Tianxia* now plays a significant part in debates within China about the role a 'risen' China should play in the world — a role that many Chinese thinkers agree should neither be defined nor guided by purely Western norms.



## SOCIAL ISSUES AND INTELLECTUAL TRENDS

### THE TOP TEN SOCIAL ISSUES

*Baidu, China's leading search engine, posted a list of the top ten search terms for 2012 in its Hot-button Social Issues (Shehui redian 社会热点) category. The terms, translations and a brief explanation of the context follow:*

#### **The Wang Lijun Affair** (*Wang Lijun shijian* 王立军事件)

The head of the Chongqing Public Security Bureau and the driving force behind the city's campaign against organised crime made news in February when he spent twenty-four hours in the US Consulate in Chengdu, directly precipitating the fall of the city's party secretary, Bo Xilai. Tried in September 2012, Wang was sentenced to fifteen years in prison for abusing his position and attempting to defect; the entertaining, gossipy exposés that subsequently came out in the media



**Wang Lijun on trial.**  
Source: CCTV

portrayed him as a megalomaniacal strongman obsessed with his image; at his own trial, Bo Xilai accused

Wang of additionally having had a special relationship with Bo's wife, the also-imprisoned Gu Kailai.

### The Price of Silver (*baiyin jiage* 白银价格)

The volatility of silver had investors and speculators frequently searching for its price, which fluctuated between US\$20–30 throughout the year.

### Bo Xilai Removed from Office (*Bo Xilai bei mianzhi* 薄熙来被免职)



Bo Xilai on trial.  
Source: CCTV

The Party dismissed Bo Xilai from his posts in Chongqing in March, and suspended him from the Politburo and Central Committee in April. Stripped of his last remaining position, as a member of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress in October, Bo was expelled from the Party on 4 November.



Car licence lottery in Beijing.  
Source: CarsChina.com

### Fuel Prices (*youjia* 油价)

Government regulators raised prices in February and March, lowered them in June, and raised them again in August.

### Paper Gold (*zhi huangjin* 纸黄金)

Gold certificates gave investors another place to put their money instead of real estate and stocks.

### Income Tax

#### (*geren suodeshui* 个人所得税)

The exemption threshold was increased from 2,000 yuan to 3,500 yuan in September 2011, and on 22 July 2012, the government announced plans to collect income tax on a household basis.

### Car License Lottery (*yao hao* 摇号)

Beijing implemented a lottery system for assigning car license plates in 2011 in an attempt to control traffic gridlock. Guangzhou instituted a similar system in August. A minor commotion arose in November when keen-eyed applicants noticed that the name Liu Xuemei had been picked in the lottery eight times since May. This turned out to be well within ordinary probabilities.

### Labor Contract Law (*laodong hetong fa* 劳动合同法)

The resolution of employment disputes now involves the use of this law.

### Double-ninth Festival (*Chongyangjie* 重阳节)

A traditional festival associated with chrysanthemums and hill climbing, 'Double-ninth' now doubles as 'Senior Citizens Day'.

### Bureau Chief's Daughter-in-Law Flaunts Wealth (*juzhang erxi xuan fu* 局长儿媳炫富)

The daughter-in-law of the Director of the Drug Administration of Sanmenxian, Zhejiang province, posted photos of her luxury purchases



Bureau chief's daughter-in-law posted her luxury purchases online.  
Source: Weibo.com

online, boasting that her husband held a highly paid sinecure at a local state-owned enterprise, drawing the wrath of online commentators and prompting police to investigate.

## THE TOP TEN INTELLECTUAL TRENDS

On 21 January 2013, the People's Tribune (Renmin luntan 人民论坛), a magazine produced by the People's Daily Publishing Agency, ran an article listing the top ten ideological trends, as decided by an online poll and a panel of experts. The article's brief descriptions of the top ten trends offer a pro-establishment perspective on some of the major issues in China and the world in 2012.

### Nationalism

Patriotism was the order of the day during several prominent international disputes involving China in 2012. The *People's Tribune* observes that Chinese nationalism was state-based (*guojia minzuzhuyi* 国家民族主义, as opposed to ethnic nationalism *minzuzhuyi* 民族主义), but that it tended toward extreme forms of expression, as in the violent sentiments expressed by young people participating in demonstrations over the Diaoyu Islands dispute. It is anticipated that extreme expressions of nationalism will continue to break out over the next several years.

### Marxism

In his Work Report to the Eighteenth Party Congress, Hu Jintao stated: 'The whole Party should have every confidence in our path, in our theories and in



Hu Jintao, former leader of the Communist Party. Source: Wikimedia Commons



The *People's Tribune* website with article on the top ten ideological trends, as decided by an online poll, on 21 January 2013. Source: rmlt.com.cn

our system', neatly encapsulating the concept of socialism with Chinese characteristics. Of these 'three self-confidences' (*sange zixin* 三个自信), the most significant is 'confidence in our theories', the article states. (It has also been the subject of fervent discussion among Neo-Maoists.)

### Neo-liberalism

The perennial privatisation debate heated up in late 2012 after a number of economists identified with neo-liberal values put forth provocative suggestions about the future of China's state-owned enterprises (SOEs). In November, Guo Shuqing, then Chairman of the China Securities Regulatory Commission, said that SOEs ought to 'shift 30 percent of their assets, instead of the current 10 percent, to the social security fund for preserving and increasing the value' (translation by *China Daily*). Zhao Xiao — an economist at the University of Science and Technology Beijing who specializes in state enterprise reform — applauded Guo's suggestion, adding: 'Using SOE dividends to enrich the social security fund is a good idea'. Zhang Weiying — a free-market economist — suggested in December that China will only have a full market economy when SOEs contribute ten percent of GDP. The favourable reception these opinions received had left-leaning ideologues worried that neo-liberals



Zhao Xiao, a Chinese economist specialising in state enterprise reform. Source: Baidu Baike

were stealthily swapping 'liberalism' for 'socialism' in the socialist market economy.

### Materialism

In a report released on 12 January 2012, the Beijing-based World Luxury Association (WLA) named China the world's biggest market for luxury goods, accounting for 28 percent of the global total. Although the WLA was publicly shamed in 2013 for fraud and had its business license revoked, there is no doubting the growing hunger for luxury consumption in China. That the WLA was not far off in its estimate was confirmed in December 2012 by a Bain & Company report claiming that Chinese consumers accounted for twenty-five percent of global luxury spending. The *People's Tribune* lamented the pursuit of materialism, calling the identification of liberty with the accumulation of material goods symptomatic of a new kind of 'Chinese malady'.

### Universal Values

The *People's Tribune* article identified a new tactic in the debate over 'universal values' (*pushi jiazhi* 普世价值). These values are generally un-

derstood in China to include concepts such as democracy and human rights. Opponents of universal values see them as Western inventions incompatible with China's social and political system: they accuse advocates of universal values of stealthily injecting them into discussions of other hot-button topics, and even of using them to subvert the 'spirit of the Eighteenth Party Congress' for their own ends.

### Extremism

The ideological split between 'left' and 'right' in China became more polarised in 2012, and in the crowded sphere of public opinion, people were driven to adopt extreme positions in order to be heard. Calls for complete privatisation the moment SOEs run into problems are matched on the other side by accusations that any criticism of SOEs is an attack on socialism. The Little Yueyue incident, in which a toddler was run over in a hit-and-run accident and ignored by passers-by (see the 2012 *Yearbook*), was to some people a sign of a looming moral apocalypse, but others pointed to heroic acts by common people in other situations as proof that public morality was in good order.

### Neo-Confucianism

A trend that began with early education has spread to encompass the reading of traditional classics by adults. The influence of Confucianism in the humanities has moved beyond the disciplines of history and philosophy and has been taken up within such disparate fields as economics, law, political science, sociology, religion and education.

### Populism

From developed Europe and Japan to fast-rising Russia and India and the countries of Latin America, populism crept into the political process in 2012 and found expression in right-wing governments and among grassroots politicians who turned public discontent into a base of support. The *People's Tribune* cautions that while populism can give voice to the needs of the underclass, its negative repercussions should not be ignored.



Funeral of Wu Bin, a driver who was acclaimed for doing his duty.  
Source: Baidu Baika

### Moral Relativism

Moral exemplars are often described in China as 'most beautiful' (*zuimei* 最美). In 2012, frequent reports of heroes like 'the most beautiful teacher', 'the most beautiful taxi driver', 'the most beautiful soldier' and 'the most beautiful mother' gave the public models of selflessness, courage and integrity. The *People's Tribune* opined that the beauty demonstrated by these heroes transcends moral relativism and reinforces positive values.

### Social Democracy

In addition to the French Socialists winning the presidency and a parliamentary majority in France, British Labour, Germany's Social Democratic Party and the Italian Democratic Party all made headway in 2012. After retooling their policies and refocussing their attention on their traditional political power bases following previous setbacks, European social democratic forces are making a recovery.



# 2

# REVOLUTION TO RICHES

Jane Golley

MARCH 2013

北京

BEIJING

President Xi Jinping introduces his anti-corruption campaign, vowing to fight the 'tigers' and 'flies' — powerful leaders and lowly bureaucrats.



**THIS CHAPTER** moves beyond the question of whether the Chinese economy is capitalist or socialist to reflect on the role of the Chinese state in developing a 'civilised' economy. Income inequality is one of the main challenges facing President Xi Jinping as he seeks to turn the China Dream into a reality for all Chinese people. Meanwhile, China's emergence as a major global investor continues to challenge the rules, norms and institutions that govern the international economy, igniting highly charged debates about the role of the state in an increasingly globalised, but not always entirely civilised world.

## Stirring the Soul

In 2012, Bloomberg News published a series of articles titled ‘Revolution to Riches’ that revealed the vast wealth accumulating in the hands of the descendants of China’s ‘Eight Immortals’ (the founding fathers of the People’s Republic) and other ‘princelings’. The series depicts an elite ‘red nobility’ among whom are President Xi Jinping’s ‘millionaire relations’: the ‘powerful leaders of state-owned conglomerates’ and their ‘jet-setting, Prada-accessorized grandchildren’. The *New York Times* similarly revealed the ‘hidden billions’ — some US\$2.7 billion — of outgoing Premier Wen Jiabao’s son, daughter, younger brother, brother-in-law and other relatives in an investigative report that demonstrated ‘how politically connected people have profited from being at the intersection of government and business as state influence and private wealth converge in China’s fast-growing economy’. As China’s once-in-a-decade transition of power commenced, these were revelations that the Chinese Communist Party could have done without — even if most Chinese people didn’t have the chance to read them thanks to quick-acting censors.



Wen Jiabao,  
outgoing  
Premier.  
Source:  
Wikimedia  
Commons

In his debut speech as Premier in March 2013, Li Keqiang pledged to curb the power of bureaucrats, to reduce government spending and to provide a more level playing field for private enterprises. And President Xi Jinping introduced his anti-corruption campaign, vowing to fight the ‘tigers’ and ‘flies’ (powerful leaders and lowly bureaucrats), whose conspicuous displays of wealth have caused rising resentment among ‘ordinary’ Chinese. These were early signs that the new leaders are genuine in their desire to tackle vested interests. These vested interests include local governments, state-owned banks, politically influential families and the rising numbers of extremely wealthy Chinese who have clearly benefitted from China’s system as it is, but who are also inextricably linked to the pressing problems of corruption and income inequality as well as the difficulties that Chinese firms are facing in their drive to ‘go global’. Li Keqiang has acknowledged that ‘sometimes stirring vested interests may be more difficult than stirring the soul’. But he also knows that it is time to try.

## Capitalism/Socialism with Chinese Characteristics



‘Advance Resolutely Along the Way of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics’.  
Source: ImagineChina

At the Eighteenth National Party Congress in November 2012, outgoing President Hu Jintao stated that ‘the path of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics, the system of theories of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics and the Socialist System with Chinese Characteristics are the fundamental accomplishments of the Party and people in the course of arduous struggle over the past ninety-plus years’. To reiterate (and reiterate, and reiterate) this point, incoming President Xi Jinping used the formula ‘Socialism with Chinese Characteristics’ (*Zhongguo tese shehuizhuyi* 中国特色社会主义) seventyfive times in his own address to the Congress.

Deng Xiaoping is credited with promoting the theory of ‘Socialism with Chinese Characteristics’, the essential components of which are single-party rule, public ownership of the land, a dominant role for state ownership and state economic planning. These are all defining characteristics of the Chinese economy today. But Deng also famously emphasised: ‘The purpose of allowing some regions and some people to become prosperous before others is to enable all of them to prosper eventually. We have to make sure there is no polarisation of society — that’s what socialism means.’ For a regime so intent on stressing the socialist nature of its system, these are not words that can be ignored.

As Xi Jinping was stressing the socialist nature of China's system, Nobel laureate and University of Chicago economist Ronald Coase and his co-author Ning Wang published a book entitled *How China Became Capitalist*. In it, they describe China's accidental (and, they maintain, completed) transformation towards capitalism, 'from a broken economy where the market and entrepreneurship were banned to a vibrant one where market forces prevail and private enterprises blossom'. Academic studies like Christopher McNally's work on 'Sino-capitalism' in the journal *World Politics*, and *Capitalism with Chinese Characteristics* by MIT professor Yasheng Huang, more accurately depict a dual reality of a bottom-up, entrepreneurial, market-driven China and a top-down, state-controlled China. And the Leiden-based academic Frank Pieke describes China's system as 'neo-socialism', in which the state has selectively and gradually, but not 'fully retreated from the markets which its own policies have created, retaining a role for governments, state agencies, or state-owned enterprises as providers, regulators, and quite often also as major stakeholders'.

Where McNally stresses the importance of political relationships or *guanxi* 关系 networks for China's private entrepreneurs, Kjeld Erik Brødsgaard of the Copenhagen Business School focuses on the top-down, state-controlled half of the system. His notion of 'integrated fragmentation' reflects how state-owned enterprises (SOEs) have become autonomous (that is, fragmented), powerful, rich 'global giants' that nevertheless remain deeply integrated in the Party's rhetoric. This is the system that directly appoints or recommends close to 4,000 positions at ministerial and vice-ministerial level, including the CEOs of fifty-three major companies in 'strategic' sectors. The 'revolving doors' between politics and business provide the party elite with access to high-paying jobs (with the top CEOs earning more than 100 times the official governor's salary of RMB120,000), generating a web of vested interests throughout the system and creating an 'iron triangle' of state-party-business interests. This is neither 'completed' capitalism nor what Deng had in mind.



Jeans factory in Shunde, Guangdong province.  
Photo: Luigi Tomba

A review of the scholarly literature outside China thus shows that there is very little consensus about what China's economic system is, let alone what it should or could be. For many observers outside China, the bottom-up, entrepreneurial half of Chinese capitalism is the 'good' capitalism, and they maintain that China has prospered whenever this has been allowed to dominate — in the 1980s, for example, but not in the 1990s, according to Yasheng Huang, thanks to policy reversals that reinstated the state's control over the economy. He has less to say about China's economic successes this century, including the rapid urbanisation that has lifted millions of people from rural poverty, the emergence of China as the fifth largest global investor and its high and sustained rates of growth during the global financial crisis. Some would argue that these achievements were not *in spite* of the large and growing state-controlled segment of the economy, but *because* of it.

That said, the system has also created problems for China on an unprecedented scale. The savings of households deposited in low-interest bearing accounts in state-owned banks have been channelled towards large

SOEs, local governments, export industries and overseas investment. Local governments have accumulated, if anyone can accurately measure such things, more than eleven trillion yuan (US\$1.8 trillion) of debt, much of which appears to have been invested in projects of questionable economic value. According to the prominent independent Chinese think tank Unirule, China's state-owned and state-controlled companies may, in fact, have been operating in the red between 2001 and 2009 if you take into account their access to land at below-market prices, the unpaid use or acquisition of national resources, the cheap credit provided through the state banking system and other subsidies. This has resulted in a potentially unstable and highly inequitable domestic economy, in which 251 billionaires and 2.7 million millionaires (in US dollar terms) live alongside 180 million people who must survive on under US\$1.25 per day.

None of this heralds the imminent collapse of China's economy. The wealthy party-state has access to US\$3.2 trillion of foreign assets held by the People's Bank of China and US\$1.2 trillion in assets of one other state-owned bank, the China Development Bank (CDB), alone. These reserves have the potential to prevent such a disaster. It is true, nonetheless, that the nature of China's economic system matters, and in an increasingly globalised world it matters for all of us. It is time for a civilised dialogue about why this is so.

### Huawei's Political Connections

Huawei has worked hard to enhance its political and other connections outside China. According to Eric Anderson of the National Intelligence University in Washington DC, Huawei Chairman Ren Zhengfei already knew how to 'play the political game in Canberra' when he opened his first Australian office in Sydney in 2004. The Chairman of Huawei in Australia is retired Australian rear admiral, John Lord. The former Coalition government foreign minister Alexander Downer and former Labor premier of Victoria John Brumby are two of the directors on its Australian board.



Huawei Chairman Ren Zhengfei.  
Source: Wikimedia Commons

## Going Global

Over the last twelve months, there has been no shortage of heated debates regarding Chinese overseas direct investment (ODI), with contending views reflecting the complex and, for many, confusing role of the state in China's rise to a position of global economic influence.

The issue has been highly contentious in Australia — the number one destination for Chinese ODI — with accumulated investments reaching US\$51 billion in 2012. The Lowy Institute Poll 2012, an annual survey of Australian public opinion on foreign policy, revealed that the majority of Australians (fifty-six percent) think there is too much Chinese investment, even if most could probably not cite any figures, and they are most uncomfortable with investment by China's SOEs. The release of these findings in June 2012 may or may not have influenced the Liberal Party leader Tony Abbott's declaration at an Australian Chamber of Commerce speech in Beijing the following month that: 'It would rarely be in Australia's national interest to allow a foreign government or its agencies to control an Australian business'. Given that SOEs accounted for eighty-seven percent of China's investment in Australia in 2012, this was a significant comment to make.

It is perfectly reasonable for governments to protect 'national interests', which is what Australia's Foreign Investment Review Board has traditionally aimed to do. Yet many Chinese across the political and social spectrum

To bolster its positive image in Australia, Huawei sponsored the Canberra Raiders rugby league team in March 2012. Australian newspapers reported that Dennis Richardson — a long-time Raiders fan and then Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and now Secretary of Defence — had facilitated the deal. Richardson's office denied this.

In September 2012, Opposition communications spokesman Malcolm Turnbull announced that, if elected, a Coalition government would review the decision against Huawei's participation in the National Broadband Network that is being constructed in Australia. This would be on the grounds that while in opposition, the Liberal Party had not been 'privy to the security intelligence advice that the government has had'. It is impossible to know how much influence as a Huawei lobbyist Alexander Downer might have had on Liberal Party policy towards the Chinese company. Only one thing is certain: Turnbull is not a Canberra Raiders fan (he supports the Sydney Roosters).



Workers assembling and testing fiber optic systems.  
Photo: Steve Jurvetson

perceive recent decisions by the Board and the Australian government, under the Labor Party from 2007, as singling out Chinese investment for tougher-than-normal scrutiny, and lacking in transparency about which national interests are being protected and from what. Together with the results of the Lowy survey, this not surprisingly offends would-be Chinese investors who, according to Li Ruogu, Chairman of China's state-owned Export-Import Bank, are investing overseas on a purely commercial basis, rather than with any political, strategic or intelligence goals in mind. At the Boao Forum for Asia in April 2013, he noted that Chinese are becoming increasingly cautious about investing in Australia, and this may reduce inflows in the years ahead. As The Australian National University's Luke Hurst and Peking University's Bijun Wang put it in their jointly authored article 'Australia's dumb luck and Chinese investment' published in *East Asia Forum*: 'Australian policy naivety combined with a touch of xenophobia have undoubtedly played a role in choking back the growth and market access that sustained ODI would have otherwise brought'.

There is nothing civilised about xenophobia. Eric Anderson is even more explicit in his 2013 book titled *Sinophobia: the Huawei story*, in which he traces American suspicions of Huawei Technologies to a deep-rooted mistrust of anything Chinese. Huawei is a privately owned Chinese company that recently overtook Ericsson to become the largest telecommunications

equipment company in the world. Huawei hit the headlines in Australia and the US in 2012 when the Australian government rejected the company's proposed entry into the National Broadband Network on 'national security' grounds, and the US Congress released a report claiming that the use of Huawei's networking equipment in the US could pose a 'security risk' and should therefore be avoided. In response, the chairman of Huawei Australia, John Lord, accused both countries of 'raising protectionist walls against a privately owned company', arguing that 'in a globalised world with a global

### Rebalancing the Economy

In his final speech as Premier in March 2013, Wen Jiabao stressed that China's economy urgently needed to shift from an 'unstable, unbalanced, unco-ordinated, and ultimately unsustainable' growth model towards a more sustainable, balanced structure. The issue of how to 'rebalance' the Chinese economy has dominated central government policy rhetoric for nearly a decade. The key lies in shifting away from exports and investment towards domestic consumption as a key driver of growth. But 'rebalancing' also entails prioritising the development of less energy-intensive industries such as high-end manufacturing and service sectors, implementing market reforms to remove the distortions that have hitherto favoured producers at the expense of consumers and introducing measures to ensure a more equitable distribution of income.

Yiping Huang, of Peking University, argues that this rebalancing is already underway. Huang cites as evidence the rising share of consumption in China's GDP, the dramatic fall in its current account surplus (from 10.8 percent of GDP in 2007 to 2.6 in 2012) and improvement in the official Gini coefficient. While some question the accuracy of official Gini coefficients and raise the likelihood of other, significant measurement errors in Chinese national accounts data, no-one disputes that China will require significant reforms to facilitate further rebalancing, or that it is an issue that will dominate economic policy-making in the year ahead, and beyond.



Container ship Xin Mei Zhou of the Shanghai-based China Shipping Line.  
Photo: Michael R. Perry

## Huang Nubo Tries to Buy Iceland

In 2011, *Forbes* listed Huang Nubo, the real estate mogul, founder and chairman of Beijing Zhongkun Investment Group, as a billionaire with a fortune of 6.52 billion yuan (US\$1.05 billion). Huang fancies himself a poet (writing under the pen-name Luo Ying, he has published a collection of poetry on mountain climbing), and also dabbles in philanthropy (donating money to Peking University for educational causes) as well as polar expeditions. In the 1980s, before moving into business, Huang occupied a number of government positions, including in the Party's Propaganda Department.

In August 2011, Huang ignited a furore when he offered US\$8.8 million to buy 300 square kilometres of land in Grímsstaðir á Fjöllum in remote northwestern Iceland. As he explained in an interview with the *China Daily*, his interest in Iceland stemmed from the time he had an Icelandic roommate at Peking University, the translator Hjorleifur Sveinbjornsson. Huang's stated goal was to build a resort, golf course and hotel, with an emphasis on nature conservation and environmental tourism.

Some observers in Iceland immediately raised a red flag at the long-term implications of Icelandic territory passing into Chinese hands, potentially giving China access to deep-sea ports and Arctic oil reserves. The Icelandic Interior Minister Ogmundur Jonasson wrote on his website that the deal should be 'discussed and not swallowed without chewing'.

In early November 2011, Huang told the *China Daily* that he believed he had an eighty per cent chance of gaining approval for the deal from the Icelandic authorities. But on November 25 2011, the Icelandic government rejected the proposal, stating it would be incompatible with the country's laws, noting that such a deal was unprecedented in the country's history. In response, Huang accused the Icelandic authorities of prejudice against Chinese investors and of perpetuating an 'unjust and parochial' environment for private Chinese enterprises abroad.



**Huang Nubo.**  
Source: Baidu Baike

The media story died down. Then, in May 2012, Huang announced that 'after months of waiting', the Icelandic government had agreed to a rental lease on the land he had previously offered to buy outright. The project would go ahead after all. The lease was initially reported to be for forty years with an option for an extension of another forty. In July 2012, Huang revealed to the Chinese media that in addition to the luxury hotel and golf course, he now also planned to build one hundred villas 'mostly for wealthy Chinese' and to transform most of the rest of the land into a mountain park. These new details elicited strong criticism from Jonasson, who warned of the investment's negative environmental impact. In October, Huang told the *China Daily* that he was about to sign a deal worth US\$6 million with a ninety-nine-year lease on the land.

Yet Huang was foiled again. In December 2012, the Iceland state radio station RUV announced that the cabinet was unable to make a final decision on Huang's application due to a lack of information. Huang was required to reapply. Huang told Bloomberg News that he was 'angry and annoyed at how bad the investment environment in Iceland is'. Yet he maintained that he was not ready to give up.

In March 2013, Jonasson presented a new bill to the Icelandic government banning foreign citizens from owning properties in Iceland unless they have a legal domicile in the country. On 22 March, the *New York Times* published a long article on how Huang Nubo's proposed investment left many Icelanders 'baffled', especially his plan to build a golf course in a barren snow-swept wasteland. The far-fetched nature of the proposed investment raised suspicions that there was some ulterior motive on the Chinese side, for example an unspoken hope to gain a military foothold in the Arctic.

By then, it appeared as if Huang's patience (and luck) was running out. After waiting nearly two years, Huang told the *China Daily*, he was looking forward to a breakthrough in April. Failing this, he said, he might abandon the deal at the end of May. The end of May came and went; at the time of publication, there has been no clear denouement to the saga.

supply chain, the only viable solution to cyber security problems is collaboration between governments, technology vendors and operators'. In October 2012, a White House ordered classified inquiry into the security risks posed by foreign telecommunications suppliers to the US found no clear evidence to incriminate Huawei in anyway. In spite of this finding, suspicions have remained.

While I believe that John Lord is right, it is difficult to accept that the Chinese party-state has absolutely no influence on the operations of Huawei. The company, although ostensibly privately owned, has received tens of billions of dollars in lines of credit from the CDB during the last decade, and it maintains both personal and business connections with the government in ways that most outsiders simply don't understand, in good part because the links are neither entirely declared nor transparent. This is not to say that the Chinese state would encourage these firms to engage in cyber warfare, but rather that it is hard to prove that it could *not*. That said, numerous other countries, including Britain, Canada and New Zealand, have not demanded

this proof from Huawei, and the company has recently announced that it will no longer battle for the US market, focusing instead on the places where it has been made to feel welcome. Will Americans and Australians change their minds about Chinese investment when the economic consequences of its decline in their capital-hungry economies start to show?

Or are some of their suspicions well founded? The inextricable links between China's state and market are epitomised by the operations of the CDB. In their 2012 book on 'the world's most powerful bank', Henry Sander-son and Michael Forsythe explain how the wholly state-owned CDB finances its loans through bond sales, which are categorised as 'zero risk' because of their state backing, including a capital injection of US\$20 billion in 2007. This enables the bank to provide finance in quantities that no other banks can match, including more than US\$40 billion to Venezuela since 2008 and more than US\$90 billion to China's leading clean energy and telecommunication companies, of which the biggest recipient is Huawei Technologies. The book portrays CDB's Chairman Chen Yuan (the son of one of the 'Eight Immor-

tals' of the Party, Chen Yun) as a brilliant global banker who pioneered the system of local-government financing for domestic infrastructure projects, creating in the process an institution that is currently larger than the World Bank. They credit the CDB with financing a wide range of successful development projects at home and abroad using a range of innovative financial techniques. They conclude:

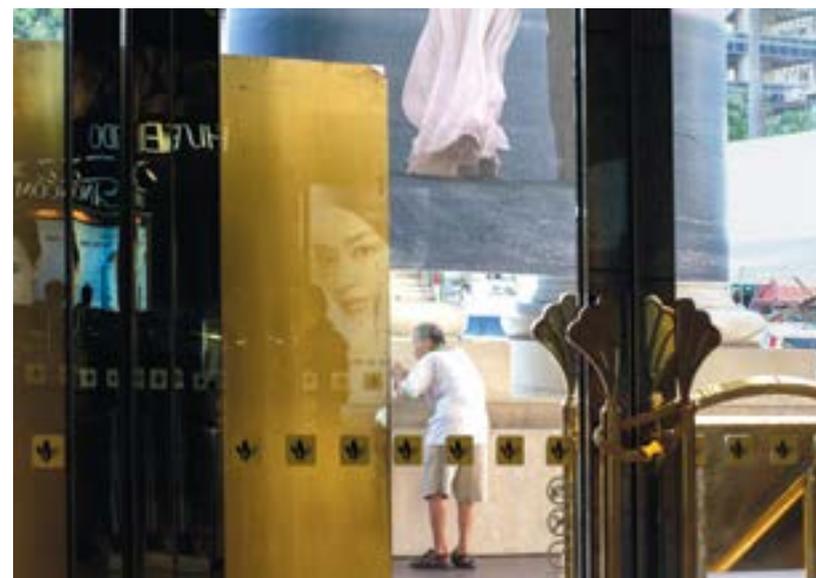
CDB is an extension of the Chinese state and the Communist Party, but it's also the reflection of one man. Through the power and connections of Chen Yuan, CDB has managed to preserve enough independence from the government to make investment decisions and function at times as a commercially driven institution. But since it is owned by the Chinese state and in turn the Party, and has its capital provided cheaply by them, there is no doubt that China's government will have a say in its future.

As Chen Yuan prepares to leave the CDB and head up the new BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) Development Bank announced in March 2013 and designed to fund infrastructure in emerging markets across the globe, this conclusion, if valid, has critical implications for global economic development in the future.

Murky links exist between political power and wealth everywhere in the world, not just in China — read David Uren's 2012 book *The Kingdom and the Quarry: China, Australia, Fear and Greed* to see it at work in Australia, and see the Information Window on Huawei in this chapter for just two examples. What is unique to China is the accumulation of such extreme wealth in the intricate web of a one-party state, which is well on its way to governing the largest economy in the world. Alleviating the fear this generates requires better communication and greater transparency from the Chinese side about how their system works, and greater efforts to understand the nature of that system by everyone else.

## Income Inequality

In January 2013, the Chinese National Bureau of Statistics released China's Gini coefficients dating back to 2003. The coefficient had risen steadily to a peak of 0.491 in 2008, falling since then to 0.474 in 2012. (The index lies between 0, representing perfect equality, and 1, representing perfect inequality.) Despite the recent improvement, Ma Jiantang, the head of the Bureau, emphasised that China urgently needed to 'speed up reform of the income distribution system to narrow the poor-rich gap'. The official Gini coefficient may substantially underestimate this gap: one Chinese academic study revealed a Gini coefficient of 0.61 for China in 2010, which would rank China among the most unequal countries in the world, behind a handful of African nations. Even the official estimate of 0.474, which places China roughly on a par with the US (which had a Gini of 0.45 in 2011), is well above the generally acceptable range of 0.3 to 0.4. The American leaders can use capitalism as an excuse. The Chinese leaders cannot.



From the series 'Great Mall of China' 中华商城.  
Photo: Adrian Suddenly Gordon

In February 2013, the State Council released a thirty-five-point plan for ‘deepening the reform of the income distribution system’, which is an essential component of the overarching goal to ‘rebalance’ the economy. The plan included:

- interest rate liberalisation (to provide household savers with higher returns and increase competitiveness in the banking sector)
- increasing the dividend payments of state-owned enterprises (to raise revenue for pensions and health insurance)
- limitations on the income of government officials
- removal of restrictions on rural-to-urban migration to promote urbanisation
- higher spending on education and housing
- measures to protect the rights of rural land owners.

### Bath Time: Clamping Down on Corruption

As we have noted elsewhere in this *Yearbook*, one of the first policy initiatives that Xi Jinping introduced was a comprehensive austerity drive to curtail party cadres’ more conspicuous indulgences. In December 2012, the Party’s Central Committee explicitly prohibited the use of ostentatious welcome banners, red carpets, floral arrangements and grand receptions on official occasions. The document contained a wide range of instructions and interdictions aimed at reducing inefficiency, formalism and extravagance. Party leaders were instructed to avoid long speeches and ‘empty talk’, not to attend ribbon-cutting or cornerstone-laying ceremonies and to shun unnecessary expenses.

In January 2013, Xinhua reported that ‘more than twenty provinces have issued detailed regulations to build cleaner governments’. On 31 January, the *Nanyang Evening Post* of Henan province reported that the Discipline Inspection Committee of Nanyang had launched a special new operation to ‘strictly investigate the use of public funds for eating and drinking’. The Committee had dispatched teams to hotels in the city to identify officials gorging themselves at the public trough. It called on city residents to denounce any government officials violating the rules on feasting, termed ‘big eating and drinking’ (*da chi da he* 大吃大喝). The head of the operation explained that his team would not rest until frugality was achieved and waste and extravagance obliterated. The newspaper quoted waiters who remarked on how much emptier and quieter the city’s restaurants had become in the wake of the new campaign.

Despite such campaigns, Xinhua reported in January 2013 in an English-language dispatch that there are still ‘a cohort of pussyfooters who rack their brains to keep their corrupt work-

There are signs that this plan will translate into direct action. In early 2013, the Ministry of Finance set targets for central government departments to reduce spending on receptions, vehicles and overseas trips (the ‘three public consumptions’, *sangong xiaofei* 三公消费). Whether those targets are reached obviously remains to be seen. The State Council, meanwhile, stated that the dividend payments of SOEs will be raised by five percentage points from the currently low range of five to fifteen percent. Notably, following this announcement, a number of public news outlets including the *Global Times* acknowledged that most of the dividends to date had been funnelled back into SOEs in order to support their development. The *China Daily* pointed out that: ‘Raising dividend payouts will therefore be meaningless if the money continues to be earmarked for the well-being of the country’s SOEs themselves, not the general public’. Allowing these kinds of criticism to appear in the tightly controlled public press may indicate that real changes are underway. Or it may

ing practices and lifestyles while maintaining good reputation’. Quoting anonymous hotel employees, the Xinhua article related that officials are still enjoying lavish banquets. They have simply moved them to secret locations and split into smaller groups. Xinhua’s secret sources also revealed that the saying ‘to eat quietly, to take gently and to play secretly’ (*qiaoqiaode chi, qingqingde na, toutoude wan* 悄悄地吃、轻轻地拿、偷偷地玩) had entered into common usage among officials as a code for discreet corruption.

In May, the Party’s Central Commission for Discipline Inspection, headed by Wang Qishan, ordered all officials and employees working in disciplinary and supervisory departments to discard all VIP membership cards by 20 June. Such cards give members access to a range of private venues for the discussion of illicit deals as well as services from dining to prostitution.

In June, Xi continued his austerity drive by announcing a ‘thorough cleanup’ of undesirable practices among party members. Stressing that public support is a matter of life and death for the Party, Xi’s new campaign targeted ‘formalism’ (*xingshizhuyi* 形式主义), ‘bureaucracy’ (*guanliao zhuyi* 官僚主义), ‘hedonism’ (*xianle zhuyi* 享乐主义) and ‘extravagance’ (*shemi zhi feng* 奢靡之风). In his own words, Xi wanted the campaign to focus on ‘self-purification, self-perfection, self-renewal and self-progression’, and urged party members to ‘look at themselves in the mirror, groom themselves, take a bath and cure what ails them’ (*zhao jingzi, zheng yiguan, xixi zao, zhizhi bing* 照镜子、正衣冠、洗洗澡、治治病). The new campaign uses the Maoist rhetoric of the Mass Line (drawing on the notion that wisdom resides in the people at large); the *People’s Daily* even launched a related website called Mass Line Net (*Qunzhong luxian wang* 群众路线网).

not. In an April 2013 article in *Foreign Affairs*, Evan Feigenbaum and Damien Ma describe the ‘growing chorus of pessimists’ who doubt that the new leaders have the vision and political will to implement crucial economic reforms. Among these pessimists are the ‘political doubters’, who question

... the new leadership’s resolve to overcome powerful vested interests that will resist reforms, especially among China’s state-owned enterprises. These powerful corporate players, this argument goes, will obstruct the leadership’s well-intentioned goal of boosting household incomes, defeating efforts to force state firms to pay more dividends that can be redistributed into social welfare programs.

Feigenbaum and Ma are themselves more optimistic about the prospects for reform. They note that Xi Jinping and Li Keqiang have already succeeded in diagnosing the major economic problems and prescribing many of the right solutions. And while translating words into action will be difficult, Li Keqiang himself has said: ‘It’s useless screaming about reform until you’re hoarse. Let’s just do something about it.’

It is too early to say whether Li Keqiang will be constrained by the iron triangle of state–party–business interests, which Brødsgaard refers to as the ‘heart of the beast’. But, on paper, at least, he does seem like the right man for the job. Li Keqiang has little personal wealth, an academic wife, a family with few connections to business and a PhD in economics from Peking University on China’s rural–urban disparities. With this background he can credibly state, with a nod to Confucian values, that: ‘Clean government should start with oneself. Only if one is upright himself should he ask others to be upright.’



Cranes meet tower.  
Photo: Hsing Wei

## Concluding Thoughts

There are differing perceptions about the health of China’s economic system and an equally glaring gap in opinions about whether the Chinese Communist Party is capable of reforming and developing that system in the years ahead. A pair of *Foreign Affairs* articles published in early 2013 epitomises the differences. In one, Eric X. Li, a venture capitalist in Shanghai with close links to Hu Jintao, claims: ‘The country’s leaders will consolidate the one-party model and, in the process, challenge the West’s conventional wisdom about political development and the inevitable march toward electoral democracy’. Li depicts a highly meritocratic and innovative state that enjoys widespread popular legitimacy, and that is extremely capable of tackling the long list of challenges that China faces. It would be hard for the Publicity (that is, Propaganda) Department to improve on Li’s glowing assessment, though it was not without critics.



Eric X. Li, a venture capitalist in Shanghai.  
Source: ImagineChina

**KEY WORDS AND PHRASES****Xi Jinping's Eight Musts**

We must persist in:

- maintaining the dominant role of the people
- liberating and developing social productive forces
- advancing reform and opening-up
- safeguarding social fairness and justice
- marching on the path of becoming well-to-do together
- stimulating social harmony
- peaceful development
- supporting the leadership of the Party.

**The Five Cardinal Principles**

The Four Cardinal Principles, which are to be upheld:

- the socialist path
- the people's democratic dictatorship
- the leadership of the Communist Party
- Marxism–Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought.

The Eight Musts have been added to this list to create the Five Cardinal Principles.

**Creating an Environmentally Friendly Culture** (*shengtai wenming jianshe* 生态文明建设)

Wen Jiabao, in his outgoing speech as Premier in early March, described significant progress in 'constructing a civilised ecology', or 'creating an environmental-friendly culture'. A 'civilised ecology' must at the very least be one in which its citizens can safely breathe the air. As we have noted elsewhere in this volume, the government has a tough job ahead:

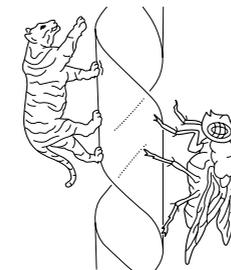
- China is home to sixteen of the top twenty most polluted cities in the world
- Just one percent of urban Chinese breathe air that is considered safe by European Union standards
- In January 2013, Beijing's air quality was described as 'hazardous', with PM2.5 readings reaching over forty times those considered safe by the World Health Organisation
- According to the Global Burden of Disease Study, air pollution in China contributed to 1.2 million premature deaths in 2010, accounting for nearly forty percent of the world's total and making 'smog' the fourth highest risk factor for deaths in China (following dietary risks, high blood pressure and smoking).



Street cleaners on the move.  
Photo: Hsing Wei

Yasheng Huang was one of those critics. In his article 'Democratise or Die: Why China's communists face reform or revolution', Huang debunks many of Li's arguments, arguing that democratisation is the only option for China, and that an increasing number of Chinese elites believe that the status quo is no longer viable. Despite the huge economic and social gains of the past few decades, the system 'has also proven ineffective at creating inclusive growth, reducing income inequality, culling graft, and containing environmental damage. It is now time to give democracy a try.'

Xi Jinping disagrees. In January 2013, the *People's Daily* and other major public news outlets introduced Xi Jinping's 'Eight Musts' (*bage bixu* 八个必须), part of his 'new political programme'. These have been added to Deng Xiaoping's Four Cardinal Principles to become the Five Cardinal Principles (*wuge jiben yuanzi* 五个基本原子) for Socialism with Chinese Characteristics, and it is worth noting that one them — that of 'persisting in the leadership of the Party' appears twice. The emphasis on fairness, justice, social harmony and peaceful development in the remaining 'Musts' are admirable. Regardless of the name given to the system, concrete measures to deliver on these Musts would certainly signal a move to a more civilised state and economy.



FORUM

A world map with a light blue background. A circular callout bubble is positioned over China, containing the text 'COUNTING AND CORRUPTION'. A vertical line extends from the bubble down to a horizontal line that spans the width of the page. On the left side of the page, there is a vertical scale with numerical markers from 50 to 130 in increments of 10. The word 'FORUM' is written in red capital letters on the left side, below the 20 mark. The title 'COUNTING AND CORRUPTION' is written in bold black capital letters on the right side, above a vertical line that separates it from the list of articles.

## COUNTING AND CORRUPTION

Party Policies from One to Ten

The Top Twenty People: Successful and Distasteful

Own Goal: Football in China

· BARRY VAN WYK

The Ugly Chinaman

· BO YANG

FORUM

## PARTY POLICIES FROM ONE TO TEN

*Chinese political and ideological campaigns are often packaged into mnemonics or numerical slogans. The habit long predates Communist Party rule. Sun Yat-sen — leader of the Republican revolution in the 1910s — for example, promoted the Three Principles of the People (sanmin zhuyi 三民主义), loosely translatable as nationalism, democracy and social welfare. The following are prominent party doctrines of the first months of the Xi Jinping–Li Keqiang period, organised from one to ten.*



**Sun Yat-sen,**  
leader of the  
Republican  
revolution.  
Source: Wikime-  
dia Commons

### **One China Principle** (*yige Zhongguo yuanze* 一个中国原则)

In 1992, representatives of the People's Republic of China and the Republic of China (which most of the world calls Taiwan) signed a document that became known as the '1992 Consensus', by which the two sides agreed to the One China Princi-



**Lien Chan,**  
Honorary  
Chairperson of  
Taiwan's rul-  
ing Nationalist  
Party.  
Source: Wikime-  
dia Commons

ple: that there is only one China and both the Mainland and Taiwan belong to it. Meeting in Beijing in February 2013 with the Honorary Chairperson of Taiwan's ruling Nationalist Party and former vice-president of Taiwan, Lien Chan, Xi Jinping reaffirmed the Mainland's unwavering commitment to peaceful reunification with Taiwan as well as the One China Principle.

### Two Things that Cannot be Negated (*liangge buneng fouding* 两个不能否定)

On 5 January 2013, Xi Jinping told a party meeting that: ‘The period of history after Opening Up and Reform cannot be used to negate the period of history before Opening Up and Reform; and the period of history before Opening Up and Reform cannot be used to negate the period of history after Opening Up and Reform’. Collectively, these two statements became known as ‘the two things that cannot be negated’ — the different accomplishments of the two eras of the People’s Republic’s sixty-year history: the Maoist era from 1949 to 1978, and the Reform era from 1979 until now.

### Three Articles of Faith (*sange zixin* 三个自信) and the Three Publics (*san gong* 三公)

In his report to the Eighteenth Party Congress in November 2012, outgoing Party General Secretary Hu Jintao articulated three articles of faith or self-confidence. He declared that these are the decoction of the experiences of ninety years of struggle, creativity and experience on the part of the Party and the People. The three articles are: unwavering confidence in the path (*daolu*

*zixin* 道路自信), theory (*lilun zixin* 理论自信) and system (*zhidu zixin* 制度自信) of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics.

Another trio that has come to even greater prominence since the Eighteenth Party Congress is the ‘Three Publics’. This is an abbreviation of the expression the ‘Three [excessive] Costs to the Public Purse’ (*sangong xiaofei* 三公消费), which are: overseas travel, limousines and official banquets — three common ways that officials live it up at public expense.

### Four Things to Guard Against (*sige li jie* 四个力戒) and Four Dishes and One Soup (*si cai yi tang* 四菜一汤)

Just before the Eighteenth Party Congress, the Party Secretary for Dandong in Liaoning province, Dai Yulin, published in the *Liaoning Daily* (*Liaoning ribao* 辽宁日报) his list of the four most crucial things for party members to guard against:



Dai Yulin, Party Secretary of Dandong in Liaoning province.  
Source: Wikimedia Commons

- misconduct and loss of probity
- failing to draw the line between friendship and favouritism
- abuse of power
- psychological imbalances linked to corruption.

Dai’s article was later published on the ‘Mass Line Net’ website set up after Xi Jinping resuscitated Mao Zedong’s concept of using a ‘mass line’ to connect with the people.

The first Ming emperor, concerned that officials were banqueting in the middle of a famine, declared that official meals should consist only of ‘four dishes and one soup’. After the 1949 revolution, the first premier of the People’s Republic, Zhou Enlai, revived the concept and, in 1984, Deng Xiaoping did the same. Now it is part of the anti-corruption drive launched by Xi Jinping in early 2013 that, among oth-

er things, has focused on extravagant dining and called on officials to eat more frugal meals. High-end restaurants in Beijing reported a sharp drop in their revenues in the first quarter of 2013.

### Five Don’ts (*wu bu gao* 五不搞)

In March 2011, Wu Bangguo, then a member of the Politburo Standing Committee and second in rank in the Party (although not the government), told the National People’s Congress that there were five things China would never do. There was to be:

- no multi-party democracy (*bu gao duodang lunliu zhizheng* 不搞多党轮流执政)
- no ideological pluralism (*bu gao zhidao sixiang duoyuanhua* 不搞指导思想多元化)
- no separation of powers or bicameral legislature (*bu gao ‘sanquan fenli’ he liangyuanzhi* 不搞‘三权分立’和两院制)
- no federalism (*bu gao lianbangzhi* 不搞联邦制)
- no privatisation (*bu gao siyohua* 不搞私有化).



Wu Bangguo, former member of the Politburo Standing Committee.  
Source: Wikimedia Commons

Since coming to power, Xi Jinping has not signalled any departure from the Five Don'ts.

- streamlining of government and the delegation of responsibility to lower levels (*jianzheng fangquan* 简政放权)
- punishment of abuses of power (*guan zhu quan li* 管住权力)
- careful management of public monies (*guan hao qian cai* 管好钱财)
- transparent and open government (*zheng wu gong kai* 政务公开)
- hard work and thrift in administrative practice (*qin jian cong zheng* 勤俭从政)
- investigations into corruption to be guided by the law (*yifa cu lian* 依法促廉).

### Seven Things That Should Not Be Discussed (*qige buyao jiang* 七个不要讲)

In May 2013, an internal circular entitled 'On the Current Situation in the Ideological Domain' (*Guanyu dangqian yishixingtai qingkuangde tongbao* 关于当前意识形态领域情况的通报) was distributed to party committees. A professor of political science at Shanghai's East China University named Zhang Xuezhong broke with protocol and openly

### Six Aspects (of the fight against corruption) (*liuge fangmian* 六个方面)

On 26 March 2013, Premier Li Keqiang addressed a meeting devoted to clean and honest government convened by the State Council. Li outlined six aspects of the government's anti-corruption campaign for 2013. In abbreviated form, the six aspects were:

discussed the contents of the document on his Sina Weibo microblog. He revealed that it listed seven topics on which universities and the media should discourage discussion. Zhang's post was soon deleted from Weibo and the topic was censored altogether.

The seven things that the Party does not want discussed are:



Zhang Xuezhong, professor of political science.  
Source: Wikimedia Commons

- universal values (*pushi jiazhi buyao jiang* 普世价值不要讲)
- freedom of the press (*xinwen ziyou buyao jiang* 新闻自由不要讲)
- civil society (*gongmin shehui buyao jiang* 公民社会不要讲)
- civil rights (*gongmin quanli buyao jiang* 公民权利不要讲)
- historical mistakes by the Party (*Zhongguo Gongchandangde lishi cuowu buyao jiang* 中国共产党的历史错误不要讲)
- Party-elite capitalism (*quanguo zichanjieji buyao jiang* 权贵资产阶级不要讲)
- judicial independence (*sifa duli buyao jiang* 司法独立不要讲).

### Eight Must Persists

(*bage bixu jianchi* 八个必须坚持)  
and Eight Honours and Eight Shames (*ba rong ba chi* 八荣八耻)

The Work Report of the Eighteenth Party Congress directed party members to 'firmly grasp the basic requirements in eight areas' — summarised as the 'Eight Musts or Eight Must Persists'. Party members must persist:

- in supporting the dominant position of the People (*bixu jianchi renmin zhuti diwei* 必须坚持人民主体地位)
- with the liberation and development of social productive forces (*bixu jianchi jiefang he fazhan shehui shengchanli* 必须坚持解放和发展社会生产力)
- with Reform and Opening Up (*bixu jianchi tuijin gaige kaifang* 必须坚持推进改革开放)
- in upholding and safeguarding social fairness and justice (*bixu jianchi wei hu shehui gongping zhengyi* 必须坚持维护社会公平正义)
- in the journey towards shared prosperity (*bixu jianchi zou gongtong fuyu daolu* 必须坚持走共同富裕道路)
- in promoting a harmonious society (*bixu jianchi cujin shehui hexie* 必须坚持促进社会和谐)
- with peaceful development (*bixu jianchi heping fazhan* 必须坚持和平发展)
- in upholding the leadership of the Party (*bixu jianchi dangde lingdao* 必须坚持党的领导).

Former President Hu Jintao's widely mocked 'Eight Honours and Eight Shames' disappeared from propaganda and state media several years before the end of his term. He first introduced the formula at the Sixth

Plenum of the Sixteenth Party Central Committee on 4 March 2006. The Eight Honours and Eight Shames were, according to the English translation provided by Xinhua in October 2006:

- Love the country; Do it no harm (*yi re'ai zuguo wei rong, yi weihai zuguo wei chi* 以热爱祖国为荣, 以危害祖国为耻)
- Serve the People; Never betray them (*yi fuwu renmin wei rong, yi beili renmin weichi* 以服务人民为荣, 以背离人民为耻)
- Follow science; Discard superstition (*yi chongshang kexue wei rong, yi yumei wuzhi wei chi* 以崇尚科学为荣, 以愚昧无知为耻)
- Be diligent; Not indolent (*yi xinqin laodong wei rong, yi haoyi elao wei chi* 以辛勤劳动为荣, 以好逸恶劳为耻)
- Be united, help each other; Make no gains at other's expense (*yi tuanjie huzhu wei rong, yi sun ren li ji wei chi* 以团结互助为荣, 以损人利己为耻)
- Be honest and trustworthy; Do not sacrifice ethics for profit (*yi chengshi shouxin wei rong, yi jian li wang yi wei chi* 以诚实守信为荣, 以见利忘义为耻)
- Be disciplined and law-abiding; Not chaotic and lawless (*yi zunshou fa wei rong, yi weifa luanji wei chi* 以遵纪守法为荣, 以违法乱纪为耻)
- Live plainly, work hard; Do not wallow in luxuries and pleasures (*yi jian'an ku fendou wei rong, yi jiaoshe yinyi wei chi* 以艰苦奋斗为荣, 以骄奢淫逸为耻).

### Li Keqiang in Nine Characters (*Li Keqiang jiuge zi* 李克强九个字)

At a press conference following the conclusion of the annual National People's Congress on 17 March 2013, the new Premier, Li Keqiang, answered a question from a journalist related to his personal vision (*geren qinghuai* 个

人情怀). Li summed up his insight into the world in nine Chinese characters — *xing dadao, min wei ben, li tianxia* 行大道、民为本、利天下 — roughly meaning: 'Follow the Great Way [which relates broadly to Daoist and Confucian thought]; [remember that] the People are the foundation of everything

[a Confucian precept]; and benefit All-Under-Heaven' [All-Under-Heaven is an expression that signifies the world, but traditionally refers to the civilised territory of China as we noted in the Forum 'Dreams and Power'].

### Ten Measures to Safeguard Stability in Tibet (*shiyige weiwen cuoshi* 十个维稳措施)



Chen Quanguo, Party Secretary for Tibet.  
Source: Wikimedia Commons

On 4 January 2012, a conference on stability maintenance in Tibet was convened in Lhasa. The Party Secretary for Tibet, Chen Quanguo, outlined ten measures for maintaining stability. They are, in abbreviated form:

- Heighten management in rural areas
- Strengthen and modify the management of monasteries and temples
- Implement a management system based on an urban grid to enforce social stability
- Prioritise the protection of Tibetan Buddhism and within the confines of the law, reconcile Tibetan Buddhism with Socialism with Chinese Characteristics
- Strengthen social control and the supervision of hotspots; closely monitor online activity and new means of communication
- Expand employment opportunities and improve people's living conditions.
- Promote peaceful coexistence between different ethnic groups
- Instill socialist vigour in students by strengthening control over campus life and shaping the opinions of young people
- Strengthen the influence of advanced socialist culture in order to guarantee the safety of all spheres of Tibetan ideology; thoroughly criticising, exposing and suppressing all influence of the Dalai Lama
- Make the maintenance of stability top priority; institute a chain of responsibility and mechanisms for dealing with emergencies.



## THE TOP TWENTY PEOPLE: SUCCESSFUL AND DISTASTEFUL

### THE LEADING ENTREPRENEURS OF 2012

In December 2012, *Entrepreneurs' Daily* (Qiyejia ribao 企业家日报) published its selection of China's leading entrepreneurs under the headline of 'Relaxed and Confident, Measuring their Forward March' (Congrong yu zixin zhangliang tamende bufa 从容与自信 丈量他们前行步伐).

#### **Pony Ma (Ma Huateng)**

Founder of Tencent, a provider of Internet and mobile services and online advertising. In 2012, the number of registered users of Tencent's mobile social app *Weixin* (WeChat) exceeded 200 million.

#### **Jack Ma (Ma Yun)**

Founder of Alibaba, a B2B (business-to-business) online marketplace. Alibaba had a huge 2012, with its Taobao online mall, for example, notching up a record sales total for one day of 19.1 billion yuan.

#### **Robin Li (Li Yanhong)**

Chairman of Baidu, a China-based Internet search engine. Li shifted Baidu's focus to cloud computing this year.



Jack Ma, founder of Alibaba, on stage.  
Source: ImagineChina

**Yu Liang**

CEO of Wanke Property Development. Under Yu's leadership, in 2012 Wanke made a series of foreign acquisitions and entered a number of Western markets.

**Yang Yuanqing**

CEO of Lenovo, the major Chinese electronics firm. In 2012, Lenovo became the world's leading seller of PCs.

**Ren Zhengfei**

Chairman of Huawei, the networking and telecommunications equipment and services company. With Huawei going from strength to strength, Ren entered the *Forbes* Rich List in 2011, and was named China's most influential global business leader by *Fortune* magazine in 2012.

**Liang Wen'gen**

Founder of the construction machinery firm Sany. Regularly featured prominently on lists of the rich and influential, Liang steered Sany to the high-profile acquisition of a German firm in 2012.

**Fu Chengyu**

CEO of the Chinese oil and gas giant China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC). In November, Fu was chosen by his peers as Global Oil Industry Leader of 2012; under Fu's stewardship, the Corporation has ventured into shale gas exploration.

**Wang Jianlin**

CEO of Wanda Real Estate. In 2012, Wanda completed its acquisition of a cinema chain in the United States, making it the largest operator of cinemas worldwide.

**Lei Jun**

Former CEO of Jinshan Software, founding CEO of Xiaomi, a mobile phone manufacturer. Lei won a number of awards this year for his innovations in mobile Internet systems, and was named China Central Television's 2012 Economic Cutting-edge Personality.

**Zhang Ruimin**

CEO of consumer electronics and home appliances company Haier. In 2012, Haier acquired Fisher & Paykel Appliances of New Zealand.

**Liu Yonghao**

Founder of New Hope, China's largest producer of fodder and largest livestock company. In 2012, Liu featured prominently in the official me-

dia for his work in developing plans for food security for farmers and urban centres.

**THE MOST HORRID PEOPLE OF 2012**

*In the last week of November 2012, a list of ten polarising characters associated with nationalist rhetoric circulated briefly on Sina Weibo before being abruptly deleted. Titled the 'Top Ten Horrid People' (Shi da exin renwu 十大恶心人物), the list is comparable to the list of 'traitors' (hanjian 汉奸) that was drawn up by neo-Maoist nationalists at the end of 2011 and published in China Story Yearbook 2012. The controversial anti-fraud crusader Fang Zhouzi enjoys the distinction of making both lists. Following is the list of the Top Ten Horrid People of 2012, as reported and explained by the China Media Project at Hong Kong University, republished here with permission and slight modification.*

**Sima Nan**

A well-known Mao-style leftist, also dubbed the 'anti-American warrior'. He famously said that fighting America was his work, while travelling to America was a lifestyle choice.

**Kong Qingdong**

A Peking University professor with a brutal, haranguing media style. During one rant he famously described the people of Hong Kong as 'dogs'.

**Han Deqiang**

A professor at Beihang University and a representative figure of China's New Left. During anti-Japanese protests in Beijing in September 2012, Han slapped an old man for taking issue with the use of the slogan 'Mao Zedong, we believe in you'.

