

# CHINA RIGHTS FORUM

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## INSPIRING CHANGE

OUYANG XIAORONG THE LIFE OF A POLITICAL PRISONER'S WIFE

DU GAO AN INDIVIDUAL ARCHIVE AND A HISTORICAL ERA

YANG JIANLI PRISON IS A DIFFERENT KIND OF LIFE

GUIYANG DEMOCRACY SALON CRITIQUING THE OLYMPIC GAMES

LIU XIAOBO FURTHER QUESTIONS ABOUT CHILD SLAVERY IN CHINA'S KILNS

D. T. UYGHUR CULTURE FACED WITH ENDLESS CAMPAIGNS

JONATHAN MIRSKY IN SEARCH OF A BREATH OF FRESH AIR

TIE LIU CHINA: A COUNTRY WITHOUT FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN RIGHTS

YANG TIANJIAO ABOUT MY FAMILY

PLUS A HOLIDAY READING LIST, POETRY, IDEAS FOR TAKING ACTION,  
AND A NEW FEATURE HIGHLIGHTING HRIC'S CHINESE PUBLICATIONS

## CHINA RIGHTS FORUM

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# MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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Reflection. Looking back to move forward. This end-of-the-year issue brings our readers personal reflections of family members of rights defenders, critical articles examining the human rights situation, as well as our regular features, with a special poetry selection in our Cultural Reviews. We also introduce a new feature, “Chinese Publication Highlights.” We hope that you will find it useful in accessing Chinese-language debates, discussions, and news. The ongoing development of the content and format of the *China Rights Forum* reflect your good feedback and suggestions. Thank you and please keep sending them this way!

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The first section—“Enduring Family Bonds”—presents personal reflections of the children and spouses of human rights defenders. Some family members become activists by necessity. Fu Xiang, the wife of democracy activist Yang Jianli, lobbied tirelessly for the release of her imprisoned husband. The voices—of Guo Feixiong’s ten-year-old daughter, Hada’s son, Ouyang Yi’s brother, Rebiya Kadeer’s daughter—all testify to the terrible price paid by the families of rights defenders—and are moving reflections of family bonds that weather all hardships.

The second section—“Mining the Past”—examines the importance of memory and historical accountability to individual and societal survival and growth. In the face of ongoing official censorship efforts and enforced historical amnesia about past abuses, this mining of the past is a dangerous activity. Yet, as demonstrated by the contributions from Woesser on Potala Palace, Du Gao on the 1950s and 1960s, Guan Zhonghe and Yan Jiawei on the Cultural Revolution, and the interview with Yang Jianli, it is also necessary to excavate lessons for the present and build resources for future action.

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The final thematic section—“Exposing Many Chinas”—examines the role of the Olympic Games in the push for human rights in 2008 and the significant gap between Olympic rhetoric and human rights realities. The response of the IOC (published in this issue) to HRIC’s letter calling for the public release of the Beijing Host City Contract, confirms that side-stepping critical issues remains the official strategy.

As we move into 2008 and the final lead-up to the Beijing Olympics, on behalf of the entire Human Rights in China team, we wish you a year of reflection and action.

SHARON HOM

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# CONTRIBUTORS

**D. T.** is a Hong Kong-based researcher on culture and politics in China.

**Du Gao** was formerly a professor and the editor-in-chief of China Drama Press [*Qian Zhongguo Xiju Chubanshe*].

**Aaron Gray** is a researcher at the Uyghur Human Rights Project. He has a degree in International Studies and spent four years studying and teaching in the PRC, including in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region.

**Guan Zhonghe**, 75, served 23 years in a Reeducation-Through-Labor camp after he was labeled a “Rightist” in 1957. He has written many articles related to democracy and the Anti-Rightist Movement.

**Hu Jia** is a prominent Chinese environmental and HIV/AIDS activist. He has served as the executive director of the AIZHI Institute of Health Education, and is one of the founders of the AIDS NGO Loving Source.

**Liu Xiaobo** is an outspoken scholar and writer. As a result of his activism, he is subjected to periodic house arrest and monitoring in Beijing.

**Jonathan Mirsky** lived in Hong Kong continuously from 1993 to 1997, as East Asia Editor of *The Times* (London). He is currently based in London.

**Ouyang Xiaorong** is an Internet essayist and poet, and is a member of Independent Chinese PEN.

**Shi Tao** is a Chinese journalist, writer, and poet. He is currently serving a 10-year sentence for releasing a docu-

ment of the Communist Party to an overseas Chinese democracy site.

