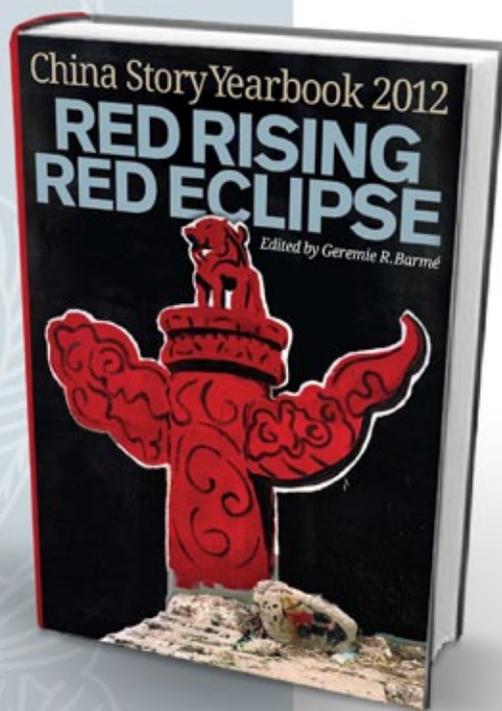


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中国的故事

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VOICES FROM THE BLOGOSPHERE I

Excerpt from
CHINA STORY YEARBOOK 2012

RED RISING RED ECLIPSE

Edited by
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Australian Centre on China in the World
中华全球研究中心 / 中華全球研究中心



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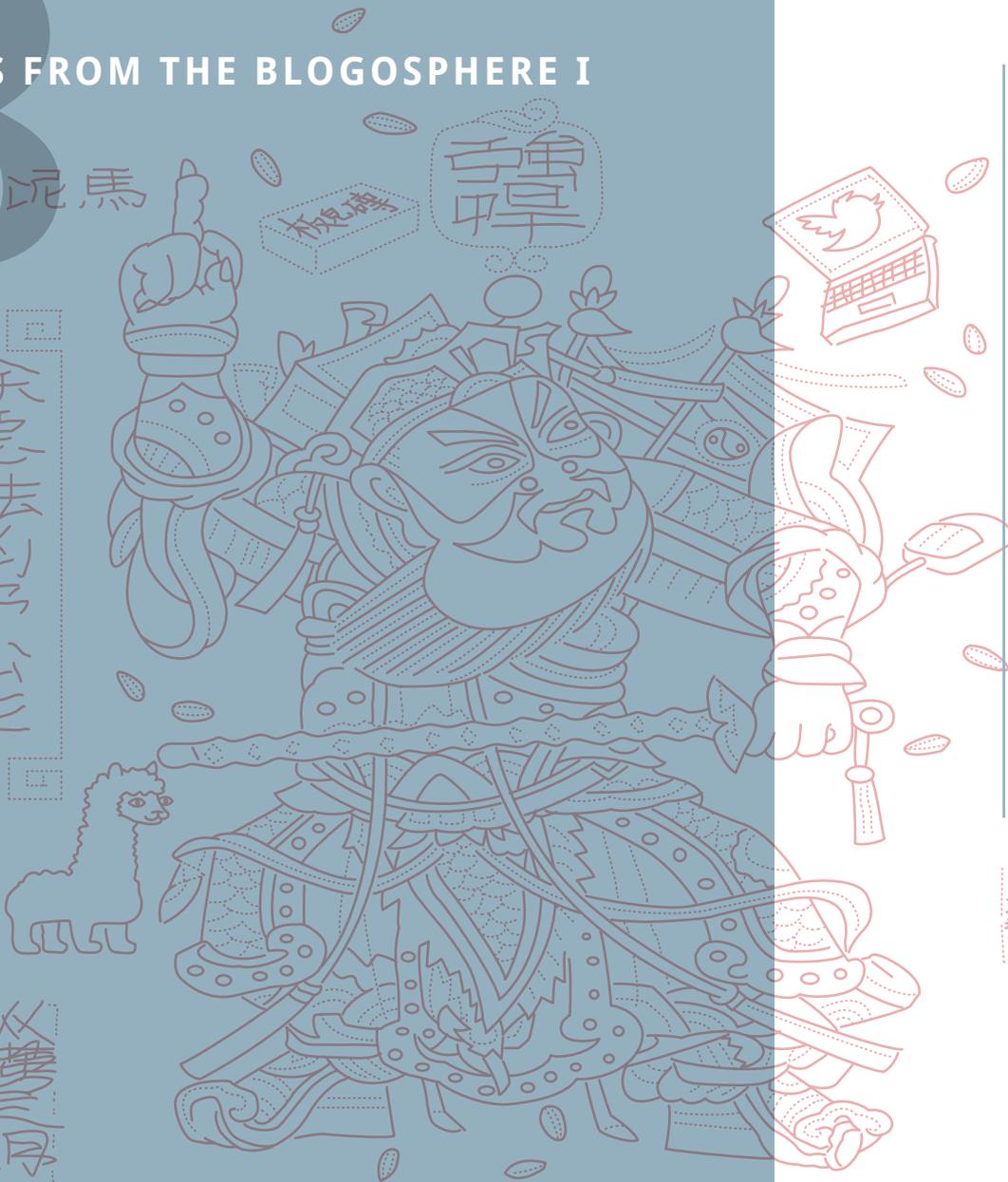
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8 VOICES FROM THE BLOGOSPHERE I

馬泥州

除惡祛凶爭公平

蘇木糖
美厚



THE VARIETY and depth of information about China available on blogs and niche websites is extraordinary. The best bloggers offer immediate and well-sourced perspectives on events on the ground; news about China often breaks on their sites first. There are also dozens of sites that translate articles from the Chinese media and postings from the Internet.

