POLLUTION

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EDITED BY
Gloria Davies,
Jeremy Goldkorn AND Luigi Tomba

CHINA STORY YEARBOOK 2015

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AUSTRALIAN CENTRE ON CHINA IN THE WORLD

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本书扼要

中国正在面对环境污染所造成的，包括经济及公共卫生等众多领域在内的严峻挑战。《中国故事年鉴２０１５：污染》着眼于中国共产党和中国政府如何面对和化解上述问题，以及中国公民怎样表述和应对与他们休戚相关的，仍在日益恶化中的污染问题。

本年鉴在探讨环境污染对中国文化、法律、社会活动，以及互联网、语言、思想、历史等方面所造成的后果的同时，还就环境污染如何影响中国经济和政治发展、城市化进程、中国在亚太地区及全球姿态等问题进行了广泛的探讨。与此同时，本年鉴对当代中国在身兼诸多决策机构领袖的中共中央主席习近平的带领下，坚决清除西方精神污染，以宣传和思想教育工作实行文化净化与社会控制的现状也进行了探讨。

污染一词在汉语中既指肮脏或有害物质的玷污，亦指人们受到恶劣或异端思想的影响。随着世界越来越依赖与中国的经济联系，对于中国特色的一党制政体和当局者对污染一词所涵盖的各类『污染』的复杂态度的探索与讨论，无疑是具有全球性现实意义的。

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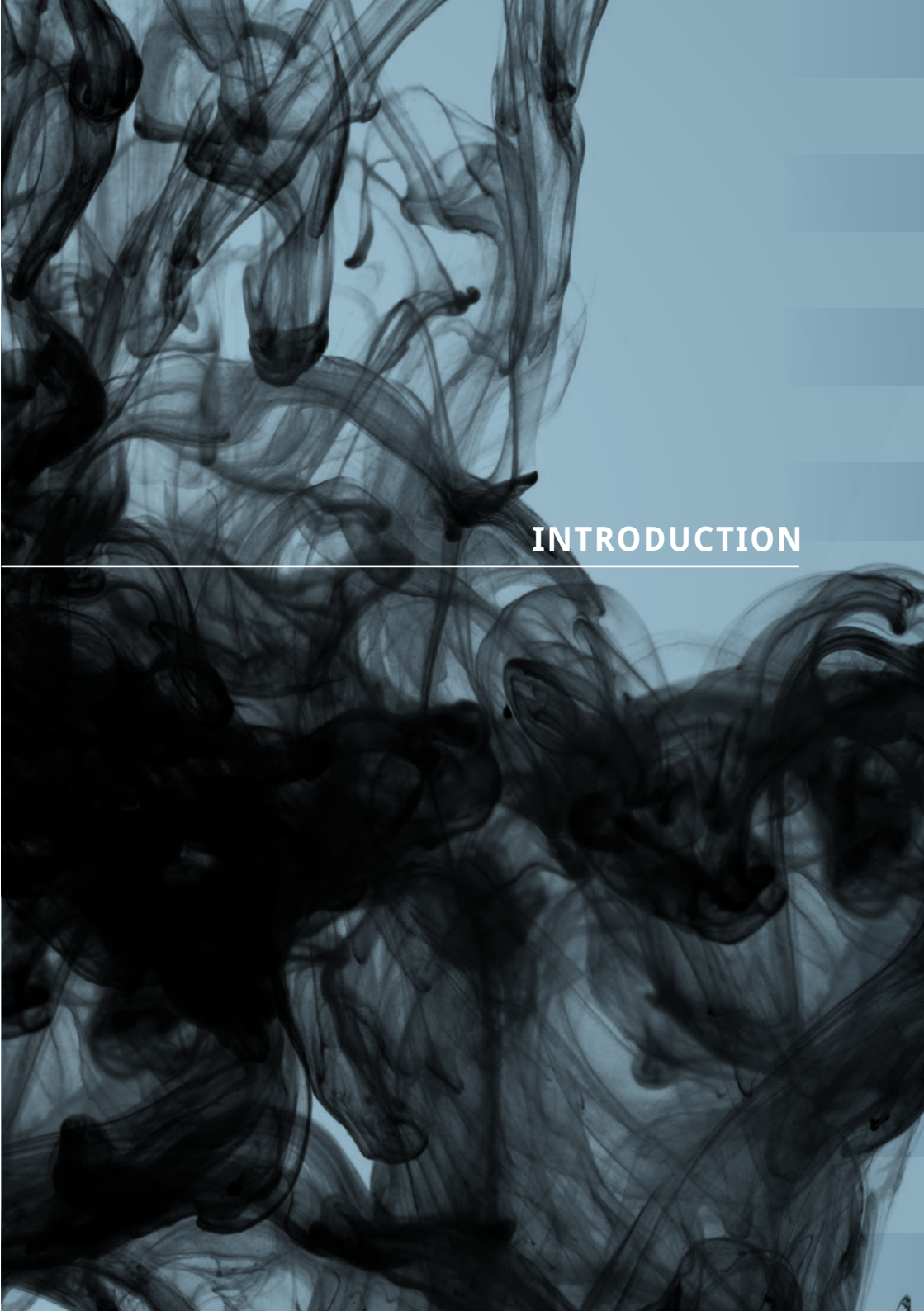

INTRODUCTION

6月

7月

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9月

10月

11月

12月

INTRODUCTION

2015年1月

2月

3月

4月

5月

6月

7月

8月

9月

POLLUTION—AIR, SOIL, WATER, BODY, AND SPIRIT

Gloria Davies and Luigi Tomba

Xi Jinping arriving in Paris for COP21
Source: COPParis/Flickr

An Uncertain Year of the Goat

On 15 February 2015, four days before the start of the Lunar New Year, Xi Jinping met with local residents in the Yanta district 雁塔区 of Xi'an. He admired the Spring Festival papercuts they had made and selected one with a traditional 'three goats' 三羊 design. Photographs of Xi holding the papercut in both hands, and other photographs of him chatting or shaking hands with different groups of people in Xi'an, soon appeared in print and online. Xi has often called Xi'an, the site of China's famous ancient capital Chang'an, his hometown—he was born in Fuping county 富平县, only an hour's drive away. These images, which projected an aura of harmonious cordiality between a beaming General Secretary of China's Communist Party and people who appeared visibly excited to be in close physical proximity to him, marked an auspicious start to the Year of the Goat for China's one-party state.

As the first day of the Year of the Goat approached in 2015, Chinese cities and towns were awash with advertisements, festive banners, and papercuts featuring 'three-goat' designs. Luxury Swiss watch companies keen to capitalise on the appetite for goat symbolism among wealthy Chinese customers produced limited edition watches featuring single

A beaming Xi Jinping with his papercut goats
Source: politics.people.com.cn

The 'Grandeur' hexagram
Source: commons.wikimedia.org

and triple goat designs. 'Three goats' is a visual pun for hexagram eleven in the early Chinese classic, the *Book of Changes*. The hexagram, which symbolises 'grandeur' 泰, consists at its base of 'three *yang* lines' 三阳 (that is, unbroken lines). The hexagram's top three lines are *yin* (broken) lines. This symmetrical arrangement of three *yang* lines and three *yin* lines is regarded as highly auspicious. For divinatory purposes, the hexagram augurs greatness: 'the three *yang* lines pave the way to grandeur' 三阳开泰. This saying has long served as a New Year greeting and is especially popular during goat years because 'three goats' and 'three yang lines' are both pronounced *san yang* in Chinese. Hence the saying is also often written as: 'May the three goats bring grandeur your way' 三羊开泰.

However, the festive euphoria of the week-long Spring Festival celebrations (18–24 February) was overshadowed by ongoing, widespread anxieties about pollution and financial volatility. The 2015 *Yearbook* is titled *Pollution* but environment and economy are interlinked in complex ways that preoccupied both Party and people throughout 2015.

Goat symbolism: Jaquet Droz Ateliers d'Art watches celebrating the Year of the Goat
Source: timetransformed.com

The state-imposed presence of a 'collective vision' has enabled us to organise each of our *Yearbooks* around a theme that illuminates a key feature of life and society in the People's Republic during that year. For 2012, it was the rise of China's 'red boomers' (or 'revolutionary successors', the 'princeling' children of the first generation of Chinese Communist leaders). Xi Jinping and Bo Xilai had emerged in the late 2000s as the two most prominent of these 'red boomers'. That year saw the political demise of Bo and the rise of Xi to the leadership of both Party and state as chairman of the Chinese Communist Party and President of the People's Republic of China. In 2013, we considered the prominence accorded to 'civilisation' in China's official and public culture and discourse that year, with state-led 'civilising' projects in fields as varied as economics, education, politics, and social and urban planning. In 2014, Xi Jinping's vision of China as leading a regional 'community of shared destiny' led us to explore how, as the world became increasingly dependent on China's economic prosperity, the Chinese government and Chinese citizens were also finding a place for themselves in the world.

As with the themes of previous years, we have chosen a Chinese character, 染 *ran*, to express the idea of the 2015's theme of pollution. The basic meaning of the verb 染 is 'to dye' and it appears in the range of compound words that are used to describe different forms of dyeing, including the 'dyeing' (painting) of fingernails and toenails 染指甲 *ran zhi jia.*

By extension, 染 has also come to mean pollution in the sense of an agent or force that produces a negative change in an object, person or substance. Accordingly, 染 is part of the Chinese word for pollution 污染 *wuran*. The word meant 'contamination' or 'defilement' in its premodern usage, of which a well-known instance appears in a statement attributed to the seer Guan Lu 管辂 (209–256) in the third century work, *Records of the Three Kingdoms* 三国志: 'The bleeding bodies of dead soldiers defile the hills and mountains' 军尸流血，污染丘山. As a modern word *wuran* refers mainly to environmental pollution and appears in terms denoting particular types of pollution, such as air pollution 空气污染 or the

pollution of drinking water 饮水污染. Other negative connotations of the verb 染 include the Buddhist-derived expression 'to acquire a bad habit' 染恶习 *ran e'xi*; the term for 'contracting an infectious disease' 染病 *ranbing*, and the compound verb 染指 *ranzhi*, which refers to inappropriate uses of power and overreaching influence (whether of a country, group or individual). For instance, in January 2015, China's state media used the phrase 'encroachments on cultural circles' 染指文化圈 to publicise the launch of the state's investigations into how corrupt officials were manipulating the workings of China's elite art market. These varied senses of 染 capture something of the complex trajectories of pollution as a Chinese idea.

Also, as in previous years, the organisation of the chapters, forums, and information windows reflects the research themes of the Australian Centre on China in the World, including justice, numbers, text, time, urban, and everyday life, with specific focuses on culture and foreign relations (with special attention to China's relations with Australia). We explore the relation between pollution and money through such questions as: Why have so many Chinese farmers chosen to gamble on the stock market instead of investing in farm equipment? Why, despite predictable environmental consequences, has Xi Jinping's administration pushed so hard for the restructuring of the city of Beijing and the creation of the

A fragment of the *Records of the Three Kingdoms*
Source: politics.people.com.cn

massive city-region called Jing-Jin-Ji (encompassing Beijing, Tianjin, and Hebei)? Why have the party-state's commitments to resolve environmental problems in China, including the considerable suite of environmental laws it has already enacted, achieved very little to date? It is not only China that is 'under the dome' of its pollution (to borrow the title of a popular—and then suppressed—2015 documentary on pollution that is also the title of the opening chapter by Jane Golley). The country's ambitious plans for a 'new silk road' over land and sea in particular illustrate how we all share the same sky.

We also reflect on the further extension in 2015 of the party's 'mass education' campaign that was first launched in 2013. Xi's administration has shown a particular determination to 'reform' Chinese minds. As China's 'opening up' and integration with the global economy proceeds apace, the Party appears all the more intent on prescribing what citizens can and cannot do, write and even think. Accordingly, 'Reform and Opening Up' has acquired a highly particular connotation at odds with its original meaning. As the post-Maoist party-state's guiding motto throughout the 1980s (it was first introduced in December 1978), the slogan signalled a commitment to gradual political liberalisation (though never full democratisation) to complement the economic reforms already underway.

Throughout 2015, the government led by Xi has sought to more effectively align the thinking of its citizens with that of the Party through new restrictions on the nation's educational curriculum (particularly at university level), tightened censorship, and an unprecedented crackdown on rights and civil society activism that resulted in the arrest of more than one hundred 'rights-defence' 维权 lawyers and activists in July 2015. The current Party leadership's understanding of political 'reform' is nowhere more evident than in its interpretation of the rule of law as a governing tool aimed at the preservation of the Party's authority.

The year also saw the continued prosecution of corrupt party and state officials: a key event being the closed-door trial in June 2015 of Zhou Yongkang, former head of China's all-powerful state security. In 2015, the

Still from Chai Jing's documentary *Under the Dome*
Source: digi.163.com

Party-state also introduced tougher penalties for environmental pollution, pressed on with massive building and infrastructure construction as part of the urbanisation drive, built more artificial islands in the South China Sea, and drew up an action plan for China's global economic role, based on the 'Silk Road Economic Belt' and 'Twenty-First Century Maritime Silk Road' initiatives first proposed by Xi in late 2013. In their public statements on these matters, party leaders and official spokespersons resolutely presented a grand narrative about China's present and future.

However, events that challenged that narrative appeared to have taken them by surprise, eliciting less certain, even erratic behaviour. For instance, officials praised Chai Jing's 柴静 phenomenally successful documentary on air pollution and environmental degradation *Under the Dome* 穹顶之下 when it was released online on 28 February 2015 but shut it down three days later—after it had been viewed almost 200 million times. From June 2015, as prices tumbled on the Shanghai and Shenzhen stock exchanges, the government moved rapidly from trying to prop up share prices with public funds to introducing incentives to boost investor confidence, to introducing penalties for short selling and finally

demanding that China's top brokerages invest funds to stabilise the stock market. Disjunctures between planning and reality are a problem for governments everywhere. In China, the opaque nature of the one-party system complicates the picture. But this authoritarian system also means the state is involved in everyone's life—and various Internet forums readily expose the gaps and contradictions between the party's narrative of a 'collective vision' and the diverse stories of average citizens. These gaps and contradictions have served as a framing device for the *China Story Yearbook* project since its launch in 2012.

On Pollution

THE NATIONAL TIMES, JANUARY 13 to 19, 1984

CHINA BLAMES THE WEST FOR 'CULTURAL POLLUTION'

THE Chinese people have tasted Coca-cola. Now some of them want free speech, too. GEREMIE BARME* reports.

A SHORT article on the second page of The People's Daily, China's largest newspaper, in late November would be enough to warm the metaphysics of Nancy and Ronald Reagan, and make the Festival of Light positively pert.

The article, with its curious digital title, 28 & 31, actually tells of the suspension of 28 city students are being denounced, and popular music from Taiwan and Hong Kong has been labelled as subversive. Although ing to purge the party of up to one-third of its 39 million members.

Chinese leaders and the media have been at an intrinsic value, as do university students and cadres.

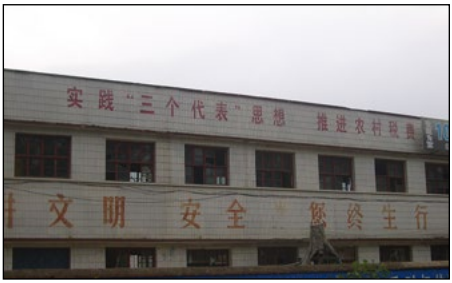
"This will lead to people arguing that it is inhuman to send people to work in the border regions, that to do so shows a disregard for the value of the individual. It is precisely thinking like this that has been poisoning the minds of the masses, turning them into selfish individualists.

***The National Times*, 13–19 January 1984**
Source: thechinastory.org

Pollution is both an omnipresent physical hazard for people living in mainland China and a powerful metaphor for the things the current regime sees as a threat to its ability to maintain power and the People's Republic itself. Xi's administration seeks to eradicate not only the pollution of the natural elements (air, water, soil), but also 'polluting' ideas and those whom they have identified as agents of these polluting ideas (whether individuals, groups, or organisations).

Back in 1983, when he was trying to work out how to reform the economy while keeping control over society, ideas, and politics, Deng Xiaoping launched an 'anti-spiritual pollution' 反对精神污染 campaign to silence critics, clamp down on newly emerging social freedoms and

cleanse the cultural scene of such pollutants as abstract art, pop music, and 'misty' poetry 朦胧诗. The Party's fear of spiritual pollution never quite went away, but it has intensified under Xi Jinping since 2013. In May 2015, at the height of the party-state's crackdown on dissenting voices in media, law, and academe, Xi Jinping stated: 'Political and natural ecology are the same—neglect them even a little and they will very quickly become contaminated'.



Futu, Hebei: 'Practice the Thought of Three Represents, advance the reform on rural tax system'
Source: en.wikipedia.org

Xi's rhetoric marks a decisive shift away from the approaches adopted by the previous administrations under Jiang Zemin (1989–2002) and Hu Jintao (2002–2012). Towards the end of his tenure in 2001, as socioeconomic inequalities deepened in China, Jiang introduced the concept of the 'Three Represents' 三个代表 to affirm the role of wealthy businesspeople in the nation's economic development and to consolidate the links between the one-party system and private enterprise. As Jiang's successor, Hu continued to strengthen this relationship while promoting a 'harmonious society' as a way of managing the growing gulf between haves and have-nots. Both Jiang and Hu relied on the collective style of management that Deng established at the Party's historic Third Plenum in 1978 and that formally ended the Maoist era.

Xi, conversely, has demanded that even the upper echelons of the Party submit to his leadership as he focused on eradicating corruption in the party's ranks, a task which the two previous administrations also prosecuted but with much less success. In this process, Xi, departed significantly from the collective work style of his two immediate predecessors. Throughout 2015, party publications and state media

energetically promoted Xi's image as a strong, enlightened, and morally superior leader. He has spoken of forging cadres (especially high-level cadres) with 'four iron' qualities '四铁'干部: an 'iron-like' belief and faith in the Party and an iron-clad discipline and sense of responsibility.

Under Xi, the Chinese government views the country's environmental problems and ideological consolidation as inextricably linked. They perceive cleaning the nation's air, safeguarding its land, and purifying the water of its rivers, lakes, and coast as requiring not only scientific, technological and policy solutions but ideological commitment and a dedicated cadre of party and government officials as well.

This *China Story Yearbook 2015* tracks three narratives of pollution:

Environmental Pollution

Dead fish floating in a contaminated river in Anhui province
Source: ah.people.cn

Land-grabbing urbanisation and soil and water contamination is increasingly placing agriculture in China under stress. Several of our stories describe how both governments (central and local) and citizens have dealt with and responded to the challenges of pollution and contamination. We also look at how pollution has come to play a defining role in urban design and megacity planning in the north and the repercussions of pollution on China's growth.

We also consider the complexities of implementing expensive and massive engineering solutions to address water scarcity and pollution and how cities struggle to provide a livable environment for an urban population destined to grow dramatically over the next decade. We note

2015年11月24日 星期二 乙未年十月十三 福建日报 海峡 6

警惕“污染”

一周看台

本报记者 叶桂

香港特区第五届区议会431个民选议席全部产生

新华社香港11月23日电 香港特别行政区第五届区议会选举23日凌晨4时完成计票工作，431个民选议席全部产生，投票率达四年来最高，总投票人数超过146万，创历届区议会选举的最高纪录。

此前，香港区议会选举的最高投票率为2003年的44.13%，上届即2011年为41.4%，最高总投票人数为上届的约120万。

香港特区行政长官梁振英22日晚于投票结束后立即作一个点票的表示，十分高兴见到本次选举的投票人、竞选投票权利、和参与区议会的选举。

选举管理委员会主席马丽乔凌晨23日总结本届区议会选举时表示，整体来说，投票时间延长是大胆尝试，选举结果公信度公平、公平和诚实的原则，选管会满意是大家的。

丽乔表示，本次计票用了约4个半小时，原因时间较多，是因为本届投票人数增加，约上届增加约26.3万人，每宣布票数的需要重新计算。

第五届区议会选举投票自23日上午7时30分开始至晚10时30分结束，分区共设179个站，全港495个一般投票站及24个专用投票站当日开放予约313万名登记选民投票。

此次选举香港18个区共设有431个民选议席，比前已有14个选区的候选人自动当选，867名候选人见证第六届363个议席。

24 November 2015: Liu Shenkui writes an opinion piece on the 'pollution' of 'Taiwanese independence'
Source: fjrb.fjsen.com

how a massive, catastrophic chemical explosion in an urban industrial warehouse in Tianjin in August 2015 exposed shortcomings in areas ranging from regulation to security and safety and emergency response preparedness that were the results of rapid and poorly planned industrialisation and how this incident exacerbated anxiety around the subject of pollution in both the populace and the leadership.

Ideological Pollution

The Chinese government's intensification of censorship and propaganda is an important part of the 2015 China story. We provide accounts of how it has sought to banish 'Western values' (meaning, broadly, ideas of a liberal democratic persuasion) from university classrooms, and how, in linking 'de-Westernisation' to a strengthening of 'Socialism with Chinese Characteristics', it has further politicised China's legal system in the name of reform.

In 2015, while tightening existing restrictions on free discussion, the party-state gave free reign to online abuse against the idea and promoters of Taiwanese independence. In the months leading up to the Taiwanese general election of 16 January 2016, and as the party leadership redoubled its efforts to strengthen diplomatic and trade ties with Taiwan, nationalistic Chinese netizens denounced Taiwanese independence. Some even called it a 'polluting' idea. For instance, an opinion piece of 24 November 2015 in

Zhou Yongkang
Source: *Caixin*

the *Fujian Daily* included this line: 'Waste pollution and air pollution makes us angry but the "pollution" of "Taiwanese independence" is much more hateful'. When Tsai Ing-wen of the pro-independence Democratic Progressive Party was elected as Taiwan's first female president, media commentators speculated that Taiwanese resentment at abusive online mainland discourse had played a part in the DPP's landslide victory.

Agents of Pollution

If things and ideas can be polluted, so can people. In June 2015, the trial of Zhou Yongkang was reported in ways that signaled the Party leadership's determination to root out the 'contagion' of corruption, even if it meant taking down people in high positions. Zhou's family members and many other senior Party and state officials linked to him have since gone down as well, and almost every province has experienced the fall of at least one important leader.

Under Xi, the government has targeted many 'unhealthy' practices. This year saw the introduction of strict new regulations to ban smokers from public places and the imposition of heavy fines for disobedience. However, people who mounted their own campaigns risked being viewed as pollutants themselves. When the 'Feminist Five' sought to raise awareness of sexual harassment on public transportation in March 2015, they were arrested, and other activists defending, for example, the rights of minorities, were also detained. To prevent the contagion effects of social activism, public security authorities throughout 2015 frequently charged people with the crime of 'picking quarrels and provoking trouble'.

Predictions and Reckonings

Mo Zhixu
Source: commons.wikimedia.org

When a newly-appointed Xi Jinping announced in November 2012 that achieving the 'Chinese Dream' 中国梦 would be his primary goal, people had little idea of how far he would go to protect his vision from perceived contaminants and threats. In 2015 and early 2016, an energetic debate has taken place outside China on the question of whether he—and China's Communist party-state—would succeed or, ultimately, collapse.

The dissident blogger Mo Zhixu 莫之许 (pen name of Zhao Hui 赵晖) wrote in April 2016 on Chinaorg.com that the previous year had seen a shift in the views of 'mainstream Western scholars' about 'the future prospects for Chinese Communist rule'. They had previously argued, he observed, that China's authoritarian regime would remain 'resilient', a thesis first elaborated by Columbia University-based political scientist Andrew Nathan in 2003. But now they were seemingly defending the opposite view. The 'resilience and adaptation' argument perceived the regime as uniquely capable of adapting to changing conditions and using its institutions to manage conflicts and transitions. In 2015, David Shambaugh, an influential American analyst of Chinese affairs and professor of politics at George Washington University, a previous supporter of the 'resilience and adaptation' argument, published a book, *China's Future*, that featured a big question mark on its cover. Shambaugh was now predicting the progressive and ultimately fatal decline of China's one-party system, as were commentators like Pei Minxin 裴敏欣, professor of government at Claremont McKenna College, who had long warned that Chinese communism was 'trapped' in 'transition'. Pei more recently began speaking in terms of Chinese communism's imminent 'twilight'.

Whether or not one subscribes to the particular views held by Mo, Shambaugh, and others, it is undeniable that academic and online commentary about China's 'unstable and unsettled' future is on the rise, including, to the extent allowed by China's rigorous system of censorship, within China itself. Certainly, China suffers from rampant corruption, the flight of domestic capital, an ideology that struggles for true believers among China's citizens, increasing repression of dissent (real or imagined) by an increasingly insecure regime and an economy with deep structural weaknesses. However, none of these phenomena are new, and they haven't taken China to the brink yet. In his review of Shambaugh's *China's Future*, historian Jeffrey Wasserstrom of the University of California Irvine agreed with much of Shambaugh's analysis, but did not 'buy [Shambaugh's] notion that the past performance of developing countries provides a clear guide for China's future'. Will 2015 herald the collapse of one-party rule in China or will it be merely the prelude to the one-party system's solidification under Xi Jinping's strongman tactics? The outcome will not depend on Xi's decisions alone.

Jeffrey Wasserstrom
Image: Steve Zylius, UCI Communications

Geremie Barmé, founding director of the Australian Centre on China in the World, used the term 'collapsism' to describe the raft of pessimistic predictions among those who professionally comment on Chinese affairs. In a March 2015 interview, he noted that such speculation among American commentators in particular may have more to do with 'huge anxiety about US politics and its future' than with China per se. Barmé remarked: 'Xi's China is uglier, more repressive, and narrow, yet it's more confident, more articulate and more focused than at any time since Mao Zedong. That's why America is worried'.

THE CAUSEWAY BAY BOOKS INCIDENT, by Gloria Davies and Linda Jaivin

Thousands of people took to the streets in Hong Kong to protest the disapperance of five people who worked at Causeway Bay Books
Source: youtube.com

The disappearance between October and December 2015 of five people who worked at Causeway Bay Books 铜锣湾书店 in Hong Kong alarmed fellow booksellers, media, and a general populace already wary of mainland interference in free expression in Hong Kong, and sparked international outrage. Lam Wing-kee 林榮基, the bookshop's founder and book editor Lee Bo 李波 (the bookshop is involved in publishing as well) were abducted by mainland agents in Hong Kong and taken across the border. Gui Minhai 桂敏海, a major shareholder and Swedish national, was also abducted, but from his home in Pattaya, Thailand, drawing both Sweden and Thailand into the incident. The two others, publisher Cheung Jiping 張志平 and manager and shareholder Lui Bo 呂波, were detained by the police when they visited family in Guangdong.

Causeway Bay Books, which Lam founded in 1994 and was acquired by Mighty Current Media Ltd in 2014, had made its reputation publishing books about in-fighting, intrigues, and scandals among China's party leaders, 'red aristocrats', and their families.

If the 'Causeway Bay Books Incident' 铜锣湾书店事件 was intended to be a lesson to other independent booksellers and publishers in Hong Kong, it had mixed results. On the one hand it was widely condemned. On the other, at least one publisher lost nerve. Hong Kong's Open Books had contracted the dissident writer Yu Jie 余杰 to publish his critical account of Xi's administration, *Xi Jinping's Nightmare* 習近平的噩夢, but informed Yu on 3 January 2016 that they could not publish the book. Yu relayed the contents of the email sent to him on that day by Jin Zhong 金鐘, editor-in-chief at Open Books, in which Jin wrote:

> The difficulty of publishing political books in Hong Kong is already in the international spotlight. People in the industry are feeling great fear and pressure; they want to stay out of trouble so that they won't be the next one [to disappear]. I received many calls from friends and family trying to persuade me. Because of that, we decided after much deliberation to suspend the publication of your work.

By mid-2016, several of the Hong Kong-based booksellers had been allowed to return to Hong Kong, though the circumstances of their disappearance remains unclear, with Lam alleging serious mistreatment.

Economic fugitives are repatriated with the help of overseas governments
Photo: chinadaily.com.cn

Throughout 2015, many mainland public intellectuals have expressed dismay at the increasingly authoritarian nature of China's political culture. The dismay spread beyond China's borders when, between October and December 2015, Chinese state agents carried out cross-border abductions of three Hong Kong booksellers from Causeway Bay Books while detaining two more of the bookshop's staff when they visited family in Guangdong province. The bookshop, with its reputation for publishing works critical of China's Communist Party leadership and selling titles banned on the Mainland, had long been a thorn in the side of the Chinese government. The governments of Western democratic countries denounced these extra-territorial abductions, with senior government figures in the UK and Sweden pressing for the release of two of the detained booksellers who held, respectively, British and Swedish citizenship (see Information Window 'The Causeway Bay Books Incident', p.xxiii).

In 2015, the Chinese government also continued to request assistance from other countries to repatriate corrupt Chinese officials who had fled overseas. At the same time, it established a new Department of Overseas Fugitive Affairs to pursue economic fugitives abroad. This posed new and difficult problems for the governments of Western democracies, apprehensive about returning people to face a highly politicised justice system. The term 染指 (mentioned earlier) allows us to say that, given the substantial amount of money that corrupt Chinese officials have transferred

abroad, Western democracies must now contend with the 'encroaching' effects of those ill-gotten gains as well as Xi's anti-graft campaign. The intricate networks of financial and political power that have enabled the families of senior party leaders, including Xi Jinping, to amass vast and unaccountable fortunes, are now a global problem. As Chinese investments in commercial, industrial, and property developments outside China continue to grow, countries such as Australia whose economies have become heavily dependent on trade with and investment from China, are increasingly forced to reckon with the country's political complexities.

There is clear popular support in China for Xi's anti-graft campaign but the relationship between the Party and the people is a delicate balancing act. With unilateral decision-making comes enormous, almost paternal responsibility. The Party expects the people to obey its directives. In return, the people expect the Party to 'serve the people'—to ensure their socioeconomic and environmental well-being, and in more far-reaching ways than is expected of governments in democratic societies. Whether the Party-state is able and willing to meet these needs and expectations is one factor, but a big one, in determining its future and that of China itself.

The *China Story Yearbook*

The *China Story Yearbook* is a project of the Australian Centre on China in the World (CIW) at The Australian National University (ANU). It is part of a broad undertaking aimed at understanding what we call the China Story 中国的故事, both as portrayed by official China, and from various other perspectives. Our Centre on China in the World is a Commonwealth Government-ANU initiative that was announced by then Australian prime minister, the Hon Kevin Rudd MP, in April 2010 on the occasion of the Seventieth George E. Morrison Lecture at ANU. Geremie Barmé was its director from its founding through to 2015.

The Centre is dedicated to a holistic approach to the study of contemporary China: one that considers the range of forces, personalities,

and ideas at work in China as a means of understanding the spectrum of China's sociopolitical and cultural realities. The Australian Centre on China in the World fosters such an approach by supporting humanities-led research that engages actively with the social sciences. The resulting admixture has, we believe, academic merit, public policy relevance, and value for the engaged public. The *Yearbook* is aimed at a broad readership that includes the general public as well as scholars from all fields, as well as people in business and government.

The Australian Centre on China in the World promotes the New Sinology of which Geremie Barmé was a pioneer (http://www.thechinastory.org/new-sinology/). This is a study of China underpinned by an understanding of the disparate living traditions of Chinese thought, language, and culture. Xi Jinping's China is a gift to the New Sinologist, for the world of the Chairman of Everything requires the student of contemporary China to be familiar with basic classical Chinese thought, history and literature, appreciate the abiding influence of Marxist-Leninist ideas, and the dialectic prestidigitations of Mao Zedong Thought. Those who pursue narrow disciplinary approaches to China today serve well the metrics-obsessed international academy. However, they may be incapable of understanding and explaining the historically-derived and culturally-fostered ideas and practices that shape both government and society in mainland China.

Most of the scholars and writers whose work features in the *China Story Yearbook 2015: Pollution* are members of, or associated with the Australian Centre on China in the World. They survey the China of Xi's third year as leader of the Party and state through chapters, forums, and information windows on topics ranging from economics, politics, and China's regional posture through urban change, social activism and law, the Internet, cultural mores, and present-day Chinese attitudes to history and thought. Their contributions, which cover the twelve-month period in 2015 with some reference to events in early 2016, offer an informed perspective on recent developments in China and what these may mean for the future.

The *Yearbook* is organised in the form of thematically arranged chapters which are interspersed with information windows that highlight particular words, issues, ideas, statistics, people, and events. Forums, or 'interstices', expand on the contents of chapters or discuss a topic of relevance to the year. This year, we have signposted the Chapters using the Five Elements 五行 of early Chinese thought—water, fire, wood, metal, and earth. The five elements were used for reckoning time and remain widely used to this day for Chinese astrological calculations. The traditional Chinese belief that all phenomena of the known world are the result of dynamic interactions among these five elements offers a useful analogy for the intricately interdependent nature of events and trends in a globalised China. As 2015 was the Year of the Wood Goat, we have highlighted the wood element by featuring it twice.

The Five Elements (from top, counter-clockwise); fire, metal, water, wood, and (in the middle) earth
Source: zh.wikipedia.org

A Chronology at the end of the volume provides an overview of the year under discussion. Footnotes and the CIW-Danwei Archive of source materials are available online at: http://thechinastory.org/dossier/.

Acknowledgements

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Jip Bouman, Emily Feng, Oma Lee, Lucille Liu, Siodhbhra Parkin, Matt Schrader, Nick Stember, Xiaonan Wang, and Aiden Xia—who provided updates of Chinese- and English-language material relevant to the project and helped to compile and write some of the information windows in the chapters and forums. We would especially like to acknowledge the work of Lorand Laskai in this respect. We are deeply grateful to Linda Jaivin for her extensive and painstaking editorial work on various drafts of the manuscript, to Lindy Allen for typesetting, and to Sharon Strange for typesetting, providing excellent editorial advice and assistance, as well as keeping everyone on track.

The Cover Image

The *Yearbook* cover features the Chinese character 染 *ran*, 'to dye', embossed on swirls of Chinese black ink. 染 forms part of the Chinese word for pollution 污染 *wuran*, the theme of this year's *Yearbook*. Among the metaphorical and literal connotations of pollution expressed in this *Yearbook* through 染 are to adulterate, contaminate, spoil or violate.

Cover of the *China Story Yearbook 2015*, showing the Chinese character 染, which is embossed on swirls of Chinese black ink
Artwork: CRE8IVE, Canberra

FORUM

FORUM

GRANDEUR • 泰

The Road to Rejuvenation: The Animated Xi Jinping
· NICK STEMBER

Where There's Smoke
· AIDEN XIA

Tu Youyou Awarded Nobel Prize in Medicine
· LUCILLE LIU

THE ROAD TO REJUVENATION: THE ANIMATED XI JINPING

Nick Stember

FUTURE HISTORIANS OF CHINESE animation may remember 2015 as a banner year for Chinese animations with the release of more than twenty feature-length and countless short animated films. Major feature length titles include *Amazing Pleasant Goat* 羊年喜羊羊, the big screen adaptation of the hit television series *Pleasant Goat and Big Bad Wolf* 喜羊羊与灰太狼; the dystopian sci-fi epic *10,000 Years Later* 一万年以后; and *Teenage Mao Zedong* 少年毛泽东.

Most memorable of all perhaps, though, was a three-minute English language YouTube video described by *The Wall Street Journal* as 'a psychedelic music video' produced to promote China's Thirteenth Five-Year Plan. Dubbed 'The 13 What' by CCTV America, the film is credited to Road to Rejuvenation Studios 复兴路上工作室, a mysterious film production studio that has no official website and only a scattered social media presence across several accounts. The Chinese name of the studio can alternately be translated into English as 'The Studio on Fuxing Road'. There are many Fuxing Roads in China, but one of the best known is just down the street from the Beijing offices of not only CCTV, but also the General Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film, and Television (GAPPRFT), at No. 2 Fuxing Gate Outer Street, Xicheng district 西城区复兴门外大街2号, just outside Beijing's Second Ring Road.

'The 13 What'
Source: daliulian.net

Xinhua News Agency, *China Daily*, and other party mouthpieces have reposted more than a half dozen short films produced by the studio since late 2013, some animated, some not. Several of the films were released to coincide with important events such as the Thirteenth Five-Year Plan, the Boao Forum, and Xi Jinping's official trips abroad. While two videos, one highlighting Chinese investment in the UK and the other in the US states of North and South Carolina, have racked up equivalent view counts, neither are quite as eye- (or ear-) catching as 'The 13 What'.

Visually speaking, 'The 13 What' calls to mind the cut-and-paste collage aesthetic of Terry Gilliam's early animations for Monty Python: a pink, dismembered hand holds up the moon on a string, while a cubist elk with a giant mouth on its side and eyeball where its face should be dances in the background. The song that accompanies the film is performed entirely in English, with the exception of the words *shi san wu* 十三五 ('thirteen five'), the Chinese abbreviation for the Thirteenth Five-Year Plan. Like other productions of Road to Rejuvenation Studios, the target audience seems to

be foreign rather than domestic audiences. What might surprise veteran China watchers is the levity with which that message is communicated—in another video titled 'Who is Xi Dada?' (ostensibly produced by the *People's Daily* but bearing all the hallmarks of a Road to Rejuvenation Studios video), a Korean student studying Chinese language jokes that, 'If Xi Jinping were my husband, I bet I'd be really happy'.

'Xi Dada' 习大大 or Uncle Xi, as he is often referred to in the videos, is a constant presence. *The Power of Deepening Reforms* 深改的力量, which seems to have been produced by the studio, was released on Sohu 搜狐 and other Chinese language news sites in late 2015. Audio clips of Xi's speeches are used as hooks for a rap song explaining the goals of the anti-corruption campaign. 'China Comes to Carolina,' meanwhile, released just prior to Xi's 2015 visit to the US, borrows the format of an American political campaign ad, with heartfelt testimonies from American employees of companies saved from bankruptcy by an infusion of Chinese capital.

The variety of techniques employed by Road to Rejuvenation Studios suggests a sophisticated, tailored approach to public relations, involving

***The Power of Reform*: a rap song explaining the anti-corruption campaign**
Source: youtube.com

a skilled team of producers, marketers, directors, artists, writers, and voice talent (the latter being particularly impressive, given that several of the videos, like 'The 13 What' are entirely in English). Inquiries made by Matthew Robertson for the *Epoch Times* (a Falun Gong-controlled newspaper) indicate that at least some of this process is being outsourced to private firms outside of China. An anonymous employee of the London-based search engine optimisation (SEO) company Viralseeding.com claimed that his company was paid 'a few thousand to [potentially] tens of thousands' to promote the Road to Rejuvenation Studios' short film *Britain Meets China*, without being told who produced it. In an interview with the AFP news agency, a spokesperson for Road to Rejuvenation Studios said

***How Leaders are Made*: uploaded in October 2015, this Chinese propaganda video has been viewed more than one million times. It presents a view of how the US President, the UK's Prime Minister, and China's President are elected**
Source: youtube.com

they had 'continuously co-ordinated and co-operated with' the global advertising agency BBDO on 'The 13 What', although the Shanghai office of BBDO declined to comment on this.

As of 6 June 2016, CCTV America's posting of 'The 13 What' has garnered over 180,000 views on YouTube, while the posting of the video to Road to Rejuvenation Studios own YouTube page has gained it another 45,000 views. A more recent video released in April 2016 (with some 24,000 views over two channels), however, reflects the challenging reality of the Chinese economy in 2016: 'Kung Fu and the Chinese Economy' ends with a play on words that doesn't quite work in English. In Chinese, *kung fu* 功夫 is a homophone for *gongfu* 工夫, meaning free, or sufficient time: 'With *gongfu*,' states the narrator, anyone can understand Chinese kung fu … and yes, even the Chinese economy!'

WHERE THERE'S SMOKE

Aiden Xia

ON 1 JUNE 2015, Beijing rolled out a new, strict anti-smoking law that placed a ban on smoking in public, including restaurants, offices, and public transport. The regulation also forbids tobacco advertisements and the selling of cigarettes within one hundred metres of primary schools and kindergartens.

China has over 300 million smokers, 1.37 million of whom die from smoking-related illnesses every year, according to 2014 statistics released by the National Health and Family Planning Commission (NHFPC). Yet the fact that new China's founding fathers such as Chairman Mao and Deng Xiaoping are often seen smoking in photographs and that some cigarette brands boast patriotic names like *Zhongnanhai* 中南海 (China's seat of government), cigarettes in China have acquired an almost benign, even revolutionary image. And behind the scenes, concerns about public health have also had to contend with the fact that a government monopoly on tobacco means that cigarette sales contribute directly to state coffers.

***Zhongnanhai* cigarettes**
Source: etmoc.com

The roll out of Beijing's new anti-smoking law involved a highly visible public awareness campaign, which included draping the iconic Bird's Nest in anti-smoking signs
Source: chinanews.com

While past attempts at banning public smoking in the nation's capital, most recently during the 2008 Olympics, failed to dent Beijingers' predilection for lighting up wherever and whenever—partly because the fine was a laughable ten yuan—the new effort appears to be backed by increased resolve. In 2013, the Central Committee of the Communist Party and State Council jointly released regulations banning officials from lighting up in public. Under new legislation, offenders will be fined 200 yuan and businesses that fail to stamp out smoking on their premises could be fined up to 10,000 yuan. Repeat violators will be named and shamed on an official website. Violations can be reported via a call to a government hotline and pictures of offenders can be sent to a public WeChat account. Within a day of the regulations coming into effect, inspectors fined their first offender: a branch of *Sichuan Haidiliao* 四川海底捞, a popular hotpot chain.

Within a month, health authorities declared the ban's result 'satisfactory', and there appears to be wide adherence to the new law in eateries and

bars across the city. But when authorities panned the film, *Mr. Six* 老炮儿, a runaway success in 2015 that brilliantly captured Beijing's urban culture, for featuring a smoking scene every 1.3 minutes (the most of any Chinese film in 2015), the director shrugged off criticism: he had, he explained, simply wanted to depict Beijing life accurately.

The motion picture *Mr. Six*, which was released in September, was noted for featuring a smoking scene every 1.3 minutes
Source: cnews.chinadaily.com.cn

TU YOUYOU AWARDED NOBEL PRIZE IN MEDICINE

Lucille Liu

IN 2015, Tu Youyou 屠呦呦 became the first Chinese citizen to receive a Nobel Prize in medicine for her contributions to discovering the antimalarial drug artemisinin 青蒿素. She shared the prize with William C. Campbell and Satoshi Ōmura for their work in finding a novel therapy against roundworm parasites.

Tu's discovery has its roots in a secret military program. On 23 May 1967, Mao Zedong launched Project 523 to find a cure for drug-resistant strains of malaria that were taking a huge toll on China's Viet Cong allies in the Vietnam War. In 1969, the government requested help from the China Academy of Chinese Medical Sciences (formerly China Academy of Traditional Chinese Medicine) 中国中医科学院. China was in the midst of the Cultural Revolution; many of the country's top scientists, including those that had trained overseas, had been persecuted and sent off to labour camps. Tu, who at thirty-nine held only an undergraduate degree from Beijing Medical University's School of Pharmacy and had never studied abroad, was chosen to lead the program at her institute.

Tu Youyou
Source: img3.imgtn.bdimg.com

Building on previous research, Tu and her team scoured ancient texts and interviewed traditional medicine

Ge Hong's *Handbook of Prescriptions for Emergencies*
Source: nature.com

practitioners to compile over 2,000 potential anti-malarial recipes. An extract from sweet wormwood or *Artemisia annua* 青蒿 produced promising, but inconsistent results when tested on malaria-infected mice.

Tu credits a recipe from a manual written more than two millennia ago, Ge Hong's 葛洪 *Handbook of Prescriptions for Emergencies* 肘后备急方 for inspiring the breakthrough that would lead to the discovery of artemisinin.

Ge's recipe called for patients to drink the juice from sweet wormwood soaked in water. Tu realised that boiling the plant might have been destroying its active ingredient and thus switched to a low temperature technique, which produced an extract that completely inhibited parasite growth in animal trials.

Premier Li Keqiang called Tu's Nobel prize 'an expression of the huge contribution that Chinese traditional medicine and pharmacy has made to the health of humankind'. The award has not been without controversy, including over whether it vindicated Chinese medicine per se or the scientific method used to identify active compounds from traditional remedies. Project 523 was also a massive government undertaking that involved over 500 scientists from sixty military and civilian institutions; Tu was one of many working on the project. Tu herself has told *The New York Times* that she considered the honour of the Nobel to belong collectively to herself, her team, and the nation.

水

1

UNDER THE DOME

Jane Golley

6月
7月
8月
9月
10月
11月
12月
2015年1月
2月
3月
4月
5月
6月
7月
8月
9月

FOUR DECADES OF RAPID ECONOMIC growth has resulted in wide-ranging environmental damage across China (and beyond), from smog-ridden skies to contaminated rivers, toxic soils and 'cancer villages'. These increasingly intolerable costs have emerged as a major source of social unrest in recent years. Premier Li Keqiang acknowledged this in his opening address to the National People's Congress (NPC) on 5 March 2015: 'China's growing pollution problems are a blight on people's quality of life and a trouble that weighs on their hearts.'

Wang Renzheng and his smog-sucking vacuum cleaner
Source: tech.163.com

A still from the documentary *Under the Dome* with Chai Jing in the foreground
Photo: cq.house.qq.com

On 28 February, six days before Li spoke to the NPC, the former investigative journalist Chai Jing 柴静 released her documentary *Under the Dome* 穹顶之下 on the Chinese Internet. *Under the Dome* vividly conveyed the nature of this 'blight' and struck a chord: its mainland Chinese audience exceeded 200 million people. Yet within two weeks of its release, it was no longer possible to download it in China, and official directives prohibited the Chinese media from any further reporting on the film. It is still available on YouTube but, of course, this is also blocked in China.

Clearly, the detailed, inconvenient truths laid bare in *Under the Dome* and the popular response to it were too much for the Chinese leadership to handle. It isn't hard to see why. The film implicated party-state officials at every level in its highly critical assessment of the 'growth at all costs' industrialisation strategy of the last four decades. Its overarching message was loud and clear: that the central government was primarily to blame for blatantly failing to enforce its own environmental laws and regulations and call polluters to account. Whether either Premier Li or President Xi

Jinping had seen the documentary, they seem to have got the message. Xi declared in his own address to the NPC meeting on 6 March that, 'We are going to punish, with an iron hand, any violators who destroy the ecology or the environment, with no exceptions.'