**Tenzin Tsundue** is a Tibetan activist, essayist, and poet. He is currently the general secretary of the Friends of Tibet (India).

**Tie Liu** is the pen name of a veteran activist and writer in Beijing. He formerly worked for the *Chengdu Daily*.

**Uiles** is the son of political prisoner Hada, who is currently serving a 15-year sentence. Uiles has been harassed and detained in relation to his and Hada’s activism.

**Wang Youqin**, a senior lecturer in the department of East Asian Language and Civilization at the University of Chicago, developed a website commemorating victims of the Cultural Revolution. It is available at [www.chinese-memorial.org](http://www.chinese-memorial.org).

**Woeser** is a well-known Tibetan writer, currently based in Beijing. She lost her job at the Tibetan Cultural Association because of her writings on Tibetan culture and the Dalai Lama.

**Yan Jiawei**, 70, is a Chengdu native, and originally worked in oil. In 1957, he was labeled a “Rightist” and “counterrevolutionary,” and served 15 years in a Reform-Through-Labor camp. His essays have been published in numerous magazines.

**Yang Tianjiao** is the 10-year old daughter of political activist Yang Maodong (Guo Feixiong).

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## NEWS ROUNDUP | AUGUST–OCTOBER 2007

For updated monthly summaries on these issues, see our online Monthly Briefs at [www.hrichina.org](http://www.hrichina.org).

### MEDIA CENSORSHIP

#### Websites shut down/blocked

A labor website that provided legal knowledge and information on rights defense lawsuits became inaccessible on August 20. (RFA)

On August 23, a Henan-based Internet service provider was ordered to shut down because it contained an “illegal” message. As a result, 10,000 websites hosted by the service provider were no longer accessible, affecting millions of Internet users. (MP)

Wikipedia’s English site was again blocked in China beginning in September, after being accessible for two

months. Reportedly, the user-generated content may have been blocked ahead of the 17th Party Congress in October. (IDG News Service)

On September 18, a Chinese website was ordered to shut down for the 18th time, for setting up a poll allowing Internet users to virtually elect either Hu Jintao or Wen Jiabao. The website, established in 2005, has been repeatedly shut down for conducting sensitive opinion polls online. The person responsible for the website said the website has been on a government blacklist, and its content is closely monitored. (RFA)

Rights defender **Huang Xiaomin** told RFA on October 3 that a Sichuan-based website cancelled one of its very popular sub-forums on October 1. Wang speculated that the cancellation was related to the 17th Party Congress. RFA reported in mid-September that the same

Virtual police officers will soon begin visible patrols on Chinese Internet sites to warn surfers they are being monitored. Photo credit: STR/AFP/Getty Images.



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website removed a heavily-viewed post about an attack on an evictee. (RFA)

On October 4, Ars Technica reported that China's Public Security Bureau blocked all incoming URLs that begin with "feeds," "rss" and "blog," effectively censoring RSS feeds. The story quickly spread to numerous technical and blog-related publications before subsequent reports provided necessary clarification. These reports stated that China is not dynamically blocking all RSS feeds, although RSS feeds will be blocked if they are coming from sites that are already blocked. (Global Voices, Danwei, Nartv)

On October 9, an online forum on HIV/AIDS became inaccessible for the fourth time since September 29. **Meng Lin**, the forum's founder, told RFA that the Internet service provider said the closure was due to technical problems, but that he could not speculate on the real motive behind the closure. (RFA)

A popular Tibetan literature website, reportedly the first of its kind, was shut down on October 20. Tibetan writer Woesser told RFA that the website had been careful not to publish articles related to political and current affairs, and that the closure was likely linked to Dalai Lama's receipt of the Congressional Gold Medal award in the U.S. (RFA)

It was reported on October 18 that numerous Internet users from inside China reported being redirected to the Chinese-owned Baidu search engine when they tried to access the websites of Google, Yahoo!, and Microsoft. Although many bloggers have speculated as to the cause, there is no definitive information on the scope of the redirection or how long it lasted. (AFP)

### **Foreign journalists detained/harassed**

Despite a new regulation that guarantees greater reporting freedom to foreign media in the period leading up to and during the 2008 Olympics, an August survey found that the authorities continue to interfere in journalists' work. Foreign journalists reported 157 incidents of surveillance, intimidation of sources, reprimands and violence against foreign correspondents and their staff. Conducted by the Foreign Correspondents Club of China (FCCC), the survey found that 95 per-

cent of respondents found reporting conditions in China inferior to international standards, and that 11 foreign reporters had been officially reprimanded by authorities since the new rules came into effect in January 2007. (FCCC)