This and the following chapter provide a selection of writings from the Internet by Chinese and foreign observers, translations and commentary that offer further reflections on topics discussed elsewhere in this book. All material is reprinted with permission from the original author or website. The punctuation and style of these selections accord the house style of the book, the texts have not otherwise been edited. Sources are given in the online notes for this book.

啟風
老王
永信

Political trust, not something to be taken with a grain of salt...

By Yajun

From Jeremiah Jenne's blog

Jottings from the Granite Studio

Published on 18 March 2011



The nuclear crisis in Japan has been a test not only of the resilience of that nation but also for the world. Many foreign residents have grabbed the earliest possible tickets out of the country, while residents in Tokyo and in the damaged north-east part of the country have (for the most part) placed their trust in their government's decisions while they try to rebuild their lives.*

Meanwhile, in China, some people are starting to lose their cool. On Wednesday, messages about radiation arriving in Beijing were widely disseminated and many people took the rumours seriously. I received several long-distance phone calls from my family warning me to be careful.

Yesterday, word spread of people rushing to buy salt and the media was flooded with stories, pictures, and articles about the 'salt rush'. As a result, stores throughout China were sold out and the price of salt in some places went from 1.3 *yuan* per bag to ten *yuan*.

To be honest, I don't get it. I suppose some people believe that consuming iodized salt can protect them from radiation, others are afraid that radioactive ocean water will mean not enough salt for sale in the future. Whatever the reason, the situation was serious enough that the CCTV news broadcast spent fifteen minutes this morning trying to convince people that eating too much salt is bad for your health, that China has an adequate supply to meet market demand, and so for the love of God, please stop panicking.

Some buyers might not even be aware of why they are doing this. There are rumours, and everybody else is doing it, and that's enough of a reason to do it too. It's sad to see people abandon their own judgment and just follow the crowd.

However, I'm also saddened to see a good deal of mockery and criticism online blaming the panic buying on people's 'low *suzhi*' [素质 character, 'quality' of a person, or breeding – *Ed.*] and ignorance. I'm sure nobody wants to fight with other shoppers, wait in a long line, and then pay an inflated price for what used to be a basic commodity, but this small bag of salt is something they can trust, something they can count on. Many people, like my grandparents, who survived the Great Famine of the early 1960s and the Cultural Revolution, are still conditioned by that experience, and they have vivid memories of food and basic supplies running out. When a run on a commodity happens, it's hard for them not to compete with others to be sure they are not left behind.

That said, the salt rush is mainly a symptom of a profound lack of political trust.** In the event of a real radiation crisis, many people simply don't know whether or not the Chinese government would tell the truth. Rather than wait and feel helpless, they listen to rumours and take the actions they believe will protect them and their family.

A good recent example of this lack of political trust is last month's 'Xiangshui incident' in Jiangsu province. On 10 February, during the 2011 Spring Festival, a strong odour covered the whole town at 2:00am. Many local residents believed that an accident at a nearby factory had released toxic fumes. In the middle of the night tens of thousands of panicked people from thirty-eight villages fled their homes. In the end, four people were killed as the result of being trampled in the rush to escape or in traffic accidents as the roads jammed with evacuees. The local government didn't respond until 4:00pm the next afternoon, but even after that people still didn't believe the official response because of several previous accidents and leaks from the plant.

Ultimately, the vapours proved harmless, although nothing official has been said about what caused the odour. Nevertheless, when residents finally returned home, several people were arrested on charges of spreading rumours. Even though this was a false alarm, I have no doubt that if this kind of thing happens again, residents will still choose to flee, because

they fear not being able to receive reliable and trustworthy information in time. They don't have the confidence to believe that the government would tell the truth, so panicked flight is the best choice in a bad situation. With the recent radiation scare in China, the Ministry of the Environment did announce that China has not been affected by radiation from Japan, but that did little to slow down the run on salt. In times of crisis, people want to feel like they are doing something to help themselves, even if that something might seem silly or even counterproductive. Worried about 'what might be but can't be helped', people instead focus on those things they do have control over, even if it's something as seemingly trivial as buying a bag (or a case) of salt.

- * Though as we're seeing, even the patience of the people in Japan is understandably starting to run short. Given everything that has happened over the past few days, it's still impressive that faith in the government response has last as long as it has.
- ** I actually wrote my senior thesis at Peking University on the issue of political trust. This is why this subject is so interesting for me.

The Sino-Japanese Relationship: (apologies to Facebook) It's Complicated

By Yajun

From Jeremiah Jenne's blog

Jottings from the Granite Studio

Published on 15 March 2011



Over the last four days, CCTV has had comprehensive coverage of the massive earthquake which struck Japan last week. Despite the ongoing NPC and CPPCC meetings, CCTV still filled more than half of its morning news time with the latest information from Japan.