The Plan: Green from the Top Down

Fortunately, this is not the government's only strategy for addressing China's environmental crisis. The central government had already produced an abundance of plans to tackle China's environmental problems during the period covered by its Twelth Five-Year Plan (2011–15). It further ramped up its efforts following Premier Li's declaration of a 'war on pollution' in 2014. In November 2014, the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) 国家发展和改革委员会 released the National Plan for Responding to Climate Change (2014–2020) 国家应对气候变化规划. This outlines strategies including strengthening laws and regulations on climate change and limiting large-scale industrialisation and urbanisation. It also proposes defining 'ecological red lines' (a baseline level of ecological health that must be maintained) for key areas including the headwaters of the Yangtze and Yellow Rivers. Other strategies include limiting total coal consumption, and actively promoting cleaner energies. The language of 'strengthening', 'limiting', 'defining', 'controlling', and 'promoting' is indicative of the central government's intention to drive China's climate change agenda from the top down.

In February 2015, the NDRC published its roadmap for a nationwide emissions trading scheme (ETS). This will build on the seven pilot programs that have been implemented since 2013 in Beijing, Shanghai, Chongqing, Shenzhen, and Tianjin, as well as Guangdong and Hubei provinces. Together they comprise the second largest ETS in the world after that of the European Union. The national scheme, to be launched in 2017, will create the world's largest carbon market, and by a big margin.

In his March 2015 report to the NPC, Premier Li committed the government to a wide range of specific energy conservation and emission reduction measures as well as environmental improvement plans and projects. These support China's official quest for 'green, low-carbon and recycled development' 绿色低碳循环发展, the catch-phrase for its environmentally-friendly growth strategy. They include an action plan for preventing and controlling air pollution, upgrading coal-burning power plants to achieve 'ultra-low' emissions similar to those produced by gas, promoting clean-energy vehicles, and improving fuel quality to meet the new 'National V' standard by which the sulphur content in fuel must be less than ten parts per million. There are also ambitious plans to develop renewable energies including wind power, photovoltaic power, biomass energy, and hydropower, as well as safe nuclear power. Li also announced that the energy conservation and environmental protection industry would become a 'new pillar of the economy' 经济新支柱 and that 'green consumption' 绿色消费 would become the path to stimulating the domestic consumer economy.

The following month, the Chinese government committed to establishing a 'green financial system' 绿色金融体系. A report produced by experts from the People's Bank of China (PBoC), the China Banking Regulatory Commission, the Ministry of Finance, other Chinese banks, the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, universities, think tanks, and more laid out the blueprints for this system. In his foreword to the report, Pan Gongsheng 潘功胜, Deputy Governor of the PBoC refers to the 'opportunity' he had to watch *Under the Dome*, an interesting choice of words. In a key passage, he reinforces the message that in China, change must come from the top down: 'For policymakers, these worsening environmental problems require the further enhancement of top-level design and the improvement of market mechanisms and policy support systems, so as to provide the conditions necessary for various stakeholders to participate in environmental management and protection.

Wang Renzheng, a Chinese performance artist better known as Nut Brother, with the industrial vacuum cleaner he uses to suck up smog and turn it into 'smog bricks'
Photo: tech.163.com

China also introduced numerous plans to tackle climate change on a global level in the period leading up to COP21—the Conference of Parties meeting of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)—in Paris in December 2015. In June, China submitted its 'Enhanced actions and measures on climate change' to the UNFCCC Secretariat. These provided the basis for the country's 'intended nationally determined contributions' (INDC) to the negotiations. They set out the target of reaching peak CO_2 emissions around 2030. By that time, carbon intensity (CO_2 emissions per unit of GDP) would be reduced by sixty to sixty-five percent from the 2005 levels, and the share of non-fossil fuels in primary energy consumption would increase to around twenty percent from the current level of 11.2 percent.

The Thirteenth Five-Year Plan (2016–2020)—the first one produced under the leadership of Xi Jinping—will emphasise government commitment to environmental protection when it is formally adopted in March 2016. The draft proposal, released in November 2015, names the environment as one of the 'five key points' of the economy. It stresses 'green' and 'sustainable' development and the Party's intention to promote a 'low-carbon energy system'. It is possible that a cap on coal use or a ban on new coal-fired power plants will become part of China's long-term development strategy. Given its global economic clout, a greener China could become a catalyst for worldwide change.

The Reality: Smog from the Bottom up

As *Under the Dome* made abundantly clear rules, regulations, and plans have so far failed to green China. The documentary exposed both industry's and local governments' notoriously low compliance with central government regulations, pointing to problems at every level. These include failures in co-ordinating action among ministries with conflicting interests; the blind pursuit of rapid economic growth by provincial governments; the vested interests of powerful, corrupt, and monopolistic state-owned energy and power companies; and the self interest of tens of millions of new car owners, many of whom run their vehicles on low-standard fuel that fails to reach national standards. As Chai succinctly sums it up: 'No regulations, no authority, no law enforcement—the conundrum of environmental protection right there'.

One of the many damning examples Chai Jing uses to illustrate her point begins with a visit to a truck tolling station, where trucks are checked to see if they are complying with emission standards. Many of the truck drivers fail the test. In one case witnessed by Chai, the official in charge does not impose the requisite on-the-spot fine because he notes that the truck is carrying food that is part of the city's supply system—and local regulations stipulate that such transport cannot be disrupted.

FOOD SCANDALS, by Aiden Xia

In a national crackdown on dangerous foods in June 2015, authorities seized over 100,000 tonnes of frozen chicken wings, beef, and pork worth up to AU$264 million in Hunan province that were were nearly forty years old—packed and stored when Mao Zedong was still alive. That particularly foul haul reportedly came from the border area with Vietnam: officials explained that smugglers bought cheap meat abroad, and smuggled it in via Hong Kong and Vietnam in unrefrigerated vehicles.

June 2015: Chinese authorities seized decades old frozen meat in Changsha, Hunan province
Photo: youtube.com

Since 2008 alone, China has experienced scandals including the addition of industrial chemical melamine to dairy products including infant formula (killing at least six babies and making 300,000 people ill); watermelons exploding due to the injection of growth accelerator chemicals; and carcinogenic additives in pork.

Chai Jing then reveals a thriving industry for 'fake cars', vehicles manufactured without the required emission controls devices in the first place, and which produce emissions that can be 500 times the national standard. In theory, the 'Atmospheric Pollution Prevention Act' 大气污染防治法 of 2002 could be used to shut down the manufacture of such cars, but Chai discovers that no government department has been charged with enforcing the act. She records an official at the Ministry of Environmental Protection (MEP) saying, 'As far as we know, it's not us.' One from the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology tells her, 'It's definitely not us.' A third from the General Administration of Quality Supervision and Inspection insists, 'It should be all three of us.' Finally, she calls an official at the National People's Congress who tells her: 'The issue of the execution of this law is indeed unclear.' He acknowledges that they'd made it that way on purpose because so many government departments opposed the act. The result puts manufacturers in a corner. As one of the factory owners explains: 'If we build real trucks and others build fake trucks, we

According to *Under the Dome*, Beijing's daily PM2.5 level is five times that of China's average
Photo: fotomen.cn

would be bankrupt tomorrow.' An MEP official admits, 'Not enforcing the law forces people to cheat.'

Chai then turns to the issue of why Chinese fuel standards are set so low compared to those elsewhere. She asks why fuel required to reach the then-highest National Standard Four was still in such low supply, accounting for just three percent of all available fuels. Yue Xin 岳欣, a director of the Chinese Research Academy of Environmental Sciences, informs her that representatives of China's oil industry dominate the standards committee. Neither the MEP nor the NDRC have the power to enforce higher standards. Baffled, Chai Jing questions Cao Xianghong 曹湘洪, head of the National Fuel Standards Committee and former chief engineer at the state-owned China Petrochemical Corporation (Sinopec). Cao defends the role of the oil industry in setting fuel standards because, he tells her, he doesn't believe that people from the MEP understand the oil refining business.

As if that unblushing insult to the state ministry tasked with China's environmental protection wasn't enough, Cao then addresses the question of whether Sinopec, the second largest company on the Fortune Global list in 2014 and described by *Fortune* as the 'king of China's state-owned hierarchy', should have to take greater responsibility for its impact on the environment. 'Sinopec', he says, 'is huge, like a person, very big, but it's all fat and no muscle', implying a lack of will, if not ability.

Chai Jing then addresses the issue of corruption in the energy industry's relations with the party-state. Citing the views of an official convicted

for corruption, she describes the links forged in recent years between people in the National Energy Administration, Sinopec, electricity distribution firms, and the coal and mining industries. The film raises serious questions about Sinopec's involvement in setting the standards for fuel that it both produces and sells in a highly concentrated, state-dominated market.

Other stories told in *Under the Dome* illustrate the connection between industrial emissions and the 'unstable, unbalanced, uncoordinated and unsustainable' development model of the past. The film also highlights the urgent need for China to rebalance its economy away from energy-intensive production, as well as to price energy according to market principles, to eliminate subsidies for 'dirty' industries, and to tackle powerful state–owned enterprises (SOEs) (like Sinopec) whose vested interests are at odds with the central government's green growth agenda. While the plans for action announced in 2015 are encouraging, clearly far more remains to be done.

A Case of Consumption

Within days of the release of *Under the Dome*, the newly appointed Minister for Environmental Protection, Chen Jining 陈吉宁, praised its 'important role in promoting public awareness of environmental health issues'. He saw it as encouraging individuals to play their part in improving China's air quality. In fact, very little of the film focuses on the responsibility of individual citizens, until the concluding ten minutes when Chai Jing notes that 'Even the most powerful government in the world can't control pollution by itself.' Turning her attention to the choices made by

Chen Jining
Photo: n.sinaimag.cn

'ordinary people, like you and me', she urges her viewers to take public transport, walk, ride bikes, and avoid burning low-quality coal, as well as to report polluters and boycott the goods of listed polluting manufacturers. According to Chai Jing, with collective action, and 'a little thought and care, the smog will start to clear'.

If only it were that simple.

China's plan to rebalance the economy towards domestic consumption is coupled with its National New-Type Urbanisation Plan (2014–2020) 国家新型城镇化规划. The plan aims to raise the urban proportion of the population from fifty-three percent in 2013 to sixty percent in 2020. If successful, this will create a middle class the size of which the world has never seen before. The global environmental consequences of hundreds of millions of new urban consumers will be unavoidable and immense—whether their rising demand is satisfied by China's domestic production or elsewhere.

The number of cars in China, for example, has increased by around one hundred million in the last decade. In cities including Beijing and Hangzhou, car emissions are now the primary source of PM2.5. The

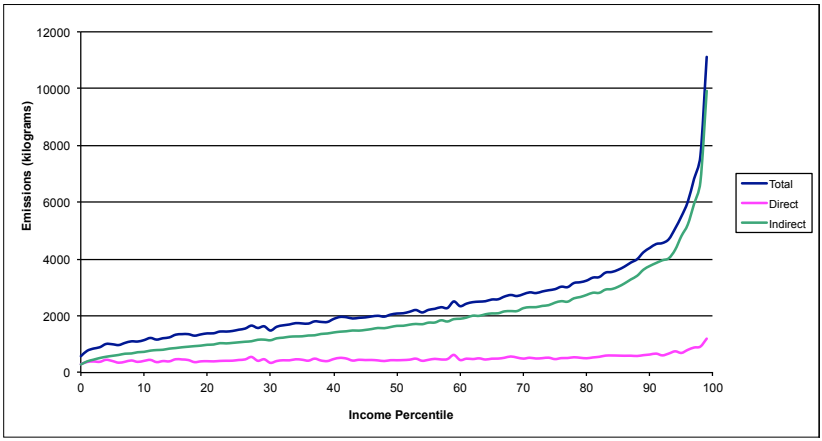


Figure 1. Household per capita emissions by income percentile

Development Research Centre of the State Council predicts that there will be 400 million private vehicles in China in fifteen years time. Car owners don't only consume energy directly in the form of petroleum at the pumps. The production of cars requires energy as an input, and other inputs that use energy as an input (most obviously steel), and so on down the chain.

More generally, individuals consume energy directly in the form of coal, natural gas, petroleum, and electricity and indirectly through the many goods and services that require energy. Indirect energy consumption—and associated emissions— is likely to grow substantially in China in the years ahead.

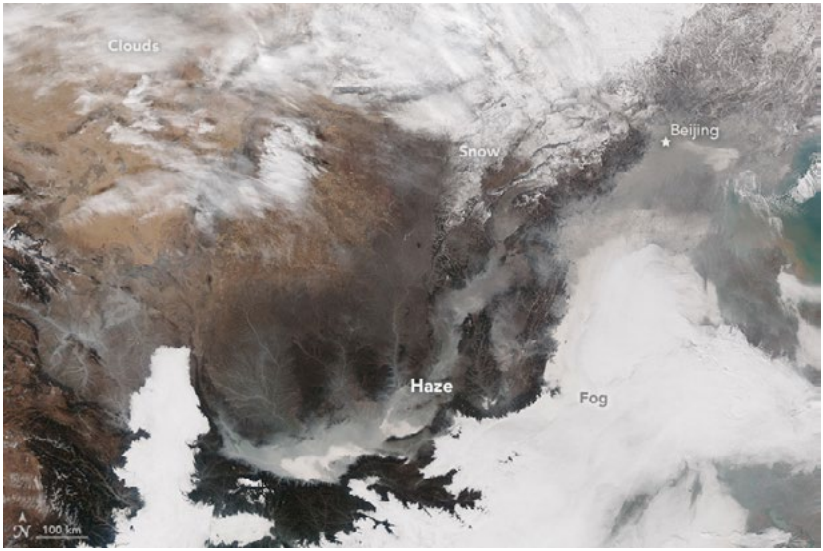
In researching this topic, I calculated the direct and indirect energy use and subsequent emissions per capita of 33,000 urban Chinese households. The graph opposite illustrates the results, plotted across income percentiles (ranging from the poorest to the richest one percent of the sample population). As seen, total energy consumption, and therefore emissions, increases as income rises. This may be an obvious point: richer people have more to spend, so they tend to consume more of just about everything. But people can only consume so much energy directly, no matter how rich they are. More importantly, the figures show that indirect emissions rise even more when income increases. At higher levels of income, indirect emissions are an even greater problem than direct emissions.

On the other hand, consumer choices can change, and production technologies and environmental policies can make the production of all goods and services greener over time. Given its population size, and its global emissions ranking, no country has a greater incentive than China to turn this potential into reality. Yet it needs to make serious efforts to address such fundamental issues like the legal ambiguity, bureaucratic buck-passing, and corporate bullying as described above. Otherwise it is highly unlikely that a program of promoting a 'green, low-carbon, healthy, and civilised way of life and consumption patterns' together with the kind of personal activism advocated by Chai Jing will be enough to tackle the country's complex environmental crisis.

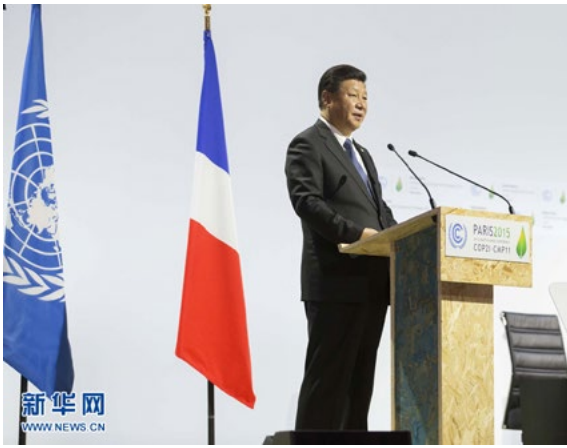
Under Which Dome?

Chai Jing borrowed the name *Under the Dome* from a US television series about a small town upon which a dome descended out of nowhere, cutting it off from the rest of the world, providing no way out. Yet this is not a perfect metaphor for China's reality. In an increasingly integrated global economy—in which China is both the largest exporter and one of the largest overseas investors—we are all effectively living under the same dome.

The Chinese government played a critical role at the COP21 meeting that, as the official agreement states, marked 'a change in direction, towards a new world'. The Paris agreement confirms the target of keeping the rise in global temperature below 2°C, and ideally 1.5°C, with 186 countries publishing 'action plans' for achieving targeted reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. The agreement asks all countries to review these plans every five years beginning in 2020, not to lower their targets where possible, to reach peak emissions 'as soon as possible', and to 'achieve carbon neutrality in the second half of the century'.



November 2015: As world leaders converged on Paris for the World Climate Change Conference 2015, residents of Beijing and other cities in eastern China faced the most severe air pollution the nation saw that year
Photo: earthobservatory.nasa.gov



November 2015: President Xi Jinping delivers a speech for the opening day of the World Climate Change Conference 2015 (COP21) at Le Bourget, near Paris
Photo: news.xinhuanet.com

The impetus for finding a global solution to what is clearly a global problem gathered momentum in Paris. Yet the challenges of implementation remain huge, for at least two reasons.

First, in all of its policy documents, China stresses its status as a developing country and the principles of 'equity and common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities'. These principles were a dominant theme at the twentieth BASIC (Brazil, South Africa, India, and China) Ministerial Meeting on Climate Change in June 2015. It called on developed countries to take the lead in emission reductions and provide financial support to developing countries for green technology and capacity building, as well as to mitigate against and adapt to climate change. COP21 confirmed that developed countries remain committed to raising US$100 billion per year by 2020 from public and private sources to address the needs of developing countries. Yet developed countries have collectively failed to provide this funding since 2010 when the commitment was first made—falling short, according to World Bank estimates, by about US$70 billion per year.

Second is what is known among economists as the 'pollution haven hypothesis'. This suggests that foreign investors will be drawn to countries where environmental regulations are weak and production costs are relatively low. As China tightens up on its own environmental regulations, its 'dirty' industries are likely to try and relocate offshore. There's no reason to think that the Chinese multinationals will be any better than Western ones at resisting the option of looking for 'pollution havens'. These are most likely to be found in other developing countries, where the urge for stronger environmental regulation often loses out to the pressing need for economic growth.

This hypothesis will be tested as China rolls out its One Belt One Road Initiative, (OBOR), which refers to the 'Silk Road Economic Belt and Twenty-First Century Maritime Silk Road' 丝绸之路经济带和21世纪海上丝绸之路. OBOR aims to enhance China's connection and co-operation with other parts of Asia, Europe, and Africa through increased regional trade as well as cultural exchange. It requires the construction of an infrastructure network, including new ports, railways, roads, and so on throughout the region, as well as improvements to existing infrastructure. This will be by its very nature energy intensive, just as China's internal infrastructure expansion has been in the past. While official policy documents stress that the initiative will 'promote green and low-carbon infrastructure', it will take concerted bilateral and multilateral efforts to turn these ambitions into reality.

The problem of 'pollution havens' extends beyond developing countries. In 2014, then Australian prime minister Tony Abbott publicly stated that coal is 'good for humanity', and the 'foundation of prosperity for now and the foreseeable future'. This was the opposite view to that of the United Nation's top climate official, Christiana Figueres, who warned that most of the world's coal must be left in the ground if we are to prevent

December 2015: Chinese authorities issue their first ever 'red alert' for Beijing as acrid smog enveloped the capital
Photo: bj.jjj.qq.com

CROP TOP: POTATOES IN FASHION,
by Xiaonan Wang

2015 Beijing World Potato Congress
Photo: potatocongress.org

The potato, introduced to the country about 400 years ago and called by many different names in China including 'earth bean' 土豆, 'foreign taro' 洋芋 and 'horse-bell' tuber 马铃薯, will soon become the fourth most popular staple food in China after rice, wheat, and corn.

The Ministry of Agriculture announced on 6 January 2015 that the government planned to nearly double the land area devoted to the cultivation of potatoes from just over five million hectares to ten million by 2020. At the World Potato Congress held in Yanqing County, Beijing, in July, Chinese officials stated their goal of raising the annual total yield from the current ninety-five million tonnes, already the world's highest, to 130 million tonnes by 2020. The initiative aims to ensure food security, alleviate pressure on the environment and increase the income of farmers.

China's grain output has grown over the past decade partly thanks to the government's subsidies to farmers, but this is not sustainable. Urbanisation, pollution and limited water supply has put huge pressure on domestic farming; the production of grain can't keep up with demand, leading to a surge of grain imports that challenge China's self-sufficiency.

Potatoes are more productive than other staple crops, they adapt better to environmental stress, and they are relatively easy to store. Nor does planting potatoes interfere with cultivation of the other three staples, as the government has promised to grow potatoes only on land unsuitable for growing grains.

Public opinion, however, is divided. While many have embraced the potato, Chinese people traditionally consider it a vegetable, rather than a staple. What's more, widespread public prejudice associates the potato with foreignness, poverty, and the cuisines of 'backward' ethnic groups in relatively undeveloped provinces like Yunnan and Guizhou. The government's potato push has even led some people to suspect an imminent food crisis.

To boost the image of the humble tuber the Ministry of Agriculture has launched a webpage promoting the potato's nutritional qualities and sharing cooking tips. The state media has also given generous coverage to the policy as well as promoting food products made of potatoes. There has even been an officially backed documentary called *Potato on the Tip of the Tongue* 舌尖上的马铃薯. Feng Xiaofeng, a potato entrepreneur, has become a television variety show star and Weibo staple herself under the name Sister Potato.

Not everyone is swallowing the pro-potato propaganda. Analysts have noted that structural problems in grain production and a consumerist ethos that leads to an enormous waste of food pose fundamental threats to the nation's food security that can not be solved just by growing more potatoes. Chips with that, anyone?

Will Beijing escape from underneath its 'smog dome'?
Photo: Ernie/Flickr

catastrophic global warming. Abbott's pronouncement, and his climate change policies generally, received much criticism both within Australia and overseas, including from China. Yet even Abbott's successor as Prime Minister, Malcolm Turnbull, who once supported the introduction of an ETS, now appears to shares his predecessor's aversion to 'green tape' (environmental-based regulations). The Turnbull government has given conditional approval to the Chinese state-owned company Shenhua Watermark to open a highly controversial coalmine in the fertile Liverpool Plains area of New South Wales. Shenhua, which is the world's largest coal supplier, plans to invest AU$1.2 billion in the mine, from which it intends to extract ten million tonnes of coal per year for thirty years. Unless there is an unexpected change in policy direction, Australia could soon find itself home to some of China's dirtier industries in the future—in short, a pollution haven.

On 8 December, as 2015 was drawing to a close, the Beijing authorities issued the first ‘red alert’ for air pollution since the introduction of an environmental emergency response system in late 2013. A red alert—declared if Air Quality Index readings of PM2.5 exceed 200 milligrams per cubic metre or more for at least three days in a row—places temporary restrictions on the city’s cars, factories and construction sites, and shuts down schools. Yet critics accused the city’s environment bureau of taking too long to issue the alert, given that in the week preceding it, PM2.5 levels had been close to 1000, forty times the World Health Organisation’s guideline limit of twenty-five. But Beijing’s ultimate decision signalled that it was capable of choosing the environment over the economy, at least in desperate circumstances.

The rhetoric of the highest levels of government, including its threat of ‘iron-handed punishment’ for environmental lawbreakers, signals a sincere interest in tackling China’s environmental problems. Yet without a more systemic program of environmental management within China, similarly strong commitments by all the nations of the world, and substantial personal efforts on the part of the world’s 7.3 billion individuals (especially the billion or so richest ones) it is hard to imagine an escape from ‘under the dome’.

FORUM

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THE WELL • 井

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DON'T TOUCH THE WATER! POLLUTION AND THE FUTURE OF CHINESE AGRICULTURE

Luigi Tomba

IS FARMING STILL WHAT Chinese peasants do? In most of the countryside, the income generated by farming remains far below what can be earned in even low-paid industrial or services jobs in the cities. For rural youth, the simplest path to social mobility continues to be migration to industrial areas.

For the people who stay, often the elderly or those with limited skills, few are willing to invest their savings in farms that are held on thirty-year leases on collectively-owned land and generally produce meagre incomes. Even the high-risk gamble of the stock market is more likely to appeal to farmers than the purchase of next-generation tractors. During 2014 and 2015, when the Chinese stock market was most bullish, many villagers diverted cash and time from farming to the dazzling experience of betting on China's 'red chips'. Excluded from the urban real estate market that in two decades had turned many urban employees into a new propertied middle class, many farmers blithely disregarded the risks of stock market speculation until the June 2015 crash, when the Shanghai Composite Index lost thirty percent of its value within one month.

The question is why, given the growing demand for quality food from China's rapidly increasing middle classes and in its fast-growing urban areas, is agriculture not seen as an economic opportunity? There are many possible explanations, but one is

extremely simple: plants require land and water to grow.

China has never been a country rich in either land or water. Agriculture has always been highly labour intensive and, as a result, it used to command respect. In Confucian times (from 551 BC to 479 BC), farmers were second only to scholars in the social hierarchy, above artisans, merchants, and soldiers. Revolutionary mythology elevated farmers (农民often translated as peasants) to the status of labouring heroes, part of a holy trinity alongside workers and soldiers. But political pressure to plant particular crops (whether or not the land was suitable) and produce bumper harvests forced farmers into over planting, over fertilising, and ultimately depleting already nutrient-poor soil and limited water resources.

In the Maoist past, when things went badly, such as during the three years of mass crop failure and famine from 1959–61, farmers starved. They could not leave the land, though. Internal migration from the rural to the urban areas was severely restricted.

Today, farming is again in crisis, for different reasons. With increased mobility, more young rural people

Idyllic Maoist propaganda of labouring heroes and bumper harvests was a far cry from the reality in the Chinese countryside in the 1950s and 1960s
Source: upload.m4.cn

are simply abandoning the fields. Agriculture contributes only nine percent of the country's economic output. (Services, by comparison, make up forty-nine percent). What is more, agricultural land is the main takeover target of aggressively urbanising local governments. Meanwhile, much of the land that is left to grow plants and raise animals, and most of the water available to irrigate it, is poisoned by pollution from chemical fertilisers and pesticides as well as poorly regulated local industry and construction.

A recent national survey of agricultural land suggests that an average of 16.2 percent of all rural land is contaminated. That percentage grows to 19.4 when you exclude grasslands and forests and only consider arable land. The survey is extensive and national, as it is based on samples from about two-thirds of all agricultural land in China. The most common pollutants are inorganic, suggesting that industrial development is the main cause of such pollution. The worst contamination is found in the traditional breadbaskets of the Yangtze Delta and the Pearl River Delta as well as the northeast of the country, all of which have experienced high levels of industrialisation in recent decades.

August 2015: Following the deadly chemical warehouse fires in the northern Chinese city of Tianjin, large numbers of dead fish were found in the city's Haihe River
Photo: pbs.twimg.com

What the survey does not reveal is the potential impact of pollution on the quality of the produce. The release of these numbers, which had long remained a 'state secret', is enough to concern the urban consumers of locally grown agricultural products.

Even more alarming is the quality of China's water, three-quarters of which is used for agriculture. Authorities are working to improve the quality of drinking water in cities to accommodate the growing numbers of people living in urban areas. Yet one estimate suggests that over seventy percent of river water in the country may be unfit for human contact, let alone drinking, and its use in agriculture a danger to public health. In some areas, recorded lead levels in rivers have reached forty-four times the accepted national standards. Officials admit that over sixty percent of underground water is

June 2015: Blue-green algae covers Chao Lake in Anhui province
Source: blog.sina.com.cn

also polluted. The historically uneven water levels of Chinese rivers increase farmers' reliance on wells, heightening the risk of crop contamination from polluted aquifers. Only one-fifth of the water flowing underneath the North China Plain (the area around the lower Yellow River, its tributaries and the land north of it) is deemed safe for human consumption.

The government has launched optimistic campaigns to clean up China's land and water. It hands anti-pollution targets to local cadres, which in reality become one more item in already long to-do lists, often in contradiction with other targets, for example, economic growth, social stability, and urbanisation. Bureaucratic inertia, the size and cost of the clean up, the lack of skills and technology, and the long time frame required for such transformation suggest that things may get worse before they get better.

Agricultural production continues to grow in China, but at an even slower rate than the rest of the economy. A recent report from Deutsche Bank dispels the myth that low productivity can be blamed solely on limited land and water. Comparing China's water and land resources with those of South Korea, DB notices that South Korean farmers have an even greater shortage of natural resources, yet they invest almost six times as much in machinery than their Chinese counterparts, and are more than eighteen times more productive per capita.

The Chinese Academy of Social Sciences believes that Chinese agriculture lags behind that of other world powers, specifically, 108 years behind

June 2015: Pollution has turned the Lian River in Guangdong black
Source: blog.sina.com.cn

the US and thirty-six years behind South Korea. An American cow produces four times more milk than a Chinese cow, and the US per hectare production of soy beans is double that of China; China has become the largest soy bean importer in the world. China still produces almost a quarter of the world's food on seven percent of the world's arable land, a remarkable achievement, but one that cannot guarantee self-reliance.

Productivity relies on investment, but the small size of family plots in Chinese villages, limited interest from agribusiness, and collective ownership add up to significantly less investment than is needed. Collective ownership prevents farmers from taking out loans with their land as collateral.

Public ownership of land as a pillar of the socialist market economy at least protects farmers from the vagaries of land speculation (see the *China Story Yearbook 2013: Civilising China*, Forum 'A New Land Reform', pp.234–241). Under the current regime, while farmers don't own the land they work, they enjoy exclusive land use rights for a period of thirty years. In January 2015, the government drafted new guidelines that allow farmers in thirty-three counties to trade these land use

Chinese dairy farmers are facing difficult times; some are even dumping milk as they can't sell it
Photo: xianghunet.com

rights. Previously, such rights were inalienable. There are still significant limitations on the trade: villages will be allowed to trade land only where it has been clearly redefined as 'non-agricultural' and where collectives have adopted a shareholding structure for ownership. The pilot areas are scattered across every single province in the country, including all provincial-level municipalities.

The experiment was inspired by Chongqing's experiment with 'land tickets' beginning in 2010 to facilitate the expropriation of land for urbanisation. The local government provided 'land tickets' to collectives that allowed them to trade available land on a limited market. Huang Qifan 黄奇帆, the

Chongqing's experiment with 'land tickets'
Photo: cq.xinhuanet.com

mayor of Chongqing, recently suggested that land use rights valued at more than RMB 30 billion have changed hands since 2010 thanks to this system—and that Chongqing (which has eighteen million farmers and 300,000 hectares of rural land) experienced no loss of farmland in the process. The state's argument is that urbanisation leads to more efficient management of land.

To supplement the pilot scheme, the government is also carrying out a survey of 'permanent farmland'—high-quality agricultural land that should never be converted. Previously, it had spoken of drawing a 'red line' under the loss of arable land to purposes other than agriculture so that there would always be at least 120 million hectares available for farming. The need to preserve agricultural land and the trade in it are in obvious contradiction, as the most immediately rewarding way of using land is to convert it to industrial or construction use.

Huang Qifan
Photo: news.youth.cn

It is difficult to see a solution to China's farming problems, or a successful way forward for its agriculture. Changing consumption habits in the cities, however, suggest a way forward for growers in search of higher returns from small plots. Years of continuous and high profile food scandals have generated a greater demand among middle-class and wealthy consumers for organic and premium agricultural products. The amount of certified organic produce in China has tripled since 2007, but still only represents about one percent of total national production.

For the moment, organic products are still easier to source from overseas. Ever since the tainted milk

and baby formula scandals of 2008 and beyond, foreign dairy farms have been high on the list of acquisition targets for Chinese investors. The assumption is that accessing existing production facilities overseas, even at a premium (Chinese investors recently ploughed US$43 billion into a Swiss agricultural company) is a better deal than trying to convert China's contaminated soil to the level of purity required for organic production.

Australia, which possesses over half of all the certified organic land in the world, remains the third largest exporter of agricultural products to China, after the US and Brazil. Its export of dairy products to China has grown threefold from 2007. Demand for organic Australian produce from overseas markets including China is already forty percent higher than what Australian farms can supply. While Chinese companies own only one percent of all Australian agricultural land, China offers Australia's farmers a fast-growing export market for quality food. All large agricultural producers have benefited from China's increasing hunger for quality produce, with the US exporting about twenty-six billion dollars worth of agricultural goods to China (now its top destination for agricultural exports).

In Australia, the sale of the nation's oldest and largest dairy farm, Tasmania's Van Diemen's Land Company to Chinese investors generated heated discussion about whether the sale was in Australia's 'national interest'. The ratification of a bilateral free trade agreement in December means there are likely to be even greater efforts by Chinese investors to acquire agricultural assets that produce the goods that are increasing greater Chinese demand for the goods themselves. The Chinese urban consumer is both wealthy enough and eager enough to pay premium prices on quality products and, however the free-trade agreement plays out, Australian organic farmers, in particular, are likely to do very well in the coming years.

Demand for organic farming in China is growing
Photo: mt.sohu.com

THE STOCK MARKET CRASH

Lorand Laskai

ON 16 JUNE 2015, the Shanghai Composite Index, a measure of the price of all stocks traded at the Shanghai Stock Exchange, reached an all-time high of 5,166 points. Share prices began falling the next day in a series of dramatic drops interrupted by occasional recoveries, dipping as low as 2,964 on 24 August and ending the year on 30 December at 3,572.

China's other stock markets followed the same pattern. After years of modest if sometimes sluggish growth since the 2008 global financial crisis, a season of exuberant rallies beginning in the late summer of 2014 turned stock market mania into a cultural phenomenon. According to Bloomberg, more than forty million new stock trading accounts were added between May 2014 and May 2015. The *Yangcheng Evening News* 羊城晚报 reported on the plight of 'stock market widows' 股市寡妇—women whose husbands spent all their waking hours staring at screens showing market movements. The *Wuhan Evening Paper* 武汉晚报 reported that one wife threatened to divorce her husband unless he invested his stock market gains in a house for their son. A man on Weibo recounted giving ninety-nine stock shares to his wife for Valentine's Day. State media contributed to the hype, urging investors on and dismissing fears that the picture of unlimited gain was too good to be true. In April 2015, the *People's Daily* article declared '4,000 points is just the beginning!' As stories of small-time investors hitting it big spread, media outlets gave a name to the craze: the Stock Market Dream

In the Chinese stock market, red indicates a gain in stock price while green indicates a loss
Source: image.baidu.com

股市梦, an adaptation of the government's much vaunted 'Chinese Dream'.

The major cause of the frenetic trading activity was probably the easing of restrictions on trading with borrowed money (known as margin financing). Following a pilot program in 2010, the Chinese Securities Regulatory Commission (CSRC) 中国证券监督管理委员会 sanctioned this practice in 2011, but restricted it to investors who had maintained an account with a registered securities company for at least eighteen months, with the value of cash and stock in the account of at least RMB 500,000. But it loosened requirements in 2013. As stock prices rose, inexperienced individual investors borrowed money, driven by the fear of missing out on the opportunity to get rich quick. In stock markets like those of Shanghai and Shenzhen, which are dominated not by institutional investors but individual retail investors with a taste for speculation, this can lead to instability.

In early June 2015, when the CSRC announced new restrictions on margin financing, the market panicked, dropping 8.5 percent in a day. Instead of rallying as predicted, though, the market kept dropping. The government responded with heavy-handed rescue measures, including propping up stocks with government funds in an unsuccessful attempt to restore investor confidence. By 8 July, the Shanghai stock index had lost thirty-two percent of its value at its peak.

Although the market failed to respond to government intervention, the government continued to react, this time punitively. On 25 August, a day after yet another market dip which newspapers around the world dubbed 'Black Monday', public security officials arrested *Caijing* journalist Wang Xiaolu 王晓璐 for 'spreading false information' in connection with an article he wrote claiming CSRC was planning to withdraw its support of the stock markets. A report on 30 August in the *Financial Times*, citing senior officials, stated that the government was in fact abandoning its attempt to prop up the markets through buying

Awake, comrade, the stock market is rebounding
Source: Weibo

stocks—though it was evidently not abandoning its attempt to strike out against those it suspected of spreading harmful information. A few days after his arrest, Wang confessed on state television, apologising for causing 'panic and disorder'.

To the Gallows

Throughout the summer, many Chinese Internet users responded to the stock market misery with gallows humour and satire. 'Last month, when the market was rising, the dog ate the same as I ate. Last week, when the market fell, I ate the same as the dog ate. This week I might eat the dog,' one joke went. In another joke, posted on Weibo, an investor boasts that one reason he survived the latest market crash is that he studied past market fluctuations, monitored economic fundamentals, and read Marx's *Das Capital*. The second reason: the last market crash had already wiped out all of his savings. Some playfully counterpoised China's mythicised past with financial market developments. Cartoons depicting ironically repurposed images of Communist liberation circulated on social media: in one, China's SOE investment fund is portayed as brawny communist troops arriving to shore up stock prices. In another, a girl stands over a fallen solider, saying 'Awake, comrade, the stock market is rebounding'. After more than a year of stock market mania, China's 'stock market dream' had become a nightmare.

STOCK MARKET CRASH TIMELINE 2015, by Lorand Laskai

1 April
The *People's Daily* and other state media encourage investors to keep buying stocks, arguing that prices will keep rising.

12 June
Shanghai Composite Index peaks at 5,166 points.

27 June
China's central bank, the People's Bank of China (PBOC) cuts its benchmark lending rate to a record low and reduces reserve requirements for some banks.

29 June
Pension funds managed by local governments are allowed to invest in the stock market, unlocking up to one billion RMB to invest in the equity market.

Stocks continue to drop. The Shanghai Composite Index drops 8.5 percent in a day.

1 July
The Shanghai and Shenzhen stock exchanges announce plans to lower securities transaction fees by thirty percent.

11 August 2015: China carried out the biggest devaluation of the renminbi in two decades to boost its slowing economy
Source: pixabay.com

2 July
The Chinese Securities Regulatory Commission (CSRC) lowers the threshold for margin financing for individual investors.

The CSRC sets up a team to investigate illegal manipulation of stock prices.

4 July
China's top twenty-one securities brokerages pledge to invest at least 120 billion RMB, or fifteen percent of their net assets, to stabilise markets.

Regulators halt new initial public offerings in an effort to shore up liquidity.

5 July
PBOC announces that it would provide liquidity support to the state-backed margin finance company, China Securities Finance Corp.

6 July
Over the course of a few days, the China Securities Finance Corp (CSF) buys at least one trillion RMB worth of shares in an effort to stabilise markets.

8 July
The Shanghai stock index plummets thirty-two percent from its peak.

9 July
The Ministry of Public Security says it will help the CSRC investigate short selling of stocks and indexes.

20 July
Caijing journalist Wang Xiaolu publishes an article claiming the CSRC plans to withdraw funds from the stock market.

8 July 2015: The Shanghai stock index loses thirty-two percent from its peak
Source: china_ask.com

14 August
The CSRC announces that it will allow the market to play a bigger role in determining stock prices, signalling that the government might reduce its role in propping up the markets.

24 August
Shanghai's main share index loses 8.49 percent of its value. Xinhua—an organ not given to hyperbole when reporting bad news out of China—dubs it 'Black Monday'.

The PBOC cuts interest rates and reserve requirement ratio for the second time.

25 August
Wang Xiaolu is detained by police. The search term 'stock market collapse' is censored on Baidu. The front page of the *People's Daily* contains no news regarding the stock market.

30 August
The Public Security Bureau announces that it has punished 197 people as part of a 'special campaign' associated with 'spreading rumours' online about the stock market crash.

31 August
Wang Xiaolu confesses on state television to making 'irresponsible' and 'sensational' remarks in his writing about the stock market.

14 September
Biggest stock price drop since August.

LI KA-SHING MOVES INVESTMENTS OUT OF CHINA

Lorand Laskai

DURING THE HEYDAY OF China's economic miracle, being a patriot and a good businessman were one and the same. In late September, legendary Hong Kong business magnate Li Ka-shing 李嘉诚 encountered the wrath of China's state media and nationalistic netizens when he moved his investments away from China.

A self-made business tycoon, Li is the second-richest person in Asia according to Forbes. His universally recognised business acumen endows his investment decisions with heavy symbolism; the extent of his investments in China had lent China's economic miracle a kind of additional legitimacy. But in 2013, Li Ka-shing's Cheung Kong Holdings began slowly restructuring its holdings in the Mainland. It sold off real estate, retail chains, and other assets, shifting its investments to Europe. This sent shock waves through China's business community. Wang Shi 王石, president of Vanke (one of China's largest real estate developers), wrote on Weibo that 'The very shrewd Mr. Li Ka-shing is selling properties in Beijing and Shanghai. This is a signal. Be careful!'

In the wake of China's summer stock market collapse, some were quick to point the finger at Li for damaging the confidence of investors. On 14 September 2015, a Xinhua affiliated WeChat account published an article titled 'Don't Let Li Ka-shing Run Away'. The article charged Li with profiting from China before throwing it by the wayside: 'In the eyes of the people, Li Ka-shing has thus transformed into a long, sharp-toothed creature, which is

Li Ka-shing
Source: flickr.com

regretful.' The article instructed Li to do three things: pay the people back (for what, it's unclear), keep at least symbolic holdings in China, and do more philanthropy (despite being famous for the philanthropy he does already, including founding Shantou University in Guangdong province). The attack triggered a deluge of online attacks on Li.

Perhaps fearing that drawing attention to Li's rationale for moving his money out of China would draw further attention to China's economic slowdown, government censors quickly called off the attack. A government media directive dated 18 September, which was later leaked, instructed media outlets to 'stop hyping reports and commentaries on Li Ka-shing divesting from mainland [China]'. State media quickly demonstrated a newfound composure, exemplified by a piece in the *Securities Times* on 20 September entitled, 'Let Li Ka-shing go, the sky won't collapse'.

But it was too late. Cheung Kong Holdings issued a press statement just a few days later. While Li is normally soft-spoken and non-confrontational, the press statement criticised the personal nature of the attacks as showing a 'cultural revolution mentality'. In the tone of a loyal but aggrieved subject, it noted that Li had not responded earlier for fear of causing a distraction during President Xi's visit to the US (which coincided with the media frenzy against him). It drew attention to Li's many philanthropic contributions in the Mainland. He explained his decision to invest abroad as consistent with official policy, pointing to the government's 'going out' 走出去战略 strategy and Xi's One Belt, One Road Initiative (see Forum 'One Belt One Road: International development finance with Chinese Characteristics', pp.244–250). On the topic of his patriotism, Li reflected on his childhood in Chaozhou, Guangdong province, growing up amid war and destruction, and the thirty years of tumult that came after. 'Of course this made him unhappy,' the statement read. 'But he believes [Song and Tang dynasty poets'] Su Shi and Bai Juyi said correctly: "Where there's home there is heart" and "Where my heart finds its inner peace, I call it my homeland." '

INTERNATIONALISATION OF THE RMB

Jip Bouman

CHINA HAS BEEN PUSHING for the internationalisation of its currency, the renminbi (RMB), since the late-2000s. Ever since setting up the first RMB-denominated bond (also known as Dim Sum Bonds) market in Hong Kong in 2009, China has been building the financial infrastructure necessary to facilitate international transactions in RMB and to liberalise its capital account and capital markets. In 2015, China:

- Signed bilateral currency swap agreements with Surinam, South Africa, Chile, and Tajikistan, bringing the total number of such agreements to thirty-two.
- Set up RMB clearing banks in Thailand, Malaysia, and Chile, in addition to its twelve already established banks.
- Allowed more foreign investors to trade in its domestic, RMB-denominated stock market under its RMB Qualified Institutional Investor (RQFII, 人民币合格境外机构投资者) program.

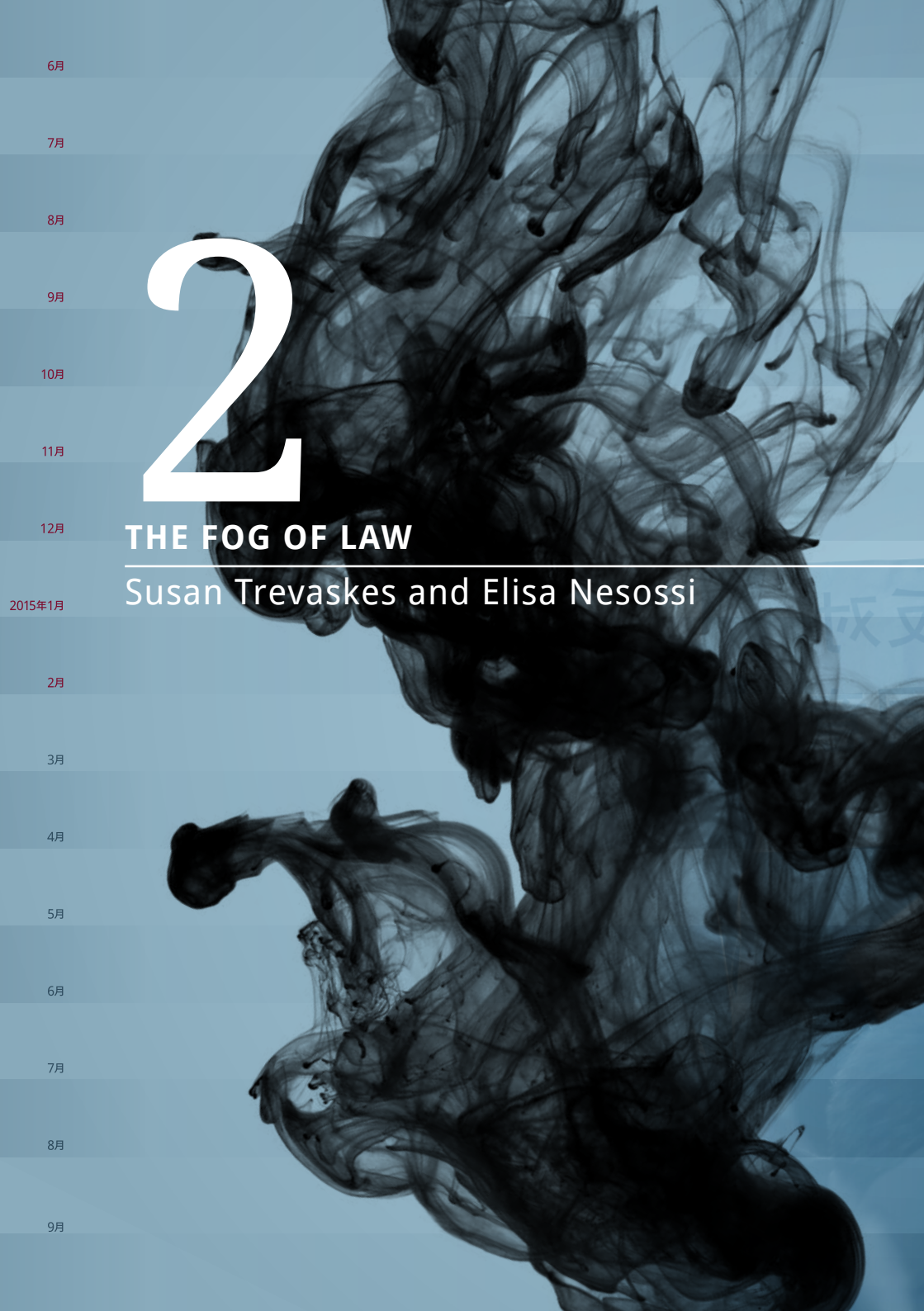
In October 2015, China also launched the first phase of its Cross-border Inter-bank Payment System (CIPS, 人民币跨境支付系统). This system to clear cross-border RMB payments has been called a 'milestone of RMB internationalisation' by the People's Bank of China (PBOC, 中国人民银行), China's central bank. Prior to CIPS, payments to and from China were costly and slow to execute. Most had to be re-routed through one of the above-mentioned clearing banks, as China's national payment system is incompatible with the internationally used

China has pushed for the internationalisation of the RMB
Source: chinaausfocus.com

SWIFT system. With CIPS in place, the nineteen connected banks, nine of which are foreign institutions, can directly handle RMB transactions for cross-border trade, direct investment, financing and personal remittances. The *Financial Times* reports that the system currently only includes onshore entities, but that it will eventually allow offshore banks to participate as well, enabling offshore-to-offshore RMB payments as well as transfers in and out of China.