**Wu Danhong (a.k.a. Wu Fatian)**

A professor at Beijing's Renmin University who frequently decries dissident

opinion on the Internet. He himself has been derided as a representative figure of the allegedly paid commentariat ‘Fifty-cent Party’ (*Wumao dang* 五毛党) (for more on the Fifty-cent Party, see the 2012 *Yearbook* and Chapter 6 below). His alter-ego, Wu Fatian, refers to a saying once used by Mao Zedong: ‘I’m like a [bald-headed] monk carrying an umbrella: I have no hair [*fa* 发 a homonym for law 法] or heaven above [*tian* 天]’ (*heshang da san: wu fa wu tian* 和尚打散无发/法无天).

### Fang Binxing

President of Beijing University of Posts and Communications, Fang is the architect of the online censorship system; he is known as ‘the Father of China’s Great Firewall’ (see Chapter 6).

### Zhang Zhaozhong

A professor at China National Defense University, Zhang holds views that invariably reflect a high degree of conformity with those of the authorities; he is a special commentator on military affairs for the national broadcaster China Central Television (CCTV). In 2012, he told a reporter that: ‘The most important qualification for an outstanding TV news commentator is not knowledge

but political character and moral fibre. Political character demands that you must unconditionally maintain unity with the Party.’

### Rui Chenggang



Rui Chenggang, CCTV reporter.  
Source: ImagineChina

A reporter with CCTV, Rui has made a reputation for himself by asking awkward questions at international forums. At the Davos Forum in Dalian in 2011, for example, he asked US Ambassador Gary Locke if he had travelled economy class as a way of reminding the Americans ‘that the US owes China money’. He became a laughing stock online.

### Fang Zhouzi

A complex figure, Fang was originally a manager for an overseas website. Following his return to China, he became a full-time science cop exposing academic grifters and was dubbed a ‘fraud-fighter’ by the media. He made his reputation by questioning and criticising public figures, yet he has also willingly taken on a public role on behalf of the authorities in suppressing proscribed religious activities.

### Hu Xijin

Editor-in-Chief of the *Global Times* newspaper. *Global Times* is the mouthpiece of China’s nationalistic left and has been called the ‘headquarters of China’s angry youth’.

### Zhang Hongliang

A leading revivalist Maoist theorist and frequent contributor to the radical website Utopia (*Wuyou zhi xiang* 乌有之乡).



## OWN GOAL: FOOTBALL IN CHINA

Barry van Wyk

### **A Dagger to the Heart**

On Monday 17 June 2013, the front page of Nanjing's *Oriental Guardian* (*Dongfang weibao* 东方卫报) described the latest defeat of China's national football (soccer) team as 'a dagger deep into the heart of every Chinese football fan' (*xiang yiba jiandao shenshendi celtong meiyige qiумide xin* 像一把尖刀深深地刺痛每一个球迷的心). The *Oriental Guardian's* hyperbolic language was indicative of the visceral response engendered by the embarrassing loss. The match in question was a friendly against Thailand held at the Olympic Sports Stadium in Hefei, capital of Anhui province. Having lost two home matches against Uzbekistan and Holland earlier in the month, China was expected to perform better against a

Thai team composed mostly of young and inexperienced players. Instead, in front of a crowd of around 20,000 fans, Thailand handed China a drubbing of five goals to one.

After the game, a crowd of angry fans besieged the bus of the Chinese team and chanted for the coach to be sacked. They also shouted 'Disband the Chinese Football Association!' (*Zuxie jiesan!* 足协解散!) and 'Disband the national team!' (*Guozu jiesan!* 国足解散!). The crowd grew violent and one hundred people were reportedly injured. Over the following two days, the editorials in *Oriental Guardian* and other newspapers across China voiced despair at the loss, which was seen as a national disgrace.

## More than a Game

The *Oriental Guardian* editorial pointed out what every Chinese football fan knows all too well: the embarrassing defeat in Hefei was due to a lot more than just a lack of sporting skill. Apart from the corruption and mismanagement that have plagued Chinese football for years, cities lack adequate football facilities, and there are no institutions to nurture talent or encourage grassroots teams that in other countries form the basis of a football culture. In 2011, the Chinese Football Association (CFA) — the official body with oversight of the game — had a mere 7,000 registered young players aged thirteen to eighteen years on its books. Japan, by contrast, had 600,000, and France had 1.46 million.

Problems arose with the advent of professional football in China in the 1990s. The first professional national league was set up in 1994, composed of clubs largely run as commercial ventures and with lavish sponsorships from state-owned enterprises. Initially, player salaries were low, but they began to rise as the clubs, buffered by a state-funded safety net, took on more debt. By 1998, the average attendance per game hovered at around 20,000.



Members of the Chinese national football team walk dejectedly off the field after their 1-5 drubbing by a young Thai team in Hefei, Anhui province, 15 June 2013.

Source: ImagineChina

Growth then began to stall as fans started to question the standards of both the playing and the refereeing, as well as the commitment of players to the game. In 1996, the president of the CFA publicly berated the national team for not training hard enough and for gambling, drinking and smoking. Insiders muttered about bribery and match-fixing run by gambling syndicates. Gradually, players, coaches, referees and officials alike were dragged into corrupt dealings; even spots on the Chinese national team were up for sale.

By 2000, corruption was so endemic that some sponsors withdrew support in disgust — the privately-owned auto manufacturer Geely, for example, ceased supporting a club in Guangzhou. Accusations of corruption began to surface in public in 2001, when Chen Peide — the head of the Zhejiang Sports Bureau — publicly lambasted the bribing of referees and the influence of betting syndicates. Yet Chen's condemnation of these corrosive practices resulted in only the meekest of crackdowns. The CFA — whose senior leaders were deeply implicated in the match-fixing and bribery — was given the problematic task of investigating

itself. One lone referee was sentenced to a ten-year jail term for taking bribes in 2003 — he was the only one who had confessed.

In 2004, the professional league reorganised itself as the 'Chinese Super League' (*Zhongguo zuqiu chaoji liansai* 中国足球超级联赛, or *Zhongchaolian* 中超联 for short), consisting of twelve teams (later expanded to sixteen). But the reorganisation did nothing to address the corruption plaguing the game, and it showed: the inaugural season of the Chinese Super League saw the lowest-ever average attendance per game of little more than 10,000 people. Chinese football seemed to be in a terminal state of decline. This was typified by the national team's abysmal showing at the 2002 World Cup held in South Korea and Japan (the only World Cup China has ever qualified for). Riding a wave of home support, South Korea, with a population of less than fifty million, went all the way to the semi-finals; China failed to score a single goal.

In November 2008, the state broadcaster China Central Television (CCTV) announced a total ban on broadcasting Chinese professional league matches, accusing the players of 'lacking professional ethics'. With a few

exceptions, the ban remained in force until the start of the 2012 season. A farcical instance of the dire lack of professional ethics occurred in September 2009 during a game between the second division teams Sichuan Zhigu and Hailifeng from Qingdao. Near the end of the match, the president of the Hailifeng club ordered his players to concede a goal immediately to ensure that he would take in more from a bet he had placed on the game. What ensued was a comedy of incompetence as the players exerted themselves but ultimately failed to score an own goal. The whole fiasco, subsequently dubbed ‘Chip-shot gate’ (*diaoshemen* 吊射门) in the media, played out in full view of the fans.

The media regularly raised allegations of match-fixing and bribery of referees, but with the CFA complicit in the criminal acts, nothing changed. By the end of the decade, however, some of the highest-level party officials in China, including then Vice-President Xi Jinping, had voiced grave concern about the state of the game. It was something that happened overseas, however, that jolted the Chinese Ministry of Public Security into action. In 2008, the Interpol office in Singapore issued an arrest warrant for Wang

Xin — who was managing Liaoning Guangyuan FC, a Singaporean satellite club of the Chinese Super League club Liaoning FC — for bribery and match-fixing in the city-state. The investigation there turned up evidence that incriminated Wang and others in the Chinese Super League. Wang fled back to China, but his arrest by the police there in April 2009 marked a new crackdown on football corruption in China. One month earlier, a committee comprising twelve ministry-level bodies had been set up with a brief to clean up the game, and this time it would not be a mere formality.

The campaign found a champion in 2010: Wei Di, who had managed aquatic sports in China from 2001 onwards and who was appointed to head the CFA after its previous incumbent was arrested for match-fixing. Wei promised to clean up the game within five years. A series of arrests, trials, fines, expulsions, demotions and jail sentences followed, much of it broadcast on national television. One of the most shocking incidents was the 2010 arrest of China’s most trusted referee, Lu Jun — nicknamed ‘Golden Whistle’ due to his reputation for fairness — on corruption charges. In December



‘Golden Whistle’ Lu Jun (left) before he was sent to jail for taking bribes.  
Source: ImagineChina

### Spend It like Beckham

2011, Lu confessed to accepting bribes totaling 710,000 yuan over a four-year period to 2003. The clean-out extended to the top management of the CFA as well as referees, players, coaches and administrators. Clubs found guilty of match-fixing had trophies revoked, had league points deducted or found themselves demoted to a lower league. By February 2013, thirty-three people — including three former CFA presidents and vice-presidents, ‘Golden Whistle’ and other referees, and four former national team players — were banned from football for life, with some handed jail sentences as well as fines.

Just a few weeks later, in March 2013, international football superstar David Beckham appeared in Beijing at the invitation of the CFA and (at least according to the *South China Morning Post*) with the financial support of CCTV, as Chinese football’s new ‘global ambassador’. His fee was not disclosed, but the one thing Chinese football does not lack is ready cash. Real estate companies have been investing some of the profits they have made during the fifteen-year-long real estate boom in football teams: they own nine of the current sixteen clubs in the Chinese Super League. Other club owners include the Tianjin Economic-Technological Development Area, Shandong Electricity Power Cooperation and Moutai — the company that makes the famous firewater of Nixonian toasts.

CCTV started broadcasting Chinese professional games again at the start of the 2012 season, and the average attendance per game reached 18,740 people — the highest level since 2001. The immense financial resources invested in local clubs have improved the prospects for the Chinese Super League to be a viable commercial competitor for global football talent; some of the renowned foreign players and coaches who have since been drawn to China have contributed significantly to rising attendances.

The contrasting fortunes of some of the richest local clubs, however, illustrate the precarious state of the game. The most successful club over the last two years achieved a remarkable transformation in a very short space of time. In 2010, when sponsored by the state-owned Guangzhou Pharmaceutical, Guangzhou GPC was demoted to the second league for taking bribes. Then it was acquired by Evergrande Real Estate Group, which is controlled by billionaire and party stalwart Xu Jiayin. The club won promotion back to the Chinese Super League the next season, and followed that up by winning the season in 2011. In 2012, Guangzhou GPC hired former Italian World Cup-win-



Zhu Jun and Didier Drogba.  
Source: ImagineChina

ning coach Marcelo Lippi, successfully defended its title and won the national knockout competition, the CFA Cup, as well.

The story of Shanghai Shenhua, however, another club that attracted huge amounts in sponsorships, provides a stark contrast with Guangzhou Evergrande. In 2007, a billionaire businessman named Zhu Jun acquired a

controlling stake in the club. Zhu had made his fortune with his Internet gaming company The9, which held the exclusive Chinese rights for the popular online game *World of Warcraft* from 2004 to 2009. Soon after acquiring a controlling stake in Shenhua, the forty-something Zhu forced the team manager to pick him in the starting line-up in a friendly match against English Premier League side Liverpool. Zhu lasted only five minutes before he was substituted. But his self-indulgence —

described by [Wildeastfootball.net](http://Wildeastfootball.net), a China-based English-language football blog, as ‘the most cringeworthy event in Chinese football’s rather bulging episodes-to-forget file’ — was characteristic of the brash and overconfident Zhu.

In 2012, Zhu pulled off something of a coup when he managed to sign two high-profile former English Premier League stars: Didier Drogba and Nicolas Anelka. But Shenhua achieved little on the field and failed to attract large crowds, and Zhu went through nine

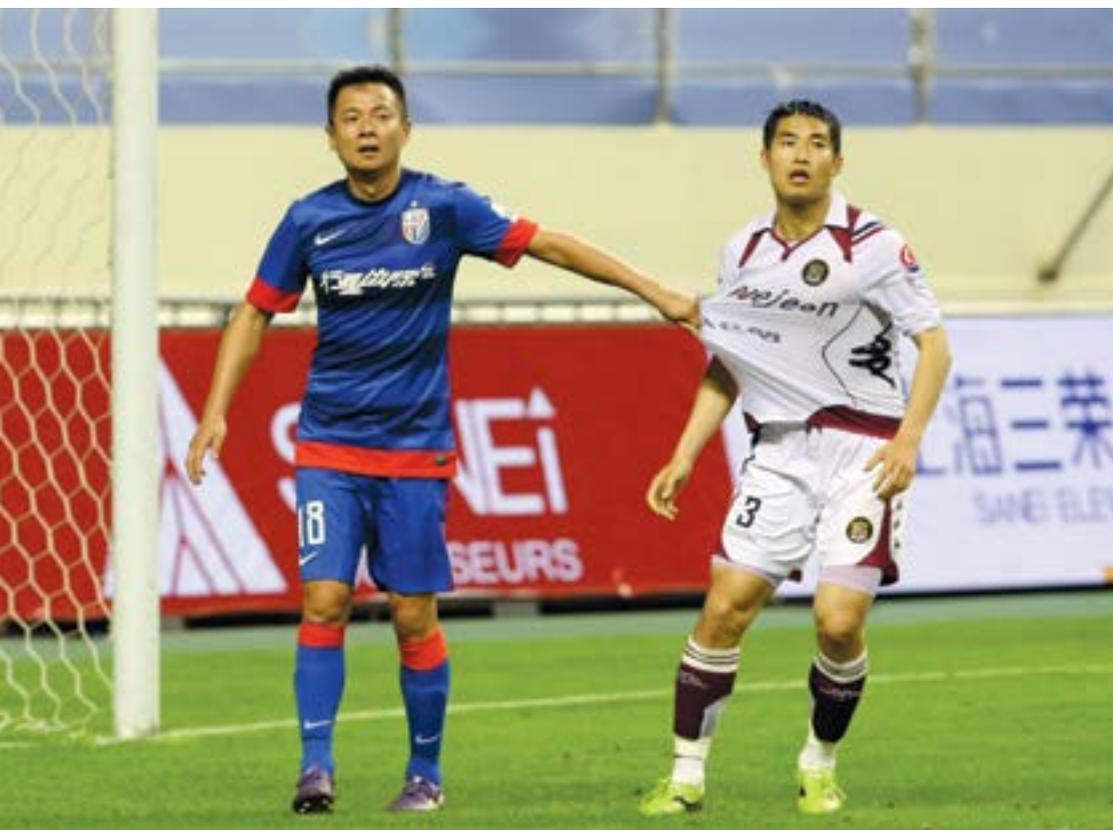


Chinese football fans in Guiyang, Guizhou province, when their national team beat North Korea, June 2011.  
Source: ImagineChina

coaches in six seasons. In a bizarre interview he gave to the *Financial Times* in June 2012, Zhu unwittingly revealed a crucial problem with the way many clubs are run in China when he dismissed the heavy rotation of coaches as nothing abnormal: 'We change two coaches in one year as we do not have any long-term plan. We're different from Europe.' Amid a dispute over

unpaid wages, both Anelka and Drogba departed within one season. And in June 2013, Zhu himself appeared to be gone too as the media reported the club's acquisition by Shanghai Greenland — another real estate company — although later media reports clarified that Greenland was interested in buying the club but had not yet done so.

Majority club owner Zhu Jun (left) in the colours of Shanghai Shenhua.  
Source: ImagineChina



The instability that continues to plague Shenhua at the time of writing is far from unique. As one foreign player in China told the BBC in 2013, there is a lot of money in China, but also a lot of volatility and not much organisation; a club can change hands, owners or names in the middle of a season. In an interview during his brief stint at Shanghai Shenhua, Nicolas Anelka complained of 'games behind my back' that were distracting him from business on the field. Many of the foreign players and coaches currently working in China have expressed concern about the lack of professionalism, skill and commitment among local players. They also bemoan the under-development of youth and amateur football in China.

So if football in China is gradually recovering, it is doing so from a life-threatening disease. The long-term strategy that Zhu Jun so derided is exactly what is needed now for building a sustainable foundation for the development of the game. Yet what has made the failure of Chinese football so toxic is how it has so conspicuously exposed the effects of corruption, which are usually hidden behind an opaque, bureaucratic machinery. It did so in the form of a professional league largely

reduced to a sham due to bribery, betting and match-fixing. Consequently, China's national team struggles to compete even those of far smaller countries such as Thailand. Many Chinese now perceive football to be a shameful blot on the country's modern sporting record and national reputation; every defeat just adds more misery to an incessant loss of national face. Perhaps David Beckham can help. But from the perspective of the irate crowd after the game in Hefei and other long-suffering fans, it might just be better to disband the national team altogether.



## THE UGLY CHINAMAN

### Bo Yang

*Bo Yang is the pseudonym of Guo Yidong (1920–2008), a controversial Taiwan writer who was born in Kaifeng, Henan. Guo moved to Taiwan in the late 1940s and, under the pen-name Bo Yang, began writing essays dealing mainly with Taiwan's social problems and the Chinese national character. His penetrating exposés of corruption and special privileges soon won him a reputation as a leading social critic in Taiwan and among Chinese communities overseas. The influence of Lu Xun is evident in Bo Yang's acerbic style. Like Lu Xun, he inevitably incurred the displeasure of the Nationalist Party authorities. In 1967, he was arrested and jailed for ten years on charges of 'defaming the leadership' and 'complicity with the Communists'.*



**Bo Yang,**  
writer from  
Taiwan.  
Source:  
Wikimedia  
Commons

The Ugly Chinaman (Chouloude Zhong-guoren 醜陋的中國人), from which the following translated extracts by Don Cohn are taken, was originally given as a speech that Bo Yang delivered at Iowa University on 24 September 1984. Subsequently published in the Hong Kong Pai-shing Fortnightly (Baixing banyuekan 百姓半月刊), it set off a small-scale 'battle

of the pens' among the magazine's readers. A translation of one of the more negative letters Pai-shing received in reply to Bo Yang is appended to the abridged translation of the speech.

The Ugly Chinaman appeared in book form along with a selection of Bo Yang's essays and readers' letters in Taiwan; it was subsequently also published

醜  
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in the People's Republic and has gone through numerous reprints. Such critiques of the Chinese national character, frequent from the late nineteenth century, have become something of a cottage industry in recent decades.



Cover of a recent edition of *The Ugly Chinaman*, first published in 1985.  
Source:  
Wikimedia Commons

FOR MANY years I've contemplated writing a book called *The Ugly Chinaman*. When *The Ugly American* was published in the United States, the US State Department chose it as a guide for policy making. But when the Japanese ambassador to Argentina published *The Ugly Japanese*, he was swiftly removed from his post. This is a good example of the difference between the Orient and the Occident. In China, however, things could be one step worse. If I wrote a book called *The Ugly Chinaman*, before long you'd be bringing me my meals in jail; that's the reason why I haven't written it yet, though I've been looking for an opportunity to talk about the subject in public for a long time.



## How Hard it is to be Chinese

On the Chinese mainland, the Anti-Rightist Campaign was followed by the Cultural Revolution, an earthshaking disaster without precedent in the history of human civilisation. In addition to the terrible loss of human lives, the Cultural Revolution caused incalculable damage by destroying humanitarian values and defiling the nobility of the human spirit, without which there remains very little to separate man from beast. Those 'Ten Years of Devastation' turned many people into animals. How can a nation whose morality has degenerated to this level ever regain its self-respect?...



Everyone's talking about the Hong Kong question nowadays. When a piece of a country's territory is snatched away by another country, it is always a cause for shame. And when that territory is finally returned to its rightful owner — like a child returning to its mother's embrace — the event becomes a cause for celebration on both sides. You must be familiar with France's ceding of Alsace-Lorraine to Germany. The original loss of the two states was extremely painful, and the reunification

a cause for great rejoicing. In the case of Hong Kong, however, no sooner was the news out that the territory would be returned to the motherland than people panicked. How do you explain this? In Taiwan, a number of young people — both native Taiwanese and Mainlanders — support the idea of an independent Taiwan. This is the so-called Taiwan Independence Movement. I recall thirty years ago when Taiwan was restored to China by Japan, we were all overjoyed; it was as if a lost child had found its way back to the arms of its mother. Thirty years later, what is it that has brought about this change of heart, this child's desire to leave home and try to make it on its own again? Chinese people share the same blood, the same physical appearance, the same ancestry and culture, the same written and spoken languages; only geographical differences divide them. How, then, has the present situation come about?

Even among the Chinese in the United States you will find the absurd situation wherein leftists, rightists, moderates, independents, left-leaning moderates, moderate-leaning leftists, right-leaning moderates, and moderate-leaning rightists can't seem to find a common language and are constantly

at each other's throats. What does this imply about the Chinese people? What does this imply about China itself? No other nation on earth has such a long history or such a well-preserved cultural tradition, a tradition which has in the past given rise to an extremely advanced civilisation. Neither the Greeks nor the Egyptians of today bear any relationship to their ancient forebears, while the Chinese people of today are the direct descendants of the ancient Chinese. How is it possible for such a great people to have degenerated to such a state of ugliness? Not only have we been bullied around by foreigners; even worse, for centuries we've been bullied around by our own kind — from tyrannical emperors to despotic officials and ruthless mobs...

### **Chinese People are the Same Everywhere**

During my incarceration I spent a lot of time contemplating my fate. What crimes had I committed? What laws had I broken? I continued pondering these questions after I was released and began to wonder whether mine was an abnormal or special case. On this trip to Iowa, where I have been able to meet writers from the Chinese mainland, I have discovered that God has predestined people like me for jail, whether the jail be in Taiwan or on the Chinese mainland. These mainland writers told me: 'Someone like you would never have made it as far as the Red Guards or the Cultural Revolution. You'd have been lucky to survive the Anti-Rightist Movement.' Why must a Chinese person with the courage to speak an iota of truth suffer this sort of fate? I've asked a number of people from the Mainland why they ended up in prison. The answer was invariably, 'I spoke the truth.' And that's the way it is. But why does speaking the truth lead to such unfortunate consequences? My answer is that this is not a problem of any particular individual but rather of Chinese culture as a whole. A few days ago I had a discussion with the Party secretary of the [mainland] Writer's Association. He literally made me speechless with an-

ger. I used to think I could hold my own in an argument; but this guy knocked the wind clean out of my sails. I don't blame him though; in the same way, I don't blame the agents who handled my case in Taipei. If you were in that environment and conversant with its ways and means, you would very likely act as they do, because you would believe that what you were doing was right. I would do the same, though I'd probably be even more obnoxious than that Party secretary. I often hear people say: 'Your future is in your own hands.' Having lived the better part of my life, I don't believe that any more. Actually, I should say about one half is in your hands, while the other half rests in the hands of others.

### **The Inability to Admit Error**

Chinese people's inability to co-operate and their predilection for bickering among themselves are deep-rooted, harmful traits. These behaviour patterns do not stem from any inherent weakness in the moral fibre of the Chinese people, but rather from a 'neurotic virus' which infects Chinese culture, making it impossible for us not to act in certain ways in given situations. We may be entirely aware of the fact that we quarrel among ourselves, yet it is beyond our control to stop it. 'If the pot breaks, no one can have anything to eat; but if the sky falls, there'll always be someone tall enough to prevent it from falling on me.' This tendency towards internecine struggle is associated with a terrible reluctance to admit mistakes... .

Chinese people find it hard to admit their mistakes, and produce myriad reasons to cover up for them. There's an old adage: 'Contemplate errors behind closed doors.' Whose errors? The guy next door's, of course! When I was teaching I had my students keep a weekly diary in which they were supposed to record their own behaviour for the week. The entries frequently read like this: 'Today XXX deceived me. I've been good to him in so many ways. It must

be because I'm too honest and simple.' But XXX's diary revealed that he also believed himself to be too simple and honest. If everyone thinks himself simple and honest who does that leave to be dishonest? Chinese don't admit their mistakes because somewhere along the line they have lost the ability to do so. We may not admit our mistakes, but they still exist, and denying them won't make them disappear. Chinese people expend a great deal of effort in covering up their mistakes, and in so doing make additional ones. Thus it is often said that Chinese are addicted to bragging, boasting, lying, equivocating and malicious slandering. For years people have been going on about the supreme greatness of the Han Chinese people, and boasting endlessly that Chinese traditional culture should be promulgated throughout the world. But the reason why such dreams will never be realised is because they're pure braggadocio. I need not cite any further examples of boasting and lying, but Chinese verbal brutality deserves special mention. Even in the bedroom, where Western couples address each other as 'honey' and 'darling', Chinese people prefer such endearments as 'you deserve to be cut into a thousand pieces.' And in mat-

ters of politics and money, or in power struggles of any kind, the viciousness can be out of all proportion. This raises the additional question: What makes Chinese people so cruel and base?

Many Westerners have said to me, 'It's hard getting to know Chinese people: you never know what's really on their minds.' My reply is: 'You think you have problems? When Chinese people speak with other Chinese, it's nearly impossible to know what's going on.' One way of communicating in these situations is to observe people's slightest movements and changes of expression, and to cultivate the habit of beating around the bush. You ask someone, 'Have you eaten yet?' and the answer is 'Yes.' But this person is actually ravenously hungry. You can hear his stomach growling ...

### **Stuck in the Mud of Bragging and Boasting**

Narrow-mindedness and a lack of altruism can produce an unbalanced personality which constantly wavers between two extremes: a chronic feeling of inferiority, and extreme arrogance. In his inferiority, a Chinese person is a slave; in his arrogance, he is a tyrant. Rarely does he or she have a healthy sense of self-respect. In the inferiority mode, everyone else is better than he is, and the closer he gets to people with influence, the wider his smile becomes. Similarly, in the arrogant mode, no other human being on earth is worth the time of day. The result of these extremes is a strange animal with a split personality.

### **A Nation of Inflation**

What makes the Chinese people so prone to self-inflation? Consider the saying: A small vessel is easily filled. Because of the Chinese people's inveterate narrow-mindedness and arrogance, even the slightest success is overwhelming. It is all right if a few people behave in this manner, but if it's the entire population or a majority — particularly in China — it spells national disaster. Since it seems as if the Chinese people have never had a healthy sense of self-respect, it is immensely difficult for them to treat others as equals: If you aren't my master, then you're my slave. People who think this way can only be narrow-minded in their attitude towards the world and reluctant to admit their mistakes.

### Only the Chinese Can Change Themselves

With so many loathsome qualities, only the Chinese people can reform themselves. Foreigners have a duty to help us, not in the realm of economics, but through culture. The Chinese ship of state is so large and overcrowded that if it sinks many non-Chinese will be drowned as well.

One last point: China is seriously overpopulated. China's more than one billion mouths can easily devour the Himalayas. This should remind us that China's difficulties are complex and call for awareness on the part of each and every Chinese person. Each one of us must become a discriminating judge and use our powers to examine and appraise ourselves, our friends and our country's leaders. This, I believe, is the only way out for the Chinese people.

### Developing a Personal Sense of Judgement

In the last 4,000 years, China has produced only one great thinker: Confucius. In the two-and-one-half millennia since his death, China's literati did little more than add footnotes to the theories propounded by Confucius and his disciples, rarely contributing any independent opinions, simply because the traditional culture did not permit it. The minds of the literati were stuck on the bottom of an intellectually stagnant pond, the soy-sauce vat of Chinese culture. As the contents of this vat began to putrefy, the resultant stench was absorbed by the Chinese people. Since the numerous problems in this bottomless vat could not be solved by individuals exercising their own intelligence, the literati had to make do with following others' ways of thinking. If one were to place a fresh peach in a soy-sauce vat full of putrescent brine, it would eventually turn into a dry turd. China has its own particular way of transforming foreign things and ideas which enter within its borders. You say you've got democracy; well we have democracy too. But the Chinese form of *democracy* is: You've got the *demos* (people), but I've got the *kratos* (power). You've got the legal system; we've got one too. You've got freedom, so have we. What-

ever you have, we have too. You've got pedestrian crossings painted on the street; we have too, but ours are there to make it easier for cars to run pedestrians over.

The only way to improve the situation of the Ugly Chinaman is for each of us to cultivate our own personal taste and judgment. If we're poor actors, we can at least enjoy going to plays. Those who don't understand what's happening on stage can enjoy the music, lights, costumes and scenery, while those who do understand can appreciate drama as an art form. The ability to make such distinctions is a great achievement in itself. ...I have my freedom and rights, whether the government gives them to me or not. If we had the capacity to make proper judgments, we would demand elections and be rigorous in our selection of candidates. But without this capacity, we'll never be able to distinguish a beautiful woman from a pock-marked hag.

### One Ugly Chinaman WANG YILING

I am a Chinese and I readily acknowledge that I have numerous faults and imperfections, but I certainly am not an 'Ugly Chinaman', nor can I countenance an accusation that decries all Chinese as 'ugly'. I am not sure whether Bo Yang still thinks of himself as Chinese or not, but if so then he is quite free to say he is ugly. But that doesn't give him the right to lump everyone else in with him.

I am in total disagreement with the basic tenor and argument of 'The Ugly Chinaman', although this is not to say there is no merit in the speech whatsoever. A few of the things Bo Yang says are correct, for example his statement that 'the Chinese are indeed one of the most intelligent nationalities in the world ...'.

This speech raises one important question: what is actually so ugly about the Chinese? Bo Yang certainly doesn't avoid this issue, he rambles on at great length and cites many examples in his attempt to prove that the Chinese are 'filthy, disorderly, noisy and quarrelsome'. I am sure that Bo Yang isn't the kind of person to like slandering others, but even if what he says is true, just what does it prove? What race or country on earth is completely noise-free or

unmarred by disputes? Aren't American hippies dirty? Isn't the New York subway system chaotic? Are politics in the US, Europe and Japan free from vociferous debates and shameful infighting? Is there, in fact, anywhere in the world where people don't fight with each other? According to Bo Yang's logic, we should be speaking of Ugly Humanity, not just the Ugly Chinaman.

Why should an outstanding writer ... who has consistently claimed that he loves his people and his country use scraps of unconnected and specious 'evidence' to slander his compatriots? The truth of the matter is that Bo Yang has a distorted view of traditional Chinese culture, and that his faulty perceptions have led him astray. Perhaps he himself has fallen into the very 'soy-sauce vat' that he so delights in vilifying? Its poisonous virus has obviously befuddled his thinking and paralysed his nerves.

The world of Chinese culture is vast and profound. Within it one may find numerous examples of benevolent government and tyranny, humanity, justice and virtue. There are thieves and whores, honesty and probity, as well as the 'wind, flowers, snow and moon' of the effete literati. All of these things have been refined to perfection; it is a world that has something for everyone. There are cesspits and germs aplenty in Chinese culture, besides the 'soy-sauce vats' and viruses. When a person uses the filth he dredges up to attempt to prove that the whole of Chinese culture is a pestilent cesspit he unwittingly reveals himself to be a smelly turd beyond redemption, while in no way detracting from the glories of China.

... It depends entirely on what you are looking for in the corpus of Chinese culture. Our culture can be used to cure and heal, or it can be used to kill; it can even become an instrument of suicide. It is easy for anyone bent on talking of extremes to find the world of traditional Chinese culture bursting at the seams with 'soy-sauce vats' and viruses ...

Bo Yang never tires of talking about his nine years and x number of days in prison. He acts as though it has given him some sort of special dispensation to carry on as he does ...

To sum up what I've been saying: the Chinese are not necessarily ugly; but there is no lack of contemptible wretches among them.



3

## AN EXEMPLARY SOCIETY

Benjamin Penny



乌鲁木齐

北京

ÜRÜMQI

BEIJING

Zhuang Shihua, a surgeon at the Xinjiang Armed Police Corps hospital in Ürümqi, is declared a 'Modern-day Lei Feng'.

**IN THE** 2012 Corruption Perceptions Index report by Transparency International, China ranked eightieth out of the 176 countries surveyed, with a score of thirty-nine from a possible one hundred. By contrast, Singapore is ranked fifth with a score of eighty-seven, Hong Kong fourteenth with a score of seventy-seven and Taiwan is in thirty-seventh place with a score of sixty-one. These comparisons show that China's corruption cannot be due to some specific way people of a Chinese cultural background conduct business or public administration. Since he assumed the presidency, Xi Jinping has refocused the attention of government on the eradication of corruption, using not only the instruments of state power to arrest and detain offenders but also traditional methods of persuasion to encourage civilised behaviour in the community as a whole. Whether such methods, pioneered in the early years of the People's Republic, and in fact even earlier, are still effective remains an open question.

## Fighting Tigers and Flies

In the first public speech Xi Jinping made after becoming General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party on 15 November 2012, he nominated graft and corruption as the most important problems facing the Party. On 19 November, he expanded on these remarks to the new Politburo, declaring that ‘corruption could kill the Party and ruin the country if it were to increase in severity and [so] we must be vigilant’. Speaking too of ‘the overthrow of governments’, he seemed to be making an oblique reference to the Arab Spring, blaming endemic corruption in those countries for popular discontent and social unrest. Xi’s comments might be dismissed as merely the ritualistic denunciation of corruption, as his two predecessors Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao both made similar remarks: Jiang in 2000, and Hu on two occasions — in 2007 and in his opening address to the Eighteenth Party Congress in 2012. However, the appointment in 2012 of Vice-Premier Wang Qishan, the Party’s chief troubleshooter, to head up the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection of the Communist Party was an indication of Xi’s seriousness in this arena.



Wang Qishan, the Party's chief troubleshooter.  
Source: Wikimedia Commons

On 22 January 2013, Xi followed up on his November pronouncements with a more pointed declaration of intent. The Party would not just stamp out transgressions among the leadership of the country but it would address infractions of discipline by local officials as well. In what may become one of Xi’s best-known slogans, he asserted that ‘we must fight tigers and flies at the same time’ (*yao jianchi ‘laohu’, ‘cangying’ yiqi da* 要坚持‘老虎’、‘苍蝇’一起打). Xi’s targets included the extravagant banquets and other luxury perks that officials have long enjoyed, as well as the kind of petty bureaucratic formalism that includes endless speechifying and elaborate, expensive and self-aggrandising ceremonial events. If the Party failed to address this culture of corruption, he warned, then ‘it will be like putting up a wall between our Party and the people, and we will lose our roots, our lifeblood and our strength’. To prevent corruption occurring in the first place, power should be exercised within what he called ‘a cage of regulations’.



Entrance of a VIP clubhouse. In May 2013, officials and employees working in disciplinary and supervisory departments were ordered to discard all VIP membership cards.  
Source: ImagineChina

### Putting VIP Cards on the Table

In a further development of the anti-graft campaign announced by Xi Jinping shortly after he formally assumed the presidency in March 2013, Wang Qishan — chief of the Party’s Central Commission for Discipline Inspection — demanded that officials in the state’s disciplinary and supervisory systems hand in all VIP membership cards (*huiyuanka* 会员卡 or *huisuoka* 会所卡). Businesses offering luxury goods and services, including golf clubs, restaurants and spas, issue such VIP cards. Charged up with money like a debit card or gift voucher, the cards may be used to enjoy services at the clubs, or sold: shops adjacent to such venues may advertise that they ‘accept cards’ — meaning they will buy them for resale. Their value can reach into millions of yuan. Whether exchanged for money or used for goods and services, the cards allow for cashless bribes. The clubs that offer them, often unmarked and hidden behind high walls, additionally provide a private venue for backroom deals as well as the enjoyment of prostitutes and other entertainments.

At a teleconference held by the Commission on 27 May 2013, Wang said that the ‘VIP card’ campaign sends a signal to the Party and society that anti-graft officials are serious about improving their ‘work style’ (*zuofeng* 作风). Wang also noted that the campaign is a prelude to the Party’s Action to Implement Mass Line Education (*Qunzhong luxian jiaoyu shijian huodong* 群众路线教育实践活动), and that disciplinary officials must rectify their own behaviour first.

The campaign is described as an Action to Eradicate VIP Cards (*huiyuanka zhuanxiang qingtui huodong* 会员卡专项清退活动). The Central Commission for Discipline Inspection issued a circular to officials setting the deadline of 20 June 2013 for officials to hand in all their cards.

## EATING DANGEROUSLY

Food is essential, and safety should be a top priority. Food safety is closely related to people's lives and health, economic development and social harmony. We must create a food safety system of self-disciplined food companies with integrity, effective government supervision and broad public support to improve overall food safety.

Li Keqiang,  
then head of the National Food Safety  
Commission, State Council, April 2010



Screenshot of the 'China life-saving manual' app.  
Source: liqcn.com

Since the melamine milk scandal of 2008, food safety has been a top priority for parents, journalists and people generally in China. In 2011, a Fudan University student built a website called Throw it Out the Window (*zhengchu chuangwai* 掷出窗外 [www.zccw.info](http://www.zccw.info)) that aggregated reports related to food safety dating back to 2004. As we noted in the 2012 *Yearbook*, a Zhejiang-based software company launched an iPhone app called China Life Saving Manual (*Zhongguo qiusheng shouce* 中国求生手册) that sends updates of the latest food scares to users' mobile phones.

The topic of food safety is not always a pressing personal concern for government officials, as highly ranked cadres can also obtain provisions through the elite channels (known as 'special supplies', *tegong* 特供, short for *teshu gongying* 特殊供应). Below is a list of some of the major food safety scandals reported in the Chinese media.

### Plasticiser in Liquor

In November 2012, the Chinese media reported that samples of liquor made by Jiu Gui Jiu Co., a Hunan-based distiller, were found to contain plasticiser 2.6 times higher than the maximum level stipulated by national standards, apparently as a result of the use of plastic piping during production. China's quality watchdog, the General Administration for Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine (AQSIQ, *Guojia zhiliang jiandu jianyan jianyi zongju* 国家质量监督检验检疫总局) issued a test result supporting the media report. The Shenzhen Stock Exchange put a hold on trade in the company's shares for several days.

Other premium Chinese grain wines (白酒 *baijiu*), including Moutai and Wu Liang Ye came under the spotlight as well. In December, an online post cited the results of a test conducted by a Hong Kong laboratory indicating that the plasticiser level in samples of Moutai was twice as high as the national limit. Discussions as to whether the national standards were too rigorous were soon muted by public criticism. In April 2013, media reports said that imported bottles of Camus, Frapin and Rémy Martin cognac were turned back at Chinese customs for the same reason.

### Rat Meat for Mutton

In May 2013, the Ministry of Public Security released results of a three-month crackdown on food safety violators, saying that authorities investigated more than 380 cases and arrested 904 suspects. Among those arrested were sixty-three people who allegedly ran an operation in Shanghai and the coastal city of Wuxi that bought fox, mink, rat and other meat that had not been tested for quality and safety, processed it with additives like gelatin and passed it off as lamb. The meat was sold at farmers' markets in Jiangsu province and Shanghai.

Corruption is undeniably one of China's most pernicious problems. In October 2012, He Guoqiang, Wang Qishan's predecessor at the Discipline Commission, reported that between 2007 and 2012, the commission found more than 660,000 officials guilty of 'disciplinary violations'. It handed 24,000 officials suspected of committing crimes over to the judicial authorities. In the first half of 2012 alone, it had punished 377 officials from 'major state-owned enterprises' and found that 1,405 officials in law enforcement agencies had abused their power and aided criminal organisations. In September 2012, subsequent to the local elections held that April in Zhejiang province, it cancelled the nomination of forty-four cadres because they failed in the morals examination, while seventy-nine others 'were warned, transferred from their original posts and removed because of their poor marks'. In January 2013, Xinhua reported that 7.83 billion yuan had been recovered the previous year through investigations of corrupt officials. Central Chinese Television characterised the 2012 campaign as 'an anti-corruption storm' sweeping across the country.

Over the last few years, Chinese news services have regularly featured the falls from grace, arrests and convictions of former leading officials. Popular outrage over six babies dying and another estimated 54,000 admitted to hospital after infant formula had been found to be tainted with melamine (a scandal allegedly hushed up before the 2008 Beijing Olympics) led to the execution of two officials in 2009 and the jailing of nineteen more for long sentences. Since then, food contamination cases have regularly occurred across the country: in 2010, investigators discovered green beans had been contaminated by illegal pesticides in Wuhan and, in April of the same year, they confiscated seven million takeaway food containers in Jiangxi province found to be poisonous. Inspectors found the steroid clenbuterol in pork as recently as 2011; the contamination was feared to be so common that China banned its athletes competing at the 2012 London Olympics from eating Chinese-produced products for fear of breaching drug testing guidelines. The use of cooking oil recycled from restaurant drains and sometimes combined with even more dangerous

**Poisonous Milk and Infant Formula**

Safety scandals continue to plague the dairy industry. In August 2012, a cheese product made by Shanghai-based Bright Dairy 光明乳业 for babies was removed from shelves nationwide for containing a banned mineral additive (not melamine) that could also potentially harm the kidneys. Early in September, nearly 1,000 households in Shanghai bought sour milk produced by the same company. In June 2013, Bright Dairy milk was found to be contaminated with an alkaline solution. In July, excessive bacteria in its butter and cheese saw those products removed from the shelves as well.

Scandals also befell other major brands, foreign and domestic alike. In June 2012, a university student, claiming to have interned at a Mengniu 蒙牛 ice cream factory, posted pictures to the Internet showing unsanitary conditions. The post circulated widely on social media and the company apologised. In April 2013, the authorities in Suzhou, Jiangsu province, raided a subcontractor of Hero — a Swiss dairy brand — alleging that the subcontractor had been illegally repackaging and selling baby formula with protein counts below national standards.

There were many other safety scandals involving infant formula in 2012 and early 2013, leading Chinese parents to scour the world's supermarkets for untainted milk for their babies. New Zealand, Hong Kong and the Netherlands are among the countries that have imposed restrictions on the bulk purchase of infant formula to prevent Chinese speculators from buying up all available stock.

**Gutter Oil**

In August 2012, the media reported that Joincare Pharmaceutical Group 健康元药业 in Jiaozuo, Henan province, used cooking oil reprocessed from the kitchen waste found in gutters behind restaurants to make a widely used antibiotic. The State Food and Drug Administration subsequently investigated. The company denied any knowledge of the use of gutter oil, arguing that it was impossible to recognise it by testing, that the oil didn't go into the final product, and that it was used only in an intermediate stage of processing.

In January 2013, *Caixin Century* (*Caixin xinshiji zhoukan* 财新新世纪周刊) published an exposé of a Shandong businessman named Liu Ligu, who amassed a fortune selling gutter oil to small, greasy-spoon restaurants and food factories.

**Water**

In an article published on the *People's Daily* website in January 2013, Zhao Feihong — head of the Beijing Institute of Public Health and Drinking Water — said that her family had not drunk the city's tap water for twenty years, using bottled mineral water to drink, make tea and cook rice. Though Zhao refrained from criticising China's tap water standards or lack thereof, many people promptly abandoned tap water for the supposedly safer bottled water.

However, not all bottled water is safer than tap. In April, the *Beijing Times* (*Jinghua shibao* 京华时报), a subsidiary of the *People's Daily* published an exposé on Nongfu Spring 农夫山泉 bottled water — a major brand — alleging that it contained levels of arsenic and cadmium that exceeded even China's tap water standards. Nongfu Spring denied the allegations and blamed a competitor for spreading rumours.

In May, *The Beijing News* (*Xinjingbao* 新京报) ran an article saying that China still follows regulations adopted from the Soviet Union to test bottled drinking water. According to these arcane regulations, China's national health inspectors do not test bottled drinking water for acidity, pH level, or toxic substances such as mercury and silver.

non-food oils, a product known colloquially as 'gutter oil' (*digouyou* 地沟油), is also alleged to be widespread. In 2011, tests discovered that twenty-eight percent of samples of food made from flour in Shenzhen had aluminium levels well above national limits, and studies continue to identify extensive cadmium contamination in rice grown across the country. Most recently, in May 2013, the Ministry of Public Security arrested sixty-three people in Shanghai and Wuxi for selling gelatin-treated rat, mink and fox meat as lamb.



Lei Zhengfu, former Party head, Beibei district, Chongqing. Source: Wikimedia Commons

In the famously corrupt world of Chinese football, two former heads of the national association, four members of the national team and China's best-known referee were all jailed in June 2012 for between five-and-a-half and ten-and-a-half years for taking bribes. Recently, in May 2013, no fewer than twenty-one officials from Chongqing were disciplined for corruption, three of whom face criminal charges following the leaking of a sex video featuring Lei Zhengfu, the party head of Beibei district in Chongqing municipality, onto the Internet.

This case is but one of many where the dalliances of officials, whose mistresses have often also been implicated in corruption, have been exposed. In April 2013, Liu Zhijun, the former Railways Minister who presided over the vast growth in China's high-speed rail system, was charged with corruption — in 2011, Liu had



Liu Zhijun, former Railways Minister, at his trial, July 2013. Source: ImagineChina

## EATING DANGEROUSLY

### Chicken Licken

On 15 March 2012, CCTV's annual gala for World Consumer Rights day accused McDonald's and French retailer Carrefour of selling expired chicken products. The report said a McDonald's restaurant in Beijing sold chicken wings ninety minutes after they were cooked (the company's rules set a thirty-minute limit), and that employees at a Carrefour store in the central city of Zhengzhou changed expiration dates on some chicken meat and also passed off battery chickens as the more expensive free-range birds. McDonald's and Carrefour both issued public apologies.

In December, authorities in Shanghai and Shanxi investigated KFC suppliers following claims that the chicken the company was selling contained excessive quantities of antibiotics. KFC's parent company Yum! Brands reported a six percent drop-off in sales in China in the final quarter of 2012 and stated that it would step up its screening of suppliers.

### Floating Pigs in the Huangpu River

During March 2013, thousands of dead pigs showed up in a stretch of the Huangpu River — a main source of Shanghai's drinking water. Local officials insisted both the water and the city's pork supply were safe. The authorities never explained how the pigs died or how they ended up in the river. Evidence suggested that farmers upstream in neighboring Zhejiang province dumped the dead pigs after officials cracked down on the practice of selling diseased pork to local markets, while making it very expensive to dispose of the diseased carcasses properly.



Workers trying to fish floating pig carcasses out of the Huangpu River.

Source: *Yangcheng Evening News*

### Chromium in Capsules

A CCTV program aired on 25 April 2012 revealed a list of medical capsules found to have excessive amounts of chromium. The reporters investigated a number of manufacturers in Zhejiang and Hebei provinces and found that dirty scrap leather containing high chromium concentrations was used to make industrial gelatin, which eventually ended up as medical capsules. The capsules were sold on to pharmaceutical companies, including major pharmaceutical brands.

### Ginger

In May 2012, an investigative report by CCTV revealed that farmers in Shandong were using an illegal and highly toxic pesticide on their ginger crops. Farmers in Weifang city had been using the pesticide aldicarb at three to six times above the recommended level. The pesticide is not approved for use on ginger. Aldicarb — branded in China as *Shennongdan* 神农丹 — is a highly poisonous carbamate pesticide that the Ministry of Agriculture only approves for cotton, tobacco, peanuts, roses and sweet potatoes, with strict controls.

been dismissed from his post and last year was expelled from the Party. Apart from the furore over the Wenzhou train crash itself, an investigation by the National Audit Office found that during his tenure, 187 million yuan had been embezzled during the building of the new Beijing–Shanghai line and another 491 million yuan had gone missing in associated land transactions. In July 2013, Liu was given a suspended death penalty.

The Lei Zhengfu sex video case made Beijing blogger, and former journalist with the *Procuratorial Daily* (*Jiancha ribao* 检察日报), Zhu Ruifeng famous among China's online community as it was his Hong Kong-based website People's Supervision Network that published the video. After he uploaded the video, a former journalist on the *Southern Capital Daily*, Ji Xu-guang posted stills from it on his Weibo account, allowing it to spread across the Chinese Internet. The case was remarkable not only for its squalor but also for the unusually speedy official response: only sixty-three hours had lapsed between the uploading of stills onto Weibo and the Chongqing government announcement that they were removing Lei from his post.



Zhu Ruifeng, Beijing-based blogger and journalist.

Source: *ImagineChina*

In December 2012, Zhou Lubao — whom the *China Daily* referred to as a ‘muckraking netizen’ — noticed that the mayor of Lanzhou (the capital of Gansu province), Yuan Zhanting, had worn five different expensive watches in publicity photos. One of the watches was revealed to be a Vacherin Constantin that retails for more than 200,000 yuan, one was a gold Rolex and another a 150,000-yuan Omega.

The clampdown on corruption has already affected luxury consumer items commonly used for bribes, tax evasion or simply ostentatious consumption. The first quarter of 2013, for example, saw imports of Swiss watches drop twenty-four percent and those of expensive French wine plummet. Sales of shark fins for soup have fallen an extraordinary seventy percent — a result to please environmentalists. Pernod Ricard, owner of Ballantines and Chivas Regal, reported their first annual fall in whisky sales in China in March 2013; their first foray into the China drinks market was in 1987. The decline in luxury alcohol sales has not just hit foreign brands. Moutai, the premium Chinese *baijiu* or clear liquor, saw its profit growth halved in the first quarter, and sales of Shuijingfang — the first *baijiu* company bought by overseas interests, in this case the British drinks conglomerate Diageo — fell by forty percent in the same period. Another area of consumption that has

seen a steep decline has been in the purchase of gift cards. In 2011, some 600 billion yuan of cards were sold and the market was growing at between fifteen to eighteen percent annually. New regulations were enacted in May 2011 to prevent, in the words of the State Council, ‘money laundering, illegal cash withdrawal, tax evasion and bribery’. Subsequently, for transactions exceeding 10,000 yuan, the gift card issuer had to register the purchaser’s name and the names of the people who would redeem them. Furthermore, no card could be issued with a value of more than 5,000 yuan and officials were banned from receiving them in the course of their duties.



Shark fin soup with shrimp dumplings in Huangpu, Shanghai.  
Photo: Robert S. Donovan

## China's Next Top Models

Within the government, the officials who work to stamp out corruption are employed in what is called the ‘disciplinary inspection and supervision system’. Following a pattern established in the early years of the People’s Republic, when the authorities want to stress the importance of certain areas of work, or particular casts of mind, they nominate people deemed especially meritorious as ‘model workers’. Thus, in this field, some individuals have won the title ‘All China Disciplinary and Supervision System Advanced Model Worker’. Like other model workers since the 1950s, they are lauded as selfless, devoted to the Party and their duties and incorruptible; they may even sometimes martyr themselves through enthusiasm for the task or neglect of their own health. Unlike the model workers of high Maoism, shown mindlessly acquiescing to ideological demands in denial of their own individuality, these figures display personal initiative and do not accept the moral rectitude of party officials as a given. Yet at least one anti-corruption model, Shen Changrui, from Changping county district near Beijing, finds his predecessors inspirational: Shen claims to have seen the 1990 movie about the ‘good student of Chairman Mao Zedong’ Jiao Yulu (1922–1964) many times:

Scenes from the film constantly appear in my mind. If you want your office to deal with a petition well, then you have to treat the people with kindness. Think about it: it’s always the common people who are wronged. It’s only when they encounter some thorny issue that the old folk come running out of the mountains to find us. Could that be easy? If you just give them a blank ‘don’t-bother-me’ look, then how are they expected to survive!

Another is Li Xing’ai from Longchang county in Sichuan province. An article published in August 2012 in the Sichuan News Service narrated Li’s anti-corruption exploits. The tone of the introduction gives a flavour of the whole:

For a full twenty-three springs and autumns he has worked like a tireless ox for the people, bowing his head before the plough without resentment and without regret, resolute in the frontline battle of investigations in disciplinary inspection and supervision. He is also like a steadfast woodpecker, looking in all directions with piercing eyes and never failing in his task, determinedly extracting swarming putrid termites from dark crevices to eat. To the present he has personally investigated more than 400 cases that have led to the punishment of 477 personnel for disciplinary violations, and has retrieved more than twenty million yuan of direct economic losses to the country. What's more, he is like a loving yet awe-inspiring guardian angel, treating cadres and the masses with overflowing tenderness when implementing disciplinary regulations for the people; he is upright and incorruptible, with majestic righteousness. Time and time again, he has received all manner of commendations from county, city and province ... His deeds show the feelings of a grassroots disciplinary inspection and supervision cadre, a public servant selfless and fearless in carrying out his responsibilities. And they provide an example of a contemporary Communist Party member's lofty pursuit of his ideals and his passionate loyalty.

Official anti-corruption fighters are mostly the ones who receive this kind of praise. Human Rights Watch reported the detention on 31 March 2013 of four people who staged a demonstration in the Xidan Cultural Plaza in Beijing demanding that officials publicly declare their private financial interests. They reportedly raised large banners with this demand and stated that 'unless we put an end to corrupt officials, the China Dream can only be a daydream'. Following this demonstration, part of an ongoing campaign that included petitions and open letters, police arrested several other activists on charges ranging from illegal assembly and extortion to 'inciting subversion of state power' either for allegedly helping to plan the protest or for demonstrating in support — despite the fact that their demands chime

with party policy. All but one of those detained remain in jail. The charge of 'inciting subversion of state power' is extremely serious: it is the 'crime' for which Nobel Peace Laureate Liu Xiaobo is serving an eleven-year sentence.



Liu Xiaobo,  
Nobel Peace  
Laureate.  
Source:  
kosherchinese.  
wordpress.com

The month following the ill-fated demonstration, President Xi addressed the Politburo again on the topic of corruption, this time urging his colleagues to learn from China's 'ancient anti-corruption culture' and to apply 'historical wisdom' to the problem. Two stories of officials involved in anti-corruption activities from 'ancient China' featured in the *Procuratorial Daily*. One concerned a short text from the *Classic of History* entitled the 'Song of the Five Sons' and the other 'the first anti-corruption textbook in Chinese history': the *Book of Wakening Corrupt Officials*, attributed to Zhu Yuanzhang, the fourteenth-century founding emperor of the Ming dynasty (1368–1644).



Ming dynasty  
emperor Zhu  
Yuanzhang.  
Source: Wikime-  
dia Commons

The 'Song of the Five Sons' probably dates from the third or fourth century BCE but tells of events that occurred about one and a half millennia earlier. The protagonist is Taikang, the third emperor of the possibly legendary Xia 夏 dynasty who, through neglect of his duties and lack of devotion to the people, lets his state descend into turmoil. James Legge renders the Chinese evocatively: Taikang 'occupied the throne like a personator of the dead'. Taikang's five brothers (the sons of the title) relate and decry his behaviour and its consequences in their songs.

When Zhu Yuanzhang ascended the throne, he faced enormous problems of official embezzlement, bribery and corruption. He personally oversaw the investigations and often dictated brutal terms of punishment for transgressors in the bureaucracy, even writing the record of events himself. Mao Zedong deeply admired the way Zhu set about cleansing his administration and the 'demonic cruelty' with which he had transgressors punished or executed, as Ming historian Edward L. Farmer characterises his legislative zeal.

The Chinese media have also recently started to retell other anecdotes about incorruptible officials from pre-modern China. These include that of the sixteenth-century mandarin Hai Rui. His story became famous in the 1960s when the Ming historian Wu Han's play *Hai Rui Dismissed from Office* (*Hai Rui ba guan* 海瑞罢官), which implied that Chairman Mao was in fact not listening to upright officials speaking the truth around him, became an early, major target of the Cultural Revolution.

The *People's Daily* has even published a guide to 'The Top Ten Corrupt Officials in Ancient China'. Whether these stories about the battles of

### BLACK FERRARI, RED FERRARI

One of the most controversial and salacious stories of the year pertained to a black two-seat convertible Ferrari 458 Spider that, speeding on Beijing's Fourth Ring Road in the early hours of 18 March 2012, crashed into a wall. One man and two women were pulled out of the wreckage in varying states of undress. The man died at the scene. One of the women died later in hospital and the other is rumoured to have been left paralysed. Images of the crash scene circulated online amid speculation about sex games in the car and the possible identities of the driver and passengers — and whether they were politically connected. The word 'Ferrari' was blocked on Chinese social networks.

Six months later, the *New York Times* reported that anonymous party officials had revealed the driver of the car to be Ling Gu — the twenty-three-year-old son of Ling Jihua, head of the General Office of the Party's Central Committee and close ally of Hu Jintao. The identity of the two female occupants of the car were later said to be twenty-five-year-old Tashi Dolma (Zhaxi Zhuoma) — the ethnic Tibetan daughter of a deputy director of the Qinghai Provincial Public Security Department — and Yang Ji, also an ethnic Tibetan and twenty-five, reportedly the daughter of a Living Buddha and a student at China University of Political Science and Law in Beijing. (Yang is the one who died in hospital.) In the personnel reshuffle during the Eighteenth Party Congress in November 2012, Ling Jinhua did not receive an expected promotion. Instead, the Party gave him the largely symbolic post of head of the United Front Work Department. In March 2013, he was also appointed Vice Chairman of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, which some media reports described as a 'soft landing'.

### Red Ferrari — Ma Chi

On 12 May 2012, a cherry-red Ferrari 599 GTO — the fastest Ferrari model on the road, and one of only 599 ever built — ran a red light at high speed in Singapore and crashed into a taxi, which then hit a motorcycle. Three people were killed in the crash, including the driver of the Ferrari — a thirty-one-year-old mainland Chinese immigrant named Ma Chi. Online rumours suggest-

the righteous against the corrupt are seriously influencing the behaviour of China's bureaucrats today, or if this is simply the busy-work of cynical journalists and historians playing their role in a national campaign is hard to say, but the authorities' faith in providing positive exemplars does not seem to have waned.