Chinese leaders and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs expressed China's sympathy to its neighbour immediately after the earthquake, and a Chinese rescue team arrived in the disaster zone over the weekend to assist their Japanese counterparts in the relief and rescue efforts.

It seems that the Chinese government has decided to put historic conflict and recent territorial disputes aside for a time, show its humanity, and return the favour of Japan's help during the Wenchuan earthquake three years ago.

However, China's public opinion doesn't always match the government's magnanimity, and there is a debate, online and off, about how China should react to the news of Japan's disaster. There are those who say Japan got what it deserved and cite the atrocities committed against China in World War II, and saw the earthquake as something to be celebrated, but most people feel that at this moment of great tragedy, we should put history aside and reach out to the Japanese people.

Even though the anti-Japanese opinion often makes the loudest noise online and the best story (as in the demonstrations against Japan in 2005), I am glad to see most people taking a different and more compassionate view. But I am also not surprised that this debate occurs in China today, we have such complicated feelings and opinions regarding Japan.

Sometimes, these opinions are even totally contradictory. Japanese people could be ruthless killers, twisted psychos or extremely polite people who value efficiency, discipline and creativity.

Many Chinese people first learn about Japan from 'patriotic' education in elementary schools. I remember when I was a kid, 'Resist Japan' movies were part of the school curriculum. In those black and white movies produced thirty or forty years ago, Japanese soldiers were always described as short, cunning and ruthless people. They were not portrayed as human, but as aliens or killing machines.

Chapters and chapters of history textbooks provide detailed information about the pain and disastrous consequences that Japanese invasions inflicted on the Chinese people. Museums display exhibits showing how Japanese troops used Chinese civilians for grotesque and cruel bio-medical 'research'.

Despite the official line, there is a range of opinions among Chinese, some of which break down along geographic lines. The grandparents of my colleague from Changchun, part of 'Manchukuo' during the war, think Japanese soldiers were much better and more disciplined than KMT soldiers. When Changchun was occupied by Japan, ordinary people felt that life was orderly and safe, but after the war, KMT soldiers brought looting and corruption. Contrast this with Nanjing, where many people had their family members brutally killed or raped during the infamous Nanjing Massacre. In places like this, old hatreds run deep.

It is hard for many foreigners to understand why China's resentment towards Japan is still so strong after seven decades. If one compares the Sino-Japanese relationship today with, say, Germany and France, it seems that narrow minds are the only explanation for lingering Chinese resentment.

But of course it is more complicated than that. Imagine that a single group of people is held up for public scorn and criticism, with museums and the media displaying images of cruelty and evidence of evil, and now imagine these are the only images you have of this group for most of your life. Sadly, this is fertile ground for hatred to spread.

The lack of comprehensive and open information fuels the resentment. For example, the Chinese public always hears about Japan's Prime Minister's visit to the Yasukuni Shrine, but Japan's apologies to the Chinese people are never reported in China. Most news coverage focuses on the flood of Japanese products into China, but no one mentioned that Japan has provided more foreign aid to China than any other country.

Fortunately, times are changing. Young people of my generation grow up with Japanese fashion, music, soap operas, and cartoons. *Tokyo Love Story* showed us how romantic Japanese people are. It inspired fantasies for an entire generation. Tokyo is also a Mecca of fashion for many young people.

With such a large number of ordinary Chinese using the Internet, more and more young Chinese rely on their own critical thinking and information that they find online, rather than rigid patriotic doctrine, to shape their opinion towards Japan. For example, after this earthquake, many online articles applauded how calm and well-organized Japanese people are and compared the solid Japanese buildings with the shabby schools in Sichuan.

The anti-Japanese mood in China is not going to disappear soon, but I believe that in the near future we will see more and more rational thinking about the Sino-Japan relationship.

Two-year-old female child ran over by car, eighteen passers-by ignore her

By Fauna

From chinaSMACK

Published on 16 October 2011

Synopsis: On the afternoon of 13 October around 5:30pm, a car accident occurred at the Guangfo Hardware Market in Huangqi of Foshan. A van hit a two-year-old little girl and then fled. No passers-by reached out to help and then another car ran over her. Over the span of seven minutes, a total of seventeen people passing by failed to extend a hand or call the police, up until the nineteenth person, a garbage scavenger *ayi* [older woman], who lifted her up after discovering her but the little girl in her arms was like a noodle, immediately collapsing back onto the ground. The trash scavenger *ayi* called for help, and the little girl's mother, who was in the vicinity, immediately rushed over and rushed her to the hospital.

The news report video [about the incident and available online] has been viewed nearly 700k times on popular Chinese video-sharing website Youku since it was uploaded seventeen hours ago and currently has over 6,200 comments spanning 210 pages. This story is also spreading on China's popular microblogging service Sina Weibo in addition to receiving a lot of views and comments on China's major Internet news portals and communities.

In addition to showing the little girl, Yueyue, being run over twice and many of the bystanders who didn't stop to help her, it also shows that Yueyue is currently in the hospital in critical condition. Police have already found the second driver but have yet to find the first driver as they were unable to read the first van's licence plate and are calling upon witnesses for help. Yueyue's parents are also shown.