Another milestone was the decision by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to include the RMB in its Special Drawing Rights (SDR) currency basket. To meet IMF's criteria, China pushed through multiple financial reforms in 2015. These included full liberalisation of interest rates and a reform of the RMB pricing mechanism. This last reform was especially praised by the IMF as 'a welcome step' because 'it should allow market forces to have a greater role in determining the exchange rate'. Apart from symbolising China's economic influence and continued integration into the world economy, the inclusion of the RMB into the SDR basket might lead to greater demand for RMB-denominated assets in the future.

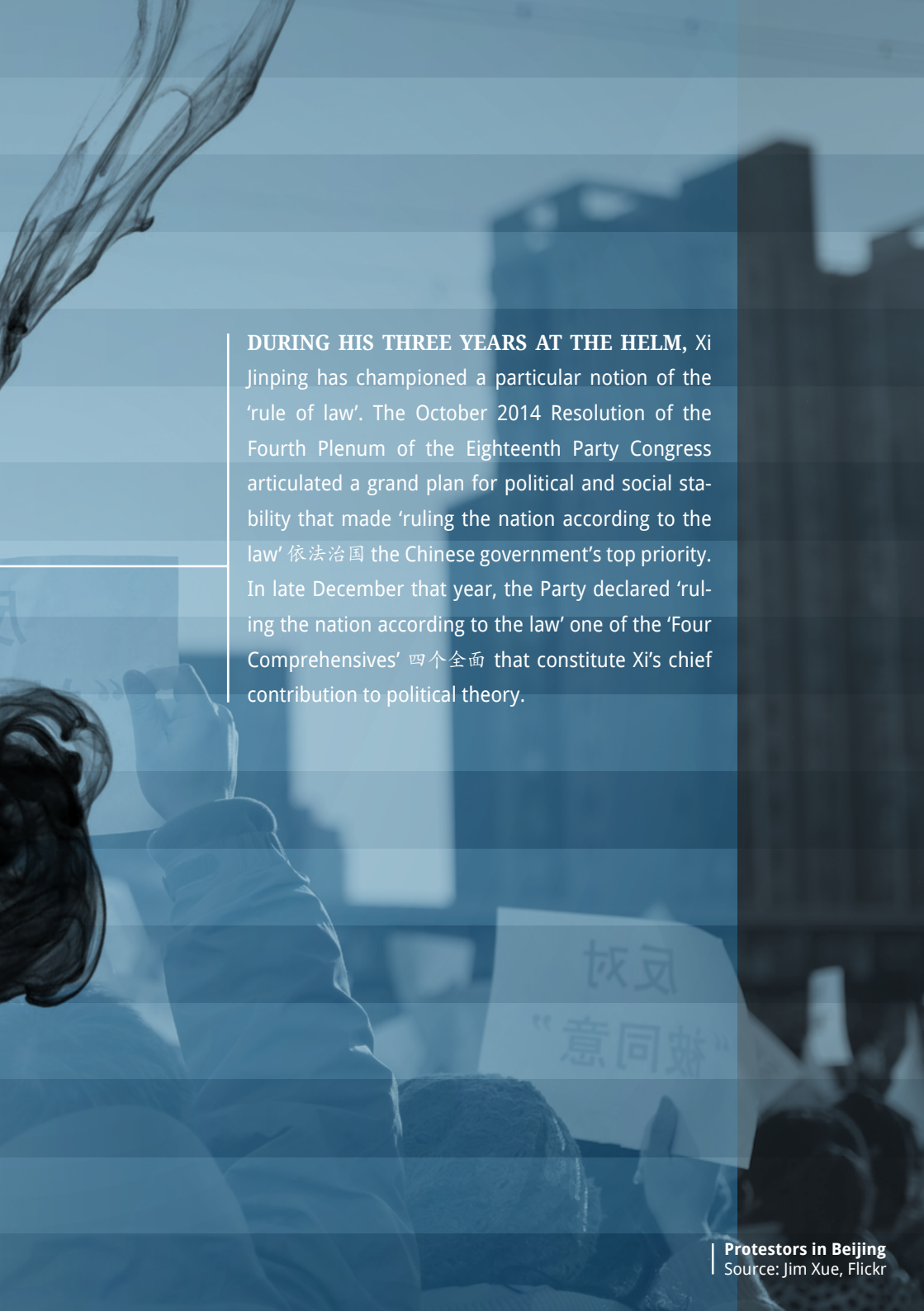
According to a SWIFT report in January 2016, the RMB was the fifth most-used currency worldwide in December 2015 and even temporarily took fourth place in August, beating the Japanese yen. To put this into perspective, however, only 2.31 percent of all transactions were settled in RMB that month, making the currency only slightly more used than the Canadian dollar or the Swiss franc. Some foreign analysts believe that the recent increase in RMB usage is more the result of speculation than trade and investment. At the same time, a mixture of reforms, economic policy, and concerns about possible economic slowdown have caused major fluctuations in the currency's exchange rate. While the RMB was relatively stable during the first half of the year, it dropped 2.8 percent against the dollar in just three days after the PBOC announced it would reform the RMB's pricing mechanism. It dropped sharply again in December, making the latter half of 2015 one of the most volatile and bearish periods in the currency's history.



2

THE FOG OF LAW

Susan Trevaskes and Elisa Nesossi



DURING HIS THREE YEARS AT THE HELM, Xi Jinping has championed a particular notion of the 'rule of law'. The October 2014 Resolution of the Fourth Plenum of the Eighteenth Party Congress articulated a grand plan for political and social stability that made 'ruling the nation according to the law' 依法治国 the Chinese government's top priority. In late December that year, the Party declared 'ruling the nation according to the law' one of the 'Four Comprehensives' 四个全面 that constitute Xi's chief contribution to political theory.

Protestors in Beijing
Source: Jim Xue, Flickr

According to the multilingual animated music video, *The Four Comprehensives*, 'the rule of law is guaranteed'
Photo: thenanfang.com

To understand what the rule of law actually means, we need to look closely at the October 2014 Resolution, because it states that Party leadership and the rule of law are identical. It also describes the rule of law as integrating two ancient traditions of law and governance: the Legalist tradition of 'ruling the nation according to the law' with the Confucian principle of 'ruling the nation by morality' 以德治国. The latter associates political order with the moral authority of a nation's leaders. The interests of a morally upright leadership are identical to those of the people they govern—and so, by this logic, the law can and should be used to sustain the power of the ruling (Communist) party. Hence, the rule of law can be understood to mean Party-Rule-Through-Law.

Given China's increasingly heterogeneous society, in which people may find their needs and interests at odds with those of the Party, the rule of law serves the practical function of controlling dissent as well. As we have written in previous *China Story Yearbooks*, over the last fifteen years or more, there have been many tens of thousands of public protests

annually against corruption and abuses of power—what the Party calls 'mass incidents'. President Hu Jintao and Premier Wen Jiabao responded to such unrest by mounting campaigns to 'maintain stability': policing and judicial measures known as 'stability maintenance'. Now, with his rule of law agenda, Xi Jinping has put 'stability maintenance' on steroids.

29 June 2015: A 'mass incident' in Jinshan district, Shanghai. Thousands of protestors gathered to protest against the construction of a chemical plant
Photo: Twitter

Pruning the Political Tree

For two years, Xi's anti-corruption campaign has targeted party officials accused of moral and/or material corruption. Xi has wielded the rule of law—in this case the Party's internal disciplinary rules—like a blade with which to prune the unruly branches at the top of the political tree. These 'branches' include mid-ranking party officials as well as higher-ups in Beijing whom he considers a potential threat to his leadership; not all the corrupt officials are targeted. Still, with at least one senior official in every province under arrest, this campaign has turned into the most comprehensive attack on graft since the Cultural Revolution.

In 2015, its focus turned to the business sector, including some of China's biggest corporations: CNP, Sinopec, and Chinalco. The Washington-based Eurasia Group, the world's largest consultancy specialising in political risk, suggests that in 2015, no less than eighty-three Chinese entities—including state-owned enterprises (SOEs), and institutions such as the China Securities Regulatory Commission—have fallen under investigation, compared with twenty in 2013 when the campaign began.

Zhou Yongkang
Photo: *Caixin*

The 'leniency' of the suspended death sentence handed to Zhou Yongkang 周永康 in June 2015 was read by some analysts as signalling that the campaign was winding down. Zhou, the former secretary of the Central Political and Legal Affairs Commission, was the most senior political figure in decades to be expelled from the Party and charged with capital offences—in his case bribery and abuse of power. The suspended death sentence may eventually be commuted to a long custodial sentence. With many observers expecting that Zhou would face immediate execution, the lighter punishment appeared to be a message that Xi was prepared to end the anti-corruption campaign before it could seriously threaten powerful figures, particularly within the military, who might have gone down fighting.

The campaign continues to target corrupt officials who have fled the country. Since April 2015, five government departments—the People's Bank of China, the Ministry of Public Security, the Supreme People's Court, the Supreme People's Procuratorate, and the State Administration of Foreign Exchange—have worked jointly to track down fugitive officials and their illicit assets.

Criminalising Unruliness

The 2015 Amendment to the 1997 Criminal Law, passed in August, listed nine types of crimes that will no longer be subject to the death penalty. Smuggling weapons or ammunition, smuggling nuclear materials, smuggling counterfeit money, counterfeiting, investment fraud and fraudulent

fundraising, organising prostitution, forcing females into prostitution, obstructing military affairs, and spreading rumours, and undermining morale during wartime are no longer punishable by death. This brings down the number of capital crimes in China to a total of forty-three. The revised Criminal Law also extends protection to some of society's more vulnerable or previously ignored groups. New criminal offences include rape committed against males, the purchase of children even if there is no evidence of abuse, and actions by guardians and caretakers that harm those under their care.

The 2015 Amendment to the Criminal Law
Photo: Xinhua

The Criminal Law has introduced twenty new criminal offences and the amendment has increased the seriousness of selected other offences. Among the newly listed crimes are contempt of court as evidenced by 'insulting a judge', 'disrupting court orders', 'reporting or revealing information about cases not made public', and even bringing a civil case that is based on 'a distorted version of the truth'. In addition, the law targets forms of dissent including 'fabricating or deliberately transmitting false information' online, 'forcing someone to wear extremist clothing or tokens', 'disrupting the work of public bodies', and 'organising or aiding illegal gatherings.' The new crime of 'forcing someone to wear extremist clothing or tokens' appears to be aimed at discouraging Uyghur men and women in Xinjiang from wearing clothing such as the hijab, or Muslim headscarf that expresses devotion to their faith.

THE NATIONAL SECURITY LAW & THE COUNTERTERRORISM LAW, by Oma Lee

The National People's Congress approved new National Security and Counterterrorism laws. Foreign media, technology companies, foreign civil society organisations, and governments have widely criticised the laws for conferring Chinese authorities with even greater powers to restrict and control the activities of non-state actors especially when coupled with the Law on Managing Foreign Non-Governmental Organisations and Cybersecurity Laws.

The National Security Law effectively grants the National Security Commission domain over China's national security encompassing politics, the military, finance, cyberspace, culture, environment, ideology, and religion. It sets out the principles of security management, including intelligence collection, risk assessments, national security reviews, emergency responses, and so on, and lays out the responsibilities of citizens and companies to assist the authorities in protecting national security and reporting potential threats. This applies to Hong Kong and Macau as well.

The law also requires Internet and information technology, information systems and data to be 'secure and controllable'. The National Security Commission has the power to conduct reviews of foreign commercial investment, special technologies, Internet information technology products and services, and all other projects involving national security matters (Article 59). A broad spectrum of foreign governments, businesses, and civil society groups see the law as legitimising stronger restrictions on foreign business, social and political interests in China.

Chinese Internet café
Photo: thecomingcrisis.blogspot.com

A Chinese soldier takes part in a counterterrorism military drill
Photo: people.com.cn

The Counterterrorism Law, meanwhile, proposes the establishment of a national body in charge of identifying terrorist activities and co-ordinating nationwide counterterrorist work. The first draft, issued for public comment in November 2014, drew widespread criticism for its vague definition of terrorism and the requirement that foreign tech companies provide their encryption keys to authorities and keep their servers and user data in China. Foreign companies and leaders, including US President Obama criticised the law and its potential effect on the Chinese business environment, making it less attractive to foreign companies. China has argued that many Western governments have similar requirements and that Chinese companies operating overseas are subjected to heavy security checks. Still, the final draft removed, inter alia, the clauses about encryption keys and foreign businesses keeping servers and user data in China.

The law still requires companies to provide encryption information upon the request of the government. Telecommunications and Internet service providers in particular are also required to monitor, report, and prevent dissemination of information on terrorism and extremism (including activities, such as peaceful agitation for greater autonomy for Xinjiang or Tibet, that are not considered either terrorist or extremist outside China). (Article 19).

The Chinese government has claimed that the laws will help strengthen the Party-state's ability to prevent, handle, and punish threats to both national and international security. How it will affect foreign business activities and data security in practice remains to be seen.

25 June 2015: Xi Jinping and Li Keqiang shake hands with groups and individuals being honoured for their contributions to the country's antidrug campaign in Beijing
Photo: news.cn

Resurrecting Mao

The rule of law agenda makes use of the revolutionary language of the 'mass line' and 'political struggle' 斗争. By drawing on what Qian Gang 钱钢 at the China Media Project in Hong Kong, calls 'deep red' Maoist discourse, Xi Jinping is signalling that he expects local authorities across the nation to crack down hard on certain types of criminals and (criminalised) dissenters who are characterised as 'enemies of the people'.

For example, speaking at the start of a new 'People's War on Drugs' campaign launched on 26 June 2015, Xi Jinping used classic Maoist language: 'We will not recall our army until we have achieved total victory' 不获全胜绝不收兵. Another Maoist slogan, 'strengthening the democratic dictatorship of the people' 加强人民民主专政 was displayed on a banner

at a sentencing rally to publicly shame drug offenders before an audience of primary school children. In the post-Mao era it has been almost unheard of to conduct rallies in schools. But this is what happened on 26 June in Dingan county in Tianjin, where offenders convicted of trafficking relatively small amounts of drugs (ten grams of heroin) were sentenced to eight years imprisonment in front of young children.

Xi also followed Mao's example when he issued a special pardon to a limited group of imprisoned criminals to mark the seventieth anniversary of the end of World War II. Those he pardoned included those who had fought in the War Against the Japanese Occupation, for the Communist Party during China's civil war or who had served in the People's Liberation Army in other wars. They also included those who were disabled, over seventy-five years old or who were under eighteen when they committed the crime. This pardon was only the eighth since the founding of the PRC; Mao was responsible for the first seven. So while more optimistic commentators saw in the amnesty a positive development towards the realisation of human rights and the rule of law, others interpreted it as display of extreme confidence and power on the part of Xi.

In September 2015, Xi Jinping declared that 'Communism is not ethereal and unattainable' but the very goal towards which the Party should be working. Reaffirming the end-game of Communism after thirty-eight years of silence on the issue is part of Xi's plan to revive the 'Party's nature' 党性. In this context, applying the rule of the law—including to the Party itself through new Party disciplinary rules 中国共产党纪录处分条例 announced in November 2015—is one of the means by which Xi plans to realise Communism. The use of the expression 'improper discussion of [the policies] of the Central Party' 妄议中央 that appears in Article 46 of the rules has raised some eyebrows within the Party as it further institutionalises intolerance of internal political dissent.

Legislating for Stability Over Society

In April 2015, the National People's Congress released the second draft of a new law on Managing Foreign Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs). It establishes procedures for foreign organisations to formally register with the government and conduct activities within China. It also puts NGOs under the supervision of public security departments within the State Council and imposes restrictions on Chinese NGOs that receive money from overseas.

International NGOs and representatives of other foreign bodies with interests in or ongoing exchanges with Chinese counterparts, including universities, professional organisations, and business groups, submitted letters to the National People's Congress expressing grave concern about these provisions, as well as suggestions for amendments. They worry that the ambiguously-worded law, which fails to provide clear definitions of non-profit activities, could jeopardise many kinds of foreign operations within China, including those of universities and think tanks involved in academic and cultural exchanges.

Chinese officials answer questions about a new law regulating foreign NGOs during a press conference at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing
Photo: Weibo

Another controversial law, passed on 1 July 2015, is the National Security Law (see Information Window 'The National Security Law and The Counterterrorism Law', pp.72–73). In the view of Professor Fu Hualing 傅華伶 of the University of Hong Kong, what is most significant about the new law is that it shifts the focus from punishment to prevention in such a way that justifies even more pervasive surveillance, particularly over people's expressed opinions on the basis of safeguarding the country's 'core interests' 核心利益. As defined in Article 2 of the new law, these are: maintenance of the political system under the rule of the Communist Party, the defence of national sovereignty and territorial integrity, and economic development.

Professor Fu Hualing
Photo: law.hku.hk

In its preamble, the law states baldly that safeguarding the political regime ranks above sovereignty, national unification, territorial integrity, and the people's welfare. The implication is that any activities alleged to endanger the rule of the Communist Party may now be interpreted as a threat to national security. Vague wording makes it easier for the party-state to act against its internal and external 'enemies' on issues ranging from cultural and ideological heterodoxy to cybersecurity and even China's interests in space.

Pruning Other Parts of the Tree

As suggested above, the Party central leadership is extending what it calls the 'struggle' from crime to political dissent in general. David Bandurski from the China Media Project has quoted from a full–page *People's Daily* article in February: 'China cannot and must not … slavishly copy the systems of the West. Such copying is a means proposed by unspecified 'hostile forces' that hope to upset the 'leadership of the Chinese Communist Party'.

Not surprisingly, 2015 was a particularly bad year for civil society and human rights activism. The authorities have moved strongly to suppress public expressions of dissent, including those that fall within the legal or constitutional rights of Chinese citizens. Lawyers, labour activists, and people working for NGOs have all felt the heat, and there were hundreds of arrests of lawyers over several months in the summer of 2015 alone.

The year began with a series of arrests and detention of a number of prominent civil society activists. Among the first prominent victims of the campaign against local NGOs and civil society activism was Guo Yushan 郭玉闪, a Chinese scholar and the founder of the well-known think tank Transition Institute 传知行. Guo had helped the blind rights activist Chen Guangcheng 陈光诚 escape from house arrest in 2012 and had expressed support for the pro-democracy movement in Hong Kong. He was first detained in October 2014. In May 2015, the Beijing Public Security Bureau recommended that the procuratorate indict Guo Yushan and his colleague He Zhengjun 何正军 for 'illegal business operations', following a pattern by which the Party-state, rather than directly accusing someone of 'thought crimes' and leaving itself open to the accusation that China has political prisoners, finds some dubious crime to pin on the accused, one that may be difficult to defend and which has the additional benefit of smearing their public reputation. In September, just ahead of Xi's visit to the US, Guo and He were released on bail, a gesture seen by many observers as a way of smoothing Xi's path in the US by pre-empting complaints about human rights violations.

Guo Yushan
Photo: Pan Haixia

Chen Guangcheng
Photo: wikipedia.com

He Zhengjun
Photo: Pan Haixia

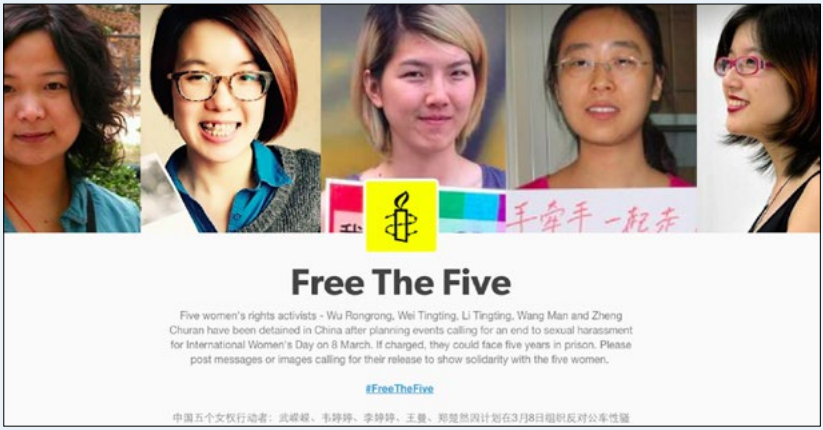
'Occupy Men's Toilets' Campaign in 2012
Photo: english.cntv.cn

But Guo was far from the only case that drew the attention of human rights advocates in 2015. Just days before International Women's Day on 8 March, public security forces detained five feminist activists in connection with anti-sexual harrassment demonstrations they were planning. The five women had led a campaign in 2012 to 'occupy' men's toilets in an effort to persuade the government to build more public loos for women. Police had warned the women that further activism could get them into trouble. Their arrest in March made them a popular cause among human rights advocates at home and abroad, who used the Twitter hashtag #FreeTheFive. In early April, Hillary Clinton tweeted that their detention was 'inexcusable', and called for their release. On 13 April, the 'Feminist Five' were released en masse.

That same month, however, Gao Yu 高瑜, a seventy-one-year-old journalist, was sentenced to seven years in prison for leaking state secrets abroad—in her case, by disclosing a Communist Party directive called 'Document No. 9' to the *Minjing News*, an overseas news media group (see the *China Story Yearbook 2014: Shared Destiny,* p.319 and p.334). The document laid out the Party's plans to quash liberal political ideas and values.

While past years have seen numerous arrests and harassment of lawyers who defend people's rights 维权律师, the scale and ferocity of the attacks on this group in 2015 were unprecedented. The crackdown began on 9 July 2015 with the seizures of lawyers Zhou Shifeng 周世锋 and Wang Yu 王宇 and other staff of the Beijing Fengrui Law Firm 北京锋锐律师事务所. During the previous months, members of the law firm, including Wang Yu herself, had been involved in a number of cases deemed sensitive by the government, including a case in Heilongjiang of a petitioner shot dead by the police and the case of the 'Jiangxi 4', where four villagers had been wrongly convicted of a double murder in 2000. Involvement in these cases and in other prominent cases in the previous years—the defence of Falun Gong practitioners, of journalist Cao Shunli 曹顺利, and of the Uyghur professor Ilham Tohti 伊力哈木·土赫提—made Wang Yu an easy target. Without exception, those who spoke out and defended Zhou or Wang have been harassed or detained. In the case of the law firm headed by Li Heping 李和平, everyone, including Li Heping's brother, lawyer Li Chunfu 李春富, has disappeared without trace.

Arrested lawyers: (from top left) Pu Zhiqiang, Zhou Shifeng, Wang Yu (from bottom left) Li Heping, Wang Quanzhang, Sui Muqing
Photo: molihuazh.blogspot.com



Amnesty International's appeal for the Feminist Five
Photo: Tumblr

FEMINIST FIVE, by Siodhbhra Parkin

As discussed in this chapter, the Feminist Five 女权五姐妹—Li Tingting 李婷婷, Wu Rongong 武嵘嵘, Zheng Churan 郑楚然, Wei Tingting 韦婷婷, and Wang Man 王曼—were arrested in the middle of the night on 6 March 2015, two days before International Women's Day. The arrests took place on the eve of the Five's planned public campaign to raise awareness about sexual harassment on public transportation; they were charged with 'gathering a crowd to disrupt public order' despite not having had the chance to gather the crowd in the first place.

Previously Li Tingting and others had organised a movement called 'Occupy Men's Toilets' that involved staging sit-ins at male toilets to draw attention to the relative lack of facilities for women. 'Occupy' attracted widespread international and domestic media attention. Another one of the women, Wu Rongrong had founded Weizhiming 蔚之鸣, a legal centre specialising in women's rights, and often organised public education events. Both Li Tingting and Wei Tingting have also played extremely public roles in LGBT rights activism.

The Feminist Five were released on bail within twenty-four hours of each other on 13 April 2015. They had spent thirty-seven days at the Haidian District Detention Centre. All five are still officially criminal suspects, though no court dates have been set. Some of them have already been briefly re-detained and questioned. They also face travel restrictions, and are prohibited from speaking to the media. *Weizhiming*, the women's legal centre, was forced to shut its doors in the summer of 2015, followed by the closure of the internationally recognised Beijing Zhongze Women's Legal Counselling Service Centre 众泽妇女法律咨询服务中心 not long afterwards. 'I'd like to thank the Chinese government for arresting me,' feminist activist Li Tingting remarked in a recorded statement released on the one-year anniversary of her arrest. 'Without their involvement, I think many fewer people would be aware of the current Chinese feminist movement.'

THE RISE OF PUBLIC INTEREST LITIGATION, by Siodhbhra Parkin

A record number of public interest litigation cases was accepted for hearing by China's courts in 2015
Photo: *Caixin*

In a country where the 'rule of law' remains an embattled concept, the role of public interest litigation 公益诉讼 is severely limited by the government. However, this might be about to change. In the past few years, legislative and policy shifts have signalled a gradually widening space for the role of public interest litigation, and in 2015, a record number of such cases was accepted for hearing 受理 by China's courts.

The term 'public interest litigation' refers to lawsuits brought on behalf of the general public against government agencies, private companies, or other

During July and August, public security officers took into custody more than 250 lawyers and professional legal staff, interrogating them about both their own activities and those of their colleagues. A number of lawyers were kept in police custody for extended periods; others were placed under 'residential surveillance at a fixed location' 指定居所监视 without access to their own lawyers. While some were released within days or months according to the terms of the law, others have been charged with the crime of 'picking quarrels and provoking troubles' 寻衅滋事罪 or 'endangering state security' 危害国家安全罪.

To support the campaign, Chinese official media published articles outlining the threats that such lawyers allegedly posed to social stability. In the weeks leading up to and following the crackdown, the *People's Daily* described human rights lawyers as a dangerous criminal 'gang' 圈子 that has been undermining the social order since 2012. The articles resurrect Maoist tactics of public shaming to justify repression against alleged dissenters. As of 11 December 2015, twenty-five lawyers and their associates remained under 'residential surveillance at a fixed location', the majority held in unknown locations without the ability to access either legal advice or make contact with their families.

organisations whose actions have violated the interests of society through environmental pollution, for example. Until 2012, the courts did not accept most public interest suits filed by public interest lawyers or NGOs.

However, as pollution and consumer protection scandals increased in frequency and severity, along with public outrage, things began to change. In 2011, a Chinese court in Yunnan province accepted the first environmental public interest lawsuit in China. In 2012, the Chinese government added a provision to the Civil Procedure Law that permitted 'lawful agencies and related organisations' to file public interest lawsuits; the definition of lawful agencies was later expanded to include certain types of environmental and consumer protection NGOs. Yet that first public interest case filed back in 2011 remains unresolved, and continues to navigate its way through a complex legal landscape. Whether public interest litigation will prove genuinely effective or yet another social management tool co-opted by the government remains to be seen.

Police also harassed the lawyers' families and peers. They repeatedly interrogated Wang Yu's sixteen-year-old son and confiscated his passport. In October, the boy crossed the border into Myanmar, but was arrested there and taken back to China, where he was put under house arrest. Many lawyers and activists have been prevented from leaving the country under the pretext that their going abroad would endanger the security of the state or the like. At the same time, China arranged for the deportation back to the country from Thailand of two veteran Chinese dissidents, who were registered as refugees there, in a covert security operation that involved co-operation between the two countries in violation of international legal standards.

'Picking quarrels and provoking troubles' is the official phrase used to criminalise dissent. In November 2014, lawyer and human rights activist Guo Feixiong 郭飞雄, arrested in August 2013 on suspicion of 'gathering crowds' was tried, convicted, and sentenced to six years in prison. To the surprise of Guo and his defence team and in violation of procedural rules, the judge announced during the trial that 'picking quarrels' had been added to the initial charge, which resulted in the addition of two more years of imprisonment to the original sentence of four years. In December, the

Middle: the Chairperson of the UN Committee against Torture, Claudio Grossman
Photo: UN photo/Loey Felipe

Beijing Second Intermediate People's Court found lawyer Pu Zhiqiang 浦志强, one of the most outspoken of the human rights lawyers of the group detained in May the previous year (see the *China Story Yearbook 2014: Shared Destiny*, p.265, pp.278–279, p.290, and p.335), guilty of 'inciting ethnic hatred' 煽动民族仇恨罪 and 'picking quarrels and provoking troubles'. They sentenced Pu, who had already been detained for eighteen months, to a three-years 'suspended' 缓刑 jail sentence, which he will most probably spend outside jail, and suspended his licence to practice law.

Nearly thirty international associations of lawyers and jurists and numerous international organisations including the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the International Bar Association and the Law Council of Australia have condemned the actions of the Chinese authorities. The United Nations Committee against Torture, in its fifth periodic report on China, which was released in December 2015, strongly denounced the crackdown. It also requested a 'prompt, thorough and impartial investigation of all the human rights violations perpetrated against lawyers'.

Conclusion

Developments in 2015 make it difficult to argue that there has been a shift to a rule of law, at least as understood in countries such as Australia or the US. Mao's legacy is clearly visible in the party-state's approach to the administration of justice and criminal punishment under Xi Jinping, particularly in the politico-legal language it is using, with its references to struggles, wars, and social contradictions.

GREEN GOOD NEWS,

by Susan Trevaskes and Elisa Nesossi

At the end of October 2015, two green NGOs won China's first environmental public interest case. The Nanping Intermediate People's Court of Fujian Province issued a judgment in favour of the two environmental NGOs, Friends of Nature and Fujian Green Home. The case, which concerned an illegal mining site, was heard under China's new Environmental Protection Law, which took effect on 1 January 2015.

On the one hand, political and judicial authorities are promoting the rule of law as a way of strengthening what they call 'institutional credibility' 公信力, openly implying that it is legitimacy that is sorely lacking in the legal system following a decade of Stability Maintenance in the Hu Jintao era. They have made some improvements to increase the credibility of the courts such as making court rulings more transparent (see the *China Story Yearbook 2014: Shared Destiny*, Chapter 6 'The Sword of Discipline and the Dagger of Justice', pp.260–283) and introduced laws to protect some of society's more vulnerable citizens—an impressive and much needed development.

On the other hand, Xi is using Party-Rule-Through-Law to impose a clear political agenda on both the Party machinery and criminal justice agencies. Both internal Party regulations and criminal laws place a priority on protecting the state and preserving political stability (i.e. the continued rule of the Communist Party). They aim to thwart corruption, improve the efficiency of government, and enhance judicial fairness—but also to suppress dissent, even when it is in the form of arguing for the rights of citizens under China's own laws and constitution. As a result, Xi's years in power will almost surely be remembered far more for his intolerance of discordant voices than for any rule of law.

A YEAR OF DISAPPEARING BUSINESS EXECUTIVES, by Lorand Laskai

In 2015, China's anti-corruption drive reached China's business class. Many executives were taken unannounced, what the media and their staff described as *shilian* 失联, 'losing contact'. A number of top Chinese executive from both private and state-owned enterprises 'lost contact', taken abruptly to 'assist in investigations', leaving empty boardrooms and panic-stricken investors. Some reappeared after a period of time as if nothing ever happened; others faced corruption charges; still others remain missing in action.

Many disappearances were the work of the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection (CCDI), the secretive and ruthless body charged with carrying out President Xi Jinping's anticorruption drive. However, since many disappearances in 2015 occurred without public notice or explanation, the connection between many disappeared businessmen and the CCDI's anti-corruption efforts are often tenuous and unclear. Often, the businessmen are just disposable pawns, brought in suddenly for interrogations; authorities looking to build a case against a political patron or high-up Party members often target the businessmen they support. Soon after Fosun Group's chairman Guo Guangchang 郭广昌 'lost contact', another prominent business executive, Feng Lun 冯仑 of Vantone Holdings 万通, wrote on his blog: 'A private tycoon once said, "In the eyes of a government official, we are nothing but cockroaches. If he wants to kill you, he kills you. If he wants to let you live, he lets you live." '

Mao Xiaofeng
Photo: china.dwnews.com

Mao Xiaofeng 毛晓峰—president of Minsheng Bank 中国民生银行

In late January, the CCDI detained Mao Xiaofeng, the youngest president of a publically listed Chinese bank, in relation to the ongoing investigation of Ling Jihua 令计划, a former high-ranking official, for corruption. Mao resigned from his post a few days later, citing personal reasons. Mao had served in the Community Youth League prior to joining Minsheng. Chinese media reported that he had close ties to Ling Jihua's wife as well as the wife of another official under investigation, Su Rong 苏荣.

Lei Jie 雷杰—chairman of Founder Securities 方正证券

In late January, Founder Securities announced that it had lost contact with its chairman Lei Jie, who had asked for sick leave through relatives. Founder Securities is a joint venture between Swiss Credit Suisse Group AG and state-owned Founders Group. In light of Lei's continued absence, the board of Founder Security appointed a replacement CEO in February. In November, international media reported that Lei Jie had been released by authorities. Lei was not reappointed as CEO and his current relationship to Founder Security is unknown.

Lei Jie
Photo: english.caixin.com

Wang Yaoting 王耀庭**—vice president of Hua Xia Bank** 华夏银行

On 4 May, state-owned Hua Xia Bank announced that its deputy chief Wang Yaoting was under investigation for 'violating discipline'. Media reports at the time pointed to Wang's role in the restructuring of Shanxi Liansheng Energy 陕西联盛能源. Another Chinese media outlet reported that the investigations were in fact related to Wang's outsourcing of IT support for Hua Xia's online banking operations. Wang's current whereabouts and the status of his case are unclear.

Wang Yaoting
Photo: english.cri.cn

Guo Guangchang 郭广昌**—chairman of Fosun Group** 复星集团

The disappearance in December of Guo Guangchang, the CEO of Fosun Group and China's seventeenth richest man, often referred to as 'China's Warren Buffet', was especially shocking given his status as one of China's most prominent business figures. Chinese media reported on 10 December that Fosun executives had 'lost contact' with their CEO. The same day the company said Guo was 'assisting in an investigation' and suspended trading of its shares on the Hong Kong Stock Exchange. After four days, Guo resurfaced without explanation. One day later, he was spotted dining at a restaurant in New York. Fosun's stock dropped ten percent once trading resumed.

Guo Guangchang
Photo: forbes.com

Li Yifei 李亦非**—chairman of Man Group's China unit**

At the time of the 2015 stock market crash, news circulated that Li Yifei, the Chinese head of the international hedge fund Man Group, had been taken into custody. A week later she wrote on social media that she had gone on holiday to 'meditate'. A subsequent comment by her husband indicated that she had been meeting with authorities.

Li Yifei
Photo: youtube.com

A YEAR OF DISAPPEARING BUSINESS EXECUTIVES (cont'd)

Cheng Boming
Photo: china.org.cn

Chen Jun
Photo: finance.caixin.com

Yan Jianlin
Photo: finance.caixin.com

Cheng Boming 程博明**, Chen Jun** 陈军, **and Yan Jianlin** 闫建霖**—CITIC Securities** 中信证券

In mid-September, officials launched a probe into Cheng Boming, the president of China's biggest brokerage firm CITIC Securities, for financial wrongdoings in connection to that summer's stock market crash. While the specific nature of the probe remains unclear, Cheng's detention came weeks after a report on Xinhua implicated high-level executives at CITIC Securities in inflaming stock market turbulence earlier that summer through insider trading and short selling. The allegations led to a series of executive departures. On 6 December, CITIC said it had 'lost contact' with two senior executives, Chen Jun and Yan Jianlin. The status of the cases against Cheng and other CITIC executives is unclear, though they were removed from their positions at CITIC.

Zhao Dajian
Photo: finance.sina.com.cn

Zhao Dajian 赵大建**—honorary chairman, Minzu Securities** 民族证券

Founder Group was struck again by investigators when director of Founder Securities Zhao Dajian, who served simultaneously as the chief executive of Minzu Securities, was detained at the end of September. Founder Securities reported that they had lost contact with their director on 22 September. The reason for his detention remains unclear, though state media reported that an official probe had been launched into the embezzlement of two billion yuan by Minzu executives.

Chen Hongqiao 陈鸿桥**—president of Guosen Securities** 国信证券

Chen Hongqiao, the president of state-owned Guosen Securities, was found dead from an apparent suicide in his Shenzhen house on 22 October. His death came little over a month after the CCDI announced that his former boss Zhang Yujun 张育军, the former assistant chairman of the China Securities Regulatory Commission 中国证监会, had been put under investigation for 'severe violation of discipline'. Chen had served as a deputy general manager of the Shenzhen Stock Exchange before joining Guosen Securities in 2014.

Chen Hongqiao
Photo: eng.wdkforum.org

Xu Xiang
Photo: baike.sogu.com

Xu Xiang 徐翔**—general manager Zexi Investment** 泽熙投资

Nicknamed 'Hedge Fund Brother No. 1', the head of the wildly successful hedge fund Zexi Investment, Xu Xiang, was arrested in November on the G15 Expressway over the Hangzhou Bay Bridge. Authorities stopped Xu's car and arrested him for insider trading and stock manipulation. The preternaturally good performance of Xu's hedge fund, which yielded on average 249 percent annual returns had led to suspicion that Xu was engaging in insider trading or had powerful political connections which helped him manipulate stocks for gain, a relationship of convenience that ultimately went awry. In April 2016, Xu was formally charged with 'stock market manipulation and insider trading', according to Xinhua.

Yim Fung 阎峰**—chairman of Guotai Junan International** 國泰君安國際

Shares of Hong Kong-listed Guotai Junan International dropped seventeen percent in mid-November after the brokerage firm announced it could not reach its chairman Yim Fung. Yim surfaced more than a month later after 'assisting in certain investigations' in the Mainland and resumed work. The Guotai Junan's stock rallied in the wake of Yim's return, though the company's share price did not fully recover from the blow of Yim's lengthy disappearance.

Yim Fung
Photo: asianfinancialforum.com

FORUM

FORUM

PULLING APART • 剥

Pollution Migrates to the West

· WUQIRILETU

POLLUTION MIGRATES TO THE WEST

Wuqiriletu

IN MONGOLIAN, Tengger means both 'heaven' and 'huge'. Most of China's Tengger Desert 腾格里沙漠 falls in Inner Mongolia, but it also extends into the northwestern provinces of Ningxia and Gansu. At 36.7 thousand square kilometres, it is China's fourth largest desert. It is dotted with hundreds of freshwater lakes surrounded by fertile areas of grass and vegetation that have sustained nomadic herders and their animals for thousands of years.

However, beginning in the late 1990s, the local governments of Inner Mongolia and Ningxia have been building industrial parks in the desert, including many chemical manufacturing plants. These enterprises discharge untreated wastewater into the desert, polluting groundwater resources and destroying desert ecosystems, threatening the survival of local herders, their families, and their animals.

The local people's complaints have fallen on deaf ears. In 2011, after one herder, Urhaan, failed to get any meaningful response from local government, he erected a board by a road near to his home on which he wrote: 'Dear leaders, the pollution is serious!' 各位领导, 污染严重.

'Dear leaders, the pollution is serious'
Photo: blog.163.com

Pollution of the Tengger Desert
Photo: [Clockwise from top left] *People's Daily*; Bert van Dijk/Flickr; wzaobao.com; and chinadialogue.net

In 2013, another, younger Mongolian herder named Batuu addressed an informal seminar in Beijing on groundwater pollution that was organised by journalists, scholars, and environmental activists. He noted that the number of chemical factories in the Tengger had increased within a decade from a few to dozens. He described how these enterprises discharge wastewater directly into the desert, burying any residue after the water evaporates or seeps into the sand. After a few windy days, the polluted area 'disappears' completely. Water is already sparse in the desert; pollution of the underground water threatens the survival of both animals and people.

Journalists were aware of the issue. In 2011, the *Times Weekly* 时代周报 reported on it in detail. Two years later, on the UN-sponsored World Water Day (22 March), China Central Television (CCTV) broadcast a report they titled 'abscess in the desert'.

Yet nothing changed until September 2014, when two influential news media organizations, *The Beijing News* 新京报 and the *Southern Weekend* 南方周末 fiercely criticised the local authorities for their inaction. Soon after that, the central leadership stepped

in. Xi Jinping and other central leaders ordered the party committees and government of the Inner Mongolian autonomous region to halt the pollution of the Tengger Desert.

The Supreme People's Procuratorate of China, meanwhile, investigated criminal breaches of environmental law, listing four 'key' cases from Inner Mongolia, Ningxia, and Gansu. On 7 May 2015, it fined the Ming Sheng Dyeing Company 明盛染化公司 five million yuan, additionally fining Lian Xinzhong 廉兴中, the company's responsible executive, fifty thousand yuan and giving him a suspended sentence of eighteen months. This was named one of the 'hottest' ten cases of the year by Sina.com's news centre. Comments on the Chinese Internet noted the absurdity of the authorities having to wait for an instruction from the highest leadership before acting.

Worse, more and more polluting industries are relocating to remote parts of western China with the apparent intention of avoiding the increasingly stringent anti-pollution measures in economically developed regions of the east—a phenomenon dubbed Pollution Migrates to the West 污染西迁. Indeed, on 17 November 2015, official media announced that between 2013–2015, Beijing had successfully eliminated 1,006 of its polluting enterprises. The report did not say where these enterprises had gone. A year earlier, when a person in Inner Mongolia posted his fears that they were simply moving to Inner Mongolia, he was detained by local police for ten days and fined 500 yuan for 'spreading rumours'.

In May 2015, when I was in Inner Mongolia, I heard many people voice their fears that the number of power plants being built there meant 'you will never see the sun again in the grasslands'. I heard some say that 'Inner Mongolian people are like candles, burning themselves to provide illumination for others', referring to the fact

7 May 2015: the Ming Sheng Dyeing Company was fined five million yuan for breaching the environmental law
Photo: Xinhua

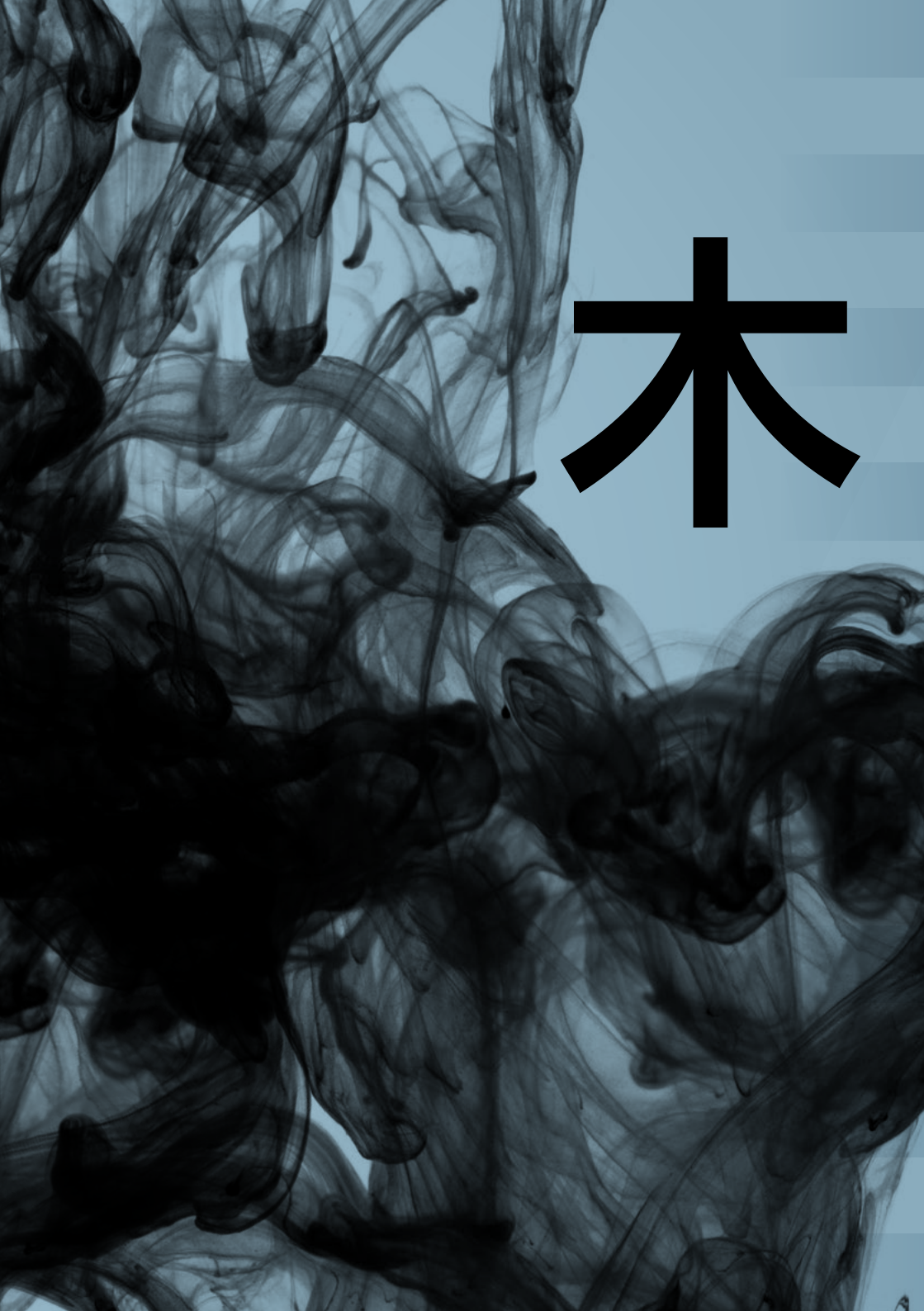
Heavy smog in Hohhot
Photo: chinanews.com

that coal-fired electricity is produced in Inner Mongolia for use in Beijing and elsewhere.