The sociologist Børge Bakken has helpfully characterised contemporary China as 'an exemplary society'. As he puts it:

ed that he was the son of the then State Counsellor (and, from March 2013, Vice-Premier of China) Ma Kai. Speculation that the driver was related to any party official was strictly censored on the Chinese Internet.

Ma Chi's pregnant wife arrived at the scene soon after the crash and was reported to have been shocked to see an unidentified female passenger in the Ferrari. The woman, a mainland Chinese student from Wuhan studying in Singapore and rumoured to be working as a KTV hostess, survived the crash.



Deceased Ferrari driver Ma Chi.  
Photo: Alvina Soh

### Crashing and Skidding

Early on 10 May 2012, a race between ten Ferraris on public highways in Shaanxi province ended in a crash, destroying several of the cars. Photos of the smashed cars circulated widely on the Chinese Internet. Also in May, the English-language *Shanghai Daily* reported:

The Nanjing Kuaiyi Automobile Trading Co planned to hold a car exhibition at the Zhonghua Gate — a Ming Dynasty (1368–1644) city gate and castle — to celebrate [Ferrari's] entry into China 20 years ago on Monday.

But the night before, an unidentified employee drove a car worth millions of yuan without permission and left tire marks on the ancient wall, triggering widespread outrage over damage to the heritage in the capital city of east China's Jiangsu Province.

'We will take further measures to ensure that similar cases never take place again,' the Italian car-maker said ...

The exemplary society ... can be described as a society where 'human quality' based on the exemplary norm and its exemplary behavior is regarded as a force for realising a modern society of perfect order. It is a society with roots and memories to the past, as well as one created in the present to realise a future utopia of harmonious modernity.

As the title of the *People's Daily* guide suggests, exemplars can be both positive and negative. Official historians in imperial times were obliged



Derrick Rose basketball shoes inspired by Lei Feng. Design features 'revolutionary screws that never rust'.  
Photo: Markuz Wernli

to designate a biographical subject as worthy of praise or blame. In today's China, this is no less true, even if, as in ancient times, nuanced judgements of a person's actions rarely fit such a powerfully binary template. Thus, officially produced books, films, comics and histories feature clear-cut heroes and villains — the better to illustrate what is correct, righteous behaviour on the one hand and what is behaviour that is disloyal, counter-revolutionary, or corrosive of society on the other.

Officially designated model workers or model soldiers offer guidance to the rest of society as to how to work and live. However, because they are by definition so pure, so selfless, so unthinkingly loyal, they become transformed into caricatures of real people, cartoons of goodness. This leaves them wide open to suspicion and makes them the subject of snide asides and satire. A perfect example of this phenomenon can be seen with China's best-known model citizen, People's Liberation Army (PLA) soldier, Lei Feng.

Lei's official biography relates that he was born in 1940 in Hunan province to a rural family and orphaned at seven. His father had been killed by the Japanese and his mother committed suicide after being raped by the son of a powerful landowner. 'Adopted by the Party', as the hagiography puts it, Lei Feng joined the PLA when he was twenty and was transferred to Liaoning province in the northeast. He died in 1962 when he was hit by a telegraph pole that an army truck had knocked over while backing up. In 1963, his diary was 'discovered' — portions had previously appeared in 1959 and 1960 in the Shenyang military region newspaper *Progress* (*Qianjin bao* 前进报) — and published under the sponsorship of Lin Biao, then Minister of Defence. The diary is full of entries describing his acts of selflessness, such as darning the socks of his comrades in the platoon while they slept, and of his devotion to Mao Zedong — he is known as 'Chairman



Comrade Lei Feng.  
Source: Zhang Jun

Mao's good soldier' — and it became an important element in the construction of Mao's personality cult. Lei's diary, if it is genuine — there are many doubters — reveals him to have been an ideological zealot whose love for and devotion to the Party was only exceeded by his hatred for the 'exploiting classes'. His greatest wish, he wrote, was simply to be 'a revolutionary screw that never rusts'. The original Lei Feng propaganda campaign was deeply ideological and focused on the inseparable link between good comradesly behaviour and party loyalty.

Over the years, and in a contemporary China less focused on ideology, Lei Feng has transformed into what Tania Branigan of *The Guardian* has called a 'depoliticised Good Samaritan'. On 5 March, the annual 'Learn from Lei Feng Day', many younger Chinese collectively donate blood or visit old people's homes to do good deeds. In 2013, Jiaotong University commissioned a special Lei Feng badge for its students to wear. The university website said that the 'Learn from Comrade Lei Feng' badge should remind people to share their umbrella with fellow students caught in a downpour or to give a lift to students heading in the same direction'. In another example, a former volunteer for the Beijing Olympics indicated that while Lei Feng inspired him to take on that role, 'being a volunteer does not simply mean helping others or doing good deeds ... it has something to do with environmental protection, assisting the poor, and helping the disabled'. A billboard in the Xujiahui underground station in Shanghai encourages similar, boy scout-like behaviour: helping blind people, giving up your seat for the elderly, assisting people to cross busy roads, and making sure that lost property gets back to its rightful owner. Such anodyne, do-gooder campaigns hark back to earlier Chinese attempts to civilise people's behaviour, such as the Nationalists' New Life Movement of the 1930s discussed in the introduction to this volume.

More cynical members of China's younger generations predictably have had fun with Lei Feng's image. A silly catchy song called 'All Northerners are Living Lei Fengs' was released in 1999, with an equally silly cartoon attached to it, and went viral across the country when it was

uploaded to the Internet. A popular Shanghai comedian tells how so many party officials visited an old people's home one Lei Feng Day to help bathe and cut the hair of the residents that some old people gave up putting their clothes back on because they would only have to get undressed again for the next compulsory bath.

The years 2012 and 2013 have, nonetheless, been special ones for Lei Feng: 2012 marked the fiftieth anniversary of his death and 5 March 2013 was the fiftieth Lei Feng Day. It was on 5 March 1963 that the *People's Daily* published Mao Zedong's essay 'Learn from Comrade Lei Feng' (*Xiang Lei Feng tongzhi xuexi* 向雷锋同志学习) along with the now-ubiquitous inscription of that phrase in Mao's distinctive calligraphy. On 1 March 2013, Liu Yunshan, the fifth-ranked member of the Standing Committee of the Politburo, President of the Central Party School and Chairman of the Central Guidance Commission for Building Spiritual Civilisation, addressed a Central Committee symposium to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of Mao's inscription. Continuing to learn from Lei Feng's example, he insisted, would 'advance the building of the socialist core value system and unite and inspire the entire nation in pursuing socialist morality'. The symposium declared Zhuang Shihua — a surgeon attached to the Xinjiang Armed Police Corps hospital in Ürümqi and a delegate to the Party's Eighteenth National Congress — to be a 'Modern-day Lei Feng' (*dangdai Lei Feng* 当代雷锋). It commended him for being a doctor who had 'successfully completed a record 58,000 operations, mostly gall bladder surgeries, and made seven breakthroughs that filled the nation's gaps in the field ... Working in a region that is home to various ethnic minorities, the selfless doctor has greatly contributed to ethnic unity there. He often visited patients by hiking across snow-capped plateau, covering over 380,000 kilometres to date. Zhuang also donated about 46,000 yuan to his patients and provided long-term financial assistance to three poor students.'



Zhuang Shihua, the army doctor who helps the poor.  
Source: Chen Jinsong

In honour of the pair of fiftieth anniversaries, the Chinese Post Office issued a new set of stamps featuring Lei Feng's image and Mao's calligraphy — an event that was especially celebrated near Lei Feng's birthplace. But three new films about Lei Feng's life that were released for the anniversary — *Youthful Days* (*Qingchun Lei Feng* 青春雷锋), *The Sweet Smile* (*Lei Fengde weixiao* 雷锋的微笑) and *Lei Feng in 1959* (*Lei Feng zai 1959* 雷锋在 1959), despite heavy promotion, proved to be box-office flops and many screenings were cancelled. The celebrations were further dampened when eighty-two-year-old Zhang Jun, the photographer who had taken more than 200 photos of Lei Feng in 1960, suffered a heart attack while giving a speech at a Shenyang commemoration. Zhang's photos, the core material for the propaganda campaigns, had reportedly featured in 320 exhibitions over his lifetime.

## Unofficial Exemplars

If Lei Feng represents the most traditional of Communist models, the heroes of private enterprise are among the newest. Officially not even allowed to join the Communist Party before 2001 (although the numbers had been growing unofficially since the early 1990s), private entrepreneurs now make up a sizeable proportion of party members. Heroes and celebrities in their own right, they may be seen as the unofficial exemplars of contemporary China. They are promoted, not by the *People's Daily*, but the likes of *Fortune* magazine. In 2012, the Chinese edition of *Fortune* published its list of the top fifteen most influential business people in China. Predictably, most of its members come from the Internet, computer and communications industries, with some representation from white goods, agriculture, finance and real estate — all industries with close links to the state sector. The list included three state employees: Wu Jinglian, the eighty-three-year-old economist at the Development Research Centre of the State Council; Zhou Xiaochuan, the governor of China's Reserve Bank; and Li Rongrong,



**Wu Jinglian.**  
Source:  
Wikimedia  
Commons



**Zhou Xiaochuan.**  
Source: Wikime-  
dia Commons



**Li Rongrong.**  
Source:  
Wikimedia  
Commons



**Zhang Ruimin.**  
Source:  
ImagineChina

the former director of the State-Owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission of the State Council. The top three on the list include the heads of Huawei Technologies and Lenovo Group. Most of China's 'most influential business people' still have intimate relations with the party-state system — a situation often referred to as 'crony Communism' — and one of the stickiest problems facing the Party in its declared war on corruption.

An interesting example of the nexus between the Party and business is number two on *Fortune's* list, Zhang Ruimin, the CEO of the Haier group, one of the largest white goods manufacturers in the world. An official sponsor of the Beijing Olympics, Haier has also sponsored sports organisations across the world. In Australasia, these include the Wests Tigers in the NRL, the Melbourne Nets in basketball and the New Zealand Pulse in the Trans-Tasman netball competition. A Red Guard in the Cultural Revolution, Zhang became a full party member in 1976. He initially worked for different departments of local government in Qingdao, Shandong province, including those supervising the manufacture of household appliances. In 1982, he was asked to take over a loss-making refrigerator plant. When one inspection revealed twenty percent of their new refrigerators were faulty, Zhang had his workers smash all seventy-six substandard machines with sledgehammers. This anecdote has passed into Chinese business legend, as has his comment to the distraught workers: 'If we don't destroy these refrigerators today, the market will shatter this enterprise in the future!' Apparently, he still has one of the sledgehammers on display in his headquarters.

Zhang has overseen Haier's extraordinary rise since then, while continuing to nurture his Communist Party affiliations. Since 2002, he has been an alternate member of the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth Central Committees of the Party. In 2010, he achieved apotheosis as a management guru when the Zhejiang People's Press published *The Wisdom of Zhang Ruimin* (*Zhang Ruimin xue shenme* 张瑞敏学什么).

## The Winning Apprentice

Even the *People's Daily* lauds the way

... present-day China is enthusiastically embracing entrepreneurship and individualism in the context that everyone is free to pursue wealth and is able to have his dream realised through dedication and diligence. (Quoted from the paper's English-language edition.)

This *People's Daily* quotation comes from a 2009 article about China's first business-related reality television program, *Win in China* (*Ying zai Zhongguo* 赢在中国), based on *The Apprentice*. Its executive producer, Wang Lifen, had held a fellowship at the Brookings Institution in Washington to study American media. The prize for winning the series was seed capital of ten million yuan, with seven million for second place and five for the other finalists; the money came from genuine investors who then owned fifty percent of the businesses formed. The other fifty percent is owned in part by the winning contestants, the TV production company, and some viewers who had voted for the winners, selected at random. For the first series, more than 3000 people put up their hands, with a final 108 selected to take part. By the third series in 2008, more than 150,000 people auditioned for the program. In the final of the first series, the guest judges were the heads of Haier and Lenovo themselves. Since then, other business reality TV shows have appeared based more closely on the original model of *The Apprentice*, including the Tianjin-produced *Only You* (*Fei ni moshu* 非你莫属), which became infamous in 2012 for the aggressive and humiliating questioning of contestants by judges — in one case causing the physical collapse of a contestant on screen.



*Win in China*, China's version of *The Apprentice* television show.  
Source: CCTV

Still, compared to the sort of corruption that allegedly allowed Chongqing Party Secretary Bo Xilai, for example, to imprison and torture members of the business community who did not co-operate with him, the contestants on *Only You* have got off lightly. The corruption that model anti-corruption workers like the marvellous ox-woodpecker-guardian angel Li Xing'ai are working to eradicate is a direct impediment to the development of healthy — and civilised — conditions for doing business, however much China has 'embraced entrepreneurship'.

For every Liu Zhijun or Lei Zhengfu gaining financially from their official positions, there were those in business on the other side of the transaction who were also making windfall profits from official corruption. These people are not immune from prosecution. In July 2013, a businessman accused of 'illegally raising 3.4 billion yuan and defrauding tens



One of the contestants on *Only You*, a television show based on *The Apprentice*, collapses under the strain of severe questioning by the judges.  
Source: ImagineChina

### Foreigners Behaving Badly

The summer of 2012 witnessed a spike in anti-foreigner sentiment in China after two videos were uploaded to the Chinese Internet. The first video appeared on 9 May 2012. It showed a lanky foreign man trying to rape a screaming Chinese woman near Xuanwumen in Beijing. A Chinese man, soon joined by two others, confronts and beats the foreigner. Within twenty-four hours, the video logged 1.32 million views on Youku.com, and Sina Weibo exploded with anti-foreigner vitriol. The man in the video — reported to be a British national — was deported within three weeks of the incident.

About a week after that video was uploaded, the second appeared. In it, a blond, white male in a train compartment is seen putting his feet on the headrest of the seat in front of him. When the woman seated there complains, he refuses to move, and worse, starts berating her in Chinese. Within a day of the video appearing online, the man was revealed to be Oleg Vedernikov, the principal cellist at the Beijing Symphony Orchestra. Named and shamed online, Vedernikov apologised — in Russian — with a video of his own. The Beijing Symphony Orchestra sacked him nonetheless for ‘uncivilised behaviour’ (*bu wenming xingwei* 不文明行为).



Oleg Vedernikov.  
Source: english.sina.com

Apparently in response to the online fury about the two uncivilised foreigners, the Beijing police announced a one-hundred-day summer crackdown on ‘Three-Illegals Foreigners’ (*sanfei waiguoren* 三非外国人) — foreigners entering, living and working illegally in China. The campaign consisted of spot checks on foreigners in neighbourhoods frequented by expatriates, and the establishment of a hotline for locals to report suspicious foreigners. Into the fray stepped Yang Rui, the tweedy host of *Dialogue* — a current affairs talk show on the English-language channel of China Central Television — with a message of support for the police posted to his Weibo account:

The Ministry of Public Security must clean out the foreign trash: catch foreign lowlifes and protect innocent girls (Wudaokou and Sanlitun are the worst-affected areas). Eliminate foreign human traffickers, unemployed Americans and Europeans who come to China to make money by selling people abroad, misleading them and encouraging them to emigrate. Learn to recognise the foreign spies who find a Chinese girl to shack up with while they make a living compiling intelligence reports, posing as tourists in order to do mapping surveys and improve GPS data for Japan, South Korea, the United States and Europe. We kicked out that shrill foreign bitch and shut down Al Jazeera’s office in Beijing; we should make everyone who demonises China shut up and fuck off. (Translation by Brendan O’Kane.)

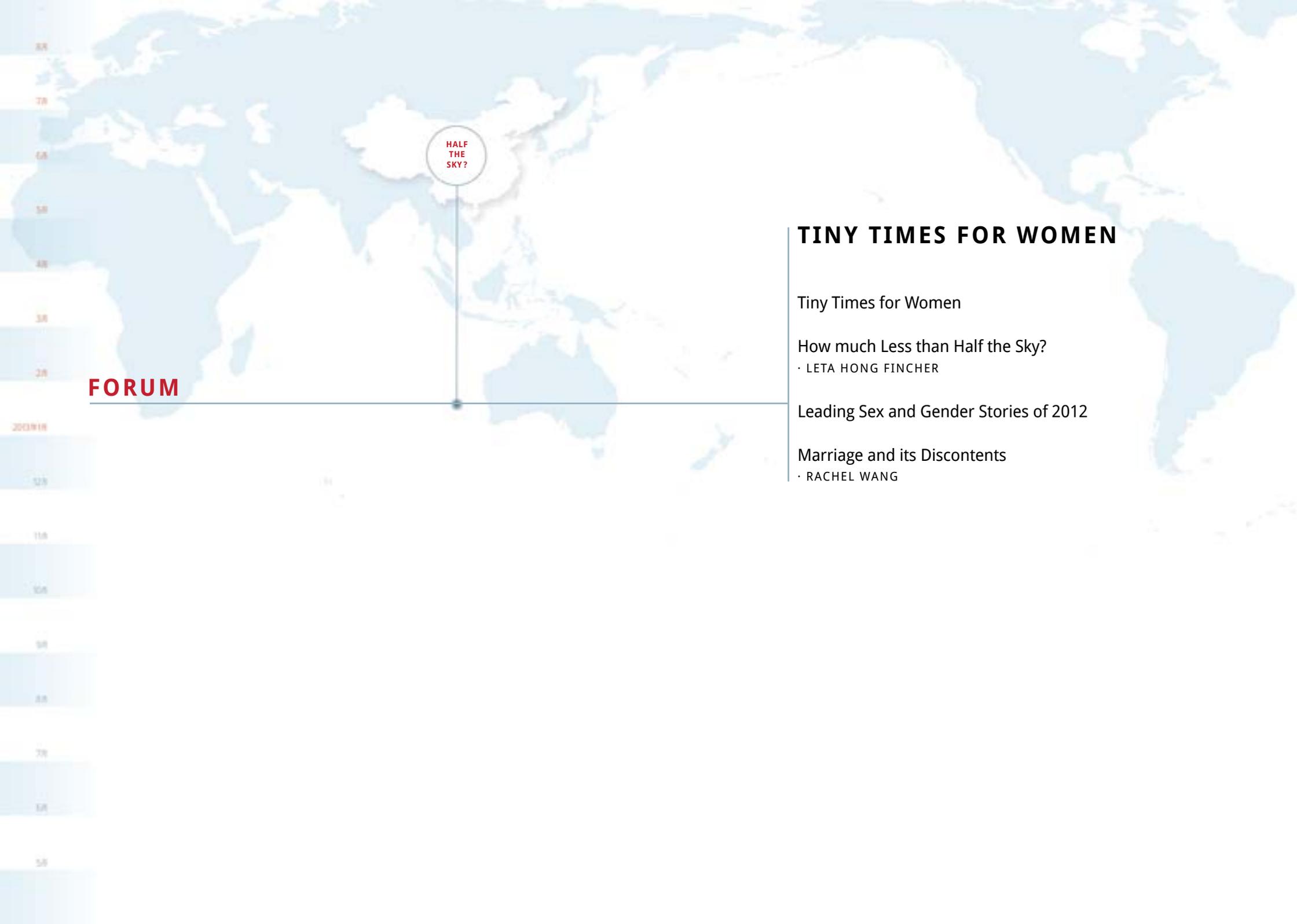
The ‘shrill foreign bitch’ refers to the Al Jazeera journalist Melissa Chan, whose work visa was not renewed by the Foreign Ministry — a move that was widely seen as an attempt to intimidate foreign media organisations into reporting less negative news.

With no further videos of unruly foreigners, the rest of 2012 passed without much anti-foreigner bile on the Internet. In April 2013, it emerged that Neil Robinson — a British national wanted by the UK police ‘in connection with the distribution of indecent images of children and the rape of a child’ — was working as a teacher at the private school Beijing World Youth Academy. Soon after the news broke, Robinson handed himself in to the police in Beijing. There was almost no reaction from Chinese online commentators.

of thousands of investors’ by running a Ponzi scheme, Zeng Chengjie (the Western media dubbed him China’s Bernie Madoff) was executed for financial crimes. Once, however, the state media had described Zeng as ‘diligent, wise and conscientious’. His fall from grace illustrates the continuing powerful culture of exemplary categories in China. Zeng was all good, or he was all bad; he was either a hero or a villain, a figure to be held up for either praise or blame. In his consecutive roles as positive and then negative example, he was a model contemporary Chinese citizen.



FORUM



## TINY TIMES FOR WOMEN

Tiny Times for Women

How much Less than Half the Sky?

· LETA HONG FINCHER

Leading Sex and Gender Stories of 2012

Marriage and its Discontents

· RACHEL WANG

FORUM

HALF  
THE  
SKY?

## TINY TIMES FOR WOMEN

China does not lack notable female entrepreneurs, publishers, social activists, educators or commentators. Prominent businesswomen include Zhang Lan (b.1958), founder of the South Beauty (*Qiaojiangnan* 俏江南) chain of restaurants and Dong Mingzhu (b.1956), CEO of GREE air conditioning company. Hu Shuli (b.1953), the financial journalist at the helm of Caixin Media has an international reputation that has seen her win awards including the *World Press Review's* 2003 International Editor of the Year and a listing in the US *Foreign Policy*

magazine's 2008 as one of the world's top one hundred intellectuals alongside Noam Chomsky and Umberto Eco. The independent journalist and historian Dai Qing (b.1941) was one of the forces behind China's nascent environmental movement in the mid-1980s and continues her tireless advocacy for human rights, democracy and environmental protection. Hong Huang (b.1962) is a well-known media mogul, microblogger and television host whose projects include the high-profile promotion of Chinese design brands. The list is long. Yet Chinese women's



**Zhang Lan.**  
Source: China-detail.com



**Dong Mingzhu.**  
Source: Wikimedia Commons



**Hu Shuli.**  
Source: Asia-society.org



**Dai Qing.**  
Photo: Ian Elwood



**Hong Huang.**  
Photo: Benjamin Chiang



**Wu Yi.**  
Source: China-detail.com



**Xu Jinglei.**  
Source: Chineseidol.info

**Guo Meimei Baby.**  
Source: Weibo.com

**Zhou Rui Emily.**  
Source: Mop.com

representation at the highest levels of the Chinese political sphere has rarely been more than token. There has not been a woman in the politburo since Wu Yi (b.1938 and named one of *Time* magazine's 100 most influential people in the world in 2004) retired from her position as Vice-Premier on the State Council in 2008.

The last few years have also arguably seen a stumble backwards when it comes to the representation of women in the media and on the Internet. The most prominent Chinese Internet celebrity of the first decade of the twenty-first century was, arguably, Xu Jinglei, an unmarried film director and actor. After long-form blogging became the medium

*du jour* from 2005 to 2008, tens of millions fans logged onto Xu's blog daily for her independent, down-to-earth take on life and her willingness to share non glam photographs with her fans. In 2010, Xu directed *Go La La Go! (Du La La shengzhi ji 杜拉拉升职记)*, a film about a young professional woman's struggle to balance work and life.

But the era of the microblog that started with the launch of Sina Weibo in 2009 is also one that seems to celebrate brashness and materialism, and the subservience and sexualisation of women over the sort of qualities that have brought the likes of Hu Shuli, Dai Qing and other such women to prominence. Although there are still inde-



Film poster of *Tiny Times*, directed and produced by Guo Jingming.  
Source: Onlylady.com

pendent female voices of authority and intelligence, the ones who appear to get most of the attention in this new 'micro' climate are women such as Guo Meimei Baby (see the 2012 *Yearbook*) and Zhou Rui Emily (see Chapter 7), mistresses who boast of gifts from their rich lovers. Perhaps most notorious was Ma Nuo, a twenty-year-old female contestant on a TV dating show in 2010 who famously said that she would 'rather cry in the back of a BMW than laugh on the back of a bicycle' (*Ning zai Baoma cheili ku, ye bu zai zixingcheshang xiao 宁在宝马车里哭，也不在自行车上笑*).

In contrast to Xu Jinglei's 2010 film, the biggest hit film with young women in early 2013 was *Tiny Times (Xiao shi-dai 小时代)*, directed and produced by male pulp novelist Guo Jingming. *Tiny Times* depicts four young women whose main aim in life appears to be snagging

a rich husband. Writing in the *Atlantic* magazine Ying Zhu and Frances Hisgen noted that the women's 'professional aspirations amount to serving men with competence' and that the only 'enduring relationship' in the superficial world portrayed by the film is 'the chicks' relationship with material goods'. Zhu and Hisgen call the male-scripted film 'a great leap backward for women' that portrays 'a twisted male narcissism and a male desire for patriarchal power and control over female bodies and emotions misconstrued as female longing'.



## HOW MUCH LESS THAN HALF THE SKY?

Leta Hong Fincher

*Leta Hong Fincher, a former journalist, is a PhD candidate in sociology at Tsinghua University in Beijing who is conducting research on the economic effects of sexism and the changing place of women in Chinese society and author of the book 'Leftover' Women: The Resurgence of Gender Inequality in China. The following is a transcript of a brief interview with Hong Fincher conducted by Jeremy Goldkorn in May 2013.*

**JG:** *Is Chinese society going backwards when it comes to the treatment of women and what would you say are the major areas where women's status or conditions are deteriorating?*

**LHF:** There are many, many areas in which women's status is moving backwards. I will start with my own research. I found that women have been shut out of arguably the biggest accumulation of real estate wealth in history. In the past decade and a half,

since the privatisation of housing and the real estate boom in China, China has created over US\$27 trillion in residential real estate wealth. Most of that wealth is in men's names. Parents tend to buy homes for sons and not for daughters. A lot has been written about the pressure on men to provide a home upon marriage, but what I found is the pressure is equally intense on women and so there are a lot of women who transfer their life savings and all of their assets over to the man – and it

may not even be the husband, it may just be a boyfriend – in order to finance the purchase of this extremely valuable home.

So what you are seeing is the creation of this gigantic gender wealth gap, and the consequences of this gender wealth inequality could last for generations, because there is no tax on property and there is no gift tax imposed on parents buying homes for their children. So that's one major area of economic inequality between women and men.

There has been a lot of research on other areas. The gender income gap is widening, and labour force participation among women is declining sharply, particularly in the cities. There has also been this law that was amended by China's Supreme People's Court in August 2011, a new judicial interpretation of the Marriage Law. Before this, basically marital property was common property, but now essentially whoever buys the home and whose name is on the deed gets to keep the home in the event of a divorce. This is a severe setback to married women's property rights that has consequences extending far beyond merely who gets the property in the event of a divorce,

because whoever has greater wealth in the marriage has a lot more bargaining power in all areas of the marriage.

That relates to another very serious problem for women, which is the pervasiveness of domestic violence. I do not think that we have the evidence to say that domestic violence has necessarily worsened, but it certainly has not gotten any better and there has been no progress whatsoever in introducing a national law that would really prevent and punish perpetrators of domestic violence. This is a very serious problem, especially when it comes to property rights.

There are all sorts of other areas. Human Rights Watch came out with this report recently about the proliferation of prostitution in the last few decades and major abuses of all of these workers in the sex trade.

All of the problems with creation of inequality of wealth and income that relate to all Chinese people hit women especially hard.

Then there's the campaign against leftover women! In 2007, the Women's Federation defined the new term, *shengnü* 剩女 or 'leftover women'. The Ministry of Education adopt-



Giant bird cage.  
Photo: Ernie Emop

ed it as part of China's official lexicon. And ever since then, the state media has been stigmatising urban educated women over the age of twenty-seven who are still single, and so in all the state media you see columns, news reports, supposedly objective social science surveys, cartoons, and TV shows all basically hurling invective at women who choose to pursue higher education and remain single beyond the age of twenty-seven.

What I have found is that this is not merely a cultural phenomenon, it has very drastic economic consequences and relates back to my topic of real estate wealth. Because of the intense pressure on young women to get married, a lot of young women rush into marriage with the wrong man. I find that a lot of times these young women come under such pressure when they're getting married and buying a home. It can be a very complicated financial transaction. It usually involves the parents of both the bride and the groom, and there



'Women hold up half the sky, manage the landscape to give it a new face.' Mao-era propaganda poster from Liaoning province, April 1975.  
Source: Creativesomerset.com

can be heated arguments over whose name is going to be registered on the property deed. Time and time again I have found young women who are unwilling to walk away from an unequal financial arrangement because they are so anxious about not finding another husband, and so I think that this 'leftover women' campaign has also contributed to the creation of the enormous gender wealth gap.

**JG:** Do you see any remnants of the Maoist 'women hold up half the sky' mentality and was that ever even a real thing? Has there been any good news? Has there been any legislation that has benefited women?

**LHF:** Well, with regards to legislation, there has not been any that I am aware of that has really helped women. I mean it is possible that there might be something out there, but I certainly have not heard of it. The positive news is that women are getting educated: you have record numbers of women getting a college education, and I believe that there may be about twenty-five percent more university educated urban women now than there were in 2000. That is very good news.

But I believe that that is partly the reason why the government rolled out this leftover women campaign. Because women are getting so much more educated, they are choosing to pursue their careers, and naturally when a woman wants to advance her education and advance her career, she wants to delay marriage. So I think this leftover women campaign is in large part a backlash against the recent gains of women in education and

in their early careers. And this is related as well to the one-child policy. A lot of scholars have done research showing that as a result of the one-child policy, parents with only one daughter tend to invest a lot in her education, because the daughter does not need to compete with a brother for parental investment. But what you are not seeing is that increased education translating into economic gains when women enter the workforce and particularly when they get married.



Two young women at an Internet cafe: 'There are no decent men out there.' The other replies: 'I will take one if he comes free of charge.'  
Cartoon in response to campaign against 'leftover women' of the Women's Federation.  
Source: Wshed.blog.sohu.com



## LEADING SEX AND GENDER STORIES OF 2012

Since 2008, the Sex and Gender Institute at Beijing Forestry University (Beijing Linye daxue xing yu xingbie yanjiusuo 北京林业大学性与性别研究所) has published an annual list of the Ten Biggest Sex and Gender Stories in China (Niandu shi da xing yu xingbie shijian 年度十大性与性别事件). The following is a translation of the 2012 list:

### **Thirty-eight-year-old Master's Degree Holder Promotes Chastity**

In February 2012, Tu Shiyou from Wuhan University started a blog advocating premarital chastity and proclaimed that she herself was still a virgin (and she uploaded a medical report to her blog to prove it). This elicited many critical and satirical responses from online commentators.

### **Ye Haiyan and Free Sexual Services**

At the beginning of the year, Ye Haiyan — a well-known advocate for the rights of sex workers and AIDS victims — posted pictures on her Weibo account



**Ye Haiyan.**  
Source: Baidu Baike

of herself, volunteering to provide free sexual services to migrant workers to focus attention on the lack of legal rights for sex workers. In response, Ye was subjected to physical abuse by locals and her place of work was attacked.

In May 2013, Ye was in the news again for mounting a protest in Hainan against the sexual abuse of schoolgirls there by their principal by uploading photos of herself carrying a sign that said: ‘School principal — leave the schoolgirls alone and come to my room!’ Again, she was the victim of physical attack.

### ‘Gendered’ Education

In February, Zhengzhou No.18 Middle School in Henan province tested a new education method when it announced the introduction of different academic standards for ‘Masculine Boys’ and ‘Refined and Intelligent Girls’. In March, the Shanghai municipal government approved No.8 Middle School’s ‘Shanghai Senior High School Experimental Class for Boys’ with the stated goal of creating a happy environment for the cultivation of wholesome and studious male learners. Both schools reported good results in their experiments.

### Under-aged Girls in Brothels

In 1997, the Criminal Law was revised so that keeping under-aged girls in brothels was specified as a crime separate from the crime of statutory rape. Various scholars have in the period since maintained that this distinction lowers the threat of punishment for criminals who keep under-age girls in brothels. In March 2012, the Vice-Chairperson of the All-China Women’s Federation (*Zhonghua quanguo funü lianhehui* 中华全国妇女联合会), Zhen Yan, stated that the law does not adequately protect minors, and called for the law to be repealed.

### Suicide of a Gay Man’s Wife

In June, a woman named Hong Lingcong jumped to her death from a building after her husband admitted to her on Weibo that he was gay. This case ignited heated debate within the gay community regarding marriage: many gay men and lesbian women end up in a loveless heterosexual marriage in order to please their families.

### ‘I May be Flirtatious, but You Shouldn’t Harass Me’



A female protester holding a placard reading ‘I may be flirtatious, but you shouldn’t harass me’.  
Source: Sohu.com

In June, an official working on the Shanghai subway posted an image on Weibo showing the back of a woman wearing a see-through top. Professing his good intentions, the official reminded women not to invite sexual harassment by dressing provocatively. A few days later, two women launched a protest by carrying posters in the subway with the words ‘I may be flirtatious, but you shouldn’t harass me’ (*Wo keyi sao, ni buneng rao* 我可以骚, 你不能扰), saying that they had the right to dress in revealing clothes without the threat of being harassed or abused on the subway or, for that matter, anywhere else.

### Eighty-four-year-old Transgender Woman Steps Out of the Closet

In June, an eighty four-year-old transgender woman in Guangdong province named Qian Jinfan stepped into the limelight by accepting an invitation to be interviewed by a journalist. Qian intended to challenge the prejudices held in society against the transgendered. She has not had a sex change operation but dresses and self-identifies as a woman.

### The Fight Against Sexual Violence

During a ‘Global Campaign Against Sexual Violence Towards Women’ in November and December 2012, the UN Population Fund’s representative office in China ran a concurrent online campaign urging men to pledge to oppose sexual violence against women. During the sixteen-day campaign, 351 men signed up to the pledge.

### Online ‘Pornographic Anti-corruption’ Cases

During 2012, pornographic images and videos of officials were regularly exposed online, and punishment meted out to the people involved. Such cases have seen an official at a university expelled from the Party in August, another

er official at a university fired from his position in November and, that same month, an official in Chongqing was relieved of his position.

### Activities of Feminists

2012 was a year of increased feminist protests in China. These included:

- In February, a number of women launched ‘Occupy Male Restrooms’
- In April, female students at Sun Yat-Sen University in Guangzhou sent a letter to 500 companies protesting against gender discrimination in recruitment
- In August, women shaved their heads to express their dissatisfaction with the Ministry of Education over gender discrimination in college entrance exams
- In November, women posted bare-breasted pictures of themselves online to show their support for the enactment of laws governing domestic violence
- In December, women in Guangzhou put on red wedding dresses to protest against domestic violence.



Women shave their heads to protest gender biased examination policy.  
Source: Chinese Internet Forum



Women protesters outside a men's restroom.  
Source: Mop.com



## MARRIAGE AND ITS DISCONTENTS

Rachel Wang

*The following is adapted with permission from an article that originally appeared on TeaLeafNation.com.*

IN LATE February 2013, the Sina Weibo news portal published an article that included the following assertion:

According to relevant regulations, the first marriage of males aged twenty-five or older and females aged twenty-three or older are considered 'late marriages'. A bit of simple math shows that 2013 is the first year that some post-Eighties [those born in 1980 or later] are turning thirty-three, and the first year that some post-Nineties [those born in 1990 or later] are of 'late marriage' age.

Over 400,000 web users discussed the topic on Sina Weibo, and with print media covering it as well, the subject of 'late marriage' generated a discussion on a variety of issues related to marriage, age and gender roles in China: how can a Chinese woman born in 1990 already be too old for marriage?

Though the age for late marriage was not set in the law, twenty-three years of age for women and twenty-five years for men has been the assumed standard at local levels, and has been used in such documents as the Population and Family Planning Policy of Beijing (Chapter 3, Article 16), published in 2003. Several decades ago, the state ac-

tually encouraged late marriage. Chapter 2, Article 6 of the 1980 Marriage Law states: 'Late marriage and late child-birth should be encouraged.'

Although the original aim of the Population and Family Planning Policy was to curb population growth, policy-makers today have different concerns. A number of prominent Chinese academics recently signed a letter pointing out that even if China's one-child policy were to be scrapped immediately, the Chinese population will begin to shrink in ten years. Faced with an aging population, China has an interest in hurrying its post-Nineties citizens into marriage.

Yet some young Chinese women still hesitate. Some of their reasons are similar to those of other women around the world who are less keen than those of previous generations to jump into marriage early (or in some cases, at all). Ifeng.com surveyed over 35,500 single women in China in early 2013. The most popular response to the question 'What kind of men are you willing to marry?' was 'a divorced man who owns a house and car' followed by 'a successful forty-something man who has gone on a lot of blind dates but is still single'. The least popular kind of man, com-

ing behind even 'an unassuming computer programmer' and 'a handsome freelancer', was the so-called 'phoenix man' (*fenghuang nan* 凤凰男), a successful and ambitious businessman or corporate executive from a humble background. 'Phoenix men' are assumed to have exhausted the resources of their families in the process of educating themselves and raising themselves out of poverty, and are expected to have many family members burden them financially and emotionally. Instead of being regarded as heroes who changed their own destinies, 'phoenix men' are perceived to be prone to insecurity, fear of failure, penny pinching, inferiority complexes, and prioritisation of their extended family over their own wife and children.

One female Weibo user commented on the popularity of the 'divorced man with a house and a car':

I personally think that you may lose face by marrying an old man, but at least you might have some security in life. He might also be less flirtatious. A more stable life would bring you a sense of safety.



Street scene in Zhuzhou, Hunan province.  
Photo: Ernie Emop

A majority of the women surveyed said that while single, they devote themselves to their work. Almost half reported they had no sex life. A sizable 13.28 percent said they did not want to marry, while 23.87 percent said they were 'uncertain, tired, and might never love again'. Paradoxically, as pressure from

the state and society to marry early increases, women might opt out altogether from a system that seems designed to entrap them in a loveless economic relationship or a love match that makes no economic sense.



# 4

# 14

## UNDER RULE OF LAW

Susan Trevaskes and Elisa Nesossi

8 JANUARY 2013

SHANGHAI

Protesters against the Re-education Through Labor system at a Politico-Legal Commission Work Conference where Meng Jianzhu announced reforms.



**IN POST-EIGHTEENTH** Party Congress China, politics continue to dominate the justice agenda, particularly in corruption cases and in cases that may have an impact on social stability. Despite its staunch opposition to liberalism, the new party leadership recognises that, during the last decade, encroachments of the Stability Maintenance agenda on the legal system have resulted in a widespread loss of public trust in the law. Hence, in 2013 rhetorical expressions such as ‘using rule-of-law thinking’ have reappeared in the politico-legal discourse. This in no way implies a new commitment to liberal values. Indeed, the prescribed route to development and prosperity in Xi Jinping’s China remains unmistakably socialist, intolerant of the ‘deviant path’ of Westernisation and heavily reliant on anti-corruption rhetoric and Mass Line discourse, and these ideological concerns justify and inform justice practices.

Civilising justice has been an ongoing national project in post-Mao China. Officially, it goes under the description of ‘reform’ — an effort to instil the values associated with the rule of law into the practice of justice. Yet in these times of rapid social transformation, the civilising of justice is inseparable from politics. Increasing demands for ideological conformity have an inevitable impact on the way the justice system works both in theory and practice.

Since late 2012, the new party leadership has been realigning its politico-legal agenda. It has been pulling away from the hardline insistence on ‘Stability Maintenance’ (*weiwēn* 维稳, short for *weihu shehui wending* 维护社会稳定) that was eroding public confidence in the law (and which we discussed in the 2012 *Yearbook*), and is returning to an emphasis on building the rule of law. Collective public protests or ‘mass incidents’ (*qunti shijian* 群体事件) drew the particular ire of the party-state in the years after the Seventeenth Party Congress. Over the years 2007 to 2012, these increased from around 80,000 to well over 100,000 annually, possibly up to 180,000. After 2007, and bolstered by a dramatically increased annual budget, police and other security agencies implemented a conservative approach to policing, or what the legal scholar Yu Jianrong describes as ‘rigid Stability Maintenance’ (*gangxing weiwēn* 刚性维稳) operations. State responses to protests began to soften as a result of the Guangdong provincial government’s success in negotiating a peaceful resolution to the stand-off between police and protesters in Wukan village that captured the nation’s attention in December 2011, as discussed in the 2012 *Yearbook*. The political fallout from the March 2012 downfall of Bo Xilai further turned the tide.

Loss of public trust in the law has been central to the party-state’s decision to revive rhetoric around the rule of law. By mid-2012, it was apparent that the party leadership recognised the futility of rigid Stability Maintenance as a long-term political solution. It began to favour instead the relatively peaceful process of mediating and resolving disputes through local courts and government agencies.

## Refining Stability Maintenance



Special police force on the move.  
Source: Xinhua

The law–politics nexus in China is well illustrated by the major political events of 2012–2013. This period’s justice-related highlights and lowlights include the dramatic downfall of the Bo Xilai empire in Chongqing, his wife’s murder trial in August 2012 and the associated criminal trial of his right-hand (police-) man Wang Lijun in September 2012. They include other high-profile trials such as that of millionaire businesswoman Wu Ying, who escaped execution apparently as the result of nationwide public demands for leniency, and that of Burmese drug lord Naw Kham, whose final hours before execution March 2013 in Yunnan province were televised nationwide.

Political realignments in late 2012, meanwhile, began to shift politico-legal agendas. As the head of the Central Party Committee Politico-Legal Commission from 2007 to the end of 2012, Zhou Yongkang played a central role in formulating and implementing justice policy, driving the Stability Maintenance agenda from central to local criminal justice agencies, through politico-legal party committees in courts, procuratorates and police stations across the nation. But Zhou’s support for Bo Xilai sealed both

## MASS INCIDENTS IN 2012

In January 2013, Legal Daily (Fazhi ribao 法制日报) published a summary of a report that tabulated and analysed 'mass incidents' in China — riots, civil unrest and protests. The sources of information and the methodology underpinning the report were not clear; the summary also failed to give a total number of mass incidents for 2012. The numbers of incidents by location indicating, for example, that Guangdong experienced only eight mass incidents, made no sense when compared with previous official reports that spoke of an annual total of 80,000–100,000 mass incidents nationwide. But the report did provide a snapshot of some of the challenges faced by the Communist Party. Following are translated highlights from the Legal Daily report.

### Duration of Incidents

- one day: 75.6 percent
- two to seven days: 20 percent
- seven days to three months: 4.4 percent.

### Geographical Distribution (the most restive provinces)

Guangdong, Sichuan and Henan provinces had the most mass incidents with eight, five and four respectively.

### Causes

The report declared that in 2012 the causes of mass incidents were more varied than in the past. These included:

- social disputes/issues 社会纠纷: 24.4 percent
- forced demolitions/removals 征地强拆: 22.2 percent
- conflict between the police and the People 警民冲突: 22.2 percent
- conflict between officials and the People 官民冲突: 13.3 percent
- defence of environmental rights 环境维权: 8.9 percent
- ethnic conflict 族群冲突: 8.9 percent.

### Public Interest

The report said cases detrimental to the public interest (*gonggong liyi shou sun* 公共利益受损) are the most common type of mass incident at 57.8 percent, whereas harm to private or individual interests (*geren liyi shou sun* 个人利益受损) is the cause of 42.2 percent of mass incidents. 'Public interest' is defined as something that affects a large group of people — for instance, an environmental problem — whereas an example of 'private interests' is damage to a person's property.

### Types of People Involved

Mass incidents in 2012 involved the following types of people:

- residents of cities and towns 城镇居民: 51.1 percent
- farmers/rural residents 农民: 46.7 percent
- migrants 外来人口: 17.8 percent
- students 学生: 11.1 percent
- minorities 少数民族: 4.4 percent
- foreign nationals 外籍人士: 2.2 percent.

### Tactical Response

The report recommended that local governments put a major effort into preparing emergency response mechanisms to deal with mass incidents, and divided them into the following categories:

- spontaneous 临时突发的: 53 percent
- organised in advance 事前有组织: 31 percent
- progressively/gradually unfolding 递进式开展: 16 percent.

### Means of Organisation

The report said that although the majority of mass incidents are organised face-to-face or by telephone calls, social media 'cannot be ignored'. From the report:

It's worth noting that in 13.3 percent of mass incidents, new media Weibo was used as an organisational tool. One can see that the nature of mass incidents is changing with the development of the Internet, and there are more and more methods of organising people who have never met before into an interest group that encourages a mass incident to break out. In these circumstances, all local government departments need to professionalise their use of official Weibo accounts and their monitoring and control of public sentiment on the Internet.

### Means of organising:

- personal (face-to-face/ phone call) 人际 (当面/电话): 95.6 percent
- Weibo 微博: 13.3 percent
- instant messaging 即时通讯: 4.4 percent
- Internet forum 论坛: 4.4 percent
- unknown 不确定: 2.2 percent.

### Aftermath

The report recommends careful consideration of how to 'achieve win-win outcomes' in relation to mass incidents, and breaks down the consequences of mass incidents in 2012 as follows:

- damage to property 财产损失: 73.3 percent
- injuries 人员受伤: 71.1 percent
- peaceful resolution 和平解决: 11.1 percent
- fatalities 人员死亡: 8.9 percent.

### Measures Taken

According to the report, the Chinese government dealt with mass incidents in 2012 using the following types of responses:

- negative measures 负面应对措施: 62.2 percent
- positive measures 正面应对措施: 57.8 percent
- no measures taken 无应对: 15.6 percent.

#### Positive measures are defined as:

- official announcements 官方声明
- thorough investigation 深入调查
- dealing with the persons responsible 处理负责人
- consoling/persuading concerned parties 慰问/劝说当事人
- publicising policies, laws and regulations 出台政策法规。

#### Negative measures are defined as:

- information blackout 封锁信息
- dispersal using force 强硬驱散
- arresting and detaining concerned parties 逮捕/拘留当事人。

**Bo Xilai**

**Bo Xilai on trial.**  
Source: Xinhua

**Gu Kailai, Bo Xilai's wife on trial.**  
Source: CCTV

Xinhua News Agency announced on 28 September 2012 that former Chongqing Communist Party chief and Politburo member Bo Xilai had been expelled from the Communist Party and removed from his remaining public offices. According to Xinhua, the decision was made during a Politburo meeting and was based largely on Bo's handling of Wang Lijun's unauthorised entry into the US Consulate in Chengdu early that year, the involvement of Bo's wife, Gu Kailai, in the murder of Englishman Neil Heywood in late 2011, and disciplinary violations dating back to Bo's time as mayor of Dalian in the 1990s. Bo was removed from the Politburo and the Party's Central Committee, and his case was turned over to the judiciary.

On 23 October 2012, the neo-Maoist website Red China published an open letter to the Politburo Standing Committee arguing that Bo's removal from office was politically motivated and legally questionable. It was purportedly signed by more than 300 people, including former senior officials. There were other small, muted acts of protests, but on 25 July 2013, Bo was formally charged with taking bribes, corruption, and abuse of office.

Gu Kailai, whom the state media consistently referred to as Bogu Kailai after her arrest, had already been formally charged with Heywood's murder on 26 July 2012. During her one-day trial on 9 August 2013, she reportedly confessed to the crime, blaming her actions on a mental breakdown. On 20 August, the court handed down a suspended death sentence. Her aide, Zhang Xiaojun, was sentenced to nine years in prison. According to the official Xinhua narrative of the crime, Gu had poisoned Heywood out of fear for the safety of her son, Bo Guagua, whom he had reportedly threatened via email during a financial dispute.

Wang Lijun was tried on 17–18 September 2012 for abuse of power, attempted defection, taking bribes and bending the law for selfish ends. He was sentenced to fifteen years in prison. State and commercial media portrayed Wang as an image-obsessed wheeler-dealer who had assisted Gu in covering up the Heywood murder.

Gu's trial took place in a closed court in Hefei, Anhui province, that released a terse, scripted statement about what took place, but during Bo's trial, conducted by the Jinan Intermediate People's Court just over a year later, from 22 to 26 August, edited excerpts of the court transcripts were released regularly to Sina Weibo. Gu testified via video. Bo called her 'crazy' and vigorously cross-examined businessman Xu Ming, a witness for the prosecution.

On 22 September the court found Bo guilty on all charges, stripped him of his assets, and sentenced him to life in prison. Xinhua published photographs of him listening to the verdict. As during the hearings, the 1.85 meter tall Bo, wearing fashionable black sneakers as clearly visible as his handcuffs, is flanked by two policeman specially chosen to tower over him. In some of the photos, Bo is smiling, in apparent defiance, or in sheer disbelief; or a perhaps sign that he was dreaming of revenge.

**Naw Kham**

Naw Kham (also romanised as Nuo Kang and Nam Kahn) was an ethnic Shan Burmese criminal gang leader who was convicted by a Chinese court of planning and carrying out the murder of thirteen Chinese mariners on 5 October 2011. The sailors were crewing on two cargo ships — the *Hua Ping* and *Yu Xing 8*. The ships operated on the Mekong River in the 'Golden Triangle', where criminal gangs often demand protection money from boats and sometimes hijack them to transport illegal goods such as drugs. The mass murder caused great public outrage in China after photos of dead Chinese sailors went viral on the Internet.

After the sailors' bodies were found, the Chinese authorities quickly suspended all Chinese shipping on the Mekong and requested co-operation from Thailand, Laos and Burma in solving the crime. In December 2012, the four countries signed a security agreement to administer joint patrols on the Mekong. They launched a man-hunt, under Chinese direction, involving members of an elite Thai anti-narcotics force, to capture suspects including Naw Kham and members of his gang. Laotian security forces apprehended Naw Kham in late April 2012 in Bokeo province. He was extradited to China to stand trial. The court sentenced him and two other members of his gang to death in November 2012; they were executed by lethal injection on 1 March 2013. The graphic televised report of the execution caused considerable comment both in China and internationally.

Some observers viewed the Chinese government's actions as indicative of China's growing role in regional security, or what the *New York Times* called 'cross-border clout'.



**Naw Kham on trial.**  
Source: Xinhua

his own fate and, indirectly, the fate of rigid Stability Maintenance. With Bo's downfall, Zhou Yongkang found himself politically isolated. As the political mood shifted, in July 2012 he publicly affirmed the more moderate 'Guangdong Model' (that is, a negotiated solution to local strife).

In August, Zhou further tried to salvage his reputation as well as his protégés' within the bureaucracy by touting what he referred to as a more 'civilised' security and justice agenda. This consisted of standardising justice practices throughout the nation and urging strict enforcement of laws and regulations. In January 2013, the well-known activist lawyer Pu Zhiqiang made an extraordinary public attack on Zhou, accusing him of abusing human rights through rigid Stability Maintenance, calling him a 'traitor to the people' and characterising his actions as 'poisonous'. Pu argued that for China to emerge from the shadow of Stability Maintenance, Zhou would have to be 'held to account' (*qingsuan* 清算) for its negative political and social fallout. Although these comments were later deleted from the Chinese Internet, at the time of writing Pu had not suffered serious consequences for his outspokenness. This alone suggests the level of disdain for Zhou in even the highest political circles.

**Wu Ying**

**Wu Ying on trial.**  
Source: Xinhua

Wu Ying, an entrepreneur from Zhejiang province, founded Bense Group in 2005 and by 2006 was ranked by the *Hurun* Report as the sixth-richest woman in China. In February 2007, she was formally arrested for illegal fundraising and was sentenced to death for fraud in December 2009. The provincial high court upheld her sentence on appeal and submitted it to the Supreme People's Court for authorisation.

Wu Ying's case shed light on the application of the death penalty to a wide range of economic crimes and led to calls for legal reform, particularly because the illegal fundraising she was convicted of could also be viewed as the sort of underground financing that may be the only option available to private businesses shut out by the state-run banking monopoly. Wu also admitted to bribing officials, but because bribery is not a capital crime, popular opinion held that the court imposed the sentence partially to prevent the investigation escalating to include the more than one hundred officials who had allegedly lent her over half a million yuan each.

Speaking at a press conference on 14 March 2012, then Premier Wen Jiabao noted approvingly that the Supreme People's Court had taken a 'cautious approach' to her case, a remark interpreted as nudging the court toward a reprieve. The court issued a narrow ruling quashing the original sentence on the grounds that Wu had co-operated with investigators, although it affirmed the particulars of the lower court rulings. On 21 May 2012, the Zhejiang court sentenced Wu Ying to death with a two-year stay of execution.

## Regaining Trust in the Law

Security agencies deployed three million people including police, other security personnel and volunteers to maintain stability and protect the some 2000 national party delegates who descended on Beijing for the week-long Party Congress beginning on 8 November 2012. This congress set the 2013 politico-legal agenda, announcing new rule-of-law-based slogans and a crucial change in the politico-legal power structure. Until 2012, politico-legal authority was concentrated largely in the person of Zhou Yongkang as Politburo Standing Committee member and head of the Politico-Legal Commission. After November, Xi Jinping and colleagues recentralised this authority back into the collective hands of the Politburo Standing Committee.

Meng Jianzhu, the former Minister of Public Security, became the new head of the Commission in November 2012. Meng's debut speech implored criminal justice organs to 'civilise' their practices, conduct their work 'on the basis of the rule of law', and 'standardise' justice practices across the nation to ensure that the law is properly enforced. As Meng declared:



**Meng Jianzhu,**  
former Minister of Public Security.  
Source: Xinhua

... Making use of concepts and methods of the rule of law, we should also enhance, in a practical way, our ability to resolve conflicts and maintain stability ... We should rigorously implement the basic strategies of the rule of law, and conscientiously address the issue of developing our capacity to enforce the law in the context of constructing a socialist country within the framework of the rule of law. Public security organs should tenaciously build up the concepts of socialist rule of law, skilfully handle all kinds of complex problems with the help of rule-of-law thinking, skilfully resolve various social conflicts with the help of legal approaches, and skilfully maintain social order with the aid of law and regulations. This way, solutions to social conflicts and problems can be addressed via the rule of law ... Law enforcement should be performed on the one hand, strictly and justly, and on the other hand, in a rational and civilised manner.

Immediately following important Party Congress speeches, political factions and personalities often test regime tolerance through provocative statements. While some political authorities clung to Stability Maintenance rhetoric, at the other end of the political spectrum others took advantage of the opportunity to promote more robust rule of law values. Writing in the *People's Forum* (*Renmin luntan* 人民论坛), Supreme People's Court Deputy Chief Justice Jiang Bixin's endorsement of the virtues of the rule of law went far beyond the modest enforcement-orientated goals of Meng Jianzhu's speech. Rebuffing those in the Party who ridiculed the idea of 'universal values', Jiang lauded the civilising effects of law and justice:

Concepts such as democracy, freedom, equality, rule of law, justice, integrity, and harmony should be incorporated into core socialist values ... . These concepts have never been merely patents of the bourgeoisie, but are the product of the civilising process which is commonly created by all human beings. These concepts symbolise both the moral values of humanism which are embedded in the rule of law, and the fundamental conditions upon which the rule of law is conceived. ... [T]he inclusion of these concepts into core socialist values will not only enrich the core socialist values system, but will also endow socialist values with a commonality and compatibility with other value systems.



Spotting imperfections.  
Photo: Hsing Wei

The reignition of rule-of-law rhetoric may point more to a change in the political mood for limited internal reform than the delivery of dramatic improvements to the structure of state power. Yet the upsurge in references by politicians to the rule of law in late 2012 and early 2013 signalled intentions within the Party to make the judicial and security organs more conducive to 'supervision' and the 'mutual restraint' of authority — a boon, ultimately, for the long-term resilience of the regime. This change of political heart will influence the carriage of justice in courts and policing agencies, many of which in recent years took the stability imperative to extremes.

The 'localisation' (*difanghua* 地方化) of court agendas over the last decade has meant that at each sub-national level (county, municipal, provincial), local party and government officials have been able to interfere with and heavily influence the work of individual judges in politically sensitive and potentially socially destabilising disputes over land, labour and environmental issues. Given that courts and judges rely on local governments for their resources and remuneration, systemic entrenchment of local power relations has often mitigated against judicial fairness in cases with implications for social stability. Hence, rule-of-law statements posit nationwide 'standardisation' (*guifanhua* 规范化) in place of destabilising 'localisation'.

## Promoting the Rule of Law

In January 2013, at a national politico-legal work conference, Meng Jianzhu announced four main areas to be targeted for reform in the coming years: the Re-education Through Labour (RTL) system — the ‘letters and visits’ (*xinfang* 信访) petitioning system, the balance of power structures within the politico-legal system and the household registration system. These are detailed on the Politico-legal Commission’s new ‘Chinapeace’ (*ping’an Zhongguo* 平安中国) website, which declares that ‘the core of politico-legal work is located in peace and rule of law’. The Commission recognises that for this to be realised on a local level and in fairer justice practices generally, power relations among and between the police, procuratorates and courts need to be fine-tuned.

The announcement related to RTL reform in January garnered by far the most media attention. As a form of administrative detention that is solely at the discretion of the public security organs, RTL bypasses the judicial system, allowing detention without trial for up to three or four years for prostitutes, petty thieves, those judged to have disrupted social order, people involved in unlawful religious activity and even petitioners. Many scholars have been arguing for years that the RTL system is unconstitutional and should be abolished.

In cutting out the middlemen (the court system as decision-maker and the Ministry of Justice as administrator), RTL gives police great flexibility in dealing with public order misdemeanours and provides a convenient dumping ground for those, like petitioners, who have become a political nuisance to local authorities.