Guo Meimei Red Cross Controversy Pissing Off Chinese Netizens

By Fauna

From chinaSMACK

Published on 29 June 2011

Perhaps the most popular controversy on the Chinese Internet over the past week has been about a twenty-year-old Chinese girl named Guo Meimei, her wealth, and how her wealth may have come from corruption in the Red Cross Society of China. Many incredible twists and turns have occurred in this ongoing controversy that has confused many, so below is a translation of a Chinese reporter's effort to explain how this story has developed so far, as well as the latest updates involving Chinese netizens petitioning the Australian Embassy to deny Guo Meimei a visa to prevent her from fleeing China.

From ifeng:

This morning, when Guo Meimei appeared at the Beijing Capital International Airport and was besieged by over ten media reporters, the 'Guo Meimei showing off wealth' Internet controversy reached a climax in the real offline world.

Since 21 June, when Guo Meimei first was exposed on microblogs for showing off her wealth, until yesterday when she posted three apologetic microblog posts in succession, just how did a twenty-year-old young girl come to be besieged by netizens? And why is it that the statements of the relevant government organs and companies are unable to get the trust of netizens?

This reporter, while putting together the path this incident took as it spread on the Internet, discovered that over seven days, she made one lie after another, and we believe that her lies will definitely be exposed.

1. Incident begins (21 June, evening)

21 June evening, a netizen discovered the Sina Weibo verified user 'Guo Meimei Baby' [郭美美baby] really liked to show off her wealth, and even



identified herself as the ‘Business General Manager of Red Cross Society’. Within two hours, her microblog was shared over a thousand times.

Guo Meimei: The Red Cross Commerce that I am at and the Red Cross Society of China have a partnership; Red Cross Commerce is a commercial business and is of a different nature from the Red Cross Association.

Red Cross Society of China: No response.

2. *Human Flesh Search (21 June, evening onward)*

Parties involved: Red Cross Society of China, Sina Weibo.

21 June evening onward, netizens began a ‘massive human flesh search’.

Netizens discovered Guo Meimei’s Netease photo album and her information on the 58.com automotive sales website. She has had plastic surgery before, previously rented in Shenzhen and Beijing, dressed and decorated her room very ordinarily, and was using a domestic clamshell mobile phone [not foreign name brand like Apple, Samsung, or Nokia].

Yet in less than two years, she’s moved into a large villa, is driving a luxury sports car, and has suddenly become rich.

Guo Meimei:

2008: Renting, using a domestic mobile phone, selling cars.

2011: Upgraded to a sports car and villa [detached single-family home].

Red Cross Society of China: No ‘Red Cross Commerce’, no ‘Business General Manager’ position, and no employee by the name of ‘Guo Meimei’.

Sina Weibo: Guo Meimei’s identity/profession was initially verified as an actress and later personally applied to have her profession changed to ‘Business General Manager of Red Cross Society’. Sina’s existing verification procedures are not strict.

3. *Getting to the bottom of the matter (22 June, noon onward)*

Parties involved: Red Cross Society of China, Shenzhen Tian Lue Group, Red Cross Society of China Business Systems.

A netizen ‘uncovered’ Guo Meimei as a car model under the Shenzhen Tian Lue Group banner, has close relations with the group’s upper level management, and even came to know Red Cross Society of China Vice-president Guo Changjiang through the Tian Lue Group.

24 June evening, the Red Cross Society of China, Red Cross Society of China Business Systems, and Tian Lue Holding Group issued statements regarding the ‘Guo Meimei Incident’.

Statements:

Red Cross Society of China: Vice-president Guo Changjiang has no contact with Tian Lue Group’s Chairman of the Board Qiu Zhenliang. We have already reported this matter to the public security organ, and have decided to launch legal proceedings.

Red Cross Society of China Business Systems: We have never authorized Tian Lue Group to conduct any fund-raising activities, much less divided/embezzled money from donations.

Shenzhen Tian Lue Group: No relationship with Guo Meimei.

4. *More developments (22 June, afternoon onward)*

The Guo Meimei Showing Off Wealth Incident continued to develop, with the content of her latest microblog update having already been reposted/shared over 100,000 times.

On the Tianya website, a picture began circulating that detailed the relationships in the Guo Meimei Incident, with Guo Meimei at the center, and the Red Cross Society, Red Cross Business Systems, Tian Lue Group and others arranged around her.

The people and organizations/companies involved in the Guo Meimei Incident: Guo Changjiang, Guo Dengfeng, Red Cross Society of China, Red Cross Society of China Business Systems, Tian Lue Group.

5. *Ridicule and jeering (25 June)*

On the afternoon of the twenty-sixth, Guo Meimei once again posted a statement on her microblog, continuing to distance herself from having a connection to the Red Cross Society.

However, she did not respond to what netizens cared about which is the issue of her sudden wealth, and the style/tone of her speech was completely different from before, resulting in wide-ranging scepticism and suspicion.

6. *Apology (26 June, afternoon)*

‘Guo Meimei Baby’ posted the following microblog messages in succession:

I have already received severe criticism and condemnation from family and friends! These past few days, I have been reflecting on the harm and headaches I have caused everyone with my thoughtless behaviour and hope netizens will stop creating a fuss. I have decided to use even more time to reflect upon myself and educate myself!