On August 6, a dozen foreign journalists were detained by Beijing police while covering a press conference in which Reporters Without Borders (RSF) called for the release of nearly 100 Chinese journalists and online activists who are currently in prison. Four RSF spokespersons had flown to Beijing for this first press conference in China held by the Paris-based NGO, conducted across the street from the headquarters of the Beijing Olympic Organizing Committee (BOCOG). After the event, police physically restrained foreign journalists from leaving the area for more than an hour. Neither BOCOG nor Beijing police responded to requests to comment on the incident. (The Star, FT, AFP)

On September 14, RSF estimated that about 32 foreign journalists had been detained or prevented from carrying out interviews since January 1, 2007, when China's new regulations on foreign journalists came into effect. The regulations were aimed at loosening restrictions on foreign journalists. RSF urged the Chinese government to keep its promise on protecting media freedom ahead of and during the Beijing Olympic Games. (RFA)

On September 12, two Agence France-Presse (AFP) journalists were detained and questioned by the police for five hours in Dingzhou, Henan Province, after the police alleged that they were "illegally" conducting interviews. The journalists were interviewing villagers after a local protest against a Henan land grab in late-August. The police also asked the journalists to give contact information for the individuals that the journalists had interviewed. (RFA)

On October 21, BBC journalist Juliana Liu was forced to stop interviewing a labor rights consultation unit in Guangdong Province. Local authorities interrupted the interview, and police followed and harassed the head of the unit after the incident. In related news, a BBC Chinese team was not allowed to cover the 17th Party Congress and was also not allowed to cover the National





A Chinese police officer demanding that a journalist switch off his camera after detaining several others who attend a protest organized by members of the Reporters Without Border in Beijing, China, Monday, Aug 6, 2007. Photo credits: AP Photo/Ng Han Guan.

People's Congress (NPC) meeting in March; an explanation was not provided. (RFA)

On October 30, RFA reported that two journalists from UK Channel 4 TV were detained for six hours while interviewing petitioners for the documentary "China's Olympic Lie." The journalists' Chinese interpreter was detained for 16 hours. The documentary was covering a detention center where petitioners were reportedly held and sometimes beaten. Chinese authorities deny the existence of such centers. The TV station also contacted the Beijing Olympic Organizing Committee, which denied knowledge of these centers. (RFA)

#### **Yahoo! investigation/lawsuit**

In early August, the Dui Hua Foundation gave evidence before Congress that Yahoo! had provided information to the Chinese government on an individual, journalist Shi Tao, in full knowledge that the authorities were investigating an allegation of inciting subversion. Representative Tom Lantos (D-CA) opened an informal investigation after hearing the Dui Hua evidence, which

suggested that Yahoo! officials had presented inaccurate information in their testimony before Congress in February 2006. (BetaNews)

In late August, the World Organization for Human Rights filed a human rights lawsuit against Yahoo! Hong Kong for assisting police investigations of cyber-dissidents by providing names and IP addresses of Yahoo! e-mail and groups services users. Despite following Chinese law, Yahoo! was accused of violating international law. Yahoo! sought to dismiss the lawsuit. (Dailytech)

#### **China adopts Emergency Response Law**

On August 30, the Standing Committee of the NPC passed the Emergency Response Law, which attempts to improve the handling of industrial accidents, natural disasters, and health and public security hazards. Organizations and individuals who create and spread fake news concerning these emergencies will be punished, but the law does not specify what violations are serious enough to constitute a crime and be subject to punishment. (XH)

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### **Liaoning authorities silence news of local explosion**

Local officials of the Communist Party of China (CPC) blacked out news of a fatal explosion at the Tianying karaoke bar on July 4. In August, it was reported that CPC had barred newspapers and television stations in Benxi County and Liaoning's capital, Shenyang, from conducting investigations or sharing the information. The Liaoning Propaganda Bureau had faxed instructions to Liaoning media outlets ordering them to publish and broadcast only what the official Xinhua News Agency reported. (WP)

### **Chinese scholars write open letter**

Chinese scholars and activists wrote an open letter to Chinese and international leaders on August 7, 2007, proposing seven ways to end human rights violations. The letter, entitled "One World, One Dream, and Universal Human Rights," was initially signed by more than 40 prominent individuals, including Dai Qing, Bao Tong, Liu Xiaobo and Ding Zilin. Since being posted online, the letter has continued to collect signatures, which numbered over 1,000 by mid-August. The letter calls for amnesty for political prisoners, genuine reporting freedom for both domestic and foreign journalists, and fair compensation for forced evictions, among other proposals. (CRD)