Take the case of Tang Hui. The mother of an underage rape victim, Tang protested outside local government buildings, claiming that police had falsified evidence in order to mitigate the punishment of men who had kidnapped and raped her eleven-year-old daughter, forcing her into prostitution. In August 2012, the police sentenced Tang to eighteen-months detention at a RTL facility in Yongzhou, Hunan province, for ‘seriously disturbing social order and exerting a negative impact on society’. A public outcry helped secure her speedy release. She tried to bring an



Tang Hui was sentenced to re-education for being a nuisance petitioner.  
Source: *Want China Times*

administrative lawsuit against the RTL committee. In April 2013, the Yongzhou court rejected Tang’s claim for compensation, but in July she won her case on appeal and was compensated 2,941 yuan.

One main reason why RTL was not abandoned years ago is that the politico-legal authorities are yet successfully to rebalance existing horizontal power relations between courts, police and the Ministry of Justice. The public security organs have a vested institutional interest in retaining a system that involves hundreds of facilities, thousands of personnel and substantial budgets. Absence of a viable alternative that suits all institutional players also explains RTL’s continued existence. The courts do not want their workloads increased, and China’s crowded and under-resourced prisons do not need more inmates.

The authorities have begun discussing cost-effective alternatives to RTL for punishing misdemeanours that would not further stress the already overburdened criminal trial system. Many provinces are now opting to reform the system by simply not arresting people for RTL-related misdemeanours or transforming RTL facilities into compulsory drug treatment centres. In 2012, Yunnan, for instance, became one of the first provinces to decide no longer to detain people for three illegal (non-criminal) behaviours including ‘suspected violations of national security’ (*shexian weihai guojia anquan* 涉嫌危害国家安全), ‘causing a nuisance through petitioning and visits to authorities’ (*chanfang naoshi* 缠访闹访) and ‘sullyng the reputation of national leaders’ (*wuru guojia lingxiu* 污辱国家领袖). Interestingly, authorities have done their best to avoid public attention and press coverage on the process of RTL abolition.

## Criminal Procedure Law and the Mental Health Law

Rebalancing power relations and providing better enforcement mechanisms are the underlying themes of two major legislative reforms realised in 2012: the amendment of the 1996 Criminal Procedure Law and the promulgation of the Mental Health Law. After a decade of intense public discussion, scholarly proposals and negotiations among the various politico-legal powers, the National People's Congress (NPC) amended the Criminal Procedure Law in March 2012. Despite the insertion of the clause 'respect and safeguards for human rights' into the aims of the law, the revised law immediately generated public concern and scepticism.

Debates among scholars and in the media have focused on the clauses concerning the system of 'residential surveillance'. Article 73 of the new law ensures that the public security authorities maintain their exclusive power to put people suspected of crimes against national security (*weihai guojia anquan fanzui* 危害国家安全犯罪), terrorism (*kongbu huodong fanzui* 恐怖活动犯罪) and extremely serious corruption cases (*tebie zhongda huilu fanzui* 特别重大贿赂犯罪) under house arrest for up to six months in a location at their discretion. Commentators argue that since the definitions of these crimes remain extremely vague, Article 73 could easily justify incommunicado detention of political troublemakers, as has happened in the past.

Another crucial legislative document issued in October 2012 is the Mental Health Law — almost thirty years in the making. Amending the 1996 Criminal Procedure Law and issuing a new Mental Health Law could



Guo Zhiyuan,  
mental health  
law specialist.  
Source:  
*The China Story*

well improve the protection of the most vulnerable in society. However, as leading Beijing-based specialist in mental health law Guo Zhiyuan has noted, both of these legal areas have become ideological battlefields between those who believe the thrust of the law is to protect society and maintain stability and order, and those who oppose this imperative when it threatens the protection of the rights of the vulnerable.

## Protecting the Interests of the 'Masses'

The rhetoric of the 'rule of law' has not by any means supplanted the language of mass-line justice that has been a staple of justice administration since the mid-2000s. Now more than ever, the Party is keen to be seen as responsive to the needs of the masses. This is reflected in law and order rhetoric. For instance, just days before he left for his American tour in June 2013, Xi Jinping spoke at a national conference organised by the Central Party's Politico-Legal Commission. He highlighted the need to allow the 'people's demands for the administration of justice' (*renminde sifa yaoqiu* 人民的司法要求), along with the requirements of economic development, to be the guiding force of police work in China. Gone, for now at least, is Zhou Yongkang-style 'rigid Stability Maintenance'. But the commitment to stability remains: the NPC announced in March 2013 that the budget for 'stability maintenance' would increase by 8.7 percent over 2012 to RMB761.1 billion (US\$123.7 billion).



The portrayal of crackdowns on crime encourage the public to appreciate the benefits of a strong and protective state.  
Source: ImagineChina

### The Slaying of Zhou Kehua

Zhou Kehua was a Chinese armed robber and fugitive wanted in connection with crimes dating back to 2004. He was suspected of committing multiple homicides and armed robberies; reports variously attribute between eight and twelve deaths to him. He was also wanted on a charge of ‘committing a terrorist act’ after he was alleged to have shot and killed a PLA sentry before stealing his rifle in 2009. He committed his crimes across the country, from Nanjing to Changsha, but ended up being shot dead by police in his home city of Chongqing.

According to media reports, Zhou is believed to have committed his first murder in 2004. Prior to that, he was twice jailed for stealing and illegally carrying firearms. Media reports say that sometime before 2004, he worked as a mercenary soldier in Burma, which explains his familiarity with guns. He was nicknamed ‘Brother Headshot’ (*baotouge* 爆头哥) for his habit of shooting his victims in the head at point-blank range.

On 10 August 2012, armed with a handgun, Zhou robbed customers coming out of a bank in Chongqing. He shot two people dead and injured one at the bank, and killed a police officer as he fled the scene. The crime triggered the largest man-hunt in China in recent years, involving thousands of police officers and soldiers. Four days later, on 14 August 2012, Zhou was spotted in Chongqing’s Shapingba district by the police and was shot dead in an exchange of fire.

The man-hunt came a few months after the sacking of Bo Xilai. Chongqing’s former party chief had been known for his tough-handed crackdowns on criminal gangs in the city before his political fall and detention in early 2012. The timing of the man-hunt prompted speculation that it was intended in part to reassure local people that security in Chongqing would not worsen after Bo was removed from his position.

That it took the authorities almost nine years after the first murder to capture Zhou drew criticism for inefficiency, though some media reports emphasised that Zhou’s mastery of disguise and survivalist skills had made capture very difficult. A number of reports said that Zhou had been spotted camping in a graveyard in Nanjing and that he was used to living in the mountains. He often fled the scene of his crimes by taking a pedicab, shunning the riskier public transit system and never staying in hotels. He rarely used mobile phones.

Immediately after his death, photos showing a dead body lying face down in blood appeared on the Internet. The photos fed various conspiracy theories, including one that disputed the official account of his death, arguing that Zhou committed suicide. Others proposed that the dead man in the picture was not Zhou, but a plain-clothes police officer who was killed when his colleagues mistook him for the fugitive. Despite the plethora of media accounts, there does not seem to be an authoritative account of Zhou’s life and crimes.

On 22 March 2013, Zhang Guiying, Zhou’s girlfriend, was sentenced to five years in prison for concealing stolen property.



Front page news in Chongqing on 15 August, 2013: the shooting of the serial killer Zhou Kehua.  
Source: Chongqing Shangbao

Official media portrayals of crackdowns on crime encourage the public to appreciate the benefits of a strong and protective state. The news gives prominent coverage to such high-profile justice operations as the capture and killing of ‘China’s most dangerous man’, Zhou Kehua, and the capture and execution of Naw Kham, one of the Golden Triangle’s biggest drug lords. ‘Strike Hard’ police operations on 24 May 2012 that ended with mass arrests and the extradition of 126 Chinese citizens from Malaysia and Thailand who were suspected of involvement in international telephone scams perpetrated against Chinese people back home also made the headlines. Less newsworthy, in China, at least, was news of Australians and other foreigners in trouble with the law in China, unless they were involved in crimes against Chinese citizens.

‘Administering justice for the people’ (*sifa wei min* 司法为民) is very much alive in mediation work, which has dominated the agenda of the courts in recent years. Judicial mediation between the masses and local companies, developers and government in labour, land and environmental disputes has become a politico-legal priority. In February 2012, the Ministry of Justice required judges at lower levels to encourage parties to exhaust all avenues of dispute resolution before proceeding through the trial process, allowing litigation only as a last resort. Mediation is additionally attractive to the central authorities because if complainants agree to the terms of a mediation agreement, they no longer have the right to petition in the capital for redress. But pressure from Beijing on local courts to ‘close the case and solve the problem’ (*anjie shiliao* 案结事了) before it reaches higher levels of justice administration — or before petitioners head off to Beijing to protest — means courts are now clogged with administrative cases, many of which are difficult to mediate in favour of the complainant. According to some Chinese sources, with the ‘petition-isation’ of court work (*sifa xinfanghua* 司法信访化), seventy to eighty percent of administrative cases are now required to undergo mediation rather than going straight to trial.

## THE TEN BIGGEST CRIMINAL CASES

In December 2012, the Qinghai Legal News (Qinghai fazhi bao 青海法制报) — a newspaper from the northwest province of Qinghai — published a list of China's ten biggest criminal cases of the year. The selection included cases involving massacre, homicide, fraud, corruption, a religious cult and sex slavery:

### 1. Naw Kham and the Massacre of Chinese Sailors

Myanmar national and criminal overlord of the Mekong river basin, Naw Kham, was extradited to China, where he was sentenced to death on 6 November for the massacre of Chinese sailors on the Mekong River.

### 2. The Trial of Bogu Kailai and Zhang Xiaojun

The spectacle of the Bogu Kailai murder trial occurred in the Hefei Intermediate People's Court in Anhui province on 20 August. Bo Xilai's wife, Gu Kailai, known in the state media as Bogu Kailai, and her accomplice, Zhang Xiaojun, were found guilty of planning and carrying out the murder of British businessman Neil Heywood in Chongqing in November 2011.

### 3. Wu Ying's Fundraising Fraud

In 2009, a court in Zhejiang found that from May 2005 to February 2007, while acting as the legal representative of a firm in Zhejiang province, Wu Ying had defrauded around 770 million yuan. Sentenced to death, she appealed. Her appeal was rejected, but in April 2012 the Supreme People's Court sent the case back to the lower court in Zhejiang, which deferred the death sentence by two years. A significant factor in Wu Ying's reprieve was an online campaign for her to be spared the death penalty.

### 4. The Gansu School Bus Accident

On 16 November 2011, a minibus from the Little PhD Kindergarten 榆林子镇小博士幼儿园 in Shaanxi province was travelling in Gansu province when it collided head-on with a goods van. The minibus could legally carry nine people, yet no fewer than sixty-four people including sixty-two children were crammed inside at the time. Nineteen children and two adults died in the accident; forty-three other children were injured. In July 2012, a court in Gansu sentenced Li Jungang — chairman of the board of the kindergarten — to seven years' imprisonment. The case became a *cause célèbre* on the Internet. Commentators drew pointed comparisons between China's generally shoddy school buses and the gift by the Chinese government to Macedonia, publicised around the same time as the Gansu accident, of several high-end school buses.

### 5. The 488 Million Yuan Sichuan Pyramid Scheme

In 2009, Chen Lijun set up the company Sichuan Xingfuyuan Agricultural Development Limited 四川省幸福缘农业开发有限公司 to manufacture nutritional products. Within a few months, the company attracted 150 million members across China, who had invested a total of 488 million yuan in what turned out to be a massive pyramid scheme. In June 2012, a court in Sichuan sentenced Chen to ten years in jail and imposed a fine of five million yuan.

### 6. Luoyang Sex Slaves

In August 2009, Li Hao, a civil servant, excavated a burrow underneath the cellar of his house in Luoyang, Henan province. Luring six women aged between sixteen and twenty-four, he imprisoned them, raped them and forced them to perform in pornographic shows on the Internet. In 2010, Li murdered one of the women, and in June or July forced three of the remaining women to kill one of the others. He was caught in 2012 after one of his captives escaped. On 30 November 2012, the Luoyang Intermediate People's Court sentenced Li to death for murder, rape, organising prostitution, detaining people against their will and manufacturing and distributing obscene materials.

### 7. Liao Dan and the Fake Treatment Form

After paying for six months of expensive dialysis treatment for his wife, Liao Dan found someone to fake a treatment form for his wife at Beijing Hospital (run under the auspices of the Ministry of Health) that would entitle her to obtain dialysis free of charge. He got away with it for four years, avoiding 1.7 million yuan in hospital fees. Although Liao Dan attracted much sympathy from people online, in December 2012, a court in Beijing sentenced him to three years in jail for fraud and an additional fine of 3,000 yuan.

### 8. Almighty God Cult

On 30 October 2012, a court in Inner Mongolia charged eight people with being members of Almighty God (*Quannengfu jiaohui* 全能父教会), what the court called a 'cult organisation'. Almighty God is a heterodox, millennial Christian cult that teaches that the new messiah is a woman from north China. The newspaper article refers only to 'Almighty God' but other reports specify that the eight accused were members of Eastern Lightning (*Dongfang shandian* 东方闪电) — an offshoot of Almighty God. On 14 December, one week before Eastern Lightning literature predicted the world would end, the court handed down sentences ranging from four to five years.

### 9. Zhou Kehua



The two police officers who killed Zhou.  
Source: *Chongqing Business News*

Zhou Kehua was an armed robber and murderer. Originally from Chongqing, he had been on the run from the law since 2004, committing robberies during which at least six and possibly as many as twelve people died. He was cornered by the police in Chongqing in August 2012 and shot dead.

### 10. The Mayor of Haitang Bay in Sanya Loses 700 Million Yuan

In June 2011, a series of irregularities in compensation awarded to villagers in Haitang Bay in Sanya, Hainan province, whose land had been confiscated for the building of luxury resorts, came to light. In December 2012, the Hainan provincial party disciplinary authorities announced that the mayor of Haitang Bay, Li Ji, had accepted bribes of more than fourteen million yuan and was additionally responsible for the loss of 700 million yuan from government coffers. A court in Sanya subsequently sentenced Li to death, but deferred the sentence for two years.

## AUSTRALIANS JAILED IN CHINA

Several Australian citizens doing business or working in China have made the news in recent years for their arrest and criminal convictions. The most prominent cases include:

### Matthew Ng (Wu Zhihui)

Businessman Matthew Ng is serving a thirteen-year sentence for fraudulent registration of capital, embezzlement of funds and property and corporate bribery (*danwei xinghui* 单位行贿). Ng, who was arrested in November 2010, headed Et-China (*Yiwangtong* 易网通), the majority owner of the national travel agency GTL (*Guangzhilü* 广之旅). His lawyer, Chen Youxi, argued that Et-China's local partner in GTL, Lingnan Group 岭南集团, which is backed by the municipal government of Guangzhou, had ordered Ng's arrest to obtain a controlling interest in GTL on the cheap. The court also handed down prison terms to Et-China's local executives.



Matthew Ng.  
Source: Southern Metropolis Daily

### Stern Hu (Hu Shitai)

On 29 March 2010, Shanghai's First Intermediate People's Court convicted Stern Hu, an executive for mining giant Rio Tinto, of bribery, and sentenced him to ten years in prison. Three of Hu's Chinese colleagues — Wang Yong, Ge Minqiang and Liu Caikui — also received sentences. Hu had been detained on 5 July 2009 on suspicion of stealing confidential information from Chinese companies, including detailed industry data, shortly after Rio Tinto rejected a bid from Chinalco Mining Corporation (*Zhonglukuangye* 中铝矿业) to raise its stake in the company. The trade secrets charges were dropped prior to the trial, and the defendants pleaded guilty to bribery.

### Charlotte Chou (Zou Wanling)



Charlotte Chou  
with her son.  
Source: Aboluowang.com

Australian entrepreneur Charlotte Chou is serving an eight-year prison sentence in Guangzhou for embezzlement. Chou was the founder and vice-president of the South China Institute of Software Engineering (*Guangzhou daxue huaruan ruanjian xueyuan* 广州大学华软软件学院) — a private college run in partnership with Guangzhou University (*Guangzhou daxue* 广州大学). She was first arrested in 2008 and served an eighteen-month sentence for bribery before her second arrest and subsequent conviction on 4 May 2012. Institute chairman Lin Yongping fled the country to escape prosecution. Chou's supporters allege that cofounder Zhu Hanbang, who succeeded Lin as chairman, was behind Chou's rearrest.

### Du Zuying

Police from Tai'an in Shandong province detained Du Zuying — a Melbourne-based heart surgeon and the founder of the blood plasma company China Biologic Products 泰邦生物制品 — at Beijing Capital Airport on 9 February 2011. They failed to notify his family, who spent five or six hours waiting for him at Sydney airport. The Tai'an Intermediate Court handed down a four-year sen-

One of the authorities' most conspicuous moves on behalf of the public interest has been the new anti-corruption drive, as we note elsewhere in this *Yearbook*. Xi Jinping delivered a major speech in mid-November 2012 predicting an end to the Party if corruption could not be brought under control. Since then, he has argued that the abuse of power can be tackled only through the strengthening of the rule of law, or, as he put it, positioning power 'within the cage of regulation'. The words are bold. Yet there has been no introduction of the kind of systemic change that would tackle corruption by forcing the Party to take the Constitution more seriously and limiting party power in government decision-making, despite increasing demands for this throughout the blogosphere and in legal and academic circles.

tence for embezzlement related to 2.4 million yuan he took out of the company in December 2002 and returned a year later. Du appealed the sentence but, as of April 2013, no trial had been held. Du's lawyer claims that the case is an example of interference in the justice system for the benefit of local capital over foreign investment. A lengthy exposé published by Shanghai's *Oriental Morning Post* on 9 April 2013 reported that Du lost control of his company in 2004 when he granted power of attorney to his half-brother, Du Haishan, while fundraising in Australia.

### Carl Mather

Carl Mather, a fifty-four-year-old Australian who had taught English in Nanjing for a decade, completed a one-year sentence early in May 2013 for assault following a brawl with four men in his apartment that left one with a broken finger and another with an injured hand. He had been arrested in November 2012 and convicted in January 2013. Mather's wife, Jenny Xie, claimed that he was acting in self-defence, and that the men were intruders who had come in connection with a long-running dispute over money. Mather's lawyer, Si Weijiang, won an appeal in April 2013 because new evidence showed that one of the men was a professional debt collector hired to put pressure on Mather and his wife.



Carl Mather with his wife and daughter.  
Photo: Du Wenshuang

## Debating the Constitutional ‘Key Word’

Xiao Yang, Chief Justice of the Supreme People’s Court, presided over a decade of impressive reforms to the court system that ended with his retirement in 2008. He published his memoirs in July 2012 — well before the January 2013 media debates on the need to strengthen the authority of China’s Constitution. The *Southern Weekly* published a photograph of an exuberant Xiao Yang on its online edition of 6 July 2012 under the provocative headline ‘Xiao Yang’s Collected Works Published, His Keywords are “Reform”, “the Constitution” and “the Rule of Law”’. Xiao argues that there are already provisions in the Constitution that limit the powers of both the Party and institutions, and that these need to be acknowledged, applied and taken as the ‘bottom line’ in any discussion on rule of law and reform.

In January 2013, veteran law expert Jiang Ping declared that China needs no less than an entire paradigm shift from an emphasis on collective public (state) rights to private (individual) rights. In a similar vein, Deputy Chief Justice of the Supreme People’s Court Jiang Bixin observed that it is imperative to accept and internalise values such as democracy, freedom, equality, rule of law, justice, integrity and harmony — observations that go hand in hand with his earlier, even more provocative suggestions in June 2012 about limiting party power. His essay in the June 2012 edition of *Theoretical Horizons* (*Lilun shiye* 理论视野) called on the Party to take the Constitution at face value and limit the exercise of party rule *exclusively* to the National People’s Congress.

As it has been noted in the introduction to this *Yearbook*, lively discussions around the rule of law, constitutionalism and judicial independence dictated the agendas and inspired discussions in the liberal press and scholarly circles in December 2012 and January 2013. Liberal intellectuals and activists increasingly used the expression ‘constitutional governance’ (*xianzheng* 宪政) to demand the realisation of the basic rights guaranteed by the Constitution. But Communist Party rhetoric about building rule of law — including a call by Xi Jinping in December 2012 to fully implement the authority of the Constitution — revealed the senior leadership had a far more limited agenda.



Xiao Yang in *Southern Weekly* on 6 July 2012.  
Source: Infzm.com

The Eighteenth Party Congress Work Report issued in December 2012 stressed the Party’s continued commitment to ‘using legal-system thinking’ to resolve social issues. It also emphasised its intention to improve oversight functions, ‘standardise’ practices and enforce the law. Yet official renunciation of concepts including ‘constitutional governance’ and judicial independence in May 2013, made it clear that any legal reforms, in the short term at least, are unlikely to involve changes to the structure of state power. On 21 May, a week after media exposure of an internally circulated party document warning officials against ‘dangerous’ Western values and other ideological threats, the Party’s *Red Flag Journal* (*Hongqi wengao* 红旗文稿) published an article by constitutional scholar Yang Xiaoqing that confirmed a new wave of conservatism. According to Yang, there’s no place for talk of constitutional governance in China, even in the context of socialist constitutional rule. The party-sanctioned piece argued that by its very nature, constitutional governance can only relate to capitalist and bourgeois thought. It therefore cannot fit within the ‘democratic dictatorship of the people’; in China, ‘it would lead to chaos’. The next day, an editorial in the ideologically conservative tabloid *Global Times* repeated Yang’s argument, adding that constitutional governance was merely an ‘empty political slogan’ espoused by a ‘minority of liberal intellectuals’ in China. The editorial declared that ‘If the entire Western world together cannot muster the might [to change China’s course], then a small group of dissenters will be even less likely to do so’.

### Resistance is Futile

Ye Haiyan, an advocate for the rights of sex workers, better known by her Internet handle 'Hooligan Swallow' (*Liumang yan* 流氓燕), first gained notoriety in 2005 by posting nude photos of herself on her blog. Her exhibitionism developed into activism, an ongoing campaign to publicise the conditions and problems faced by people at the bottom of China's economic ladder. In 2012, she provided free sexual services to migrant workers and then microblogged about her experiences on Sina Weibo. In May 2013, she travelled to Wanning on Hainan Island and stood outside Wanning No. 2 Elementary School holding a sign protesting against the attempted cover-up of the rape of six sixth-grade students by the principal of the school. The sign read: 'Mr Principal, get a room and call me; leave the students alone!' (*Xiaozhang, kai fang zhao wo, fangguo xiao xuesheng* 校长, 开房找我, 放过小学生).

When, at the end of the month, Ye returned to her home in Yulin prefecture, Guangxi province, her landlord, acting under pressure from local authorities, gave her notice that she and her daughter could not continue to live in their apartment. At around noon the same day, 30 May, eleven hired thugs surrounded and attacked Ye. When she fought back, local police promptly appeared and arrested her, accusing her of stabbing three women. A number of Ye's supporters, including Ai Weiwei, have posted photos on the Internet of themselves either holding up similar signs to Ye's original sign or with the words written on their bodies; some have substituted 'Ye Haiyan' for 'students'.

Under pressure from an Internet firestorm of criticism, police freed Ye Haiyan only two weeks after her arrest. But on 6 July 2013, local authorities struck again, evicting her and her daughter from their new home in Zhongshan, Guangdong province, threatening to 'break her legs' if she ever returned.

Authorities in the rural Shandong Linyi prefecture arrested Chen Kegui, nephew of the exiled blind legal rights activist and 'barefoot lawyer' Chen Guangcheng, under similar circumstances. Six days after Chen Guangcheng took refuge in the US Embassy on 26 April 2012, the Shuanghou village headman Zhang Jian and a number of others burst into Chen Kegui's home and assaulted his parents. In the ensuing scuffle, Chen stabbed a number of the intruders. The assailants then hauled Chen away. Two hours later, police charged Chen with attempted murder. On 30 November 2012, the Yi'an County People's Court sentenced Chen to three years and three months' imprisonment for assault.



Ye Haiyan holding a placard reading 'Mr Principal, get a room and call me; leave the students alone!' on 27 May 2013. Source: Ye Haiyan's Weibo account

## Conclusion

'Reform', 'Constitutional Governance' and 'Rule of Law' were the keywords in debates about justice in 2012 and 2013. Underlying all these is the all-important issue of trust. A major problem for the Party's long-term survival is that it needs the people to trust a judicial system that the Party's members themselves no longer demonstrably believe in. It needs them to trust a system that has been directly undermined by rampant corruption both in the Party and in the government. Maintaining stability in society and the Party's continued rule depends upon this strained fiduciary relationship.

The Party needs the people of China to seek to resolve injustices by recourse to judicial institutions rather than protest. But instead of addressing the problem of corruption and injustice through systemic political change, Xi Jinping has launched yet another 'campaign' against corruption through the media, propaganda and the Party's internal discipline and inspection committees, which have egregiously failed for decades now to tackle the issue. Hardline Stability Maintenance is out of fashion. Despite various moves to 'civilise' justice, however, the Party and its political agenda still drive the realities of both the law and justice in China today. Xi Jinping may have stated boldly that power should be exercised 'within the cage of regulation', but he is some way from taking the advice of Jiang Ping, Xiao Yang, Jiang Bixin and others to make the Constitution the basis of that cage.



FORUM



LAND,  
LAW AND  
PROTEST

## LAND, LAW AND PROTEST

A New Land Reform?

· LUIGI TOMBA

The Top Ten Laws and Regulations

NIMBY Protests

The Top Ten Protesters

FORUM

## A NEW LAND REFORM?

Luigi Tomba

ON 3 APRIL 2013, the *People's Daily* published a commentary on the violent death of two protesting farmers in Henan, crushed in two separate incidents by vehicles used to clear their land for development. 'Besides the open questions about the administrative violations,' wrote the author, 'there remain other things to be asked: has the expropriation followed the appropriate procedures? Is it legal to build a hotel or any permanent structure on basic agricultural land? And if there are problems, who is going to evaluate them, who is taking responsibility?' For people to feel that they have obtained justice, the article argued, 'the greatest efforts should be made to protect the life of every citizen'. These episodes were followed just

a few days later by a major incident in which 300 employees of the Bureau No.13 of the Ministry of Railways attacked farmers who were picketing land earmarked for expropriation.

At times, such violence is perpetrated by government departments through local gangsters and in the name of progress and stability. Many such conflicts emerge in the process of land conversion from agricultural use (*nongdi* 农地) to 'construction land' (*jianshe tudi* 建设土地). Given the great uncertainties surrounding the regime of land use rights, this has today become the single most explosive and confronting issue for local governments in China. About sixty-five percent of all 'mass incidents' are land-related. According to the legal ex-

pert Yu Jianrong's estimates, over the last two decades, local governments have seized 14.7 million hectares of land, and the difference between official compensation and market prices has short-changed farmers by over two trillion yuan. All this has happened while the central government has desperately been trying to prevent the area of China's arable land from falling below the dreaded 'red line' of 1.8 billion *mu* (120 million hectares) — considered the lowest level at which it will be possible to prevent significant food shortages.

The National People's Congress recently approved an amendment to Article 47 of the Land Management Law to allow increased land compensation for deracinated farmers. The limit of 'thirty times the original value' imposed by the law kept compensation from following market value and resulted, according to Jiang Ming — a professor at Peking University — in farmers receiving only, on average, 6.9 percent of the market value of expropriated land.

Over the last six decades, China has experienced repeated land reforms, each defining a different phase of the country's economic develop-

ment. The Chinese Communist Party came to power during the first and bloodiest of these reforms — the one that during and after the revolution redistributed land away from landlords and to collectives of poor farmers who had until that time tilled land owned by others. The system set in place an ownership regime after the revolution (state-owned land in the cities, collectively owned land in the countryside where village co-operatives retained property rights through the period of the People's Communes) that is still formally in place today. Under the new conditions, with land transfer necessary for any economic or infrastructural project, it is turning into a major headache for the leadership, which has become increasingly concerned about the conflicts it has ignited. The redistribution of land to households (the second land reform) in the early 1980s had marginally and temporarily boosted agricultural incomes and land efficiencies. But the parcellisation of land use rights that resulted greatly reduced the productivity of land and the quality of agricultural products. Meanwhile, local governments depended on land conversion (and the fees this generated) to balance their

budgets and foster economic reform. Still in 2012, and despite central policies aimed at slowing down the sale of rural land, the income derived by local government from land fees grew by a staggering 46.6 percent on the previous year!

From 2010, a third land reform has been on the cards and, while discussions rage, local experiments flourish. Since 2003, the Party has produced an annual 'Document No.1' (*Yihao wenjian* 一号文件) devoted to rural reform and the solution of the so-called 'three rural problems (or issues)' (*sannong wenti* 三农问题: agriculture, rural areas and peasants). In 2013, the document that set the tone for rural policy during the year focused on three aspects of this reform: the encouragement of 'specialised farming households' (*zhuan ye nonghu* 专业农户); the expansion of rural co-operatives through the corporatisation of collective land in the hands of shareholding companies, inspired by the experiments with corporate collective land first in Guangdong and more recently in other rapidly industrialising areas of the country; and, thirdly, the establishment of 'family farms' (*jiating nongchang* 家庭农场). 'Family farms'



A Guangdong village.  
Photo: Luigi Tomba

is a new expression in China's policy landscape, and it refers to farms where most of the labour is undertaken by family members. Family farms are larger in the scale of their production than traditional households, employ more intensive agricultural practices and are largely commercialised (that is, they produce for the market rather than personal consumption). In initial commentaries on this new policy, such farms are seen as 'a further evolution of the specialised household'. Families registering to establish larger scale activities will be entitled to preferential policies by the state in terms of land



**Worlds collide: Downtown Wenzhou, Zhejiang province, on the right, and surrounding village, photographed on 15 June 2013.**  
Photo: Ken Larmon

use rights, welfare, financial support and fiscal regimes. It has also been suggested that such ‘bottom up’ development of larger farms will counter the increasing penetration of agribusiness into the Chinese countryside, which public opinion sees as one of the reasons for the increase in food security issues.

While suggesting the need for fairer and clearer procedures in cases of land expropriation, the 2013 Document No.1 did not offer any clues as to whether there would be significant changes to the present land-owning regime. The distinction between collective and state land — which produces conflicts during conversion — and the dependence of local budgets on land fees are the main problems under discussion. A lack of clarity in

the registration of use rights remains, despite the land census of the late 1980s and early 1990s, which claimed to have mapped and registered over ninety percent of collective land. The 2013 document suggests that such registration should be completed ‘within five years’. Collectives have often redistributed land among villagers or established corporations to manage collective land, and ‘who owns what’ is still a question few can answer. Needless to say, such uncertainty provides opportunities for land-based elites to emerge and for conflicts to develop.

Some have argued that collective ownership has protected farmers from expropriation, and resulted in significant revenues for them, especially in rapidly urbanising areas like Guangdong. Villages in wealthier and rapidly

developing regions of the country have indeed taken advantage of the situation and locked in the growing value of their land — for example, turning some urbanised villages (especially in Guangzhou and Shenzhen) into large land-holding corporations. Others have contended that these are extreme cases — exceptions rather than the rule. In most urbanising areas, farmers have indeed become shareholders, but they have no real control over their assets. Decisions over land use are in the hands of a few, the shares they own cannot be sold, and there is no individual market where they can be used as collateral. Even the houses farmers build on collective land only entitle them to ‘small property rights’ (*xiao chanquan* 小产权) — a sort of usufruct. In order to acquire full owner-

ship rights, farmers are required to pay the difference between construction costs and market price, which few can afford. Collective ownership, therefore, has locked in some of the value produced by industrialisation. But it has also increasingly alienated farmers from the land, while the land itself, especially in peri-urban areas, is increasingly built up. For some commentators, this amounts to a de facto expropriation, and in many cases the value of the farmers’ shares will continue to decline until they become irrelevant to their livelihood.

This situation has led to a fragmentation of land policies, where local governments have accepted substantially different arrangements to

## HOUSE FOLK

Real estate and land — how to get it, who should inherit it, and how much of it you need to be an eligible bachelor — these are the problems that beset Chinese people of all social strata from peasant farmers to the urban rich. The real estate business is also closely associated with corruption and with China's huge income disparities, so

political scandals in which officials accumulate large numbers of apartments are a quick source of popular anger. In 2102 and early 2013, there were three stand-out cases of officials who became notorious on the Chinese Internet for their real estate transgressions:

### House Uncle (*fang shu* 房叔)

On 8 October 2012, a post was made to the Tianya forum website accusing Cai Bin, a political commissar at the Panyu district urban management office in Guangzhou, of owning twenty-one homes that occupied more than 7,200 square metres of space. He was fired after Panyu district authorities confirmed that he actually owned twenty-two properties. A subsequent investigation revealed that he had taken bribes and conducted illegal business activities while serving as Vice-Director of the district Public Security Bureau, and his case was handed over to the courts.

### House Sister (*fang jie* 房姐)

At the end of January 2013, Gong Ai'ai, a bank executive in Shaanxi province, was detained by police for using forged household registration documents to amass forty-one residential properties. When a microblogger revealed that the majority of her real estate in Beijing was purchased in the Sanlitun SOHO development, SOHO real estate company founder Pan Shiyi was accused of being complicit in Gong's fraud and money-laundering racket. Drawing on archived news reports and previous complaints to the State-Owned Assets Commission, left-wing gadfly Sima Nan accused Pan of the rather more insidious crime of conspiring with another property tycoon, Ren Zhiqiang, to defraud state assets. Sima claimed that Ren, chairman of the Huayuan Group, sold an idle development in downtown Beijing to Pan for a price well below market value, after which Pan completed development and realised a profit of five billion yuan. At the heart of the controversy was the ownership of Huayuan Real Estate, the listed company that actually held the properties bought by SOHO, and whose largest shareholder is the Huayuan Group, a state-owned enterprise. Pan and Ren's critics claim that this makes the properties state-owned assets and therefore subject to restrictions on trading.

### House Grandpa (*fang ye* 房爷)

In late January 2013, a post on a Southern Media Group portal website accused Zhao Haibin, a member of the party committee at the Public Security Bureau in Lufeng, Guangdong province, of possessing a second identity as 'Zhao Yong', a resident of Zhuhai. Rumours then began to circulate that Zhao had acquired 192 homes in Guangdong. On 4 February, Zhao admitted to the *Guangzhou Daily* that his name had once been attached to multiple homes, but it was done purely as a convenience for his brother, a property developer, and he no longer had anything to do with them. On 26 March, the Lufeng Information Office announced that Zhao had been expelled from the Party and given an administrative punishment for possessing two IDs, and that the remainder of his case had been handed over to the courts.



Housing complex in Ningbo, Zhejiang province.

Photo: Robert S. Donovan

appease farmers and avoid conflicts. Such complexity is what led some analysts, including Zhou Tianyong of the Central Party School, to suggest doing away with collective land altogether. They would nationalise the countryside and grant long-term leases to farmers, thereby extending to the countryside the model used for urban areas by which land is leased for periods of seventy years. According to this scenario, nationalisation would result in farmers exercising greater control over their land for periods long enough to stimulate investment. Such measures would, however, lead to a collapse of rural local governments that greatly depend on the taxes and fees earned through the conversion of rural land. A fiscal reform is therefore central to such reorganisation, to better redistribute wealth in the fragmented economies of the Chinese countryside. This is especially the case since the abolition of the agricultural tax that left local authorities little alternative to speculation and land grabs to provide services and produce growth.

Nationalisation, however, is not as simple as it sounds, and its supporters have failed to convince policy

makers of its merits. It would require a massive transition of land away from collectives. This has until now happened only as case-by-case expropriation, and there is no solid nationwide information on land use rights that can be used as a basis for such transactions. This would be likely to result in massive transaction costs. In a way, this solution would suffer from the same structural problem often identified with the privatisation of land: the lack of a certain base for the distribution of rights.

No clear solution is on the horizon for the massive challenge posed by the inadequacy of the current land regime to the intense exploitation of resources that characterises urbanisation and industrialisation. The increasingly loud public call for 'returning the land to the farmers' will, nonetheless, keep pressure on policy makers in the coming years to reduce inequality and violence around land issues.



## THE TOP TEN LAWS AND REGULATIONS OF 2012

*The Public Opinion Research Centre of Legal Daily (Fazhi ribao 法制日报) compiled a list of the laws and regulations that garnered the greatest public attention in 2012. The list included the Centre's one-line assessments.*

### **Revisions of the Criminal Procedure Law**

A step forward in the protection of human rights.

### **New Traffic Rules**

Many violations receive harsher penalties.

### **The Law and Underage Prostitution Cases**

Continued debate over whether to scrap this legislation. [In 1997, the criminal law was revised so that the keeping of underaged girls in brothels was specified as a crime, thus mak-

ing it distinct from the crime of rape. Various scholars have since maintained that this distinction lessens the punishment associated with running brothels with underaged girls.

[See also Leading Sex and Gender Stories in the Forum 'Tiny Times for Women' – Eds.]

### **Revisions to Intellectual Property Law**

Increased compensation for infringements.

**Revisions to Funeral Management Regulations**

Forced removal of graves by local governments is criminalised; positive encouragement [for families to agree to relocation or cremation – *Eds.*] to be used instead.

**Revisions to Labour Contract Law**

Standardisation [of labour laws] introduced for casual labourers.

**School Bus Safety Regulations**

School buses now enjoy privileged right of way.

**Four Imperatives**

*Legal Daily* also listed four pieces of proposed legislation that the public most wanted to see passed:

- protection of citizens' private information: Internet legislation imperative
- tourism industry in chaos: market standardisation imperative
- concerns over [the incidental punishment of] good deeds: good samaritan legislation required
- rebuilding credibility: a charity law [to regulate the operation of charities] is urgently needed.

**Revisions to the Environmental Protection Law**

Increased attention to public interest litigation.

**Domestic Violence Law**

Urgent need for rules to protect women against violence.

**Feedback Solicited on a Draft Food Law**

Genetically modified food a focal point.



Traffic police in Gansu province.  
Source: Beijing Patrol/securityguard



## NIMBY PROTESTS

### A TIMELINE OF NIMBY PROTESTS

*The phrase Not In My Back Yard, or NIMBY, has been in use since at least the 1980s in the West to refer to opposition by individuals to new developments in their neighbourhood for fear of pollution of one kind or another. The term is often pejoratively associated with self-interested resistance to projects that may be necessary for the public good. In China, both the foreign press and local activists tend to interpret NIMBY protests as signs of the emergence of a civil society. The government generally tolerates expressions of dissent if they are confined to a particular environmental issue. On the other hand, it usually, and rapidly, censors the dissemination of images and reportage via mobile phones and the Internet, as well as attempts to organise protests by these means.*

*Many of the NIMBY protests in China oppose the building of new petrochemical and plastics factories, with plants intended to produce paraxylene, or PX, used in paints and plastics a particular target. The following is a list of the most notable NIMBY protests in China since 2007. Even studying media reporting and Internet chatter about such protests, it is hard to know whether the objectionable projects have been cancelled, halted temporarily, moved elsewhere or simply hidden behind high walls.*

**June 2007**

An anti-PX march occurs in Xiamen, Fujian province, against the planned construction of a toxic chemical plant in the city.

**January 2008**

Thousands of Shanghai residents protest against a proposed extension of the high-speed magnetic levitation 'Maglev' train.

**May 2008**

Hundreds of residents in Chengdu, Sichuan province, protest against an RMB5.5 billion ethylene plant under construction by PetroChina.

**November 2009**

Hundreds of residents of Guangzhou, Guangdong province, protest against the planned construction of a waste incinerator, following rumours that a similar incinerator nearby was responsible for a cancer cluster. The protests

force the authorities to postpone construction and eventually relocate the incinerator.

**August 2008**

Beijing residents protest against the city's biggest refuse dump site at Gao'antun, Chaoyang district outside the city's Fifth Ring Road. They claim the dump is polluting the air with a foul stench and dangerous toxins. The dump continues to operate but the government has implemented measures to reduce the smell, including burial and chemical treatment.

**July 2010**

More than 1,000 villagers march on the streets of Jingxi county, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, to protest against the pollution caused by an aluminium plant.

**August 2011**

A chemical plant in Dalian, Liaoning province, is closed down after thousands of protesters confront riot police, demanding that the plant be shut due to safety concerns.

Beijing residents protest against high-speed railway construction.  
Photo: Jim Xue



**September 2011**

Several hundred villagers in Haining, Zhejiang province, protest for four days, overturning cars and storming the compound of a photovoltaic manufacturer accused of releasing pollutants into a local river. Police break up the riot.

**December 2011**

Following the announcement of plans to expand a coal-fired power plant in Haimen, Guangdong province, tens of thousands of residents protest, barricade a freeway and surround government offices. Three days later, authorities announce that the planned expansion will be temporarily suspended.

**April 2012**

Thousands of Tianjin residents demonstrate against a planned US\$1.7 billion Sino-Saudi joint venture petrochemical plant.

**July 2012**

Protests in the city of Shifang, Sichuan province, result in the cancellation of a copper mine project.

**July 2012**

Tens of thousands of people in Qidong, near Shanghai, protest against a proposed sewage pipeline at a paper factory. Plans for the pipeline are shelved.

**October 2012**

Thousands of residents of the city of Ningbo protest against a multi-billion yuan expansion of an oil refinery and chemical plant. After a few days, an official statement announces that the project will not go ahead.

**October 2012**

Thousands of residents in the coastal town of Yinggehai, Hainan province, demonstrate against plans to build a large power plant nearby. Dozens of people are injured when police crack down on the protests; the police detain more than one hundred protesters. This follows similar protests in January 2012 against plans to build a coal-fired power plant close to the town.

**December 2012**

Around 300 protesters stage a march in Beijing against plans to construct a portion of the Beijing-Baotou high-speed railway line through their neighbourhood on Qingnian Road in Chaoyang district. Media reports say that plans for the project have been put on hold but there have been no announcements about the railway line since then.

**May 2013**

Hundreds of people gather in Kunming, Yunnan province, to protest plans to build a PX plant in a nearby town.

**NIMBY protesters wearing facemasks during a protest against a PX plant in Kunming.**  
Source: China News Service



## THE TOP TEN PROTESTERS

*On 30 December 2012, Tencent News — a channel owned by the country's largest Internet company — published a list of the ten most important protesters over the previous two years. Although the piece was soon censored from the channel, it went viral on social media. Here is a summary of the list, adapted with permission from a translation on GlobalVoices.org:*

**Wukan Village Residents:  
against election fraud**

After protests against local authorities over farmland-grabs and corruption in late 2011, residents of Wukan in Guangdong held elections for village leaders in February 2012.

**Qidong Citizens:  
against opaque decisions**

In July 2012, citizens in Qidong, a city near Shanghai, surrounded the local government headquarters to protest against the construction of a pipeline that would channel wastewater from a Japanese-owned paper mill into the sea.

**Hong Kong Citizens:  
against 'brainwashing' education**

The Hong Kong government's plan to make 'patriotic education' compulsory at schools triggered mass protests and strikes among Hong Kong parents and students who considered it 'brainwashing'. In the end, the government cancelled the classes.

**Ren Jianyu:  
against restrictions on free speech**

A village-level official by the name of Ren Jianyu was sentenced to two years of 're-education through labour' in August 2011 after posting messages on

microblogs about social issues. Ren's case triggered a campaign on Chinese social media to end the Re-education Through Labour system.



**Ren Jianyu.**  
Source: Caixin.com

### Zhan Haite: against inequalities in educational opportunities

A fifteen-year-old girl, Zhan Haite, made waves in the media for her campaign on Weibo for the right to take the high school entrance exam in Shanghai, which is currently denied to the children of migrant families living in Chinese cities without a residency permit.



**Zhan Haite.**  
Photo: Aly Song

### Yang Zhizhu: against the One Child policy

In March 2010, Yang Zhizhu lost his job as a law lecturer in Beijing for having more than one child. His story is not rare, but Yang's high-profile protests spurred debate over whether the one child policy is needed, especially now that the first generation born under it face the prospect of becoming sole carers for an ever-increasing number of pensioners.



**Yang Zhizhu with his daughters.**  
Source: Southern Metropolis Weekly

### Zhao Keluo: the 'grave clearing' campaign



**Zhao Keluo.**  
Source: Globaltimes.cn

Official policy saw two million graves and tombs across Henan province demolished in 2012 during a campaign to 'flatten graves and return the land to farming'. Zhao Keluo had his candidacy for the provincial ruling committee revoked due to his fight against the campaign. He published a sarcastic 'letter of repentance' on his Weibo account apologising for his criticisms.

### Wu Heng: against toxic food

Food safety is another issue that has concerned citizens in recent years. A graduate student, Wu Heng, decided to do something about it: he launched a food safety website called 'Throw it Out the Window' (*Zhichu chuangwai* 掷出窗外, at: zccw.info).

### Luo Yonghao: against commercial domination

In early 2011, the Internet celebrity and noted teacher Luo Yonghao tried attracting the attention of Siemens via his Weibo microblog when the door of his fridge refused to shut. When the company ignored him, Luo got other angry customers to join him in smashing their fridges outside Siemens' Beijing headquarters.



**Luo Yonghao.**  
Source: Globaltimes.cn



# 5

## BUILDING CIVILISED CITIES

Carolyn Cartier



深圳市

SHENZHEN

The first city to implement a 'civility law' also requires an 'ecologically sustainable environment'. This includes the management of air quality based on national standards. This didn't prevent portable oxygen concentrators from becoming a popular item among urban dwellers.

**THIS CHAPTER** introduces the urban issue of the year — the air quality problem in China's cities — in relation to the 'Civilised City' system. The system combines Maoist-style campaigns with ideals of urban modernisation, bestowing the honour of the title 'Civilised City' on chosen places of reform. A hybrid form of social control and urban governance, the National Civilised City program sets out goals that encompass government accountability, air quality monitoring and improved public infrastructure including cultural facilities, in addition to programs promoting volunteerism and 'healthy' ideals for urban youth. It is a broad-based approach for all cities that recalibrates the party-state's political and social agendas in relation to standard urban development benchmarks.

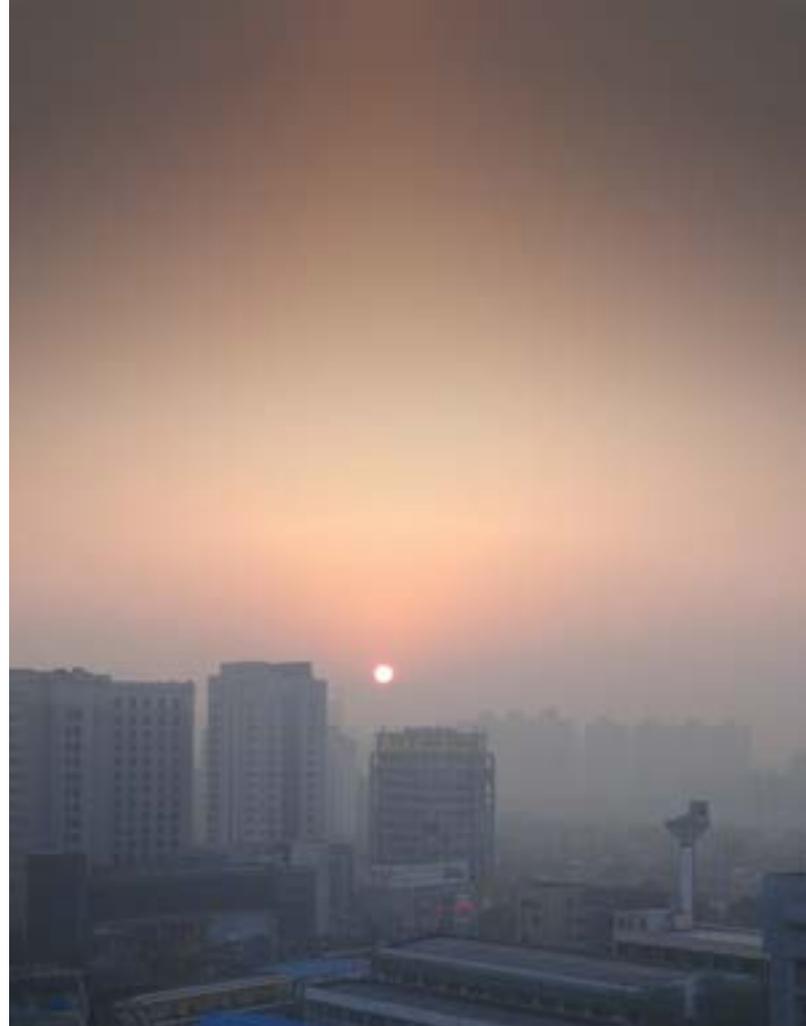
## An Uncivilised Air



Oxygen infusion in Shanghai, 16 June 2013.  
Photo: Madhu Babu Pandi

In 2012–2013, many cities in the People’s Republic of China started regularly reporting air quality data for PM2.5 — the measurement for micro-particulate airborne pollutants that are implicated in a range of serious health threats. PM2.5 in the air sometimes appears like a ground fog or mist, and photographs of urban streets thick with smog in China often look like fog-bound river valleys or coasts. Rather than being identified by weather forecasters as unsightly and threatening ‘air pollution’ (*kongqi wuran* 空气污染), in recent years the authorities have encouraged the use of the more poetic expression ‘dun mists’ (*yinmai* 阴霾). California tule fog — the winter fog of the San Joaquin Valley — can look worse than average Beijing smog.

In January 2013, the reading for PM2.5 in Beijing air reached its highest recorded levels since the US Embassy there began independently tracking pollution levels in 2008. Readings were over 750 on the 1–500 scale of the US Environmental Protection Agency air quality index, and up to 900 at some stations. When the reading first breached 500, the US Embassy twitter feed indicated ‘crazy bad’, a non-official description that was not originally meant for public dissemination because no-one imagined that the level of PM2.5 would ever exceed 500. Nevertheless, the phrase went viral.



Good morning, Shanghai: image taken at Tianlin Road, 26 January 2013.  
Photo: Phreddie

The relation between the appearance of the air and health-threatening levels of PM2.5 lies in the numbers. As we noted in *Yearbook 2012*, the US Embassy’s webpage and twitter feed ‘BeijingAir’ introduced the concept of PM2.5 to Chinese citizens in 2009. The authorities protested against this statistical incursion into local air sovereignty. In a tone of high dudgeon, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs urged that ‘air quality data should not follow a “market-based” approach’. It was concerned because PM2.5 information released by the embassy had ‘resulted in the Chinese public now questioning “unnecessarily” the validity of Beijing EPB’s [Environmental Protection Bureau’s] data.’ The ministry declared that the ‘Beijing

EPB should be the sole authoritative voice for making pronouncements on Beijing's air quality'. By this logic, the ministry was unwilling to support a market in objective data.

The hazardous air led people to coin the expression 'airpocalypse' (*kongqi mori* 空气末日) that captured the public sense of panic. People blogged about 'refusing to be human vacuum cleaners' (*jujue zuo renrou xichenqi* 拒绝做人肉吸尘器) and recorded their experiences: 'I'm standing in front of Tiananmen but can't see [the huge portrait on Tiananmen Gate of] Chairman Mao' (*zhan zai Tiananmen qian, que kanbujian Mao zhuxi* 站在天安门前, 却看不见毛主席). Reports that the smog was also registering indoors, inside public buildings, were alarming and sometimes appeared in contradictory terms that defied reality: 'The interior of the gleaming Terminal 3 of the Beijing Capital International Airport was filled with a thick haze on Thursday'. In another account, anxious hotel guests ran for a fire alarm after encountering smoke in the hallway, only to learn that it was osmotic smog. The security authorities, having painstakingly installed unprecedented numbers of surveillance cameras in public spaces such as Wangfujing Mall and Tiananmen Square, as well as around party-state government compounds in recent years, were also worried to find themselves blinded by the persistent thick haze.

Once the authorities started reporting PM2.5 levels, local governments expanded their air quality monitoring capacity. In January 2013, for example, Shanghai introduced a user-friendly air quality index in the form of an anime-style face whose six different expressions correspond to air quality levels. More importantly, the Shanghai Environmental Protection Bureau now provides real-time air quality data for a range of air quality indicators: PM2.5, O<sub>3</sub>, CO, PM10, SO<sub>2</sub> and NO<sub>2</sub>, based on an aggregate of information from ten measuring stations.

China's Environmental Protection Bureau has historically preferred reporting on the larger particulate measurement of PM10, which is equal to ten microns, or ten millionths of a metre. PM2.5 is only 2.5 microns. (For the non-metric world, PM2.5 comes down to 1/10,000 of an inch.) To gain



Real-time Air Quality Reporting System in Shanghai, 26 September 2013.  
Source: Shanghai Environmental Monitoring Center

some idea of the size of such particles, we would note that the dot above the letter 'i' in a typical newspaper measures about 400 microns. Micro-particles collect in vital organs and can also enter the body through the surface of the skin. Since the nineteenth century, people in industrialised cities have suffered unknowingly from some amount of exposure to micro-pollutants. Scientific knowledge of the health consequences of PM2.5 has circulated only since the early 2000s. The fact that China is industrialising at a time when pollution is a global concern means that its citizens and foreign residents, as well as the media and potential visitors, expect that the authorities will strive to meet international standards. In response to the news about poor air quality, foreign tourist arrivals decreased markedly in 2013.

In 2012, the central Ministry of Environmental Protection outlined new requirements for cities to monitor and report on ambient air quality standards. This policy is now being introduced incrementally in the leading cities of major industrial regions such as Beijing, Tianjin, Shanghai and Guangzhou, as well as in provincial capitals. The authorities further stipulated that, in 2013, all of what are called 'Key Environmental Protection Cities' and 'National Environmental Protection Model Cities' had to monitor air quality. This will be followed in 2015 by the same requirements for all prefecture-level cities (most large cities except Beijing, Shanghai, Tianjin and Chongqing are prefecture-level) and other cities nationwide by 2016.

## Modelling the National City

Because rapid industrialisation and rapid urbanisation have proceeded hand in hand, China takes a multi-faceted approach to questions related to modernisation and development. Still, many forms of urban policy are neither readily visible to observers nor directly comparable to the kind of approaches taken in other countries. For example, in China today there are different types of what are called ‘model cities’ (*mofan chengshi* 模范城市). The political history of the ‘model’ (*mofan* 模范 or *dianxing* 典型) in China derives from the Maoist-era use of model production workers, model streets and model places, which the propaganda apparatus held up for emulation. The most famous model places in the Maoist heyday were the oilfields of Daqing (*Daqing youtian* 大庆油田) and Dazhai People’s Commune (*Dazhai renmin gongshe* 大寨人民公社). The media repetitively idealised their trumped-up successes in collective production and support for the party-state: as sites for political pilgrimage they were outstanding symbols of Potemkin-village propaganda. They were also geographical contexts for the Stakhanovite labour mobilisation model, introduced to China from the Soviet Union in the 1940s. Alexey Stakhanov was the mythologised model worker who symbolised a zealous socialist work ethic and ‘socialist competition’. Villages, factories or industrial towns thus competed to increase their production through collective effort. If they reported that they had

exceeded their quotas, they could accrue rewards; they commonly masked their failures and faked their successes through inflated statistics. This had disastrous implications for overall economic management.

The model city programs in China today have their historical and aesthetic roots in such Maoist-era models and the political campaigns used to promote them. For example, big red banners with political statements and exhortations still herald ‘model’ activities. Yet now, instead of basing a model on a particular place, such as was the case when the whole nation was exhorted to ‘In Industry Learn from Daqing’ (*gongye xue Daqing* 工业学大庆), the contemporary approach combines measures for social control with regulations for urban governance. What has not changed is that today’s model city guidelines provide idealised visions of development, officially approved standards for urban modernisation. An early contemporary example of such a campaign was the National Environmental Protection Model Cities program launched in 1997. Others include the National Ecological Garden City, National Hygienic City, National Model City for Science and Technology, National Excellent City for Comprehensive Management of Public Security and National Entrepreneurial City. But unlike schemes targeting one particular goal, the National Civilised City model involves a set of goals, criteria and indices of measurement designed to regularise urban governance and promote its standards nationwide.

‘Better City Better Life’ signifies Shanghai’s status as a major economic and cultural centre.  
Photo: Wolfgang Staudt



## Slogans and Quality

The National Civilised City (*Quanguo wenming chengshi* 全国文明城市) campaign is a top-down, commercialised form of post-socialist mobilisation or agitprop. It features, among other things, propaganda slogans in large colourful Chinese characters printed on all kinds of conspicuous billboards and other kinds of signs. This kind of Mao-era ‘red’ practice might seem out of step with the contemporary urban environment, but it is a central, and highly visible, feature of party-led socialist modernisation. The language used in these slogans harks back to the Spiritual Civilisation campaigns of the 1980s mentioned earlier in this volume. Today, following the prompts of the new leadership of Xi Jinping and Li Keqiang, ‘The China Dream’ prominently features in many of these urban slogans; under the previous decade-long rule of Hu Jintao and Wen Jiabao, the key phrase was to create a ‘Harmonious Society’ (*hexie shehui* 和谐社会).

