

CHRONOLOGY

The following outline chronology covers some of the key events touched on in this book.

2013

24 September: Xia Junfeng, a street vendor convicted of killing two *chengguan* (urban law enforcement officers) is executed in Shenyang, Liaoning province, despite popular support for him and widespread resentment against *chengguan*.

25 September: Li Tianyi 李天一, the seventeen-year-old son of celebrity People's Liberation Army singers Li Shuangjiang 李双江 and Meng Ge 梦鸽, is sentenced to ten years in prison for gang rape in a case that attracted widespread attention and outrage in China.

16 October: The Party's bi-monthly political theory journal *Qiushi* publishes an article strongly denouncing democracy and 'constitutionalism' (requiring the Chinese party-state to follow the Chinese constitution), part of a broader campaign against liberal thinking.

24 October: A court in Shandong province rejects the appeal of Bo Xilai, the former Chongqing party boss sentenced to life in prison for bribery, embezzlement and abuse of power.

25 October: During a speech at a conference on Diplomatic Work with

Neighbouring Countries, Xi Jinping stresses 'letting the awareness of a community of common destiny to take root in [our] neighbouring countries'. This is understood as a guiding principle for China's diplomacy with its neighbours.

28 October: A Jeep with a Xinjiang number plate and a Uyghur driver crashes into a crowd of people on Tiananmen Square, bursting into flames and killing two people and injuring forty, including foreign tourists. An audio recording published on the Siteintelgroup.com website claims responsibility on behalf of the East Turkestan Islamic Movement.

8 November: *The New York Times* reports that editors at Bloomberg News in Hong Kong chose not to run a story on ties between a wealthy businessman and China's top leadership for fear of repercussions against Bloomberg in China. Bloomberg denied censoring the story, saying that it had not been ready for publication.

12 November: The Third Plenum of the Chinese Communist Party's Eighteenth Central Committee concludes in Beijing with the release of a lengthy

communiqué laying out the latest plan for economic reform.

23 November: The Chinese government proclaims an 'Air Defence Identification Zone' over a large area of the East China Sea including the disputed Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands. Japan, Australia and the United States protest the unilateral proclamation.

2 December: China launches the Chang'e-3 嫦娥三号 lunar probe carrying the country's first moon rover.

12 December: As part of a wide-ranging campaign against corrupt practices, the State Council releases 'Regulations on Official Receptions for All Party and Government Departments' 党政机关国内公务接待管理规定, requiring all government and administrative departments to observe thirty-eight prohibitions including those against the consumption of shark fin and other luxury items.

26 December: At a symposium held in Beijing to commemorate the 120th anniversary of the birth of Mao Zedong, Party General Secretary Xi Jinping states that the Communist Party of China will forever hold high the banner of

Mao Zedong Thought. Before the symposium, Xi and China's other six top leaders visit Mao's mausoleum on Tiananmen Square and they bow three times in front of Mao's statue.

28 December: Xi Jinping turns up unannounced at a steamed bun restaurant in Beijing and buys a twenty-one-yuan set meal consisting of six pork and onion buns, pork liver stew and fried mustard greens. Despite little coverage in the official media, the news circulates widely on Weibo.

29 December: The Party's Central Committee and the State Council prohibit officials from smoking in venues where smoking is banned, and from using public funds to buy cigarettes including for use in official hospitality.

2014

23 January: The Beijing Municipal Bureau of Statistics announces that Beijing's population reached 21.15 million at the end of 2013.

26 January: Xi Jinping visits a PLA border outpost in Inner Mongolia, and the *People's Daily* publishes images of the

president sharing a meal with the soldiers.

9 February: CCTV broadcasts an investigative report showing police raiding saunas, karaoke bars and other venues associated with the sex trade in Dongguan, Guangdong province. Sixty-seven people are detained in the raid and twelve venues shut down, and a week later the Public Security Bureau warns it will not tolerate such crimes.

10 February: The first official talks between the Republic of China (Taiwan) and the People's Republic of China in sixty-five years take place at a symbolic meeting in Nanjing, the former republican capital. No national flags are displayed and the officials present wear no official or party insignia.

25 February: The Uyghur scholar and professor at the Minzu University of China in Beijing, Ilham Tohti, who had been held incommunicado since being detained in Beijing on 15 January, is formally charged with 'separatism' (advocating Xinjiang independence). In September, a court finds Tohti guilty of separatism and jails him for life and, in November, an Ürümqi court rejects his appeal and upholds his conviction.