These rumours, if that's what they are, are not totally groundless. As early as 2013, the *National Business Daily* 每日经济新闻 reported that while the Air Pollution Prevention Action Plan restricted the building of new coal-fired power projects in eastern regions such as Jing-Jin-Ji (See Chapter 5 'The City that Ate China—Restructuing and Reviving Beijing, pp.178–201), they were springing up in western provinces including Shanxi, Shaanxi, Inner Mongolia, and Ningxia. According to *China Energy News* 中国能源报, 120 new plants have been approved (another source says 155), of which forty-eight are to be located in western China and seventeen of these in Inner Mongolia.

Pollution Migrates to the West
Source: news.163.com

Already, Asia's largest coal-fired power plant is located close to Hohhot, the capital city of Inner Mongolia, which is already plagued with heavy smog in winter. Built in 1995, its main task according to Wang Dongsheng 王东升, the party secretary, in 2015, is to 'ensure power supply to Beijing without polluting Inner Mongolia'. If you substitute 'western China' for 'Inner Mongolia', that is the challenge in a nutshell.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INTELLECTUAL HYGIENE/*MENS SANA*

Gloria Davies

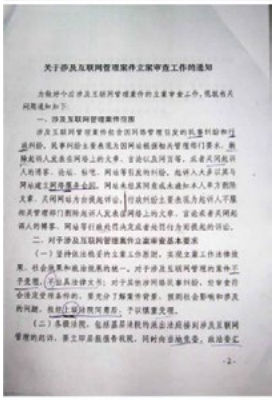
IN THE FIRST HALF OF 2013, the new administration of Xi Jinping banned university lecturers as well as popular and academic media from discussing 'constitutionalism' (the notion that the Chinese government and laws must be guided by the Chinese constitution). It also instructed them not to mention the 'Seven Speak-Nots' 七个不要讲 (七不讲 for short): universal values, freedom of the press, civil society, civil rights, historical mistakes by the Party, judicial independence, and [the existence of the] Party-elite capitalist class 权贵资产阶级. As of early 2016, these prohibitions remained in place with one small but crucially suggestive difference—in 2015, the government began referring to the 'Seven Speak-Nots' as 'Western values'.

The White Haired Girl 白毛女
Source: yykj.com

内部明电

郑州市中级人民法院

关于转发最高人民法院《关于涉及互联网管理案件立案审查工作的通知》的通知



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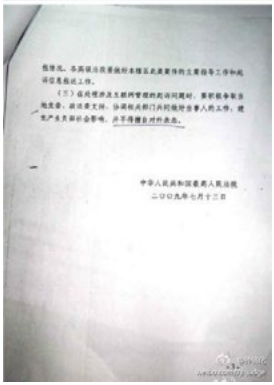


An Opinion on Strengthening and Improving Propaganda and Ideological Work in Higher Education Under the New Circumstances
Source: chinadigitaltimes.net

An Ominous Speech

The first assault on 'Western values' in 2015 was on 29 January when China's Education Minister Yuan Guiren 袁贵仁 addressed Chinese university leaders and education officials at a national meeting in Beijing. Yuan called for vigilance in 'ideological management, especially of textbooks, teaching materials, and class lectures'. He declared an 'absolute prohibition' 决不允许 on: 'textbooks promoting Western values'; 'remarks that slander the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party or that vilify socialism'; 'remarks that violate the country's constitution and laws', and 'remarks by teachers giving vent to personal grudges or expressing discontent in the classroom, thereby transmitting all manner of unhealthy feelings to their students'. On the Internet in the Mainland, these were quickly dubbed 'The Four Absolute Nos', written as either 四个绝不 or 四个决不, which all universities were to observe in order to prevent the dissemination of 'Western values' and to secure 'The Three Bottom Lines' 三条底线 in the areas of politics, law, and ethics.

The Beijing forum at which Yuan spoke had been convened to discuss a document titled 'An Opinion on Strengthening and Improving Propaganda and Ideological Work in Higher Education Under the New Circumstances' 关于进一步加强和改进新形势下高校宣传思想工作的意见 (hereafter 'Opinion'). This document, drafted by the General

Office and the State Council of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), had been published ten days earlier. The 'Opinion' refined the arguments of similar directives issued during Xi's first year in office such as the 'Sixteen Suggestions of the Chinese Communist Party on Strengthening Ideological and Political Work among Young Teachers in Higher Education' 中共16条意见加强高校青年教师思想政治工作, which was published on 28 May 2013.

Yuan Guiren
Photo: miniharm.com

Outside China, Yuan's anti-Western invective drew a flood of critical responses from online and print media as well as within academia, much of it on forums like Twitter that are blocked in China. Within China itself, media censorship ensured that domestic voices critical of Yuan's speech went largely unheard, with the notable exception of three pointed questions posted online by Shen Kui 沈岿, a professor and vice-dean at Peking University's Faculty of Law whose specialty is constitutional and administrative law. The questions were: 'How do we distinguish "Western values" from "Chinese values"?'; 'How do we distinguish "attacking and slandering the Party's leadership and blackening socialism" from "reflecting on the bends in the road in the Party's past and exposing dark facts"?' and 'How should the Education Ministry that you lead implement the policy of governing the country according to the Constitution and the law?'

Shen Kui
Photo: baike.baidu.com

Pro-government commentators attacked Shen for posing what they characterised as misleading rhetorical questions. On the Communist Youth League website, two articles described Shen's post as, respectively, 'harbouring evil intent' and 'a dastardly deception'. Both referred to

Shen's post using the same stylised four-character phrase, 'Shen Kui's Three Questions' 沈岿三问. Four-character phrases abound in Chinese as concepts, literary allusions, proverbs, and slogans. Official speeches make ample use of them, for their association with venerable traditions suggests that what they are saying is self evident or true. Besides, they are easy to memorise. 'Absolute prohibition' and 'The Three Bottom Lines' are examples of four-character phrases that the minister employed in the speech to which Shen was responding, as is 'The Four Absolute Nos', which online commentators used to describe Yuan's speech.

Zhu Jidong
Photo: image.baidu.com

Zhu Jidong 朱继东, Deputy Director and Party Secretary of the State Cultural Security and Ideology Building Research Centre 国家文化安全与意识形态建设研究中心 of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, went even further. Accusing Shen of distorting Yuan's remarks to generate 'ideological chaos' 思想混乱, he called on 'the relevant government agencies' to investigate, prosecute and severely punish both Shen and others like him.

The controversy continued for a month or so. But media outlets were warned not to publish any more criticisms of Yuan's speech. Consequently, on the Internet in the Mainland, denunciations of Shen, mostly appearing on state-sponsored websites, greatly outnumbered reports of Shen's post and other commentaries critical of Yuan. The result was a carefully managed 'struggle for public opinion' 舆论斗争 (yet another four-character expression), as the state defended the unpopular directive and instructed its citizens precisely how it ought to be understood.

As noted in the 2014 *Yearbook*, the government under Deng Xiaoping introduced the phrase 'the struggle for public opinion' (one source dates its first appearance to a *People's Daily* editorial in 1980), launching a full-scale propaganda campaign against 'Western spiritual pollution' in 1983. Then, 'Western spiritual pollution' was presented as an external threat. By 2013, the government had begun to perceive the threat as coming from within. For commentators in and outside China, the renaming of the

‘Seven Speak-Nots’ to ‘Western values’ in 2015 did not so much signal an ethnocentric, even xenophobic, attitude towards education so much as a crackdown on ‘liberalism’ in general.

The attack on ‘Western values’ is not a negation of the entire spectrum of ideas that have originated in Western countries. Academics in favour of one-party rule vigorously promote anti-liberal Western thinkers such as Carl Schmitt and Leo Strauss, for example. Above all, the Party-state seeks to bolster its particular interpretation of Marxism as a kind of inoculation against what is alternatively called, in the foreign-image-conscious, English-language *Global Times*, ‘suspicious values’.

On 5 May 2015, one day after Youth Day, the Party Secretary of Peking University laid the foundation stone for a new building on campus to be named after Karl Marx. The building is one of the university’s ‘Six Marx Projects’ 六马工程. First announced at a national forum on Marxism in higher education held at Peking University on 30 March, the six projects include the establishment of a new research centre on ‘The Chinese Path and Sinicised Marxism’; the compilation of ‘The Treasures of Marx’ 马藏, envisaged as the world’s most comprehensive collection of writings by Marx and studies of Marxism in Chinese and other languages; the founding of a centre housing materials on international Marxism; the hosting of the first-ever World Congress on Marxism (which took place on 10–11 October, with over 400 invited participants from more than twenty countries); the establishment of a website devoted to Marxism, and, of course, the construction of the Marx Building. The Baoshan Bank reportedly donated 100 million yuan towards the building. Yuan called in his speech for ‘the main teaching materials produced by the Marx Projects to be the key index for evaluating all teaching’.

The site of the new Marx Building at Peking University
Photo: globaltimes.com.cn

The intensification of state-led initiatives to strengthen Marxism reflects the authorities' growing fear that exposure to liberal ideas will encourage citizens to demand greater freedoms and to exercise their constitutional rights in ways that undermine the one-party system. Yuan was not proposing an outright ban on the study of such ideas, which can range from the kind of rights-based liberalism of the American philosophers Ronald Dworkin and John Rawls to the left-leaning defence of the public sphere mounted by the German social theorist Jurgen Habermas and his followers. Yuan wants people to conclude for themselves that Western liberalism is unsuitable for China. Yet the Party has its work cut out. Yuan and other leaders are aware that the internationalisation of the curriculum at Chinese universities, opportunities to study and travel abroad (opportunities eagerly taken up by many of their own children), as well as access to TED talks and MOOCs are just some of the many ways by which Chinese citizens can acquire knowledge about the full range of 'Western values'.

The current assault on 'Western values' is only the latest of the campaigns against Western ideas since the founding of the People's Republic in 1949. Like previous ideological drives, the 2015 campaign is conceived of as a form of intellectual hygiene. 'Western values' transmit 'unhealthy feelings'. Only if everyone adheres to 'The Four Absolute Nos' and 'The Three Bottom Lines', can the country 'secure a clean and upright atmosphere in our classrooms and lecture theatres'.

Socialist Hygiene

At the height of Russia's civil war in 1919, there was a typhus epidemic. Lenin warned, 'Either the lice will defeat socialism, or socialism will defeat the lice'. The remark has become a *locus classicus* for socialist hygiene. Disease and filth must be purged not only from physical bodies and environments but hearts and minds as well.

UNIVERSITY STUDENT SELF-STUDY ROOM AND OTHER PROBLEMS,

by Lucille Liu

Hao Yu, writer of *University Student Self-study Room*
Photo: baike.baidu.com

China's Ministry of Culture banned 120 Internet songs 网络音乐产品 in August for content that promotes 'obscenity and violence, incites criminal behaviour or harms social morality'. Websites and entertainment venues such as karaoke bars and cafés were given two weeks to remove the blacklisted titles or face severe penalties. The songs were also barred from commercial performances and from appearing in audio-visual publications.

Items one through seventeen on the list are from one band: Beijing hip-hop trio In3 阴三儿, which formed in 2006 and rose in prominence during the 2008 Olympics with radio hit *Welcome Back to Beijing* 北京欢迎你回来. Among their banned songs is the popular *Beijing Evening News* 北京晚报, which intersperses lyrics about local nightlife with social commentary on corruption and welfare: 'some sleep in underpasses, while some dine on government expenses', for example.

Once featured in a milk tea commercial, *I Love Taiwanese Girls* 我爱台妹 by MC HotDog and Ayal Komod 张震岳 with lyrics including 'I don't love Chinese ladies 小姐 (also slang for prostitutes), I love Taiwanese girls, may they reign forever', also appeared on the blacklist. Ayal Komod (of Amis, or indigenous Taiwan nationality) also saw his *Fart* 放屁 and *Cheating Couple* 狗男女, which the musician claimed he had not performed in at least a decade, wiped from the Internet.

The blacklist contained a mix of household names and obscure Internet artists. Some of the more eye-catching titles include *Suicide Diary* 自杀日记 by Beijing rap group Xinjiekou 新街口组合, *Fly to Other People's Beds* 飞向别人的床 by Internet rap artists Ceekay 沉珂 and Light Shen MC 光光, and the seemingly innocuous *University Student Self-study Room* 大学生自习室, about the difficultly of finding a quiet space for studying, by then-student Hao Yu 郝雨. As the list of banned songs circulated over the web, some Internet users sarcastically thanked the ministry for its recommendations.

MC HotDog
Photo: flickr.com

JOURNEY TO THE WEST: CHINESE SCIENCE FICTION IN TRANSLATION,
by Nick Stember

In August 2015, something previously unthinkable happened: a translation of a popular Chinese novel won one of the most prestigious awards in world science fiction. By taking home the Hugo at the Seventy-Third WorldCon, Ken Liu's translation of Liu Cixin's 刘慈欣 *The Three-Body Problem* 三体 (Tor Books, 2014) demonstrated that popular Chinese literature was finally reaching an audience outside of China.

Liu Cixin is often called one of the 'three generals' of Chinese sci fi (the other two are Wang Jinkang 王晋康, known for his think pieces, and the famously acerbic Han Song 韩松). Liu is perhaps the most beloved writer of speculative fiction writing in China today, often compared to authors of 'hard' science fiction such as Isaac Asimov and Arthur C Clarke. An engineer by day, aside from his ambitious, award-winning trilogy, Liu Cixin has penned a number of short stories and novellas that grapple with the thorny ontology of human civilisation in the face of political and social collapse. Shortly after the Hugo announcement, the second volume of *The Three-Body Problem*, titled *The Dark Forest* 黑暗森林. was released by Tor Books.

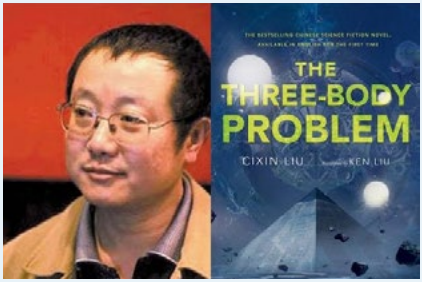
In September 2015, Liu Cixin and a group of sci fi writers met with Chinese Vice-President Li Yuanchao 李源潮, with Li urging the writers to use their work to promote the cause of

In her 1987 novel, *Bathing* 洗澡 (the published English translation is titled *Baptism*), the eminent writer Yang Jiang 杨绛 explored how socialist hygiene changed China during the PRC's first 'thought reform' campaign, the 'Three Antis Campaign' 三反运动 of 1951. It was anti-corruption, anti-waste, and anti-'obstructionist bureaucratism'. The process of self-examination and ordeals of public 'self-criticism' and confession by which the accused (many of whom were university educated) were required to undergo 'self-criticism' to show they were no longer germ ridden was informally nicknamed 'bathing'. The type of intellectual hygiene demanded by the Xi-led party-state today involves none of the physical and emotional rigours of Maoist 'bathing': compliance with official directives is all that the authorities can hope to expect. But such campaigns can increasingly appear

***Bathing* by Yang Jiang**
Photo: eladies.sina.com.cn

'national revival' and inspire interest in science among the youth.

Although some individuals have cautioned readers against overly simplistic interpretations of Chinese science fiction as criticism of the Chinese government, given the state of the natural environment and limitations on freedom of speech, it is hard not to see social criticism in works such as Chen Qiufan's 陈楸帆 *The Smog Society* 霾 and Ma Bo yong's 马伯庸 *The City of Silence* 寂静之城. Liu's *The Three-Body Problem* itself starts with a gruesome scene from the Cultural Revolution, which ultimately provides the premise of the trilogy's story. For his part, Ken Liu (also the co-translator with Carmen Yiling Yan of the first story, and translator of the latter story) argued in an essay from late 2014 that given the impressive diversity of Chinese fiction we might instead see such works as an expression of global humanism rather than domestic satire.



Lui Cixin and his Hugo award-winning book, *The Three-Body Problem*
Source: youtube.com

anachronistic to a population growing better educated and more cosmopolitan all the time.

Their defenders can also appear more than a little desperate. One of Shen Kui's critics stated that Shen's questions were as pointless as asking 'why the American President must oppose terrorism, or why the people of Great Britain must pledge allegiance to the Queen'. But to liken 'Western values' to 'terrorism' or monarchism to a national creed is poor logic, and unlikely to convince the unconvinced.

The Party is certainly aware of the gulf between itself and the people, amply illustrated by ceaseless online ridicule of official mottos and slogans (see the 2012 *Yearbook*, Chapter 2 'Discontent in Digital China', pp.118–141). In launching its 'Mass Line Education and Practice Campaign' in June 2013, Xi's government aimed to close the gap, or at least prevent it from widening. The 'Opinion' of 19 January 2015 recognises the importance of winning over China's intelligentsia. A key goal it lists is to 'realistically strengthen the Party's direction of propaganda and ideological work in higher education', noting that this was a task of 'extreme importance and real urgency'. 'Realistically' is the operative word here.

The state handsomely funds research into the topic of 'Socialism with Chinese characteristics'. Party theorists and pro-government academics and writers have produced a prodigious number of books and articles on the subject. But the Chinese public's reception of such works extends, in the main, from indifference to ridicule. There's no guarantee that the Marx Projects will fare any better.

A Cancelled Reception

When 'good cop' ideological persuasion strategies don't work, the Party employs punitive 'bad cop' backup tactics like censorship, harassment, intimidation, and even arrest and detention. The nationwide crackdown on feminists, rights defence lawyers, and others in 2015 (see Chapter 2, 'The Fog of Law', pp.64–89) attracted international attention and condemnation.

Less well known is the case of the influential monthly *Yanhuang Chunqiu* 炎黄春秋 (sometimes translated as *China Through the Ages* or *The Chronicles of China*). Founded in 1991 by veteran Communist Party members as a forum for independent intellectual inquiry, *Yanhuang Chunqiu* enjoys considerable authority in mainland intellectual and elite political circles. It is famous for publishing critical accounts of Party history written by retired senior officials with intimate first-hand knowledge of the events they discuss. Authors include Li Rui 李锐, former personal secretary to Mao Zedong, and Sun Zhen 孙振, former editor-in-chief at Xinhua's Sichuan bureau, who worked under Premier

Yanhuang Chunqiu
Photo: freeweibo.com

Zhao Ziyang 赵紫阳, and who died under house arrest in 2005. Sun's published defence of his former boss's reputation infuriated Party leaders.

***Yanhuang Chunqiu*'s Spring Festival celebrations**
Source: ntdtv.com

The seniority within the Party of many of *Yanhuang Chunqiu*'s editorial staff and contributors has made the magazine unusually resilient in the face of censorship. Even among the present-day Party leadership, few would wish to be remembered for publicly attacking elderly Communists who had played major roles in national and Party history. Despite occasional attempts to interfere with its masthead and organisation, and the temporary suspension of its website in January 2013 following the publication of an editorial in support of constitutionalism, the Party-state has never banned or closed down the publication.

Every year, for the twenty-three years of its existence, *Yanhuang Chunqiu* has held a fellowship reception around the time of Spring Festival celebrations. In addition to staff and regular contributors, the invitees typically include China's leading liberal thinkers, advocates for political reform, and rights activists. The 2015 reception, with 240 invitees, was originally planned for 11 March. The magazine's supervisory organisation, the Chinese National Academy of Arts, relayed instructions from unnamed authorities '有关部门' for the event to be postponed to 18 March, until after the conclusion of the annual two-week meeting of the National People's Congress (NPC). Whether under further orders or of its own volition, *Yanhuang Chunqiu* reduced its guest list to 130 as well. On 17 March, it was informed by the restaurant at the China Science and Technology Hall, where the reception was to have been held, that the event could not proceed after all. The organisers made a final appeal via the Chinese National

Yang Jisheng
Photo: yzhy100.blog.163.com

Academy of Arts on 17 March but were refused. One invitee remarked that no one knew if the order had come from the Ministry of Culture, the Propaganda Department or the Public Security Bureau.

This was unprecedented. Throughout 2015, the government policed the magazine more strictly than ever before. Finally, on 1 July 2015, its editor-in-chief, Yang Jisheng 杨继绳, a former Xinhua journalist and the celebrated author of *Tombstone* 墓碑, about the Great Famine of 1958–1961, was forced to resign.

What's in a Name?

Yanhuang Chunqiu had previously avoided trouble for two reasons. First, it never challenged the legitimacy of Communist Party rule. Second, the ideology of 'Socialism with Chinese Characteristics', if sacred, has been open to relatively fluid interpretation since it was introduced in 1982. It is unlike in the Mao era, when phrases like 'class struggle' and the 'Dictatorship of the Proletariat' for example, were rigidly defined by Mao himself. 'Socialism with Chinese Characteristics' initially described an attitude of cautious experimentation under one-party rule: 'crossing the river by feeling the stones' 摸着石头过河, to quote Deng Xiaoping quoting fellow Party elder Chen Yun 陈云. Since Xi assumed power in November 2012, however, the party-state's tolerance for open discussion and debate on matters of public interest has shrunk and its appetite for ideological consolidation has grown.

In 2008, *Yanhuang Chunqiu*'s long-time publisher Du Daozheng 杜导正 described the magazine's policy as 'adhering to the big picture while opening up the small picture' 大框框守住，小框框放开. The 'big picture'

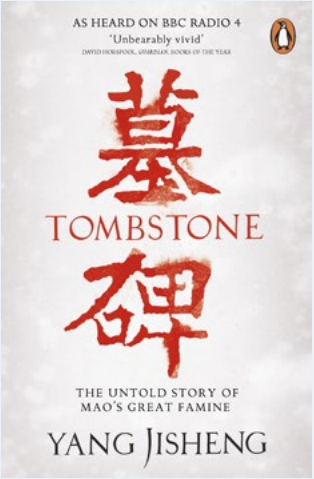
stands for the legitimacy of Party rule and 'Socialism with Chinese Characteristics'. The 'small picture' refers to the specific matters of public and historical interest explored by the magazine's contributors. In 2011, Du advised that the Party needed to 'do three things: implement intra-party democracy, undertake systemic reform of the National People's Congress, and open up public opinion'. Du's words carry weight: he joined the Party in 1937 and, in the 1980s was director of the General Administration of Press and Publications (GAPP), the state agency responsible for regulating public culture in that first decade of reform.

Party leaders and state media have used the term 'intra-party democracy' 党内民主 widely since the late 2000s. It refers to concepts such as competition and merit guiding official appointments, transparency in governance, and the sort of internal checks and balances that would mitigate against corruption and the abuse of power. 'Intra-party democracy' promotes collective leadership via negotiation and compromise among ri-

TOMBSTONE, by Gloria Davies

Yang Jisheng 杨继绳, former editor of *Yanhuang Chunqiu* magazine, is the author of *Tombstone* 墓碑, a detailed and richly sourced documentation of the Great Famine of 1958–1961. The book was never published or legally distributed in mainland China, but released in Hong Kong in 2008. An English translation was published in 2012.

In December 2015, Yang was awarded the Louis M. Lyons Award for Conscience and Integrity in Journalism by the Nieman Fellows at Harvard. He was invited to Harvard to accept the award in March 2016, but in February 2016, Yang said that his former employer, Xinhua News Agency, had forbidden him from travelling to the ceremony. In 2015, Yang travelled to Sweden to accept the Stieg Larsson prize, and in 2013, he had travelled to the United States to receive the Manhattan Institute's Hayek Prize.



***Tombstone* by Yang Jisheng**
Photo: youtube.com

val party factions. Those who openly promote 'intra-party democracy' are generally perceived—as is *Yanhuang Chunqiu* by most of the international media—as liberal leaning and on the Party's 'right'.

But political distinctions of 'left' and 'right' are often misleading in relation to the CCP. The 'left' usually describes people who defend Mao Zedong Thought and the Maoist legacy of central planning, and who seek to strengthen the power of the party-state and place high importance on propaganda and ideological work. Yet many on the 'right' also support these ideas. Similarly, if the 'right' refers to those who seek to advance China's market economy and strengthen intra-party democracy, then all high-ranking Party leaders qualify as 'right'. Like its predecessors, Xi Jinping's government displays 'left' and 'right' tendencies at different times in relation to different issues.

In official discourse, 'faction' is a pejorative term. The Party is supposed to be a factionless organisation whose members are fully unified in their beliefs and values. Party factions are best understood, not in terms of 'left' and 'right' but as alliances based on personal networks formed around a central individual of influence and power. The US-based political scientist Cheng Li 李成 argues that elite politics in China revolves essentially around two of these 'informal coalitions'. One is led by 'princelings'. Also known as 'Red Second Generation', they are the descendants of historical CCP leaders and include Xi Jinping, son of Xi Zhongxun 习仲勋, as well as the now-disgraced and imprisoned former Party secretary of Chongqing, Bo Xilai 薄熙来, son of Bo Yibo 薄一波. The other coalition is that of the 'populists', sometimes referred to as 'shopkeepers': party members from humbler origins who worked their way up through the system, such as Hu Jintao 胡锦涛 and Zhou Yongkang 周永康, the latter to date the highest ranking official to be jailed for corruption.

An illustration of official use of the word 'faction' comes from a Xinhua article dated 4 January 2015. It named, for the first time, what it called 'Three Notorious Factions' 三大帮派 (the 'Petroleum Faction', the 'Secretary Faction', and the 'Shanxi Faction'), as well as the disgraced offi-

‘Three Notorious Factions’: the ‘Petroleum Faction’ in the blue circle, the ‘Secretary Faction’ in brown, and ‘Shanxi Faction’ in yellow
Image: zhiyin.cn

cials associated with each of these. Xinhua's explicit reference to 'factions', five months before the start of the trial of Zhou Yongkang, aimed to show how successfully Xi's Anti-Corruption crusade had exposed and eradicated the rot from within.

The type of exposé for which *Yanhuang Chunqiu* is famous is altogether different. The magazine specialises in evidence-based narratives of events and persons that official accounts have distorted or suppressed. In 2014, the respected historian and public intellectual Zhang Lifan 章立凡 described *Yanhuang Chunqiu* as allied with Xi's faction. Xi's late father, Xi Zhongxun 习仲勋, was one of the magazine's early supporters. Yet in September 2014, the State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film, and Television (SAPPRFT) ordered the magazine to affiliate with an agency under the Ministry of Culture, and demanded far stricter standards of acceptable content. In an interview with the *South China Morning Post* on 19 September 2014, Zhang suggested that the magazine 'might have become a pawn in the power struggle between Xi and his political enemies, as the new affiliation order was made when Xi was on a tour of South Asia'.

In 2015, however, it became clear that Xi would offer the magazine no special protection. Following the cancellation of *Yanhuang Chunqiu*'s annual fellowship reception in March, on 10 April 2015, SAPPRFT notified the magazine that of the eighty-six articles published in the first four issues of 2015, thirty-seven violated state regulations. The offending articles addressed 'topics of grave importance' 重大选题 (the official term for censored or 'sensitive' topics) but had not been submitted to SAPPRFT for prior approval. The notice warned that further violations would not be tolerated.

On 3 June 2015, the *People's Liberation Army Daily* posted an article on its Weibo account attacking *Yanhuang Chunqiu* for 'spreading confusion and deceiving ordinary citizens, especially retired cadres'. Titled 'Getting to the Bottom of *Yanhuang Chunqiu*' 起底炎黄春秋, the article accused the magazine of 'blackening Mao Zedong's name, blackening the memory of the nation's heroes and martyrs, and making history meaningless. In

Xi's first Weibo message
Photo: cdn.static-economist.com

truth, it nullifies the history of New China and uses public opinion to try and drag China back to capitalism.' The article was widely relayed on the Internet in the Mainland, attracting an overwhelming number of positive comments on state-sponsored websites, with only a minority defending the magazine. It was another well-orchestrated triumph in the party-state's 'struggle for public opinion'. On 25 December 2015, when Xi posted his very first Weibo message, he chose to do so on the *People's Liberation Army Daily*'s Weibo account; the message was unremarkable ('…realise the China Dream and the dream of a strong army!' etc) but the media he chose to make it in was significant.

In two open letters written on 30 June 2015 and published online to mark his departure from *Yanhuang Chunqiu* on 1 July, Yang Jisheng confirmed that he had been forced to resign. He feared for the magazine's future, noting that it had, from its inception, observed the 'Eight Avoids' 八不碰, carefully circumventing all references to 'June 4', the separation of powers, Falun Gong, incumbent state leaders, the families of incumbent leaders, the transformation of the PLA from a Party to a state army, ethnic

The Dalai Lama
Photo: en.wikipedia.org

THE PARTY ARGUES BUDDHIST REINCARNATION WITH THE DALAI LAMA, by Matt Schrader

China's ongoing war of words with the Dalai Lama took a new turn in 2015. In a mid-December 2014 interview with the BBC, the exiled Tibetan spiritual leader dropped a bombshell with his remark that his reincarnation was not a certainty. Whether or not he had an officially designated successor, he said, would be 'up to the Tibetan people', adding that, 'the Dalai Lama institution will cease one day. These man-made institutions will cease'.

How the Tibetan people would make clear their choice, the fourteenth and longest-serving Dalai Lama did not explain. But as he approached his eightieth birthday in 2015, his words were clearly a shot across the bow of the PRC government, which has long claimed its authority to designate the Dalai Lama's reincarnated successor, in line with its requirement that all religious practitioners inside China recognise the ultimate authority of the Communist Party.

It was not the first time the Chinese government and the Dalai Lama had clashed over issues of succession. When, in 1995, the Dalai Lama named a young Tibetan child as the reincarnation of the Panchen Lama (the second most revered position in Tibetan Buddhism's hierarchy), Beijing promptly took the child into 'protective custody', and named another. The government's chosen Panchen Lama now fulfills the public role of that position within China; the Dalai Lama's choice, the government claims, lives a guarded but more-or-less normal life somewhere in Tibet.

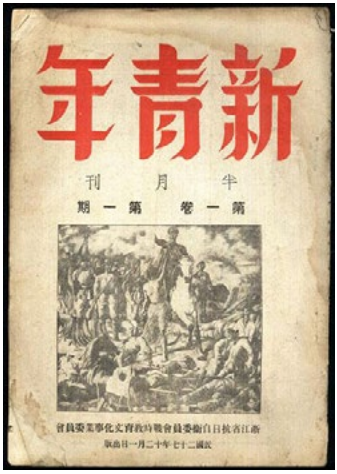
In early 2015, at a press conference on the sidelines of the annual gathering of China's two legislatures in Beijing, Zhu Weiqun 朱维群, the chair of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Congress's Ethnic and Religious Affairs Committee, accused the Dalai Lama of not showing a 'serious or respectful attitude' on the issue of reincarnation, and reiterated that 'the reincarnation of the Dalai Lama has to be endorsed by the central government, not by any other sides'.

Seemingly undeterred, in a July interview with Nicholas Kristof of *The New York Times* the Dalai Lama hinted that he had in mind a referendum of some kind among Tibetans to clarify the question of his succession. He also had a laugh at the CCP's expense, saying the Party was 'pretending that they know more about the reincarnation system than the Dalai Lama', and suggesting that the CCP 'should recognise the reincarnation of Chairman Mao Zedong, then Deng Xiaoping. Then they have the right to involve themselves in the Dalai Lama's reincarnation'.

The government was not amused by the suggestion. Writing in the Chinese-language *Global Times* in late November, Zhu Weiqun emphasised historic precedents for the government's position, highlighting the important role the Qing government had also played in the process; his claim, however, that this demonstrated China's sovereignty over Tibet glossed over the fact that over the course of the almost three-century-long dynasty (1644–1911), Beijing's say over this matter waxed and waned along with its influence in Llasa, and was often subject to highly contentious political maneuvering.

Compromise does not seem to be on either side's agenda. In the same article, Zhu made clear how the government views the stakes in this theological debate when he wrote that 'the power of the central government to decide in matters of living Buddhas [such as the Dalai Lama] cannot only not be allowed to weaken, but must be strengthened to ensure victory in the struggle against separatism'.

conflicts, and foreign relations. Yet this clearly was not enough. As of January 2016, a tightly constrained *Yanhuang Chunqiu* was still publishing.

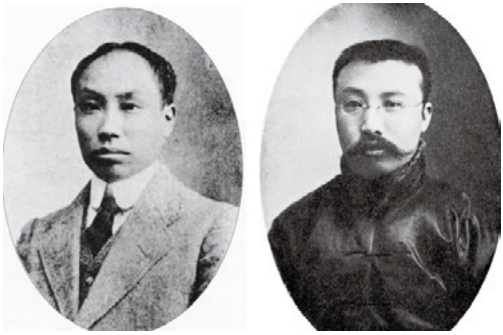


New Youth
Source: dangshi.people.com.cn

How to be a Good Communist

September 2015 marked the centenary of the founding of *Youth* magazine (renamed *New Youth* in 1917), two of whose founding members, Chen Duxiu 陈独秀 and Li Dazhao 李大钊, were also founders of the Chinese Communist Party in 1921. *New Youth* and the New Culture Movement it initiated are widely perceived in mainland intellectual circles as the prologue to the founding of the CCP. At a forum convened in August 2015 to commemorate this centenary, the eminent historian Lei Yi 雷颐 mused that while the New Culture Movement (also known as the May Fourth Movement) is typically described as the starting-point of a fundamental rejection of traditional ideas, it was much less radical than its predecessor, the movement for constitutional monarchy led by Kang Youwei 康有为 and Liang Qichao 梁启超 during the last two decades of the Qing dynasty, from about 1890–1911. Lei argued that the final decades of the Qing represented a unique period in which Chinese intellectuals, including those in exile, began to discard the moral and political principles underpinning a disintegrating dynastic system. No longer in awe of the so-called 'sacred decrees' 圣旨 as a result of the Qing's apparent inability to meet the challenges of the modern world, they were emboldened to challenge its authority.

Within ten years of the fall of the Qing, by 1921, the Nationalist Party (KMT) and the CCP had become China's two dominant political organisations. Both were Leninist in structure and sought to achieve one-party rule in China. They were allies until 1927 and enemies thereafter. Lei

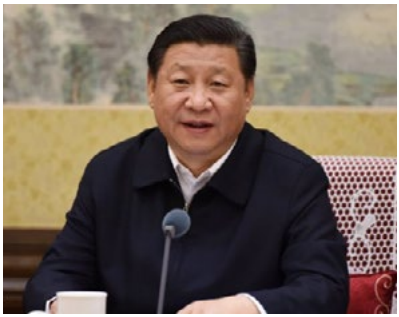


Chen Duxiu and Li Dazhao
Photo: dangshi.people.com.cn

described how in the Republican era, there was immense pressure on intellectuals to choose a side—CCP or KMT—even if they disagreed with both. The result was 'an inner contradiction and an inner tension. Intellectuals were concerned about politics but lacked the power to produce political change. The parlous state of their society made it impossible for them to keep quiet. They felt compelled to do something but they also worried about their own professional careers.' Worrying was justified, as neither party was kind to dissidents.

Among the examples provided by Lei was the case of Zhang Shenfu 张申府 (1893–1986). Zhang played a key role in the early dissemination of Marxism in China. He and Li Dazhao 李大钊 co-founded the Communist Small Group 共产党小组 at Peking University in 1920 and it was Zhang who recommended Zhou Enlai 周恩来 (China's Premier from 1949 to 1976 and Deng Xiaoping's mentor) for Communist Party membership. Lei noted that although Zhang fiercely advocated party discipline, he ultimately found it impossible to relinquish his intellectual independence and resigned from the CCP by 1925. After the Communist victory in 1949, Zhang obtained a position at the National Library in Beijing with Zhou Enlai's help. Despite attempting to stay out of trouble, he was punished in 1957 as a 'rightist'. Lei stated that Zhang embodied 'the intellectual's spirit of pursuing truth for its own sake' and that he 'never learned how to be agreeable'. Zhang was not politically rehabilitated until three years after Mao's death, in 1979.

Lei and others who spoke at the commemorative forum made no mention of their own situation. Nothing was said of 'The Four Absolute Nos', the intensification of ideological instruction on university campuses or the plight of *Yanhuang Chunqiu*. However, the contemporary relevance of Lei's remarks was not lost on forum participants. Historical innuendo is a well-established critical art in China.



29 December 2015: Xi delivers speech at the 'Democratic Life Meeting' of the Politburo
Photo: Xinhua

Under Xi, party propagandists have produced numerous slogans describing the qualities the Party requires of its officials. One widely used four-character slogan in 2015 was the 'Three Stricts and Three Genuines' 三严三实: be strict with oneself in 'moral cultivation, the use of power, and in the exercise of self-discipline', while 'planning and working in genuine ways and genuinely striving to be a decent person'. First used by Xi Jinping in a speech of 17 March 2014, official websites heavily promoted the slogan in June 2015. It was also the focus of the speech Xi delivered on 29 December 2015 at the 'Democratic Life Meeting' of the twenty-five-member Politburo. Xi told his colleagues to uphold the highest standards of ethical conduct and 'strictly educate, manage and supervise' erring family members and colleagues, to ensure their wrongdoings are 'resolutely corrected'.

Another slogan, 'It is unacceptable to be a nice guy' 好人主义要不得, appeared in many articles published on official websites in 2015. Lei Yi had suggested that Zhang Shenfu's inability 'to be agreeable' was a mark of his personal integrity. But the party's idea of 'not being a nice guy' has nothing to do with speaking truth to power. It warns officials against abusing their power by 'being nice' to greedy relatives and friends.

In his famous 1939 tract 'On the Self-Cultivation of Communists', written when he was a leader of the Communist underground. Liu Shaoqi 刘少奇 urged his fellow Party-members to be fearless, selfless, and willing to die for the Communist cause:

> As we Communists see it, nothing can be more worthless or indefensible than to sacrifice oneself in the interests of an individual or a small minority. But it is the worthiest and most just thing in the world to sacrifice oneself for the Party, for the proletariat, for the emancipation of the nation and all mankind, for social progress and for the highest interests of the overwhelming majority of the people.

THE WHITE-HAIRED GIRL AND PENG LIYUAN, by Emily Feng

1985: Peng Liyuan as Xi'er in *The White Haired Girl*
Photo: wyzzwk.com

On a dark and stormy night in pre-Liberation times, landlords from a town in Shaanxi gather in the mountains to pray to their ancestors. A sudden thunderclap, and a flash of lightning suddenly illuminates the visage of a woman with translucently white hair, her clothes reduced to rags. Mistaking her for a vengeful spirit, the men run screaming from the temple, never to return.

So goes the revolutionary opera *The White Haired Girl* 白毛女, first performed in 1945 in Yan'an. Its climactic revenge scene is meant to represent the symbolic triumph of the peasantry against the landed gentry and to foreshadow the eventual triumph of communism over feudalism.

The story is based on Chinese folktales that themselves were inspired by true events. They told of ghostly women with pure white hair despite their youth, thanks to malnutrition and lack of salt (and iodine), who roamed the mountains after fleeing a despotic landlord. The writer Li Mantian 李满天 wrote a short story based on these folktales in 1944 and presented it to the Communist cultural official Zhou Yang 周扬, who would later become the chairman of the China Federation of Literary and Art Circles. The story went through several edits, transforming from a simple ghost story into a politically symbolic tale of liberation. The opera based on the story combines vocal styles from Western opera with stylised movements inspired by Peking opera, a theatrical embodiment of the Party's efforts to engineer a modern aesthetic wedded to ideological principles.

The narrative centres on Xi'er 喜儿, the daughter of a poor farmer in Shaanxi province. When her father is unable to pay back the debts he owes to Huang Shiren 黄世仁, the local landlord, Huang seizes Xi'er, who is betrothed to another poor farmer, Wang Dachun 王大春, to be his concubine. She escapes and flees into the mountains, where she survives for years before being found again by her fiancé, who had joined the Communists' Eighth Route Army and fought in the Anti-Japanese War. They rejoice.

Mao was reportedly moved to tears the first time he saw the opera. In 1950, it was turned into a movie of the same name, becoming one of the classics of revolutionary Chi-

Several articles published on official websites in 2015 described Xi's 'Three Stricts and Three Genuines' as an exemplary emulation of the ideals presented in Liu's 1939 tract. Yet none mentioned what Liu considered 'worthiest and most just'. Words like 'sacrifice', 'the proletariat', and 'the emancipation of all mankind' have rarely appeared in official discourse since the 1990s. The goals of today are more vague, wordier, more practical, and more narrowly nationalistic: 'to establish a well-off society and to fully realise the China Dream of reviving the greatness of the Chinese nation' 建成小康社会，最终实现中华民族伟大复兴的中国梦.

nese film and named one of the 'eight model revolutionary operas' during the Cultural Revolution. Later, *The White Haired Girl* was adapted for Peking opera (1958) and the ballet (1965).

The 2015 version of *The White Haired Girl*
Photo: Weibo

Fast forward to the twenty-first century. In October 2014, Xi Jinping delivered a speech on the role of literature and arts in China that was a conscious echo of Mao's original 'Talks at the Yan'an Forum on Art and Literature'. In it, Xi stressed that art and culture was to serve the people: 'Art and culture will emit the greatest positive energy when the Marxist view of art and culture is firmly established and the people are their focus'. He criticised the 'cultural garbage' that results when artists fail to live up to such standards and 'indulge in kitsch'. In other words, artists and the arts must obey and support Communist rule.

Shortly after Xi's speech, China's Ministry of Culture announced a revival tour of *The White Haired Girl*, which opened in Yan'an in November 2015 and finished in Beijing in mid-December. It underwent a makeover to appeal to modern audiences, including 3D visual effects. Xi's wife, the singer Peng Liyuan served as the production's artistic director; in the 1980s she herself played Xi'er, a highly coveted role, when she was a star performer with the People's Liberation Army song-and-dance troupe.

A pared-down orchestral version of *The White Haired Girl* also enjoyed a one-off performance in March 2016 at The National Centre for Performing Arts in Beijing. After previous performances, Chinese news reports described audience members young and old raving about the undiminished emotional power of the opera, even seventy years later. But here, even among the fifty and sixty year olds in the audience, who had seen the original production in their youth, audience members chuckled during otherwise serious moments at some of the more outlandish and clichéd elements of the plot and presentation, including the extremely tattered clothing of the peasants. As the music swelled, people checked their phones. Yet in the final scene, when Xi'er and Wang Dachun embraced after years of separation, any remaining cynicism gave way to a collective moment of silence as woman, soldier, and peasants linked arms and waved, the picture of a happy family.

Launching his 'Mass Line Education and Practice Campaign' in June 2013, Xi spoke about self cultivation in a distinctly banal register. He asked Party members to 'look in the mirror, make themselves presentable, take a bath and cure what ails them' 照镜子、正衣冠、洗洗澡、治治病. In education and public culture, the Party-state under Xi's leadership has used the rhetoric of 'socialist hygiene' to justify its intensification of censorship. Yet, Xi's somewhat jocund remark reflects the predicament of a government whose legitimacy rests on its Communist past but for whom the very idea of being a good Communist has lost all meaning.

XI'S CATCHPHRASES IN 2015, by Lorand Laskai

Political discipline and rules 政治规矩

'Political discipline and rules exist to enable CPC cadres to defend the authority of the CPC Central Committee and cadres must follow those rules, aligning themselves with the committee in deed and thought, at all times and in any situation. Party unity must be ensured.'

At the fifth plenary session of the 18th CPC Central Commission for Discipline Inspection (CCDI) in January, Xi said that to preserve party rule, cadres had to obey 'political discipline and rules'. This included 'unifying and concentrating power in one leader'.

New normal 新常态

'China's economic development has entered a "new normal". The rate of economic growth is shifting to a medium-to-high rate, the model of large-scale quick growth is shifting towards a quality-centred model of intensive growth, and the momentum from investments is transitioning towards towards innovation driven growth.'

Although Xi's signature term to describe China's economic slowdown, 'the new normal', was coined in 2014, it remained a centrepiece of the Chinese president's policy speeches in 2015, including the one given at the Boao Forum in March. By one scholar's estimation, by March of 2015, Xi had already used the term 'new normal' over 160 times since the 18th Party Congress.

Critical minority 关键少数

'Governing the country according to comprehensive rule of law must capture a "critical minority" of the leadership cadre.'

At a session for leading provincial-level cadres in February, Xi said a 'critical minority' of leading cadre was required to promote the rule of law and strengthen national defence and the military, among other goals. Xi has used the term repeatedly to emphasise the need for a disciplined vanguard within the top levels of the Party.

Feeling of progress 获得感

'Reform must be carried through from the first to last kilometre, breaking through obstructions and preventing omissions. The gold content of reform must be fully displayed so the people can have a feeling of progress.'

At the tenth meeting of the Central Leading Group for Comprehensively Deepening Reforms on 27 February, and perhaps in an acknowledgement that fast-paced economic development does not objectively benefit everyone equally, Xi suggested using the people's 'feeling of progress' as a barometer for success. He later used the term when discussing cross-Strait trade dialogue with Taiwan: people on Taiwan, he said, needed the 'feeling of progress' if they were to 'close the distance between compatriots on both sides of the Strait'.

Purify the political ecology 净化政治生态

'When the political ecology is dirty, the environment becomes vile; when the political ecology is bright and clean, the environment is first rate. Political and natural ecology are the

same—neglect it even a little and it will very quickly become polluted. Once problems appear, recovery demands a large price.'

First coined last year, Xi has since used the concept of 'political ecology' on a number of occasions, including during the 2015 meetings of the National People's Congress and Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference.