At the core of all of these exhortations is the tireless injunction to ‘construct a civilised society, build a civilised city’. The language often includes paired characters or phrases relating the actions of the individual to the quality of the society or collective. Many of the slogans repeat the term ‘civilised’ (*wenming* 文明) the key expression of this *Yearbook* — several times over with different yet related meanings. Other slogans draw explicit connections between the behaviour of the individual and urban development. Numerous variations exist, tailored to particular cities. All of the

### Slogans for Civilised Cities

争做文明人,共创文明城  
Collectively strive to be civilised, together build a civilised city.

手牵手共建和谐城,心连心同做文明人  
Together build a harmonious city, heart to heart, unite to become civilised people.

树文明新风,做文明市民,创文明城市  
Establish civilised new ways of doing things, be civilised citizens and create a civilised city.

市民素质高一分,城市形象美十分  
Each small improvement in the character of its citizens results in a great improvement in the image of their city.

说文明话,办文明事,做文明人,创文明城  
Speak in a civilised manner, do things in a civilised fashion, be a civilised person and build a civilised city.

创建文明城市,优化城市环境,促进经济发展  
Create a civilised city, optimise the urban environment and promote economic development.

建设生态文明城市  
Construct an ecologically civilised city.



‘Be Civil’. Street musician in front of a poster in Shanghai.  
Photo: Flickr/badbrother

keywords used in the slogans invoke ideas about the role of the individual in striving to build modern cities. Together they convey the notion that the future of China lies in the city as a paragon of national modernisation and development.

For these reasons, talk of *wenming* in China invariably invokes another idea, that of *suzhi*. As we noted in the introduction to this *Yearbook*, it is a term that can roughly be translated as the ‘quality’, demeanour or overall value of a person or people.

At the start of the Reform era in 1979 and the launching of policies leading to radical modernisation, China’s leaders expressed concern about the quality of its population (*renkou suzhi* 人口素质), fearing that low levels of education, widespread lawless behaviour, and people’s lack of ability to cope with rapid change would limit China’s potential to catch up with other countries. The concern with *suzhi*, which dates back to the early twentieth century, is integral to the party-state’s efforts to create the kind of civilised society it envisages for China and to achieve the goals of Socialist Spiritual Civilisation. For the authorities, this is the human development side of economic growth in national modernisation. The building of civilised cities today is the latest in a series of political campaigns to improve the *suzhi* of the country’s citizens as a whole.

## How to be a Civilised City

'National Civilised City' is an honorary title granted by the Central Steering Commission for Building Spiritual Civilisation. The commission awards the title to urban governments in recognition of attainment of party-designated standards in several categories including education of party officials, promotion of the rule of law, public security, development of the consumer environment, provision of new cultural facilities, volunteer social services organisation and environmental quality. As the highest state honour for Chinese cities, the title of Civilised City is much sought after by urban officials.

To be awarded the title, a city must apply for evaluation and demonstrate 'clean' government. Subsequent to preliminary assessment, cities are subject to local site inspection including interviews with local citizens. Each of the eleven categories of standards is subject to multiple criteria of evaluation and assessment. The following is a selection from the Civilised City Evaluation Work Manual, which contains over one hundred separate items of evaluation of the goals specified in the National Civilised City Assessment System. Each criterion involves various standards of qualitative or quantitative assessment:

- Study and promulgation of party theory and policy (*lilun xuexi yu xuanchuan* 理论学习与宣传)
- Education of party cadres (*ganbu xuexi jiaoyu* 干部学习教育)
- Scientific and democratic system for decision-making (*jianli kexue minzhu juece zhidu* 建立科学民主决策制度)
- Government transparency (*zhengwu gongkai* 政务公开)
- Observance of government regulations by officials (*yifa xingzheng* 依法行政)
- Legal propaganda and education (*fazhi xuanchuan jiaoyu* 法制宣传教育)
- Legal aid and services (*falu yuanzhu yu fuwu* 法律援助与服务)
- Protection of labour rights (*weihu laodongzhe hefa quanyi* 维护劳动者合法权益)
- Protection of gender equality (*weihu nannüpingdeng* 维护男女平等)
- Protection of the rights of minors and senior citizens (*weichengnianren, laonianren quanyi baohu* 未成年人, 老年人权益保护)
- Protection of migrant workers' rights (*jincheng wugong renyuan quanyi baozhang* 进城务工人员权益保障)
- Complaints of violation of rights of disabled people, per ten thousand households (*qinfan canjiren hefa quanyi shijian tousulü - qi/wanhu* 侵犯残疾人合法权益事件投诉率 - 起/万户)
- Strengthening grassroots-level Party and Youth League organisation (*jiceng dang, tuan zu-zhi jianshe* 基层党, 团组织建设)
- Democratic establishment and administration of community residential committees (*shequ juweihuide minzhu jianshe yu guanli* 社区居委会的民主建设与管理)
- Public safety and security (*gonggong anquan baozhang* 公共安全保障)
- Emergency response systems (*tufa gonggong shijian yingji chuli* 突发公共事件应急处理)
- Maintenance of social stability (*weihu shehui wending* 维护社会稳定)
- Promotion of retail shops without counterfeit products (*kaizhan 'baicheng wandian wu jia-huo' huodong* 开展'百城万店无假货'活动)
- Anti-smuggling and 'anti-fake' campaigns (*daji zousi fansi, jiamao weilie chan shangpin* 打击走私贩私, 假冒伪劣产商品)
- Protection of the legal rights and interests of businesses (*weihu qiye hefa quanyi* 维护企业合法权益)
- Civic education (*shimin jiaoyu* 市民教育)
- Moral and ideological education of minors (*weichengnianren sixiang daode jiaoyu* 未成年人思想道德教育)

- Education expenditure per capita (*renjun jiaoyu jingfei zhichu* 人均教育经费支出)
- Frequency of large-scale cultural events held in public squares (*daxing guangchang wenhua huodong cishu* 大型广场文化活动次数)
- Public libraries (*gonggong tushuguan* 公共图书馆)
- Art museums, cultural centres and places for community cultural activities (*yiguan, wenhua guan, shequ wenhua huodong changsuo* 艺馆, 文化馆, 社区文化活动场所)
- Sports facilities per capita measured in square metres (*renjun tiyu changdi mianji* 人均体育场地面积)
- Regulation of publications (*chubanzhu guanli* 出版物管理)
- Establishment and regulation of Internet culture (*wangluo wenhua jianshe yu guanli* 网络文化建设与管理)
- Protection of cultural heritage (*wenhua yichan baohu* 文化遗产保护)
- Popularisation of science knowledge and team building (*kepu sheshi he kepu duiwu* 科普设施和科普队伍)
- Road manners and compliance with traffic regulations (*shimin jiaotong xingwei* 市民交通行为)
- Good deeds [*à la Lei Feng*] (*jianyi yongwei* 见义勇为)
- Charitable donations (*cishan juanzhu* 慈善捐助)
- Volunteer organisations and activities (*zhiyuanzhe zuzhi yu huodong* 志愿者组织与活动)
- Level of GDP per capita (*renjun GDP shuiping* 人均GDP水平)
- Ownership of patents per one hundred thousand people (*mei shiwan ren yongyou zhuanli shouquan shu* 每十万人拥有专利授权数)
- Community health service centres (*shequ weisheng fuwu zhongxin* 社区卫生服务中心)
- Food safety (*shipin anquan* 食品安全)
- Drinking water sanitisation (*yingyongshui weisheng* 饮用水卫生)
- Average life expectancy (*pingjun yuqi shouming* 平均预期寿命)
- Urban and rural social assistance system (*chengxiang shehui jiuozhu tixi* 城乡社会救助体系)
- Per capita public green space (*renjun gonggong ludi* 人均公共绿地)
- Rate of centralisation of treatment of urban sewage (*chengshi shenghuo wushui jizhong chuli lu* 城市生活污水集中处理率)
- Air pollution indices — API index <100 days per year (*kongqi wuran zhishu - quannian API zhishu <100 de tianshu* 空气污染指数 — 全年API指数<100的天数)
- Rate of compliance of stabilising pollutants and emissions from key industrial enterprises (*zhongdian gongye qiye wuranwu paifang wending dabiao lu* 重点工业企业污染物排放稳定达标率)
- Energy conservation and emissions reduction (*jienerg jianpai* 节能减排).



A banner reading 'Create a civilised city and build a harmonious society'.

Photo: Sen Yuan

**Note:** The Civilised Cities Evaluation Work Manual from which the above list is excerpted is available on Chinese document websites; there is no official website that openly lists these rules and criteria.

## Guiding Spiritual Civilisation

Again, as mentioned elsewhere, in 1986 the Party passed a ‘Resolution on Guiding Principles for Building a Socialist Society with Spiritual Civilisation’. In 1997, it established a Central Guidance Commission for Building Spiritual Civilisation under the supervision of the Party’s Propaganda Department. In 2003, the Spiritual Civilisation Commission set standards and selection procedures for National Civilised Cities at all levels of government administration. There were to be: ‘national civilised cities and districts’; ‘civilised villages and towns’; and ‘civilised [work] units’. In 2005, it promulgated a National Civilised City Assessment System (*Quanguo wenming chengshi ceping tixi* 全国文明城市测评体系) in the form of government manuals for each administrative level, each of the three levels of city (*shi* 市) as well as urban districts (*shiqu* 市区). New, updated editions of the manual appeared in 2008 and 2011.

Evaluation of the implementation of these policies is the work of the City Investigation Team of the National Bureau of Statistics (*Guojia tongjiju chengshi diaocha dui* 国家统计局城市调查队). Team members sign non-disclosure agreements and are assigned to cities where they demonstrably have no conflicts of interest. Their task is to evaluate the goals and achievements of urban civilisation policies. Evaluators learn of their assignments when, en route to the airport, they open a confidential envelope specifying their destination and field sites. Like restaurant critics, they carry out their work incognito, posing as ordinary tourists; they stay in three-star hotels and travel by taxi to observe conditions in major commercial streets and at traffic junctions, in hospitals and markets, as well as some fifty randomly selected sites. They try public telephones, and ride public buses to tabulate how many people do, and do not, give up their seats for the elderly, pregnant women, the disabled and children. All visits are unannounced, including neighbourhood visits during which they interview residents about their participation rates in local activities.

## Becoming Civilised

City governments voluntarily apply to be assessed for evaluation. To qualify, jurisdictions must attain the status of being designated an ‘Advanced Civilised City’ (*xianjin wenming chengshi* 先进文明城市), based on a set of statistical indicators, in order to prepare for site evaluation. Local Spiritual Civilisation Offices in cities co-ordinate with other branches of government to plan and implement activities that will meet their goals in some nine categories, based on over 100 indicators. In 2005, the Spiritual Civilisation Commission recognised ten cities as National Civilised Cities. They were: Xiamen, Qingdao, Dalian, Ningbo, Shenzhen, Baotou, Zhongshan, Yantai, Langfang and Zhangjiagang. Three urban districts made the cut: Tianjin’s Heping district, Shanghai’s Pudong New Area and Beijing’s Xicheng dis-



New Year's poster celebrating civilised behaviour at the CCTV headquarters in Beijing.  
Photo: Jim Gourley/rudenoan

## CIVILISED TOILETS

*In the run up to the 2008 Beijing Olympics, one of the city's most widely advertised projects was the construction and renovation of thousands of toilets and the introduction of a star rating system for public facilities. In 2012 and 2013, the state of the nation's toilets continues to be associated with degrees of 'civilisation'.*



Sign in a men's bathroom in Beijing: 'Stand closer to the urinal, get closer to civilisation'.

Photo: Danwei

### Jinan Open Toilet Alliance

A number of restaurants, department stores, hotels, and universities in Jinan, the capital city of Shandong province, formed an 'Open Toilet Alliance' in November 2012. Members undertook to make their toilets available to the public.

According to media reports in April 2013, the city plans to expand the alliance to 1,000 members by the end of the year, as part of its bid to win recognition as a 'National Civilised City'. The city government also boasts of innovations including 'fragrant toilets' equipped to filter out odours and automatically perfume the air. In April 2013, Jinan hosted a study tour of over 400 urban law enforcers from all over China focused on the city's 'advanced experience'.

### Occupy Toilet Protest

Inspired by the worldwide Occupy protest movements, a group of female students in Guangzhou launched their own 'occupy' movement. Fed up with long queues for the ladies', twenty women marched into a men's public toilet carrying colorful placards calling for equal waiting times for both sexes. Local media reported that provincial officials in Guangzhou responded by agreeing to increase the number of women's toilets by fifty percent. Similar moves have been made in other cities. In Shaanxi province, the government ordered that new toilet facilities provide more cubicles for women than men.

### Renewed Standards for Toilets

In May 2012, the Beijing Municipal Commission of City Administration and Environment released a new set of standards governing public toilets in the city (toilet campaigns in the 1980s had set the previous targets). The new standards impose a maximum limit of two flies per public toilet, and set out rules regarding odour and general cleanliness. As part of the upgrade, the commission would provide free toilet paper. According to the commission's estimate, this will cost the municipal government as much as eighteen million yuan per year.

In February 2013, the Ministry of Health released draft regulations governing public toilets. Media reports suggest that, if approved, the new regulations will be more strictly enforced than the ministry's previous toilet 'guidelines'. The draft document ranks public toilets into four classes, mainly based on odour. The draft also stipulates that the maximum fly-count for stand-alone public toilets is three per square metre. The public toilets inside other buildings are only permitted one fly each.

A four-star rated toilet approved by the Beijing Tourism Administration.

Photo: Rich & Cheryl



tract. Such formal recognition means that the named city or district can hold the title while continuing to 'civilise' itself over the following three- to four-year period, when they will be re-evaluated.

The introduction to the 2011 manual covering the National Civilised City Assessment System includes the numerous criteria necessary to apply to become a 'Civilised City'; in particular, it emphasises 'ideological and moral construction work' for adolescents. Other prerequisites require clean and disaster-free government. For instance, in the twelve months preceding an application or the review of a positive evaluation as 'civilised', any rule violation or crime committed by a jurisdiction's party secretary or mayor rules out the application or nullifies the place's 'civilised' status. Any serious accident or incident within the jurisdiction, such as water pollution, food safety incident or major construction disaster also prevents a city from applying for the status, or may lead to a city being stripped of the honorific title.

Among the cities named as being 'civilised' in 2005, six have retained their status through the 2009 and 2011 evaluations: Xiamen, Dalian, Ningbo, Baotou, Yantai and Zhangjiagang. Because the program treats provincial-level cities as provinces, urban districts (rather than the city at large), may apply for civilised status. Xicheng district, Beijing and Heping district, Tianjin, retained their 'civilised' status over three rounds. In 2009, meanwhile, the Commission recognised eleven new cities and three new urban districts. Of the cities and districts named in 2005, all except Qingdao and Shanghai's Pudong retained their titles. In 2011, the Commission recognised a record twenty-four cities and three districts. Among existing title-holders, all remained 'civilised' except Shenzhen, Zhongshan and Shanghai's Jing'an district, only recognised in 2009. In 2011, Qingdao and Shanghai Pudong regained National Civilised City status. Currently, there are a total of fifty national civilised cities; sixteen subprovincial, twenty-two at the prefectural level, four at the county level and eight urban districts.

## Making the Grade

The current evaluation manual emphasises some categories more than others. Categories four, five and six, which together cover social and cultural resources, management and services, are the most clearly articulated. Among them, category four, ‘healthy human environment’, has the most criteria. Not surprisingly, these include evidence of such ‘civilised behaviours’ as no spitting, littering and so forth. There’s a Lei Feng-style section on moral conduct and sections on volunteerism, which reflect historical practices and values from the Maoist era. More than 90 percent of the citizens of the aspiring Civilised City must be aware of volunteer service organisations, and at least eight percent must undertake volunteer work. This category also includes international-style urban development criteria for cultural affairs and the development of cultural industries. Cities must make an economic commitment to cultural services for which the evaluation standard is evidence of local government spending on the cultural sec-

The Yan’an Elevated Road in Jing’an, Shanghai is illuminated with LEDs on Friday and Saturday nights.  
Photo: Robert S. Donovan



tor at a rate in keeping with its general revenue growth. The jurisdiction must provide regular, free activity programs at public libraries and sports facilities and free entry to museums and cultural and exhibition centres.

The Party’s primary concern in the evaluation process is improvement of the conduct of government and party officials. Category one gives priority to ‘continuing education for officials’, including the study of party documents as well as earning the ‘people’s satisfaction’ via significant measures to improve local social problems. To popularise the program and his role in its promotion, in 2009 the mayor of Shenzhen, Xu Zongheng, launched a ‘one-hundred mayors network for the creation of civilised cities’. However, Shenzhen lost its own title when Xu was placed under investigation for serious violations of party discipline and subsequently dismissed for corruption. Shenzhen has since been working hard to regain its lost ‘civilised’ status. In March 2013, it became the first city to implement a ‘civility law’, which imposes fines for ‘uncivilised’ public behaviour.

Making the Civilised City title contingent on a corruption-free officialdom symbolically links in new ways the behaviour of officials to the city’s national standing. In an awarded Civilised City, this link also potentially intensifies public opprobrium of corrupt officials. The seaside Shandong provincial city of Qingdao lost its title in 2009 due to one of the outstanding scandals of the 2000s — the corruption of Du Shicheng, party secretary of the city from 2002, who took millions in bribes and awarded his mistress, Li Wei, large contracts for Olympics-related projects when the city was preparing to host the sailing competition of the 2008 Beijing Olympics. Du was removed in 2007 and sentenced to life in prison in February 2008. The Pudong district of Shanghai also lost its title as a consequence of corrupt land and real estate dealings. The Vice-Mayor of Pudong from 2004–2007, Kang Huijun, had earned the nickname ‘the new landlord of Pudong’ and ‘director of real estate speculation’ because he benefitted from control over the access to real estate in Liujiazui and Jinqiao — the two major development zones in Pudong. He also managed to acquire multiple apartments at below-market prices. He was sentenced to life in prison in 2009.



**Ribbon dancer in Xiamen.**  
Photo: Hsing Wei

Category eight in the civilising process requires an ‘ecologically sustainable environment’. This includes the management of air quality based on national standards. The rapidity with which cities have installed air quality monitors since the official recognition of PM2.5 mentioned above, and placed data online, led in 2013 to the creation of a major new website ([www.aqicn.org](http://www.aqicn.org)) that collates data from cities across the country. The website features individual maps depicting the locations of air quality monitors in each city and a national map showing simultaneous Air Quality Index readings in dozens of cities.

A National Public Civilisation Index (*Quanguo wenming zhishu ceping* 全国文明指数测评) assesses on an annual basis the progress made by aspiring cities. By the end of 2012, the National Bureau of Statistics revealed that Xiamen in the southern coastal province of Fujian ranked first overall for the second year in a row and, in the area of the ‘moral education of teenagers’, second only to Qingdao, Shandong province. Xiamen’s distinctions also included boasting a 9.6 percent volunteer rate, with increasing numbers of volunteers at airports, bus stations, hospitals and tourist spots. To address public concerns related to food safety, the city government implemented an online supervision system tracking fresh and pre-packaged foods in supermarkets from more than 10,000 companies: when a substandard product is found its producer is publicly identified. Xiamen also hosts blogs for ‘civilised adolescents’ involving more than 380 primary and secondary schools and about 50,000 student bloggers.

### Shenzhen’s Civility Law



**A group of *chengguan* urban law enforcers in Shenzhen.**  
Photo: Wilson L.

To promote civilised behaviour, the People’s Congress of Shenzhen passed a law that punishes inappropriate conduct ranging from spitting and smoking to allowing pets to defecate in public places, imposing fines from 200 to 10,000 yuan. It’s believed that the law, called Regulations for the Promotion of Civilised Behaviour (*Shenzhen jingji tequ wenming xingwei cujin tiaoli* 深圳经济特区文明行为促进条例) is the first attempt by a city to promote civic behaviour through legislation.

Multiple offenders with more than five violations within two years face an additional fine of 1,000 yuan. Those who have violated more than ten times in two years will have their offences written into their profile in a national ‘personal credit system’ (*geren xinyong jilu xitong* 个人信用记录系统), with consequences such as a diminished likelihood of getting a home loan or obtaining a credit card. The law allows offenders to do community service work as an alternative to the payment of their fines but only up to one half of the total monetary amount.

The law also encourages good civic behaviour such as blood donation and organ and stem cell donation by dictating that such noble deeds will be recorded in the person’s ‘civilised behavior archives’, entitling them to benefits including cash rewards and priority in receiving blood transfusions.

The city’s urban law enforcement bureau, which oversees *chengguan*, is responsible for enforcing the civility law with assistance from the police. Law enforcement officers are required to issue receipts to people who pay fines for uncivil behaviour. It fails to specify how revenue from the fines will be used, saying only that all revenues will go into the city’s coffers.

Questions remain about how effective the new laws will be. A news report in the English language *Shenzhen Daily* in April 2013 observed that ‘when an unidentified male driver spat out a window of his car last week in central Futian district, nobody showed up to charge him a fine for the act deemed uncivil by a new city law that, so far, hasn’t had any teeth’.

## The Idea of Rank

Most countries define cities by population size. China primarily defines cities by their administrative rank, from provincial-level city (*zhixia shi* 直辖市) to prefecture-level city (*diji shi* 地级市) and county-level city (*xianji shi* 县级市). Beijing, Tianjin, Shanghai and Chongqing are defined as municipalities that are under the direct control or jurisdiction of the central government on the same level as a province. A city's place in this system determines its 'rank' (*jibie* 级别) in the hierarchy.

The significance of rank is apparent in the documents of the Civilised City program. Reports on the National Civilised City program make no reference to a city's particular history, specific culture, or to distinctive places within a city including World Heritage sites. The standardised outcomes of the National Civilised City program present only the name of a city listed in order of administrative rank, from prefecture-level cities and districts of provincial-level cities to 'civilised town' and 'civilised units'. Documents do not report why a city has attained Civilised City status, or why it has lost it. If a city loses its title, its name simply disappears from the list.

In Chinese, the multiple meanings of the word *pin* 品 help explain some of the deeper meanings of the ideas around 'rank'. Among the slogans appearing in Shenzhen's civilising landscape was 'Construct a High-grade Cultural Shenzhen City' (*ba Shenzhen jiancheng gao pinwei wenhua chengshi* 把深圳建成高品位文化城市). Here the *pin* in *pinwei* or 'grade' covers notions of rank, measurement and status. Yet *pin* has additional meanings. *Pin* is composed of three *kou* 口 or mouths. It implies not merely to 'taste or sample' (*pinchang* 品尝) whether a food is salty or sweet or of high quality as in 'taste (appreciate) fine tea' (*pin ming* 品茗), but also taste in the cultured or 'civilised' sense of the ability to discern quality.

As a single character it can be a noun indicating, for example, a high rank in the dynastic court: it appeared in this sense as early as the Tang dynasty (618–907) and the last dynasty, the Qing (1644–1911), had nine *pin* or 'ranks' of bureaucrats. It could also mean temperament or character, or small commodities or products. As a verb it may mean to sample, appraise, rate or judge. Paired with other characters it can form compounds such

as *pinde* 品德 and *pinge* 品格, both conveying the sense of moral character; *pinxing* 品行, conduct or behaviour; *pinwei* 品味, taste or sensibility; *pinping* 品评, to judge, adjudicate or comment on; *pinzhong* 品种, variety or breed; *pinzhi* 品质, quality; *pinwei* 品位, grade or rank and *pinpai* 品牌, brand. From ancient times to the present, this one character connects these diverse ideas about rank and assessment with notions of inherent quality.

*Pin* 品 parses and elevates what is distinctive within categories. With uneven social development in China, the concept of *pin* informs party-state concerns about the potential to transform the *suzhi* of the population. Yet the notion of striving for 'scientific' improvement in the *suzhi* of individuals holds less significance today than the historical mission of civilising the collective. In the Reform era, the city is the key collective and holds highest rank among places, and so the National Civilised City ranks first in the official honours for 'civilised' places.



From the series 'Great Mall of China' 中华商城.  
Photo: Adrian Suddenly Gordon

## Standardising Urban Governance

Both netizens and officials have been critical of China's Civilised City program. They point out that vibrant urban life with a basis in cultural diversity is different from the tireless, standardised check-list of Civilised City criteria as identified by the party-state. Even the style in which a civilising campaign (*chuangzao wenming chengshi* 创造文明城市, *chuangwen* 创文 for short) is launched — floral displays and colourful potted plants lining the roadsides, red banners flying overhead, streets suddenly swept clear of vendors and buzzing with red-jacketed volunteers — recalls the aesthetic style of mid-twentieth century communism and mass mobilisation campaigns. It seems out of step with China's new, high-rise, consumer-oriented urban environments.

The Civilised City program also appears, at least superficially, to be at odds with China's development of modern ranking systems and the Party's emphasis on becoming 'world class' in all areas, from productive capacities to the knowledge economy and cities themselves. But the red legacies of socialism remain strong in China, and have been rearticulated since the rise of Xi Jinping in late 2012. The Civilised City system links enduring values of the party-state with contemporary principles of urban development under global capitalism. The shift to extreme marketisation or neoliberalism in the world economy since the 1980s encourages ranking schemes and quantitative indicators as a way of attracting economic interests. The neoliberal world economy readily accommodates the politics of rank in China — where the market and the state combine in inventive ways that powerfully endorse numbers and urban rankings.

On one level, China's National Civilised City program strives to improve the roles and functions of modern urban government. It promotes the co-ordination of government services, social needs, economic development, environmental quality and culture as conceived by the state. It has grown well beyond the system of political-linguistic techniques that have existed throughout the sixty-four year history of the People's Republic for socialising and coercing citizen conduct. It promotes replica-

### Urban Law Enforcers: Agents of Civility or Thugs?

China's urban law enforcement officers, known as *chengguan* 城管 (short for Urban Management Regulation Enforcement Teams, *Chengshi guanli xingzheng zhifa dadui* 城市管理行政执法大队) don't have a very good reputation — the word is sometimes used both online and off as a synonym for 'thug'. *Chengguan* regularly make the news and raise the hackles of commentators on social media for harassing and assaulting street vendors, beggars and others. 'Beat Him, Take Everything Away', a Human Rights Watch report published in 2012, explained the well-intentioned rationale behind the *chengguan* system like this:

The legal basis for the creation of the *chengguan* is the Law of the People's Republic of China on Administrative Penalty (hereafter, Administrative Penalties Law), passed in March 1996. That law did not specifically call for the creation of the *chengguan*, nor did it use that term. Instead, the law empowered provinces, autonomous regions, and municipalities to 'entrust an organization ... with imposing administrative penalties' regarding matters falling outside the realm of criminal law and the authority of the Public Security Bureau (China's police) ...

The goals of the Chinese government appear to have been streamlining enforcement of local administrative regulations which were traditionally the responsibility of multiple local government departments, minimizing opportunities for corruption and abuse of power, and better controlling public unrest...



**Chengguan officers busy taking down the fence around an illegal construction before demolition, while being filmed by local TV, in Zhabei district, Shanghai, 29 January 2013.**  
Photo: Remko Tanis

The Chinese Academy of Social Sciences scholar Zhou Hanhua [has remarked:]

Originally [urban social control] issues were handled by the *danwei* (单位), the work unit, to which Chinese employees were once closely bound. The *danwei* ... prevented people from engaging in [commercial] enterprises on the side. The decline of China's state-owned enterprises in the 1990s precipitated the breakdown of the *danwei* system. At the same time, the country grew increasingly urbanized and millions of migrant workers poured into the cities. The traditional [urban social control] system could no longer manage [so] the *chengguan* were established to handle the problems of the urban environment.

It was not until August 2002 that the central government published a directive outlining eight specific areas of administrative law — ranging from environmental sanitation and traffic regulations to urban beautification rules — that provinces, autonomous regions, and municipalities may delegate to *chengguan*. But even that directive does not specify permissible and prohibited means of enforcement, or set forth rules to guide the department and accountability of relevant enforcement personnel.

In the absence of such rules and guidelines and operating under municipal and local governments but with shadowy connections to local police, the *chengguan* often employ brutish tactics to keep casual street vendors in order or off the streets, chase away beggars, and regulate outdoor advertising and noise pollution. In some areas, they also manage the allocation and regulation of parking spaces — a growing source of vexation and conflict in Chinese cities.

### Chengguan are People Too

A propaganda video appeared online that was said to be the work of Jiang Yifan, a *chengguan* from Changzhou, Jiangsu province. The video was intended to humanise the *chengguan* and show that they are just trying to do a good job. Below is a description of the on-camera action together with a translation of the subtitle to each scene:

Jiang and a fellow *chengguan* point at vendors on the street:  
All you ever see are my extremely strict words.

A bowl of instant noodles is steaming on Jiang's desk, his wife is on the phone, he's working overtime: But you don't see all my tears and worries.

A female vendor is cooking snacks on the street: You have your livelihood.

Jiang and his colleague are standing in front of the female vendor and writing in their notebooks: ... and I have my duty.

Other people on the street are laughing and pointing: You can hold our job in disdain.

Street scenes of traffic and buildings: But we can show you who is really beautifying the city.

Close-up images of Jiang working on a computer:  
Being a *chengguan* will always be controversial.

Jiang stands watch on the street: We are questioned and mocked wherever we go.

Jiang looks at himself in the mirror while putting on his uniform:  
Despite all this, even if no one understands.

Jiang pushes open a door to face the camera: We will march courageously forward.

Jiang looks sternly into the camera: I am a *chengguan*, and I can speak up for myself.



Chengguan badge.  
Photo: Willi Grillmayer

ble standards and the involvement of both citizens and officials in developing more open and transparent forms of government behaviour and citizen compliance.

On another level, the program's emphasis on volunteerism or citizen participation in forms of social support and societal monitoring links it to the Maoist era tradition of 'mobilising the grassroots' — the masses — to carry out unpaid social and productive work. It maintains and expands citizen involvement in the policing of public places. Its ideological impact is especially evident in government programs to socialise teenagers and young people by training them to use state-approved online services and blogs in accordance with official guidelines. In these ways, the party-state continues its attempts to control social behaviour and create a future nation of uniformly 'civilised', ideologically homogenous and modern places — a Chinese version of the 'world class' city.

Three people give directions to a bulldozer driver demolishing an illegal structure, Shanghai, 29 January 2013.  
Photo: Remko Tanis



## The *People's Daily* and Civilised Driving

China's roads may not be the world's most dangerous: India has more road deaths in absolute terms as well as per capita. But neither are they associated with safe and orderly driving. The explosive growth in private and commercial traffic has brought with it frequent gridlock and increasingly blatant road safety violations. While official statistics show a decline in traffic accidents and road deaths over the past decade, the World Health Organization's *Global Status Report on Road Safety 2013* estimates that actual numbers are nearly four times higher than the reported figures.

That China's road safety still lags behind the developed world inspires constant hand wringing in the state media. In 2008, Xinhua noted that the China Traffic Safety Forum's 2007 figure of 5.1 road deaths for every 10,000 motor vehicles was worse than every developed country and more than double the global average. Xinhua specifically highlighted problem behavior including switching lanes without signaling, ignoring traffic lights, driving against the traffic and reversing on a highway to catch a missed exit.

In October 2012, the *People's Daily* published an opinion piece on the state of 'uncivilised driving' in China and what to do about it. It quoted from the 2011 'China Automobile Community Development Report' (*Zhongguo qiche shehui fazhan baogao* 中国汽车社会发展报告), which predicted that there would be 86.5 million private vehicles on the road in China by 2013. (The most recent edition predicts over 100 million this year.) The newspaper, the Party's official mouthpiece, observed that while China has become a car society, it has not succeeded in teaching people behind the wheel to drive properly. How to remedy the state of uncivilised driving? Mostly by the cultivation of healthy driving habits, the paper insisted, backed up by strict enforcement of rules and regulations.

From 1 January 2013, a new set of rules, Regulations Covering the Application for and Use of a Motor Vehicle Driver's License (*Jidongche jiazhizheng shenling he shiyong guiding* 机动车驾驶证申领和使用规定) impose hefty penalties on traffic violations. Anyone caught running a yellow light has six points deducted from their license. Those who cover up their license plates to avoid being identified by surveillance cameras (a common ruse) risk losing twelve points — effectively an automatic license suspension. Online, drivers harshly criticised the new rule governing yellow lights: if going through a yellow light is forbidden, they asked, then why not just have green and red lights?

Whether as a result of self-restraint or heightened enforcement, just one month after the promulgation of what a social media meme called 'the most severe traffic law in history', Xinhua was able to report an improvement on China's roads: 'China reported a dramatic decline of traffic violations and road accidents in January'. According to the Traffic Administration Bureau, the death toll from running traffic lights and speeding fell 13.3 percent and 71.2 percent respectively compared with the previous year. There were about 1.37 million cases of traffic light violations in January, a 40 percent decrease from the same period in 2012, and 285,000 cases of speeding — a 32.5 percent drop.

Without lines or traffic lights,  
a variety of vehicles jammed in the  
middle of the street.

Photo: Let Ideas Compete



FORUM



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**BORDER-  
LANDS AND  
CUTTING  
EDGES**

## **BORDERLANDS AND CUTTING EDGES**

Patriotism and its Discontents

· SEBASTIAN VEG

Civility Across the Straits

· MARK HARRISON

The Minorities: Civilised Yet?

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## PATRIOTISM AND ITS DISCONTENTS

Sebastian Veg

**T**HE NUMBER of participants in the Hong Kong vigil has skyrocketed since 2009 — the twentieth anniversary of the 4 June 1989 Beijing massacre — including growing numbers of young students. But the controversy that erupted this year around the slogan proposed by the organisers is significant of a tide change in Hong Kong and, perhaps to an extent, in China. The Hong Kong Alliance in Support of Democratic Patriotic Movements of China (*Zhilianhui* 支聯會), which has organised the vigils ever since their inception, put forward the catchword ‘Love the Country, Love the People; the Hong Kong Spirit’ (*Ai guo ai min, Xianggang jingshen* 愛國愛民 香港精神). This initiative was most probably a reaction to recent

debates in Hong Kong on ‘patriotism’: in the current debate on whether Hong Kong’s next chief executive is finally to be elected by universal suffrage in 2017, Beijing has set down ‘patriotism’ as a vetting criterion for candidates. (The idea, voiced by National People’s Congress official Qiao Xiaoyang, is ultimately derived from Deng Xiaoping’s formula ‘Love the Country, Love Hong Kong’ *ai guo ai Gang* 愛國愛港). The wording chosen by the Alliance was supposed to highlight, as many ‘patriotic’ Hong Kongers have done over the years, that opposing the Party and commemorating the dead students, workers and Beijing citizens of 1989 is just as patriotic, or is more so than, the official denial (of wrongdoing) that the Party still clings to.



**Horace Chin Wan-Kan,**  
cultural commentator and  
academic.  
Photo: Maria Caetano

In 2013, however, for the first time, the very idea of patriotism was publicly disputed by increasingly vocal ‘nativist’ or ‘localist’ groups usually referred to as *bentupai* 本土派 (‘own soil faction’). Their most vocal proponent, the pro-autonomy cultural commentator and academic who goes by the pen-name Chan Wan (Horace Chin Wan-kan), berated the organisers for their blind patriotism. Calls for a sepa-

rate vigil in Kowloon were heard. The Alliance sought support for their slogan from Ding Zilin (the septuagenarian mother of one of the first students killed on 4 June 1989 and the head of a group called Tiananmen Mothers who stand for justice for all the victims of the massacre). She chastised the ‘autonomists’ but refused to endorse the word ‘patriotism’, pointing out that the Tiananmen Mothers had never used it; she criticised the Alliance for misunderstanding the situation in China. Persuaded, the Alliance rapidly

dropped the slogan and apologised to Ding (a member had — somewhat bewilderingly — accused her of having succumbed to Stockholm Syndrome).

In the end, the effect on the turnout was minimal; a slight fall in participants was most probably due to a violent rainstorm, as various local groups like Scholarism (*Xuemin sichao* 學民思潮, which says it is ‘The Alliance Against Moral and National Education’) publicly opposed Chan Wan and called on residents to attend the vigil. The separate event in

Kowloon was only attended by a few hundred people. Ding’s reply, however, raises a particularly interesting issue with regard to the status of patriotism, or the identification with the Chinese nation-state, in current political controversies both in Hong Kong and in mainland China.

One obvious reason why the Alliance’s slogan, designed to deflect patriotism towards the ‘people’ and away from the state, proved controversial this year, is the anti-National Education (*guoqing jiaoyu*



**Anti-National Education protesters.**  
Photo: Ansel Ma



**Protesters supporting ‘Scholarism’ 學民思潮, 29 July 2012.**  
Photo: Kaiadamkai

國情教育) protests that took place in Hong Kong in the summer of 2012.

Anti-Mainland populist rhetoric had spread in Hong Kong throughout the spring of 2012, focussing on the ‘invasion’ of unruly mainland tourists on shopping sprees and pregnant mothers unlawfully giving birth in Hong Kong to obtain residency, squeezing local residents out of limited hospital beds. These frustrations were amusingly captured in the viral clip ‘Who’s Stolen Our Dreams?’ (a spoof of the government-sponsored video ‘Believe in Our Dreams’).

Protests escalated after the foundation of Scholarism, a non-partisan group led by high-school students (notably the highly articulate Joshua Wong) and their parents, who organised a widely attended protest march on 29 July 2012 opposing ‘brainwashing’. This in turn prompted particularly unfortunate comments on the personal blog of Central Liaison Office (CLO) official Hao Tiechuan, to the effect that brains, like dirty laundry, sometimes needed washing, and that such ‘brainwashing’ was widely practiced in other countries.

The CLO represents the Beijing government in Hong Kong but is not supposed to intervene in local politics; Hao’s remarks were therefore seen as a renewed breach of this institutional separation guaranteed by Hong Kong’s Basic Law (its mini-constitution). The ‘National Education’ project was unconditionally withdrawn by the government in September on the eve of Hong Kong’s legislative elections, in which pro-Beijing forces scored a limited success.

The anti-National Education movement should be understood as the culmination of deeper shifts in Hong Kong society. Contrary to the hopes Beijing placed in the post-colonial generation, the post-2003 stepping-up of patriotic rhetoric produced a backlash among the ‘post-80s’ and ‘post-90s’ (cohorts born in the 1980s and 1990s), who are increasingly critical of or even hostile to mainland China. While the ‘nativist’ faction has been gaining traction over the last five years (the notion gained theoretical momentum with the launching of the *Journal of Local Discourse* in 2008), its political branch, the Hong Kong City-State Autonomy Movement (with its Petition for the Independence of Hong Kong), appeared

in the wake of the anti-National Education movement. Chan Wan — originally an obscure academic specialising in Cantonese folklore — emerged in 2012 as the cultural guru of these ‘autono-

mists’. Describing themselves as the ‘right wing’ of the localist movement, they use strong anti-mainland rhetoric targeted at Chinese tourists and the use of simplified characters (the writing system promulgated by the Communists from 1949 that simplifies the traditional written form of the Chinese language), and wave an adapted version of Hong Kong’s colonial flag (without the Union Jack background). While one should not overestimate the political impact of this splinter group, their existence and the sympathy they arouse, especially among post-1980s and post-1990s youth, are changing the political landscape in Hong Kong. There are parallels with the evolution of Taiwan politics and the rise of an ‘own soil faction’ on the island in the 1980s in conjunction with the anti-Nationalist Party democracy movement. In Taiwan, too, the push for democratisation after Chiang Kai-shek’s death came together with a strong critique of the ‘central Chinese culture’ imposed by the Nationalist government when it retreated to the island after 1949.



Social movement to call for the Chief Executive of Hong Kong, C.Y. Leung, to step down, 30 December 2012.

Photo: Napcoffee



## CIVILITY ACROSS THE STRAITS

Mark Harrison

**T**AIWAN AND mainland China are currently experiencing a period of official conciliation. Economic relations continue to deepen: the 2013 Cross-Straits Agreement on Trade in Services (*Liang'an fuwu maoyi xieyi* 兩岸服務貿易協議), although controversial in Taiwan, is opening up new areas of exchange that include finance, telecommunications and entertainment. Ever-greater numbers of mainland tourists visit Taiwan, and senior officials from Taiwan's ruling Nationalist Party are going to Beijing. The result is a change in the tone of the debate on each side about the relationship.

The histories of Taiwan and mainland China diverged at the end of the nineteenth century, when Tai-

wan became a colony of Japan. In 1945, it joined the Republic of China, and in 1949 the Nationalist government of the Republic, fleeing from the Communists, relocated to Taipei. The end of the Qing dynasty, the chaos of the Republican era and then the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, meant the Mainland followed a different path of modernisation, both economically and politically.

Taiwan, having missed the excesses and disasters of Maoism, has offered a model for modernisation as an 'Asian Tiger', reaching an apotheosis with democratisation in the late 1980s. But as China has undergone its own period of hyper-growth, becoming the world's second largest econo-

my, Taiwan has been reframed as an eastern island hinterland of a new superpower.

Often, over the last century and more, writers and commentators on each side have seen in the other an alternative set of historical possibilities. Tackling themes of progress, tradition, modernisation and civilisation, they have addressed social and political problems in their own experience through the example of the alternative other.

### Han Han on Taiwan

In May 2012, the noted mainland Chinese writer, blogger, Internet celebrity and occasional racing car driver Han Han wrote about a visit to Taiwan that addressed the topic of civility in Taiwan society as a way of commenting on contemporary mainland life. His visit had been high profile and he was part of a group that included technology business figures who met with Taiwanese President Ma Ying-jeou in the Presidential Palace.



**Ma Ying-jeou,**  
President of  
Taiwan.  
Source:  
Topnews.in



**Han Han salutes Taiwan.**  
Photo: Tealeafnation.com

In his essay titled ‘Winds of the Pacific’ (*Taipingyangde feng* 太平洋的风) Han Han (notably avoiding the official title ‘President’) says that it was not his meeting with ‘Mr’ Ma that left the strongest impression. He begins sentimentally with a description of his flight touching down in Taipei, when he hears a ringtone of Sylvia Chang singing ‘Playing in the Snow’ (*Xixue* 戏雪) — a song that evokes the exodus of Chinese Nationalist refugees who fled Communism by relocating to Taiwan in 1948–1949. He speaks about the Taiwan of his imagination — a place that is populated by well-known film-



**Sylvia Chang,**  
singer and  
actress.  
Source:  
Mtime.com

makers like Hou Hsiao-hsien and the late Edward Yang, and the Republican-era intellectuals who followed the Nationalists to the island such as Liang Shih-chiu, Lin Yu-tang and Hu Shih.

He goes on to record his amazement at how generous and thoughtful Taiwanese shop owners are compared to those on the Mainland. A key incident occurs when he forgets his mobile phone in a taxi. He is stunned when, after friends have called around trying to locate it, he learns

that the driver has already dropped the phone back at his hotel. Han Han gets in touch with the taxi driver to offer a reward: ‘He said something unexpected at the end: “I have QQ and Sina Weibo accounts, what’s your account name? We can keep in contact online.” At that moment, I felt the two sides of the Straits couldn’t be closer. Then he said, “Actually, I am also on Facebook, I can add you as a friend!” I told him that we don’t have access to Facebook on the Mainland. “Oh,” he replied, “that’s right”.’

Han Han then launches into a vitriolic condemnation of the state of China today:

I do not want to discuss politics or the system here. As a writer from the Mainland, I’m completely lost. This sense of loss has not come from a few easy days of travel but from all of my life experiences up to now. My sense of loss derives from the environment in which I exist, of seeds buried deep within us, first of decades that taught people to be savage and to fight, and then decades that made people greedy and selfish. My sense of loss is for the civilisation destroyed by the previous generation. Traditional virtues have been destroyed, the bonds of trust between people have been destroyed, but no new society has been built in its place. ...

Yes, I want to thank Hong Kong and Taiwan. They have sheltered China’s civilisation, preserving the beauty of the nation and saving its roots from calamity. They do have things that can be criticised. We have a Ritz-Carlton and a Peninsula Hotel, and Gucci and LV, and the wife of a county head in China is richer than their highest officials. For one of our

major film productions they could make twenty or thirty of theirs and they could never afford our Expo or Olympic Games. But when walking on the streets of Taiwan, talking to those taxi drivers, food stallholders and people on the street, I feel no sense of pride at all.

Through Taiwan as a counter-example, Han Han captures key anxieties of mainland Chinese intellectuals of a cultural and social life upturned first by Maoism and then by marketisation. Taiwan offers a point of reference from which Han Han can excoriate the failures of a whole generation in China and the breakdown of social relations under China's Communist experiment. But at the same time, Han Han recognises the wealth and power that China has achieved in his lifetime, and speaks from a position within it. Taiwan is a backwater when measured against the scale of consumerism and global mega-events possible in today's China.

Han Han's piece attracted widespread Internet and media comment, including an acknowledgement in a speech by President Ma himself. Not long after Han Han visited Taiwan, the essayist and cultural critic Lung Ying-tai became Taiwan's first



Lung Ying-tai,  
Taiwan's first  
Minister for  
Culture.  
Source: Asia-  
society.org



political struggle that has left a spiritual wound, and that the past two decades of economic hyper-development has left Mainlanders hard-pressed to find a sense of personal worth. She said that Han Han was expressing a longing that the compassion within Chinese culture could once again be a source for his spiritual life.

In her comments in Guangzhou, Lung also compared Han Han's essay with her own public critiques of Chinese culture written over many decades in the context of authoritarianism in Taiwan and later of that in mainland China. She said writing her celebrated 1985 volume of essays, *Wild Fire* (*Yehuoji* 野火集) had caused a furious controversy in Taiwan because it exposed many social taboos of the period. 'The skin of society was fragile, and just one smack inflamed it and made it bleed'.

In *Wild Fire*, Lung Ying-tai had excoriated the Chinese (by which she meant the people of Taiwan) for their apparent apathy in the face of political oppression, corruption and

environmental degradation after nearly forty years of martial law. She appealed to a similar sense of civility as Han Han but also to the civic action required to maintain it: 'You and I are the same ordinary people, with the same needs: a peaceful environment, clean neighbourhoods, orderly streets, civilised and considerate communities'. At the time, expressing such views was risky and controversial in Taiwan and the essays were read with excitement by a receptive public. They also predate the legitimisation of Taiwanese identity politics, in which speaking about the Taiwanese as Chinese has become controversial in its own right.

Later, in 2006, with economic and social links between Taiwan and mainland China growing rapidly, Lung Ying-tai wrote an 'Open Letter to Hu Jintao' in response to the closing down of *Freezing Point* (*Bingdian* 冰点) magazine—originally published by the *China Youth Daily* (*Zhongguo qingnianbao* 中国青年报) and a sharp voice of social commentary in the early twenty-first century. Lung accused the Chinese government under Hu for being unable to abide voices that addressed Chinese history critically: 'Simply stated, Mr Hu, whether you allow the media to be independent, what attitude you adopt towards your own history, how you deal with the people ... every little decision is bound up with the word "civilisation". We have been through barbarity already, so we have to care about civilisation.'

Both Han Han and Lung Ying-tai speak about the issue of civility being at the heart of the crisis of Chinese society. Both explore the meaning of the term civility as a way of speaking about personal dignity, social relations and the everyday, and, in a broader sense, as an assessment of the state of the polity and its capacity for self-reflection.

Not everyone was so impressed with Han Han, however. Young bloggers in Taiwan picked up a patronising subtext in his equation of civility and weakness: by contrasting the civility of the everyday in Taiwan to China's contemporary wealth and power, he had made Taiwan out to be a quaint and rustic backwater.

A typical response came from the Taiwanese blogger Lin Shu Shu. Lin wrote a post entitled 'A cultivated citizen or traditional Chinese virtues: Han Han misunderstands Taiwan' in which he credited colonisation by Japan for shaping modern Taiwan, both directly through its modernising institutions and indirectly from the organised opposition to it from the Taiwanese. Lin identifies political activists like Jiang Wei-shui — founder of the Taiwan Cultural Association (*Taiwan wenhua xiehui* 臺灣文化協會) in 1921 and the short-lived Taiwan People's Party (*Taiwan Minzhongdang* 臺灣民眾黨) in 1927 — as introducing notions such as the rule of law and democratic political representation that led to democratisation in the 1980s.

Lin asserts that virtue is not unique to Chinese culture or civilisation. Chinese culture and civility flourish on Taiwan because of the rule of law. Lin argues that: 'only after China completely eliminates despotism will its full splendour be realised'. In other words, Taiwan is more civilised because it is modern, not because it has maintained traditional Chinese culture — that alone does not guarantee either virtue or civility.



## THE MINORITIES: CIVILISED YET?

David Brophy

**O**NE HUNDRED years since the fall of the Qing dynasty, which redefined the Inner Asian borderlands as integral parts of the Chinese nation, the Communist Party still struggles to resolve China's 'ethnic question'.

In February 2013, Tibet passed the gruesome milestone of the hundredth self-immolation. The count continues to rise. In April, violence broke out again in Xinjiang: a clash between Uyghur neighbourhood committee workers and suspected 'mobsters' left twenty-one dead. And in usually calm Inner Mongolia, Mongols now regularly hit the streets in protest against commercially driven land seizures and forced relocation.

The top levels of government have responded on the one hand by calling for a faster rate of investment in borderland economies to raise them to parity with the interior and, on the other, to attack forms of economic and religious life they deem to be obstructing China's trajectory of modernisation. The growing desperation of minority protests suggests that there is a palpable sense that only a brief window for action remains before China's development priorities swamp local aspirations.

Despite the confident veneer of Politburo pronouncements, ongoing problems in minority regions have prompted deep questioning of the direction of China's nationalities policy. In early 2012, Tsinghua University scholars Hu Angang and Hu Lianhe provided a fo-

cus for the debate by calling for a 'Second Generation Nationalities Policy'.

The two Hus voiced the concerns of many Han Chinese today: that autonomous administrative structures and constitutional privileges (*youhui zhengce* 优惠政策) for ethnic minorities amount to a system of reverse discrimination against the Han majority. They argued that it was time to replace these structures and privileges with a consistent set of rights and obligations for all citizens, irrespective of ethnicity.

For much of 2012, rethinking China's approach to its ethnic minorities became a hot topic in academic discussions as well as on policy websites and scholarly blogs. Following a series of semi-official rebuttals of the new approach in the same forums, enthusiasm for the debate noticeably cooled in the first half of 2013. A tally would show that most contributors to the discussion were wary, if not outright critical of the direction suggested by the two Hus. But popular discontent with China's affirmative action is widespread and support for revising, or abolishing, the system of ethnic autonomy seems likely to grow.

The proposals are radical. Yet they do not necessarily entail a major break with Chinese Marxist-Leninist tradition. The gradual withering away of national boundaries is part of the predicted path to socialist utopia: the workers have no country, as Marx put it. The current rigid system of ethnic categories prevents any possibility of such 'national' or ethnic blending (*minzu ronghe* 民族融合), and could therefore be deemed non-Marxist. The Maoist canon postponed the obliteration of national or ethnic identity to a distant point on the socialist horizon; for some, that time has arrived.

The People's Republic has always been reluctant to frame the ethnic question in terms other than a historical legacy. The revolution, officially represented as the combined struggle of all fifty-five of China's officially designated ethnic minorities (*shaoshu minzu* 少数民族) together with the Han majority, is credited with having resolved the 'nationalities question'. Concessions to China's ethnic minorities, such as the system of ethnic autonomy, were presented in a more positive light as policies aimed at developing the nation's backward regions and their (usually non-Han) inhabitants. Viewed

A Uyghur blacksmith, 18 September 2012.  
Photo: Eric Lafforgue



in this way, national autonomy in Xinjiang or Tibet has a use-by date: when the necessary cultural and economic advancement has been achieved. In other words, when the minorities are sufficiently civilised, autonomy will have achieved its goal and can be abolished.

As scholars in both China and the West have long known, creating a taxonomy of ethnic groups based on the Stalinist model often involved the state and its scholars imposing artificial designations on the population. 'Second generation' theorists hold that by institutionalising these groups traditionally as *minzu* ('nationality' 民族), with political rights attached, the Chinese state created a rod for its own back. They prefer the term 'ethnic group' (*zuqun* 族群), and speak in terms of 'watering down' (*danhua* 淡化) and 'depoliticising' (*quzhengzhihua* 去政治化) ethnic identity.

The 'second generation' thinkers on nationalities policy (they would prefer the term 'ethnic' policy) find some common ground with Western theorists of multiculturalism and civic nationalism. The 1960s' American notion of a 'melting pot' offers a catchphrase for those proposing to break down the barriers between ethnic groups and increase the degree of national blending.

What they find most attractive is the sense that immigrant nations such as America and Australia have successfully inculcated a loyalty to the state that transcends ethnic identity. A recent essay by Chinese scholars surveys the history of ethnic policy in Australia — its authors most impressed by the fact that 'state affiliation is always in the primary position; ethnic affiliation is always second'.

In reality, the term 'Australian' is far from culturally neutral, and not yet inclusive enough to serve as the primary point of identification for all mem-



Valerii Tishkov,  
sociologist.  
Source:  
Russian Council

bers of Australian society. The term ‘Chinese’ is even more problematic, for it is not an abstract notion of common Chinese citizenship, but implies membership in the *Zhonghua minzu* 中华民族 — a term with strong and specific historical and cultural connotations.

Dong Yong, Deputy Head of Ürümchi’s Ethnic Minority Cadre Training Institute from August 2012, wrote a commentary in 2012 in the *Global Times* entitled ‘Increase the Use of the Broad Designation “*Zhonghua minzu*”’ (Duoyong ‘*Zhonghua minzu*’ de da chengwei 多用‘中华民族’的大称谓). Urbanisation and population movements, Dong argued, have made Han Chinese an ethnic minority throughout China’s minority regions. In such a situation, the term ‘ethnic minority’ ceases to make any sense. Lauding the American policies for their success in promoting ‘citizen consciousness’ (*guomin yishi* 国民意识), he suggests that the term *Zhong-hua minzu* be applied more widely in administration and education in minority regions.

As much as discussion of Western multiculturalism serves as a vehicle for criticising and rethinking China’s own ethnic policies, it rarely offers concrete prescriptions for change.

A more useful model for China might be found in neighbouring Russia. Russia today is a federation that still includes autonomous ethnic republics and *oblasts* held in varying degrees of submission to Putin’s centralising grip. Arguably, this more closely resembles China and its system of ethnic autonomy than did the former Soviet Union.

During the 1990s, Russian officials took a number of steps to dismantle the Soviet framework of nationality and national autonomy, blaming it for inhibiting integration and the development of a pan-Russian patriotism. A leading theorist behind these moves was the sociologist Valerii Tishkov. His work has been translated and published in Chinese, and is often cited by *minzu* specialists such as the Peking University sociologist Ma Rong. Tishkov served as an advisor to Boris Yeltsin; in recent years his work has influenced Vladimir Putin’s push for an all-encompassing ‘Russianness’ with which Russia’s non-Slavic peoples can identify.

Relying on the linguistic distinction between *Russkii* (ethnically Russian) and *Rossiiskii* (pertaining to the Russian state), Tishkov asks citizens of Russia to think of themselves as ‘Rossian’ first (not Russian), and Tatar

or Ukrainian only second. Very much akin to the Chinese dream of realising a unified *Zhonghua minzu*, Tishkov’s goal of an all-encompassing *Rossian* identity expresses a kind of universality that is unlikely to appeal to any nationalities fearful of assimilation.

As in China today, in the Russia of the 1990s these reforms were promoted as steps towards social liberalisation: the notorious ‘nationality’ category in the Russian passport, after all, was an innovation of Josef Stalin. Yet when it was removed from the passport, leading voices among non-Russian groups such as the Tatars criticised it as a step towards assimilation.

Such is the dilemma faced by China’s ‘second-generation’ theorists. With trust between Han and non-Han a rare commodity, dissolving structures of national autonomy in the name of greater social mobility and cultural cross-fertilisation is almost certainly to be perceived as a threat to already endangered minority languages and cultures, as well as the last remaining spheres of non-Han authority in minority regions.

Critical minority voices are muted in scholarly journals and official forums, but find an outlet on personal

websites. The Mongolian Altanbolag has written on his blog that the call for a ‘second-generation nationality policy’ means one of two things: either that China will allow freedom of speech for all viewpoints on its nationality policy; or, more likely in his view, that a selective airing of views critical of current policy will lay the groundwork for a racist and exterminationist turn in China’s ethnic policy.

His piece is alarmist, perhaps, but indicative of the suspicion that will greet any major shift in China’s ethnic policy. For this reason, while endorsing the goal of unifying the *Zhonghua minzu*, many officials have sounded a warning against ‘forcing’ the integration process. As Huang Zhu — a veteran researcher in the United Front Department and State Ethnic Affairs commission — has pointed out, the last time that criticisms of the system of autonomous regions and constitutional concessions for ethnic minorities were aired was during a period the Party would prefer to forget — the Cultural Revolution.



## HOT TOPICS IN 2012

*A list of the ‘hottest’ or most popular expressions, terms or phrases in China in 2012 was compiled by the Internet companies Hudong Baike, Suhu Weibo, and a few other media organisations. Experts from these organisations chose a total of twenty phrases that went into an online poll page where readers could vote for any terms or expressions that they regarded as the most current or important. The poll closed on 25 December 2012, with 4,175 people having cast votes. The top ten words and phrases are listed below, beginning with the most popular.*

**1. Diaoyu Islands**  
(*Diaoyudao* 钓鱼岛)

The disputed islands claimed by China, Taiwan and Japan — see Chapter 1 for details.