1 March: Some ten men armed with knives, all apparently Uyghurs, kill twenty-nine people and injure more than 130 at Kunming Railway Station in Yunnan province.

18 March: In Taipei, hundreds of students and other activists occupy the Legislative Yuan, Taiwan's unicameral legislative assembly, to voice their opposition to the Cross-Strait Service Trade Agreement signed between Taiwan and Mainland China. The movement is soon dubbed The Sunflower Student Movement.

7 April: After the business magazine *Caijing* reports that the city of Baoding in Hebei province is likely to become the centre of the new Beijing–Tianjin–Hebei (or Jing-Jin-Ji 京津冀) regional agglomeration, property prices there rise by between ten and forty percent.

24 April: Gao Yu, a seventy-year-old Chinese journalist, is detained in Beijing. She is later shown on CCTV apparently confessing to having leaked state secrets to an overseas website. On 20 November, she is charged with that crime in a Beijing court where she retracts her confession, saying it was made under duress. No verdict had

been announced at the time of compiling this *Yearbook*.

30 April: After a group of men at the largest train station in Ürümqi, the capital of Xinjiang, attack bystanders with knives, a bomb explodes killing three and injuring seventy-nine.

2 May: Without consultation, China installs an oil-drilling rig in waters 120 miles from Vietnam's coast and near the Paracel Islands, which are claimed by both countries. The rig sparks a diplomatic row as well as three days of anti-China unrest in Vietnam on 13–15 May during which at least twenty-one people are killed and nearly one hundred injured. China recalls the rig on 16 July, a month earlier than scheduled.

4–11 May: Chinese Premier Li Keqiang arrives on the African continent for an official visit to Ethiopia, Nigeria, Angola and Kenya. On 5 May, he delivers a speech at the African Union Convention Centre in Addis Ababa in which he outlines his vision for a China–Africa strategic partnership.

6 May: A month before the twenty-fifth anniversary of the 1989 Beijing massacre, Pu Zhiqiang, a human rights lawyer, is detained by police on suspicion of 'causing a disturbance'. Pu is formally arrested in June and, on 21 November, Pu's lawyer reveals that Pu may face additional charges that could result in a ten-year prison sentence.

6 May: Six people are injured in a knife attack outside a railway station in Guangzhou, the third violent stabbing at a major Chinese railway station in as many months.

13 May: For the first time, female soldiers form part of China's honour guard welcoming a foreign head of state to China: in this case, the president of Turkmenistan.

19 May: US Attorney General Eric Holder charges five members of the PLA with the criminal hacking of computer systems belonging to US companies as well as a labour union in order to steal trade secrets.

21 May: After ten years of negotiations, Russia's Gazprom and China's CNPC sign a US\$400 billion gas deal for Russia to supply China with gas for thirty

years; the price China will pay for the gas remains a 'commercial secret'.

22 May: Two vehicles without licence plates plough into crowds at an open air market in Ürümqi, followed by the detonation of explosive devices, killing at least thirty-one people and injuring ninety-four.

23 May: Liu Han, a mining tycoon with ties to Zhou Yongkang, China's former security chief, is sentenced to death for organised crime in a trial in Hubei province that included thirty-five other defendants charged with 'organising, leading and participating in Mafia-like groups'.

28 May: A woman is beaten to death by five members of the Almighty God cult at a McDonald's outlet in Zhao-yuan, Shandong province. On 11 October, two members of the cult are sentenced to death for the murder, and three others are given prison sentences.

10 June: The State Council releases a white paper on the 'one country, two systems' policy, hardening Beijing's stance with regard to Hong Kong autonomy.

20 June: More than 350,000 residents in Hong Kong participate in an unofficial referendum on the Beijing-approved process by which the chief executive is selected, a poll that the Chinese government denounces as 'illegal and invalid'.

30 June: At a ceremony marking the sixtieth anniversary of the Panchsheel Treaty between China and India, Xi Jinping reiterates his assertion (first made in May 2014) that Chinese people have 'no gene for invasion or hegemony'.

30 June: A meeting of the Politburo, presided over by Xi Jinping, agrees to reform the internal investigation process. The meeting occurs after the Party expels Xu Caihou, former vice-chairman of China's Central Military Commission; Jiang Jiemin, former head of the State-Owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission; Li Dongsheng, former vice-minister of Public Security and Wang Yongchun 王永春, former vice-general manager of the China National Petroleum Corporation for corruption.