Toilet revolution 厕所革命

'Along with the quickened pace of agricultural modernisation and new rural construction, we must launch a "toilet revolution" to ensure the rural masses have access to sanitary toilets.'

Xi raised the need to make dramatic improvements to rural sanitation facilities on a number of occasions including during a visit to Yanbian Korean autonomous prefecture in July. China's first 'toilet revolution' was in 1965; there have been at least three others since the 1980s.

Supply-side reform 供给侧改革

'At the same time as appropriately increasing demand, we must try hard to increase structural supply-side reforms, raise the supply system's quality and efficiency, and strengthen the momentum for sustainable economic growth.'

Xi first used the term 'supply-side reforms' during a meeting of the Leading Group for Financial and Economic Affairs on 11 November 2015 and has since used it repeatedly to underscore the government's resolve to curb oversupply and push through new structural reforms during the period of the Thirteenth Five-Year Plan.

'Four-iron' cadres '四铁'干部

'In order to build a prosperous society and realise the Chinese dream of national rejuvenation, we must groom officials to be as strong as iron in their belief, faith, discipline and sense of responsibility.'

At the National Party School Work Conference in December, Xi coined this new term to describe the calibre of cadre the country needs. The meeting came a few months after the party released new strict disciplinary regulations for party members.

Community of shared destiny in cyberspace 网络空间命运共同体

'Cyberspace is humanity's commons. The future of cyberspace should be in the hands of all nations. Each country should step up communication, broaden consensus and deepen co-operation, in order to jointly build a community of shared destiny in cyberspace.'

During the keynote address to the Second Wuzhen World Internet Conference in December, Xi adapted another favorite catchphrase, 'common destiny', to the politics of global Internet governance. He used it to stress the importance of establishing a 'multinational' regime for Internet management.

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Culture—Cleaning Up
· LINDA JAIVIN

A New Cultural Ecology?
· OLIVIER KRISCHER

CULTURE—CLEANING UP

Linda Jaivin

TOWARDS THE END OF 2014, Xi Jinping addressed a meeting of 'arts and culture workers' 文艺工作者座谈会 for two hours. Moving beyond his prepared script, he spoke glowingly of the influence of art and literature on himself as a youth and argued that culture is crucial to the realisation of the China Dream. Not just any culture, however: Xi evoked both the ancient notion of 'culture with moral purpose' 文以载道 as well as the Soviet concept of artists as the 'engineers of human souls'. Xi also noted the importance of culture to Chinese soft power, stating that 'historically, the position and influence of the Chinese people' in the world was due not to military might but the strong appeal of Chinese culture.

Chinese cultural soft power received an unexpected boost when Liu Cixin 刘慈欣, the author of *The Three Body Problem*, became not only the first Chinese but first Asian writer to win the international Hugo Award for best science fiction or fantasy in 2015. Official soft power strategy that relies on a spreading network of Confucius Institutes around the world has done less well: in late 2014 and into 2015, a number of prestigious tertiary institutions including the University of Chicago and Stockholm University have either shut down or refused to host Confucius Institutes, citing their incompatibility with the principles of free intellectual inquiry. And while the Chinese publishing industry's 500-strong delegation may have been

BookExpo America, June 2015
Source: news.xinhuanet.com

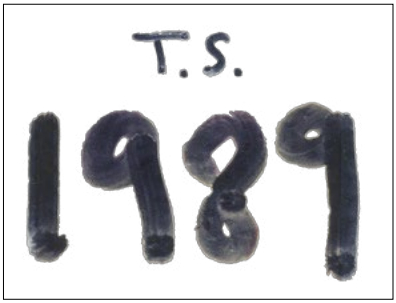
the special guests of the publishing trade fair BookExpo America in June 2015, US media were more interested in an anti-censorship rally organised to coincide with the book fair and attended by the Chinese writer Murong Xuecun 慕容 雪村 along with Jonathan Franzen and other notable American writers. The demonstration, organised by the PEN American Center, called for the release of Chinese writers including Nobel Peace Laureate Liu Xiaobo 刘晓波 and the Tibetan poet Tsering Woeser from prison and house arrest. Protesters held up a sign: 'Governments make bad editors'.

That may be so, but the Chinese government shows no sign of putting down its red pen. If anything, censorship of media and literature intensified in 2015. The Party-state has long justified censorship with the use of environmental metaphors—the elimination of filth and pollution—as in 1983's 'anti-Spiritual Pollution' campaign. In April 2015, it launched

its latest 'anti-porn' campaign. (Only three months later, a couple uploaded a video of themselves having sex in a changing room in a branch of popular clothing chain Uniqlo in Beijing's Sanlitun Shopping Village: by the following day, some 2.5 million searches and posts made the amateur porn video the top-trending item on WeChat.) In June, the censors proscribed thirty-eight Japanese anime including titles such as *High School of the Dead* and *Psycho Pass* as well as others with anti-authoritarian themes. The following month, the authorities cancelled a Shanghai concert by the American band Maroon 5, reportedly because one of the band members had tweeted a happy birthday message to the Dalai Lama. In August, the Ministry of Culture banned 120 songs from the Internet on grounds of promoting obscenity, violence, crime or harm to social morality, including Taiwan pop singer Chang Csun Yuk's 张震岳 comedic 'Fart'. In September, it axed Bon Jovi's September tour to Beijing and Shanghai—five years earlier, Bon Jovi had displayed the Dalai Lama's picture while playing in Taiwan. Taylor Swift, scheduled to visit China as part of a global tour in November, gave the authorities a

Uniqlo in Beijing's Sanlitun Shopping Village, where a couple filmed themselves having sex in one of its changing rooms
Photo: gawker.com

fresh headache when several months beforehand, she revealed her latest 'merch', t-shirts, hoodies, and more, displaying her initials and the year of her birth—T.S. 1989, unintentionally evoking the events of Tiananmen Square twenty-six years ago. The Minister for Education Yuan Guiren 袁贵仁, meanwhile, was busy fighting pollution on another front, writing



Taylor Swift's clothing line 'TS 1989'—an unintentional reference to the Tiananmen Square protests
Source: commons.wikimedia.org

in early 2015 that universities should scrap texts that promoted 'Western values'. (See Chapter 3 'Intellectual Hygiene—*Mens Sana'*, pp.100–127.)

Artists and writers who have run into difficulty exhibiting or publishing at home have long relied on outlets and markets outside China. In 2014, the authorities literally pulled the plug on the Eleventh Beijing Independent Film Festival by cutting off the electricity supply. In August 2015, Cinema on the Edge: Best of the Beijing Independent Film Festival 2012–2014 screened in New York City across a number of venues including the Asia Society.

Meanwhile, in June, Ai Weiwei 艾未未, China's most famous artist-provocateur, was allowed to exhibit in China for the first time since his imprisonment for eighty-one days in 2011 and subsequent house arrest. In July, the authorities handed him back his passport. He travelled abroad, spoke about government control and repression in the mildest possible terms, attended a major show of his work at London's Royal Academy of the Arts, and returned to China without incident before travelling again, including to Australia and Greece.

Ai Weiwei
Photo: Alfred Weidinger, Flickr

A NEW CULTURAL ECOLOGY?

Olivier Krischer

A NUMBER OF CHINESE ARTISTS and academics are seeking the answers to a suite of related environmental issues, including overzealous urbanisation, food safety, sustainable development, and cultural heritage preservation, in a renewed engagement with the Chinese countryside. Since the mid-2000s in particular, this new 'ruralist movement' 农村运动, has sparked over two hundred initiatives in the field of rural reconstruction, or literally, 'village construction' 乡村建设 (sometimes abbreviated as 乡建).

Perhaps the best known of these initiatives, outside of China anyway, is the Bishan Commune 璧山共同体 in Bishan Village, Yi County, Anhui province 安徽省黟县璧山. The commune is led by the writer, curator, and film maker Ou Ning 欧宁, and his friend, fellow curator and educator Zuo Jing 左靖. In 2011, the pair began by organizing the 'Harvestival' 碧山丰年庆, a festival of music, poetry, film workshops, and local performers. While participants also came from elsewhere, they invited the whole village to attend. That year Ou decided to move there from Beijing with his family, renovating a traditional farmhouse to live in.

Ou Ning
Source: blog.163.com

While most other rural reconstruction projects try to reinvigorate the locality through economic and social enterprises, in Bishan, Ou, Zuo and a growing network of collaborators from China and abroad focussed on art and culture. The project saw the conversion of a disused ancestral hall into a bookshop and café, operated by Nanjing's Librarie Avant-Garde bookshop 先锋书店; the opening of modest 'rural-chic' guesthouses, and the launch of commune-branded stationery and apparel devised by designer-collaborators as a means of securing ongoing funding as well as creating a marketable identity. As Ou has explained: 'Since the 1970s many [rural] people have moved to urban areas and a lot of villages are now empty—there are only old people and children. There is no public life and so what we did is to try to bring [in] more artistic and cultural events for the villages'.

Bishan logo
Source: facebook.com

In 2012, Ou and Zuo launched the stylishly designed *Bishan* journal, which publishes articles, photo essays, and a wide range of other material connecting the project to modern precedents, complemented by related texts and images about art, agriculture, and architecture in China and overseas. In June 2015, Denmark's Ovo Press published Ou's own notebook on the development of Bishan under the title *Bishan Commune: How to Start your Own Rural Utopia,* together with an English translation, in which Ou characterises Bishan as under the banner of 'Ruralism + Anarchism'.

Some articles in the *Bishan* journal have highlighted the pioneering efforts of earlier generations of Chinese intellectuals who have engaged with rural reform. Issue 2, on the theme of 'Back to the Countryside', reprinted a 2001 lecture by literary historian Qian Liqun 钱理群 that describes how successive generations of modern Chinese intellectuals have engaged in rural reform. For Qian, the first generation, active in the 1920s, was that

Ou Ning's notebooks
Source: catalystreview.net

of the May Fourth Movement, including writer Zhou Zuoren 周作人 (brother of Lu Xun 鲁迅), rural educator Yan Yangchu 宴阳初, and philosopher Liang Shumin 梁漱溟. The second consisted of the early Communists and 'rural reconstructionists' 乡村建设派 of the 1930s; the third the Yan'an era youth of the 1940s; and the fourth, the generation of post-1949 intellectuals who actively participated in the collectivist policies of the 1950s and 1960s. Qian sees the fifth generation as the 'educated youth' 知识青年 who went (or were sent) 'down to the countryside' to learn from the peasantry during the Cultural Revolution, a generation that includes Qian himself. This genealogy writes recent projects like Bishan into an intellectual narrative that is not necessarily at odds with official history.

Tension has always existed between the visions of urban intellectuals for a re-invigorated countryside and what farmers or villagers in the countryside want for themselves, which is often straightforward economic and infrastructural development. Yet projects such as Bishan, despite involving some degree of urban idealisation of traditional village life, are also critical of contemporary trends in rural and ethnic tourism that turn villages into ticketed theme parks, forcing villagers to 'act' as themselves, everyday—such as has happened in the nearby towns of Xidi and Hongcun, both UNESCO listed 'Ancient Towns

Bishan
Source: cdn2.gbtimes.com

of Southern Anhui', since 2000, and which receive bus loads of day-trippers from nearby Huangshan.

In China, as in other industrialising economies since the nineteenth century, urbanites may entertain a yearning for a lost or imagined rustic past, which they believe they can find in less economically developed areas, particularly those where there are 'authentic' and 'minority' cultures. Such rural nostalgia tends to affirm their urban middle-class status and values, which might be expressed as a taste for rustic or ethnic food experiences, such as 'farmhouse joy' 农家乐 restaurants, commonly marketed as serving more local, 'traditional', environmentally friendly fare, or 'ethnic' music. So, while new cultural initiatives like Bishan may benefit from the interest of middle-class urbanites, who are happy to sip espresso and browse foreign books in the Anhui countryside, this potential contradiction, or perhaps compromise, has not been lost on Bishan's founders.

Middle-class urbanites with rustic aspirations are now just as likely, for example, to indulge in ostentatious tea connoisseurship involving expensive teas and tea-making and serving accoutrements, including rare imported items from Taiwan and Japan. Some have taken to wearing faux-ancient *hanfu* 汉服 'Chinese' clothing that manages to simultaneously suggest aesthetic sophistication, patriotism and opulence, while being less outwardly extravagant—and therefore politically safer—than such things as designer watches, French red wines, and Italian sports cars.

At the same time, independent rural reconstruction initiatives, and the culture they both symbolise and foster,

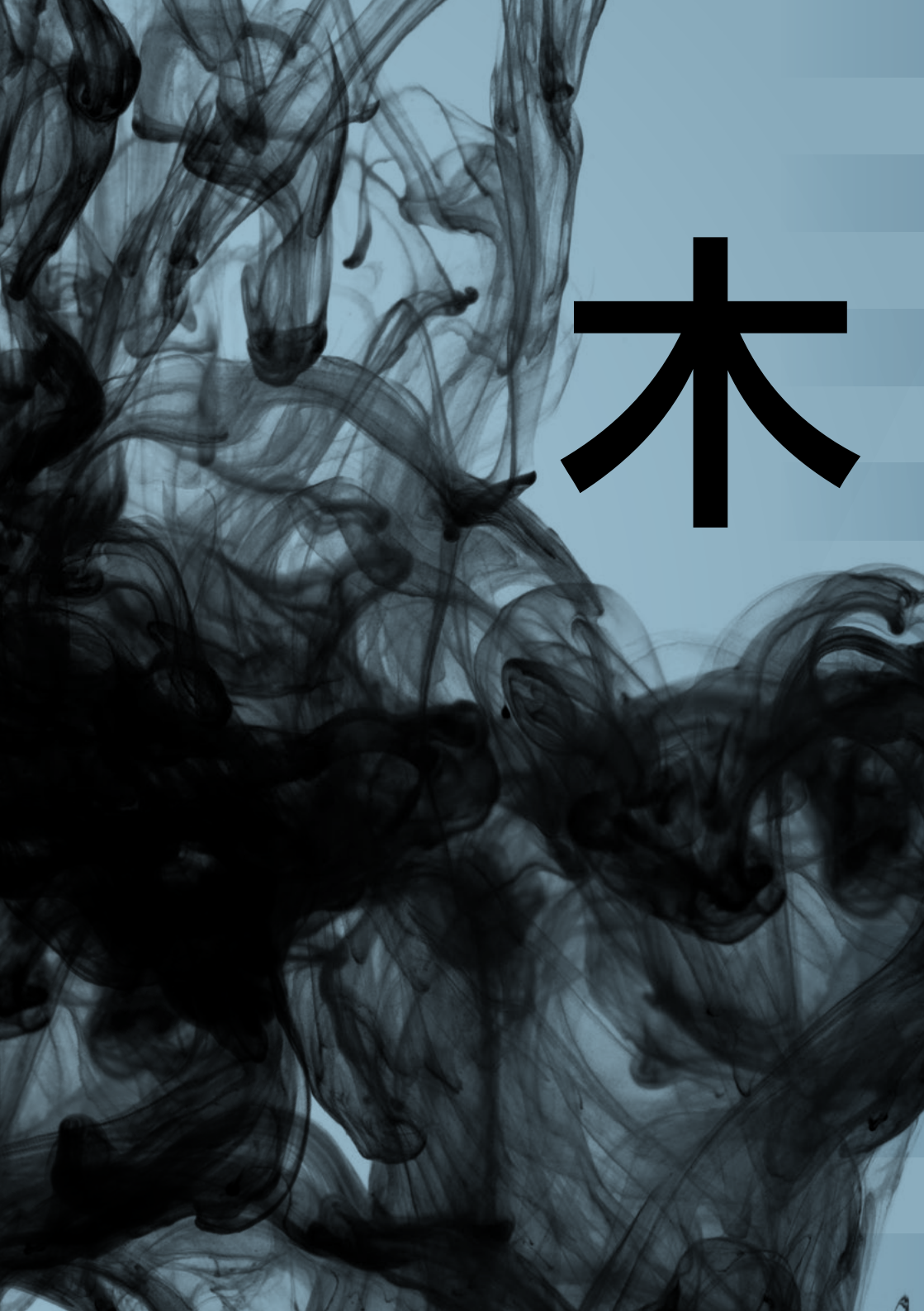
appear to be in step with such government policies as the anti-corruption and pro-austerity campaigns as well as Xi's call for 'art and media workers' to spend time in rural areas (directly recalling Mao's lecture in May 1942 at the Yan'an Forum on Literature and Art), and even the demand that intellectuals and others be on guard against 'Western influences'. However, because they tend to be driven by urban academics and creative communities, with a suspicious cohort of collaborating foreign institutions and individuals, such initiatives risk being perceived as a subversive critique of the central government's failure in rural communities, particularly since party-state policies, especially under Xi, leave scant room for autonomous zones of culture. Therefore, while many initially court local government support, they always face the risk of censure or co-option. Many initiatives, however, are in fact affiliated to university-based research labs or individual professors, and so are already directly linked to an arm of government.

No less significant a challenge is the need to navigate the expectations of locals, including cadres and other government officials, whose main incentive in such intellectual and cultural experiments is their potential to raise local incomes and create employment without attracting undue attention from the centre.

***Hanfu* 'Chinese' clothing movement**
Source: en.wikipedia.org

STOP PRESS:

Increasingly in Xi's China there is a price to pay for international recognition: on 2 May 2016, several foreign media outlets reported that nervous Party cadres shut down parts of the Bishan commune's water and electricity supply. At the time of publication, Ou had gone quiet.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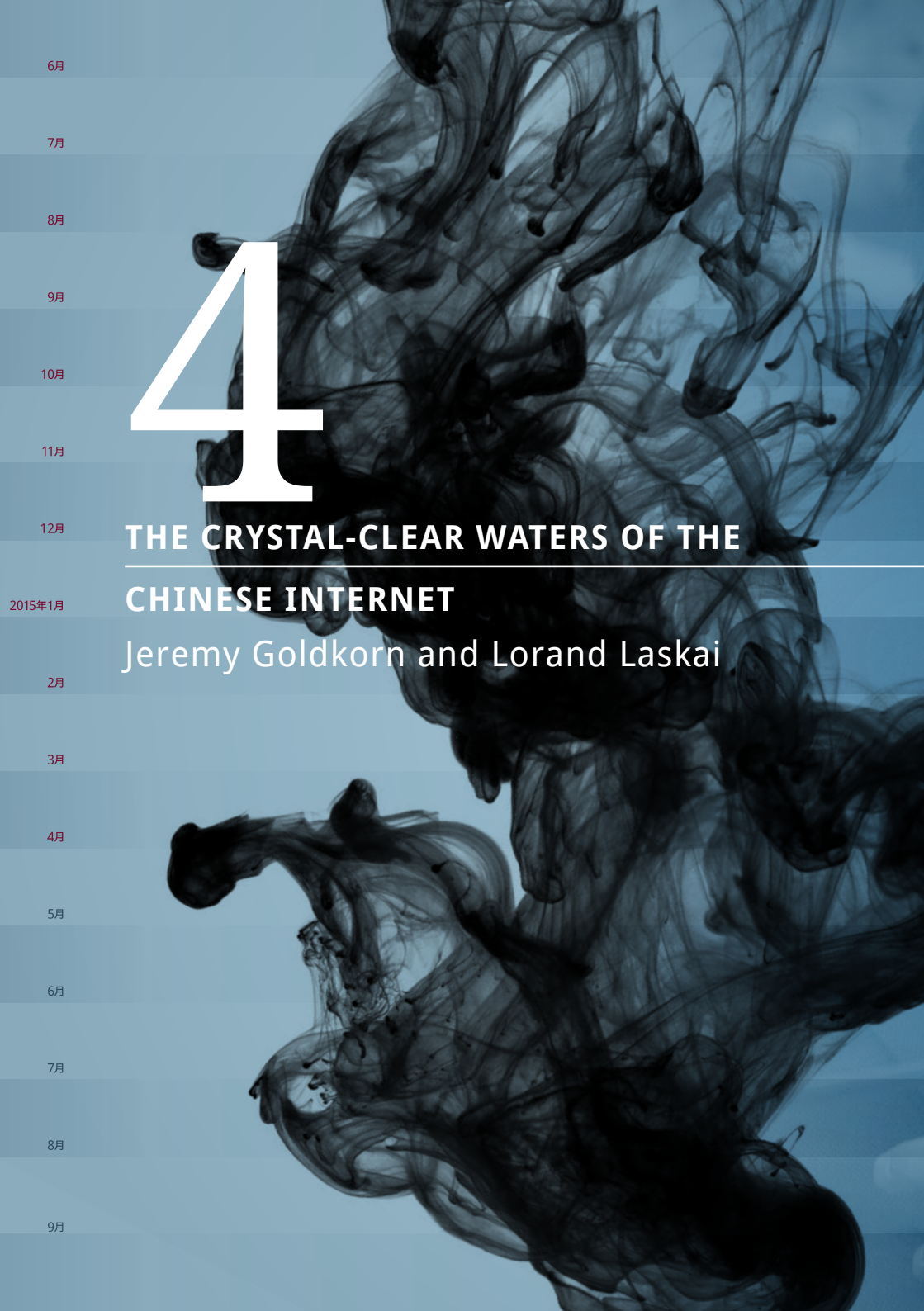


4

THE CRYSTAL-CLEAR WATERS OF THE CHINESE INTERNET

Jeremy Goldkorn and Lorand Laskai

THE TOP RESULT ON A GOOGLE SEARCH FOR 'Internet pollution' in English is an article on Wikipedia about 'information pollution,' which is defined as 'the contamination of information supply with irrelevant, redundant, unsolicited and low-value information'. The rest of the top Google results concern the carbon emissions caused by the electricity used by Internet servers and environmental degradation caused by electronic waste.

Alibaba's founder Jack Ma
Source: zh.wikipedia.org

Chinese language searches for 'Internet pollution' 网络污染 on Baidu 百度, China's leading search engine, as well as on Google, present a slightly different definition. The top result on both is a long page on Baidu's own Baike 百科 (a kind of commercial Wikipedia) that notes the following: 'For most Internet users these days, many Chinese websites have more and more "Internet pollution" that, like psoriasis, causes endless annoyance.'

Internet pollution: in this cartoon a computer is pouring vulgar words into the head of the user
Image: img5.imgtn.bdimg.com

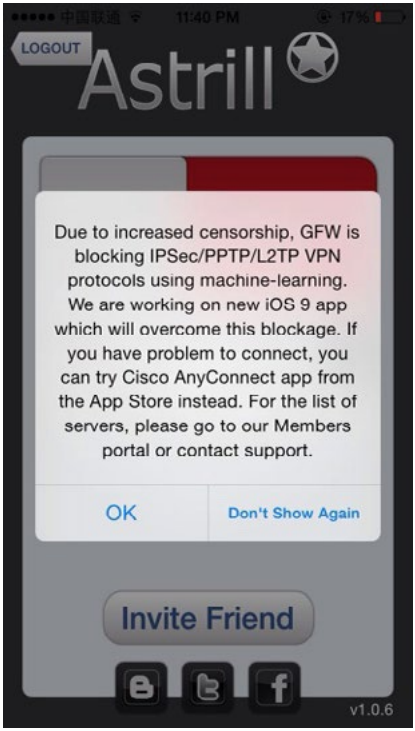
The Baike entry then notes that because the Internet and mobile networks are developing so rapidly, governments are always playing catch up with their regulation. Before describing the Chinese situation or even defining what exactly Internet pollution means, it provides a list of Internet 'management' strategies used in the USA, UK, South Korea, Japan, and France, followed by several paragraphs on Chinese government measures to control the Internet. The entry quotes from a 2010 speech by Liu Zhengrong 刘正荣, then deputy director of the State Council Information Office Internet Bureau (one of the organisations responsible at that time for online 'public opinion guidance', aka propaganda) on the need for government regulation and management to continuously keep up with the rapid development of the Internet.

The article says the problems of Internet pollution include threats to national security, pornography, the spread of rumors, and the 'malicious spread of harmful information' 恶意传播有害信息, fraud, privacy infringement, dating scams, and 'Internet violence' 网络暴力, which is probably best rendered in English as cyberbullying.

All of this is of a piece with a strategy that is old as the Chinese Internet itself. In 1997, when only a few hundred thousand people were online in China, Geremie Barmé and Sang Ye published an article in *Wired* magazine titled 'The Great Firewall'. It was the first published use of the now common phrase that describes the *cordon sanitaire* that Chinese censors have erected to block Chinese Internet users from accessing, inter alia, all major international social media services and many foreign news sites. Barmé and Sang described early work on what Chinese Internet users now refer to by the abbreviation GFW:

> In an equipment-crowded office in the Air Force Guesthouse on Beijing's Third Ring Road sits the man in charge of computer and Net surveillance at the Public Security Bureau. The PSB—leizi, or 'thunder makers,' in local dialect—covers not only robberies and murder, but also cultural espionage, 'spiritual pollutants,' and all manner of dissent. Its new concern is Internet malfeasance.
>
> A computer engineer in his late 30s, Comrade X (he asked not to be identified because of his less-than-polite comments about some Chinese ISPs) is overseeing efforts to build a digital equivalent to China's Great Wall. Under construction since last year, what's officially known as the 'firewall' is designed to keep Chinese cyberspace free of pollutants of all sorts, by the simple means of requiring ISPs to block access to 'problem' sites abroad.

State rhetoric about purifying the Internet intensified in 2012, the year that Chinese social media's ability to challenge the official narrative was probably at its lowest point to date. Calls to cleanse the Internet of 'poisons' and 'pollutants' have grown increasingly shrill every year, as documented in every edition of the *China Story Yearbook* since then. As mentioned in the *China Story Yearbook 2014*, a report published in



The Great Firewall (GFW) in operation in China
Image: The *South China Morning Post*

February that year quoted Xi Jinping as saying that cyberspace should be made 'clean and chipper' (in the Xinhua News Agency's translation). Elsewhere Xi has called cyberspace an 'ecology' 生态 that should be developed in the image of 'crystal-clear water and lush mountains as an invaluable asset' 绿水青山就是金银山. To purify the ecological system, authorities run campaigns like the 'Clean Internet 2015', which closed down tens of thousands of websites featuring allegedly pornographic and obscene content. The rhetoric is accompanied by offline crackdowns, including arrests, the shutting down of Internet services, and police investigations. The year 2015 was no exception. But if official statements focus on clamping down on crime, including the dissemination of pornography, official actions often aim at the censorship of political ideas and restricting independent political activities.

For several weeks in January 2015, the technicians of the Great Firewall interfered with VPNs, or Virtual Private Networks, popular tools for getting around the obstructions to browsing foreign sites. Most VPN services were throttled to the point of being unusable. VPNs are not illegal per se—but Chinese law requires companies and individuals using them to register with the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology.

In July, a draft Cybersecurity Law was published that made a range of Internet-based activities illegal and required tech companies operating in China, if asked, to provide law enforcement with technical assistance, including decryption of user data. The final version of the law went into force on 1 January 2016.

Pu Zhiqiang
Image: img5.imgtn.bdimg.com

In August 2015, meanwhile, the Ministry of Public Security announced the 'punishment' of at least 197 people for 'spreading rumours' online and said they had shut down 165 'online accounts'. The 'rumours' were related to China's stock market travails, the explosions at the port in Tianjin and the military parade to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II. In December, the activist lawyer Pu Zhiqiang 浦志强 went on trial in Beijing for his online social commentary; the Second Intermediate Court of Beijing found him guilty of 'picking quarrels and inciting ethnic hatred', and gave him a suspended three-year prison sentence.

The Communist Party under Xi Jinping sees free expression and political organising on digital platforms within China as a threat. It is also wary about foreign countries, particularly the US, using the Internet both to undermine the Party ideologically and for espionage and cyberwarfare. Edward Snowden's 2013 revelations about the global surveillance activities of the American National Security Agency (NSA) changed the conversation about Internet security and technology controls in China almost overnight. The Snowden revelations provided compelling proof of the American intentions that Chinese Internet regulators had long warned about. It became much tougher for Google to claim no political agenda and for the US State Department to reassure countries like Russia and China of its good intentions.

THE ANTHEM OF THE CYBERSPACE ADMINISTRATION OF CHINA,

by Lorand Laskai

Beijing Internet Association's Lunar New Year gala: 'An Internet power: Tell the world that that the Chinese Dream is uplifting China
Photo: youtube.com

During the talent show section of the Beijing Internet Association's Lunar New Year gala, the Cyber Administration of China (CAC) presented a paean to the country's Internet prowess and the greatness of Internet regulation titled: 'An Internet power: Tell the world that the Chinese Dream is uplifting China'.

For its anthem, CAC reportedly enlisted the help of Zhao Jialin 赵佳霖, one of the artists behind China's summer 2014 pop hit 'Little Apple' 小苹果. At the centre of the anthem is the concept of the country becoming an 'Internet power' 网络强国, a term that encompasses Internet infrastructure, business, culture and governance, and represents the goal of China's Internet development.

Devotedly keeping watch over the space every day,
Taking up our mission as the sun rises in the east,
Innovating every day, embracing the clear and bright,
Like warm sunshine moving in our hearts.
Unified with the strength of all living things,
Devoted to turning the global village into the most beautiful scene.

在这片天空日月忠诚的守望
为日出东方使命担当
创新每个日子拥抱着清朗
像一束廉洁阳光感动在心上
团结万物生长的力量
奉献地球村成为最美的
风光

An Internet power: Where the Internet is, so is the glorious dream.
An Internet power: From the distant cosmos to the missing home.
An Internet power: Tell the world that the Chinese Dream is uplifting China.
An Internet power: I represent my nation to the world.

网络强国网: 在哪光荣梦想
在哪
网络强国: 从遥远的宇宙到
思念的家
网络强国:告诉世界中国梦
在崛起大中华
网络强国: 一个我在世界
代表着国家

In this world all rivers flow to the sea,
Assuming the measure of Chinese civilisation.
Five thousand years of history condensed to illuminate innovation,
Integrity is the clear ripple of a nationality.
We are unified between heaven and earth,
Faith and devotion flow like the Yellow River and Yangtze.

在这个世界百川忠诚寻归
海洋担当中华文明的丈量
五千年沉淀点亮创
新思想
廉洁就是一个民族清澈荡漾
我们团结在天地中央
信仰奉献流淌万里黄河
长江

An Internet power: Where the Internet is, so is the glorious dream.
An Internet power: From the distant cosmos to the missing home.
An Internet power: Tell the world that the Chinese Dream is uplifting China.
An Internet power: I represent my nation to the world.

网络强国: 网在哪光荣梦想
在哪
网络强国: 从遥远的宇宙到
思念的家
网络强国: 告诉世界中国梦
在崛起大中华
网络强国: 一个我在世界代
表着国家

Lu Wei
Photo: img4.imgtn.bdimg.com

The Snowden Papers were hardly the first revelations to alarm China about the potential harm of the global Internet. In June 2012, *The New York Times* published an article claiming that the malicious computer worm Stuxnet was a jointly built US-Israeli cyber-weapon designed to sabotage the Iranian nuclear program. Previously, American social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter had been widely heralded as major factors in the Arab Spring protests of 2010–2012—leading to Adam Segal, author of *The Hacked World Order*, calling the period (from June 2012 to June 2013) 'Year Zero' of the dramatic reassertion of national controls over cyberspace. Of all the states and ruling parties, China was perhaps the most concerned and best prepared for this project.

In 2014, the Party-state established the Central Leading Group for Internet Security and Informatisation 中央网络安全和信息化领导小组 with, significantly, Xi Jinping himself at its head. One of the members of the leading group was Lu Wei 鲁炜, who became Xi's able lieutenant as the head of the Cyberspace Administration of China (CAC) 中央网信办, also established in 2014 to centrally manage Internet censorship and control. The CAC took over the functions of the State Council Information Office Internet Bureau (for more on this subject see the *China Story Yearbook 2014*, Chapter 3 'The Chinese Internet 'Unshared Destiny', pp.106–123).

The CAC has some elements in common with a dynamic Internet start-up. The average age of its staff (37.8 years old) is young, at least by the standards of a Chinese government agency, and CAC officials are known to work long hours thanks to the organisation's quickly expanding mandate. Within two years of its founding, the CAC has taken a central role in implementing Xi's vision of the Internet, giving Lu Wei a prominent media profile. A key part of this vision is the concept of Internet sovereignty,

Xi Jinping and Lu Wei meet with the CEOs of US Tech Giants
Photo: The *South China Morning Post*

which emphasises the authority of a nation-state to regulate cyberspace in its own unique way.

By the time Xi Jinping made his state visit to the United States in September 2015, with Lu Wei in his delegation, he was well prepared to meet the Obama government's criticisms about alleged Chinese hacking of US government and commercial websites with vague promises of co-operation on cybersecurity issues.

His confidence was due in no small part to China's huge, dynamic and expanding Internet community. At the end of 2015, the country's population of Internet users had grown to around 700 million. China is the only country whose Internet companies can rival the titans of Silicon Valley, whether measured by user numbers, scale or revenues.

Alibaba was originally an ecommerce company offering services similar to Amazon and Ebay. It used some of the US$25 billion war chest generated by its September 2014 listing on the New York Stock Exchange to rapidly expand into a huge variety of new businesses from consumer credit and mobile payments to film production. In 2015, the search engine Baidu grew a mobile phone- and online-based food delivery service from nothing to a business reportedly worth RMB 8 billion (US$1.2 billion). By the end of 2015, Tencent's WeChat mobile messaging service had more than a billion accounts with users active each month totalling nearly

700 million. The service offers a combination of messaging (similar to WhatsApp), mobile payments, flight and train ticket booking, car hailing, Facebook-type social media feeds, and many other apps and services. WeChat is perhaps the first Chinese Internet or mobile product that has a real international presence: one out of every four users is non-Chinese. Facebook and other Silicon Valley companies are studying it as a potential model for future development. Didi Dache, a car-hailing app (renamed Didi Chuxing in early 2016 after a merger with a rival), is the world's largest company of its kind and the only serious global rival to Uber. In 2015, Xiaomi, an upstart Chinese company founded in 2011, became the world's fifth largest smartphone maker, selling 70.8 million units.

It is not only giant companies that are powering the dynamism of the Chinese Internet and its broader economy: in November 2015, Bloomberg reported that China was a world leader in entrepreneurship, 'spawning 4,000 new businesses a day'. Many of these are tech companies, including everything from one person boutiques selling handmade dresses on Alibaba's Taoabao platform to companies like HaoBTC, a Bitcoin mining firm with servers in the mountains of west Sichuan that give them access to cheap hydroelectric power.

All this means that the government can laugh off criticism that government censorship and regulation of the technology industry hampers innovation and prevents China's Internet companies from achieving global significance.

During Xi's 2015 state visit to the US, he visited the Microsoft headquarters in Redmond, where he and Lu Wei posed for a photograph with the grinning CEOs of Apple, Facebook, IBM, Cisco, Amazon, Intel, and Airbnb. Despite the fact that many of these companies are blocked from operating in China or subject to protectionist regulations, none of their executives could resist a meet and greet with the Chairman of Everything and his head cyberspace administrator.

ALIBABA BUYS THE SOUTH CHINA MORNING POST, by Aiden Xia

The *South China Morning Post*
Photo: Sebastian Wallroth, Wikimedia Commons

Alibaba, China's biggest ecommerce company, announced on 14 December 2015 that it would buy the *South China Morning Post* (*SCMP*), Hong Kong's premier English-language paper, for US$266 million.

Tse Tsan-tai 谢缵泰 and Alfred Cunningham founded the *SCMP* in 1903. Companies controlled by Rupert Murdoch bought a majority stake in it in 1987, and then sold a controlling interest to Malaysian Chinese tycoon Robert Kuok 郭鹤年 in 1993. Despite its reputation as one of Asia's most authoritative periodicals, the paper today has a relatively small subscription base of around 100,000 print and digital subscribers, and falling profit margins. Penetration into the mainland Chinese market would be at the price of the paper's editorial independence and often critical coverage of the Chinese government. Already, there have been conflicts between the news staff and Kuok, who is seen as sympathetic to the Chinese government. The internal dynamics at the paper have been tumultuous in recent years, leading to a turnover rate of ten chief editors in eleven years since 2000.

News of Alibaba's acquisition of *SCMP* marked a tightening of Beijing's grip around the prestigious publication. In a statement and Q&A published in the newspaper, Joseph Tsai, executive vice chairman of Alibaba vowed that *SCMP* would remain 'objective, accurate and fair'. He said that the acquisition aimed to combine Alibaba's digital expertise with the 112-year-old newspaper's journalistic excellence to create a global media entity offering 'comprehensive and insightful news and analysis of the big stories in Hong Kong and China'. But he also remarked:

> Our perspective is this: China is important, China is a rising economy. It is the second-largest economy in the world. People should learn more about China. The coverage about China should be balanced and fair. Today when I see mainstream western news organisations cover China, they cover it through a very particular lens. It is through the lens that China is a communist state and everything kind of follows from that. A lot of journalists working with these western media organisations may not agree with the system of governance in China and that taints their view of coverage. We see things differently, we believe things should be presented as they are.

Or at least as they are through the equally particular lens of China's own media.

Conference Call

CAC organised the Second Annual World Internet Conference (also known as the Wuzhen Summit) held in mid-December 2015 in the river town of Wuzhen in Zhejiang province. Some wags on the Chinese Internet dubbed the conference the 'Third World Internet Conference' because with the exception of Russia, Iran and South Korea, there were no government representatives from major countries in attendance, with officials from countries such as Tonga, Congo, and Guinea making up the bulk of the twenty-one state participants.

Nonetheless, Chinese media reported that the event attracted more than 2,000 Internet professionals, officials, and experts from more than 120 countries and regions. Guests included Chinese President Xi Jinping, Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev, Alibaba founder Jack Ma, the CEOs of Airbnb and Netflix, as well as high-level representatives from Facebook, Google, and LinkedIn, Wikipedia founder Jimmy Wales, and Fadi Chehadé, the president of the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), an organisation that sets standards for top-level domains and root servers that ensure that you are directed to the correct page when you type a web address into a browser.

The principal purpose behind the annual conference, according to Xinhua, is 'to promote the Chinese Communist Party's vision of Internet governance 互联整理 to an international audience and to gain allies against the perceived Western encroachment upon China's cyber sovereignty 互联主权. At the first Wuzhen Summit in 2014, attendees woke up to find a draft joint statement affirming China's concept of 'Internet sovereignty' that had been slid under their hotel doors on the final night. Participants were encouraged to sign it. But the overture did not succeed—the first Wuzhen Summit ended without a communiqué, and the CAC scuttled whatever goodwill the three-day conference had managed to cultivate among those participants and observers sceptical of China's online censorship regime.

December 2015: the Wuzhen Summit
Source: cntv.cn

At the Second World Internet Conference the pitch was more compelling and the staging more graceful. Whereas Xi Jinping merely sent a video message in 2014, in 2015 he was in attendance and delivered a keynote speech. He outlined 'four principles' 四项原则 and made 'five propositions' 五点主张 for international Internet governance, centring on the idea of 'respecting Internet sovereignty' 尊重网络主权.

China enjoyed a propaganda coup with cameras trained on the Silicon Valley executives listening to China's vision for a clean and regulated cyberspace. And the Chinese government scored a significant victory at the end of the conference when ICANN president Chehadé accepted the role of co-chair of the Wuzhen Summit's high-level advisory committee.

Only days before the conference, the UN had approved a document titled 'Ten-Year Review of the World Summit on the Information Society', which sets out the processes for how the Internet is governed. The final text substituted, at China's insistence, the word 'multilateral' for 'multistakeholder'. The latter includes non-government agencies—civil society, in effect—in the discussion of how to manage the global Internet, whereas 'multilateral' grants governments a privileged role and the prerogative to manage their own cyberspaces independently. This was a victory for the Chinese concept of 'Internet sovereignty', for it grants Chinese and other governments fed up with the pesky inconveniences of an open Internet the moral right to 'purify' and enclose their own cyberspaces. The Chinese government has not yet figured out how to rid the air and soil of pollution, but it is doing a remarkable job of cleansing its Internet from unwanted impurities.

WORSHIPPING JIANG ZEMIN'S TOAD, by Lorand Laskai

A toad (left); Jiang Zemin (right)
Source: cdn0.dailydot.com

In the late summer of 2015, observant Internet users noticed the uncanny similarities between a large, cartoonish blow-up amphibian, a 'toad' 蛤蟆, floating on the lake at the Summer Palace, and the former president, Jiang Zemin, with his characteristic thick, black spectacles and high-waisted pants.

The initial commentary was mocking and much of it was censored. But instead of fizzling out, it blossomed into a meme called 'toad worship culture' 膜蛤文化 as 'fans of the toad' 蛤丝 gathered on WeChat, Weibo online community Baidu Tieba (Baidu Paste Bar), and Q&A website Zhihu to share their favorite quotes, memories, and pictures of the former leader.

In one frequently shared picture, Jiang confidently combs his hair in front of the King of Spain. In another, he gesticulates widely next to US president Bill Clinton. In yet another, Jiang, in waist-high swimming trunks and goggles, beams for a picture before diving into the Dead Sea—a comment reads 'I am utterly moved by the Elder's openness and confidence'. To indicate laughter, fans replace the characters for 'haha' 哈哈 with the 'ha' from the character for 'toad' 蛤蛤.

In toad worship culture, Jiang Zemin himself is called the 'Elder' 长者, a reference to one toad fan's favorite memory: in 2000, Jiang scolded Hong Kong reporter Sharon Cheung 张宝华 at a press conference, referring to himself as an 'elder' with an imperative to impart some real-life experience to Hong Kong's simple-minded media. Cheung's Weibo account has become something of a virtual mecca for toad fans.

Toad worship delights in Jiang's unselfconscious and free-wheeling nature, a strong contrast with Xi Jinping's meticulously choreographed public image and self-important persona. Discussing the differences between Xi and Jiang is called *xixihaha* 习习蛤蛤, a pun on the onomatopoeia for the sound of laughter 嘻嘻哈哈. In a thinly veiled satirical comment on Xi's staged 2013 visit to a Beijing steamed bun shop, some toad fans posted the slogan 'keep the toad, destroy the bun' 续蛤灭包. This was apparently too much: soon after this slogan appeared, censors eliminated most of the toad worship culture from the Internet.

2000: Hong Kong reporters make Jiang Zemin see red
Source: youtube.com

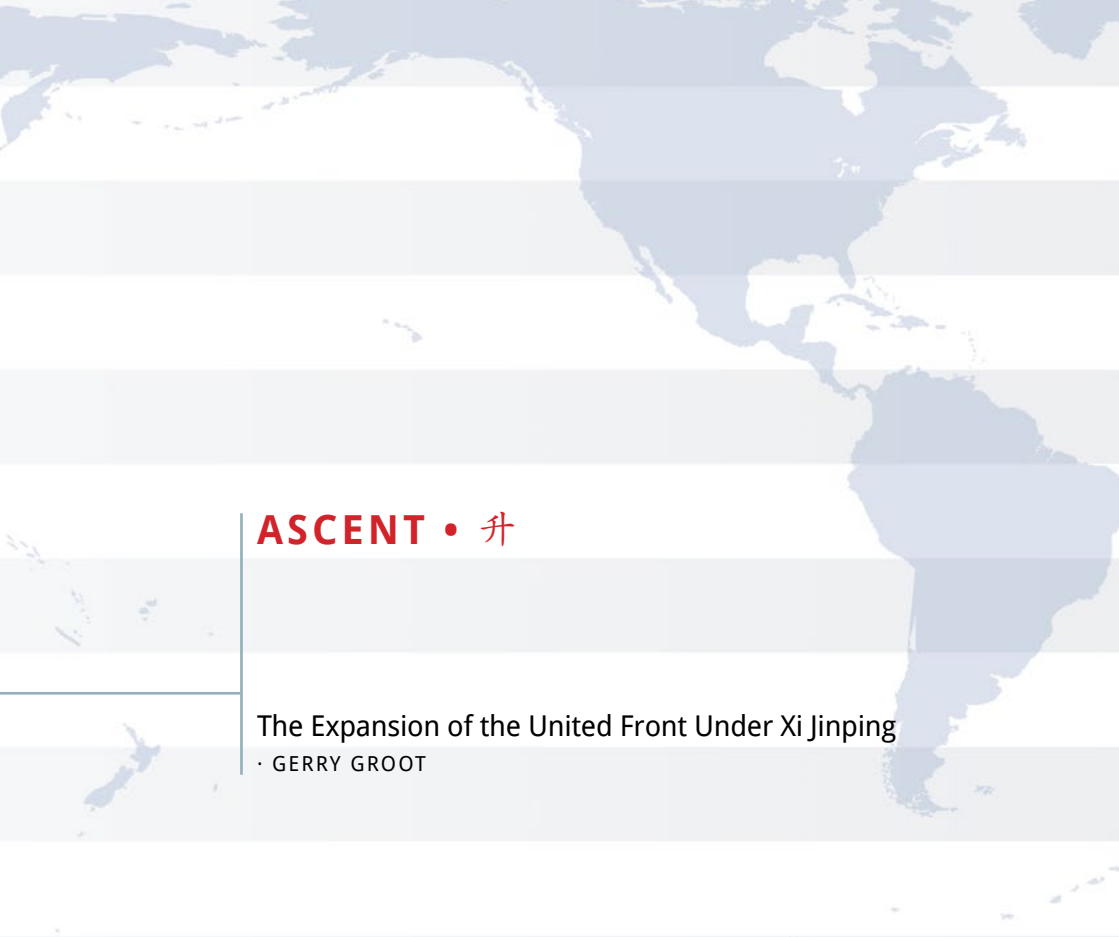
Afterword: 'Twas ever thus

The 1997 Geremie R. Barmé and Sang Ye article mentioned above quotes Xia Hong, then public relations manager for a company called China InfoHighway Space:

> The Internet has been an important technical innovator, but we need to add another element, and that is control. The new generation of information superhighway needs a traffic control centre. It needs highway patrols; users will require driving licenses. These are the basic requirements for any controlled environment.
>
> All Net users must conscientiously abide by government laws and regulations. If Net users wish to enter or leave a national boundary they must, by necessity, go through customs and immigration. They will not be allowed to take state secrets out, nor will they be permitted to bring harmful information in.
>
> As we stand on the cusp of the new century, we need to—and are justified in wanting to—challenge America's dominant position. Cutting-edge Western technology and the most ancient Eastern culture will be combined to create the basis for dialog in the coming century. In the twenty-first century, the boundaries will be redrawn. The world is no longer the spiritual colony of America.