**2. ‘Are You Happy?’**  
(*Ni xingfu ma* 你幸福吗?)

A China Central Television (CCTV) program — see page 378 for details.

**3. Liaoning Aircraft Carrier**  
(*Liaoninghao hangmu* 辽宁号航母)

China’s first aircraft carrier, commissioned on 25 September 2012.

**4. Loser (*diaosi* 屌丝)**

Online slang (literally ‘penis thread’) initially used by wired young people to encapsulate feelings of being trapped in a dead-end existence. The term’s self-deprecation and lack of pretention was later undermined by its appropriation by celebrities and other successful individuals.

### 5. *A Bite of China* (*Shejianshangde Zhongguo* 舌尖上的中国)



**A Bite of China.**  
Source: CCTV

This CCTV-produced documentary series presented mouth-watering images of cuisine from across the country and became a genuine hit.

### 6. Eighteenth Party Congress (*Shiba da* 十八大)

As expected, Xi Jinping replaced Hu Jintao during the Congress, which was held in November.

### 7. Mo Yan



**Mo Yan.**  
Photo: Howard Goldblatt

The Shandong-born novelist who won the 2012 Nobel Prize for Literature — see Chapter 7 for details.

### 8. *Voice of China* (*Zhongguo hao shengyin* 中国好声音)



**Na Ying.**  
Photo: George Chen

China's licensed version of a Dutch singing competition TV show aired on Zhejiang TV; it featured Liu Huan, Na Ying and other stars of yesteryear as judges.



**Liu Huan.**  
Source: Xinhua

### 9. Yuanfang-speak (*Yuanfang ti* 元芳体)



**'Yuanfang, what do you think?'**  
Source: 33·LA 壁纸中国 Wallpaper China

In *Wise Detective Di Renjie* (*Shentan Di Renjie* 神探狄仁杰) — a TV mystery series about the adventures of the Tang dynasty magistrate Judge Dee (made famous internationally in the novels of Robert van Gulik) — Di frequently asks his associate Li Yuanfang for

his opinion. 'Yuanfang, what do you think?' (*Yuanfang, ni zenme kan?* 元芳，你怎么看?) became a viral meme for inexplicable situations.

### 10. *Gangnam Style* (*Jiangnan style* 江南 style)

The hit song and online video by South Korean pop star Psy charmed audiences and spawned parodies in China (including one by Ai Weiwei). It also caused an increase in the use of the English word 'style' in advertising and magazine headlines. Predictably, editorials asked why China could not produce a similar, globally popular pop music hit.



**Psy.**  
Source: The Korea Project

### 11. 2012

Contrary to online buzz and hysteria about the Mayan calendar, the world did not end on 21 December.

### 12. WeChat (*Weixin* 微信)

Tencent's fast-growing mobile phone-based text, image and voice messaging application stole some media limelight from Weibo/microblogging.

### 13. Toxic Capsules (*du jiaonang* 毒胶囊)

In April, CCTV ran an exposé on the use of industrial gelatin in drug capsules — see Chapter 3 for more on this and other food safety scandals.

### 14. Positive Energy (*zheng nengliang* 正能量)

This term refers to the concept of healthy, positive civic participation. It received a boost when it was adopted as the translation into Chinese of the title of popular psychologist Richard Wiseman's *Rip It Up*. Party General Secretary Xi Jinping also frequently alludes to 'positive energy'.

### 15. City of Sansha (*Sansha shi* 三沙市)

China's smallest prefecture-level city was created on 24 July 2012 on a disputed island in the South China Sea.



**The island of Sansha city.**  
Source: DWnews.com

## 16. Zhenhuan-speak (*Zhenhuan ti* 甄嬛体)

The dialogue in the smash hit palace costume TV drama *The Legend of Zhen Huan* (*Hougong: Zhen Huan zhuan* 后宫·甄嬛传) featured archaic terms and speech patterns that inspired imitators in online forums.

## 17. Golden Rice (*huangjin dami* 黄金大米)



Wild type (white), Golden Rice 1 (yellow), Golden Rice 2 (orange).

Source: Science Squirrel

A US-funded study authored by a Tufts University scientist and two researchers affiliated with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in China tested Golden Rice — a strain genetically modified (GM) to be higher in  $\beta$ -carotene — on children in Hunan province. Neither the children nor

their parents and teachers were aware that GM rice was involved. When the results of the 2008 study were published in August 2012, Greenpeace questioned the ethics of the trial.

## 18. London Olympics (*Lundun Aoyunhui* 伦敦奥运会)

The 2012 Summer Olympics, held 27 July–12 August in London.

## 19. Jeremy Lin (*Lin Shuhao*)

An American basketball player born to immigrants from Taiwan, Lin led the New York Knicks on a winning streak in February 2012, sparking a craze dubbed ‘Linsanity’ in the US and in China.



Jeremy Lin.  
Source:  
jeremylinshuhao.com

## 20. Bile Bears (*huo xiong qu dan* 活熊取胆)

Bear bile farming, in which bile is extracted from the gallbladders of living bears for use in traditional Chinese medicine, has been a focus of animal rights concern in recent years. The bid for a public listing on the Shenzhen

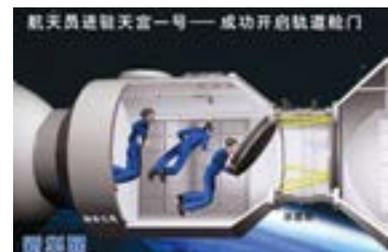
Stock Exchange in 2012 by Guizhentang 归真堂 — a manufacturer of traditional Chinese medicines in Fujian including bear bile tonics — shone a spotlight on the issue. Animal rights activists made use of Weibo and traditional media to defeat the company’s plans for a stock market launch, or initial public offering (IPO).



## LEADING SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY STORIES

*The Chinese Academy of Sciences and the Chinese Academy of Engineering published a list of the top ten science and technology news events of 2012. Below is the Xinhua News Agency's version of the list, with stylistic modification:*

- On 24 June, three Chinese astronauts successfully completed a manual docking between the *Shenzhou-9* spacecraft and the orbiting *Tiangong-1* lab module — the first such attempt in China's history of space exploration.



Successful docking between *Tiangong-1* and *Shenzhou-9*.  
Source: News.cn



*Jiaolong* submarine.  
Source: News.cn

- China's manned submersible, the *Jiaolong*, set a new national dive record after reaching more than 7,000 metres below sea level during its dive tests in the Pacific Ocean in June.

- The world's first high-speed railway in areas with extremely low temperatures, the Harbin–Dalian rail, which runs through three provinces in northeast China, started operation on 1 December.
- On 6 February, China published a set of full coverage moon maps and moon images with a resolution of seven metres captured by the country's second moon orbiter, the *Chang'e-2*.
- On 11 September, the Sunway BlueLight supercomputer, which was built with domestically produced microprocessors and is capable of performing around 1,000 trillion calculations per second, passed the test of an expert panel organised by the Ministry of Science and Technology.



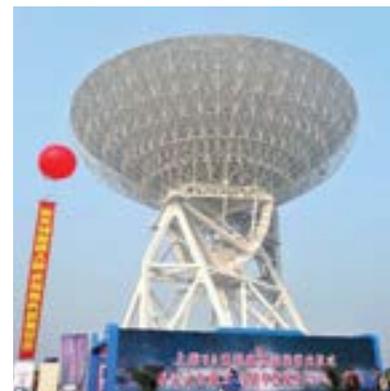
**Sunway BlueLight supercomputer.**  
Source: News.cn

- On 29 July, China successfully conducted tests on its new 120-tonne-thrust liquid oxygen and kerosene engine for its new generation carrier rocket, the *Long March-5*.
- Research led by Professor Pan Jianwei on the experimental demonstration of topological error correction with an eight-photon cluster state marked a breakthrough in quantum information processing research. The results of the research were published by the journal *Nature* in February.
- Chinese and foreign physicists confirmed and measured a third type of neutrino oscillation during the Daya Bay Reactor Neutrino Experiment. This was announced on 8 March.
- The Ministry of Science and Technology announced on 11 January that the country has approved a Hepatitis E vaccine developed by researchers from Xiamen University and Xiamen Inovax Biotech Co. Ltd. in Fujian province.



**Professor Pan Jianwei.**  
Source: News.cn

- On 28 October, China unveiled Asia's biggest radio telescope in Shanghai, which is used to track and collect data from satellites and space probes.



**Asia's biggest radio telescope in Shanghai.**  
Source: News.cn



# 6

# CHINA'S INTERNET – A CIVILISING PROCESS

Jeremy Goldkorn

17 DECEMBER 2012



BEIJING  
EAST  
DISTRICT

北京

A scene of a street worker, Chui Jiaozhao, breathing on his partner's hands to warm them after she's been shoveling snow goes viral online.



**SLOGANS, RHETORIC** and management techniques introduced during the Civilised Internet (*wenming banwang* 文明办网) campaign of 2006 have had a lasting influence on the way China manages the Internet, and how the party-state defines what it means to be civilised online. This chapter traces a history of China's Civilised Internet; it looks back to the rise of blogging and social media a decade ago to illuminate events surrounding the online world in 2012 and 2013.



## Part I: Origins of the Civilised Internet

There's a base line for social ethics, and the patience of the public has a limit. If you do not learn to cherish freedom, if you do not learn to respect the rules of society, then in the days to come it may be difficult to avoid external regulation. If bloggers that hurt others at every turn are not alerted to this fact and act responsibly, if they insist on someone else taking out their garbage, then they may well find that there's no place for them anymore.

— from a *People's Daily* editorial published as part of the 2006 Civilised Internet Campaign

### THE INTERNET LANDSCAPE

According to a January 2013 report by the China Internet Network Information Center (CNNIC), the agency responsible for Internet affairs under China's Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, at the end of 2012 China boasted 564 million Internet users — more than twice the cyber-population of the United States. The typical Chinese Internet user is young (54.4 percent are aged ten to twenty-nine), a student (25.1 percent), urban (72.4 percent), male (55.8 percent) and is on a low-to-no-income (53.2 percent earn 0–2,000 yuan per month).

Most Chinese treat the Internet as a social portal, using it primarily for social applications such as instant messaging, blogging, gaming and social networking, while more traditional applications, such as email and forums have gone into rapid decline. Of particular interest is microblogging, which, as we noted in the 2012 *Yearbook*, has become very popular among Chinese as a social media platform. The leading social media sites in China are Sina Weibo and Tencent Weibo, each with around 200–300 million users. Sina Weibo serves especially well as a barometer of current discussion in China.

Tencent's WeChat mobile messaging app has taken off rapidly since its launch in 2011. In early 2013, the company claimed that the service had 300 million users and was continuing to grow. QQ, the original instant messaging platform that Tencent launched in 1998, still has around 380 million registered users. However, while they have massive user numbers by the standards of any other country, Facebook-like social media sites such as Renren (100 million followers) and Kaixin (forty million followers) have failed to achieve the same level of popularity as microblogs.

Accessing the Internet via desktop or laptop computers remains common practice. But the use of mobile devices has exploded in recent years, following the proliferation of Google's Android and cheaper Chinese smartphones, as well as iPads and other tablet computers in which a mobile phone SIM card can be installed. In 2013, for the first time, 388.3 million Chinese used mobile devices to access the web — more than any other platform.

E-commerce is also growing rapidly in China, with 242 million shoppers spending US\$40.6 trillion annually. The most popular online purchases are electronics and clothing from sites such as Taobao, TMall and Jing Dong.

## Information Upchucking and Erudite Guests

In April 1999, Peter Merholz, a web designer in Oakland, California, coined the word 'blog' on his personal website. He later wrote: 'I like that it's roughly onomatopoeic of vomiting. These sites (mine included!) tend to be a kind of information upchucking.' A few months later, a US software company named Pyra released Blogger.com, a website that allowed users to publish blogs easily and without payment. The number of bloggers grew exponentially, particularly in North America. In China people were taking note.

### The Chinese Internet

- By end of June 2013: 591 million Internet users (44.1% of total population); 464 million connect via mobile devices
- 26.56 million people went online for the first time in the first half of 2013. Instant messaging netizens hit 497 million, increasing by 29.31 million in the first half of 2013. 397 million used instant messaging via mobile, increasing by 45.2 million in the first half of 2013
- Online payment users reached 244 million, increasing by 23.73 million in the first half of the year, with a growth rate of 10.8%. Specifically, the number of mobile phone online payment users rose by forty-three percent over the year 2012

### The Internet and Media Censorship in China

- Any new website in China must obtain an ICP licence, which is granted by the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology (MIIT).
- Apart from MIIT, Internet content is subject to regulation by a number of other overlapping state organisations:
  - General Administration of Press and Publications (GAPP)
  - State Administration of Radio, Film and TV (SARFT)
  - Ministry of Culture
  - State Council Information Office
  - Central Publicity Department of the Party (a.k.a. Central Propaganda Department).



Internet users at a public library in Shenzhen.  
Photo: Robert Scoble

### Fang Binxing and the Great Firewall

On 27 June 2013, fifty-three year-old Fang Binxing, President of Beijing University of Posts and Telecommunications (*Beijing youdian daxue* 北京邮电大学), delivered a speech to students in which he said he was resigning due to poor health. A transcript of the speech was posted to the Internet; it attracted thousands of angry comments on social media sites, cursing Fang and wishing him a swift demise. The ill-wishers were not former students unhappy with his stewardship of the University. They were Internet users enraged by government censorship. They knew Fang as the 'Father of China's Great Firewall' for his work on the blocking and filtering system that denies the country's Internet users access to a number of foreign websites and web pages.



Fang Binxing.  
Source:  
Ifeng.com

Fang began his career as an academic after earning his PhD in computer science at the Harbin Institute of Technology (*Harbin gongye daxue* 哈尔滨工业大学) in 1989. His work on the Great Firewall began in 1999 when he was appointed Deputy Chief Engineer of the National Internet Emergency Response Centre (*Guojia hulianwang yingji zhongxin* 国家互联网应急中心) — a shadowy government organisation that became responsible for developing key components of the Great Firewall. Fang was clearly talented: just one year later he was appointed Chief Engineer and Director of the Centre, and the following year he received what media reports call a 'special allowance' from the State Council (*Guowuyuan teshu jintie* 国务院特殊津贴), presumably for his work on Internet censorship.

An interview with Fang published in the English-language *Global Times* in February 2011 noted that 'he confirms he was head designer for key parts of the Great Firewall reportedly launched in 1998 but that came online about 2003.' By 2007, when he left the National Internet Emergency Response Centre, the technology behind the Great Firewall as it functions today was firmly in place. That year, he worked as 'information security special advisor to the Ministry of Public Security' according to the *Global Times*, and also took up his position at the Beijing University of Posts and Telecommunications. His leadership at the University exposed him to the public gaze, which is when the online abuse against him started.

The first major Internet mob action against Fang was in December 2010, when he tried to open a microblog account on Sina Weibo. Relentless waves of criticism, often written in violent language, led him to delete the account within a few days. In his February 2011 *Global Times* interview, he said: 'I regard the dirty abuse as a sacrifice for my country ... . They can't get what they want so they need to blame someone emotionally: like if you fail to get a US visa and you slag off the US visa official afterwards.' He was unrepentant of his role, and while he refused to divulge to the *Global Times* anything about the technology behind the Great Firewall, he made a number of revealing statements:

I have six VPNs [Virtual Private Networks] on my home computer ... but I only try them to test which side wins: the GFW or the VPN ... .

I'm not interested in reading messy information like some of that anti-government stuff ... .

... It's a ceaseless war between the GFW and VPNs.

So far, the GFW is lagging behind and still needs improvement.

The situation is better described as traffic control.

Drivers just obey the rules and so citizens should just play with what they have.

Not all citizens want to play with what they have: in May 2011, during a speech Fang gave at Wuhan University's School of Computer Science, a student threw eggs and shoes at him. Online, anonymous commentators offered a reward to the shoe and egg thrower. After that, Fang stayed out of the limelight until he made his retirement speech.



Isaac Mao.  
Source:  
Aftenposten.no



Fang Xindong.  
Source:  
Sina.com

On 5 August 2002, an Internet entrepreneur named Isaac Mao launched a website at isaacmao.com, announcing in English: 'From today, I'm stepping into the blogosphere' — a simple statement that earned him the reputation as China's first blogger. The same month, another Chinese technology entrepreneur by the name of Fang Xingdong launched a company called BlogChina.com. The company coined a new term, *boke* 博客, the Chinese equivalent of 'blog'. *Boke* is derived from the word '*bo*' as found in the expression *yuanbo* 渊博 (learned or erudite) and *ke* 客, usually translated as 'guest' but also a reference to *heike* 黑客, literally 'dark guest', a transliteration of 'hacker', and so signifying someone who does something shady online. When Twitter-like services started in China, a natural translation was *weibo* 微博, short for *weixing boke* 微型博客, literally 'microblog'. Fang's term *boke* has stood the test of time, but one wonders if he is as idealistic about the medium today as he was then:

We hope that blogging culture can guide China's transformation to become a knowledge society, and that the care shown by bloggers can bring about an era of responsibility.

Back on the other side of the Pacific, in late 2002, US newspaper editors and columnists still routinely derided bloggers as self-obsessed nerds (often caricatured as fat, pyjama-wearing men in basements or pimply youths in their bedrooms), unaware that the newspaper industry was about to face its greatest challenge, thanks in no small part to blogging and other nascent forms of social media.

In January 2003, perhaps proving that Chinese Communist Party officials can be more perceptive than American newspaper editors, China's Great Firewall blocked Blogger.com. In February, Google acquired Blogger.com and the word blog was assured its place in the English lexicon.

## SARS, *Southern Weekly* and Sex

Before the blocking of Blogger.com, a small but very active blogging community of several thousand early-adopter geek types had come into being in China. Several companies started to offer blog platforms, including Blogcn.com, Blogdriver.com and Blogbus.com. But blogging remained a minority interest, and government regulators did not interfere much with new local blog companies, which were small, with low user numbers.

Blogs came to China at a time when the information landscape was changing rapidly. The high point of these changes was in 2003, although they had been a decade in the making. In the late 1990s, the General Administration of Press and Publications (*Xinwen chubun zongshu* 新闻出版总署) started cutting subsidies to newspapers and periodicals, demanding that they become profitable businesses. This meant that periodicals had to make money from either readers or advertisers. One effect was the rapid increase in the numbers of fashion and lifestyle magazines. These courted brand-name advertisers wanting to sell cars, clothes, gadgets, lotions and potions to newly cashed-up Chinese consumers who were enjoying their second decade of economic growth since the advent of Deng Xiaoping's policy of Reform and Opening Up in the late 1970s. But for newspapers, a better business model (in addition to selling advertising space) was to make money from readers buying or subscribing to the paper. For these publications, the only way to stand out was to publish interesting stories rather than party pabulum. For many provincial city newspapers, this meant either tabloid sensationalism or 'service journalism' (that is, telling readers where to bank, shop and consume). Some papers, however, saw an opportunity to stand out by giving readers real news and analysis rather than propaganda or lifestyle fluff.

The Southern Group of newspapers was one such organisation. Although owned and controlled by the Guangdong provincial government, since the 1990s, the Southern Group has nurtured a generation of idealistic editors and journalists who have

The issue of *Southern Weekly* of 25 April 2003 with the Sun Zhigang report.  
Source: nfmmedia.com



seen their role as speaking truth to power. Their work is published across several different papers and magazines, including the *Southern Weekly* (*Nanfang zhoumo* 南方周末) and *Southern Metropolis Daily* (*Nanfang dushi bao* 南方都市报).

In April 2003, the *Southern Weekly* published a daring investigative report about a young migrant named Sun Zhigang, who was beaten to death while in police custody in Guangzhou. The report is widely believed to have been the single most important factor leading to the end of the 'custody and repatriation' (*shourong qiansong* 收容遣送) policy established in 1982. Under this system, the police could detain people in cities if they did not have a local residence or temporary residency permit (*hukou* 户口 or *zanzhuzheng* 暂住证 respectively), and force them to return to the place specified in their *hukou*, usually their village of birth. On 20 June 2003, then Premier Wen Jiabao announced the abolition of custody and repatriation procedures, effective from 1 August. Many observers saw this as a victory for media outspokenness and the freedom of expression.

The *Southern Weekly* also made a name for itself around this time for its reporting on the spread of the SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) virus. Initially, the authorities had covered up the threat of the virus despite warnings from the World Health Organization about its potential impact on the public. On 4 April 2003, Jiang Yanyong, the chief physician at the No. 301 Military Hospital in Beijing, emailed a letter to Chinese Central Television (CCTV) and Phoenix TV, a marginally more independent broadcaster officially based in Hong Kong. He accused the authorities of under-reporting the numbers of people infected with SARS and concealing the severity of the situation. Neither TV station reported on Jiang's letter, but the text was leaked to the foreign media. On 8 April, *Time* magazine published a translation of Jiang's letter, deeply embarrassing the Chinese government. This led, on 21 April, to the resignations of both the Mayor of Beijing and the Minister of Public Health. Many commentators believed



Sun Zhigang.  
Source:  
Sina.com



Jiang Yanyong.  
Source:  
Freeweibo.com



Official SARS and bird flu squad in Beijing, 9 April 2013.  
Photo: G. Yulong

that the SARS scandal would have a long-term impact on the government's handling of the media and Internet regulation. Although it did not break the story, the *Southern Weekly* aggressively reported on it and the government's handling of the crisis.

The SARS outbreak was the first test for the new leadership duo of Hu Jintao and Wen Jiabao appointed by the Sixteenth National Party Congress in November 2002. Despite the initial cover-up, when the new administration did finally react in mid-April, its actions were both transparent and highly effective. Media reports expressed the hope that the government had learned a lesson about openness.

It was in this environment of a perceived loosening of media controls that blogging went mainstream in China. If one can pin down a date that blogs 'arrived' in the People's Republic, it would be 19 June 2003. On that day, Li Li, a journalist working for a glossy magazine in Guangzhou, started a blog about her sex life on Blogchina.com under the pseudonym Muzi Mei. On 5 August, she published a post about a clumsy coupling with the well-known rock musician Wang Lei in an alley behind a bar. The blog post went viral, generating editorials in newspapers across the country that lamented the declining morals of the nation's youth. Every journalist and newspaper editor now knew about blogging.

Unlike their contemporaries in the Western media, who still tended to see blogs as either a threat to their livelihoods or the self-obsessed ranting of individuals, engaged Chinese journalists, who had long been subject to the restrictions imposed on the official media, took to blogging with enthusiasm. At long last, they could publish what they wanted with no interference from censors or editors. Sometimes their stories would be wiped from the Internet almost as soon as they were published (even then small blog companies had to self-censor if they wanted to stay in business), but there was at least some chance that readers would see and circulate the texts before they disappeared.

Although the state media had criticised Muzi Mei's sex blog, online many voices were raised in support. Some applauded her as a feminist visionary, others in the technology industry admired her for being an authentic creature of the Internet. The scandal cost her magazine job, but she was not subjected to any legal persecution or harassment from the authorities. She signed a book deal with a Hong Kong publisher and soon found a new job working for BlogChina.com — the same platform that had originally published her tales of sex.



Muzi Mei.  
Source: Xinhua



Wang Lei.  
Source: Soundcloud.com

## A Slightly More Open Society

Tolerance for Muzi Mei elicited optimism about the openness of the Chinese media. Many commentators and business people within China as well as outside argued that the upcoming 2008 Beijing Olympic Games would force the Chinese government to be more open and transparent by encouraging more liberal information policies. Chinese news media appeared to be flourishing.

On 11 November 2003, a newspaper called *The Beijing News* (*Xinjing bao* 新京报) was launched as a joint venture between the Guangming Press Group and the Southern Group. Cheng Yizhong, the editor responsible for the reporting on the Sun Zhigang scandal earlier in the year, headed up the editorial team. The first issue of *The Beijing News* featured a large photograph of former US President Bill Clinton embracing an HIV-positive boy. The following month, *Menbox* (*Shishang junzi* 时尚君子), China's first openly gay glossy magazine, appeared on newsstands. The magazine was produced in partnership with the prestigious Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in Beijing.

Globally and in China, the years 2004 to 2006 were a boom time for social media that gave ordinary people extraordinary powers to publish and broadcast their views. This was when the meaningful (albeit annoying) expression 'Web 2.0' came into use to describe the switch from large companies such as Yahoo! offering their services top down, like a newspaper publisher, to a model where Internet users themselves create, upload and share their own text, photographs and videos. The photo-sharing site Flickr.com launched in 2004, swiftly followed by Chinese clone Yupoo.com. Facebook.com was founded in 2004; a Chinese clone Xiaonei.com (later renamed Renren.com) went live in 2005. YouTube was launched in February 2005, and the Chinese video sharing site Tudou.com came online in April of the same year. Blogging websites proliferated.

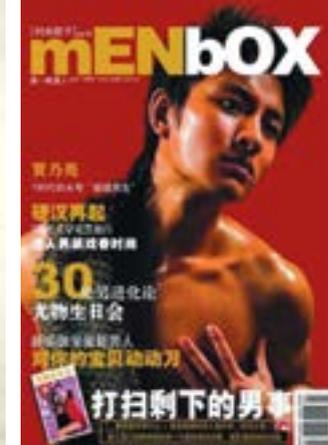
In October 2005, Sina.com launched its own blogging platform. Sina itself had been created as a 'portal' website modelled on Yahoo.com in 1996, and had become one of China's dominant Internet companies, with a repu-



Cheng Yizhong.  
Source: UNESCO



Inaugural issue of *The Beijing News* on 11 November 2003.  
Source: *The Beijing News*



*Menbox*, China's first gay oriented magazine.  
Source: iBoysky.com

tation for lively news coverage. Whereas the existing blog hosts were all small, underfunded start-ups, Sina was the first major compa-

ny to launch a blogging service. Sina invited and sometimes paid celebrities to blog on the new platform. One of these, the actress Xu Jinglei, by publishing a mix of snapshots from her A-list celebrity life and details of her daily goings on that made her seem like the girl next door, soon became the most popular blogger in China. The novelist and race car driver Han Han began blogging on Sina and went on to become one of the country's most prominent writers, gaining a reputation as a caustic social critic. Han Han's rise from relative obscurity to international fame — essentially because of a blog which was often critical of the establishment — was emblematic of the heady possibilities that blogging seemed to offer.

On 5 and 6 November 2005, a group of more than a hundred Internet entrepreneurs, coders and geeks, led by Isaac Mao (see above), met in Shanghai for the first annual CNBloggerCon, or Chinese Bloggers Conference. The conference would convene in a different city every year until 2009. Rebecca MacKinnon, a former Beijing bureau chief for CNN and a scholar of the Internet, was at the conference. She blogged the following:



Xu Jinglei.  
Source: Dianying.com



Rebecca MacKinnon.  
Source: Internetdagarna.com

Isaac Mao in his opening keynote talked about the power of many small voices. On the web, 'everybody is somebody.' What's more, Chinese web users are increasingly reacting to events taking place in their lives, in real time, online. 'We are all grassroots. We are all small voices,' he says. 'The combination of all these small voices will make our society smarter.'

### Human Flesh Search Engine (*renrou sousuo yinqing* 人肉搜索引擎)

'Human flesh search engine', or simply 'human flesh search', refers to collective efforts by Chinese Internet users to answer questions or search for information about specific people, combining online searches with information obtained offline and posting the results publicly. Most often the objective is to identify individuals suspected of official corruption or questionable social conduct. What frequently prompts these searches, which sometimes become Internet witch-hunts, are photos circulated on social media sites of someone misbehaving. The government seems to tolerate human flesh searches directed against lower-level local officials: punching bags that help relieve popular frustration and discontent. Critics of human flesh searches worry that the phenomenon is a return to the type of public shaming and scapegoating that typified the Maoist era of mass politics and victimisation.

### An Overview of Human Flesh Searches

The term was coined in 2001 as the name of a forum on Mop.com — a discussion website popular with Internet users in their teens and early twenties. The forum was intended to allow Internet users to post and answer trivia questions. But the phrase began to take on its current meaning in the last few months of 2001 when a user of the Mop.com forum posted a photograph of a beautiful woman and claimed it was his girlfriend. This aroused the suspicions of other Mop visitors. They discovered that the girl was in fact a model named Chen Ziyao, and they posted her information and photos of her modelling activities as evidence.

The first human flesh search that Chinese and Western news media covered was the 2006 'kitten-killer' incident. Photographs and a video surfaced on the Internet showing a woman in stilettos crushing a kitten to death with her heels. Internet vigilantes worked together to locate the upload server, and identify the location shown in the images. The manhunt was of such a scale and intensity that it immediately became of a topic of interest to national print and

broadcast news media as well. Within six days of the video being posted, the woman was identified, apparently by acquaintances, as Wang Jue. The triumphant searchers published her phone number, address and employer — a hospital where she worked as a nurse. The hospital fired her, and the website of the government of her native Luobei county in Heilongjiang province published an apology from her.

One of the most infamous human flesh searches targeted Wang Fei — a young employee of the Beijing office of the multinational advertising firm Saatchi and Saatchi — whose wife Jiang Yan committed suicide in December 2007 after finding out that Wang was having an affair with a younger colleague. When, in January 2008, Jiang Yan's sister published online the diary Jiang Yan had written in her dejected final days, a furor of moral condemnation erupted. Wang's personal details were human flesh searched and published. He received hun-



Poster of Chen Kaige's film *Caught in the Web*.  
Source: Moonstone Entertainment

dreds of indignant phone calls, his parents' house was vandalised, and he was forced out of his job. Interestingly, Wang successfully sued for damages from the Tianya.cn chat forum where much of the human flesh searching had been organised.

After the ethnic riots in Lhasa on 14 March 2008, and in the lead up to the Beijing Olympics, the Party and its propaganda organs whipped up popular sentiment in China against 'unpatriotic' individuals who did not toe the party line on Tibet. Human flesh searchers targeted Grace Wang 王千源, a Chinese student who had spontaneously attempted to act as negotiator between 'pro-China' and 'pro-Tibet' demonstrators at Duke University in Durham, North Carolina. As she later wrote in the *Washington Post*: 'I thought I could help try to turn a shouting match into an exchange of ideas.' She was called a 'race traitor' and received death threats serious enough to lead the FBI to become involved. Acting on information about her parents' address published on the Internet, someone defaced the entrance to their apartment in Qingdao, Shandong province, with faeces and wrote 'Kill the whole family' in red letters in the hallway of the apartment building; they were forced to go into hiding.

In October 2008, a grainy video circulating on the Internet showed a fat, possibly drunk man apparently attempting to force a young girl into the men's toilets. Subtitles added to the film said that it was shot at a restaurant in Shenzhen, and that the girl was eleven years old. A human flesh search identified the perpetrator as Lin Jiaxiang, Party Secretary of the Shenzhen Maritime Association. While the tape itself was inconclusive evidence, the groundswell of citizen resentment at the perceived immunity of government cadres caused Lin to lose his party job, even though Shenzhen courts determined he had no criminal case to answer.

More recently, in August 2012, Yang Dacai, a director of the Shaanxi province Safety Supervision Bureau, was photographed grinning at the site of a bus crash that killed thirty-six people. Incensed Internet users started a human flesh search that not only identified him but

uncovered photographs of him wearing expensive watches that could not have been purchased with his nominally meagre salary. The attention that Yang attracted led to him being sacked, expelled from the Party and, in September 2013, jailed for fourteen years on corruption charges.

That same year, the award-winning filmmaker Chen Kaige directed *Caught in the Web* (*Sousuo* 搜索), the title of which literally means 'search' and is a reference to the human flesh search that destroys the life of the female protagonist.

An even more recent example of a human flesh search is the identification and vilification of Ding Jinhao, the teenage tourist who defaced a temple at Luxor in Egypt mentioned in the Introduction to this volume.



'Watch Brother' Yang Dacai, former head of the work safety administration of Shaanxi province, speaks during his trial on charges of corruption at the Xi'an Intermediate People's Court, Shaanxi province, 30 August 2013.  
Source: ImagineChina

## Sensitive Words

MacKinnon also noted that:

[T]here was a surprisingly frank exchange about the way in which service providers have to police user content and kill everything political. All blog hosting and service providing companies must police their users' content. This is a fact of life which web businesses as well as users accept as part of being Chinese in China. They must naturally bake censorship functions into their software and into their business models ...

What this means is that Web 2.0, just like Web 1.0, is not going to spark a democratic revolution in Chinese politics any time soon.

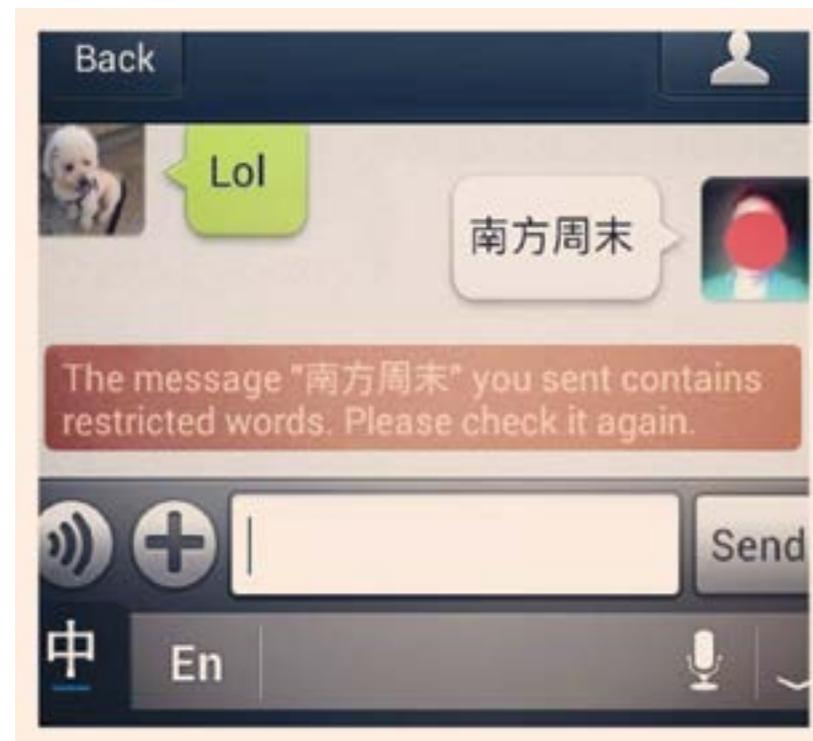
On October 25, just a few weeks before CNBloggerCon 2005, the *Sanlian Life Weekly* (*Sanlian shenghuo zhoukan* 三联生活周刊) journalist Wang Xiaofeng published a post on his popular blog, then called *Massage Milk* (*Anmo Ru* 按摩乳), that discussed the techniques Chinese blog-hosting companies were using to self-censor, primarily in the form of filters that stopped users publishing blog posts containing 'sensitive words' (*min'ganci* 敏感词).



Wang Xiaofeng.  
Source:  
blogs.elcomer-  
cio.pe

Nowadays, there are a lot of blog hosts and online forums with something that is really a characteristic of China: 'sensitive words'. It's hard to know whether to laugh or cry about 'sensitive words'. Things that were originally not at all sensitive become highly sensitive because of such 'sensitive words'. The existence of 'sensitive words' continually reminds you: 'You better watch what you fucking say: there are some things that you just can't say' ...

Is the speech of ordinary people that terrifying? I'm reminded of a line from the *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*: 'A revolutionary party does not fear the voice of the masses, it fears the reign of silence.'



Sensitive words: The Chinese name 南方周末 for the outspoken magazine *Southern Weekend* was censored on WeChat in January 2013.  
Source: Technasia.com

On the other hand, there are times when you can't let Internet users just do as they please. If there were no controls at all, there would be chaos. The problem is deciding how you prevent the Internet from becoming anarchic.

Forbidding 'sensitive words' is a clumsy, ridiculous and retarded method that does not solve any problems. It's like the ears of a deaf person, or the response of an ostrich to danger. It is just self-deception.

Let's suppose you write the following sentence on a blog host that has 'sensitive-word' controls: 'The viewership rating of CCTV's recent TV series *Moment in Peking* [*Jinghua Yanyun* 京华烟云] has

reached 6.4 percent'. You couldn't publish such a sentence on Blogcn and other blog hosts because it contains 'sensitive words' ['6.4' being shorthand for the Tiananmen Square Incident or Beijing massacre of 4 June 1989].

But does this sentence contravene the Fifth Article of the Computer and Information Network International Internet Safety Protection Regulations? Of course it doesn't. Since it hasn't broken the rules, why the hell are you depriving me of my right to free expression?

Or suppose I write a sentence like this: 'We must see through to the essence of cults like Falungong'. I imagine almost no blog host would allow such a line to be published, because it contains 'sensitive words'. You see, even my rights to criticise a cult have been taken away. Are computers fucking stupid, or are people?

If we accept that there must be some restriction of Internet content, and we absolutely must use the 'sensitive words' method, why can't they publish their list so that everyone knows what to avoid when they write? I think these lists would be very funny; but not even one blog host is willing to make their list public and that's because they'd be spurned by users if they did. Internet users would say: 'So that is what you are damned well scared of!' But if they don't publish the lists, it is a real pain to write because you never know which words will be considered 'sensitive'.

It's like a girl whose whole body is highly sensitive from head to toe. Do you dare to touch her?

(Note: The 'sensitive words' in Wang's blog post were actually published because his blog was hosted on a service called Ycool which had a more tolerant policy towards sensitive words. The post was still online at the time of writing.)

## Civilise Your Site, Be Civilised Online

The sense of openness that characterised the Chinese media and Internet in 2003 and 2004 would not last. In an overview of the *Southern Weekly* that covered the decade from 2003 to 2013, the Hong-Kong-based media scholar David Bandurski noted:



David  
Bandurski.  
Source:  
jmsc.hku.hk

The 'media spring' of 2003 was a wake-up call for party leaders, exposing the growing challenges facing media control in China. Commercial media now were challenging the party's dominance of the agenda in subtle but important ways. From 2004 onward, China's leaders pushed actively to reassert control and reverse the gains made by commercial media.

The departments responsible for controlling the Internet did not rest easy either (for details of these departments, see the 2012 *Yearbook* Chapter Seven). In late 2004, the State Council Information Office (the government equivalent to the Party's Propaganda Department) and the Central Guidance Commission for Building Spiritual Civilisation (featured elsewhere in this *Yearbook*) began orchestrating a Civilised Internet campaign aimed at cleaning up the Chinese Internet and wresting back control of it from the masses. The campaign was launched on 9 April 2006 with a series of major stories published in the *People's Daily*, on the Xinhua News Agency's website and on the front pages of all major Internet companies based in Beijing, including Sina, Sohu, Baidu and Netease. The campaign slogan was: 'Civilise Your Site, Be Civilised Online' (*Wenming banwang, wenming shangwang* 文明办网, 文明上网).

On 20 April, the *People's Daily* reported on a Civilised Internet event that targeted bloggers, noting that there were sixteen million of them at the time:

A total of nineteen Chinese websites providing blog service including People.com, Bokee.com and Sina.com as well as representatives



'Civilise Your Site'.  
Source: 010lf.com

of bloggers signed a 'self-discipline pact on civilised use of Internet' at a seminar on the construction of Internet civilisation and ethics sponsored by the Internet Society of China and Bokee.com in Beijing [translation by *People's Daily*].

A separate editorial on blogger self-discipline published in Chinese, but not in English, by the *People's Daily* was menacingly titled 'If you want freedom, first discipline yourself' (*Yao xiang ziyou, jiu xian zilü* 要想自由, 就先自律).

Interestingly, Bokee.com, the website that hosted the event, was the new name and URL of BlogChina.com — the company founded by Fang Xingdong (who had coined the term *boke* 博客). Confirming that the days of blogger freedom in China were over, Fang gave a speech in October 2006 in which, as Rebecca Mackinnon reported, he 'warned that while the "invisible hand of the market" may have enabled China's blogosphere to reach its present stage, "from now on the hand of the government will play the biggest role"'.

The possibilities of the Civilised Internet campaign were swiftly communicated to Internet companies across the country. On 26 April, my own website Danwei.org published a video interview with Li Li (Muzi Mei) — the blogger who made the form famous in China. She said:

You know now there is this slogan 'Make a Civilised Internet' [文明办网]? It's very uncomfortable. In the past, the Internet was a different world, very free. But now, I think the authorities are controlling it more and more strictly.

### Government Microblogging

In March 2013, the E-Government Research Center of the Chinese Academy of Governance (*Guojia xingzheng xueyuan dianzi zhengwu yanjiu zhongxin* 国家行政学院电子政务研究中心) published the 2012 Chinese Government Microblogging Estimates Report (*2012 nian Zhongguo zhengwu weiboke pinggu baogao* 2012年中国政务微博客评估报告). The report says that the Chinese government operated a total of 113,382 microblogs — an increase of over 80,000 from 2011. The jump marks a sea change in the government's approach to the platform, from censorship and regulation to active participation and direct engagement.

Although government microblogs in 2012 did not conform to a set standard, exhibiting great diversity in content and quality, a few trends emerged. According to the report, the Chinese government frequently used microblogs to announce news in real-time, enabling it to interact more fluidly with citizens and companies. The report also notes the rise of microblogs by individual officials such as Luo Chongmin, a member of the College Work Committee of the Yunnan Provincial Party Committee. Luo frequently posts about grassroots educational issues, college entrance exams and other topics of interest to ordinary citizens. Government organs are also increasingly using Weibo to release information about weather and traffic emergencies and natural disasters such as the 2012 flood in Beijing. Notably, the type of government organ most active on Weibo is Public Security: thirty-seven percent of all government microblog activity is carried out under the auspices of the police.



Thirty-seven percent of government microblog accounts are managed by Public Security organs.

Photo: Charles Hope



Luo Chongmin.  
Source: china-daily.com.cn

### Distribution of Microblogs by Party and Government Division

Traffic and Railways	5%	Party Committees	12%
Meteorological organs	3%	News and Propaganda	10%
Judicial organs	2%	Group Supervision	9%
Industry and Commercial	1%	All levels of Government	7%
Sanitation	1%	Tourism	7%
Education	1%	Other	5%
Public Security	37%		

## Part II: How to be Civilised

Today there are still tens of millions of active bloggers in China, and if you count Twitter-type microblogs like Weibo, there may be more than five hundred million. From 2009 to 2012, the most vibrant and politically-minded site on the Chinese Internet was Sina Weibo. In late 2012 and early 2013, the most talked about Internet service in China was WeChat (*Weixin* 微信) — an instant messaging service with social networking dimensions run by Tencent.

Xinhua News Agency still maintains a web page for the 2006 Civilised Internet campaign, although the most recent posting dates from 2011. Since 2006, websites and Internet services in China have changed dramatically, however, and the vocabulary and techniques of the Civilised Internet campaign remain in use. Some of its underlying concepts hark back to the anti-Spiritual Pollution and anti-Bourgeois Liberalisation campaigns of the 1980s; some are more recent innovations. The main concepts and methods are listed below together with examples of their use in 2012 and 2013.



WeChat poster advertising 'Official RMB Investment Accounts' aimed at Hong Kong residents in July 2013.  
Source: Mslee@Yahoo

### • *Pledging Self-discipline*

'Voluntary' activities organised by crypto-governmental organisations like the China Internet Society (*Zhongguo hulianwang xiehui* 中国互联网协会) often require Internet companies to send senior delegates. At these events, they sign pledges of self-discipline — written documents promising that their websites will be free of pornographic, criminal or politically unacceptable content. The activities are used to communicate the current party line to Internet companies, and to give a participatory patina to forced compliance.

On 11 September 2011, at the Eleventh China Internet Conference, organised by the China Internet Society in Beijing, twenty-nine Internet companies were awarded the 2011–2012 Annual Contributions to Internet Self-Discipline Prize (*2011–2012 niandu Zhongguo lianwang hangye zilü gongxian jiang* 2011-2012年度中国互联网行业自律贡献奖). Winners included commercial giants like Tencent, state organisations like Xinhua News Agency and smaller state and private companies. Sina was noticeably absent from the prizewinners. It would seem the China Internet Society did not think Sina displayed enough self-discipline, perhaps because of intense microblogging activity on Weibo about the Wenzhou train crash of 23 July 2011 as well as the flight of the Chongqing police chief Wang Lijun to the US Consulate in Chengdu on 6 February 2012 and many other such incidents.

### • *Rumours*

'Rumours' are persistently cited in Internet clean-up campaigns as constituting a serious threat to society. However, many observers interpret a 'rumour' as meaning any kind of information that the government does not want made public.

On 30 December 2012, the *China Youth Daily* (*Zhongguo qingnian bao* 中国青年报) published a strongly worded editorial titled 'A Flood of Internet Rumors — How Can We Stand By and Do Nothing?' (*Wangluo yaoyan fanlan, qineng xiushou panguan* 网络谣言泛滥 岂能袖手

旁观). The article was one of dozens of similar screeds published by state news organisations. Rumors were in abundance during the 2012–2013 leadership transition and with regard to the dramatic fall of Chongqing party boss Bo Xilai and the murder of Englishman Neil Heywood, making it difficult to tell salacious gossip from political and historical fact.

#### • **Pornography, violence, crime, fraud and copyright infringement**

This cluster of unseemly topics is often in the vocabulary of regulators who worry about ‘uncivilised’ aspects of the Chinese Internet. The government deems the proliferation of pornographic, criminal, fraudulent and pirated material so endemic in general that it has established a dedicated Eliminate Pornography and Strike at Crime Office (*Saohuang dafei xiaozu bangongshi* 扫黄打非小组办公室). Coordinating resources from no fewer than twenty-nine government departments including the police, propaganda organisations and the customs authorities, the office targets pirated films and books and illegally imported media as well as any website that the government wants to close down. The office was set up between July and August 1989, a fact that hints at its true motivation and scope.

#### • **Rule of Law**

Promotion and protection of the ‘rule of law’ (*fazhi* 法治) is perhaps the most Orwellian of China’s Civilised Internet catchphrases. This rubric is used to legitimate a wide range of government controls over and interdictions of Internet users and what they can say online or offline. Chinese Foreign Ministry spokespersons often deflect foreign objections to the incarceration of dissidents such as Liu Xiaobo and Ai Weiwei with the simple assertion that ‘China is a country under rule of law’.

Many of the propaganda articles published in April 2006 as part of the Civilised Internet campaign invoked the ‘rule of law’. For example, ‘Righteous websites respond to the Civilised Internet proposal by enthusiastically promoting the concept of rule of law’ (*zhengyi wang deng xiangying wenming banwang changyi jiji chuanbo fazhi linian* 正义网等响应文明办网倡议积极传播法治理念). Likewise, a *People’s Daily* editorial about protecting the healthy environment of the Internet published in December 2012 (translated at the end of the chapter) sees rule of law as a shackle that must be used to tightly bind the Internet.

#### • **Real Name Registration**

Although there had been rumblings in the state press for several years about forcing mobile phone users and Internet game players to register their online activities using their real names, providing addresses, contact numbers and their ID, the 2006 Civilised Internet campaign was the first time the idea was mooted for bloggers and even for all Internet users. Interestingly, real name registration, known in Chinese as *shiming zhi* 实名制 has never been successfully implemented, even for mobile phones. The state media called for real name registration of Weibo users in the aftermath of the 2011 Wenzhou train crash. In February 2012, the government publicised a new regulation requiring Sina Weibo and other providers of microblogs to ensure real name registration. The regulations have not been enforced and it is still possible to sign up for microblog services without using a real name or ID number. In 2013, it was still possible to buy a SIM card for a mobile phone anonymously, without showing identification.

#### • **Vilification**

In November 2004, the Shanghai-based *Liberation Daily* (*Jiefang ribao* 解放日报) published an editorial attacking ‘public intellectuals’ (*gong-gong zhishifenzi* 公共知识分子 or *gongzhi* 公知 for short) — in other words, non-state-sanctioned writers and thinkers who make public

### Hacking: Who is the Biggest Villain?

Although politicians and security consultants in the US have for years accused the Chinese government of hacking and cyberespionage, they've presented little concrete proof or information to the public about the alleged attacks. On 18 February 2013, the *New York Times* published a report tying a very active Chinese hacking group to a specific People's Liberation Army (PLA) unit in Shanghai. The newspaper based its story on a report published by Mandiant, a security firm in Washington DC. The firm was founded by Kevin Mandia, a US Air Force veteran and former computer security officer with the 7th Communications Group at the Pentagon.

The Mandiant report on Chinese hacking was unusually detailed. It tracked individual members of the hacking group, identified their headquarters as a building in Pudong district, Shanghai, that was occupied by PLA Unit 61398. Stating that the group's attacks targeted mostly corporate and infrastructure computer systems, the report claimed that the hackers had stolen technology blueprints, negotiating strategies and manufacturing processes from more than one hundred companies, mostly American, in a variety of industries. On 27 February, the *New York Times* published another report saying that 'Chinese-speaking users and amateur hackers' had scoured the Internet and found new evidence that 'while circumstantial, adds to the signs suggesting Chinese military efforts to hack into American corporate computer systems'. The Chinese Foreign Ministry dismissed the accusations in the Mandiant report as 'groundless' and lacking 'hard evidence'.

On 12 March, James Clapper, the Director of US National Intelligence, testified before the Senate Intelligence Committee that cyberattacks have replaced terrorism as the number one threat against the US. Two days later, on 14 March, US President Obama, in an interview with ABC News, said that some, but not all, hacking originating from China was state-sponsored. He also cautioned about the need to avoid 'war rhetoric' when discussing cyberattacks.

On 5 May 2013, the Pentagon released its annual report to Congress on Chinese military capabilities. The report described the primary goal of China's state-affiliated hackers as stealing industrial technology, but said many intrusions also seemed aimed at obtaining insights into the thinking of American policy makers. It warned that the same information gathering could easily be used for 'building a picture of US network defense networks, logistics, and related military capabilities that could be exploited during a crisis.'

In response, the Chinese Foreign Ministry reiterated that China opposes cyberattacks as well as 'all groundless accusations and hyping' that could harm prospects for co-operation. Xinhua News Agency published a report quoting Wang Xinjun, a researcher with the Academy of Military Sciences of the Chinese People's Liberation Army, who called the Pentagon's accusations 'irresponsible ... as the Chinese government and armed forces have never sanctioned hacking activities'. Both China and the US are victims of cybercrimes and should work together to tackle the issue, Wang said.

The diplomatic tit-for-tat took an unexpected turn, however, on 23 June, when the Hong Kong-based *South China Morning Post* published details of US hacking operations in Hong Kong and mainland China as provided by former National Security Agency (NSA) contractor Edward Snowden. According to the report:

Snowden said that according to unverified documents seen by the *Post*, the NSA had been hacking computers in Hong Kong and on the mainland since 2009... 'We hack network backbones — like huge internet routers, basically — that give us access to the communications of hundreds of thousands of computers without having to hack every single one,' he said.

statements or offer candid analyses of politics and society. Such attacks are not usually explicitly associated with Internet clampdowns, and they are found in state media as well as the Weibo postings of self-styled 'patriots'.

In the last two years, the considerable popularity of some liberal online writers — such as the venture capitalist Li Kaifu, who has almost fifty million followers on Weibo — has drawn frequent criticism. The *Global Times* columnist Dai Xu accused Li Kaifu of being an agent for the CIA; he regularly calls public intellectuals '*dailudang*' 帶路党 — that is, people who guide invading foreign armies. Sympathisers of public intellectuals often call their critics *wumao* 五毛, or *wumaodang*, meaning 'Fifty-cent Gang' — people allegedly paid by the government for positive online postings at the apocryphal rate of fifty Chinese cents a post (see the 2012 *Yearbook*, p.131).



Li Kaifu.  
Source:  
ITxinwen.com

The allegations prompted Xinhua News Agency to publish a report accusing the US of playing 'innocent victim' while in fact being the 'biggest villain in our age'.

President Obama tried to differentiate between US and Chinese cyberespionage, saying 'every country in the world, large and small, engages in intelligence gathering... [But] a hacker directly connected with the Chinese government ... breaking into Apple's software systems to see if they can obtain the designs for the latest Apple product' is 'theft'. Many observers would agree that there is a difference. But to a perhaps equally large number of unsympathetic observers in China, not all of whom write for the *People's Daily*, the Snowden affair has undermined the American moral high ground when it comes to hacking and surveillance.



Rally in Hong Kong in support of Edward Snowden, 15 June 2013.  
Photo: See-ming Lee 李思明

## Small Voices in a Cave

The Chinese Bloggers Conference survived the Civilised Internet campaign. After the first conference in Shanghai in 2005, the eclectic group of technologists, entrepreneurs, activists, citizen journalists and hobbyists met in Hangzhou, Beijing and then in Guangzhou. The final CNBloggerCon was held in 2009 in the entrance to a cave in a nature reserve near Lianzhou — a small town in the remote far west of Guangdong province. The choice of location was partly determined by concerns that the police would have shut it down if it were held in a larger city, whereas local municipal government officials in Lianzhou saw the gathering as a boon to tourism and were less concerned about potential risks. The theme of CNBloggerCon 2009 was ‘Micro-actions, Macro-effects’ (*Wei dongli Guang tiandi* 微动力 广天地) — the word *wei* referring both to Weibo and other microblogs including Twitter.

The 2010 conference was scheduled to return to Shanghai, but just before the conference, the owners of the proposed venue informed the organisers that the authorities had expressed their displeasure with the event and the conference was cancelled. There hasn't been a Chinese bloggers' conference since then.

## Tie Me Up, Tie Me Down

Of course, the end of the Chinese Bloggers Conference did not mean the end of blogging in China: from 2010 to 2103, Sina Weibo became a part of mainstream culture, remaining the most dynamic space for public expression in China. The Internet continues to serve as a nascent Fourth Estate, and it is where news about corruption, government malfeasance and abuses frequently breaks. The Internet culture of China remains varied and vital.

But the last word on the Chinese Internet always belongs to the state, which is why it seems fitting to conclude with a translation of a commentary published on the *People's Daily* website on 24 December 2012.

### Let the Rule of Law Tightly Shackle the Internet 给网络世界套上法治紧箍咒

Ma Bi 马碧

Today, for many people, the Internet is as vital as the air they breathe. But amid the flow of ‘positive energy’ and constructive and healthy information, there are also rumours, fraud and slander. People are deeply moved by [examples of] ‘positive energy’ such as the scene of a street worker warming his partner's hands with his breath after she has finished shoveling snow [a series of photographs that went viral on Weibo]. They panic at ‘negative energy’ such as rumours of an impending apocalypse. Moreover, ‘negative forces’ like the sale of personal information online are a threat to public safety and damage the interests of ordinary people.

The Internet is a free and open arena. It is precisely because of this freedom that the energetic few can gather around themselves a large number of fanatical followers. There is no such thing as absolute online freedom. The Internet needs clear demarcation to avoid damaging the freedom of others; it must accept moral constraints and respect the relevant laws and regulations. After all, no one wants to live in a real world in which there are no rules and no order; no one wants to live in a virtual world like that either.

The real world and the virtual world are inseparable, and harm done to individuals online does not simply remain in the virtual world. People who are cheated, whose rights are infringed or who are attacked feel as much pain as they would if they were hurt in traditional ways. Online criminals use the power of information to target ordinary Internet users for phishing scams, viewing them as mere grist for the mill. Today, when the whole world is interconnected, it is absolutely necessary to strengthen the supervision and management of the Internet.

The Internet is a public space. Public order and good behavior require the collective effort of all Internet users, and all users must ‘purify themselves’, recognising from the bottom of their hearts that the Internet is not a ‘Utopia’ in which they can wilfully satisfy any appetite, or a ‘Shangri-La’ beyond the reach of the law. On a vast Internet platform with 538 million web users and more than a billion mobile users, relying on self-discipline will not achieve regulation and order, or stop evil-doers with ulterior motives.

Without wings, the bird of freedom cannot soar. Without the rule of law, a free Internet cannot get very far. Today we revere the rule of law, and just as our real society needs the rule of law, so does our virtual society. Purifying the online world requires the self-discipline and restraint of Internet users, but it requires the discipline imposed by the rule of law even more. Only by placing the ‘tight shackles’ [*jingu* 紧箍, literally, ‘tight band’ or ‘tight ring’] of the rule of law onto the Internet, by defining the boundaries of acceptable behavior, through legal oversight and by making perpetrators of illegal acts online feel the full weight of the law in the real world, can we put an end to irresponsible rumours, plug up the seeping out of private information and cleanse the atmosphere of the Internet.

‘It is the most vibrant and the noisiest...’ This way of describing the Internet is how many people feel. An open China needs an Internet world that is civilised, one that operates under the rule of law and that is healthy. Only with the ‘tight shackles’ of the rule of law can our Internet become more civilised, healthier and safer. Only then can we increase the ‘positive energy’, purge the filth and wash in clean water.