‘Guo Meimei Baby’ said:

I ignorantly claimed that I was a ‘Business General Manager for Red Cross Society’ on Sina Weibo, and for the damage to the reputation of the Red Cross Society of China and the public misunderstandings that my ignorant behaviour has caused, I deeply apologize! I have never worked at the Red Cross Society, and this identity was something I completely fabricated.

7. *Follow-up (26 June, evening)*

Locations: Houxiandai Cheng [a residential community in Beijing], Beijing Capital International Airport.

26 June, around eight o’clock in the evening, netizens ‘uncovered’ that Guo Meimei’s mother is currently moving at Houxiandai Cheng. At around ten o’clock at night, a netizen posted on their microblog that Guo Meimei is on a flight returning to Beijing, and publicized the flight number, arrival time, seat number, etc.

This morning at 1:30am, Guo Meimei appeared wearing a black T-shirt and red shorts, a cap worn low over her face, and a website journalist following her asking questions, but she didn’t provide many responses and left immediately after getting in a taxi.

Guo Meimei: Australia is not your safe harbour.

Regarding further developments in the ‘Guo Meimei Baby’ incident, yesterday while she was flying from Shenzhen to Beijing, there were netizens constantly broadcasting her itinerary on their microblogs. Upon arriving at Beijing, this girl calmly and with a low profile got in a taxi and left. However, according to netizens at the scene and media reports, someone was on the telephone with her throughout it all, instructing her on how to act/what to do. And not long after her person left, two new postings appeared on her microblog, ridiculing netizens and expressing that in two days, she will leave China for Australia. Sina Weibo netizen @三爷笑人生 made a screenshot of these microblog messages, and several minutes later, these microblog postings were deleted, but netizen @三爷笑人生 already saved the evidence.

Her first message: Coming to the end, next week running off to Australia with Mommy, leaving this lousy place, hahaha.

Her second message: Can’t handle it anymore...

Given that this girl is the main character involved in the Red Cross Society’s corruption case, if she leaves the country, it will interfere with determining the illegal origins of the Maserati luxury car, dozens of LV bags, the luxury villa, etc, and the whereabouts of the people’s donations

will become a mystery. Sina Weibo netizen 三爷笑人生 issued a call online to collect signatures on the Internet and call the Australian Embassy in China, requesting that the Australian government suspend the visas for Guo Meimei and her mother. Amongst them, netizens 无弦无歌 and 中山首里 have already called the embassy asking the Australian government to suspend the visas for Guo Meimei and her mother and received a response from the Australian Embassy personnel saying they are already aware of the Internet incident and will relay the message to their superiors. The Australian Embassy telephone is: 010-51404111.

After netizen 三爷笑人生 posted his call, he received enthusiastic responses from netizens, with the number of microblog reposts breaking the thousands, with innumerable netizens calling the Australian embassy's telephone, asking the Australian government to suspend Guo Meimei and her mother's visas. At the same time, the signature collection campaign initiated by 三爷笑人生 has already broken into the thousands. Some netizens have worried whether or not this Weibo microblog account belongs to Guo Meimei, but according to netizens in the know, this Weibo account is Guo Meimei's secondary account; and it was because not many people know of this account that she dared to reveal that she was leaving the country and mock netizens. The reason why netizens are so angry with this incident is due to not knowing where the money the public donates goes and with the suspects involved being able to escape [with their ill-gotten gains] and live happily without consequences.

The Story of W&L: China's Great Internet Divide

By Kai Lukoff

From TechRice

Published on 7 June 2011

Here's an introductory quote from The Story of W&L, a tale of China's great Internet divide:

'China does not have one so-called "national Internet", instead there's a great divide. It encompasses the elite with ThinkPad laptops and also the grassroots with MTK *shanzhai* [山寨 fake or 'rip-off' – Ed.] mobile phones. Our elites are on a par with America, while our grassroots are on a par with Vietnam. This is the story of W&L, two representatives of China's great Internet divide.'

The original post (Chinese-language) was written in July 2010 by Simon Shen 申音 and sent to me by TechRice reader Tim Wang (thanks Tim!). The English-language translation and all errors therein are my own. See the end of this article for speculation as to the identities of W&L: 'W' is suspected to be based on Wang Xing (founder of Xiaonei/Renren (Facebook clone), Fanfou (Twitter clone), and Meituan (Groupon clone) and 'L' on Li Xingping (founder of web directory site: Hao123).



The Story of W&L

I have two friends.

L's company is in Shanghai, but he's running it from Guangdong (southern China) most of the time. He graduated from a lesser-known university in southern China, where he studied literature years ago. My friend L makes mobile games. I've seen him use many different mobiles, but the most expensive was no more than 1,000 *yuan*. Rather than concepts of Web 2.0 or mobile Internet, he follows the tens of thousands of migrant workers and the 'ant people' (marginally employed university graduates) on the outskirts of cities.

How does he follow them? He drinks beers with them over midnight snacks from street vendors, spends the night at Internet cafes in the Foxconn factory district, and chats with the convenience store owners who got their BMWs by selling to them.

W is from Beijing's Zhongguancun district (the 'Silicon Valley' of China). From early on he was a brainy talent with shining eyes, with stellar grades in maths and science, outstanding critical thinking, equally fluent in English and Chinese. He graduated from a famous university in Beijing, after which he went directly to a famous American university for a Masters, and then returned home to start a company. I've always thought he's the Chinese edition of a Silicon Valley geek. He's always the first with the latest technology, like iPad. Inside of China he's still on Facebook, Twitter, Groupon, and Foursquare. What's the future of the Internet you ask? W's websites are the future of the Internet.

