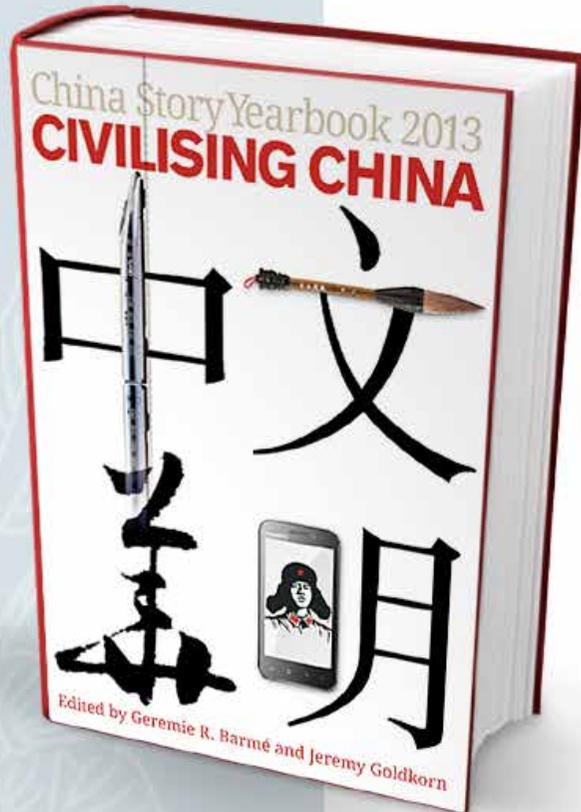


The China Story



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Excerpt from

CHINA STORY YEARBOOK 2013

CIVILISING CHINA

文明中华

EDITED BY

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中 全球研究中心
AUSTRALIAN CENTRE ON
CHINA IN THE WORLD



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The China Story
中国的故事

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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.



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

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.