FORUM



SPOKEN  
AND  
UNSPOKEN

## SPOKEN AND UNSPOKEN

An Open Letter to a Nameless Censor  
· MURONG XUECUN

The *Global Times* in Retrospect

Microbloggers, Conversations and Memes

FORUM

## AN OPEN LETTER TO A NAMELESS CENSOR

Murong Xuecun

*Hao Qun, winner of the 2010 People's Literature Prize (Renmin wenzue jiang 人民文学奖), is the author of five novels that explore government corruption and popular disillusionment written under the pen name Murong Xuecun. He once claimed a total of 8.5 million followers of his four microblog accounts, hosted respectively on Sina, Tencent, Netease and Sohu. On 11 May 2013, all four accounts suddenly disappeared. No official explanation was given.*



**Murong Xuecun.**  
Source:  
cn.hujiang.com

*Murong, who has earned a reputation as one of China's foremost critics of censorship, speculated that a post mocking the 'Seven Things That Should Not be Discussed' (qige buyao jiang 七个不要讲, also known as qige buzhun jiang 七个不准讲, see page 118), was the likely cause. In his post he said:*

*No discussion of universal values. No discussion of a Free Press. No discussion of civil society, past mistakes of the Communist Party, capitalist cronies, or judicial independence. Really, one sentence says it all: No discussion of being civilised.*

不准讲普世价值、不准讲新闻自由、不准讲公民社会、不准讲公民权利、不准讲党的历史错误、不准讲权贵资产阶级、不准讲司法独立。概括起来其实就是一句话：不准讲文明。

*Deprived of his habitual platforms, Murong wrote an open letter to the un-named censor who silenced him, and published it on the Chinese section of the New York Times website on 20 May 2013. The translation reproduced below was uploaded to Scribd.com by an anonymous Internet user. Minor stylistic modifications have been made to the translation.*

## Dear Nameless Censor,

ON 11 MAY 2013, you ordered the termination of all my microblogs on Sina Weibo, Tencent, Sohu and NetEase, deleting every single entry I ever posted. On 17 May, in the afternoon, you ordered the reinstatement of all my microblogs, but a few hours later, in the early hours of 18 May, you ordered my accounts be shut down again. You have been unpredictable from the very beginning. To date, I have received no explanation or notification about what happened to my microblog accounts. I do not know your name, which organisation you work for, or even if you are a man or a woman, but I do know you will read this letter.

To you, I am just another microblogger whose accounts can be deleted at any time. But for me, those four microblogging accounts have become a part of my life, the place where I meet with my family and friends. In this virtual space, we greet each other, share thoughts, and sometimes exchange jokes. These microblogs are also my most important platform to communicate with more than 8.5 million followers. Over the past three years, I posted about 200,000 characters, with each post limited to 140 characters and every word was chosen with painstaking care. These posts were notes on books I have read, my thoughts about life, commentaries on current affairs, and flashes of inspiration. These microblog entries, should not have been deleted because not a single word violated any law or threatened anyone's safety.

Dear Nameless Censor, perhaps you will never understand that to a writer, the words he writes are more important to him than his life. On the evening of 11 May, my words accumulated over the years in these blogs disappeared because of a single command from you.

I am sure there are reasons for your action. But no matter what the reasons might be, I hope you will honestly tell me what they are and apologise to me for what you did.

Dear Nameless Censor, I know you possess enormous power but you have no right to delete what I write, and you have no right to intrude into my life. Most importantly, you have no right to deprive me of my freedom of speech, because freedom of speech is my inviolable constitutional right. I know that in this country, at this time, you are far more powerful than me – I am merely an ordinary citizen, a writer who writes for a living, while you, a nameless censor, have the power to push me off a cliff with just one phone call. Still, I am writing you this letter because I believe your awesome powers are only temporary. You can delete my words, you can delete my name, but you cannot snatch the pen from my hand. In the years to come this pen of mine will

fight a long war of resistance, and continue to write for as long as it takes for me to see the light of a new dawn. I believe you will not be able to hide in the shadows forever because the light of a new dawn will also expose the place where you are hiding.

Dear Nameless Censor, when that time comes, the whole world will know who you are.

For far too long, you and your colleagues have devoted all your efforts to suppressing freedom of speech in China. You have created a never-ending list of sensitive words, deleted countless articles, and closed down thousands of microblog accounts. You have constructed the Great Firewall of China and kept the rest of the world at bay behind a wall of ignorance, turning China into an information prison. You censor articles and delete words. You treat literature as poison, free speech as a crime, and independent thinkers as your enemy. Thanks to your efforts, this great nation of 1.3 billion people does not have a single newspaper that can express objective views, nor a single TV station that broadcasts objective programs, or even the smallest space where people can speak freely. This is your legacy, dear Nameless Cen-

sor. If this were a war, then standing in front of your gun is not just me. You are also making yourself the enemy of our beautiful language, our nation's future and the progress of mankind.

Perhaps you believe you are standing on the moral high ground, and believe what you are doing is for the sake of national security and a harmonious society. I hope, however, you can understand the following: China doesn't just belong to you and the organisation you work for. This nation is home for 1.3 billion Chinese people. Therefore, China's national security must guarantee that all people in this nation are free of fear, not just the few who are in

power. True stability is based on the happiness and freedom of the people and not derived from obedience enforced down the barrel of a gun. True harmony is a raucous affair, not silence enforced by clutching at people's throats. The power you have been given is supposed to protect the freedom of your people, not take that freedom away. Your responsibility is to help our language flourish, not kill it.

One day in the future you may defend what you have done by saying: I knew it was wrong but I had to execute my duty. Maybe this is a mitigating factor but you will not be exempted from moral responsibility. Among the blog entries you deleted, there was this:

If you were a guard patrolling the Berlin Wall in East Germany, when you saw someone trying to climb over the wall, your responsibility was to aim your gun slightly higher than you were trained to do; if you were a guard patrolling a village in China in 1960 during the great famine, when you saw a group of starved countrymen trying to flee the village, your responsibility was to turn a blind eye and let them go; if you were a city management officer whose job is patrolling the streets to ensure they are free of unlicensed vendors, when you are ordered to chase vendors who are only trying to earn a humble living, your responsibility is to run slower. When your normal duty becomes a crime, then high above your duty there is a loftier principle that we all must respect: our conscience as a member of humanity.

I now dedicate these words to you, dear Nameless Censor. I hope that the next time you are on patrol for sensitive words you will aim your gun slightly higher and run a little slower because of your conscience as a member of humanity.

Or perhaps you will say, I did not actively do evil but I had to follow orders. This is not an acceptable excuse, dear Nameless Censor. You are

Ran Yunfei, writer, scholar  
Zhang Xuezhong, professor of law  
Xiao Xuehui, professor of ethics  
Song Shinan, scholar  
He Bing, professor of law  
Si Weijiang, renowned lawyer  
Shen Yachuan, veteran journalist  
Xiang Xiaokai, scholar  
Wu Wei, scholar  
Wu Zuolai, scholar  
Teng Biao, renowned lawyer, scholar.

Over a period of just a few days, these people's Weibo accounts have also vanished at the end of your gun muzzle. This is your legacy, dear Nameless

an adult – you have eyes that see, ears that hear and a brain that can think. You are supporting these orders from above by following them. If you know these orders are wrong, then please tell me why do you support them? Clearly, what you are doing is solely to protect your own power and status and you will not stop. I have suffered because of you but please tell me, how many more people have to be sacrificed to serve your personal interests? Please look closely at these names:

Censor. Please look at the list again, put your hand on your heart and tell me, and tell yourself and the whole world, what crimes these people have committed. Why did you censor their

works and blacklist their names? What legal procedure did you follow and which criteria were violated to provoke you to cock your gun? Which article of the law was broken to oblige you to pull the trigger?

You of course know that people fear being shot in the dark. Each deletion is a victory for you and you are by now probably accustomed to the silence of your victims. This silence encourages you to be more determined and more brutal. However, this is not your victory because in the mist of this silence, millions of people are raging, resisting, and cursing and a huge storm is brewing. I hope that from this day hence you will receive a letter like this one every time you delete someone's writings. I hope that when you finally retire from your position these letters, piled up like a mountain, will burden you for the rest of your life.

Dear Nameless Censor, this burden will be your legacy too.

I am fully aware this letter will cause me nothing but grief: I may not be able to publish my writings in China, my words may be expunged and deleted, and my future path may become even more difficult, but I must tell you: I once had fear, but from now on, I am no longer afraid. I will be here waiting for sunlight to brighten the world, to brighten people's hearts, and light up the place where you hide. That is the difference between you and me, dear Nameless Censor – I believe in the future, while all you have is the present.

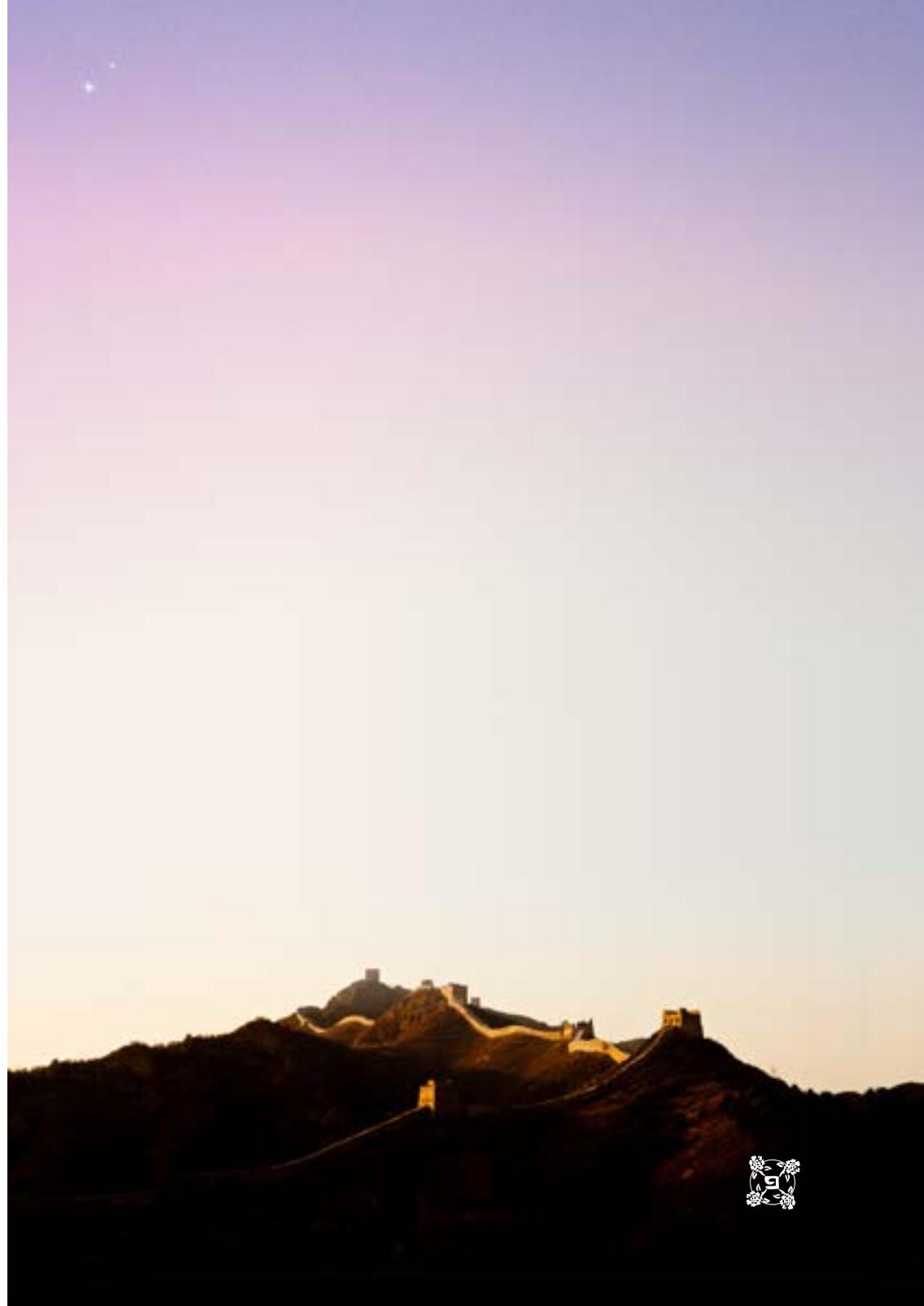
The long night is almost over;  
I wish you peace.

Sincerely yours,

Murong Xuecun

[**Note:** Murong Xuecun's microblogs remain inactive, although he began making occasional posts to Twitter after his Weibo accounts were terminated.]

**The Great Wall at dusk.**  
Artwork: Matt Barber and Markuz Wernli



## THE GLOBAL TIMES (HUANQIU SHIBAO 环球时报) IN RETROSPECT

**I**N 1993, the *People's Daily*, the venerable Communist Party mouthpiece, founded the *Global Times* — a tabloid-format newspaper that soon became known for its nationalistic take on world affairs that was part of its commercial strategy. The *People's Daily* media group was one of the earliest in China to experiment with the market. Previously, in 1981, it had established the English-language *China Daily* in collaboration with *The Age* newspaper in Australia. Then, in 1995, a company within the group entered into a joint venture with Rupert Murdoch's News Corp to build an IT business in China. Three years later, an affiliated advertising agency established a joint venture with *Beijing Scene* — a small American-run enter-

tainment magazine that other arms of the Chinese government had frequently shut down. But while the joint ventures with News Corp and *Beijing Scene* came to nothing, *Global Times* prospered.

In April 2012, the outspoken editor-in-chief of the *Global Times*, Hu Xijin, declared on his Sina Weibo microblog that print circulation of the paper had reached record highs and website traffic was continuing to grow. The *Global Times* currently boasts a daily circulation of two million copies — a high figure for a Chinese newspaper.

Since Hu took over from the founding editor He Chongyuan in 2005, he has perfected a formula of short, colloquial articles on global events, some of which are written by correspon-

dents abroad but many of which are simply digested from foreign news reports. Where stories concern China's interactions with other countries, the paper is unabashedly nationalistic, defensive of Communist Party rule and occasionally egregiously jingoistic.

In 2009, the *Global Times* launched an English edition focussing on news from and about China. Hu Xijin frequently claims that the Chinese version of the newspaper reports on a 'multipolar world' (*duoyuande shijie* 多元的世界), while the English edition tells the stories of a 'complicated China' (*fuzade Zhongguo* 复杂的中国).

Internet activists regular mock Hu for being China's 'biggest Fifty Cent Party Member' — a reference to the 'Fifty-cent Party' made up of netizens supposedly paid fifty (Chinese) cents for each online comment they make supporting the government and its policies. As reported in the 2012 *Yearbook*, shortly after the arrest of dissident artist Ai Weiwei on 3 April 2011, Richard Burger — formerly a foreign editor at the English-language *Global Times* — wrote a blog post at Peking-



duck.org describing a staff meeting at which Hu Xijin ordered his journalists to visit online forums and social media sites and leave comments following the

party line of criticising Ai Weiwei.

Hu has almost four million followers on Weibo, and many defenders. But the sarcastic, anti-propaganda culture of Sina Weibo is not always welcoming of him. The comments on his postings are often scathing, with people decrying him as a dog, an arse-kisser and far worse. Such criticism generally goes uncensored. Hu argues on his Weibo account and in editorials that people on Weibo and 'public intellectuals' critical of the Party tend to be sanctimonious, but that the vast majority of Chinese people agree with how the government operates and they understand that China is a 'complicated' country. In tone, style and commercial popularity, Hu represents a Chinese version of Australia's Alan Jones or America's Rush Limbaugh.



## SELECT GLOBAL TIMES EDITORIALS, 2012–2013

Below are summaries of key *Global Times* editorials and articles published in 2012 and early 2013.

### JANUARY 2012

#### Anniversary of the Return of Hong Kong to Chinese Sovereignty in 1997

The *Global Times* praised the achievements of Hong Kong and emphasised the role of Beijing in ensuring the former colony's prosperity. The paper also recognised that not all Hong Kong residents feel the same: an editorial published on 20 January was titled 'Reunified for 15 years, it seems Hong Kongers' hearts have not come home' (香港回归已近15年, 港人心态似未回归).

### JULY 2012

#### Bogu Kailai: Everyone equal before the law

On 27 July, the day after Bo Xilai's wife Gu Kailai (aka Bogu Kailai, as state media referred to her after Bo's fall), the *Global Times* ran an editorial entitled 'Everyone is an ordinary person when facing criminal punishment' (任何人走上刑事被告席都是普通人).

### SEPTEMBER 2012

#### Views on Hong Kong

An editorial published on 11 September argued that Mainlanders should view Hong Kong politics with a detached attitude. If the future of a rising Hong Kong involves a desire to cause political trouble for the Mainland, this will naturally be a bad thing. But the Mainland has a lot of economic leverage with Hong Kong, and any Hong Kong resistance to the Mainland is futile.

### JANUARY 2013

#### Southern Weekly's Censored New Year Editorial

Published in response to the *Southern Weekly* incident (see the Introduction for more on this), a *Global Times* editorial insisted that even in Western countries mainstream media does not openly challenge the government, and that this attempt in China was doomed to failure. This editorial expressed the *Global Times*' vehement opposition to constitutionalism in China: '“Constitutional governance” is a Roundabout Way to Negate China's Development' ('宪政' 是兜圈子否定中国发展之路).

**APRIL 2013****The Death of Margaret Thatcher**

An editorial published on 9 April following the death of former UK Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher reflected upon the history of her negotiations with Deng Xiaoping over the future of Hong Kong, concluding that she ‘removed what remained of the power of the British Empire’ (撒切尔夫人带走了大英帝国的余威).

**Diaoyu Islands**

The *Global Times* has published numerous editorials on the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands issue. A report on 24 July 2012 stated that the landing of US aircraft at US bases in Japan was designed to assist Japan’s defence of the Diaoyu Islands, while a piece on 25 July ridiculed the Japanese government’s ‘purchase’ of the islands. On 15 October, an editorial blamed the US for complicating the issue (美国让钓鱼岛问题变得暧昧) and a 3 December article warned the US not to ‘play with fire’ (别拿钓鱼岛问题玩儿火).

**A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE GLOBAL TIMES**

In 2008 — the fifteenth anniversary of the launch of *Global Times* — the paper published a list of milestones in its history together with a gallery of front pages, which are abridged and translated below:

**3 JANUARY 1993**

The *People’s Daily* launches *Global News Digest* (*Huanqiu wencui* 环球文萃) — a weekly eight-page tabloid-format newspaper. The first issue features a large colour photo of the actress Gong Li on the cover and an editorial introducing the newspaper with the slogan ‘Let’s take a global perspective’ (让我们放眼环球).

**5 JANUARY 1997**

The newspaper changes its name to *Global Times* (环球时报 *Huanqiu shi-bao*) and expands to sixteen pages.

**SEPTEMBER 1997**

The *Global Times* publishes a sincere and moving article on the death of Princess Diana. Circulation exceeds 280,000 copies.

**5 OCTOBER 1997**

The *Global Times* scoops the news that Kim Jong-il has finally assumed the role of General Secretary of the Workers’ Party of Korea and successfully predicts the date of his assumption of power later in the month.



The second major headline is ‘Saudi Arabia to behead British nurse’.

**4 JANUARY 1998**

The *Global Times* is first with the news of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and South Africa.

**JUNE 1998**

*Global Times* journalists track US President Bill Clinton’s visit to China, drawing much attention from the foreign press.



21 June 1998 headlines:

- ‘China experts [in America] talk about Bill Clinton’s China visit’
- ‘US military used toxic gas to eliminate traitors’ (in reference to a report in CNN and *Time* that the US military acknowledged it had used gas to kill US army deserters in the Vietnam War).

#### 1 JANUARY 1999

The *Global Times* expands to twenty-four pages and begins printing full colour photographs on some pages.

#### APRIL–MAY 1999

The *Global Times* tracks the Kosovo war with its own correspondents on location, establishing the newspaper as a leader amongst Chinese media in reporting international news.

#### 9 MAY 1999

The *Global Times* publishes a special issue with an exclusive eyewitness account of the NATO bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade. The article is reprinted by many newspapers nationwide. The circulation of this issue reaches 780,000.



Headline: ‘Eyewitness account of the bombing of the Chinese embassy [in Belgrade]’.

#### JULY–SEPTEMBER 1999

The *Global Times* publishes eight front-page reports criticising the ‘Two Country Theory’ (*liangguolun* 两国论) of former Taiwan president Li Teng-hui. Circulation reaches 1.48 million.

#### 13 AUGUST 1999



Headlines:

- ‘Tense atmosphere in Taiwan Straits’
- ‘Japan always aims to strike the first blow’.

#### 4 JANUARY 2000

A report on the resignation of Boris Yeltsin appears on the front page of the first issue of the New Year. The *Global Times* now starts to appear twice-weekly in sixteen-page editions.



Headline: ‘Yeltsin wisely gives up the throne’.

#### 2 JANUARY 2001

*Global Times’* twice-weekly editions expand to twenty-four pages.



Headlines:

- ‘Both America and China are constructing new embassy buildings’
- ‘George Bush concerned about his daughters’.

**5 JANUARY 2001**

Headlines:

- 'Bill Clinton packs his bags' (photo shows Bill and Hilary Clinton cooking)
- 'The Taiwan authorities put on a show in Quemoy'.

**4 APRIL 2001**

The *Global Times* carries in-depth reports and pictures of the EP-3 incident (a US surveillance plane collided with a Chinese fighter jet over the South China Sea), which are reprinted by media worldwide.



Headlines:

- 'American aircraft violated China's airspace'
- 'All eyes on Lingshui Airport'.

**12 SEPTEMBER 2001**

Due to the front-page report 'Terror attacks hits the United States', the circulation of the *Global Times* reaches 1.96 million.

**9 OCTOBER 2001**

The circulation of this issue of the *Global Times* with reports of British and American bombers over Afghanistan reaches two million.



Headline: 'US and UK bomb Afghanistan'.

**JUNE-JULY 2002**

The *Global Times* publishes a special issue on the football World Cup held in South Korea and Japan.

**1 JANUARY 2003**

The *Global Times* begins publishing three twenty-four page issues per week on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

**FEBRUARY-APRIL 2003**

The *Global Times* sends journalists to the Gulf to report on the Iraq war.

**5 AUGUST 2003**

The first *Life Weekly* supplement is published; subsequently one issue per week of twenty-four pages.

**2 JANUARY 2004**

Front-page article examines the situation across the Taiwan Straits.

**AUGUST 2004**

Special issue on the Olympic Games in Athens, Greece.



## MICROBLOGGERS, CONVERSATIONS AND MEMES

### THE TOP MOST POPULAR MICROBLOGGERS

*Sina Weibo published a list of the most influential Weibo accounts of 2012. The list was devised by evaluating variables such as the number of original tweets, retweets, comments, the downstream ‘influence’ of users retweeting those tweets and leaving comments, as well as the ratio of active to inactive followers of the user. The most influential individuals were:*

#### 1. Li Kaifu

Former head of Google China and venture capitalist

#### 2. He Jiong

Hunan TV presenter

#### 3. Xie Na

Hunan TV presenter

#### 4. Ren Zhiqiang

Chairman of Huayuan Real Estate Group

#### 5. Charles Xue

IT entrepreneur, investor

#### 6. Yao Chen

Actress

#### 7. Amy Cheung

Hong Kong-based novelist

#### 8. Yang Mi

Actress

#### 9. Pan Shiyi

Chairman of SOHO China, a real estate company

#### 10. Ashin

Lead singer of the Taiwanese rock band Mayday (*Wuyuetian* 五月天).



**Li Kaifu.**  
Source:  
ITxinwen.com



**He Jiong.**  
Source:  
Advangent.com



**Xie Na.**  
Source: Guang-  
ming Online



**Ren Zhiqiang.**  
Source: Huaqi  
Business School



**Charles Xue.**  
Source: Truez-  
hen IT



**Yao Chen.**  
Source:  
Herschina



**Amy Cheung.**  
Source:  
tkWin.com



**Yang Mi.**  
Source: Guang-  
ming Online



**Pan Shiyi.**  
Source:  
Xinhua



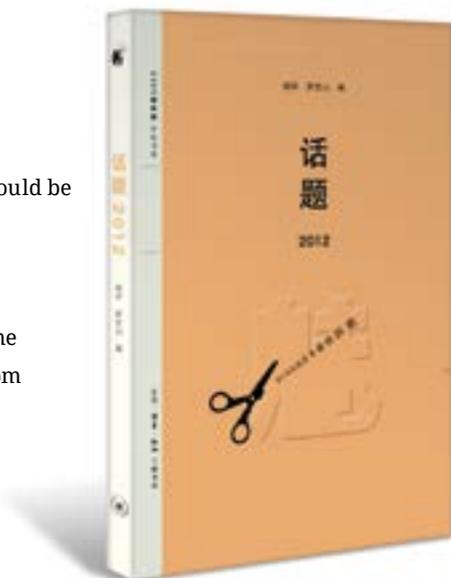
**Ashin.**  
Source:  
Star-Pedia.com

## THE TOP TEN MICROBLOG TOPICS

Since 2005, *Topics* (huati 话题) — a series of annual anthologies edited by Yang Zao and published by Sanlian Joint Publishing in Beijing — has been rounding up each year's most prominent issues. The 2012 installment includes discussions of the Nobel Prize, the controversy over whether the blogger-essayist Han Han has authored all of the work published under his name, the Hong Kong-Mainland culture clash, the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands contretemps, the party Samaritan Lei Feng, volunteerism and its depoliticisation, imperial court costume dramas, online 'loser' culture, current net-speak and food culture.

At the end of Yang Zao's book is this list of the top ten microblog discussions of the year:

- the Wukan Model [of local democratic reform]
- anti-Japanese demonstrations
- a tale of two Olympics
- storms in Beijing
- depression and senility
- doctors who kill
- National Day gridlock
- whether talent show hosts should be able to see contestants
- foreigners in China
- Guizhentang [a traditional Chinese medicine company that extracts bile from bile bears]
- animal protection.



The 2012 edition of *Topics* by Yang Zao and Sa Zhishan.  
Source: Mask9.com



Yang Zao.  
Source: Xinhua

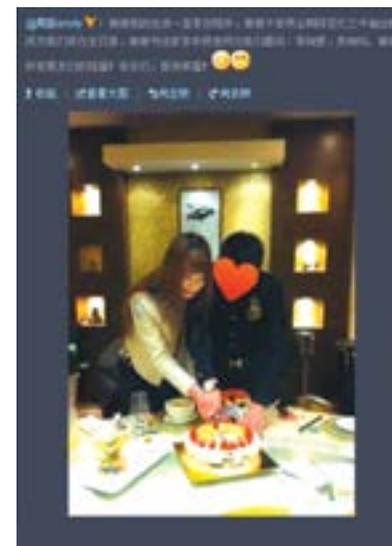
## TOP INTERNET MEMES 2012-2013

This is a list of some of the words and ideas that have recently captivated Chinese Internet users.

### Gandie 干爹

Traditionally, this word refers to an honorary father or godfather — a role someone might take on for a friend's children. These days, it's gained a new meaning as a euphemism used by younger, kept women to refer to their older lovers. On a program about antiques and jewellery aired on Henan TV in 2012, an attractive young woman brought in a jade pendant for expert appraisal. With great pride, she said the jade was a present from her *gandie*, adding that he was a real estate developer. To her dismay, the jewellery experts told her the jade, the value of which she clearly expected to be astronomical, was just a cheap fake.

A *gandie* incident was the source of another Internet meme: 'pussy-clutching miniskirt' (*qi b xiao duanqun* 齐b小短裙), which means an ultra-short skirt that barely covers the crotch. (The crude but popular word for a woman's crotch is pronounced *bi*). The term became famous during the National People's Congress meetings in March 2012 when a microblogger using the name Zhou Rui Emily posted a photo of her-



Zhou Rui Emily cutting a birthday cake with her *gandie* in March 2012.  
Source: Sina Weibo

self cutting a birthday cake with her *gandie*, whose face was obscured by a Photoshopped heart, accompanied by the following text:

Thank you for being a constant companion to me in life, thank you, *Gandie*, for taking time out when you're so busy with the Two Meetings, thank you to teacher Li Yang-

min for the calligraphy he wrote for us that says: ‘Long live love and mutual understanding!’ Thanks to all my friends for their good wishes! If I have you, I am happy!

The mention of a *gandie* who appeared to be an official of the Congress started a ‘human flesh search engine’ — a collective effort by Internet users who combed through Emily Zhou’s Weibo posts and looked elsewhere online for clues as to her and her *gandie*’s identities. These searches turned up several photos of her dressed revealingly and posing with expensive cars, and also a photo of her legs and a very short skirt, together with the text ‘One of my little friends says I am forbidden from wearing pussy-clutching miniskirts in the future’.

The expression ‘pussy-clutching miniskirt’ was adopted almost overnight by social media users and by vendors of clothing on Taobao (usually glossed as ‘China’s eBay’), who began advertising short skirts using the new formulation. However, Taobao soon banned the word, although variants still persist: a search on Taobao for the homophomous variant *qi bi xiao duan-qun* 齐比小短裙 in July 2013 turned up

1155 people selling very short skirts. In June 2013, Zhou Rui Emily posted ‘wedding gown photographs’ (*hunshazhao* 婚纱照) — posed photographs of a bride and groom, usually taken by professional photographer several weeks before, or even as a substitute for, a wedding. The groom was wearing the same Hermès belt as the man in the *gandie* photographs. As of July 2013, Zhou had 156,344 followers on Sina Weibo, and she continues to post photos of herself in revealing attire.

#### **Diaosi** 屌丝

Literally ‘penis thread’, *diaosi* is a self-deprecating epithet used by men who, sarcastically or otherwise, perceive themselves as losers in society. In a world in which marriage is all too frequently like a commercial transaction, a *diaosi* might possess the traditional virtues of reliability, industry and loyalty, but lack the requisites for social success in today’s China: wealth, power and good looks. He’s thus a *diaosi* — a loser unable to win the hand, for example, of a desirably pale, rich and pretty (*bai fu mei* 白富美), if icy, goddess.



Billboard on Times Square for fantasy game, stating ‘Diaosi, Made in China’ in April 2013.  
Source: Sina Weibo

After percolating across online gaming forums for several years, the term *diaosi* burst into the public consciousness in 2012. It was soon adopted by wealthy celebrities who were by no stretch of the imagination losers, such as Shi Yuzhu, the billionaire founder of the gaming company Giant Interactive. In April 2013, Shi’s company bought a billboard ad in New York’s Times Square promoting the interactive fantasy game ‘The Mythical Realm’ with the words ‘Diaosi, Made in China’. The billboard was taken down once the ad company was informed of the term’s meaning.

#### **Watch Brother** (*biaoge* 表哥)

Yang Dacai, a safety official in Shaanxi province, became the object of public ire when he was photographed with a smirk on his face at the scene of a deadly multi-car accident in Yan’an on 26 August 2012, an incident later dubbed ‘Smile-gate’ (*weixiaomen* 微笑门). Angry Internet users scoured the net for additional incriminating evidence and turned up a variety of photographs in which Yang was wearing different pricey foreign watches. A subsequent investigation revealed that he owned eighty-three watches and had more than sixteen million yuan in cash and bank deposits that couldn’t legally be accounted for. Yang was removed from his posts on 21 September and dismissed from the Party on 22 February 2013, after which his case was turned over to the criminal justice system.



Yang Dacai, smiling, at the site of the tragic collision where thirty-six people lost their lives.  
Source: Sina Weibo

## Are You Happy? (*Ni xingfu ma?* 你幸福吗?)



Prompted by the question 'Are You Happy?' the man replies 'Don't ask me, I'm an itinerant labourer.'  
Source: CCTV

Beginning in October 2012, the state broadcaster China Central Television sent its reporters into the streets to ask people across the country if they were happy. Their answers, some of them unexpectedly hilarious, aired on the nightly newscast and became a running meme that was referenced in the 2013 Spring Festival Gala.

### Sparta 斯巴达

Preparations for the Eighteenth Party Congress in November 2012 involved beefed-up security and Internet cen-

sorship, including a ban on discussing the Congress itself. The colloquial name for the Congress, *Shiba Da* 十八大, is a near-homophone for the Chinese term for the ancient Greek city-state of 'Sparta', and so the substitution proliferated across China's social networks, along with copious references to the 2007 American action film *300*, which reimagines the Battle of Thermopylae. 'My Internet speed is becoming slower and slower', one Sina Weibo user complained. 'Is this because Sparta is coming?'

## Qiegao 切糕

A price dispute over *qiegao* — a common Uyghur snack made of sugar, honey, nuts and dried fruit — caused a brawl in Yueyang, Hunan province, in December 2012 that resulted in police ordering a customer to compensate vendors for the value of their de-

stroyed goods: 160,000 yuan. The size of the compensation turned *qiegao* into Internet joke fodder: 'Dear *Gandie*,' reads one, 'if you love me, don't give me a Maserati or Louis Vuitton bags; I just want a piece of *qiegao*.'



Xinjiang *qiegao* on tricycles with Uyghur sellers in December 2012.  
Source: News.house365

[**Note:** See page 374 for other Internet memes popular in 2012 and 2013. — Eds.]



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2013 | Gloria Davis

7

## FITTING WORDS

Gloria Davis

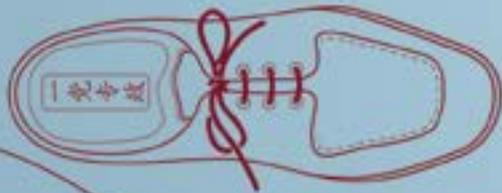
莫斯科

北京

23 MARCH 2013

MOSCOW

Xi Jinping defended one-party rule as 'the right of each country in the world independently to choose its own path of development' and quipped: 'Only the wearer knows if the shoe fits his foot'.



**IN CHINA,** digital technology has enabled the spread of independent opinion but public culture remains under strict and increasingly sophisticated state control. In 2012, many people spoke of a growing gulf between the language of ordinary citizens and that of the Chinese government. This chapter begins with observations about the recent popular online demand for those in power to 'speak like real people' and then explores more broadly recent developments in language under one-party rule. It draws on examples of official, intellectual and popular communications that have attracted commentary, controversy or widespread notice. The analysis highlights the different ways in which public language in China bears the imprint of authoritarian power.



A performance during the CCTV Spring Festival Gala 2012.  
Source: ImagineChina



Ha Wen.  
Source:  
mdk.cc

'Speak like a real person!' (*shuo renhua* 说人话, literally 'speak human language') became a popular catchphrase in China in 2012. In a January 2013 interview, Ha Wen — a leading media personality and director of China Central Television's annual Spring Festival Gala (*Chunjie lianhuan wanhui* 春节联欢晚会, or *Chunwan* 春晚 for short) — jokingly assured the 700 million-strong audience of the world's most-watched television extravaganza that its hosts would 'most definitely speak like real people'. For weeks, numerous articles in China's state-guided media hailed Ha's endorsement of 'human language'. But Ha Wen's jokey use of the term conveyed little of the critical reproach inherent in popular use that posits 'human language' (*renhua* 人话) as the opposite of the 'inhuman language' of the Party, seen as wooden and propagandistic. Ha co-opted the term, promising honest and natural communication only so as better to present a genial image of life under one-party rule.

The annual state-funded Spring Festival Gala that marks the Chinese New Year is a highlight in the mainland cultural calendar. It is also an occasion for eulogising the Communist Party in glitzy song and dance. The 2013 Gala featured, for instance, a choral tribute to 'Great China and the Great Party' (*Weidade Zhongguo, weidade dang* 伟大的中国, 伟大的党), performed by hundreds of uniformed choristers arrayed in colour blocks representing the Chinese army, navy and air force.

From an official point of view, 'human language', as one article explains, means 'conveying a sense of people's lives, drawing close to the masses and speaking in down-to-earth as opposed to high-falutin ways'. It purposefully distances itself from the Mao-era slogans that were used to launch mass mobilisation campaigns and stir political passions and attempts a more savvy approach — public relations rather than propaganda — to boost the government's image with a discontented public.

While wide-ranging online debate shapes and reflects popular discourse, the state media, for all its avowed efforts to 'speak human language', to use the official formulation, mostly 'maintains a unified caliber': it stays 'on message'. Observations on the growing gulf between official and everyday uses of the Chinese language (*putonghua* 普通话 as well as the other languages and dialects of the People's Republic) have fuelled the 'human language' debate. The acclaimed novelist Yan Lianke (whose novel *Serve the People* [*Wei renmin fuwu* 为人民服务] depicts a wild, illicit love affair during the Cultural Revolution in which the characters turn each other on by spouting Maoist slogans) puts it this way:



Yan Lianke.  
Source:  
Shenzhen  
Economic Daily

Lies, meaningless words and pretentious-sounding blather become the official language used by the government, taught by our teachers and adopted by the world of art and literature. This kind of language is also creeping into the lives of ordinary people. There are currently two conflicting language systems in China. One belongs to the state, the other to ordinary people.



Boy in an imitation Red Army uniform with 'Serve the People' slogan printed on his bag.  
Source: ImagineChina

Why? Why are ordinary people repeatedly calling for government officials to ‘speak human language’ and ‘do human things’? These requests reflect people’s resistance to the official version of memories that has been administered to them. The state is not the only player to be blamed for the nation’s amnesia in today’s China. We must also look at Chinese intellectuals, as we appear to be content with this forced amnesia.

These words are part of an op-ed by Yan published in English translation in the *New York Times* on 1 April 2013. The Beijing-based author has, so far, not released the original Chinese text. In China, news of the article and its web link soon appeared in a variety of Weibo posts. With rising levels of English-language sophistication in China, even translated dissent only accessible via proxy servers has become an important part of social criticism.

#### The Pros and Cons of Party Membership

The leading human rights activist, Zeng Jinyan, had the following to say about the dilemmas that educated Chinese face under one-party rule:



Zeng Jinyan.  
Source:  
Taiyangbao.ca

In today’s China, ‘speaking the truth’ first of all means giving up the benefits to be gained from being ambiguous. First, becoming a Communist Party member brings benefits: you get opportunities for promotion, if you’re at fault your punishment is mitigated, and you also receive financial benefits. But you don’t believe in Communism. So do you join the Party or not?

Second, in Chinese society, relationships and connections are important. They bring all kinds of little advantages and conveniences. Can you forego these rewards and be independent of all these ‘mutually beneficial’ social relations?

Third, there is the situation of bearing witness. It is often costly for you to speak out about what you have witnessed. The extent to which you tell the truth depends on the cost you are willing to bear. At the very least, you should keep silent and adopt a stance of passive resistance when you are unable to speak the truth. One can only ask oneself how one would behave in these three situations.

In the essay, Yan speaks of ‘two conflicting language systems’ to highlight the difference between the interests of the state and what Chinese citizens want. This neat opposition obscures, however, the intricate dynamics of mainland public discourse. In vocabulary and idiom, official and non-official uses of Chinese are highly interdependent. When people proudly call themselves ‘ordinary’ (*putongren* 普通人), they draw on the Communist sense of ‘the masses’ (*qunzhong* 群众). Similarly, when they identify as ‘Chinese’, or speak of belonging to ‘China’ and ‘Chinese civilisation’, they draw on phrases in the official language that have powerful political and cultural connotations that may differ from those of previous historical eras.

On the one hand, the Chinese people on- and off-line may frequently ridicule official language; on the other, its formulations of ideals and values — what is known by some as ‘New China Newspeak’ (*Xinhua wenti* 新华文体) — have helped to shape how Chinese people today understand notions of community and social wellbeing. Even when people diverge from the state in their views, party formulations and linguistic tutelage still leave their marks on the way they express their criticisms and hopes.

## Official Formulations

Under Mao, the ruling slogan was that the Communist Party had to ‘serve the people’ (*wei renmin fuwu* 为人民服务). Expressions of ‘wholehearted devotion’ to and ‘resolute support’ for the collective and national good prevailed. Over the decades of economic reform since the late 1970s, such phrases have become rhetorical staples in commercials and product endorsements. ‘To serve customers with wholehearted devotion’ (*quanxin quanyi wei guke fuwu* 全心全意为顾客服务) is a popular motto of retailers and restaurants in China, including the fast-food giant McDonalds. Moreover, with rising public concern over food safety, food manufacturers have publicised the fact that they ‘resolutely support’ (*jianjue zhichi* 坚决支持) the government’s crackdown on food safety violations. As handy declarations of dedication

to the stated mission of a company, office or organisation, these expressions also routinely feature in applications for jobs and promotions and in sales and motivational training. Workers in offices, restaurants and factories also perform daily team-building exercises that combine Maoist-style exhortations with slick jargon adapted from the global business world.

The call to be ‘absolutely unwavering’ (*haobu dongyao* 毫不动摇) made its debut on 23 July 2012 in a speech by then Party General Secretary Hu Jintao. Hu was addressing senior party and military cadres at a meeting in Beijing. He admonished ‘the whole party membership and the entire nation’ to show themselves to be ‘absolutely unwavering’ on three matters:



Hu Jintao.  
Source:  
News.cn

- resolute support for and development of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics
- advancement along the path of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics
- active promotion of Reform and Opening Up.

The state media promptly designated this an ‘important speech’ (identifying it as mandatory reading).

Hu’s fondness for stilted hyperbole is well known. With the ‘three absolute unwaverings’, he attempted to convey a genuine commitment to improved governance and transparency. The early months of 2012 had been a trying time for China’s Party leaders, as we noted in *China Story Yearbook 2012*. Rumour and gossip surrounding the arrest of Chongqing’s former Party Secretary, Bo Xilai, and his lawyer-businesswoman wife Gu Kailai, had thrust a government long accustomed to operating behind closed doors into the glare of international media attention. The ‘Bo Xilai affair’ inspired a stream of investigative reporting and opinion in Chinese, English and other languages about corruption, divisions and intrigues at the highest levels of government. State censorship proved no match for these global media flows.

The ‘left’ and the ‘right’ are flexible terms in party discourse. Prior to his downfall, the media-savvy Bo and his widely-publicised ‘Red Culture’ campaigns, which featured the mass choral singing of patriotic songs, study sessions and patriotic rallies enjoyed enormous grassroots appeal. Bo and his supporters had presented themselves as true Communists. Their ‘social justice’ parlance diverged conspicuously from the ‘harmonious society’ rhetoric of China’s two top office-holders, Hu and Premier Wen Jiabao. While a rift grew between the rhetoric of Bo on the ‘left’ and Hu and Wen on the ‘right’ neither side openly attacked the other. Whatever the state of factional warfare, both sides prudently displayed ‘unwavering’ unity under the Party.

Online commentators enjoyed pillorying Hu Jintao’s unimaginative slogans; ‘facially paralysed emperor’ (*miantan di* 面瘫帝) remains a popular nickname for the po-faced leader. The phrase ‘three absolute unwaverings’ was reminiscent of ‘the three unwaverings’ that Hu had first used when he toured Xinjiang in August 2009. Ethnic tensions run deep in this autonomous region, the homeland of the Uyghurs. That year on 5 July, violent riots broke out between Han Chinese and Uyghurs in which, according to official figures, 197 people died and 1,721 were injured. A harsh crackdown on Uyghur activists followed. In an August 2009 speech in Ürümqi, Hu urged the people of Xinjiang to defend ‘unwaveringly’ economic construction, social stability and ‘the coming-together of the various nationalities in unified struggle’. The slogan attracted a riposte posted by a blogger called Zhuoran Yimeng (What a Dream) that ‘the real three unwaverings’ are:

- the government’s corrupt dealings at home
- its congenial attitude to foreign bullying
- abiding dishonesty when confronted with media revelations about official wrongdoing.



**Ruan Zongze.**  
Photo:  
Jane Scherr

As 2012 was Hu's final year in office, the 'three absolute unwaverings' became his parting legacy. When the long-planned transition to the new leadership took place at the Eighteenth Party Congress in November 2012, the media in and outside China highlighted the plain-speaking talents of Hu's successor, Xi Jinping. China's state media in particular lauded his relaxed and forthright spoken style. They widely quoted the Vice-President of the China Institute of International Studies, Ruan Zongze, who praised Xi's style as 'frank and sensible' and as giving people the feeling 'he is actually speaking, not reading from a script', thereby 'winning greater acceptance'. The veiled barb at Hu Jintao's wooden language was unmistakable.

That's not to say that the vast majority of Xi's public utterances and internal speeches are not cluttered with the wooden verbiage of partyspeak. Even Xi's homely metaphors have inspired their fair share of derision among netizens. Speaking in Moscow on 23 March 2013, he defended one-party rule as 'the right of each country in the world independently to choose its own path of development'. Xi then attempted a quip: 'Only the wearer knows if the shoe fits his foot' (*xiezi he bu he jiao chuanzhe cai zhidao* 鞋子合不合脚穿着才知道). A flurry of sardonic comments soon appeared on the Internet. They ranged from: 'You let your family wear comfortable shoes while compelling ours to wear worn-out shoes of the wrong size' to 'If the shoe doesn't fit what is to be done? Give me a new pair or cut my foot down to size?' There were longer rejoinders, such as: 'Yes, indeed. So, when I'm at a store shopping for shoes, I'll first try them on. If they don't fit, I'll immediately abandon them, no matter what brand they are. If you want to stick to a certain brand, finding the correct size becomes a bit more difficult, does it not?' The Theory of Suitable Shoes (*he xie lun* 合鞋论) quickly replaced Hu Jintao's hoary formulation about creating Harmony (*hexie lun* 和谐论) for which it was a homonym.



**Cartoon mocking 'only the wearer knows if the shoe fits his foot'.**  
Source:  
Cnwest.com

## Flying the Red Flag to Oppose the Red Flag



**Dancing in a Beijing park.**  
Photo: Hsing Wei

Open mockery of official pronouncements is common; acts of true opposition are rare. For one thing, expressions of online scorn are fleeting, mostly pseudonymous and generally unaccompanied by political action. For another, the tertiary-educated people who make up the majority of China's most vocal netizens have complex attitudes towards the Party. Party membership can undeniably boost a person's career prospects. Among university students, the standard phrase, 'the question of entering the Party' (*ru dang wenti* 入党问题), formulated in the same way as one might talk about 'the question about your career' (*jiuye wenti* 就业问题), reflects its importance as a life issue. The latest official statistics from 2011 show China's tertiary enrolments at 31.67 million. Chinese Communist Party membership in 2011 exceeded 82.6 million, of which people with tertiary qualifications were by far the largest group at 38.6 percent. Of China's 31.67 million tertiary students, 8.77 percent (2.778 million) were party members.

## Deng Yuwen

Deng Yuwen was a commentary writer and former Deputy Editor of the Central Party School's journal, *Study Times* (*Xuexi shibao* 学习时报). During the party-state leadership transition period of 2012–2013, Deng made a habit of expressing provocative views in the media — something rare among scholars with a government background.



**Deng Yuwen.**  
Source: Weibo

On 2 September 2012, *Caijing* 财经, a leading business magazine, published Deng's three-part essay on what he called 'the political legacy of Hu-Wen' (*Hu-Wende zhengzhi yichan* 胡温的政治遗产). He argued that failures outweighed achievements in the decade-long rule of President Hu Jintao and Prime Minister Wen Jiabao. He went on to identify ten grave problems confronting the incoming leadership:

1. There have been no breakthroughs in economic restructuring and advancing a consumer-driven economy

2. There's been a failure to support and sustain a middle class
3. The rural-urban [income and development] gap has increased
4. Population policy lags behind reality
5. The bureaucratisation and profit-incentivisation of educational and scientific research institutions shows no indication of being curtailed and it continues to stifle creativity
6. Environmental degradation continues to worsen
7. The government has failed to establish a stable energy-supply system
8. The government has failed to build an effective and convincing system of shared values that can be accepted by the majority of its people, with resulting egregious behaviour and the collapse of ideology
9. Diplomacy focused on 'putting out fires' and 'maintaining stability' lacks vision, strategic thinking and a specific agenda
10. There have been insufficient efforts to push political reform and promote democratisation.

The process of getting a tertiary education in China involves intensive exposure to officially worded texts and practice in parroting. Students do well by learning to mimic the officially 'correct' style of expression in their essays and examination answers. Graduates who go on to become academics, journalists, writers or who are otherwise involved with publishing are highly attentive and sensitive to nuances in official texts. It's common in China to refer to people in these professions as 'intellectuals' (*zhishifenzi* 知识分子) — a value-laden category that implies that they will, as educated people, produce ideas beneficial to society and the nation. For the first decade after the economic reforms began in 1978, many intellectuals saw themselves as nobly engaged with the official mission of 'liberating thought' (*sixiang jiefang* 思想解放) from the rigid dogmas of class struggle under Mao and helping to set China on a course to modernisation. After the brutal suppression of the mass, nationwide protest movement in Beijing and other cities on 4 June 1989, disillusion set in, and there was much soul-searching in educated circles about what the 'liberation' of thought had achieved.

Over the last decade or so, the Internet has exponentially broadened and democratised public discourse — previously the unique preserve of 'intellectuals'. This has greatly complicated what it means to be considered an intellectual. In 2000, the novelist Wang Shuo coined the sardonic term 'knowers', or 'know-it-alls' (*zhidaofenzi* 知道分子); netizens now commonly use the expression to mock intellectuals whose online writings attract public notice. The implication is that these individuals attract attention because



**Wang Shuo.**  
Source:  
jwb.com.cn

they are well connected and 'know a thing or two', but that their writings are hollow rhetoric. Many netizens don't discriminate between people who are merely publicity-hungry and those who are genuinely socially committed and politically engaged; 'knowing' also alludes to the coded and oblique language that people use to avoid official censorship.

For instance, when in April 2013 the highly regarded editor-in-chief of Caixin Media, Hu Shuli, reminded the new party leadership of its commitment to 'opening up', it was clear that she was indirectly criticising the increased policing and censorship under the previous Hu–Wen administration. She wrote abstractly of how 'in the realms of opinion and practice', China had in recent years displayed a 'tendency toward closed-door reform and timid opening up' (*guanmen gaige, xiaoxin kaifangde qingxiang* 关门改革, 小心开放的倾向). Observing that the newly incumbent Premier Li Keqiang had highlighted 'opening up' in his speeches, she expressed her hope for greater freedoms with the phrase 'guide reform by opening up' (*kaifang cu gaige* 开放促改革).

Hu Shuli's editorial shares stylistic similarities with the many classified research reports prepared exclusively as advisory documents for senior officials. The latter are solicited efforts to 'aid governance' (*zizhi* 资治: a dynastic-era Confucian term that dignifies the undertakings of thinking people to offer policy guidance for the rulers). Hu Shuli's uninvited open counsel conveys disapproval. The controversial, three-part online article by Deng Yuwen, 'The Political Legacy of Hu-Wen', that was published between late August and early September 2012, offers another striking example of an intellectual using the government's own idiom to criticise its policies.

## Claiming Authority

Authority and power are related but different. Online mockery of the party-state points to an erosion of its authority, a situation intellectuals like to describe as ‘the crisis of political legitimacy’ (*zhengzhi zhengdangxing weiji* 政治正当性危机). Yet the party-state system remains *in* power: its massive bureaucratic complex affects all aspects of the Chinese economy and society.

The government’s authority was founded on freeing the oppressed, but it now rules in defence of ‘Socialism with Chinese Characteristics’, ‘Harmony’, ‘Stability’ and, more recently, the ‘China Dream’. Whereas the ‘left’ or neo-Maoist activists use Mao-era rhetoric, the rival ‘right’ prefers the idiom of ‘modernisation’ and ‘liberalisation’. If some on the left have become increasingly vociferous in their attacks on their ideological enemies, both eschew the politics of ‘class struggle’ and sidestep emancipatory language. ‘Civilisation’ — more specifically ‘Socialist Civilisation’ — has displaced ‘Communism’ as the Party’s mission and the basis of its authority.

If Socialist Civilisation is also what makes China unique, then the authority of the government gets a further boost, as it becomes the protector and promoter of China’s uniqueness, both as a culture and as a political and economic model. Among the commentators engaged with this aspect of the party-state’s authority are proponents of a Confucian



Jiang Qing.  
Source:  
Rujiazg.com

path for China. Two have recently attracted special notice: the controversial scholar Jiang Qing, founding director of the privately funded Yangming Confucian Academy (*Yangming jingshe* 阳明精舍) in Guiyang, Guizhou province, and Kang Xiaoguang, founding director of the Non-Profit Organization Research Centre at Renmin University in Beijing.

In July 2012, an article in the *New York Times* coauthored by Jiang and Daniel A. Bell, a Canadian professor of philosophy at Tsinghua University in Beijing, became the subject of animated discussion in China and internationally. Titled ‘A Confucian Constitution for China’, it was a manifesto defending one-party rule as compatible with China’s ‘Confucian



Factory building in Minhang, Shanghai.  
Photo: Robert S. Donovan

tradition’. The authors described democracy as a flawed system; they proposed that the current party-state system in China could be improved to reflect better a Confucian-inspired ‘Way of the Humane Authority’ (*rendao* 仁道). They called for the establishment of a tricameral legislature. There would be ‘a House of Exemplary Persons that represents sacred legitimacy’. Its Confucian leader, ‘a great scholar’, and members would be ‘nominated by scholars and examined on their knowledge of the Confucian classics and then assessed through trial periods of progressively greater administrative responsibilities’. A descendant of Confucius would lead ‘a House of the Nation that represents historical and cultural legitimacy’, whose members would also be descendants of other ‘great sages and rulers’; and finally, there would be ‘a House of the People that represents popular legitimacy’, whose members would be ‘elected either by popular vote or as heads of occupational groups’.

The article immediately began to circulate on the Internet in Chinese translation. The prominent independent thinker and historian Zhang Lifan offered a subtle Weibo riposte. He quoted the authors’ proposed tricameral legislature without comment — to convey speechless incredulity — adding only the Chinese word for snigger (*touxiao* 偷笑) in parenthesis at the end.

Below the quote, Zhang placed a cartoon of the nine-metre tall Confucius statue that had stood in Tiananmen Square from January to April 2011 before it was removed without explanation. The statue had attracted controversy: as mentioned in the 2012 *Yearbook*, an official opinion poll in January 2011 indicated that ‘some sixty-two percent of the 820,000 respondents expressed opposition to it’. The cartoon shows a cameraman filming a beaming journalist interviewing the statue. Comments on Zhang’s post include: ‘These gentlemen have water on the brain, a most atypical madness’, and ‘Isn’t this just a *copy* of Iran’s Islamic Constitution? No originality whatsoever.’

Daniel Bell’s role in publicising Jiang’s work in English translation has been crucial. More importantly, he has helped to secure academic authority for Jiang’s often flamboyant assertions about Confucianism: in 2012 Princeton University Press published *A Confucian Constitutional Order: How China’s ancient past can shape its political future*, authored by Jiang and coedited by Bell. On 28 November 2012, David Bandurski of the China Media Project at the University of Hong Kong wrote a critical review of Bell’s work that attracted notice on Twitter and discussion lists. The article, ‘For whom Mr Bell tolls’, appeared two weeks after the conclusion of the Eighteenth Party Congress. Quoting Bell’s praise for the Chinese party-state’s ‘gruelling process of talent selection’ in ensuring that ‘only those with an excellent record of past performance are likely to make it to the highest levels of government’, Bandurski observed:

Mr. Bell may not know ... that [the newly appointed Premier] Li Keqiang presided over one of the worst AIDS epidemics in history. He was responsible for the cover-up of the epidemic, which resulted from a blood trade in which government officials were involved. Does that, I wonder, make Li more or less qualified to deal with this pressing health issue? Should Li’s actions to cover up the scandal be construed as ‘morally informed judgements’?

In March 2013, Kang Xiaoguang published a new edition of his 2010 ‘Outline of Confucian Constitutionalism’ (*Rujia xianzheng lungang* 儒家宪政论纲). Like Jiang and Bell, Kang proposes a new model of one-party rule based on Confucian principles. He begins by noting that for decades China has faced ‘a crisis of political legitimacy’, ever since Deng Xiaoping’s market reforms undermined ‘the Marxist basis of the Communist Party’s right to rule’. Better to replace this now ‘unconvincing’ ideology, he argues, with Confucianism as the state religion, reprising an idea first championed by the late-Qing scholar-activist Kang Youwei (1858–1927). (Kang’s ideas were far from old-style Confucianism, however: he also advocated women’s emancipation and one-year marriage contracts, an end to property and traditional family structures and proposed dissolving all political borders so that the world could come under one democratic government, among other things.)

The present-day Kang argues the ‘benevolent government’ (*renzheng* 仁政) that reflects the ‘moral lineage’ (*daotong* 道统) of the Confucian classics is essential for China’s survival as a civilisation. He claims that Confucianism is compatible with democracy and human rights to the extent they conform to Confucian definitions of benevolence and justice. Moreover, Confucianism is a broad church ‘capable of accommodating a multi-party system, competitive general elections, the separation of powers and ideas of limited government, and so encourages a merging of ancient and modern’. Kang believes that as ‘international competition among nation-states continues to intensify’, China’s survival depends on it becoming a contemporary Confucian civilisation.

These Confucian proposals are a leap too far for the leadership of the Communist Party, which at its Eighteenth Congress reiterated its unwavering commitment to ‘Marxism–Leninism, Mao Zedong Thought, Deng Xiaoping Theory and the important thought of [Jiang Zemin’s] Three Represents’. Nonetheless, it has its uses for the notion of defending one-



**Kang Xiaoguang.**  
Source:  
Rujiazg.com



**Kang Youwei.**  
Source:  
Wikimedia  
Commons

party rule as a Confucian legacy. On the Internet, exasperated critics deride the advocates of Confucian constitutionalism as ‘knowers’ and ‘living specimens’ of intellectual betrayal, accusing them of strengthening authoritarian rule and diminishing China’s democratic prospects. In this they echo, consciously or not, the concerns of the thinkers behind the May Fourth Movement of 1919 who saw Confucianism as holding China back not just from democracy, but from modernisation and science as well.