W enjoys more applause and fame than L. But the regret is, while he's made many sites that investors think are super cool, he's never made big money.

The reasons are the following: maybe his company is early, but it's soon encircled by a crowd of copycats; maybe funds aren't enough, so he's annihilated by a strong, well-funded competitor; or maybe he touches on a high-voltage wire and is shut down by an Internet regulatory body.

L's business generates real revenues everyday, he can already play golf, but he has no desire to tell strangers about the money he's making. No one would believe him anyway, how could he make several hundred thousand *yuan* a month?

This all comes from workers making not even 2,000 *yuan* who use 300 *yuan* to buy a Shanzhai mobile phone. They play the games by L's company, contributing a few hundred *yuan* in ARPU (average revenue per user) value. In other words, they happily turn over a tenth of their salary to L.

I sometimes fail to understand – W's customers are all in Beijing and Shanghai, elites with the highest discretionary income. Why are they willing to pay for the most expensive mobile phone, switch to the newest laptop, eat at the finest restaurants, but online they want everything to be free?

My circle agrees only W's doings are widely watched. He has the eyes of his industry peers, the media, marketers, word of mouth, and his site's traffic is almost a steady upward slope. But the weird thing is, after not long his momentum suddenly stops, his heart starts to beat like that of an older man.

I also asked L, and only a handful of his grassroots users own a computer or have a 3G connection. So how could this happen? L smiled and said, Internet cafes are not the most effective channel. Next to the factory districts there are convenience stores, where the workers assemble after work. The boss supplies a computer installed with all the mobile games, MP3s, movies, and an old-style karaoke songbook. There's no need to go online, with a USB cable workers can download what they wish. Even more convenient, there's a pushcart set up that can wheel this equipment to the workers' dormitories.

One time over a meal with L, he asked me: 'Who is suitable as a spokesman for our game targeted at 450,000 Foxconn factory workers?' I guessed Jay Chou (a famous Taiwanese pop star), but L shook his head, he's for city folk. So I guessed Chris Li [春哥 – a highly popular winner of a talent show a number of years ago], but also incorrect, she's only for students and young married women. Annoyed, I guessed Feng Jiao [当红的凤娇 – the star of a reality dating show], but that guess was also rejected. The correct answer is Phoenix Legend [凤凰传奇 – a singing duo that came to fame through reality shows that are popular in western parts of China], with hundreds of songs as evidence. And I felt jealous of L's knowledge that far outstripped my own. I'm lucky I never suggested Han Han! [韩寒 – racecar driver, blogger and maverick.]

In the past, W earnestly believed technology could change society, but now he knows you can even stay away from the government, but the government will still inquire about you. L was once angry, but now he's practical. A

good businessman knows how to read the news. He closely follows official personnel changes, the crackdown on pornography, and even participated in a few 'friendship association' labor meetings, though his aim was to promote his games.

Upon the string of suicides at Foxconn, he solemnly told me: 'this is our fault.' I was startled. He said these youth jumping off buildings are the customers who feed me. Usually the mobile phone is the only entertainment for these workers, their only connection to the outside world. It's our responsibility to give these workers happier lives.

All my investor friends have high praise for W, but all more comfortable investing in L. Because in their hearts they know: in China, you target elites to make noise, but you target the grassroots to make money. Are not Tencent and Baidu perfect examples?

A Shanghai comedian [Zhou Libo 周立波] says: 'I drink coffee, but Northerners eat garlic. Coffee is an imported product, very Western, but garlic is good for the body. This year garlic producers are earning a lot of money, but I haven't heard of coffee makers making money. Is not China's Internet the same?' [Note: The stereotype is that Chinese Southerners fancy themselves as more civilized, sophisticated than Northerners. More W than L.]

I suddenly thought if W and L switched places, would the result be the same? Would they understand each other's markets? But then I realized that's improbable.

W seeks an 'elegant, American-style Internet'. American's information revolution started in the 1960s, and those 1950-1990 are all of the digital generation. There's no big Internet divide, their business and lives, work and entertainment, cannot be separated from the Internet. That's why Mark Zuckerberg, and Steve Jobs of the 1950s, Jeff Bezos of the 1960s, and Larry Page of the 1970s all compete with each other. America's societal structure is like an olive [*sic - Ed.*], there's not so much inequality, regional differences, rural-urban divide, so one can say America has a 'national Internet'.

We once thought Chinese society was like a pyramid, but it's now becoming a nail. Between W and L, one is at the tip of the nail, while the other is far away at the head of the nail. China does not have one so-called 'national Internet', instead there's a great divide. It encompasses the elite with ThinkPad laptops and also the grassroots with MTK Shanzhai mobile phones. Our elites are on a par with America, while our grassroots are on a par with Vietnam.

In reality, China's 'digital generation' exists in the north and a few big cities, in the tens of millions of twenty to forty year-old middle class citizens. The remaining hundreds of millions use only QQ. If the Internet can't change this status quo, can it provide a societal and economic revolution?