FORUM

FORUM



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The Expansion of the United Front Under Xi Jinping

· GERRY GROOT

THE EXPANSION OF THE UNITED FRONT UNDER XI JINPING

Gerry Groot

XI JINPING'S RULE TO DATE has been characterised by, among other things, a return to the basics of Party rule as established by Mao. These include a renewed emphasis on United Front 统战 work, which Mao called one of the 'three secret weapons' 三个大法宝 (along with the armed forces and Party-building) that helped the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) to power in 1949. (For an overview of the United Front, see the *China Story Yearbook 2014: Shared Destiny*, pp.128–132.) The year 2015 was the most important one since 1990 for the United Front, a collection of strategies overseen by the United Front Work Department (UFWD) 统战部 by which the Party seeks to strengthen its authority and legitimacy, especially among the more marginalised, independent, and minority sectors of the Chinese population.

Today, these include professionals such as lawyers, business managers, and 'new capitalists'—whose co-operation is crucial for the success of China's new economic policies—as well as historic United Front targets like religious believers and ethnic minorities including Tibetans and Uyghurs. The children of China's nouveau riche are another relatively new focus along with Chinese studying overseas. Xi had previously stressed the importance of United Front work among Overseas Chinese, *huaqiao* 华侨, a category that now includes Chinese citizens living abroad (so-called 'new *huaqiao*').

The intensification of United Front efforts indicates profound concerns within the CCP about ensuring

Xi Jinping at the CCP Central Committee's Conference on United Front Work
Image: news.xinhuanet.com

that these sectors are contributing to the country's political and social stability, as well as to its public image abroad. The Party also needs to prevent such individuals or groups from becoming actively rebellious or conduits of what it considers 'polluting' Western political ideals. The latter include 'universal values', electoral democracy, and academic freedom (including the right to critique the Party's historical mistakes).

United Front work often takes the form of co-optation: by advocating for the Party's views to their circles of influence and reporting the views of their circles back to the Party, targets are rewarded with enhanced status and in some cases material advantages as well. Co-operation with the United Front also affords some form of representation or a voice within the political system through recruitment into the advisory Chinese People's Political Consultative Congress (CPPC), a key United Front institution, or by other means. The Party, in return, gets to tap their diverse talents for the ongoing tasks of nation-building and economic construction. Their public expressions of loyalty, moreover, helps validate the Party's claims to represent all of China.

To succeed, United Front cadres have to be able to make friends with those who are not the Party's natural allies, and interpret and translate Party policy to them in a way that can win them over. It can be a tricky balancing act with high stakes: the Party has long been wary of United Front cadres being influenced by their targets rather than the other way round. During the anti-Rightist Campaign of the 1950s, the Party deemed then UFWD head, Li Weihan 李维汉, to be politically unreliable and he became one of the movement's victims, for example. The anti-Rightist purge put a damper on United Front work for almost two decades between 1957 and Mao's death in 1976. Thirteen years later, the attempts by UFWD head Yan Mingfu 阎明复 to negotiate with

the student protestors in Tiananmen Square in 1989 led to his dismissal as well as a wider purge within the eight 'United Front Democratic Parties' (most of which date back to the war against the Japanese occupation, like the 'Revolutionary Committee of the Kuomintang').

The Party convened its first national United Front work conference in nine years from 18–20 May 2015 under the title 'CCP Central Committee's Conference on United Front Work' 中央统战工作会议. The citation of the Central Committee in the title of the conference gave it status equal to other CCP central-level work conferences, a major fillip. Then, even more significantly, at the end of July, the Party announced the creation of a Leading Small Group (LSG) on United Front Work. Both the establishment of the LSG and the fact that the current head of the UFWD (since 2014) is Politburo member Sun Chunlan 孙春兰, one of the most senior women in the Party and the head of the UFWD, highlights the importance that Xi places on United Front work. The UFWD, meanwhile, has expanded over the last few years by some 40,000 new cadres. Sun's deputy at the UFWD is Wang Zhengwei 王正伟, the head of the State Ethnic Affairs Commission.

Sun Chunlan
Source: news.sohu.com

Their personal prominence within the Party means that the Department ranks marginally ahead of both the Central Department of Organisation and that of Propaganda. United Front initiatives are now almost certainly going to be implemented more effectively at all levels of the party-state instead of haphazardly as was often the case in the past.

Yet, for all that, plus concrete measures like more generous funding of academic research on United Front topics as well as gestures such as Xi's speeches and the establishment of the LSG, in several key areas of United Front work the Party seems to be scoring own goals, or at least making some serious missteps.

7 November 2015: Presidents Ma Ying-jeou and Xi Jinping meet in Singapore, it is the first such meeting since 1949
Source: setn.com

The Taiwan example

Taiwan, for example, has long been a major target of United Front work and perhaps the best known. The Party wants the government of Taiwan, which calls itself the Republic of China (ROC), to formally accept the sovereignty of the People's Republic of China (PRC). This would allow it to complete the CCP's self-declared 'sacred' task of unification that was partly achieved when Hong Kong and Macau returned to Chinese sovereignty in 1997 and 1999 respectively.

On 7 November 2015, Xi held a surprise meeting in Singapore with Taiwan President Ma Ying-jeou 马英九, the head of the Nationalist Party 国民党 (GMD or KMT), the Communist Party's historical enemy and rival. It was the first such meeting since 1949 and one that state media, including China's CCTV, declared would go down in history. Xi called Taiwan and China 'a family whose blood is thicker than water' and he and Ma agreed to establish a hotline to facilitate communication in times of crisis.

Already, the Party offers 'Taiwan compatriots' 台湾同胞 preferential treatment as tourists, students, and investors and it welcomes back old soldiers who once fought against it in the civil war of 1945–1949 and beyond. It attempts to bind Taiwan ever closer through trade and to encourage Taiwanese to see themselves as part of a greater China. Like the KMT, the CCP is increasingly worried about the development of distinct Taiwanese identity (as opposed to a 'Chinese' identity) based on an explicit rejection of mainland China. Yet the meeting itself, organised in secret and sprung on an unsuspecting public, may have simply intensified mistrust of the Mainland, the KMT and United

Front work among the people of Taiwan. Not long after that the people of Taiwan voted out the KMT and replaced Ma with a president who is far less enthusiastic about cross-Strait ties. (See Forum 'Purifying the Body Politic in Taiwan', pp.252–260.)

Reaching out, pressing in

Tibet is another key target of United Front work. The Party understands that its treatment of Tibetans, Uyghurs, Mongolians, and religious believers generally is of great interest to many foreign opinion makers, foreign governments, and international organisations concerned about human rights. Its crackdown on Tibetan critics of Chinese rule, restrictions on the use of Tibetan language, the intense surveillance of monasteries, and continued denigration of the Dalai Lama (in December, the Party even accused him of being an Islamic State sympathiser) have both hardened Tibetan resistance within China and alarmed Tibet's supporters overseas.

Many Tibetans and their supporters overseas were infuriated when a key Tibetan cadre within the UFWD declared in 2015 that the (atheist) Party—and not a committee of High Lamas, as is the historical custom—would determine the next reincarnation of the Dalai Lama once the current Tibetan leader-in-exile passes away.

As this example illustrates, once a religious or ethnic community leader begins promoting the Party's views, the community may trust them less, and once they lose the trust of their communities, they lose their utility as agents of influence or informants. They risk being regarded as sell-outs or ignored altogether. The UFWD has trouble selecting allies who can continue to exert influence in their own realm, be it religious, digital, economic or political, *after* they begin to do its work.

In Xinjiang, meanwhile, inter-ethnic tensions continue to simmer, with continued protests by Muslim Uyghurs against Chinese rule, including several deadly attacks on Han Chinese civilians and police. The Party-state is keen to frame this unrest as part of an international Islamic terrorist problem rather than the consequence of its own repressive internal policies. In 2014, the government introduced a policy that provides cash bonuses to Uyghurs who marry ethnic Chinese. This is not exactly popular among a group that fears for the future of its culture and

中国纪检监察报
ZHONGGUO JIJIAN JIANCHA BAO
要闻摘报
□中共中央政治局召开会议，分析研究当前经济形势和经济工作，中共中央总书记习近平主持会议
忠实履行职责使命 不断推进改革创新
习近平在同知识分子劳动模范青年代表座谈时强调
紧跟时代肩负使命锐意进取
为共同理想和目标团结奋斗
习近平代表党中央向全国广大知识分子广大劳动群众广大青年致以"五一"国际劳动节和"五四"青年节祝贺
来自微信的"下乡请柬"
共产党员绝不能信仰宗教

The newsletter of the Party's Central Commission for Discipline Inspection states that 'Party members are absolutely not allowed to hold religious beliefs' (article bottom left)
Source: csr.mos.gov.cn

identity as well as its ownership of its traditional land. In January 2015, the city of Urumqi proscribed the burka; the year before, men with large beards were kept off public transportation at the time of a provincial sporting event. United Front work to promote ethnic integration is clearly under pressure here as well.

United Front work requires candid advice and objective knowledge of the people and situations it is attempting to influence. Yet the Party-state under Xi is increasingly forcing all analysis and pronouncement to conform to ideological and policy needs. In November 2015, the Party sacked the editor of the *Xinjiang Daily*, Zhao Xinwei 赵新慰, and expelled him from the Party for 'improperly' discussing government policy. The former editor's 'words and deeds' had gone against government attempts to rein in religious extremism and terrorism, the official China News Service Agency reported.

Under former president Hu Jintao (2002–2012), the Chinese government seemingly tolerated a greater degree of religious freedom, particularly among Chinese Christians. Tolerance was

believed beneficial to social stability and charity work. Xi, however, appears far more concerned about the potential of Christians to form an anti-Communist fifth column (as some Chinese analysts believe happened in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe). In May, the newsletter of the Party's Central Commission for Discipline Inspection warned that religious beliefs among Party members were becoming a matter of 'serious concern', reminding members that communism 'begins with atheism' and that participation in 'illegal' religious activities could lead to expulsion. There has been a widespread crackdown on 'unofficial' Christianity that harks back to Maoist policies of the 1950s.

But the campaign of removing crosses and demolishing unofficial churches across Zhejiang Province and most notably in Wenzhou (part of the struggle against 'foreign influence'), proved so unpopular that in 2015, even leaders of the officially-sanctioned churches have criticised it. If the point of United Front work is to foster a connection and even identification with the Party among groups and individuals the Party regards as at best problematic and at worst outright hostile, this can be seen as a major fail for the United Front.

Removing crosses from churches in Zhejiang
Photo: Courtesy of China Aid

The United Front abroad

Since the late seventies and early eighties, when Chinese people began studying overseas in increasing numbers, the Party-state has closely monitored their behaviour and speech, especially those who have gone abroad with government support. Embassies and consulates foster close connections with students via Chinese student associations and sponsored activities.

A number of these students end up emigrating. The post-1978 generations of mainland immigrants to countries like Australia, the US, and

Chinese students abroad
Photo: marketingtochina.com

the UK are distinct from other *huaqiao* who may have left before 1949 or were born elsewhere. Older generations of Chinese immigrants tended to form tight social and business communities through associations based on language, provincial (or hometown) origins as well as politics. Historically, these associations were extremely valuable to the UFWD, whether in assessing the attitudes of *huaqiao* to the Party's policies and actions, courting their support or mobilising them against the Party's critics.

The new generations of *huaqiao* do not tend to associate or even socialise in the same way. The UFWD assumes that these newer *huaqiao* share a 'common sense' of understanding of the world shaped by decades of CCP thought work 思想工作. Given that many of these new immigrants are successful in business, academia, and even government in their new homes, the CCP is eager for their practical and moral support. It is equally keen to prevent them from falling under the influence of what it calls anti-China or anti-Communist groups or elements. These include the Falun Gong, human rights organisations, and Chinese democracy activists, as well as advocates of Tibetan and Xinjiang independence. Late in 2015, Reuters reported that the UFWD has been supporting the anti-Dalai Lama Dorje Shugden Movement, whose members protest appearances by the Dalai Lama around the world.

In the UFWD's favour, the passage of time erases or at least softens memories of events such as the violent suppression of students in Beijing in June 1989. The Mainland's economic boom and its rising global status has also helped the Party establish, maintain, and deepen links with overseas Chinese by appealing to their 'Chineseness' and bonds to their 'motherland' 祖国, literally 'ancestral' country. The Chinese government supports the teaching of the Chinese language in schools overseas, including special 'Chinese' schools and promotes the official version of Chinese culture and

history via its network of Confucius Institutes. It sponsors initiatives by which young people of Chinese descent can 'return' to study in China. While it also offers scholarships and so on to non-Chinese, its main targets are overwhelmingly ethnic Chinese.

Mainland media and financial interests, sometimes with overt state backing, exercise increasing influence over overseas Chinese-language media including newspapers, electronic, and digital media. Here the difference between propaganda and United Front work blurs but the aim remains the same—to deliver the Party's intended message in as many ways and as palatably as possible. The point is to cultivate sympathy for the Party's policies and enhance its legitimacy in constituencies that already have obtained foreign citizenship or intend to do so. This is also useful for the United Front's domestic objectives, for official media in China itself often rebroadcasts or republishes reports from such overseas media as proof of support for the Party's policies abroad; the 'fact' of their originating outside official Chinese media enhances their credibility. This tendency for direct influence by Beijing over local Chinese-language media is particularly apparent in Australia and New Zealand.

Media and organisations under the control of, or heavily influenced by the Mainland may also profile or praise prominent members of the *huaqiao* community for loyalty to their homeland. This can, however, backfire, as happened in the case of Michael Chan, Ontario's Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade. Chan was born in Guangzhou, the son of a KMT official. He immigrated to Canada at the age of eighteen. Since the 1980s, he has made over seventy visits to China and has spoken to Chinese media (Xinhua) about how, although 'strictly speaking' he was Canadian, he has never forgotten his roots.

Then, in 2015, the *Globe and Mail* reported that in 2010, Canadian intelligence suspected Chan of being under the 'undue influence' of the Chinese government. Chan has strenuously denied this, as has Canada's intelligence service. He launched a lawsuit against

Michael Chan
Image: thestar.com

PLA Headquarters in Hong Kong on Earth Day
Image: hongkong.coconuts.co

the paper. But after a Chinese language newspaper, *The Chinese Canadian Post*, ran an article critical of Chan, the editor-in-chief, Helen Wang, was told by her boss to run more pro-Chan articles. The newspaper's proprietor has close links to both the ruling Liberal Party and the Chinese consulate. Wang insisted on telling both sides of the story and was eventually sacked. And thus what could have been a good United Front story—Chan's success as a Canadian politician with close and sentimental links to China, became a rolling disaster in PR terms.

Hong Kong

In Hong Kong, the UFWD is based in part at the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. It works with Hong Kong Communists, many of whom have been underground since the 1960s, as well as wealthy capitalists and selected public figures. But the rise of Hong Kong's Umbrella Movement in late 2014 and the near total failure of United Front-related individuals and organisations to sway popular sentiment reflected a major weakness of the UFWD's Hong Kong strategy: its reliance on people whom the younger generation and significant portions of the rest of the population do not respect as leaders. In particular, the cosiness between mainland interests and Hong Kong capitalists, especially in the area of real estate and housing, has become a long-standing source of discontent.

The Party equally failed to impress the student protesters with its appeals to the public good and the importance of maintaining order, especially after it was widely reported that the Party had activated its (United Front-forged) connections with criminal triads to get the gangsters to try to intimidate the protestors through

violence. Deng Xiaoping sanctioned such connections in 1984 when he said that some triads were 'patriotic'. Many Hong Kong academics also believe that United Front cadres have been behind attacks on pro-democracy nominees for key leadership positions within the universities.

Challenges ahead

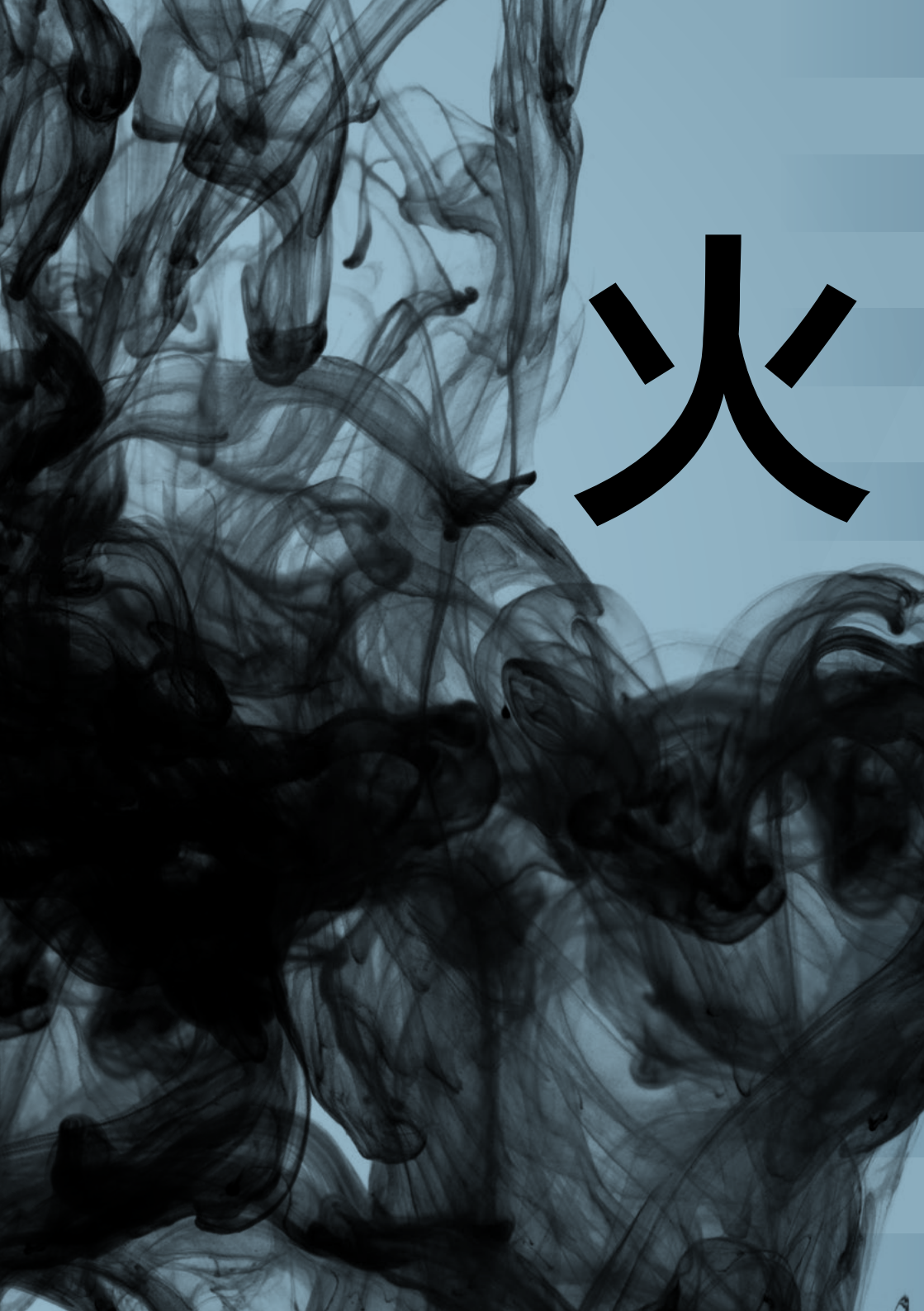
United Front work can no longer rely on the social status and *guanxi* 关系 (relationships) of the kinds of people it has relied on in the past, at home and abroad, to influence wider public opinion. As Chinese society grows more complex, it becomes harder to find people who can effectively represent both their communities and the interests of the Party. The moment the UFWD wins over someone they deem to be representative within a particular circle, the person loses that quality in the eyes of their community. This has much to do with a crisis of trust engendered by such endemic problems as corruption and nepotism within the Party.

Digital technology and the Internet present other challenges. In his speech of 20 May 2015, Xi said that the United Front would appeal to domestic Internet celebrities to help the government 'purify' the Internet of

United Work Front App
Source: Danwei

political rumours, pornography, dissident views, and so on. The UFWD has even released its own news app. But it's clear that the CCP and UFWD struggle to influence popular opinion in the digital world.

Online or off, the fact is that in an increasingly market-dominated economy the state is no longer the great provider. Chinese society is more sophisticated, complex, and reliant on individual effort than in Mao's day. A less passive population may well prefer to choose its own representatives. The 40,000 new cadres have their work cut out.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THE CITY THAT ATE CHINA—

RESTRUCTURING & REVIVING BEIJING

Carolyn Cartier

THE BEIJING CAPITAL REGION has reached the limits of environmental sustainability. The roads are clogged up with traffic, the city's residents worry about contamination of food and water, and air pollution in Beijing has become a deadly serious environmental and health issue. But Beijing's problems cannot be solved by Beijing alone. Hebei province forms a geographical collar around both the inland capital and coastal Tianjin, its historical port. As the largest producer of iron and steel in China, Hebei is also the major source of industrial pollutants in the region. What's more, its iron and steel industries consume significant quantities of water. Together with increased agricultural and urban household demand, these industries have created a crisis of water supply in the capital region.

The 'Tongzhou New City'
Source: bidg-architecture.com

In the absence of a rigorous culture of environmental conservation, the Chinese government has proposed solutions that combine engineering (long-distance water transfers), economic restructuring (downsizing Hebei's heavy industry), and the relocation of 'non-capital functions' 非首都功能 of Beijing to outside the urban core. To address these complex problems, the government is creating a 'new' city-region called Jing-Jin-Ji, a composite of the 'jing' 京 in Beijing 北京, the 'Jin' 津 in Tianjin 天津 and 'Ji' 冀, an historical name for Hebei.

This complex regional strategy seeks to transform Beijing from a traditional high-density city with a large, single urban core into a multi-centre, city-region that encompasses and integrates Beijing, Tianjin, and Hebei. It aims to achieve new standards of urban governance through a set of plans for environmental management, industrial restructuring, new transport infrastructure and new town development, all of which will support the relocation of Beijing's municipal government outside the city's historical core.

This 'meta-solution' to the region's environmental and other complex problems, including housing, transportation, and the management

The Hebei 'collar': Many maps of Hebei erroneously omit the 'flying land' 飞地 of Langfeng city between Beijing and Tianjin
Image: chinaknowledge.com

of natural resources, requires major changes to how the region is administered. What is today called 'rearranging the pieces' 板块 exists in the strategy of 'adjusting the administrative divisions' 调整行政区划 by which the state has established and redefined the governing space of subnational territories (such as provinces, prefectures, and counties) since the Qin dynasty (221–206 BCE).

The Jing-Jin-Ji Co-operative Development Outline Plan: the three oarsmen have the characters for Beijing, Tianjin, and Hebei on their backs. Their boat is called 'integrated development'
Image: gjgwyw.cn

At its 30 April 2015 meeting, the Politburo formally endorsed the Jing-Jin-Ji Co-operative Development Outline Plan for the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region 京津冀协同发展规划纲要. The concept itself had been discussed and deliberated for a decade and some of the components of the scheme were already in development. However, as of December 2015, the detailed plan had still not been publically released, or perhaps even finalised.

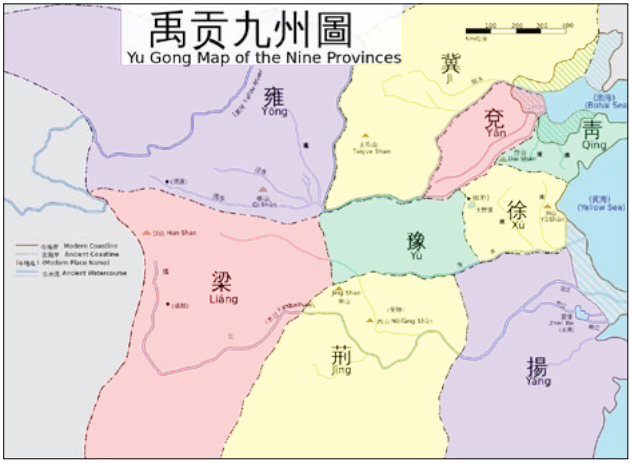
The international media has variously and somewhat misleadingly described Jing-Jin-Ji as a 'future megalopolis', 'new mega-region' or 'super-city'. The outline plan embraces more prosaic, but important goals. One, easing the 'non-capital functions of the city; two, strictly regulating the size of Beijing's population; three, promoting 'co-operative development' 协同发展 among the three regions in environmental protection and transportation; and four, letting the colleges and enterprises of Zhongguancun (Beijing's 'Silicon Valley') take the lead in linking Beijing with Tianjin and Hebei. In other words, the Jing-Jin-Ji plan will 'spatially restructure' the existing city-region to create better conditions for development in and around the national capital.

What's in a Name?

As mentioned above, the name Jing-Jin-Ji is a contraction of the three place names Beijing 京, Tianjin 津, and Hebei 冀. Where the first two are simply the second characters of the contemporary place names, Ji refers to an historic administrative division called Jizhou 冀州 in the area that today encompasses all three contemporary jurisdictions: Hebei, Beijing, and Tianjin. Jizhou first appeared in the 'Yu Gong' 禹貢 or 'Tribute of Yu' chapter in the classical text *Book of Documents* 書經, which dates back to the fifth century BCE. By using the 'Ji' of Jizhou in its formulation Jing-Jin-Ji, the party-state is subtly stressing both continuity and historical legitimacy.

China's rulers past and present have all changed official place names to reflect desired political-economic transformations. After 1949, and especially during the Cultural Revolution of 1966–1976, the Party-state renamed places to make them more 'red'; many of these quietly regained their original names—or at least pre-Cultural Revolution names—in the early 1980s.

Jizhou itself was not always Jizhou: the Qing dynasty (1644–1911) called it Zhili 直隸 (simplified as 直隶) or 'directly ruled' to indicate how the historic capital governed its surrounding region. Use of the name Zhili (previously romanised as Chihli) continued into the Republican era



The *Book of Documents* referred to Jizhou as one of 'nine provinces'
Image: commons.wikimedia.org, taken from Hou Renzhi (侯仁之), ed. (1959). 中国古代地理名著选读・禹贡 [Selected Masterpieces of Ancient Chinese Geography: Yu Gong]. Beijing: Scientific Publishing (科学出版社)

(1912–1949). But when Chiang Kai-shek 蒋介石 moved the Republican capital to Nanjing in 1928, the region around Nanjing was also called Zhili, more specifically, Nan Zhili 南直隸, 'southern directly-ruled', to distinguish it from Bei Zhili 北直隸, 'northern directly-ruled'. At the same time, Bei Zhili was renamed Hebei 河北 or 'north of the [Yellow] river'.

The province of Zhili, 1912–28
Image: en.wikipedia.org

When the People's Republic was established in 1949, with Beijing as its capital, 'new China' inherited a set of eleven 'provincial-level' cities (cities with the administrative status of provinces) from the Republican era. In 1954, the status of all but three, Beijing, Tianjin, and Shanghai, was scaled down to sub-provincial. Although Beijing, Tianjin, and Shanghai are called 'municipalities' in English, the translation can be misleading. In Chinese, in accordance with China's system of administrative divisions 行政区划体系, they are called 'directly-governed cities' or *zhixiashi* 直辖市—the same *zhi* and the same concept as in Zhili. That is, they are under the direct control of, or report directly to, the central government. The three original *zhixiashi* were joined by Chongqing in 1997.

In addition to the four *zhixiashi* and twenty-two provinces, China has five 'autonomous regions' 自治区 (Guangxi, Inner Mongolia, Ningxia, Tibet, and Xinjiang) and two 'special administrative regions' 特别行政区 (Hong Kong and Macao) that also have equivalent, provincial-level status. Theoretically, Beijing, Tianjin, and Hebei are all provincial-level entities and are therefore of equal rank. But it is clear from both the order of the names in Jing-Jin-Ji and subsequent official statements, including remarks made by Xi Jinping himself, that Beijing enjoys priority.

Golf is popular in China
Image: pixabay.com

GOLF: IT'S NOT OK, IT'S OK,

by Aiden Xia

China's Communist Party listed playing golf as a violation of discipline for the first time in its revised disciplinary code that was released on 21 October 2015. The prohibition applies to all eighty-eight million party members.

The Party's most recent crackdown on golf and golf courses began in 2004. The sport had been considered bourgeois and counter-revolutionary in the first decades following the establishment of the People's Republic in 1949, but grew rapidly in popularity with the newly moneyed during the 1980s and 1990s. Golf courses have a huge environmental impact, especially in areas where water resources are scarce. However, in defiance of the 2004 ban, the number of golf courses in China continued to grow to more than 600 in 2015.

Xi Jinping's anti-corruption teams have taken note. In March 2105, the National Development and Reform Commission announced the shutting down of sixty-six golf courses in major cities like Shanghai and Beijing and across twenty provinces. In Guangdong province, which boasts the world's largest golf facility, the Mission Hills Golf Club, officials were banned from playing golf during work hours in December 2014. A vice mayor of Wuyishan city in south-eastern Fujian province, meanwhile, was sacked in September 2015 for belonging to a golf club and playing the game when he should have been at work.

STOP PRESS:

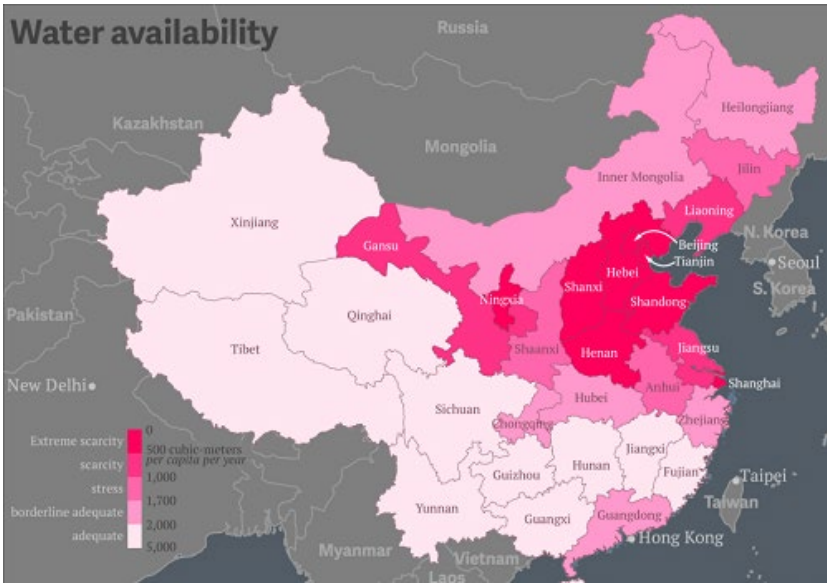
In early April 2016, the *Discipline Inspection and Supervision News* 纪检监察新 , the flagship newspaper of the Central Commission for Disciplinary Inspection (CCDI), published an article clarifying that 'playing golf itself is not a wrongdoing'. Government officials will be subject to punishment, however, if they accept membership cards illicitly, use public money to play golf, or play during office hours.

Water availability and scarcity
Image: theatlantic.com

Environmental Challenges Facing Jing-Jin-Ji

In February 2015, Chinese media reported that of the ten Chinese cities with the worst air quality, only Zhengzhou in Henan province and Jinan in Shandong were not in the capital region. The other eight were Tianjin, plus seven prefectural-level cities in Hebei: Baoding, Xingtai, Shijiazhuang, Tangshan, Handan, Hengshui, and Langfang. Beijing did not appear on the list, clearly a face-saving gesture given its position adjacent to Baoding, Langfang, and Tangshan, not to mention its internationally infamous problems with air pollution.

In fact, in December 2015, Beijing announced the first ever 'red alert' for hazardous smog. Some of the air pollutants in Beijing come from increased car use in the capital. But much of the particulate matter found in its air comes from heavy industry and coal burning in Hebei. Yet because party officials are generally only responsible for the jurisdictions to which they are appointed, they historically had little incentive to co-operate across boundaries, even for mutually beneficial outcomes. The concept of Jing-Jin-Ji recognises that there can be no solution to the region's environmental problems unless it involves the region as a whole.



THE NEW ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION LAW, by Aiden Xia

China's updated Environmental Protection Law came into force on 1 January 2015. This was the first time that this fundamental statute was revised since it was enacted in 1989, a reflection of the Chinese government's awareness that during the past three decades, the country has been sacrificing environmental quality for the sake of economic development.

A report by the Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency found that by 2006, China had become the world's leading emitter of carbon emissions, at volumes seven percent higher by volume than the United States. The new law recognises both China's global responsibilities and the reality that unless China can solve or ameliorate its environmental problems, the Chinese Dream will become a nightmare.

The amended Environmental Protection Law stipulates heavier fines, naming and shaming of companies that break the law, and punishment of local government officials who don't enforce the law. It allows Chinese NGOs to file lawsuits against polluters on behalf of the public, and provides confidentiality to whistleblowers to encourage public participation. It also requires that information about environmental monitoring—including the specific pollutants discharged, the collection and use of discharge fees and so on—be published.

Hebei produces about one quarter of China's national steel output. Hebei Iron & Steel is the largest firm in China by output, and the third largest in the world. The iron and steel industry doesn't only create noxious emissions. It also requires a lot of water: approximately 75,000 gallons per tonne. But Hebei doesn't have enough water resources to meet its combined industrial and other needs. By the mid-2000s, moreover, Beijing and Tianjin each had less than half the water resources they needed to meet local demand; Beijing has the lowest average per capita water availability of all of China's major cities. In the 1990s, Beijing began diverting water from Hebei as well as Shanxi province, but this was not a long-term solution. An increasing appetite for water in Beijing due both to an increase in population and the demands of its urban lifestyle (including the maintenance of golf courses—see *China Story Yearbook 2014: Shared Destiny*, p.239), has lowered the groundwater of the North China Plain by some 300 metres since the 1970s.

In December 2013, after Hebei Iron & Steel flouted central government requirements to decrease production, its CEO was forced to resign under suspicion of corruption. In December 2014, the Ministry of Environment declared Hebei the main target in its 'war on pollution' 污染宣战. New quotas require Hebei to cut one-third of its steel and cement production and related coal burning. This is not as economically adventurous as it may sound: declining domestic demand after years of expansion has resulted in over-production and falling prices. The steel and related heavy industries (not just in Hebei but China generally) have already been compelled to downsize. In Hebei, however, this is policy, and strictly enforced: the provincial governor, Zhang Qingwei 张庆伟 declared in a 2014 CCTV interview that 'If an extra tonne of steel is produced, local officials will have to take responsibility and be sacked'. In January 2016, Zhang reported that Hebei's economic growth in 2015 had dipped to 6.8 percent, down 0.9 percent from the previous year, which he attributed mainly to anti-pollution measures.

The 'war on pollution'
Image: edu.sina.com.cn

Sensibly, the Jing-Jin-Ji plan mandates that Beijing and Hebei cooperate on the funding of environmental management, including the treatment of the large amounts of wastewater that are discharged into the rivers feeding the regional reservoirs. Two thirds of the catchment area of Beijing's Miyun reservoir lies to the north, in Hebei. But engineering solutions are one thing: it is still not clear how the three areas are to share the costs of cross-boundary environmental mitigation.

SOUTH-NORTH WATER TRANSFERS, by Carolyn Cartier

The massive South-North Water Transfer Project 南水北调工程 transports water from the Yangtze River system northwards via three main routes, two of which are in the east, serving the capital region. The 'central' route, the more westerly of the two eastern routes, moves water from the Danjiangkou reservoir in Hubei province along a 1,432-km-long canal to Beijing's Miyun reservoir. Miyun is the main supplier for Beijing's Water Works No. 9, the largest treatment plant for drinking water in China. The 'eastern' route diverts water from the Yangtze River at Jiangdu, in Jiangsu province, north along the route of the historical Grand Canal and through tunnels under the Yellow River. It forks near Jinan, capital of Shandong province, to supply the eastern Shandong peninsula as well. The planned 'western' route would move water from the headwaters of the Yangtze across the high-altitude watershed divide to the headwaters of the Yellow River.

First conceived in the 1950s, the South-North Water Transfer finally received the go-ahead from the central government in 2001, which was planning for the 2008 Beijing Olympics in the midst of a water crisis. Work didn't begin on it until the 2010s, however, and 'southern water' only arrived in the capital in December 2014. But in 2015, researchers discovered that levels of lead in the Danjiangkou reservoir from 2007 to 2010 were twenty times the maximum level considered safe by international standards. The study questioned but did not provide information on current levels.

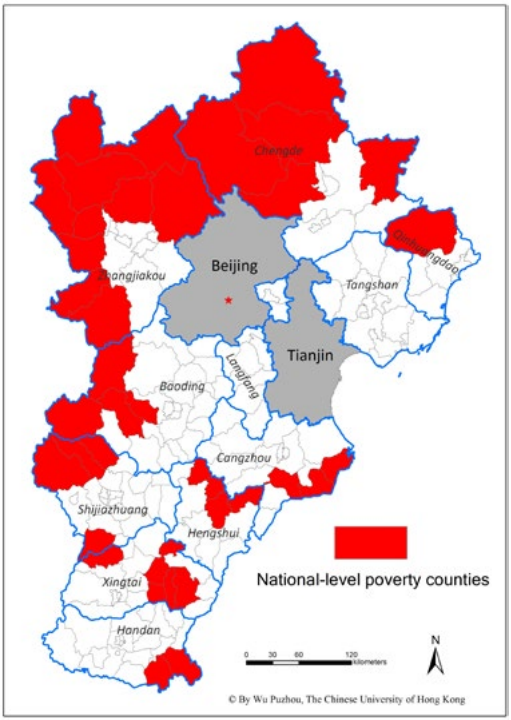
The regions interlocked watersheds
Image: edudisk.net

The Danjiangkou reservoir
Image: en.syiptv.com

Lead levels in Danjiangkou reservoir, 2007–2010
Source: WHO, EPA, MWR, Journal of Environmental Informatics

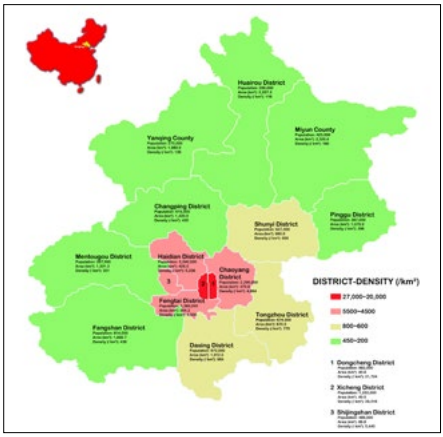
The Poverty Belt

Coverage of the Jing-Jin-Ji plan in the Chinese media makes little mention of the 'capital's poverty belt' 环首都贫困带. This consists of thirty-nine counties and county-level administrative districts in Hebei, some of them along Beijing's border with Chengde 承德, Zhang jiakou 张家口, and Baoding 保定, the prefecture-level cities to the north, west and south of the capital respectively. The 2006–2007 Bluebook of Regional Development in China (2006–2007 年: 中国区域经济发展报告) brought the 'poverty belt' to national attention when it likened the capital to 'a European city surrounded by African countryside'. Among the twenty-one regions with provincial status, only four of them have more counties on the national list of 'counties requiring "poverty alleviation" 国家扶贫县' than Hebei. (The province with the fewest poor counties is the southern island of Hainan, with only five; those with more are Gansu (forty-three), Shaanxi (fifty), Guizhou (fifty), and Yunnan (seventy-three).



National-level poverty counties
Image: Pu Wuzhou, The Chinese University of Hong Kong

The C-shaped ring of under-development around Beijing is land that historically served as a kind of defensive buffer around the capital. Hilly in the northwest and west, it slopes downwards as it traces the northern edge of the North China Plain to define the city's eastern boundaries. State



Beijing population map
Image: beijingconflict.wordpress.com

Beijing relief map
Image: beijingconflict.wordpress.com

planners have minimised industrial development in the counties upslope from Beijing to protect downstream populations from industrial run-off. Some areas of these poorer counties are designated 'military restricted zones' 军事禁区, with limited construction of even basic infrastructure.

Nonetheless, mining and the pervasive agricultural use of pesticides and chemical fertilisers in the poverty belt have polluted rivers and streams, contributing to the ongoing crisis of water management in the capital region. Jing-Jin-Ji's major reservoirs—Miyun, Panjiakou, and Guanting—or their catchment areas are all situated within or adjacent to the poverty belt. Drought, poor management (including historical failure to control contamination from fish farming, tourism, and agricultural runoff), and the pollution of the waterways have compromised the water quality of the reservoirs even as Beijing has depleted its own aquifers.

For all these reasons, the report calls the poverty belt a threat to 'political and social stability', beneficial for neither Beijing's world image nor its long-term security. Yet in the decade since the 2006–2007 Bluebook of Development, State Council-approved 'poverty alleviation programs' for Hebei have enjoyed uneven success.

THE TWO-CHILD POLICY, by Emily Feng

In October 2015, China's National People's Congress approved a dramatic policy change: the country's controversial one-child policy was finished. In its place, the two-child policy, under which all married couples could have two children, would be in force from 1 January 2016.

The two-child policy is less the result of a sudden moral reckoning than of economic and demographic calculations. The one-child policy has left China with one of the worst gender imbalances in the world, and children without siblings are struggling to support ageing relatives on their own. What's more, there are fewer and fewer younger workers to replace a rapidly aging workforce. On its current path, by 2050 China will have only 1.6 workers for every retiree, a ratio comparable to Japan or Singapore. But unlike those countries, China, to quote a phrase frequently used by economists, may well get old before it gets rich. To offset population decline, China has set its annual birthrate target at twenty million births, an increase, according to the National Health and Family Planning Commission of three million additional births a year.

In many ways, the two-child policy is an extension of what already was in recent years a growing body of legal exceptions to the one-child policy. Ethnic minorities were always exempt from the policy while, in 1987, families living in the countryside whose first child was a girl were also allowed to have a second child. In November 2013, couples in which either parent was an only child were also allowed to have a second child. However, only 700,000 of the eleven million qualifying couples applied for permission to have a second child, raising questions about what percentage of the ninety million Chinese couples that qualify to have a second child under the two-child policy will take advantage of the new policy.

There are two major reasons why Chinese couples have been slow to embrace the relaxation in family planning policy. They may consider the cost of raising a second child simply to be too great, particularly in first-tier cities like Beijing and Shanghai, where property prices are some of the highest in the world. China's top law-making bodies have discussed giving two-child families economic and educational subsidies but are yet to implement any specific policies.

The second reason is cultural. After almost four decades and at least two generations under the one-child policy, which has been not only enforced by law but normalised through education, media and culture, many couples no longer desire to have more than one child. Cash incentives, government propaganda, and slightly more generous vacation policies might not have any noticeable effect in changing societal attitudes.

The two-child policy was announced in October 2015
Image: Day Donaldson, Flickr

If large numbers of couples do decide to have a second child, another possible problem relates to gender equality. A 2013 national survey of Chinese college-age women conducted by the All China Women's Federation found that ninety percent of women had experienced gender discrimination while seeking employment. More generous maternal leave and family planning policies will make women who decide to have two children more expensive to hire, especially without additional state support. Without first creating comprehensive social programs to support working women and tackle larger issues of sexism in the workplace and society at large, the two-child policy could not only fall short of its goals but also undo years of progress in women's rights.

Implementation of the two-child policy has been delegated to provincial governments to allow for consideration of the varying circumstances of each province. Faced with unreliable population statistics, provinces face the daunting task of calculating reasonable birth targets and then calibrating social policy to achieve the desired results—a social engineering experiment that will have enormous implications for China's society and economy for years to come.

Urban Mosaics

Since the 1980s, the State Council has made thousands of changes to the administrative divisions within urban areas. The first wave re-named rural prefectures and counties as prefecture-level and county-level cities, thus transforming collective rural land into land open to urban development. In some cases, where the administrations of adjacent areas refused to co-operate, the State Council simply eliminated the boundaries themselves. Over time, cities in China have thus become mosaics in which borders, administrative divisions, new towns, rail lines, industrial parks, rivers, and even air quality are the pieces in a puzzle that may shift about from one plan to the next.

Since the 1950s, the administrative divisions of Beijing and Tianjin have remained relatively stable, even as the rural counties surrounding them have undergone multiple transformations, including in the 1950s and 1960s when they became 'people's communes' and, more recently, urban districts. In 2009, the State Council approved the merger of three of Tianjin's coastal counties-turned-districts to form the Binhai New Area, modelled after Shanghai's Pudong New Area. Beijing's last rural counties, Miyun and Yanqing, were upgraded to districts in November 2015, bringing them under direct administration by the Beijing municipal government.

Now, with the establishment of Jing-Jin-Ji, the 'pieces' need to be restructured once more.

Of the four general goals of the preliminary Jing-Jin-Ji plan, the first is relocating 'non-capital functions' of Beijing outside the urban core. Beijing is currently home to two governments: the central, or national government, and the city government, both situated in the urban core around the Forbidden City. Under the plan, Beijing's municipal ('non-capital') government will move to Tongzhou 通州, the northern terminus of the Grand Canal in imperial times.

Tongzhou is twenty kilometres southeast of the city centre. It is a district of 906 square kilometres with a population of more than one

The 'Tongzhou New City' 通州新城 is not a city as such but a new 'town development'. It will rise from some fifty square kilometres of land by the historic canal; these images come from the Tongzhou city website
Source: image.baidu.com

million, and it includes the vibrant Songzhuang 宋庄 art colony. Moving the municipal government to Tongzhou will help to relieve traffic, residential, and other pressures on the city centre.

As early as June 2013, the Beijing Party Congress had called for a new 'government sub-centre' 行政副中心 in Tongzhou. This marked a significant break with the Party's decision in the 1950s to go against the advice of urban planners like Liang Sicheng 梁思成 and develop Beijing as a single-centre, high-density capital city. The Tongzhou government centre also features in the Beijing Planning and Exhibition Hall and in the Beijing 2004–2020 Master Plan, which stresses green, low-carbon development, and sustainability.

Along with the municipal government, social services including health and education are to be developed or headquartered outside the city centre. This (the fourth goal of the plan) presents a special challenge for the elite university sector in Beijing. Beijing has eight world-ranking universities, a number of them on historically significant campuses. Tianjin has two universities and Hebei none. What will be the relationship of

Xi Jinping was party secretary of Zhengding county, Hebei, 1983–1985
Image: news.ifeng.com

Beijing's universities to institutions in Tianjin and Hebei? How will 'non-capital functions' be defined in this context? It is interesting to consider that whereas in Brazil and Australia, national capitals were constructed outside of existing major cities, in the case of Beijing, the national capital will take over the historic centre of the city, while the city itself (or its organs of government and support services) moves into the periphery.