7 July: The Weibo microblog and other social media accounts of the

outspoken writer and social critic Li Chengpeng 李承鹏, who had nearly six million followers, disappear from the Internet; it is apparently the target of a widely publicised government campaign to rein in outspoken online commentators holding officially-verified accounts with large followings, known as the 'Big Vs'.

10 July: Australian Foreign Minister Julie Bishop reportedly pledges to stand up for Australian values and 'manage for the worst' when dealing with China, which she says 'does not respect weakness'. On 14 July, an editorial in both the English and Chinese editions of the *Global Times* deride Bishop as a 'complete fool'. Bishop personally writes to Xinhua to clarify that she did not directly use the phrase 'stand up to China' in the interview.

14–23 July: Xi Jinping undertakes his second state visit to Latin America, stopping in Brazil, Argentina, Venezuela and Cuba.

15 July: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi meets President Xi Jinping on the sidelines of the BRICS Summit in Brazil, Modi's first summit-level interaction with China. Both sides describe

the talks as unusually substantive, which lay the foundation for a new chapter in Sino-Indian ties.

1 July: At a Sotheby's auction in Hong Kong, billionaire businessman Liu Yiqian puts in the winning bid of US\$36.3 million for an extremely rare Qianlong-era (eighteenth century) porcelain cup with a chicken motif. It was the most expensive work of Chinese art to sell at auction in 2014 up to that date — but in November, Liu set another record when he paid US\$45 million at a Christie's auction, also in Hong Kong, for a fifteenth-century Tibetan thangka (a Tibetan Buddhist painting).

21 July: The proportion of Internet users in China getting online via their smartphones reaches 83.4 percent — more than 500 million people, surpassing for the first time the proportion using desktops or laptops.

29 July: China's state media announces that Zhou Yongkang, a former member of the Chinese Communist Party's Politburo Standing Committee, is under investigation for serious disciplinary violations, ending more than a year of speculation about Zhou's fate.

29 July: Wang Weiguang 王伟光, head of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS), states that CASS is not 'a relaxed alliance for freelancers' 自由撰稿人的松散联盟 but a frontline for the dissemination of the thinking of party leaders, scientific theory and ideology. Its top ten research grants for 2014 are all awarded to study Xi Jinping thought and ideology.

3 August: CCTV broadcasts a news story featuring the Internet celebrity Guo Meimei confessing to prostitution and gambling charges.

7 August: A new law requires real-name registration for all public accounts on instant messaging services such as the popular mobile app WeChat as part of a crackdown on online rumours, libel, pornography and violence. According to state media, Tencent had closed twenty million WeChat accounts for offering prostitution services.

14 August: Jaycee Chan, also known as Fang Zuming, the son of actor Jackie Chan, is detained after police find more than one hundred grams of marijuana at his apartment. Also detained is the Taiwanese actor Ko Chen-tung.

On 17 September, Jaycee Chan is formally charged with allowing others to take drugs at his home.

27 August: Xi Jinping meets with Le Hong Anh, special envoy of the General Secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam, for talks in Beijing to address recent tensions in the relationship (see 2 May).

9 September: China deploys 700 soldiers in a UN peacekeeping force in South Sudan to safeguard oil fields and protect Chinese workers and installations. UN officials reveal that this is the first time that Beijing has contributed a battalion to a UN peacekeeping force.

18 September: Chinese ecommerce giant Alibaba launches the largest initial public offering in history on the New York Stock Exchange, raising US\$25 billion.

19 September: More than a year after the announcement of an investigation into the British pharmaceutical giant GlaxoSmithKline operations in China, a court in Changsha, Hunan province finds the company guilty of bribing

doctors and hospitals to promote GSK products, and fines it three billion yuan.

26 September: The University of Chicago suspends negotiations to renew its agreement to host a Confucius Institute 孔子学院. More than one hundred faculty members had signed a petition condemning the Institute's impact on academic freedom at the university. On 1 October, a second US university, Pennsylvania State, announces that it will also close its Confucius Institute.

28 September: Following a week of student strikes in Hong Kong over electoral reforms, protests spread and provoke a heavy-handed response by police, who detain several protesters.

11 October: China's Supreme People's Court issues new rulings dubbed 'anti-human flesh engine rules' intended to protect people from online persecution, but that also added another set of legal tools for 'managing' the Internet, a euphemism for government control of online public opinion.

14 October: The State Administration for Press, Publication, Radio, Film and

Television 国家广播电影电视总局 bans books by at least eight Chinese writers and scholars, including economist Mao Yushi, legal scholar Zhang Qianfan 张千帆, historian Yu Ying-shih 余英时 and columnists Xu Zhiyuan 许知远 and Xu Xiao 徐晓.