I believe L sees the essence of China's Internet. The insatiable desires of the elites, a limited group being chased by far too many entrepreneurs. On the other hand, there's a huge number of 'digital peasants' who have no way to use the Internet to change their fate, no way to access the Internet and improve their lives, they can only get drunk on cheap entertainment. L's business suits China's condition.

I've always believed there'll finally be a day when W can make something that represents the future of the Internet, make Americans sit on their butts and look up to China and learn. But will his trials today wreck his willpower?

According to the philosopher Plato's theory of the cave, everyone is born into his own cave, we only see a reflection of real life cast by the sun's shadows. But everyone believes the shadows in their cave are the real world, because we've never seen anything else. But the real world is outside of the cave, in the sun.

The elite readers of this blog must admit, there's a huge group (labourers, recent grads, about 300 million), who live in a completely different world. If you can follow this group, you'll have more opportunities. But in all likelihood, we'll never emerge from our own caves.

Identities of W&L

There's much speculation as to the identities of W&L. Many believe W refers to Wang Xing 王兴, the founder of Xiaonei (early Facebook clone, sold to Oak Pacific and renamed Renren), Fanfou (early Twitter clone, shut down by government after Tibet riots in 2009) and Meituan (Groupon clone). With Meituan, one of China's largest group-buying sites, Wang Xing should finally make his bank.

L is speculated to be Li Xingping 李兴平, founder of Hao123.com, an Internet directory used by many Chinese, especially those new to the Internet, as their homepage and a list of the most popular sites on the Chinese Internet. Sites can pay to be featured in the listings and thereby attract significant traffic. Hao123 was sold to Baidu in 2004.

Wang Xing's profile strikes me as a better fit for W than Li Xingping is for L. But the author, Simon Shen, ultimately says: 'There's no need to make this a guessing game. These are no more than two representatives, with elements from others as well.'

When Rape is Not Rape

By C. Custer

From ChinaGeeks

Published on 13 July 2011

Today I read one of the most disgusting headlines I've seen in my life. I think this whole story speaks for itself, so here you have it.

Translation:

Female teacher raped by government official, police say it's not rape because he was wearing a condom.

Recently, the topic 'official implicated in the rape of a teacher' has been appearing on forums and has attracted a lot of attention. The person who made the post was the Huajue City Middle School English teacher, twenty-six-year-old Zhou Qin. She says that on 17 May 2011, the school principal ordered her to accompany eight [government] leaders for drinks. After she was drunk, she was raped by the city rural land resources manager, Wang Zhonggui. What's even more shocking is that according to what's being said on the net, when Zhou Qin reported this to her local police station, the police said: 'If he wore a condom, it's not rape.'

Over the past two days, a reporter for the morning edition [presumably of the Southeastern News Net, where this was originally published] investigated.

Investigation Summary

The article is lengthy and, being at work at the moment, I don't have the time to translate it in full. However, here are the main points that are made in the article, according to the reporter's research.

That morning, the school had been holding a special government event, of which Zhou Qin was one of the hosts. After this, the teachers all retired to the government cafeteria to eat with the leaders. The teachers



were all originally eating in a separate room, but the principal ordered Zhou specifically to go to the officials' table and toast each of the eight men in succession, and she was also ordered to toast several other people including police officials who were also at the event.

Zhou Qin says that she was ordered to toast the officials repeatedly, around fifteen or sixteen times (generally speaking, each 'toast' would be equivalent to around a shot of *baijiu* [strong grain alcohol – *Ed.*], although there's no mention of how big the glasses were.)

Zhou says that this actually happens regularly, the principal often orders her to drink with important guests during official functions.

A police official at the event said he did remember the principal yelling at Zhou Qin to drink with the officials, but that he could not recall precisely how much she had had to drink.

Because she was drunk, it seems Zhou Qin was put into a car with Wang Zhonggui, who she had never met before that day. She, or perhaps someone else [the article isn't totally clear on this] asked that he take her home, as she was stumbling. But when she got to the car, she realized that she didn't really know him, and that her home was less than 1km from the government cafeteria, and she began to refuse the ride. Wang insisted on offering a ride, and after a few more refusals, she took it, reasoning that as a teacher it would be best for her to be driven, as if she walked some students might see her drunk.

But Wang drove her towards the Land Management offices, the opposite direction of her home. They picked up a co-worker of hers on the way, and when they got there, Wang invited them to his office. Her co-worker agreed, so Zhou followed.

In Wang's office, there was a lower-level employee who Zhou knew personally, so she felt safe. But as soon as that person left, Wang locked the door, and began to molest Zhou. Zhou struggled, but was quite drunk and unable to put up much of a fight. She began to feel threatened, and said she had to go to the bathroom (Wang's office has a private bathroom reserved for his use). Once there, she locked herself in.

But after she had been missing a while, Wang came pounding on the door. She stalled, saying she would be better soon, using the time to throw up several times and try to sober herself up. However, the booze got the better of her, and she passed out.

She awoke around 6:00pm to find herself lying on Wang Zhonggui's bed (his office also has a private bedroom, ostensibly for naps). She was alone, and completely nude. She vaguely recalled being dragged, and Wang squirting her mouth with something that seemed like water – later she would realize he must have climbed in through his bathroom's window and unlocked the door from the inside.

She realized that she had been raped and, hearing people downstairs but not wanting anyone to know about it, she quickly put on her clothes and climbed out the window for a quiet escape.