In a mid-2012 interview in English, the dissident artist Ai Weiwei remarked: ‘The emphasis on Confucianism is the last cry of this Party.’ He saw Confucianism as synonymous with ‘social order’ and thus well-suited for one-party rule. Describing China as ‘a society with no creativity, a society with no imagination, a society that cannot meet the challenges of the international struggle’, Ai concludes: ‘for us Chinese, the tragedy we have today exists because of Confucianism’.

#### Wang Wen Visits Harvard

In November 2012, Wang Wen, an opinion editor at the *Global Times*, PhD candidate at Peking University and a frequent commentator on international relations, visited the United States.

He wrote up his observations in a series of dispatches published in the *Global Times* newspaper. One piece was written after he spoke at Harvard University about political governance in the microblog era. His first observation was that Harvard was much smaller than he had imagined. But what really disappointed him was what he felt was a conspicuous lack of Chinese voices in the field of China Studies in the West. Wang’s article noted that none of the six lectures on Chinese topics scheduled at Harvard for that month was to be given by a speaker from the Mainland, even though officials and diplomats from Singapore, Korea and India were among those who had spoken there on Asian issues in the past.

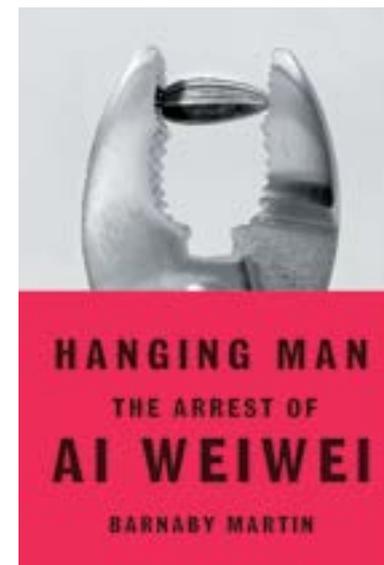
Based on conversations with Chinese students he met there, Wang observed that when talented Chinese academics go overseas, they tend to embrace Western perspectives on China, fall out of touch with mainland realities and thus fail to present a more confident and genuine Chinese perspective. A translated version of Wang’s essay that subsequently ran in the English-language version of *Global Times* concludes:

The real gap is in the power of discourse. In a global information war, it seems China have [*sic*] abandoned its fronts, and surrendered its fortresses.

## Kultur Bytes

Fondly nicknamed ‘God Ai’ (*Ai shen* 艾神) by his Chinese fans, Ai Weiwei has been prevented from leaving China since his eighty-one-day detention from 3 April to 22 June 2011. His admirers outside China have kept the media’s attention on both his art and his political causes. The Hirshhorn Museum in Washington DC put on a major exhibition of his work from 7 October 2012 to 24 February 2013 and the Hampstead Theatre in London staged the play *The Arrest of Ai Weiwei* from 11 April to 18 May 2013. In April 2013, Faber & Faber published Barnaby Martin’s *The Hanging Man: The arrest of Ai Weiwei*, just several months after Princeton University Press came out with his little book of *Weiwei-isms*. An adept self-publicist, Ai is active on Twitter, where (at the time of writing) he had 222,041 followers. He also frequently uploads YouTube video footage of his activities and has in May 2013, released his first self-styled ‘heavy metal’ music video, ‘Dumbass’, with scenes that recreate or draw on his period in detention.

In parodic homage to police surveillance of his home, Ai streamed continuous live coverage of himself (‘WeiweiCam’) for more than twenty-four hours in July 2012, stopping only when the police intervened. This brief and chilling political send-up was all but forgotten in late October 2012 in the wake of a far more accessible work: a video of Ai and his friends dancing to the phenomenally successful YouTube hit song by the Korean singer Psy, *Gangnam Style*. Ai’s video, titled ‘Grass Mud Horse Style’ (*Caonima style* 草泥马 style) after the popular Internet anti-censorship meme, became a minor YouTube sensation in its own right. Viewed more than 350,000 times, mostly outside China, one day after it was uploaded, it remained, like the rest of YouTube, outside the Great Firewall.



Book cover with sunflower seed.  
Source: Macmillan CA/Faber & Faber

At the opposite pole to Ai Weiwei is the novelist Mo Yan. In October 2012, Mo (original name Guan Moye) — a prominent writer and Vice-Chairman of the state-run Chinese Writers' Association (a largely ceremonial position) — was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature. The Chinese blogosphere greeted the news with ambivalence. Whereas Ai has turned 'baring the truth' into his signature trait (his art, which often features images of naked flesh, literalises the idea), Mo Yan's critiques of



Ai Wei Wei's video 'Dumbass'.  
Source: Ai Wei Wei's Youtube channel



Mo Yan's novel *Frogs*.  
Source: Amazon.cn

contemporary society and politics are encoded in his novels in the form of black humour and dark satire. Though his novel *Frogs* (*Wa* 蛙) won the prestigious Chinese Writers' Association-sponsored Mao Dun Literature Prize (*Mao Dun wenxue jiang* 茅盾文学奖) in 2011, his work has also tackled tough subjects from China's past and present and, as in the case of *Big Breasts and Wide Hips* (*Feng ru fei tun* 丰乳肥臀), has at times been banned by the authorities.

Of Mo Yan's works, the literary scholar Perry Link has written: 'The animal nature of human beings — eating, excreting, fighting, screaming, bleeding, sweating, fornicating — abounds, as do certain traits that animals eschew, such as bullying, conniving, and betraying'. Mo Yan has never publicly criticised the Party. In 2012, he even contributed to a project to copy out Mao's famous 1942 'Yan'an Talks on Literature and Art' (*Yan'an wenyi zuotanhuishangde jianghua* 延安文艺座谈会上的讲话) as part of commemorations of the seventieth anniversary of the speech in May 2012. This act took central place in the debate over his literary conscience. The 'Talks' became party dogma after the founding of the People's Republic in 1949. They have been used as the basis for widespread literary and artistic control ever since, and they provide the key theoretical foundation for

party-state cultural policy even today. Mo Yan's participation in the project suggested to critics that he was too comfortable with government restrictions on literary expression.

In his Nobel acceptance speech, Mo Yan likened censorship to airport security checks, infuriating all those who hoped that he might use his position to speak out for freedom of expression and his fellow Chinese Nobel Laureate, the imprisoned dissident Liu Xiaobo. His Nobel address, 'Storytellers' (*Jiang gushide ren* 讲故事的人), avoided ideological themes. It concluded with three parables that were

interpreted as either defending or attacking the status quo, depending on the stance of the observer. Salman Rushdie labelled him a 'patsy of the regime' and Ai Weiwei called the Nobel 'an insult to humanity and to literature'.

Mo Yan's *nom-de-plume* means 'Don't Talk'. In 2009, he said that if people insisted on calling him a 'state writer' they should say the same of other successful writers who also receive their salaries from the Ministry of Culture (he named Yu Hua and Su Tong). He said that he relied on his state job for health and social insurance; that without it, he could not afford to get sick. He remarked that while 'being scolded by foreigners is understandable', implying that non-Chinese critics who led privileged lives and enjoyed 'universal social security' couldn't be expected to comprehend his predicament, 'the rebuke of fellow-Chinese is downright offensive'.

In the online commotion over Mo Yan's Nobel Prize, people were consumed by the question of whether he was fit to represent China. Supporters extolled his literary genius; detractors complained that the Nobel committee had made a poor, even unconscionable choice. The Foreign Ministry spokesperson, Hong Lei, by contrast, congratulated the writer on behalf of the nation. He noted that Mo Yan had received China's highest literary award, the Mao Dun Prize, the previous year, and stated that the added honour of the Nobel award gave 'people the world over' an opportunity

‘to deepen their understanding of Chinese culture and to feel the magic of Chinese literature at its best’. Referring to Liu Xiaobo’s 2009 Nobel Peace Prize, Hong Lei reiterated on that occasion, the Nobel committee had committed ‘a serious violation of China’s internal politics and judicial sovereignty’, damaging relations between China and Norway. The comparison implied that Mo Yan’s Nobel award had helped to heal this ongoing injury.

The sharp-tongued blogger Wei Yingjie, meanwhile, posted a comment that was widely relayed on both foreign and Chinese social media: ‘I’ve read so many appraisals of Mo Yan and none is as accurate as his self-appraisal: “In my daily life, I may be a flunky, a coward and a miserable worm, but when I write, I have the gall to take what I want, have as much sex as I want and be as outrageous as I want.” This sums up Mo Yan’s philosophy of life.’ Using a humorously self-deprecating remark Mo Yan made in 2005, Wei painted a caricature of a man who was a political conformist — a writer whose displaced aggression is akin to that of an obedient servant, one fearful of his master. Another detractor was Li Jie. A novelist and cultural critic now based in New York, Li argued that Mo Yan’s work presents a distorted picture of Chinese rural life that is praised overseas because it deliberately caters to Western prejudices about China.

Defenders of the award, like Renmin University professor of literature Ding Guoqi, interpreted Mo Yan’s win as an inevitable consequence of China’s rise in international stature and a well-deserved recognition of its cultural power. The veteran literary theorist Liu Zaifu — who had championed the self-exiled playwright and novelist Gao Xingjian’s Nobel Prize in 2000 — defended the relevance and literary merit of Mo Yan’s work, demonstrating that not every response fell along predictable or partisan lines. The book-buying public, meanwhile, propelled new editions of his back catalogue onto the bestseller lists, and turned his hometown of Gaomi, Shandong province into a site of pilgrimage. Plans for a Mo Yan-related literary theme park have also been mooted.

| A department store in Datong, Shanxi province.  
Photo: Daniel Zolli

## Bedevilled

Authoritarian politics and their complications may bedevil Mo Yan’s ‘hallucinatory realism’ (the term the Nobel committee chose to describe his oeuvre). But when tens of thousands of Chinese utilise the language of patriotism to vent their unhappiness, the party-state finds itself bedevilled. In mid-August 2012, Chinese anger erupted once more against Japanese claims on the disputed Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands. Online and on the street, calls to attack and kill ‘Japanese devils’, ‘little devils’ or simply ‘devils’ rang out uncensored. This time, appeals to ‘Chairman Mao’ or ‘Grandpa Mao’ as the nation’s protector added a new twist to Chinese hate speech. Evoking Mao indirectly implied that the current party leadership was too weak to do anything to protect national sovereignty. Netizens also incorporated jibes at official corruption and at the loathed urban law enforcement officers or *chengguan*: ‘Give us three thousand *chengguan* and we’ll take back the Diaoyu Islands, give us five hundred corrupt officials and little Japan would be ruined for sure’.



In China, patriotic ardour excuses both barbed wit and racial abuse. ‘Devil’ (*guizi* 鬼子) might be a common, even harmless Chinese swearword in normal circumstances: even children can be scolded for being ‘little devils’. But it is loaded in the context of speaking about Japanese, evoking language common in the eight-year war against the brutal Japanese occupation that only came to an end with Japan’s defeat in World War II. In a second wave of the anti-Japan protests in September 2012, verbal abuse escalated into violent physical attacks on people and property. The estimated cost of the damage to Japanese businesses, cars (including those with Chinese owners), factories and restaurants and reduced sales of Japanese goods in China exceeded US\$100 million. That racial abuse mostly goes unchallenged in China and is treated as ‘ordinary language’ even by advocates of ‘human language’ greatly complicates the appeal to ‘speak like real people’ in the People’s Republic today. There is little acknowledgment in official or unofficial media or Internet discussions that the use of ‘devil’ when referring to non-Chinese people in a non-jocular or non-familiar context is racially prejudicial language. Even Ai Weiwei can fall into this trap. In October 2012, on receiving news of Mo Yan’s Nobel award, Ai Weiwei sent this Tweet in Chinese: ‘If the Swedish Academy is vying with the Chinese Writers’ Association to see who’s the more contemptible, this round goes to the foreign devils’ (*Ruidian wenxueyuan ruguo weile yu Zhongguo zuoxie bi shei geng jian, zhe yi lun yangguizi yingle* 瑞典文学院如果为了与中国作协比谁更贱，这一轮洋鬼子赢了).

‘Humans’ and ‘devils’ have long been paired in Chinese to distinguish known from unknown, friend from enemy. Cursing foreign devils, whether generically or by nationality, was once an expression of helpless rage in the face of a powerful foe. Party doctrine, first under the Nationalists then the Communist Party, nurtured that rage. To be ‘human’ accordingly meant to be willing to destroy the ‘inhuman’.

At the height of the Cultural Revolution from the mid-1960s, the human/inhuman binary, now applied to internal enemies, was employed to justify violence and murder on an apocalyptic scale. The result of ‘resolving

contradictions between ourselves and the enemy’ (*jiejue diwo maodun* 解决敌我矛盾) was a death toll estimated by the sociologists Andrew Walder and Yang Su in a 2003 publication at ‘between 750,000 and 1.5 million, with roughly equal numbers permanently injured’. In 1979, the eminent journalist Liu Binyan (1925–2005) wrote powerfully of an extensive racketeering ring in Heilongjiang province that had profitted from the lawless Cultural Revolution years. Titled ‘Between people and monsters’ (*Ren yao zhi jian* 人妖之间), Liu’s reportage was widely lauded in its day. Three decades on, it has become an important reference point in discussions of the ‘human’.

To date, the Party has told a highly edited story of its own rise to where it is today — the China Story as recounted by the party-state. Official history suppresses mention of messy complications and intrigues, along with some of the more gruesome events such as occurred in the Cultural Revolution or previous campaigns as well as 1989. To open up the past to scrutiny could threaten the legitimacy of its one-party rule. On 5 March 2013, Deputy Foreign Minister Fu Ying — the National People’s Congress’s first female spokesperson — reiterated Wen Jiabao’s April 2012 appeal for ‘power to operate in sunlight’ (*rang quanli zai yangguangxia yunxing* 让权力在阳光下运行) and Xi Jinping’s January 2013 promise ‘to contain power in a cage of regulations’. The Chinese media has widely praised Fu, who is ethnically Mongolian, fluent in English and a former ambassador to Australia, the Philippines and the United Kingdom, for her ‘gentle and cultivated’ manner and her talent for ‘speaking calmly and frankly’. (It’s hard to imagine a male spokesperson being described that way, but that’s another issue.)

In Fu Ying’s voice, the old slogan of proceeding ‘along the proper path to achieve the great renaissance of the Chinese nation’ sounded different — more an appeal than a command. Yet Fu’s dulcet tone does not augur a more benign attitude toward critics of the state. Living under Nationalist rule, the best-known Chinese writer of the twentieth century, Lu Xun (1881–1936), used the expression ‘human language’ to highlight the patriarchal nature of Chinese society and politics. He had placed his hopes in the then-besieged



Fu Ying.  
Photo:  
Roland Kemp

## Chen Guangbiao



Philanthropist Chen Guangbiao donates forty-three Geely sedans to former owners of Japanese cars in Nanjing, 12 October 2012.  
Source: Aboluowang.com

In August 2012, the standoff between China and Japan over the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands triggered an emotional response from the mainland Chinese public, as we have noted elsewhere. Protests broke out in a number of cities. In Beijing, protesters hurled eggs at the Japanese Embassy. In Xi'an, a man who was driving a Japanese car was attacked by an angry protester with a bicycle lock, leaving him paralysed. People also vandalised Japanese-made vehicles in several other cities, prompting many car owners to apply patriotic bumper stickers in the hope they would ward off attack.

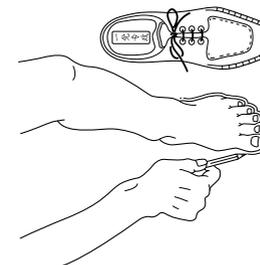
On 18 September 2012, China's official anniversary to commemorate the Anti-Japanese War, the entrepreneur, philanthropist and tireless self-promoter Chen Guangbiao (see 'Cross-straits Relations' in the 2012 *Yearbook*) offered people whose Japanese cars had been vandalised free replacements — brand new domestically made Geely sedans. On 12 October, at an open outdoor event held in Nanjing, scores of car-owning couples performed rituals, overseen by Chen, in which the wives placed green military-style hats onto their husbands' heads. Chen, dressed in green from head to toe, also sang songs solo on the roofs of cars and performed bicycle acrobatics. Aside from a symbolic nod to the concept of 'green commuting', the green hat was also meant to add a bit of cheekiness to the event — Chinese slang for cuckoldry is a wife giving her husband a green hat to wear (*dai lümaozi* 绿帽子). In all, Chen gave forty-three Geely sedans to the former owners of Japanese cars.

For several years, Chen has skillfully exploited news events for personal publicity. He first came to popular attention during the 2008 Wenchuan earthquake when he rushed to the quake zone with a fleet of sixty cranes and trucks, doling out cash on the way. He has frequently made front-page news: distributing cash to people in Taiwan, giving bicycles to pedestrians, announcing that he would change his name to 'Chen Ditan' (meaning 'Low Carbon Chen'), eating unfinished dishes left by customers at restaurants and giving away canned clean air in Beijing.

Communist Party, even though he detested the dogmatists it attracted. In his 1933 essay 'Human Language' (*Ren hua* 人话), he mused:

'Human language' is by no means singular for there are very many types: there's the language of the English and the language of the Chinese. In Chinese, we have 'the language of upper-class Chinese' and 'the language of lower-class Chinese'... . At present a lot of writers have taken to writing books in the style of letters to the young. We can take it as read that they are using 'human language' but the problem is we don't know which one. Why don't they write for older people? Aren't older people worth educating too? Or is it that they think of the young as pure and honest and thus easy to hoodwink?

Authoritarian power adopts the patriarchal posture of knowing what is in everyone's best interests, even if it conveys this via the 'gentle and cultivated' tones of a practiced female diplomat. It justifies its intolerance of criticism in terms of protecting that collective interest. In this regard, the present government under Xi Jinping has followed its predecessors by resorting to censorship, intimidation, arrest and detention whenever it perceives a threat to its interests. Because digital technology and the Internet have enabled increasing numbers of citizens to speak back to power, China's Communist Party leaders have made a special effort to sound more benign. But there is no getting around the fact that they continue to conceive of language as a tool of social control. We are not privy to how these leaders speak at home or among their intimates, but in public their language is *ex cathedra*.



FORUM



SCREEN  
AND  
TEXT

**FORUM**

## SCREEN AND TEXT

Popular Books and Films

Ang Lee and China's Oscar Angst

## POPULAR BOOKS AND FILMS

### TOP TEN FILMS IN CHINA IN 2012

The top earning imported films were:

- |     |   |                     |
|-----|---|---------------------|
| 1.  | <i>Titanic (Taitannike hao 泰坦尼克号)</i>   | 947.58 million yuan |
| 2.  | <i>Mission: Impossible — Ghost Protocol</i><br>( <i>Bu kenengde renwu: Gui ying xingdong</i><br>不可能的任务: 鬼影行动) | 674.71 million yuan |
| 3.  | <i>Life of Pi (Shaonian PI de qihuan piaoliu 少年PI的奇幻漂流)</i>   | 571.05 million yuan |
| 4.  | <i>The Avengers (Fuchouzhe lianmeng 复仇者联盟)</i>  | 567.92 million yuan |
| 5.  | <i>Men in Black III (Heiyiren san 黑衣人三)</i>   | 504.15 million yuan |
| 6.  | <i>Ice Age: Continental Drift</i><br>( <i>Bingchuan shidai 4: Dalu piaoyi 冰川时代4: 大陆漂移</i> )                   | 449.13 million yuan |
| 7.  | <i>Journey 2: The Mysterious Island</i><br>( <i>Dixin lixian 2: Shenmi dao 地心历险2: 神秘岛</i> )                   | 388.49 million yuan |
| 8.  | <i>The Dark Knight Rises (He'an qishi jueqi 黑暗骑士崛起)</i>   | 340.12 million yuan |
| 9.  | <i>The Expendables 2 (Gansidui 2 敢死队2)</i>  | 334.06 million yuan |
| 10. | <i>The Amazing Spider-Man</i><br>( <i>Chaofan zhizhuxia 超凡蜘蛛侠</i> )   | 11.51 million yuan  |



Film posters of the top four foreign films in 2012: *Titanic*; *Mission Impossible*; *Life of Pi*; *The Avengers*.  
Sources: bbs.hupu.com, Wretch.cc, The Sky Gene blog, Wikimedia Commons.

The top earning locally produced films were:

- 1. Lost in Thailand**  
(Ren zai jiongtu zhi Tai jiong 人再囧途之泰囧) 1.16 billion yuan
- 2. Painted Skin: The Resurrection**  
(Huapi II Fuhuo 画皮II 复活) 04.51 million yuan
- 3. CZ12 (Shi'er shengxiao 十二生肖)** 735.97 million yuan
- 4. Back to 1942 (1942)** 372 million yuan
- 5. Cold War (Hanzhan 寒战)** 253.61 million yuan
- 6. The Silent War (Tingfengzhe 听风者)** 233.74 million yuan
- 7. The Four (Si daming bu 四大名捕)** 192.17 million yuan
- 8. The Great Magician (Da moshushi 大魔术师)** 174.12 million yuan
- 9. Caught in the Web (Sousuo 搜索)** 173.54 million yuan
- 10. Mission Incredible: Adventures On the Dragon's Trail**  
(Xiyangyang huitailang zhi kaixin chuang longnian 喜羊羊灰太狼之开心闯龙年) 165.95 million yuan



Scene from the domestic block buster *Lost in Thailand*.  
Source: ImagineChina



Film posters of top domestic films: *Painted Skin: The Resurrection*; *CZ12*; *Back to 1942*; *Cold War*.  
Sources: Qianqiandy.com, Fmoviemag.com, Wikimedia Commons, Wandafilm.

## THE TOP TEN MOST POPULAR FOREIGN WRITERS IN 2012

The following list published in Huaxi Metropolitan Daily (Huaxi dushibao 华西都市报) is based on book sales figures in China:

**J.K. Rowling** J.K. 罗琳

Income from royalties: 15 million yuan  
(US\$2.41 million)

Bestseller: *The Casual Vacancy*  
《偶发空缺》

Country: United Kingdom

Age: 47

**Gabriel García Márquez**

加夫列尔·加西亚·马尔克斯

Income from royalties: 6 million yuan  
(US\$964,800)

Bestseller: *One Hundred Years of*

*Solitude* 《百年孤独》

Country: Colombia

Age: 85

**Walter Isaacson** 沃尔特·艾萨克森

Income from royalties: 5 million yuan  
(US\$804,000)

Bestseller: *Steve Jobs* 《史蒂夫·乔布斯传》

Country: USA

Age: 60

**Christian Jolibois** 克利斯提昂·约里波瓦

Income from royalties: 3.3 million yuan  
(US\$530,600)

Bestseller: *The Little Hen* series for  
children 《不一样的卡梅拉》

Country: France

Age: 64

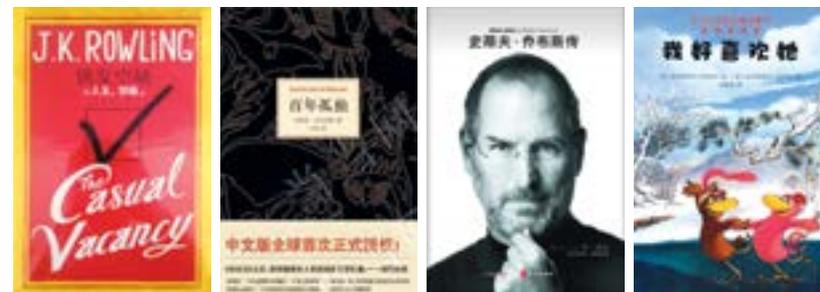
**Haruki Murakami** 村上春树

Income from royalties: 3 million yuan  
(US\$482,400)

Bestseller: *1Q84* 《1Q84》

Country: Japan

Age: 63



Bestsellers in 2012: *The Casual Vacancy*; *One Hundred Years of Solitude*; *Steve Jobs*; *The Little Hen* series.  
Sources: Sina Weibo, QTC.com.cn, Chinamac.com, Shaoer.book110.cn.

**Higashino Keigo** 东野圭吾

Income from royalties: 2.8 million yuan  
(US\$450,200)

Bestseller: *White Night* 《白夜行》

Country: Japan

Age: 54

**Thomas Brezina** 托马斯·布热齐纳

Income from royalties: 2.6 million yuan  
(US\$418,100)

Bestseller: *A Mystery for You and The*

*Tiger Team* series for children

《冒险小虎队》

Country: Austria

Age: 49

**Kuroyanagi Tetsuko** 黑柳彻子

Income from royalties: 2 million yuan  
(US\$321,600)

Bestseller: *Totto-chan, the Little Girl at the Window* 《窗边的小豆豆》

Country: Japan

Age: 79

**Dan Brown** 丹·布朗

Income from royalties: 1.6 million yuan  
(US\$257,300)

Bestseller: *The Da Vinci Code*

《达·芬奇密码》

Country: U.S.

Age: 48

**Inamori Kazuo** 稻盛和夫

Income from royalties: 1.5 million yuan  
(US\$241,200)

Bestseller: *The Principles to Living* series

《活法》

Country: Japan

Age: 80



A Chinese version of Haruki Murakami's work *1Q84*.

Photo: Wu Fake 发课吴



## ANG LEE AND CHINA'S OSCAR ANGST

**A**NG LEE is a Taiwan-born American film director, screenwriter and producer. His many films, in both Chinese and English, have won critical acclaim: *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (2000) won him the Best Director prize at the Academy Awards (Oscars), the Golden Globes, and the BAFTAs. *Brokeback Mountain* (2005) won the Golden Lion at the prestigious Venice Festival and Best Director prize (Lee's second) at the Academy Awards. Lee's latest success

is *Life of Pi*, which won the 2013 Oscar awards for Best Director, Best Cinematography, Best Visual Effects and Best Original Score.

As Hollywood's pre-eminent ethnically Chinese director, Lee's life and career is of considerable interest to Chinese media and Internet commenters; his latest Oscar awards provoked many reactions in China. Generally, reactions to Lee on the Chinese Mainland fall into three categories:

- The first is one of hand-wringing and complaint, mostly on social media, about why the People's Republic has still failed to produce an Oscar-winning director. Some people noted that in his Oscars acceptance speech, Lee thanked Taiwan for making the film possible, and asked when the Mainland would get such a chance. State media organisations talk about



Ang Lee introducing *Life of Pi* at the 35th Mill Valley Film Festival.  
Photo: Cindy Maram

the same problem but use a different tone. For example, an editorial in the *Guangming Daily* asked whether Lee's Oscar should be a cause for joy or a cause for concern. It concluded by emphasising that *Life of Pi* was a success for Lee himself as well for American cinema, but not for the Chinese film industry, neither on the Mainland nor in Taiwan.

- A second kind of reaction focuses on the factors behind Lee's success. A common explanation attributes it to family values and the support of his wife, Jane Lee, a microbiologist. The *Tianjin Daily* (*Tianjin ribao* 天津日报) and the business website Hexun 和讯 for example, both ran commentaries crediting his successes to the guidance provided by his wife. The *Wuhan Morning News* (*Wuhan chenbao* 武汉晨报) asserted that



Jane Lee.  
Source:  
Apo-win.com

Lee's unyielding commitment to realising his dreams 'should be copied by other professionals'. Speaking more specifically to the film industry, the PRC State Council Office for Taiwan Affairs said that 'Ang Lee is a model for the entire Chinese film industry, not just on the Mainland'.



Ang Lee's acclaimed films: *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (2000); *Brokeback Mountain* (2005).  
Sources: Amanda Maede, IMP Awards.

- The third category comprises commentaries that try to diminish Lee's success by reporting negative stories associated with *Life of Pi*. For example, the *Information Times* (*Xinxi shibao* 信息时报) reported incorrectly that some American newspapers had refused to print Ang Lee's picture because their editors couldn't believe that Spielberg's Lincoln had lost out to *Life of Pi*. Likewise, an article entitled 'Many controversies surround Ang Lee's Oscar' (*Li Ang duo Aosika shifei duo* 李安夺奥斯卡是非多) chronicled complaints made by the special effects company Rhythm and Hues after Lee failed to acknowledge their work during his acceptance speech.

Nonetheless, *Life of Pi* was very popular with Chinese cinemagoers, taking US\$17 million at the box office in its first week.



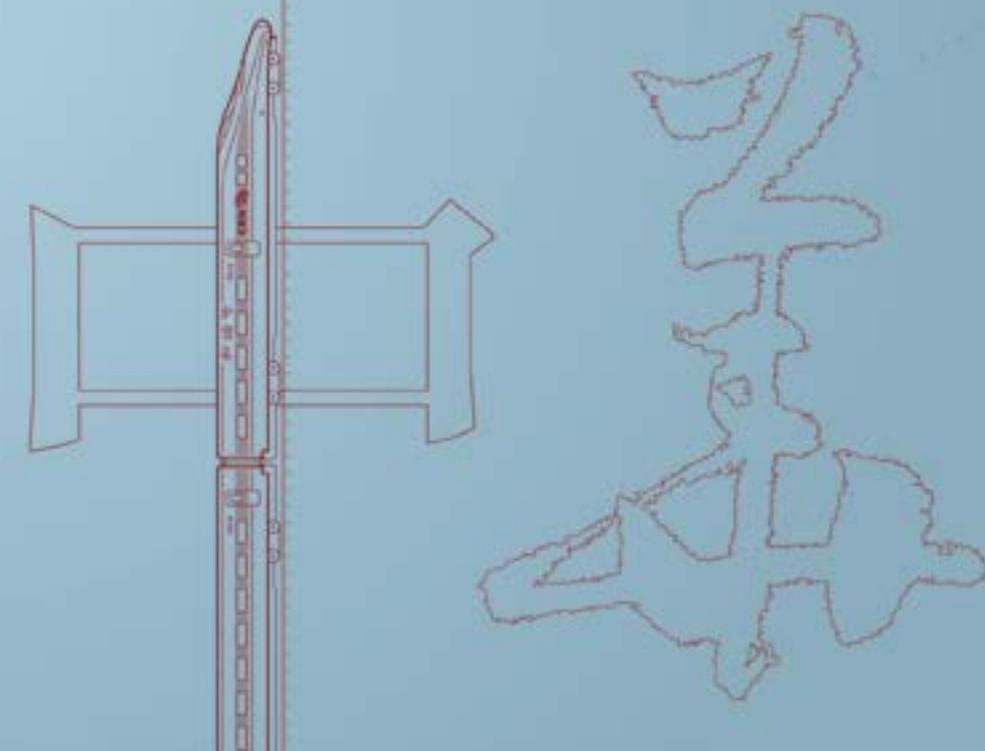
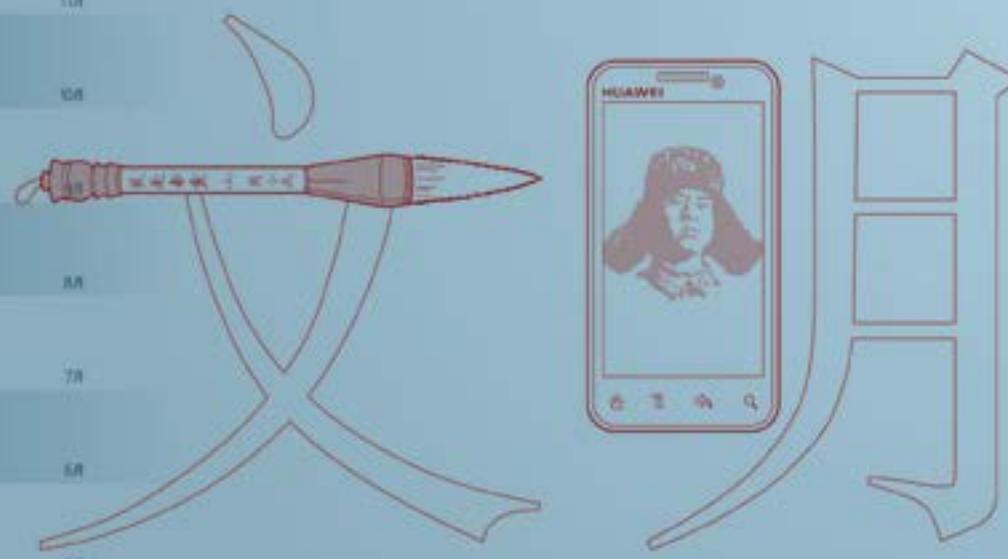
# CONCLUSION

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CONCLUSION

A CLASH OF CIVILISATIONS

Geremie R. Barmé



Li Changchun — a member of the Communist Party's ruling Politburo Standing Committee — declared in March 2007 that China should develop a Harmonious Society based on 'core socialist values' (*shehuizhuyi hexin jiazhi tixi* 社会主义核心价值观体系). Party ideologues explained these values in a press release that expanded on Li's comments:



Li Changchun.  
Source: Politics.  
people.cn

Marxism is the leading theory, while Socialism with Chinese Characteristics is the common goal. A nationalist spirit founded on patriotism and a public spirit based on reform and innovation should be developed, and the core socialist values should also incorporate a socialist concept of honour and disgrace ...

The values that Li outlined in his speech are often contrasted with 'universal values' (*pushi jiazhi* 普世价值), such as the concepts of human rights and basic freedoms. Although government officials generally dismiss universal values as coming from the West or for being promoted by liberal publications and liberal intellectuals calling for political reform, they occasionally acknowledge that they also have a place in China. In 2007, although he did not use the term 'universal values', then Premier Wen Jiabao wrote that 'science, democracy, rule of law, freedom and human rights are not unique to capitalism, but are values commonly pursued by mankind over a long period of history'. His comments, however, did not receive public endorsement by other top leaders.



On duty.  
Photo: Hsing Wei



The Pangu building in Beijing.  
Photo: Hsing Wei

Since 2008, a debate on the two value systems has once more unfolded in the Chinese press. Like many other aspects of civilising China that feature in this book, the discussion harks back to ideological contestations that began in the late nineteenth century. Before the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, China's Communist Party leaders committed themselves to creating a new democratic China that would champion equality, human rights and economic prosperity — all of which they accused the previous Nationalist Party government of failing to realise. Soon after 1949, however, Mao Zedong and his comrades established a political system that featured very particular definitions of democracy and human rights: the former, for example, was equated with 'the dictatorship of the proletariat' and the latter included the ability to rise from poverty but not freedom of



The backlit roof of a training centre in Xi'an.  
Photo: Renato Ganoza

expression. Then, in the 1950s, a series of ideological purges were aimed at eliminating support for the kinds of Western political and cultural values that were now seen as a threat to China's unique form of socialism.

In the ongoing clash of civilisations in China itself — between the Marxist-Leninist party-state and its values, and the advocates of Western-inspired universal values — the party-state typically couches its arguments in language first developed in the Soviet Union and the early years of the People's Republic. In 1983, when Deng Xiaoping's five-year-old policy of Reform and an Open Door to the outside world had seen a rise in free-thinking in the universities and among influential cultural figures, the Party launched the Anti-Spiritual Pollution campaign. As in other ideological purges, the campaign promoted a vision of socialist-Chinese spiritual civilisation that included mundane details of social behaviour (no spitting) as well as ideological ideals (no 'misty' or politically ambiguous poetry and definitely no 'bourgeois liberalisation' that would champion electoral democracy and free speech) and that, in its broadest form, continues to hold sway in China today.

Yet the abiding contradiction between the domestic priorities of the one-party state, what we call 'official China', and its desire to be a respected and integrated member of the international community generates friction not only with the outside world (which can react with outrage, for example, at the imprisonment of dissidents and human rights abuses), but also within the People's Republic itself. As Chinese society evolves and its middle class burgeons the debate over values continues and grows. As we have seen in this *Yearbook*, a major focus in 2013 has been constitutional governance. Issues to do with government accountability, independent legal oversight of politics and the economy, media freedom and individual rights will not go away anytime soon.

As in the late nineteenth century, independent Chinese cultural figures and thinkers judge the level of China's civilisation by standards that may be at odds with the ones of those in power. When, in early 1989, some liberal thinkers agitated for political change in the prelude to what became a nationwide protest movement, the poet Bei Dao wrote:



Bei Dao.  
Source:  
Wikimedia  
Commons

Capitalism has no monopoly on the protection of human rights and freedom of speech; they are the standard of any modern, civilised society.

I believe every Chinese intellectual realises how extremely tortuous China's path to Reform is. However, during this process, the rulers must become accustomed to hearing different, even discordant, voices. It is beneficial to develop such a habit; it will mark the beginning of China's progress toward becoming a modern and civilised society.

Complicating the debate about clashing values systems are issues of patriotism and loyalty, which are particularly relevant in China's restive borderlands. During the Lhasa riots of April 2008 Chang Ping asked in a *Southern Metropolis Daily* editorial: 'If we use nationalism as a weapon to resist West-



Chang Ping.  
Source:  
DR Network

erners, then how can we persuade the ethnic minorities to abandon their own nationalism and join mainstream nation-building? Apart from the official government position, will the media be permitted to discuss the matter freely and uncover more truths?' Given that the spectre of ethnic separatism (labelled 'splittism') is a major political bugbear, the editorial, not surprisingly, attracted heavy criticism online for its seemingly 'traitorous' tone. Soon after, Wen Feng (an alias) wrote an op-ed for the *Beijing Evening News* in which he accused Chang Ping's editorial of playing fast and loose not only with the facts but also of abnegating moral responsibility. Wen also criticised Chang for holding values in which 'only things of the West are universal and need to be upheld'.



'Charter 08'.  
Source: inmediaHK.net

The following month, editors at the *Southern Weekly* waded into the debate, praising the government's response to the Wenchuan earthquake in Sichuan for respecting 'universal values'. Like Chang Ping's editorial for the *Southern Metropolis Daily*, this editorial attracted allegations of traitorous attitudes from conservative groups who read any advocacy of universal values as a Western plot to undermine the Communist Party. The controversy re-emerged during the August 2008 Beijing Olympics. The official slogan of the Games was clearly universalist: 'One World, One Dream'.

Conservative commentators skewered the slogan. Dissidents and liberal academics, on the other hand, published 'Charter 08' — a manifesto supporting universal values — under the aegis of the well-known writer (and now jailed Nobel Peace Prize laureate) Liu Xiaobo.

In his report to the Eighteenth Party National Congress in November 2012, however, President Hu Jintao spoke about 'universal values' and 'core socialist values' without conveying any sense that there might be a contradiction between the two. As Hu put it, one of China's development goals is to 'constantly increase the credibility of the system of justice, and to effectively respect and protect human rights' (*sifa gongxinli buduan tigao, renquan dedao qieshi zunzhong he baozhang* 司法公信力不断提高, 人权得到切实尊重和保障). Hu went on to say that democracy, freedom, equality, justice and rule of law (*minzhu, ziyou, pingdeng, gongzheng, fazhi*



Lily pad lights.  
Photo: Hsing Wei

民主、自由、平等、公正、法治) were to be 'encouraged' (*changdao* 倡导), after which he went on to reiterate the need for an 'active cultivation of socialist core values' (*jiji peiyu shehuizhuyi hexin jiazhi guan* 积极培育社会主义核心价值观).

Speaking at a National Thought Work Conference on 20 August 2013, the new party leader Xi Jinping reiterated the importance of 'core socialist values' and a tireless struggle to maintain ideological unity in the face of a rapidly changing world. China's economic achievements and relative social cohesion at a time of continued global uncertainty, he said, give the Party reason to celebrate its successes and persevere on its chosen path. As it does so, Xi emphasised, the Party needs 'to tell the China story well, to make sure China's voice is heard' internationally (*jiang hao Zhongguo gushi, chuanbo hao Zhongguo shengyin* 讲好中国故事, 传播好中国声音).

### The Struggle Against Rumours



Chinese-American investor and Weibo celebrity Xue Manzi (Charles Xue) at an event in Beijing, 20 April 2012.

Source: ImagineChina

According to reports in the Hong Kong media, at the August 2013 National Thought Work Conference, Xi Jinping spoke about the need to purge online rumours and for the state to build a 'strong army to seize ground of new media'.

On 20 August, Beijing police detained several people connected with Beijing Erma Interactive Marketing and Planning, including Internet celebrity Qin Huohuo, on suspicion of rumour-mongering. Later official reports accused Qin of being behind slander of the Chinese Red Cross, a para-state organization whose reputation had been devastated by criticism online, particularly on Sina Weibo.

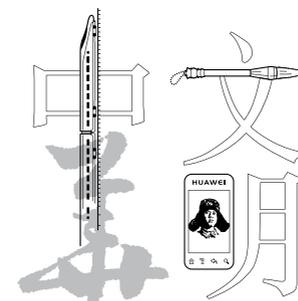
On August 23, Chinese-born American-passport-holding businessman and famous microblogger Charles Xue (Xue Biquan, or Xue Manzi) was arrested and accused of soliciting prostitutes. Over the next two weeks, Xue was featured in multiple China Central Television (CCTV) news shows in which he confessed firstly to soliciting prostitutes, and then to misleading his more than twelve million followers on Weibo for vanity; Xinhua reported that 'he offered to appear handcuffed as a negative example to publicise the online rumors crackdown'.

As part of the same campaign, another famous microblogger, the real estate developer Pan Shiyi was featured in a CCTV package, stuttering and agreeing with the interviewer that 'online rumours' could harm society.

Such triumphalism masks the fact that there is an abiding clash of cultures within the Chinese Communist Party itself. Its strict materialist worldview precludes any endorsement of abstract human worth and universal value. But, rhetorically at least, it recognises the potentially positive role of values that, like Marxism itself, first evolved in the West. Some within the party-state don't see these as mutually exclusive. In Chapter Four, Jiang Bixin, Deputy Chief Justice of the Supreme People's Court, is quoted as saying:

Concepts such as democracy, freedom, equality, rule of law, justice, integrity, and harmony should be incorporated into core socialist values ... . These concepts have never been merely patents of the bourgeoisie, but are the product of the civilising process which is commonly created by all human beings.

Perhaps it is in similar embrace of both socialist and universal values that legal and party thinkers will discover a third theoretical way forward — one that affirms the achievements of the Party while also allowing for it to moderate its ideological stance to fit the increasingly sophisticated demands of its people as part of its own civilising process.



## CHRONOLOGY

*The following outline chronology covers some of the key events touched on in this book.*

### 2012

**29 June:** Bloomberg publishes a report on the business interests of Xi Jinping's extended family. It alleges that Xi's relatives have amassed a fortune worth US\$376 million, though no assets were traced to Xi, his wife, or his daughter. China's Great Firewall blocks Bloomberg's website within hours of the article's publication.

**7 July:** Japanese Prime Minister Noda Yoshihiko announces that Japan is preparing to purchase the uninhabited Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands from their owners, the Kurihara family. China's Foreign Ministry spokesperson Liu Weimin responded that 'China's holy territory is not "up for sale" to anyone'.

**20 July:** Nearly ninety departments of the Chinese government release data on their administrative expenses to the public. The majority of government departments overspent by at least 100 million yuan, to a total of 39.2 billion in excess of budget.

**22 July:** Beijing is hit by the biggest rainstorm in sixty-one years; seventy-seven people die in floods, mostly in rural areas to the south of the city.

**29 July:** Thousands of Hong Kong residents demonstrate against the Hong Kong government's plan to introduce mandatory 'national-education' classes to Hong Kong's public schools by 2015.

**31 July:** An expensive promotional video made by the Ministry for Railways that names the noted filmmaker Zhang Yimou as director in the credits attracts widespread public criticism.

**15 August:** Chinese protesters demonstrate against Japan's plans to buy the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands in front of the Japanese embassy in Beijing. The next day, Japanese police detain fourteen Chinese people, both PRC and Taiwan passport holders, who have sailed to the Diaoyu Islands in small craft to 'protect the islands'. The Chinese Foreign Ministry proposes a negotiated settlement with Japan.

**21 August:** The wife of former Chongqing Party Secretary Bo Xilai, Bogu Kailai (as the state media call her), is given a suspended death sentence for the intentional homicide in 2011 of her business associate, the Englishman Neil Heywood. She does not appeal.

**25 August:** The Yangmingtan Bridge in Harbin collapses only ten months after it was opened. The city government blames overloading.

**7 September:** A 5.7 magnitude earthquake strikes Yunnan and Guizhou provinces, killing sixty-seven people.

**15–16 September:** A second wave of urban anti-Japanese protests sweeps China. The protests occasionally turn violent: in Xi'an, a man wielding a bicycle lock drags the driver of a Toyota out of his car and beats him unconscious.

**15 September:** Following an unexplained two-week absence, Xi Jinping reappears in public and makes an impromptu speech at the China Agricultural University in Beijing. His absence had sparked rumours about his health and raised questions about political stability.

**25 September:** The first Chinese aircraft carrier, the *Liaoning*, successfully completes sea trials.

**29 September:** Former Chongqing party boss Bo Xilai is expelled from the Communist Party. The state press says he is guilty of abuse of power, bribery and inappropriate sexual relationships.

**11 October:** Chinese author Mo Yan wins the Nobel Prize for Literature.

**15 October:** King Sihanouk of Cambodia – 'an old friend of China' – dies in Beijing. Two days later, the national flag at Tiananmen Square is lowered to half-mast in his honour.

**25 October:** The *New York Times* publishes an article exposing the 'hidden riches' of the family of Wen Jiabao. The Great Firewall immediately blocks the newspaper's website.

**8 November:** The Eighteenth National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party begins in Beijing.

**16 November:** Xi Jinping is elected General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party and Chairman of the Party's Central Military Commission. The new, slimmed-down seven-member Politburo Standing Committee consists of Xi, Li Keqiang, Zhang Dejiang, Yu Zhengshen, Liu Yunshan, Wang Qishan and Zhang Gaoli.

**10 December:** Police in Aba county, Sichuan province, arrest two men they accuse of organising a spate of self-immolations. Tibetan exile groups report that since 2009 more than ninety Tibetans have self-immolated in protest against Chinese rule. Xinhua News Agency accusing the Dalai Lama of instigating young Tibetans to set themselves on fire.

**27 December:** The Beijing–Guangzhou high-speed train line is formally inaugurated.

## 2013

**3 January:** The New Year's letter to readers of *Southern Weekly* — a newspaper with a longstanding reputation for hard-hitting journalism — is censored. Protests erupt in support of the newspaper.

**8 January:** Meng Jianzhu, Chairman of the Party's Politico-Legal Commission, announces reforms to the system of Re-education Through Labour.

**14 January:** After sustained, extreme pollution levels in Beijing, city officials announce for the first time that smog had reached the highest levels of the classification system.

**13 February:** The State Council criticises North Korea's decision to carry out a nuclear test and summons the North Korean ambassador to express China's displeasure.

**19 February:** Mandiant, a US-based Internet security company, alleges that hackers affiliated with the Chinese military and government have been carrying out a prolonged and wide-ranging espionage campaign against US targets.

**1 March:** Burmese national Naw Kham is executed in Yunnan province for murdering Chinese sailors on the Mekong River in 2011.

**9 March:** Sightings of dead pigs floating in the Huangpu River, which supplies some of Shanghai's drinking water, are traced to farmers in Jiaying, Zhejiang province who dumped more than 10,000 pigs in the river.

**11 March:** The government announces that it will streamline its bureaucracy by merging maritime agencies, combining the two media administrations, bringing the Family Planning Commission under the Health Ministry, but splitting up the scandal-ridden Ministry of Railways.

**30 March:** A landslide at a mine in Tibet buries eighty-three people. The media report that President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Keqiang are overseeing rescue efforts.

**10 April:** Former Railways Minister Liu Zhijun is charged with corruption and abuse of power. Liu was arrested in February 2011 as part of a far-reaching audit of misappropriated funds in the Ministry. He was given a suspended death sentence on 8 July 2013.

**20 April:** A 7.0 magnitude earthquake strikes Lushan, Sichuan province, killing 160 people and affecting the lives of more than 150,000.

**May:** An internal directive to university party committees orders teachers and party members not to discuss subjects such as 'universal values', press freedom and civil society.

**9 May:** A Philippine warship attacks a Taiwanese fishing vessel, killing a Taiwanese fisherman.

**12 May:** Memorials commemorate the fifth anniversary of the 2008 Wenchuan earthquake in which almost 70,000 people died.

**20 May:** Former US National Security Agency employee Edward Snowden tells the *Guardian* in Hong Kong that the US government has hacked into servers in Hong Kong and in the Chinese mainland. Snowden stays in Hong Kong until 23 June, when he flies to Moscow.

**4 June:** A fire destroys a factory owned by the Jilin Poultry Company; 119 people die.

**11 June:** *Shenzhou-10*, China's fifth manned spaceflight, launches to rendezvous with the space lab *Tiangong-1*. Astronauts give science lectures to high school students from space. The craft successfully returns to earth after fifteen days in space, China's longest manned space flight to date.

**20 June:** The former Party Secretary of Chongqing's Beibei district, Lei Zhengfu, is arrested for corruption after a video of him having sex with a young woman was released on the Internet.

**20 June:** A cash crunch in China, apparently caused by the People's Bank of China freezing loans to other banks, causes uncertainty in stock markets.

**26 June:** Twenty-four people are killed in a conflict in Lukqun, near Lop Nur in Xinjiang. Government reports say that 'terrorists' attacked an army base and government buildings and set fire to police cars.

**8 July:** An Asiana Airlines plane crashes at San Francisco airport. The only fatalities are two Chinese high school girls on their way to summer camp in the US.

**12 July:** The government launches an anti-corruption campaign targeting the pharma and health care industries: twenty senior officials of GlaxoSmithKline China are charged with accepting bribes. Investigations into price-fixing also target infant formula manufacturers.

**15 July:** A court in Hunan province awards Tang Hui, the mother of a rape victim, 2,941 yuan (US\$429) for wrongful sentencing to a labour camp in 2012 after she publicly demanded that the men convicted of kidnapping, raping and prostituting her eleven-year-old daughter receive severe punishment.

**17 July:** A group of *chengguan*, the low-paid municipal employees tasked with keeping order on city streets, kill a melon vendor in Linwu, Hunan province, sparking public outrage.

**22 July:** Eighty-nine people die in Gansu when a 6.6 magnitude earthquake strikes the province.

**9 August:** Liu Tienan, former Deputy Director of the National Development and Reform Commission, head of the National Energy Administration and reported associate of former Politburo member and security chief Zhou Yongkang, is arrested on corruption charges. In late August and early September, the government investigates senior officials from China National Petroleum Corporation (which Zhou headed from 1996 to 1998) including Jiang Jiemin and Zhou's former secretary Li Hualin.

**19 August:** Xi Jinping gives a speech to officials responsible for propaganda and information control, calling for the crushing of online rumours, and the building of a 'strong army to seize the ground of new media'.

**22–26 August:** The trial of Bo Xilai, former party boss of Dalian and Chongqing, begins in Jinan, Shandong province. The trial lasts for five days, during which Bo mounts a vigorous defense. His wife, Gu Kailai, testifies

against him from prison via a video played at the trial. Bo blames the entire fiasco on Wang Lijun, his former police chief, whom he says was in love with Gu Kailai. Selected parts of the trial are conveyed to the public and the media via the Sina Weibo account of the Jinan Intermediate People's Court.

**23 August:** Chinese-born, American-passport-holding businessman and famous microblogger Charles Xue (aka Xue Manzi) is arrested on prostitution charges and humiliated in multiple China Central Television broadcasts; Xinhua reports that 'he offered to appear handcuffed as a negative example to publicise the online rumors crackdown'.

**9 September:** Xinhua News Agency reports that China's Supreme People's Court has issued a new law that states 'Internet users who share false information that is defamatory or harms the national interest face up to three years in prison if their posts are reviewed 5,000 times or forwarded 500 times'.

**22 September:** Bo Xilai is sentenced to life in prison by the Jinan Intermediate People's Court after being found guilty on charges of bribery, embezzlement and abuse of power.



## PEOPLE AND PERSONALITIES

*The following is a list of people mentioned in this book arranged alphabetically.*

### A

Tony Abbott  
Ai Weiwei 艾未未  
Nicolas Anelka  
Ashin 阿信

### B

David Bandurski  
David Beckham  
Daniel A. Bell  
Joe Biden  
Bo Xilai 薄熙来  
Bo Yang 柏杨  
Thomas Brezina  
Dan Brown  
John Brumby  
George Bush

### C

Cai Bin 蔡斌  
Rowan Callick  
Melissa Chan  
Jackie Chan (Cheng Long 成龙)  
Chan Wan (Chen Yun 陈云)  
Chen Guangbiao 陈光标  
Chen Guangcheng 陈光诚  
Chen Guangfu 陈光福  
Chen Kaige 陈凯歌  
Chen Kegui 陈可贵  
Chen Lijun 陈立军  
Chen Peide 陈培德  
Chen Quanguo 陈全国  
Chen Youxi 陈有西  
Chen Yuan 陈元  
Chen Yun 陈云  
Chen Ziyao 陈自瑶  
Amy Cheung (Zhang Xiaoxian 张小娴)

Cheng Yizhong 程益中  
 Chiang Kai-shek 蒋介石/蒋中正  
 Horace Chin Wan-kan  
 (Chen Yungen 陳雲根)  
 Charlotte Chou (Zou Wanling 邹婉玲)  
 James Clapper  
 Bill Clinton  
 Hillary Clinton  
 Cui Tiankai 崔天凯

**D**

Dai Qing 戴晴  
 Dai Xu 戴旭  
 Dai Yulin 戴玉林  
 Deng Xiaoping 邓小平  
 Deng Yuwen 邓聿文  
 Ding Guoqi 丁国旗  
 Ding Jinhao 丁锦昊  
 Ding Zhijian 丁志健  
 Ding Zilin 丁子霖  
 Tashi Dolma (Zhaxi Zhuoma 扎西卓玛)  
 Dong Mingzhu 董明珠  
 Dong Yong 董勇  
 Alexander Downer  
 Didier Drogba  
 Du Haishan 杜海山  
 Du Shicheng 杜世成  
 Du Zuying 杜祖贻

**F**

Fang Binxing 方滨兴  
 Fang Xingdong 方兴东  
 Fang Zhouzi 方舟子  
 Thomas Friedman  
 Fu Chengyu 傅成玉  
 Fu Ying 傅莹

**G**

Gao Xingjian 高行健  
 Ge Mingqiang 葛民强  
 Malusi Gigaba  
 Julia Gillard  
 Gong Ai'ai 龚爱爱  
 Gong Li 巩俐  
 Gu Kailai (Bogu Kailai) 谷开来  
 Guo Jingming 郭敬明  
 Guo Meimei (Baby) 郭美美  
 Guo Shuqing 郭树清  
 Guo Zhiyuan 郭志媛

**H**

Ha Wen 哈文  
 Hai Rui 海瑞  
 Han Deqiang 韩德强  
 Han Han 韩寒  
 Han Henglin 韩亨林  
 Hao Tiechuan 郝鐵川  
 He Chongyuan 何崇元  
 He Guoqiang 贺国强  
 He Jiong 何炅

Neil Heywood  
 Sara Jane Ho 何佩嵘  
 Hong Lei 洪磊  
 Hong Huang 洪晃  
 Hou Hsiao-hsien (Hou Xiaoxian 侯孝賢)  
 Hu Angang 胡鞍钢  
 Hu Chunhua 胡春华  
 Hu Jintao 胡锦涛  
 Hu Lianhe 胡联合  
 Hu Shih 胡適  
 Stern Hu (Hu Shitai 胡士泰)  
 Hu Shuli 胡舒立  
 Hu Xijin 胡锡进  
 Huaisu 怀素  
 Huang Nubo 黄怒波  
 Huang Yasheng 黄亚生  
 Huang Zhu 黄铸  
 John Huntsman

**I**

Inamori Kazuo 稻盛和夫  
 Walter Isaacson

**J**

Ji Xuguang 纪许光  
 Jia Qinglin 贾庆林  
 Jiang Bixin 江必新  
 Jiang Ming 姜明  
 Jiang Ping 江平  
 Jiang Qing 江青

Jiang Zemin 江泽民  
 Jiang Qing 蒋庆  
 Jiang Wei-shui 蔣渭水  
 Jiang Yanyong 蒋彦永  
 Jiang Yifan 蒋佚凡  
 Steve Jobs  
 Christian Jolibois  
 Ogmundur Jonasson  
 Alan Jones

**K**

Kang Huijun 康慧军  
 Kang Xiaoguang 康晓光  
 Kang Youwei 康有为  
 Higashino Keigo 东野圭吾  
 Kuroyanagi Tetsuko 黑柳彻子  
 Kim Jong-il  
 Kong Qingdong 孔庆东

**L**

Ang Lee (Li An 李安)  
 Jane Lee 林惠嘉  
 Lee Hsien Loong  
 Ambrose Lee Siu-kwong 李少光  
 Lei Feng 雷锋  
 Lei Jun 雷军  
 Lei Zhengfu 雷政富  
 Eric X. Li 李世默  
 Li Guoqiang 李国强  
 Li Hao 李浩

Li Ji 李骥  
 Li Jie 李劫  
 Li Jungang 李俊刚  
 Li Kaifu 李开复  
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