Transcending divides—whether educational, economic or other—between the three territories of Jing, Jin, and Ji will require engineering new transport links, establishing new eco-industrial zones and building new urban centres. There are already plans for twenty-seven new rail lines to crisscross the region, including a high-speed line between Beijing and the Hebei provincial capital of Shijiazhuang.

The Political is Personal Too

Xi Jinping has closely associated himself with the Jing-Jin-Ji plan. His rise to the Party leadership began in 1982 in Hebei, where he was appointed deputy party secretary of southwest Zhengding county. The National Development and Reform Commission first proposed to co-ordinate development in the region in 2004, when Xi was still governor and party secretary of Zhejiang province. He joined the Politburo's Standing Committee in 2007. It was the following year that ranking officials of the three jurisdictions met formally for the first time, in Tianjin. In 2011, by which time Xi had been elevated to the vice-presidency, the concept of a 'capital economic circle' appeared in the national Twelfth Five-Year Plan. Then, in 2014, by which time he was both President and Party General Secretary, Xi

Jinping called for specific Jing-Jin-Ji integration plans, and soon a suite of specific measures was announced. These included the relocation (possibly by the end of 2016) of the wholesale clothing markets in Beijing's Dahongmen and Beijing Zoo to Langfeng in Hebei, removal of mobile phone roaming charges within the region, and regional coordination of airport security.

Zhang Gaoli
Image: news.21cn.com

Back in September 2013, when the central government approved the Action Plan for Air Pollution Prevention and Control in Jing-Jin-Ji and Surrounding Areas, Xi went to Shijiazhuang and led a widely publicised 'struggle session' with the Hebei Provincial Party Committee in which he criticised provincial Party Secretary Zhou Benshun 周本顺 for 'not paying enough attention to work for the poor', among other things.

On 24 July 2015, shortly after attending a Jing-Jin-Ji integration meeting chaired by Vice-Premier Zhang Gaoli 张高丽, Zhou Benshun was detained and placed under investigation—the first provincial leader to be detained while holding office. Zhou was subsequently photoshopped out of the photographs of the meeting. The former Hebei Party secretary is an associate of Zhou Yongkang 周永康, the past head of state security who was sentenced to life in prison in June 2015. Thus at the same time as he was promoting regional co-operation, Xi removed one of the most powerful leaders in Hebei, conveniently ridding himself of a potential factional enemy in the process.

Conclusions

The capital region is reaching developmental limits that demand urgent and complex management solutions. The current approach, rather than emphasising the principle of conservation, deploys the state's power and authority to rearrange or spatially restructure resources, economies, and populations—to 'construct' 建设 *jianshe*—on a vast scale.

The Party-state's upbeat rhetoric on Jing-Jin-Ji focuses on the scale of the transformation itself. China has a long history of employing massive engineering projects, the Three Gorges Dam, for example, to solve difficult problems. Given the impact these projects tend to have on local populations and also the uncertainty of their outcomes, free debate might raise uncomfortable questions. The official media is relatively silent, for instance, on the challenges posed by the existence of the poverty belt to regional integration, possibly because the Party-state has not yet worked out how to solve them.

That the Party-state is carefully managing the information around Jing-Jin-Ji is not unusual. The Party has controlled the narrative of China's development—urban and otherwise—since the Yan'an era in the 1940s. It decides what information to release into the public sphere and how to frame it, and times its release in a strategic manner designed to bolster both its own legitimacy and state security.

Given that the Jing-Jin-Ji concept has circulated for over a decade and much of the detail has yet to be released, or even finalised, it is useful to ask why it has been announced now. The central government regularly times such announcements to compel local governments and regional interests to prepare for change and also to consider them while planning future projects and policies.

It is also interesting to note that there has been little discussion of the lessons that the capital region might take from the development of the Yangtze and Pearl River deltas, both of which are highly integrated regions with multiple, interconnected centres, unlike the Jing-Jin-Ji region with its focus on Beijing. And whereas tourism into Jiangsu province from Shanghai continues to grow, Beijing has not generated similar synergies with Hebei, which has 'wild Great Walls', the old 'hunting palace' at Chengde, nature parks, and the beach resort of Beidaihe, among other attractions.

Isabel Hilton, the editor of the bilingual environmental website China Dialogue 中外对话 has observed how 'the design of China's future cities will not only affect the health and wellbeing of their residents; it will

also be an important factor in the battle to contain China's soaring carbon emissions. These questions, therefore, are of high importance to all of humanity'. If Jing-Jin-Ji can help to solve, or at least mitigate the region's environmental problems by remapping its boundaries and jurisdictions, it will strengthen and enhance Beijing as a majestic and dignified national capital and become the Xi Jinping era's most significant contribution to China's urban history.

FORUM

FORUM

THE ABYSS • 坎

Tianjin Explosions

· AIDEN XIA

The Yangtze River Cruise Incident

· XIAONAN WANG

TIANJIN EXPLOSIONS

Aiden Xia

AT 10:30PM ON 12 AUGUST 2015, two explosions at the port of Tianjin created a fireball visible from miles away and were strong enough to register as seismic activity by China's national earthquake centre. The blasts killed 173 people, including 104 firefighters and eleven policemen. Within minutes, footage of the blasts circulated on the Internet.

Chinese Prime Minister Li Keqiang visited the site four days later, and met some of the residents of nearby residential apartments who had been injured in the calamity. The authorities confirmed that hundreds of tonnes of highly poisonous cyanide had been stored at the warehouse, but said that most of it had dissipated without contaminating the environment.

An aerial view of a large hole in the ground in the aftermath of two huge explosions at Tianjin port
Image: img1.imgtn.bdimg.com

Military rescuers clear chemicals from the Tianjin blast site
Image: img4.imgtn.bdimg.com

Government censors clamped down on rumours about the causes of the explosions and how they were affecting public health, swiftly purging non-official reports from the Internet.

It emerged that the warehouse where the explosions took place belonged to Tianjin Dongjiang Port Ruihai International Logistics, a company licensed to store, distribute, and import dangerous chemicals. Xinhua News Agency later reported that Dong Shexuan 董社轩, one of the largest shareholders of the company, is the son of the late police chief of Tianjin port, Dong Peijun 董培军. Authorities confirmed that the explosions were caused by the ignition of hazardous materials that had been improperly or illegally stored at the site.

Local residents and owners of apartments damaged in the blasts staged small-scale protests, demanding answers and compensation. Official media reported that the municipal government had offered local residents compensation, and was forcing a total of eighty-five enterprises working with hazardous chemicals in Tianjin municipality to close, relocate, or make changes in their operations. However, there has not yet been a full or open investigation of the blast.

THE YANGTZE RIVER CRUISE INCIDENT

Xiaonan Wang

AT ABOUT 9:30PM ON 1 JUNE 2015, the Yangtze River cruise ship the *Eastern Star* 东方之星 capsized in fifteen-metre-deep water in Jianli County, Hubei province. It had been halfway through an eleven-day, 1500km journey from Nanjing to Chongqing via the Three Gorges, with 403 tourists, forty-six crew and five travel guides on board. The final death toll of the disaster was 442, making it China's worst boat disaster in over six decades.

The twelve survivors recalled travelling through pounding rain and lightning, when the boat suddenly tilted to a 'forty-five-degree angle' and overturned in 'about half to one minute'. Even if the boat had been equipped with enough life jackets

Rescue workers on the sunken cruise ship, the *Eastern Star*
Source: img5.imgtn.bdimg.com

The righting of the capsized cruise ship
Source: img3.imgtn.bdimg.com

and lifeboats, most passengers, in their cabins at the time, did not have enough time to react. Two hours later, the river patrol picked up Captain Zhang Shunwen 张顺文 and Chief Engineer Yang Zhongquan 杨忠权 from the water after the crew of another boat spotted them and called for their rescue. Of the other survivors, some swam ashore, some were saved after hours floating with life jackets on the river, and some were pulled out from air pockets inside the hull by rescuers.

The captain, who was taken into police custody, claimed that he was attempting to steer the boat but the wind was too strong. According to Xinhua, the *Eastern Star* sank so fast that it did not have time to send out a distress call. An angry public questioned why the captain didn't do as other vessels on the river did and drop anchor after the maritime office issued a severe storm warning that afternoon.

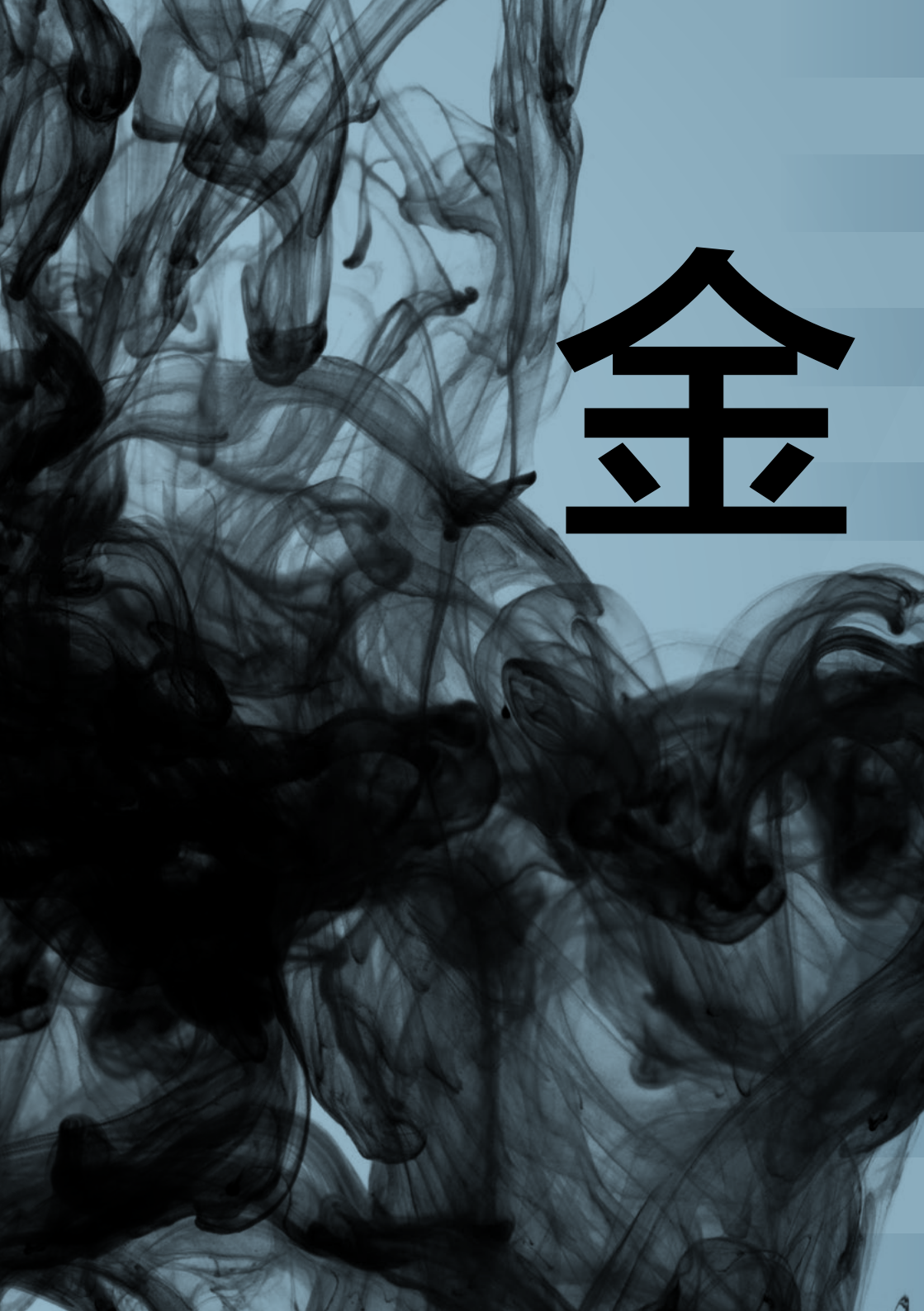
While Chinese meteorologists later described the storm as a Force 12 cyclone, and authorities described the weather conditions as freakish and unpredictable, the public demanded closer scrutiny into the captain's responsibilities, as well as the safety regulations, equipment and supervision on boats and into the management of shipping and tourism generally. The *Eastern Star*, which had been in service for

nearly twenty years, had passed its annual inspections. Yet news reports revealed that a 1997 retrofit had left it with safety defects and as late as 2013, the Nanjing authorities for safety violations.

Following a familiar pattern, and as outrage grew, the central government ordered journalists to focus on the positive sides of the story, such as rescue efforts, and banned reporting by local journalists. Some foreign journalists too were blocked from entering the rescue site and barred from talking to relatives of victims. Authorities also muted criticism in public forums and censored negative comments in social media.

In December, six months after the crash, a sixty-member investigative team released their report into the incident, which they described as 'an extraordinary serious disaster'. They attributed the tragedy to heavy rains and winds resulting from a rare weather phenomenon and asserted that the ship had in fact conformed to official safety criteria.

Forty-three people were held accountable including two crew members of the ship, executives of Chongqing Eastern Shipping Corp 重庆东方轮船公司, the owner of the *Eastern Star*, and maritime authorities for their negligent management. The report recommended that the captain be investigated further but held that he could only be blamed for 'insufficient knowledge' and 'inadequate response'.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BELT TIGHTENING

Rebecca Fabrizi

IN 2015, XI JINPING continued his hyperactive diplomacy, visiting fifteen different countries within the year. He also packed in bilateral meetings with world leaders at multilateral gatherings, including with the African Union (at the China-Africa Co-operation Forum in Johannesburg in December) at the United Nations General Assembly, the BRICS and SCO Summits and even during the World War II (WWII) commemorations in Moscow and Beijing. Just as in 2014, however, neither Xi nor Premier Li Keqiang visited the Middle East.

A Chinese UN peacekeeper
Source: MONUSCO/Myriam Asmani

Throughout all of this frenetic foreign affairs activity, there has been a strong accent on economic diplomacy and, in particular, advancing the cause of China's 'One Belt One Road Initiative' 一带一路 (also known as 'Belt and Road Initiative' or 'OBOR') (See Forum 'One Belt One Road: International Development Finance with Chinese Characteristics', pp.244–250).

Belting Up

Xi had announced his idea for a 'Silk Road Economic Belt' and a 'Twenty-first Century Maritime Silk Road', without any details, during visits to Kazakhstan and Indonesia in September and October 2013. One month later, the Third Plenum of the Communist Party enshrined it as policy. It took until March 2015 for the State Council to publish a detailed 'Action Plan' for the policy, which had been jointly drafted by the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) and ministries of Commerce and Foreign Affairs. In the same month, Xi outlined the plan to an international audience at the Boao forum in Hainan Island.

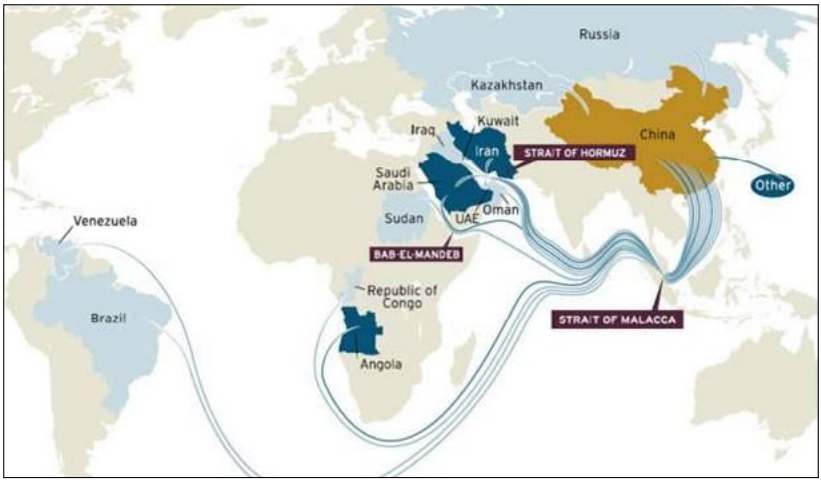
The OBOR Initiative is said to have diverse aims. One is to use Beijing's large foreign exchange reserves to boost exports of domestic producers by investing in large infrastructure projects that will create demand, an idea touted for several years by domestic analysts. It may also be a way to absorb excess industrial capacity in struggling sectors such as steel. It could eventually help alleviate concern in China about over-reliance on Malacca Strait shipping, the conduit for around ninety percent of China's

Xi Jinping speaking at the Boao forum in Hainan Island
Photo: chengshiw.com

oil imports, by creating alternative trade routes. The parallel policy of creating new financial institutions such as the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and the New Silk Road Fund should help to bring more choice in international infrastructure financing.

Perhaps most importantly, the initiative should be a neighbour-friendly way of creating a more benign regional security and policy environment for China to get on with pursuing its domestic agenda without active or passive interference from the region. Supporters look forward to China achieving its stated goal of improved regional security and prosperity through 'common development' 共同发展. It is also a compelling soft power strategy, recalling China's rich history as a trading nation in the era of the Silk Road.

The State Council has published a dedicated website for the OBOR Initiative with maps being revised as countries express greater or lesser interest in being involved. Observers in some of the targeted countries, like India, have been skeptical about the benefits to them, even suspecting malign strategic intent. Foreign Minister Wang Yi 王毅 directly addressed



Malacca Strait shipping routes
Photo: baike.baidu.com

Wang Yi
Photo: cyol.com

these concerns in his annual address to the press in March, when he said that the initiative was 'not a tool of geopolitics' and cautioned against viewing it through an 'outdated Cold-War mentality'.

There is no question that China is showing a high appetite for risk. This is a difficult initiative, given that it relies on Chinese enterprises making major investments when the prospect of financial return might be at best remote, and security risks could be significant. According to political scientist Xie Tao 谢韬 of Beijing Foreign Studies University 北京外国语大学, the Chinese leadership has deliberately described the policy as an initiative, not a strategy, to avoid implying that participation will be mandatory for Chinese banks, enterprises, and other players.

If they do join in, there could be substantial risks to Chinese consulates of the kind seen in Libya in 2011 when the Chinese military had to manage its largest-ever evacuation (nearly 39,000 citizens) from a foreign country when a wave of unrest saw direct and violent attacks on Chinese oil and other firms there. The plan for OBOR is for large-scale projects, likely to involve large numbers of Chinese workers. The only project so far initiated, a dam in the new 'China Pakistan Economic Corridor', involves a particularly unstable region of Pakistan. Pakistan has agreed to provide 10,000 troops and commandos for the project's security.

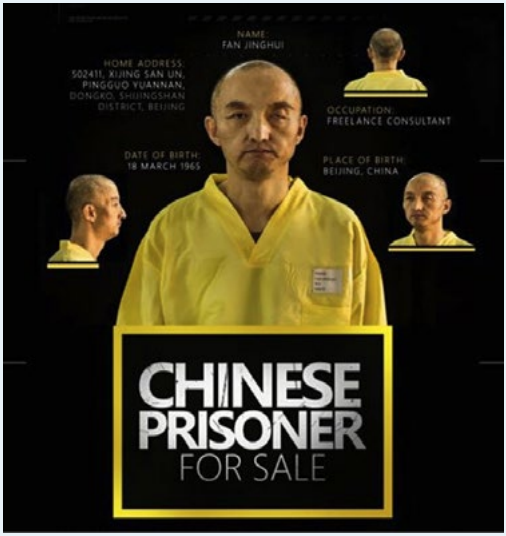
Xie Tao
Photo: youtube.com

On the other hand, if China can contribute to growth and stability in these difficult and volatile border areas, benefit will also accrue to the US, Russia, and other regional countries and major powers.

THE ISLAMIC STATE TAKES CHINESE NATIONAL HOSTAGE, by Lorand Laskai

In mid-September, the war with Islamic State (IS) arrived at China's doorstep in the form of an online advertisement: 'Chinese prisoner for sale'.

It featured a photograph of a man, Fan Jinghui 樊京辉, against a black backdrop. His face was battered and he was dressed in a yellow jumpsuit. The advertisement listed his profession as a freelance consultant and his place of birth as Beijing, China; it also published his home address.



The 'advertisement'
Source: ntdtv.com

IS held Fan Jinghui alongside a Norwegian hostage. This placed the Chinese government in a new situation. The Chinese leadership's reluctance to get involved in conflicts abroad had previously sheltered its citizens from direct conflict with IS. Now the Chinese people demanded action.

While netizens called for Fan's rescue and vigorously debated the correct course of action, the Chinese government remained largely mute. Censors scrubbed the Internet of the most impassioned calls for intervention to save Fan.

On 18 November, IS executed Fan and posted photos of the execution online. There was an outpouring of grief on the Internet. Xi Jinping, in Manila for APEC, expressed sympathy towards the victim's family and vowed to 'strike against any manifestation of terrorism'. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs pledged to bring the criminals responsible to justice. Yet Chinese Internet users searching for Fan Jinghui's name on Weibo found their attempts blocked, and posts and comments calling for military intervention or questioning the government's resolve were swiftly removed.

Within the constrained media space, Chinese citizens meditated on the practical and principled dilemmas of China's evolving role in the world. 'If China was going to deploy soldiers, where would it put them?' asked one commentator. 'Russia and the US have military bases, does China? France sent an aircraft carrier, could China send its carrier to the Middle East? … [China's] military capability should not be underestimated, but actual combat is still a weak point.' Another post on the nationalistic blog *Haijiang* bemoaned that ISIS doesn't care whether you're 'Western or Eastern heritage … China cannot watch with its arms folded.'

ASIAN INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT BANK AND THE TRANS-PACIFIC PARTNERSHIP

The China-led international financial institution Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) formally launched on 25 December 2015 with thirty-seven regional and twenty non-regional Prospective Founding Members (PFM). The bank had on founding US$100 billion in capital, equivalent to two-thirds of the capital of the Asian Development Bank or nearly half that of the World Bank. It is the first significant multilateral lender dominated by a developing country.

The US, which along with Japan and Canada declined to become a founding member, lobbied European countries, Australia, and South Korea not to join. Its efforts were mostly ignored. The former UK chancellor of the exchequer, George Osborne, announced Britain's application in early March, in an unusual split from the US line. Despite expressions of frustration from Washington, Australia and South Korea applied to join the bank later that same month.

The Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), a trade agreement signed by twelve Pacific Rim countries including the US and Japan on 4 February 2016 in New Zealand, seems like a counter-measure to the AIIB. Despite being the largest economy in the Pacific Rim, China was not involved in the negotiations. In a *Washington Post* article on the TPP, Obama said 'The world has changed. The rules are changing with it. The United States, not countries like China, should write them.'

Global Governance

There has been much discussion in China and abroad about the impact of a rising China on global institutions and governance. With Xi Jinping enforcing more and more restrictions on Chinese citizens' access to justice and civil liberties and freedoms (see Chapter 2 'The Fog of Law', pp.64–89), there is nervousness abroad about China's intentions with regard to international institutions.

The US government has acted on these concerns. In an embarrassing diplomatic failure, when China announced the creation of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), the US government lobbied its allies not to join despite the fact that the new bank looked set to be established according to international norms, and was a 'responsible stakeholder' response to a real and urgent need for infrastructure funding across the Asian region. The AIIB opened for business on 6 January 2016, with fifty-seven founding member countries. Many US allies signed on, including Australia, Germany, and a particularly enthusiastic United Kingdom.

The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank launched in December 2015 with US$100 billion in capital
Image: commons.wikimedia.org

Officially, China is staying neutral. A spokesperson from China's Commerce Ministry said that China 'always keeps an open mind toward the construction of systems that are in accordance with World Trade Organisation rules and are helpful for promoting economic integration in the Asia-Pacific region'.

State media Xinhua also said that China has already demonstrated a 'deep-seated, high-standard, and comprehensive pattern of opening to foreign trade', citing new free trade agreements with South Korea and Australia and the on-going Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) negotiations, a free trade agreement that would include all ten ASEAN member states, Australia, India, Japan, South Korea, and New Zealand and encompass the OBOR Initiative as well. Xinhua added that China might seek to join the TPP 'at an appropriate time'.

China is certainly having an impact on global institutions. One example from 2015 is the decision in December by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to include the renminbi (RMB) as one of five currencies in its Special Drawing Rights basket from October 2016. This reflects the importance of the RMB to the world's trade and financial systems.

In a major speech in Seattle on 22 September 2015, Xi Jinping said:

> As far as the existing international system is concerned, China has been a participant, builder, and contributor.... A great number of countries, especially developing countries, want to see a more just and equitable international system. But it doesn't mean that they want to unravel the entire system or start all over again. Rather, what they want is reform and to improve the system to keep up with the times.

Six days later, Xi addressed the UN General Assembly. There he called 'peace, development, equity, justice, democracy and freedom', the 'common values of all mankind and the lofty goals of the United Nations'. He pledged US$1 billion over the next ten years to create a peace and

Chinese UN peacekeepers
Photo: news.xinhuanet.com

development fund to support the United Nations; the establishment of a new standby peacekeeping force of 8,000 troops; and military assistance worth US$100 million over the next five years to the African Union for peacekeeping missions. At the UN Sustainable Development Summit the following day, he pledged a goal to invest US$12 billion in the world's poorest countries by 2030.

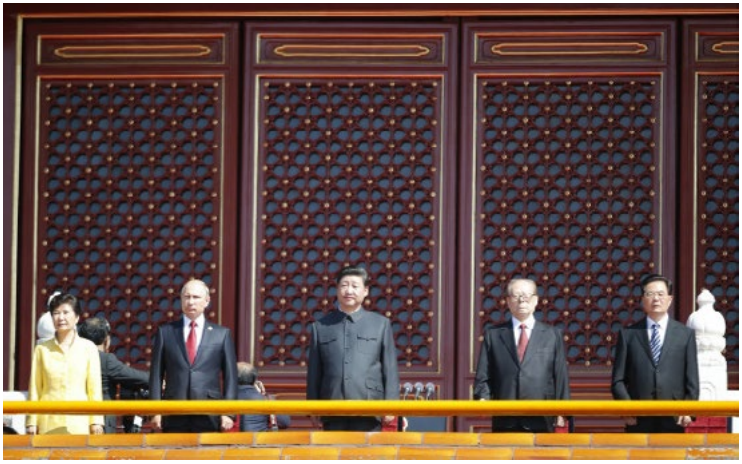
China will also use its growing influence to support its own political system: such as working to reduce the ability of international organisations, like the UN, to police civil rights, freedom of expression, and justice through the work of the Human Rights Council and the visits and statements of important figures such as UN Special Rapporteurs. China continued in 2015 to take a cautious approach to the UN's Responsibility to Protect, promoting a very limited range of circumstances that would make non-consensual military intervention an appropriate course of action.

Friends with Benefits

Beijing often looks to Moscow for support in international relations, and vice versa. While Russia's relationships with Europe and the US remain strained, the potential benefits of a 'pivot East' look significant. Putin was the most important guest at the parade in Beijing to commemorate the

seventieth anniversary of the Japanese surrender on 3 September (though not many other world leaders took up the invitation). Xi had been to Moscow in May for a similar purpose, returning to Russia for the Brazil, Russia, India, and China (BRICS) and Shanghai Co-operation Organisation (SCO) summits in July, and holding further bilateral meetings with Putin in the margins of other international events. Yet while official rhetoric speaks about the warm relationship, Chinese leaders have avoided explicitly supporting Putin's domestic politics or his actions in Ukraine. China has no interest in full-scale confrontation between Russia and the West. Indeed, Chinese analysts say in private that the Chinese leadership would prefer Putin to stop fomenting unrest in Ukraine, and fear for the sustainability of Russia's economy and society. Bilateral trade continued to stagnate in 2015.

On 6 May 2015, when Xi was visiting Moscow for the victory parade, the *Rossiskaya Gazeta* published an opinion piece by him titled 'Remember history, look to the future'. Chinese analysts point to one specific phrase in this article of particular significance: 'силочение - это сило, а самоизоляцуя - обессиленуе' or 'unity is strength, while self-isolation is weakness'. This was intended to remind Putin that displaying power through destructive force and alienating the international community was a path to ruin.



Xi and Putin attend the parade in Beijing to commemorate the seventieth anniversary of the 'World Anti-Facist War' (WWII)
Photo: upload.icrosschina.com

'UYGHURS MEAN MONEY, UYGHURS MEAN CASH', by Lorand Laskai

Chinese security forces escort Uyghurs suspected of travelling to join the IS from Thailand
Source: cctv.com

In mid-July, the Thai government provoked international ire when it forcibly repatriated over one hundred asylum-seeking Uyghurs back to China. Uyghurs are a Muslim Turkic language-speaking people native to the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonymous Region, where there has been considerable unrest in recent years. In 2015, the Chinese government intensified its crackdown on Islamic dress and other religious and traditional practices in Xinjiang, adding to local grievances against Chinese rule. China has traditionally sought the return of those Uyghurs who seek refugee status abroad, a process condemned by human rights advocates.

The repatriation of Uyghur asylum seekers to China sparked furious outrage against China in Turkey. Turkey has historically presented itself as the protector of the Uyghur people and offers asylum and identification papers to those who make it there. Anti-Chinese protesters in Ankara smashed windows and broke into the Chinese Embassy. Another hundred Uyghurs rounded-up by the Thai government in mid-July had Turkish identification papers, and were sent on to Turkey.

Turkey is a natural destination for Uyghurs fleeing the country as the Chinese government intensifies its crackdown on Islamic and traditional practices in Xinjiang, but getting there is hard. Whether they travel through Central Asia or South East Asia, the journey is harrowing and dangerous. As one refugee told Reuters in Istanbul: 'For ... traffickers, Uyghurs mean money, Uyghurs mean cash. If you are Vietnamese ... they charge $1,000, but when you are Uyghur the price goes up five-fold, sometimes ten-fold.' He had fled after being told that his sick and imprisoned brother would not 'leave jail alive'.

Dismissive of claims of persecution, the Chinese government works hard to associate Uyghur refugees with religious extremism. The Chinese media suggested that many Uyghurs repatriated from Thailand in July have a history of extremism and that their ultimate destination was the Islamic State (IS) in Syria. One Chinese official said that many Uyghurs in Turkey had become 'cannon fodder' for IS. IS has also pushed forward the narrative, releasing a video in June 2015 featuring a eighty-year old Uyghur man who had travelled from China to join the jihad. In December, Indonesian officials foiled a terrorist plot that reportedly involved a Uyghur man who had entered Indonesia through Thailand.

The blurred line in world media between political refugees and extremists has worked in Beijing's favour. In December, Pulitzer Prize winning investigative journalist Seymour Hersh claimed that over 5,000 Uyghur 'would-be fighters' had been funnelled to Syria via Turkey—approximately the total number of Uyghur refugees who have arrived in Turkey since 2013.

If Xi avoids directly speaking to Russia's affairs, Putin rarely mentions Asia at all, preferring in important speeches to focus on criticising the US and the European Union. As in previous years he declined an invitation to attend the leaders meeting of the 2015 East Asia Summit.

Guiding this policy of presenting a strong friendship to the world is China's desire to have a smooth relationship with the only other permanent member of the UN Security Council that does not support US primacy in the international sphere in general, and the western Pacific in particular. Bilateral agreements and discussions on issues such as cyber security and human rights provide a counterpoint to what are usually referred to as 'universal values'. The US and China agreed on a joint cyber security pact in May 2015, for example, which identified key threats to information security as including the use of technology 'to carry out acts of aggression aimed at the violation of sovereignty, security and territorial integrity of states'; 'to interfere in the internal affairs of states' or to disseminate 'information that harms [the] political and socio-economic systems, spiritual, moral and cultural environment of other states'.

The Moscow-based international software security group Kasperky Lab and the state-owned China Cyber Security Company signed a strategic co-operation pact at the second, China-sponsored World Internet Conference in Wuzhen, Zhejiang province in December. This co-operation is aimed at an unnamed state actor that has mounted sophisticated attacks against both countries.

China's focus on becoming the dominant power in the western Pacific leaves room for an active role by Russia. As reported in Japan, in 2014 Russia and China had more-or-less equally provoked its air force to scramble fighter jets in what turned out to be an unprecedentedly high number of incidents. The two countries were at it again in 2015, carrying out joint naval and air force exercises over the Sea of Japan from 20–28 August. And Russia finally agreed to sell twenty-four Su-35 fighters to China over three years, with delivery starting in late 2016, despite reported Russian concerns over the risk of reverse engineering.

Fairly Friendly Giants

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Xi'an
Photo: image.baidu.com

The current Chinese leadership has made some effort to prioritise relations with India, which historically have never been too friendly. Li Keqiang went there on his first overseas visit in 2013, and Modi's 2015 tour in China was reciprocating a 2014 visit by Xi. India, like Pakistan, agreed to join the China-led SCO in 2015. Bilateral trade remained at a healthy US$70 billion in 2014 figures, though the balance was very much in China's favour, with a surplus of around US$48 billion.

Modi, like Xi a nationalist with a forceful personality, visited China in May. A border incursion into still-disputed territory by Chinese troops had marred Xi's 2014 visit to India, and Modi had annoyed his hosts by making a joint statement with President Obama in January, declaring the importance of freedom of navigation in the South China Sea. China is wary of India's objectives as a rising naval power, and India is cautious of China's motives in the Indian Ocean, including through the OBOR Initiative. Xi Jinping had moreover just concluded an oft-delayed visit to Pakistan in April, agreeing to a massive and much-needed US$46 billion investment package. China also announced that it would sell Pakistan eight submarines, more than doubling its existing fleet.

Both China and India seem to want a more positive dynamic. Xi started his visit in Gujarat, Modi's home state, and Modi landed in Xi's hometown of Xi'an, with Xi flying there to meet him, a privilege never accorded to any other VIP. This venue was historically relevant as well as personal;

Xi'an, or Chang'an, was the dynastic capital of China and the starting point for the Buddhist monk Xuanzang's famous seventh-century pilgrimage to India to collect Buddhist sutras and relics to nurture Chinese Buddhism. For his part, Modi went home with twenty-one trade and investment deals in his pocket worth around US$22 billion. This is clearly better than nothing, but substance has yet to catch up with diplomacy.

Across the Pacific

In February 2015, China publically confirmed that Xi would make a state visit to the US in September, when he would also visit the United Nations for the annual Leaders' Week. The unusually early announcement was perhaps intended to provide some ballast for this unstable relationship through the year.

The main causes of bilateral friction were not new. They included cyber espionage: in June 2015, the US Office of Personnel Management (OPM) revealed it had been the target of a data breach involving the records of millions of American citizens. *The Washington Post* called it 'one of the most devastating breaches of US government data in history'. Many in the US suspected China was behind it, which China denied. On the eve of Xi's visit, the Chinese government announced it had arrested the hackers involved. *The Post* observed that this might have been, as some US officials speculated, simply part of 'an effort to lessen tensions with Washington' ahead of the visit.

Another important source of tension was China's 'island building' in the South China Sea—what US Admiral Harry Harris, Commander of the United States Pacific Command, described in a speech in Canberra in 2015 as a 'Great Wall of Sand'. (See the *China Story Yearbook 2014: Shared Destiny*, Forum 'Sandcastles in the South China Sea', pp.78–81.) The Pentagon takes a dim view of China's attempts to increase its strategic reach by creating what are in effect stationary aircraft carriers for the PLA, on land features claimed by other states.

Few expected Xi's visit to break much ground. The two sides had clearly done a lot of work to agree on the boundaries of the scope of State-

SOUTH CHINA SEA AND THE US FONOP, by Matt Schrader

Concern over the construction of artificial islands in the disputed waters of the South China by the PRC intensified in 2015. Separate reports by the Pentagon and the Washington DC-based Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative indicated that work on seven islands had either been completed or was well advanced by May 2015. In January 2016, the Chinese completed an airstrip on Fiery Cross Reef—an established reef that the Chinese have converted into an artificial island that is long enough to land the PLA's heaviest bombers and air transports. In total, between early 2014 and mid-2015, Chinese dredgers raised roughly twelve square kilometres of land above the waves, an area about the size of Heathrow Airport. According to the Pentagon, over the past forty-five years other claimants (which include the Philippines and Vietnam) have reclaimed only about one hundred acres of land in the area.

This disparity, and the PLA's apparent determination to assert Chinese sovereignty over both the airspace and sea around its new islands came under increasing fire by senior US officials in the first half of the year, culminating in a speech by US Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter at the 30 May Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore. Carter called for 'a lasting halt' to island building, singled out China for going 'much further and much faster than [any other claimant]', and said that the US military would not be deterred from sailing or flying where it wished.

Carter's remarks foreshadowed the mutual tension that built over the summer and into the early fall. US Pentagon officials also dropped frequent hints that the US was examining options for 'freedom of navigation operations' (FONOP) in the waters around the new islands. FONOPs, in which US ships sail through contested waters, are intended to challenge what the US sees as excessive or illegal territorial claims.

Under the United Nation Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), sovereign states are entitled to 'territorial waters' extending twenty-two kilometres from their coastline. Foreign military vessels are permitted 'innocent passage' through territorial waters, but they must refrain from any activity 'prejudicial to [the coastal state's] peace, good order or ... security'. Although

supported espionage, even if they remain hazy, and though they did not issue a fully joint text on the subject, there was substantial agreement in their separate publications. As for the Pacific, Xi stated China had no intention to militarise the South China Sea area. Yet Xi's definition of 'militarisation' appears limited to the display of offensive capability; China claims it is acting to enhance capacity for national defence, as well as providing global goods in the form of crisis management capacity.

The US Freedom of Navigation Operations in the Spratly Islands have highlighted the tensions surrounding China's efforts to become de facto leader of a region where the US has long been the dominant power (see Information Window 'South China Sea and the US FONOP' above). Nonetheless, neither side wants conflict and, despite outbursts of official rhetoric and the occasional sensational headline, extensive policy co-operation creates multiple avenues for dialogue, reducing the risks in times of crisis.

UNCLOS does not require warships making an innocent passage to provide advance notice, Chinese law does, a position that the PLA Navy seeks to enforce.

Although the South China Sea was on the agenda of a summit meeting between Barack Obama and Xi Jinping at the White House in late September, they failed to reach an understanding. In October, the *USS Lassen*, a US Navy guided missile destroyer, sailed within twenty-two kilometres of Subi Reef, one of the newly built artificial islands, in what anonymous Pentagon sources described as both an innocent passage and a FONOP. The *Lassen* did not provide prior notice of its passage. Some observers wondered whether the US, in claiming innocent passage, had inadvertently bestowed implicit recognition upon China's territorial claim.

China's 'island building' in the South China Sea
Photo: guancha.cn

A letter from Ashton Carter to US Senator John McCain on 22 December finally put the rumours to rest by clarifying that the *Lassen*'s passage was meant to challenge what the US saw as China's illegal attempts to restrict freedom of navigation by requiring prior notice for innocent passage. It was not, he stressed, an indication that the US had taken a position 'on which nation has the superior sovereignty claims over each land feature in the Spratly Islands. Thus, the operation did not challenge any country's claims of sovereignty over land features, as that is not the purpose or function of a FONOP.'

Chinese official reaction to the *Lassen* operation took little note of these distinctions. State media described the US as 'irresponsible' and 'reckless', and Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Lu Kang 陆康 said the US should not 'make a fool out of themselves in trying to be smart'.

Diplomacy in North East Asia

In 2014, Xi shook Japanese Prime Minister Shinzō Abe's hand. But in 2015, there was also much fist shaking. The official Xinhua News Agency described as 'insincere' the statement by Abe on the end of WWII in August, in which he expressed 'remorse' and pledged that Japan would 'never again resort to any form of the threat or use of force as a means of settling international disputes' and would 'respect the right of self-determination of all peoples throughout the world'. However, he stopped short of issuing a clear apology.

For its part, at the military parade commemorating Japan's surrender, China showcased its new Dong-Feng 26 (DF-26, 东风-26) missile, also known as the 'Guam Killer' for its ability to reach the island chain from Chinese territory. China, meanwhile, continued to patrol the seas

Abe and Xi shake hands at the APEC meeting in Beijing
Photo: gdb.voanews.com

around the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands, which both sides claim, and Japan continued to scramble fighter jets in high numbers to prevent possible incursions by Chinese planes.

At the same time, there have been positive developments. Japan's National Security Advisor Shotaro Yachi 谷内 正太郎 and Chinese State Councillor for Foreign Affairs Yang Jiechi 杨洁篪 co-chaired the first China-Japan High Level Political Dialogue in Beijing in July, affirming and acknowledging the 'momentum' for improvement in bilateral relations.

Yang made a reciprocal visit to Japan in October where he also met with Abe, laying the groundwork for a possible Leaders' Summit. Yet the passage of a new security law by the Japanese Diet in July and Japanese protests to UNESCO in October over the inclusion of documents on the Nanjing Massacre in its 'Memory of the World' program restrained the pace of what is already a very slow thaw in relations.

Despite having resolved none of the issues that had blocked such a meeting since 2012, Li Keqiang met his Korean and Japanese counterparts for the first time in three years in Seoul on 1 November, signalling that China wants to continue dialogue, even if the underlying problems are tricky to deal with.

As for North Korea, Beijing remains concerned about Pyongyang's nuclear program and supports sanctions as long as North Korea continues to violate UN resolutions. Yet Politburo Standing Committee member Liu Yunshan 刘云山 visited Pyongyang in October for a parade

Liu Yunshan in North Korea
Photo: mingpaocanada.com

marking the seventieth anniversary of the Workers' Party, carrying a supportive message from Xi Jinping and prompting speculation of a more senior visit.

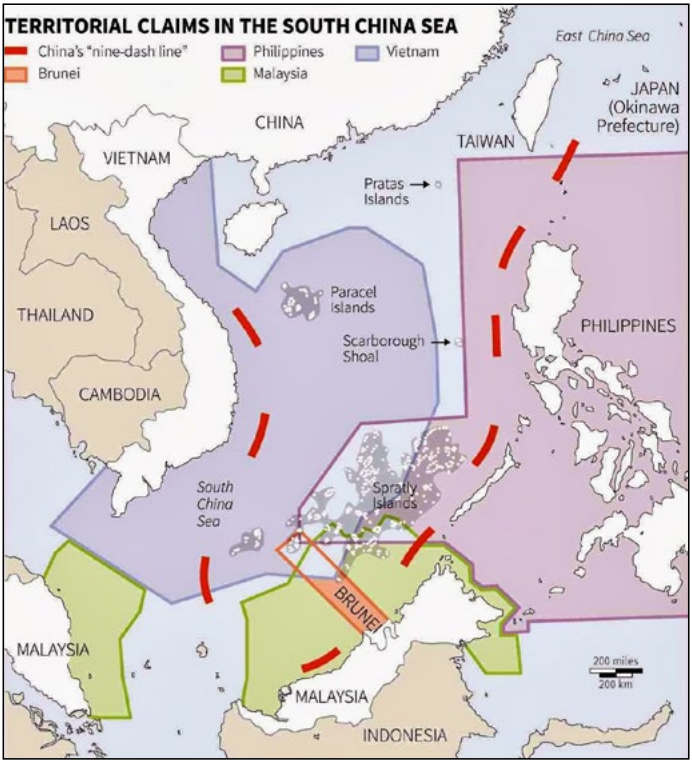
Speculation cooled when the Moranbong 'girl' band, whose members are apparently hand picked by Kim Jong-un, visited Beijing two months later but then left suddenly, without performing and without explanation. This might have been because Xi Jinping decided not to attend the performance after Kim announced, only days earlier, that North Korea was 'ready to detonate a self-reliant A-bomb and H-bomb'.

Rumours also circulated that the band had departed after a stand off regarding a song declaring Chairman Mao 'the greatest on earth' but 'Great Leader Kim' the 'greatest in the universe'. Either way, relations continued to cool following a reported test of the hydrogen bomb at the start of 2016, and it is not clear how ties might recover. Since 2013, Xi Jinping has held six summits with South Korea's President Park Geun-hye. He has never met Kim Jong-un.

... and in South East Asia

Xi and Li both visited the region, an important part of the 'Maritime Silk Road'. But China's continued, enthusiastic pursuit of island building in contested waters and dismissal of regional concerns meant that diplomatic gestures such as Xi's visit to Vietnam in November, the first by a Chinese president in ten years, were not universally well received. The Vietnamese government, apparently divided between pro-US and pro-China factions, brutally suppressed some of the protests.

Vietnamese protesters greet Xi's arrival
Source: ndtv.com



Map of China's nine-dashed line
Image: en.wikipedia.org

In June, the Chinese Foreign Ministry announced that it would stop reclaiming land in the South China Sea. At the same time, it said it would continue to construct facilities on the islands it had already built—some 1,170 hectares of land in total, according to Pentagon estimates.

By September, China had also completed construction of its first airstrip there, on Fiery Cross Reef. There are four other airstrips in the region, built by Vietnam in 1976, the Philippines in 1978, Malaysia in 1983, and Taiwan in 2006. The Chinese government has accused its critics of a double standard, given that other claimants to the Spratly Islands have also built islands—although only amounting in total to five percent of all the reclaimed land there, with China responsible for ninety-five percent. China's new airstrip, at 3,000 metres, is more than twice as long as any of the others.

In November 2015, an arbitral tribunal facilitated by the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) in The Hague decided that it did have jurisdiction to hear a case brought by the Philippines contesting various Chinese claims, including the nine-dashed line by which China demarcates its

THE CHINESE ARMED FORCES IN 2015,
by Rebecca Fabrizi

New DF-26 anti-ship ballistic missiles at the military parade on 3 September
Image: janes.com

China's military development continued apace in 2015, with a defence budget of approximately US$215 billion, a 10.1 percent increase from 2014. This was the second largest after the US, at US$596 billion, and way ahead of Saudi Arabia, at US$87.2 billion. The expansion is intended to advance the modernisation of China's military, especially the navy and air force, which have traditionally lagged way behind land forces, as well as to fund the development of new weapons systems. China's new Dong-feng 26 (DF-26, 东风-26) anti-ship ballistic missiles were among new hardware revealed at the military parade on 3 September.