When she got home, she locked herself in her room and refused to speak or come out. Her mother recognized that this was very odd, and asked her what was wrong. After numerous attempts, Zhou finally told her: 'I was raped.'

Together, the two decided they should tell the police, and Zhou charged her boyfriend with going to the police station to report the crime. The police investigated Wang's office-bedroom on 19 May, finding (among other things) a used condom. They told the reporter: 'This is proof that Wang Zhonggui and Zhou Qin had intercourse.'

However, the investigation remains unresolved, as the procuratorate maintains there is insufficient evidence, and have asked the police to provide evidence in addition to the used condom, other chemical evidence, and circumstantial evidence such as a broken window lock that matches Zhou's story.

Zhou says that on the eighteenth, when she was first putting the story down formally at the police station, the person guiding her told her that: 'If he was wearing a condom, it's not rape.' Zhou recalled that this person was none other than Zhong Xiancong, one of the men she had been ordered to toast the day of the rape.

Zhou says that Zhong also told her: ‘This is all something you did to yourself, and you don’t want to make it public now. Think of your reputation. I will keep it secret for you.’ The reporter tracked Zhong down at the police station yesterday, and he said that he had told Zhou that there wasn’t much evidence of rape, and that additionally with a used condom rape would be very difficult to confirm. ‘That’s why I advised her to settle privately,’ he said.

Many other people have also advised Zhou Qin to settle the case privately.

The reporter got Wang Zhonggui’s phone number from the police and has called him repeatedly for comment, but no one is answering his phone.

UPDATE: As one would expect, this and other news stories are drawing more attention to this case and many are discussing it on Weibo. To find relevant messages, try searching for terms like ‘毕节阿市’ or ‘教师被强奸’.

UPDATE 2: This story seems to be accelerating fast on Weibo, where it’s now being RTed by dozens of people every minute.

Chinese Government: ‘Internet Rumours Are Like Drugs... Attack Creators And Spreaders... Head-On’

By Bill Bishop

From DigiCha

Published on 4 December 2011

It looks like the campaign to squash Internet rumours, especially on microblogs (aka Weibo), has kicked into high gear.

In the last week there have been multiple articles in official Chinese media about the importance of the proper handling of microblogs and the dangers of Internet rumours. The coordinated propaganda effort appears to have started with a signed article in the 28 November issue of the *People’s Daily* by Wang Chen, head of the State Internet Information Office and a deputy minister of the Central Propaganda Department: ‘Actively Carry Out Microblog Public Opinion Guidance Work’ (*Jiji kaizhan weiboke yulun yindao gongzuo* 积极开展微博客舆论引导工作).

Wang Chen references the ‘Decision’ of October’s Sixth Plenum of the Seventeenth Communist Party Congress in his opening paragraph. Party members at all levels will likely be studying this article and implementing, or at least making a show of implementing, his suggestions.

Also on 28 November, *People’s Daily* Online published an article entitled ‘Internet Rumours Are Drugs, Please Resist And Stay Far Away From Them’ (*Wangluo yaoyan shi dupin qing zijue dizhi he yuanli* 网络谣言是毒品 请自觉抵制和远离) while Xinhua Online ran the first of a series of commentaries on the subject titled ‘Internet Rumours Are Like Drugs’ (*Wangluo yaoyan ru ‘dupin’* 网络谣言如‘毒品’).

On 28 November, Xinhua Online published the second in the series – ‘Please Do Not Let Internet Rumours Poison Our Kind Hearts’ (*Qiemor wangluo yaoyan duhai women shanliangde xin* 切莫让网络谣言毒害我们善良的心) and on the thirtieth carried the third – ‘Use A “Combination Punch” To Cut The Internet Rumour Propagation Chain’ (*Rang ‘zuhequan’ zheduan wangluo yaoyande chuanbolian* 让‘组合拳’斩断网络谣言的传播链).



On 1 December, *People's Daily* Online ran 'Attack Creators And Spreaders Of Internet Rumours Head-On' (*Dui wangluo zaoyao chuanbozhe jiu ying dang 'yingtoutongji'* 对网络造谣传谣者就应当'迎头痛击'). The article states that 'Internet rumours are "societal drugs"...which are no less harmful to society than Internet pornography, gambling or drugs.'

That 1 December article admits that the rapid spread of Internet rumours is partly due to a credibility deficit of the government and its officials. It also states that 'some foreign forces, who always want to play the role of "saviour"...are using the Internet to disseminate rumours to smear the image of officials, to attack leaders of the Chinese Communist Party, use distortions to illustrate that China's current political regime is lacking in legitimacy and stability.'

The language in these articles has echoes of campaigns and crack-downs from an earlier era. The comparisons to drugs and drug dealing, sometimes a capital offence in China, may be a sign of an impending harsh crackdown on those who spread Internet rumours. The backdrop is concern about social stability, especially in the worsening economic environment, and increasing conservatism in the run-up to the leadership change at the 2012 Eighteenth Party Congress. This week also saw a much publicized talk by top security official Zhou Yongkang.

Government pressure is increasing on the leading Chinese Internet companies, especially Sina for its Weibo, and Tencent, both for its Weibo and for QQ, the leading real-time messaging platform in China. Investors should be wary.