15 October: At a 'Forum on Art and Literature' in Beijing, Xi Jinping calls on Chinese artists to create 'socialist culture and art' that is 'artistically outstanding and morally inspiring' and that serves 'correct' viewpoints with regard to history, nationality and culture. He singles out patriotic blogger Zhou Xiaoping for special praise for his 'positive energy'. Commentators liken it to the 1942 speech on art and literature by Mao Zedong that guided China's cultural policies for the first three decades of the Communist era.

20-23 October: The Fourth Plenum Session of the Eighteenth Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party convenes in Beijing. An official Central Party Communiqué is released together with a document on 'Governing the Country According to the Law'.

24 October: Representatives from twenty-one Asian nations sign an agreement to establish the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, a Chinese initiative that will lend money for infrastructure development in poorer parts of Asia. The US, Japan, and Australia declined to join. The bank's founding capital is US\$50 billion.

10-12 November: The twenty-sixth annual gathering of APEC leaders takes place in Beijing. Factories and government offices are shut down and car use restricted for a week, giving rise to the phrase 'APEC Blue' APEC蓝 to describe the resulting clear skies.

10 November: On the sidelines of the APEC gathering in Beijing, following an awkward handshake, Chinese President Xi Jinping and Japanese Prime Minister Abe Shinzo hold their first formal talks.

12 November: China reveals plans to establish a new bank to fund development of the 'New Silk Road', reviving intercontinental land routes and maritime links through central Asia. Four days earlier, Xi Jinping had announced

that China would invest US\$40 billion in a New Silk Road fund for infrastructure development and industrial and financial co-operation in Asia.

12 November: Presidents Xi Jinping and Barack Obama announce an ambitious bilateral agreement on climate change as well as the introduction of reciprocal ten-year, multiple entry short-stay visas for ordinary citizens.

14 November: At a joint press conference with Barack Obama following the APEC gathering, Xi Jinping responds to a question from a *New York Times* journalist on press freedom in China, defending the Chinese government's refusal to give visas to a number of foreign journalists, saying the barred journalists had only themselves to blame.

16 November: In a private exchange at Kirribilli House with the German Chancellor Angela Merkel, Prime Minister Tony Abbott admits that Australia's policies towards China are driven by two emotions: 'fear and greed'.

17 November: Following a meeting between Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott and Xi Jinping, representatives

of China and Australia sign a 'Declaration of Intent to work towards signature of the China–Australia Free Trade Agreement'.

19–21 November: China hosts the World Internet Conference in the town of Wuzhen, Zhejiang province. Participants include the heads of all major Chinese Internet firms as well as executives from Western tech companies operating in China.

17 November: Xi Jinping addresses Australia's parliament, saying China aims to become a 'modern socialist country that is prosperous, democratic, culturally advanced and harmonious by the middle of the century'. Prime Minister Tony Abbott misunderstands the stock formulation, and says that Xi has made an unprecedented commitment to make China 'fully democratic' by 2050.

21 November: The People's Bank of China cuts interest rates, a move widely seen as an economic stimulus to offset slowing growth. One of the immediate effects of the rate cut was a boost to China's stock markets as investors rushed to move their money into shares.

25 November: The Legislative Affairs Office of China's State Council releases for public comment a draft of China's first national law against domestic violence, formally defining domestic violence as a crime and streamlining the process for obtaining restraining orders.

30 November: As violent clashes between pro-democracy protestors and police continue in Hong Kong, Beijing bars a group of British politicians from entering Hong Kong after one of them declares support for the protests.

4 December: China celebrates its first China Constitution Day 国家宪法日.

9 December: China awards the third annual Confucius Peace Prize (founded in response to the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to Liu Xiaobo in 2010) to Fidel Castro. Cuban students in Beijing accepted the award on behalf of their retired president. Previous recipients include Vladimir Putin and Lien Chan 連戰 (former premier of Taiwan and chairman of the Kuomintang).

11 December: Police bring a peaceful end to the seventy-five days of occupation of Hong Kong's central Admiralty district by pro-democracy protesters; the last site (in Causeway Bay) is cleared on 15 December. Protests continue, guerrilla style, with people carrying yellow umbrellas while singing Christmas carols and carrying out other actions.

13 December: China marks its first state commemoration of the Nanjing Massacre 国家公祭.

This text is taken from *Shared Destiny*, edited by Geremie R Barmé,
Linda Jaivin and Jeremy Goldkorn, published 2015 by ANU Press,
The Australian National University, Canberra, Australia.