China released a military strategy paper in 2015, providing some broad insights into its strategic goals, including '... making the military strong as part of the Chinese Dream'. Key tasks were to safeguard territorial interests and the unity of the motherland; protect against separatism; safeguard China's overseas interests; maintain strategic deterrence; and provide overall support to the Chinese Communist Party.

China's military parade on 3 September showcased the new DF-26, or 'Guam Killer' missile. At the end of December, the Ministry of Defence confirmed that China had constructed its first domestic-built aircraft carrier. Other modernisation efforts have focused on cyber and counter-space capabilities (the latter focuses on the use of satellites in warfare and includes the development of 'directed-energy weaponry' and satellite jamming technology).

The biggest story in the Chinese military in 2014 and 2015 was the unprecedented crackdown on corruption at senior levels. The campaign has felled two of the most powerful officers of recent times, Xu Caihou 徐才厚 and Guo Boxiong 郭伯雄, both former vice chairmen of the Central Military Commission (CMC) 中央军事委员会. Xu died in 2015. His case had been dropped in 2014 when it was clear that his failing health was already a death sentence. Guo, who was the more senior and who may have accumulated even more dirty money than Xu, was accused of bribery in July. On 6 July, the *People's Daily* reported that more than 200 officers of lieutenant-colonel rank and above had been punished in 2013 and 2014 for corruption.

China's armed forces serve the Communist Party. Under the previous president Hu Jintao, the control of the civilian leadership over the army was seen as weak. The world got a glimpse of this weakness when the PLA tested its first stealth fighter on the day of a visit by US Defense Secretary Robert Gates in 2011 apparently without Hu's knowledge. This stunning display of the military taking the initiative on foreign policy came just one week before Hu's State visit to the United States.

In December, Xi completely overhauled the command structure, asserting and consolidating control by downgrading the previously powerful four PLA functional headquarters to departments of the Central Military Commission (CMC). The navy and air force got their own commands, no longer subordinate to the vastly more numerous land forces. There were new commands for space and cyber-warfare, as well as ballistic and cruise missiles. A new joint command, meanwhile, followed the US model. The number of regional commands was reduced from seven to five to increase central control. Xi repeated his commitment to reduce military personnel by 300,000, to two million. In what appeared to be a final confirmation that he had secured total control over the armed forces, in 2016, Xi emerged as Commander-in-Chief 总指挥, a title never before used in the PRC.

XI'S UK VISIT, by Rebecca Fabrizi

Xi Jinping attends the official welcoming ceremony in Horse Guards Parade
Photo: news.xinhuanet.com

At the end of a day of pageantry during Xi's visit to the UK in mid-October, the lavish banquet at Buckingham Palace wrapped up with a rendition by the Countess of Wessex's String Orchestra of 'Nobody Does It Better', the theme song from the *The Spy Who Loved Me*, a James Bond flick about two stolen nuclear submarines. The two countries had earlier announced that China would take a one-third stake in the £18 billion Hinkley Point C nuclear power plant project.

Former prime minister Cameron had been hailing the 'golden era' 黄金时代 in Sino-British relations ever since his 2015 re-election. British policy aims to secure London's primacy in both international trading in the RMB and Chinese inward investment into Europe. But David Cameron and former chancellor George Osborne annoyed many of the UK's traditional allies as well as domestic critics who believe Britain had abandoned universal values in favour of hard cash, despite there being no evidence that the UK's human rights policy towards China had changed. Steve Hilton, David Cameron's former advisor, called Xi's visit 'one of the worst national humiliations we've seen since we went cap in hand to the IMF [International Monetary Fund] in the 1970s'.

Chinese state media, meanwhile, joyously propagated images of Xi and his wife Peng Liyuan enjoying a traditional state visit. 'No institution does pomp and pageantry quite as well as the British royals, and probably no institution appreciates it as much as the modern Communist Party of China,' observed *The Financial Times*. Britain's role in China's 'century of humiliation' was overlooked in favour of the rhetoric of 'win-win co-operation' 共赢 and enthusiastic praise for British culture. Even the nationalistic *Global Times*, which in 2013 called Cameron's overtures insincere and the UK nothing more than 'an old country apt for travel and study', railed against any suggestions that the 'golden age' was built on inequity. It characterised such a view as mere 'sour grapes'.

claim to sovereignty over all of the South China Sea's land features on the map. China refuses to accept that this case has any legal basis, and doesn't recognise the authority of the PCA. The tribunal's decision, however, makes quite clear that the case can be heard, whether or not both parties agree to engage. China has always been deliberately vague about the legal basis of its own claims, preferring to assert 'historical rights'. There is no basis under the UN Convention on the Law Of the Sea (UNCLOS) for a nation to claim territorial rights based on islands built on low-tide elevations unless they are on its continental shelf. By building and populating relatively large islands, China may be hoping to create a new precedent in its own interests.

China called the US FONOPS (see Information Window 'South China Sea and the US FONOP', pp.230–231) 'illegal' (under Chinese domestic law rather than UNCLOS) and a 'threat to China's sovereignty and security'. Other South China Sea claimant states kept quiet, failing to take take a unified position. China has successfully avoided multilateral discussion of the matter, though they appear more inclined to acknowledge that a solution will require discussion with ASEAN.

Global Attitudes

Most countries struggled to find a consistent and constructive China policy that would serve their policy interests in 2015. The then prime minister of Australia Tony Abbott crudely summed up a common (if rarely vocalised) attitude when he told German Chancellor Angela Merkel that Australians viewed China with 'fear and greed'. For China's neighbours, balancing independence and beneficial economic ties with China is a challenge, one thrown into relief by the OBOR Initiative. Nations less concerned by China as a potential security threat, such as in more distant Europe are nonetheless perturbed by ever-increasing restrictions on civil liberties. How to deal with a China that is rich, influential, yet not showing any trend towards becoming a liberal democracy is seen to violate human rights and is one of the most pressing diplomatic questions for the US and its allies.

The United Kingdom took a bold and opportunistic stance under the initiative of former chancellor George Osborne to court China, becoming its 'best friend in Europe'. The UK was the first European country to ignore US lobbying and state its intention to become a founding member of the AIIB. Xi described the UK's position as 'visionary' when he visited in October, although many commentators described it as embarrassing, and the US accused it of 'constant accommodation'.

Britain has certainly taken a risk in alienating traditional allies: investment from China might be growing but it is still small at around three percent of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) stock, as opposed to twenty-seven percent from the US, and China's economic and political future is uncertain. However, it was interesting to see a new diplomatic approach, one with less hedging, working with China in pursuit of UK interests where possible, and leaving space to defend universal values where appropriate. How best to interact with China on the international stage will depend on how China's domestic struggles play out. It is too early to tell.

Afterword

In July 2016, an arbitral tribunal at the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague issued a ruling in Manila's case against claims made by Beijing in the South China Sea. The tribunal was established according to UNCLOS provisions and its ruling was final and binding. The ruling dismissed most of Beijing's claims, including to 'historic rights' and any validity of the nine-dashed line. It also found that Beijing had violated the traditional fishing rights of Filipinos around Scarborough Shoal, and the sovereign rights of the Philippines over living and non-living resources.

China has angrily refused to recognise the validity of the court or its ruling. Indeed, there is no enforcement mechanism. China has also conducted a vigorous diplomatic campaign to reduce international pressure to abide by the ruling. President Duterte of the Philippines has called for bilateral talks. China announced that a senior officials meeting with ASEAN on 16 August had achieved consensus on achieving a draft Code of Conduct by mid-2017.

XI IN DC, by Rebecca Fabrizi

Peng Liyuan, Xi Jinping, and Barack Obama in the Lincoln Bedroom in the White House
Photo: Peter Souza, Flickr

Xi Jinping visited the US from 22-28 September 2015. He kicked off with two days of speeches and meetings with tech executives in Seattle—an opportunity to stress the two countries' strong commercial ties, but also to reassure a powerful sector rattled by the implications of China's expanding national security regulations. After his first state visit to Washington DC, from 24–25 September, where President Obama hosted meetings and a state dinner at the White House, he spent several days at the United Nations in New York.

The visit was not widely expected to be a success. It coincided with the growing scandal over a cyber attack on the Office for Personnel Management, in which as many as twenty million records were stolen, making it the largest breach of government data in US history, and which US government sources attributed to China. There were other sources of tension as well. The turbulence in China's stock market over the preceding months had sharply reduced confidence in China's economic management. And the US had been criticising China's island-building in the South China Sea for several months, to Beijing's acute irritation.

In the end, things went slightly better than expected. Intense negotiation on cyber security in the weeks preceding the visit resulted in some agreed-on, if weak, language on the subject. Both sides agreed not to 'conduct or knowingly-support' commercial espionage, though China has consistently denied doing this anyway. The difference between commercial and national security espionage remained undefined. Given sweeping definitions of national security in China this leaves an expansive grey area, encompassing the various commercial sectors described as 'core' national interests. However, the agreement provided a basis for further discussion. Both sides committed to a ministerial-level, multi-agency dialogue twice a year.

With regard to climate change, China and the US had made headlines ten months previously with an agreement that put Australia to shame on the eve of the Brisbane G20 Summit. During this visit, they built on this agreement, releasing a joint vision statement for the UN Conference on climate change, COP21 in Paris (30 November–12 December 2015). Co-operation between two of the largest emitters of carbon dioxide was fantastic news for COP21, and demonstrated China's commitment to making a substantive contribution to global governance.

The two Presidents addressed regional security in their joint press conference, including the South China Sea. Xi denied any intention to militarise the Spratly Islands, and said that China supported freedom of navigation and overflight in accordance with international law. Perhaps his words, at odds with China's actions ever since, were intended to blame the US for militarising the area, and bolster the idea that all China does is defend its sovereign interests. More meaningful was an agreement on handling air-to-air encounters, of which there had been several through 2014 and 2015, including a reported near miss by only ten metres.

FORUM

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RESOLUTION • 夬

One Belt One Road: International Development Finance with Chinese Characteristics
· DAVID MURPHY

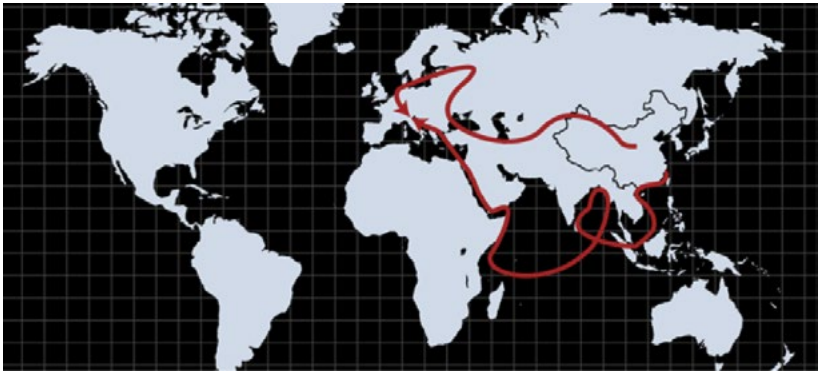
Purifying the Body Politic in Taiwan
· MARK HARRISON

ONE BELT ONE ROAD: INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT FINANCE WITH CHINESE CHARACTERISTICS

David Murphy

CHINA'S TUMBLING STOCKS, slippery and slipping growth numbers, and pollution emergencies were just a few of the crises of 2015 rattling a global economy increasingly dependent on Chinese growth. The central government's continued elaboration of its One Belt One Road (OBOR) Initiative suggests that China's leaders, by contrast, are increasingly confident that the lessons of China's unique experience of development can be applied on a wider stage than previously imagined. The Chinese concept of development finance 开发性金融 provides the set of principles that determine how Xi Jinping's gauzy statements of intent will actually be converted into bricks and mortar, rail and highways. As a consequence, understanding the Chinese concept of development finance, and its similarities and differences with international orthodoxies is essential for understanding what OBOR is and what it might imply.

The first time Xi Jinping introduced the concept of OBOR, in September 2013 in Kazakhstan, he spoke of a 'Silk Road Economic Belt'—specifically, road and rail construction along a route roughly following the ancient trade route connecting China to Europe via Central Asia. One month later, in Indonesia, he proposed an equivalent 'Maritime Silk Road' to



Map of the 'One Belt, One Road' route
Source: Economist Intelligence Unit

link China's eastern ports to Europe via Southeast Asia. The Maritime Silk Road would pass along the Indian subcontinent, doubling back around the Bay of Bengal then across the Indian Ocean, grazing the east coast of Africa before heading straight up through the Suez Canal. On the maps that China has since published, this 'one belt' and 'one road' appear as two threads in a loop that loosely knits together Europe, Asia, the Middle East, and parts of Africa.

In March, the government revealed more details about the routes and corridors along which the government anticipates that construction will be concentrated. Most of China's largest industrial and financial enterprises also released OBOR plans, which typically integrated their existing projects and future planning with OBOR's objectives. (See Chapter 6 'Belt Tightening, pp.214–239.) These statements are beginning to give the OBOR concept shape and content.

But the event that perhaps most greatly informs our understanding of OBOR is not directly related to the initiative itself. In April, the State Council issued a document on the future structure of China's banking system. It identified three kinds of finance—commercial, policy, and development. It defined the functions of each kind, and decreed that Chinese financial institutions would each have to commit to one kind and divest itself of its other kinds of loans. The institutions charged with financing OBOR—the

China Development Bank, along with the new institutions AIIB and Silk Road Fund—are all considered development finance institutions. So the State Council's decision essentially affirms that the principles of Chinese development finance will determine the lending practices that will shape OBOR.

Chen Yuan 陈元 was the first chairman of the China Development Bank and, in the late 1990s, the first to articulate a Chinese concept of development finance. He was building upon the tenets of development finance established by Western powers following World War II to fund reconstruction, as embodied in the institutions of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Foremost among these tenets is the notion that economic development depends on the construction of capital-intensive infrastructure. In parts of the world where commercial banks will not fund development projects because of excessive time frames and low yields (rather than inherent risk) there is a role for state institutions or multilateral finance organisations to step in.

Chen established the principle that development finance in China would support development decided by national strategic interests. At the same time, it would be administered by a functionally independent institution—the China Development Bank—that would have the right to choose the projects it funded. It would not have the burden of channelling state subsidies to failing industries or ill-conceived public works. This dual aim—of advancing national strategic interests and remaining independently viable—fostered distinct lending practices. These included the Local Government Financing Vehicles that allowed provincial and city governments to leverage the rising value of land to fund infrastructure. The bank has succeeded spectacularly. With few bad loans on its books and assets of over $US1.6 trillion at the end of 2014, it is now one of the biggest financial institutions in the world.

Chen Yuan
Source: alchetron.com

Given that OBOR theoretically encompasses over half the world's population, territory, and economic activity, and is backed by an institution much larger than the World Bank, the ques-

tion arises as to whether the principles of Chinese development finance are compatible with global norms.

The constant referencing of the World Bank in the China Development Bank's reviews of the completed projects it has financed shows how close the core principles of Chinese development finance are to those of the institutions (World Bank, IMF) established by the United Nations Monetary and Financial Conference of 1944 (also known as the Bretton Woods conference). There are, however, at least two major discrepancies.

The first is that Chinese development finance is explicitly the servant of China's national strategy. Its founding purpose was to support the broad goals of the state, such as the Western Development Strategy, first proposed in 1999. This involved the diversion of resources towards China's interior regions to help them catch up with the more economically dynamic coastal provinces. By contrast, the multilateral Bretton Woods institutions are guided by principles that, if ideologically inflected, are presented as supporting the interests of developing countries and the global community in general. It might be argued that institutions like the World Bank have in practice been co-opted by their major donors to pursue their own narrow national interests. Yet there remains a basic difference in principle.

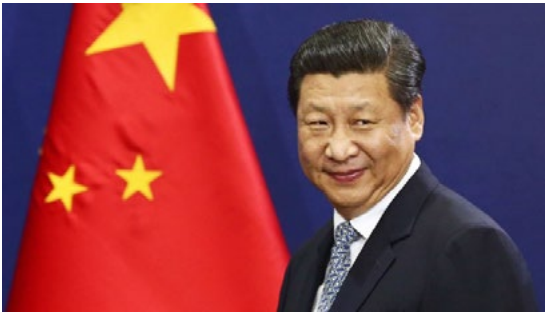
The second major distinction concerns the importance placed on strong institutions of governance in countries receiving investment. This has long been an article of faith in the world of multilateral development finance, but it appears to conflict with China's own experience. In an article in 2011, University of Hong Kong

The first Chinese train reaches Tehran
Image: img0.imgtn.bdimg.com

economist Xu Chenggang 许成钢 explained how China's spectacular achievements in wealth creation and poverty reduction had occurred in a context of 'notoriously weak' institutions of government, corporate governance, law, and finance. He points out that China pressed forward with development in spite of these deficiencies. This, in turn, has shaped its development finance methodologies. Now, with OBOR, these may be applied abroad on an unprecedented scale.

If, as the plan for OBOR anticipates, China continues to ramp up its overseas lending to the point that it is responsible for a very large proportion of global development finance, China's impact on global development paradigms will be considerable.

This may not play out, at least initially, in competition between Chinese institutions and established multilateral institutions competing directly to finance development in other countries. In the region covered by OBOR, demand for development finance vastly outweighs the current supply. Concern, however, may arise if Chinese development finance institutions are seen to be offering soft loans in the service of a strategy of economic integration, for such loans could encourage an economic dependence on China that might substantially shift the global balance of power away from the liberal democracies.



Xi Jinping announced the OBOR Initiative in September 2013
Source: infobrics.org

Many Chinese commentators have emphasised the need to forestall suspicion and alarm about Chinese intentions, not just in Washington and Tokyo, but in the OBOR countries themselves. In order to project an image of China as a rising power with fraternal instincts, they occasionally present arguments that cast the multilateral institutions of development finance as rigidly ideological, paternalistic or infected by a residual imperialism.

Niu Wenxin 钮文新, the editor-in-chief of CCTV's finance network, wrote such a commentary in the *China Economic Weekly* in March 2015. He explicitly stated that the

establishment of the AIIB breaks the monopoly of the Bretton Woods institutions in the development finance sphere, and that cheaper infrastructure-targeted loans could bring about a 'second Asian economic miracle'. Insisting that China is a 'developing country that understands the needs of developing countries', he suggested that the World Bank and the IMF have become 'tools of imperialism'.

He gave as examples the lending conditions the IMF imposed during the Mexican and Asian financial crises of the 1990s and said China would never indulge in such paternalistic prescriptivism. The AIIB, by contrast, has created an unprecedented opportunity for developed and developing countries to engage in dialogue on development finance as equals. Such commentary tends to conflate the project financing functions of the World Bank, which China has been adapting and replicating for some time, with the global financial stabilisation and crisis management functions of the IMF—of which China has no unique experience. This is perhaps due to a perception that the World Bank and the IMF are different branches of a global financial establishment with a common ideology.

Other prominent Chinese economists, less boosterish about OBOR, have expressed concerned that such a scale of strategy-driven finance will lead to colossal waste, particularly of China's vast (but diminishing) reserves of foreign currency.

If Chinese media has aired a diversity of views about the country's evolving role as a development financier, no one should doubt China's confidence in and commitment to the sort of international development implied by OBOR, to which it is devoting formidable political and financial capital.

'One Belt, One Road' promotional image
Source: img1.imgtn.bdimg.com

PURIFYING THE BODY POLITIC IN TAIWAN

Mark Harrison

ON 16 JANUARY 2016, voters in Taiwan elected their first female president, Tsai Ing-wen 蔡英文, and gave the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) an absolute majority in the Legislative Yuan, Taiwan's parliament, for the first time. The election results were a thorough repudiation of the ruling party, the KMT, and Taiwan's outgoing president, Ma Ying-jeou 馬英九.

Under President Ma, who headed Taiwan's government from 2008 to 2016, Taiwan had forged closer ties with mainland China. The government had delivered a series of cross-Strait agreements on trade, tourism, education, and investment. Cross-Strait trade and investment grew rapidly through his presidential terms, and several million mainland tourists began visiting Taiwan every year. Under Ma, there were regular high-level meetings by government officials from each side as part of a policy to institutionalise cross-Strait relations.

Tsai Ing-wen
Source: pl.wikipedia.org

In Singapore in November 2015, Ma and Xi Jinping held the first-ever meeting between the leaders of the Republic of China and the People's Republic of China. For Ma, this historic gesture was the high point of his presidency. However, for many Taiwanese voters, the meeting was the culmination of a period of disenchantment and anger.

Long before the historic summit and the presidential election

Ma Ying-jeou and Xi Jinping
Source: commons.wikimedia.com

campaign, a new generation of political activists had begun arguing that cross-Strait trade and exchanges benefitted ordinary people in Taiwan far less than they did the KMT's own crony networks of political and business interests. As discussed in the 2014 *Yearbook*, the Anti-Media Monopoly Movement, which began in mid-2012 and gained momentum in the second half of that year, campaigned successfully against the concentration of media ownership in Taiwan in the hands of the pro-Chinese businessperson Tsai Eng-meng 蔡衍明.

In 2014, student activists of the Sunflower Movement occupied the Legislative Yuan to protest against a bilateral agreement that would have given Chinese commercial interests access to key areas of Taiwan's economy including the media, banking, and education. The protesters claimed that the agreement would have afforded mainland China undue influence over Taiwan's social and cultural life and that this would ultimately undermine Taiwan's democratic system and freedoms.

The results of county and municipal elections in November 2014 showed that the concerns expressed by the student activists were widely shared. The KMT lost the mayorships of every major city bar one, and following that election the entire cabinet of the Taiwanese government resigned. The KMT's heavy defeats not only bestowed formal democratic legitimacy on the position of anti-KMT activists but also enabled the DPP to capitalise on voter sentiment to build an unstoppable momentum through 2015.

Students mobilised again in July 2015 to protest changes to high school history textbooks proposed by the Ministry of Education. The protesters were angered by changes to the language and terminology with which the textbooks discussed key events in Taiwan's history, such as the period of Japanese colonial rule (1895–1945). They said that these changes both over-emphasised Taiwan's Chinese identity and reintroduced the style of education that characterised Taiwanese educa-

tion in the authoritarian era of Chiang Kai-shek and his immediate successors (1949–1987).

During the campaign for the 2016 presidential election, the KMT presidential candidate Eric Chu 朱立倫, the chairman of the KMT, placed Taiwan's relationship with mainland China at the centre of his presidential campaign. Chu said that the KMT had created a stable basis for Taiwan's relationship with the Mainland, which, he argued, afforded Taiwan the best prospects for long-term prosperity and peace.

Tsai Ing-wen conversely emphasised the DPP's focus on domestic issues, noting in particular the poor state of Taiwan's economy, wage stagnation, and housing affordability. She also called for better environmental protection and a culture of innovation. She attacked the KMT for its ineffective domestic governance, using examples such as the tainted cooking oil scandal in late 2014, in which food company Chang Guann 強冠企業 was found to have adulterated cooking oil with recycled oil and other substitutes.

Tsai avoided, as much as possible, being drawn into a clear position on Taiwan's relations with mainland China. Rather, she stressed that Taiwan has a unique identity and called for stability and continuity in cross-Straits relations. She pledged to manage cross-Strait relations in accordance with the Constitution of the Republic of China and thereby accommodating a key demand from Beijing. At the same time, her emphasis on domestic issues of deep concern to voters implicitly criticised the KMT's approach to relations with China as well as the notion advanced by the KMT that closer links to the Mainland represented a positive future for Taiwan.

Eric Chu
Source: commons.wikipedia.org

Taiwan's economy slipped into recession in late 2015 as campaigning for the presidential election reached fever pitch. Party figures on both sides threw inflammatory statements and slurs against their opponents. Senior KMT figure Chiu Yi 邱毅 accused Tsai Ing-wen of illegally profitting from a real estate deal in the 1990s. The DPP responded by publicising Chiu Yi's extensive land holdings and financial interests. The election rallies grew ever larger and were as deafening as rock

HUANG AN'S WITCH HUNT FOR TAIWANESE INDEPENDENCE SUPPORTERS,
by Lorand Laskai

Huang An
Photo: chinesepress.com

In the lead-up to the Taiwanese presidential election, the fifty-four-year old Taiwanese singer Huang An 黄安 (best known for his 1993 pop hit *New Dream for a Pair of Butterflies* 新鸳鸯蝴蝶梦) launched a personal campaign to expose supporters of Taiwanese independence 台独份, particularly in Taiwan's entertainment industry, and report them 举报 over Weibo to Chinese authorities. Huang An's music career initially took off in Taiwan, where he was born. Yet like many Taiwanese artists, he found a far larger market for his work on the Mainland. Unlike a number of other Taiwanese artists and entertainers who perform in mainland China and make a conscious decision to underplay any personal politics that would be controversial there—pro-independence views, for example—Huang sings in harmony with the Communist Party's adamant opposition to Taiwanese independence.

Huang's one-man Weibo campaign started in earnest in late September 2015, when Chung Yu-chen 钟屿晨, a politically-minded twenty-four-year-old Taiwanese businesswoman, posted a status update on her Facebook page after returning from a business trip to the Mainland. In it, she joked about taking mainlanders' money and using it to strengthen the cause of independence. Prickly Chinese netizens expressed anger, but Huang went a step further. The singer dredged up and posted information about Chung's company and the Xiamen-based state-owned enterprise with which it was co-operating, and tagged relevant government agencies on Weibo. Soon after, Huang posted a picture of himself outside the gate of Beijing's Taiwan Affairs Office 国台办 holding up a sign with the words 'I am anti-Taiwanese independence, not anti-Taiwan' 我是反台独，不是反台湾 scrawled across it.

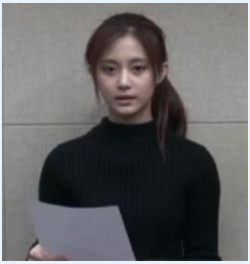
On 20 November, Huang reported on Taiwanese singer Crowd Lu 卢广仲, divulging online that the artist, who had been slated to perform at a music festival in Dongguan, had joined the opposition to a controversial service trade agreement with China in 2014. Huang explained that he had originally withheld this information lest he ruin the young

artist's career, but had changed his mind: 'I have only one reason for reporting you [to the authorities]: Taiwanese Independence! Crowd Lu, my little friend, why force yourself to go sell your voice in a place you oppose, protest against, disdain and raise your voice against for "suppressing Taiwan's nationhood?" ' 我举报他的理由只有一条：台独！广仲小朋友，何必勉强自己去你反对、抗议、不屑、呛声、'打压台湾国' 的地方卖声呢? The artist dropped out of the music festival and has not toured in the Mainland since.

A profile of Huang published around the same time reported that he had become 'obsessed' with the 'report' function on his Weibo and spent all his time 'before sleep, on the road, and even on the toilet' trawling Weibo for signs of Taiwanese independence sympathizers. Once, in the span of a few minutes, Huang reported five people and received a system error notification: 'your reports exceed normal frequency, please wait five minutes then try again.'

Huang An's next two high-profile targets were TV host and comedian NONO 陳宣裕 and pop singer Chou Tzu-Yu 周子瑜. NONO, apparently an old friend of Huang, provoked Huang's anger after he voiced his support for an independence-leaning legislative candidate in his hometown. Huang reported NONO and the comedian cancelled an upcoming TV appearance in the mainland. Chou Tzu-Yu unwittingly entered Huang's sights after she held up a Taiwanese flag during a performance with her international K-pop group TWICE on South Korean television. Huang railed against the sixteen-year-old singer on Weibo, and called for a boycott of her music, leading a series of mainland TV programs and venues to cancel performances.

With Chou, Huang An finally seemed to go too far. On 15 January 2016, the eve of the Taiwanese election, Chou's talent agency released a video of the young singer reading a scripted apology. 'There is only one China ... and I am proud to consider myself thoroughly Chinese,' the teary-eyed singer said. Taiwanese society reacted with disgust: legislators called for an inquiry into revoking Huang's Taiwanese citizenship and KTV parlors on the island boycotted his music. Observers have ascribed the large voter turnout for independence-leaning candidates on election day in part to the outrage over Chou's forced apology.



Chou Tzu-Yu
Photo: youtube.com

The Taiwanese vote-counting ritual
Photo: Mark Harrison

concerts. The campaigning received non-stop and frequently emotive and hyperbolic coverage from Taiwan's twenty-four-hour cable news media.

When election day dawned, Taiwanese citizens cast their votes and at the end of the day the process of vote counting began. In contrast to the raucousness of campaigning, vote counting at the end of an election day in Taiwan is a solemn and formal process. School classrooms commonly serve as polling stations, with local teachers acting as tellers and counters. When the voting concludes, the large yellow ballot boxes, emblazoned with the flag of the Republic of China, are unlocked, their broad paper seals torn, and a teller pulls out the large voting slips one at a time. A second holds it aloft in both hands and calls out the voter's choice. At the blackboard, a third repeats the result and records it as a line on the long strip of paper dedicated to that candidate, each five lines forming the complete character *zheng* 正. This style of counting is widely used in shops and restaurants across the Chinese-speaking world but *zheng*, which means correct, exact or orthodox, acquires a special importance in this context. A fourth counter takes the ballot paper, checks it off, and stacks it.

At the other end of the classroom, representatives of the political parties and Central Election Commission officials watch carefully. If there is a miscount, a shout goes up and the process stops. The ballot paper is examined and an election official notes the error. Local police are on hand, and sometimes individuals and families known to the scrutineers will wander into the classroom to observe the process. When all the votes are counted, the scrutineers examine the empty ballot boxes and the final tally is made. The election officials then phone in the results to the main election tally room of the Central Election Commission in Taipei. The CEC takes over a large hall on the Taiwan Police College campus, where hundreds of journalists, politicians, and observers gather to watch huge screens broadcasting the results.

The counting of the votes in Taiwan has the quality of a rite. The practice of counting becomes a series of formalised repeated motions as the ballot papers are passed between the

tellers, while the uttered declarations of the ballots are like a secular liturgy of versicle and response.

In the Chinese worldview, rites, or *li* 禮 are a central part of the many lineages of thought and practice that make up the Chinese world, including Daoism, Buddhism, and Confucianism. The classical Confucian text the *Li Ji* 禮記 or *Book of Rites*, one of the Five Classics of the Confucian canon, prescribes ritual practices and describes their moral, social, and political value.

Rites are one of the ways political power, the social order, morality, and cosmology are understood as all interconnected. They establish the social regulation of behaviour as the foundation of power and order. Through rites, an individual knows the correct behaviour for their place and time in society. In that knowledge, he or she is able to see beyond the disorder of everyday life to a higher and enduring social order. Rites, with their requisite seriousness and forbearance, afford participants an experience of things being put right and in this momentary symbolic rectification of everyday deviations people can entertain the prospect of an ideal, or even orthodox and transcendent social order.

The character *zheng* 正 can be seen on the blackboard
Photo: Mark Harrison

Victorious Tsai Ing-wen
Photo: youtube.com

For the Taiwanese, the ritualised way in which their votes are counted, with every one of twelve million ballot papers held aloft and declared out loud, is an enduring expression of social and political ideals that they continue to observe above the noise of party politics and vociferous political activism. The public declaration of the political will of each individual member of Taiwanese society is intrinsic to how the Taiwanese have come to understand democracy as an orthodox social and political order.

In 2016, after the counting of the votes delivered victory to Tsai and the DPP, their supporters were jubilant and tearful. The KMT's Eric Chu bowed grim-faced after conceding defeat. In her victory speech, Tsai said: 'the people want to see a government more willing to listen to the people, a government that is more transparent and accountable, and a government that is more capable of leading us past our current challenges and taking care of those in need.'

But Tsai and the DPP face a contracting economy and a belligerent Beijing. One of her greatest challenges may be to manage expectations within her party and among young student activists as she makes the inevitable compromises of governance. There is nothing to suggest that the Tsai era will be less rancorous than the Ma era. However, just as Taiwan's body politic judged the KMT unfit to rule on election day in 2016, in four years Tsai Ing-wen and the DPP will face a similar ritual when the Taiwanese voters renew their commitment to their democratic system.

CHRONOLOGY

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

2015

1 January: China's updated Environmental Protection Law comes into effect. The law emphasises the importance of transparency and for the first time imposes daily penalty fines for polluters that exceed their permitted quota of emissions. Most notably, the new law gives certain Chinese environmental NGOs the right to bring environmental public interest lawsuits against polluters. Two environmental NGOs do so on the day the law goes into effect.

6 January: The Ministry of Agriculture announces a plan to nearly double the farmland devoted to cultivating potatoes by 2020 as part of an effort to ensure food security.

29 January: Education Minister Yuan Guiren 袁贵仁 calls for vigilant 'ideological management' in order to keep Western values and other perceived threats to the CCP out of classrooms.

16 February: The Central Commission for Discipline Inspection (CCDI) investigation into Su Rong 苏荣, vice-chairman of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) and former party chief for three provinces, concludes that he 'violated organisational

discipline' and 'used his position of power to seek gain for others'. He is expelled from the Party, a 'big tiger' in terms of the anti-corruption campaign.

28 February: Former investigative journalist Chai Jing 柴静 releases *Under the Dome*, a documentary on pollution in China which garners over 300 million views online within two weeks but is blocked within a week by censors, who also prohibit mention of it in Chinese media.

6 March: Five women activists, Li Tingting 李婷婷, Wu Rongrong 武嵘嵘, Zheng Churan 郑楚然, Wei Tingting 韦婷婷, and Wang Man 王曼, are arrested for 'picking quarrels and stirring up trouble' on the eve of a planned public campaign to raise awareness about sexual harassment on public transportation. The 'Feminist Five' become a global cause célèbre. On 27 April, the five women are released on bail.

16 March: CCTV America releases 'The 13 What', an English-language propaganda video explaining the Thirteenth Five-Year Plan to a foreign audience, becomes a minor online sensation. Unlike most propaganda aimed at the outside, the video is light-hearted and witty. Media inquires reveal that a Western PR company was involved in the production.

20 March: Chinese media celebrates the detention of Xu Gang 徐钢, the vice governor of Fujian, as the 'Ninety-ninth tiger' to fall since the Eighteenth Party Congress.

1 April: The *People's Daily* publishes an op-ed dismissing warnings that a bubble, fuelled by marginal financing, might be forming in China's stock markets, telling investors '4000 points is just the beginning'.

30 April: The Politburo formally endorses the Jing-Jin-Ji Co-operative Development Outline Plan for the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region 京津冀协同发展规划纲要.

5 May: The National People's Congress (NPC) releases the second draft of the Foreign/Overseas Non-Governmental Organisations Management Law of the People's Republic of China. The draft proposes stringent controls over foreign non-governmental organisations, including foundations and universities.

18 May: The Communist Party convenes the first national United Front

work conference in nine years. During his speech, Xi calls on Party officials to 'befriend' non-Communist Party intellectuals and bridge the divide between other parts of society and the Communist Party.

19 May: During a joint meeting of China's national security agencies, President Xi Jinping 习近平 calls for 'absolute loyalty' to the Communist Party as a necessary condition for national defence.

1 June: Beijing municipality rolls out a strict anti-smoking law that prohibits smoking in public, including in restaurants, offices and on public transport, imposing steep fines on offenders. Highlighting the government's new tough stance on smoking, the provision's successful enforcement is carefully monitored by authorities, and state media signals the law could be rolled out nationwide in the near future.

1 June: The Yangtze River cruise ship the *Eastern Star* 东方之星 capsizes in fifteen-metre-deep water in Jianli County, Hubei Province, killing 442 people.

11 June: Former head of China's state security Zhou Yongkang 周永康 is sentenced to life in prison for abuse of power and bribery during a closed-door trial, marking the first time a former member of the Politburo Standing Committee is convicted of corruption-related charges. State media heralds the fall of a major 'tiger' and suggests the corruption drive is entering a new stage.

16 June: Share prices on China's stock exchanges drop, triggering a series of extreme market fluctuations that destroy trillions of renminbi (RMB) in wealth before the end of the summer.

1 July: Yang Jisheng 杨继绳, a former Xinhua journalist and the celebrated author of *Tombstone* (about the three-year famine from 1958–1961), is forced to step down as editor-in chief of the embattled liberal magazine *Yanhuang C hunqiu*.

9 July: A two-month crackdown on human right lawyers begins with the detention of Zhou Shifeng 周世锋 and Wang Yu 王宇 of the Beijing Fengrui Law Firm 北京锋锐律师事务所. By the end of August, public security officials have detained over 250 lawyers and legal staff.

16 July: Months after authorities launch an Internet anti-porn campaign, a video of a young Chinese couple having sex in a Uniqlo fitting room in Beijing goes viral ocin WeChat and Sina WeChat. Police detain four people in connection with the video, but not before the video becomes a cultural sensation, inspiring t-shits and fan visits to the Beijing Uniqlo where it was shot.

2 August: Nearly a thousand Taiwanese turn out to protest 'China-centric' changes to the high school curriculum in Taiwan. The protest started on 24 July with a break-in to the Ministry of Education by thirty protestors, many of them high school students.

12 August: Two explosions at the port of Tianjin create a fireball visible from miles away and are strong enough to register as seismic activity by China's national earthquake centre. The accident, caused by illegal storage of dangerous chemicals at a nearby warehouse, kills 173 people.

24 August: Shanghai's main share index loses 8.49 percent of its value, leading Xinhua to dub the day 'Black Monday'.

25 August: Ken Liu's translation of Liu Cixin's 刘慈欣 *The Three Body Problem* 三体 wins the international Hugo Award for best science fiction, becoming the first Chinese science fiction novel to win the prestigious prize.

25 August: Police detain *Caijing* financial reporter Wang Xiaolu 王晓璐 for an article he published on 20 July, in which he suggested the China Securities and Regulatory Commission (CSRC) might stop propping up share prices. On 31 August, CCTV airs footage of Wang apologising for 'spreading rumours' and adding his 'own subjective judgment' to the report.

3 September: The Chinese government holds a large military parade, showcasing China's military might along Tiananmen's Chang'an Avenue to commemorate the nation's victory over Japan. Billed as an international celebration of the world's triumph over fascism, it is attended by heads of state from twenty-nine countries, including Russia and South Korea. A number of other world leaders, wary of the parade's militaristic overtones, stay away. In China, the parade is nonetheless a major propaganda coup for the Party-state at a time of economic uncertainty.

8 September: China marks the fiftieth anniversary of the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) 西藏自治區 with a massive public celebration. Politburo Standing Committee member Yu Zhengsheng 俞正声 oversees the celebration, stressing the importance of inter-ethnic harmony and economic development.

21 September: Authorities announce the launch of a national emissions trading system in 2017.

23 September: Xi Jinping meets with American business executives in Seattle before heading to Washington DC to meet with President Obama. After two days in DC, he flies to New York City to deliver a speech at the UN General Assembly, in which he pledges US$100 million in aid to the African Union.

5 October: Tu Youyou 屠呦呦 becomes the first Chinese national to win a Nobel Prize in Medicine for her work on the discovery of artemisinin and its use in the treatment of malaria.

10 October: Politburo Standing Committee member Liu Yunshan 刘云山 visits North Korea for the seventieth anniversary of the ruling Worker's Party in an attempt to reset relations after a period during which relations between the Kim regime and Beijing had been turbulent.

15 October: State media releases the transcript of President Xi Jinping's speech on cultural production at 'Forum on Art and Literature' that had been delivered the previous year. Officials are told to diligently study the speech and state media draws parallels to Mao Zedong's 1942 talks on the same subject, which guided state cultural policy for nearly forty years after.

17 October: A hundred days before Taiwan's general election, and in light of strong anti-China sentiment among voters, the governing Nationalist Party recalls its hardline presidential candidate, Hung Hsiu-chu 洪秀柱, who called for closer relations—and possible unification—with mainland China. Hung's replacement is New Taipei Mayor Eric Chu 朱立倫.

19 October: Xi Jinping and Peng Liyuan 彭丽媛 receive a royal welcome during their state visit to the UK, the first of a Chinese president to the UK since 2005. Both sides herald the trip as the start of a 'golden age' in Sino-British relations, but there are frictions and

some British commentators criticise the Cameron government for not putting human rights on the agenda.

21 October: The CCP releases a revised disciplinary code, which for the first time applies to all CCP members. It bans the playing of golf and emphasises moral conduct.

27 October: The US destroyer, *USS Lassen*, passes close by the China-controlled Subi Reef in the Spratly Islands in a 'Freedom of Navigation Operations' (FONOP). China calls the move a 'deliberate provocation'.

29 October: Two environmental NGOs, Friends of Nature and Fujian Green Home, win China's first-ever environmental public interest lawsuit, against an illegal mining operation in Fujian.

2 November: The editor of the *Xinjiang Daily*, Zhao Xinwei 赵新慰 is removed from his post and expelled from the Party for 'improperly' discussing government policy towards Xinjiang.

7 November: President Xi Jinping meets Taiwan President and head of the Nationalist Party, Ma Ying-Jeou 马英九 in Singapore, the first face-to-face meeting of leaders from mainland China and Taiwan since 1949. The highly choreographed meeting provides memorable images for both international and domestic media, but results in no substantial breakthrough in cross-strait relations. Taiwanese media criticise President Ma—who is, functionally, a lame duck president—for taking the trip in the first place.

18 November: The Islamic State executes Chinese national Fan Jinghui 樊京辉, posting photos online, and sparking an outpouring of grief and anger in China. President Xi Jinping and China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs Wang Yi 王毅 promise justice for the victim in strongly-worded statements.

26 November: The Beijing municipal government announces that the city will cap its population at twenty-three million.

8 December: The Beijing municipality issues its first 'red alert' for air pollution since the introduction of the environmental emergency response in late 2013. A red alert places temporary restrictions on the city's cars, factories, and construction sites, and closes schools.

14 December: Jack Ma's 马云 Alibaba announces that it will buy the *South China Morning Post*, Hong Kong's premier English-language paper, for US$266 million. In an interview with *The New York Times*, Ma's second-in-command, Joseph Tsai 蔡崇信, vowed to preserve the *SCMP*'s editorial independence, though he said he looks forward to more news reporting that will provide 'the Chinese perspective'.

16 December: Chinese officials, foreign dignitaries and tech industry leaders meet in Wuzhen, Zhejiang for the Second World Internet Conference. In his keynote address, President Xi Jinping outlines China's vision for strict and broad Internet governance and 'rectification'互联整理.

22 December: Human rights lawyer Pu Zhiqiang 浦志强 is given a suspended three-year sentence for 'picking quarrels and inciting ethnic hatred'. Pu was detained the previous May for posting criticism of government officials and China's policy in Tibet and Xinjiang on Weibo.

25 December: President Xi posts his very first Weibo message while conducting a media tour of the *People's Liberation Army Daily*.

25 December: The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) opens for business, with thirty-seven regional and twenty non-regional Prospective Founding Members (PFM). The bank has a founding capital of US$100 billion, equivalent to two-thirds of the capital of the Asian Development Bank and nearly half that of the World Bank. It is the first significant multilateral lender dominated by a developing country.

27 December: The National People's Congress adopts the two-child policy, a major change to the country's stringent family planning policy which had imposed, with some exceptions, a one-child limit on most families for almost four decades.

28 December: China passes its first anti-domestic violence law.

30 December: Lee Bo 李波, a Hong Kong bookseller, is seen pushed into a minivan while delivering a book order. He is next heard from days later, when he telephones his wife to say that he had to go to Shenzhen for urgent business—but Hong Kong's Immigration

Department has no record of Lee's departure, which suggests an abduction. Lee is one of five people associated with the publishing house Mighty Current which specialises in scandalous accounts of the private lives of Party leaders, all of whom were abducted by mainland authorities between October and December.

2016

1 January: China's two-child policy goes into effect.

8 January: Chinese security officials acknowledge that they have detained Hong Kong bookseller Lee Bo. The message, sent to Hong Kong Police, was just nine words, and contained no other details.

17 January: Voters in Taiwan elect Tsai Ing-wen 蔡英文 of the pro-independence Democratic Progressive People's Party as their president. China reacts swiftly and negatively to her election. China's Taiwan Affairs Office warned that it would treat Taiwan as an issue of national sovereignty and oppose any move towards independence. She voices a commitment to maintaining the status quo and ensuring peace.

17 March: The Thirteenth Five-Year Plan (2016–2020) is formally adopted by the annual plenary session of the NPC and CPPCC.

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The China Story
中國的故事

ONLINE MATERIAL

Electronic versions of this book and supplementary materials are available for free download in a variety of formats at: www.chinastory.org. Below are some of the resources available on The China Story site:

China Story Yearbook 2015: Pollution

thechinastory.org/yearbooks/yearbook-2015

China Story Yearbook 2014: Shared Destiny

thechinastory.org/yearbooks/yearbook-2014

China Story Yearbook 2013: Civilising China

thechinastory.org/yearbooks/yearbook-2013

China Story Yearbook 2012: Red Rising, Red Eclipse

thechinastory.org/yearbooks/yearbook-2012

Dossier

Chinese-language source materials and supplementary materials related to the Yearbooks

thechinastory.org/yearbook/dossier

The China Story Journal

The China Story Journal *is a companion to the* Yearbook *where we publish a variety of articles, essays and enquiries throughout the year*

thechinastory.org/journal

Key Intellectuals

Profiles of some of China's leading public or citizen intellectuals, men and women who are vitally involved with the ideas, debates and concerns about China's present and its future direction

thechinastory.org/thinking-china/-key-intellectuals

Index and searchable database for The China Story

thechinastory.org/index

Index and searchable database for the *China Story Yearbook 2015*

thechinastory.org/index/2015

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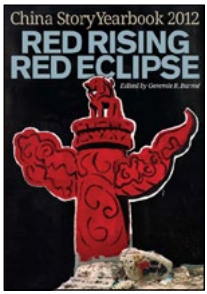
PREVIOUS CHINA STORY YEARBOOKS

2014: *Shared Destiny*

The People's Republic of China under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party and its 'Chairman of Everything', Xi Jinping, has declared that it shares in the destiny of the countries of the Asia and Pacific region, as well as of nations that are part of an intertwined national self-interest. The *China Story Yearbook 2014* takes the theme of Shared Destiny 共同命运 and considers it in the context of China's current and future potential.

2013: *Civilising China*

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.



2012: *Red Rising, Red Eclipse*

The authors of *Red Rising, Red Eclipse* survey China's regional posture, urban change, social activism and law, human rights and economics, the Internet, history and thought. This inaugural *China Story Yearbook* offers an informed perspective on recent developments in China and provides a context for understanding ongoing issues that will resonate far beyond the Dragon Year of 2012–2013.