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### FORUM

## BORDERLANDS AND CUTTING EDGES

Excerpt from

CHINA STORY YEARBOOK 2013 CIVILISING CHINA

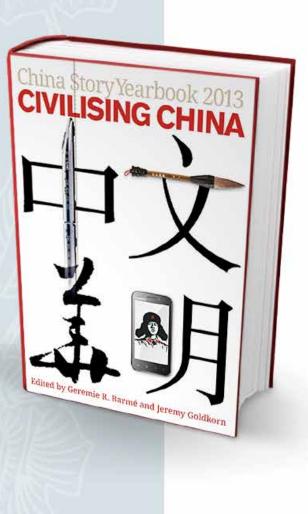
文明中华

EDITED BY Geremie R. Barmé AND Jeremy Goldkorn





ANU College of Asia & the Pacific Canberra, Australia



## The China Story 中國的故事

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A s 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.



Chinese football fans, Guiyang, June 2011. Source: ImagineChina



## BORDERLANDS AND CUTTING EDGES

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## PATRIOTISM AND ITS DISCONTENTS

## Sebastian Veg

THE 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.



Wan-Kan,

academic.

Photo: Maria

In 2013, however, for the first time, the very idea of patriotism was publicly disputed by increasingly vocal 'nativcultural comist' or 'localist' groups mentator and usually referred to as

Caetano 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 separate 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



Anti-National Education protesters. Photo: Ansel Ma

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 inflect patriotism towards the 'people' and away from the state, proved controversial this year, is the anti-National Education (guoging jiaoyu



Protesters supporting 'Scholarism' 學民思潮, 29 July 2012. Photo: Kajadamkaj

CHINA STORY YEARBOOK | Patriotism and its Discontents 2013 | Sebastian Veg

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-



Social movement to call for the Chief Executive of Hong Kong, C.Y. Leung, to step down, 30 December 2012. Photo: Napcoffee

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.



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## CIVILITY ACROSS THE STRAITS

### Mark Harrison

AIWAN AND mainland China **L** 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 雨岸服務貿易協議), 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 Taiwan 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 econoCHINA STORY YEARBOOK | Civility Across the Straits 2013 | Mark Harrison

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 Yingjeou in the Presidential Palace.



Source:

fled Communism by relocating to Taiwan in

Ma Ying-jeou, President of Taiwan. 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 戲雪) — a song that evokes the exodus of Chinese Nationalist refugees who

1948–1949. His speaks about the Taiwan of his imagination — a place that is populated

actress. Source: by well-known film-Mtime com

Sylvia Chang,

singer and

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.

ple, 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.

Through Taiwan as a counter-exam-

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 Tai-

Minister for Culture. Source: Asiasociety.org wan, the essayist and cultural critic

Lung Ying-tai,

Taiwan's first

Lung Ying-tai became Taiwan's first

Minister for Culture, heading up a new ministry created out of the old Council for Cultural Affairs and the Government Information Office. On a visit to Zhongshan University in Guangzhou to give a public lecture, Lung was asked about Han Han's essay. In her response, she celebrated Han Han has having the kind of voice a healthy society needs. She also said that Taiwan demonstrated that Chinese culture at its heart is one of compassion. Lung said that for people like Han Han, the last sixty years on the Mainland has been an experience of

political struggle that has left a spiritual wound, and that the past two decades of economic hyper-development has left Mainlanders hardpressed 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

Taxi in downtown Taipei. Photo: George Ruiz



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—originallypublished 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**<sup>NE</sup> 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 foCHINA STORY YEARBOOK | The Minorities: Civilised Yet? 2013 | David Brophy 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 guestion 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 mem308 309

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.

sociologist. Source: Russian Council

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, Sohu 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

312 313

(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.

for details.

#### 7. Mo Yan

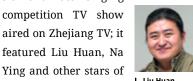


The Shandong-born novelist who won the 2012 Nobel Prize for Literature — see Chapter 7

Mo Yan. Photo: Howard Goldblatt

#### 8. Voice of China (Zhongguo hao shengvin 中国好声音)

Na Ying. China's licensed ver-Photo: George Chen sion of a Dutch singing



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.

#### 11.2012

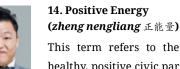
Contrary to online buzz and hysteria about the Mayan calendar, the world did not end on 21 December.

#### 12. WeChat (Weixin 微信)

Tencent's fast-growing mobile phonebased 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.



Psy.

Source:

Project

The Korea

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



featured Liu Huan, Na Ying and other stars of yesteryear as judges.

#### 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·甄缳传) 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 'Lin-



streak in Jeremy Lin. Source: jeremylinshuhao.com

### sanity' in the US and in China.

#### 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).



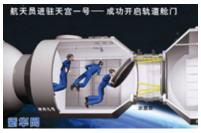
## LEADING SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY STORIES

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.

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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

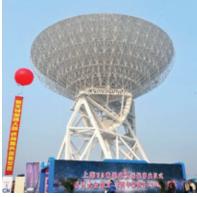
- On 29 July, China successfully conducted tests on its new 120-tonnethrust liquid oxygen and kerosene engine for its new generation carrier rocket, the Long March-5.
- Research led by Professor Pan Jianwei on the experimendemonstration

tal

Professor of topological error Pan Jianwei. correction with an Source: News.cn 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 Innovax Biotech Co. Ltd. in Fujian province.

• 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