### **Reporter of "faked" cardboard buns story jailed and fined**

On August 12, the Beijing No. 2 Intermediate People's Court found Zi Beijia, 28, guilty of "infringing on the reputation of a commodity" for reportedly faking a story about vendors using cardboard in pork buns. Zi was sentenced to one year in jail and a fine of 1,000 *yuan*. The court heard that Zi paid four migrant workers from Shaanxi Province to make the buns with chemically-treated cardboard. (AP)

### **Crackdown on media in lead-up to 17th Party Congress**

*People's Daily* reported that immediately following Zi Beijia's sentencing, the CPC issued a notice that "those who intentionally fabricate news that causes public anxiety and tarnishes the nation's image will be harshly dealt with or even prosecuted if they break the law." Media outlets have been asked to set up hotlines so the

public can report false news during the campaign, which continued through mid-October in an effort to create a "healthy and harmonious environment" for a successful Party Congress. (AP)

### **Journalists beaten for reporting bridge collapse**

Reporters said thugs harassed and beat them when they attempted to cover the August 13 collapse of the Fenghuang bridge in Hunan Province, which killed more than 64 people. Five reporters, including one from *People's Daily*, said unidentified assailants interfered in their efforts to interview survivors and family members. "The reporters demanded that they show their identification but were refused, and then suddenly one of the men kicked (*People's Daily* reporter) Wang Weijian in the stomach," read an Internet account posted by the reporters, adding that other reporters were also beaten. (AP, RTR)

### **Internet pact signed by foreign companies**

The government-run Internet Society of China recently released a pact that was signed by at least 20 blog service providers in China, including Yahoo! and Microsoft. RSF said that the "pact stops short [of] the previous project of making it obligatory for bloggers to register, but it can be used to force service providers to censor content and identify bloggers." Microsoft subsequently said in a statement, "It should be emphasized that these are indeed recommendations only, and we retain discretion to determine how to best achieve the overarching goals of the agreement." (IDG News Service)

### **Virtual Internet police**

State media reported on August 29 that two virtual police officers will patrol the Internet in the form of animated figures patrolling user screens on foot, by motorbike or in a car every 30 minutes. The figures will appear on news portals starting on September 1, and on all Beijing sites and forums by the end of 2007. The virtual police will be watching for "Web sites that incite secession, promote superstition, gambling and fraud," the *China Daily* said, citing Beijing's Municipal Public Security Bureau. Users will be able to click on the icons to connect to the Bureau's Internet Surveillance Centre, where they can report illegal activities. (BBC)

**Online forums to reapply for operational license**

On August 31, the Chinese Ministry of Information Industry, together with provincial authorities, issued a notice requiring all online forums to reapply for an operational license to stay in business. Those operating without a license would be closed. (RFA)

**Website to remove report on HIV disaster**

It was reported on September 10 that commercial website “Hichina” was ordered to remove a report about transfusions of HIV-contaminated blood in Henan Province. The report included articles from several experts, journalists, doctors and academics that revealed the corrupt practices of local officials associated with the spread of HIV/AIDS in Henan. (RFA)

**Foreign news agencies authorized in China**

The Foreign Information Administration Center (FIAC) of Xinhua News Agency announced on September 25 that it authorized three more foreign news agencies to disseminate information in China. The three agencies are RIA Novosti of Russia, and Sipa Press and Gamma of Eyedea, both based in France. All foreign news agencies need approval by the Xinhua News Agency, and must have entities designated by Xinhua act as their agents. (XH)

**Media censors Burma news**

Chinese media coverage of the situation in Burma has given more prominence to the Burmese junta’s official line, and access to uncensored information remains limited. On September 25, the Xinhua News Agency reported that protesters wanted “an improvement to people’s livelihoods, the release of prisoners and national reconciliation.” There was no mention of the democratic reform demands that have widely been reported on outside China. (AT)

**China’s online population reaches 172 million**

The number of Internet users in China reached approximately 172 million, or 13 percent of the total population, at the end of September. More than 100 people in China are accessing the Internet every minute of the day. (XH)

**More access for overseas media**

On October 9, *China Daily* reported that overseas reporters would have greater access to cover the 17th

Party Congress. Besides three open press conferences, overseas reporters also had access to more group interviews and to more interviews with delegations. Instead of having to take photos from afar, overseas photographers were allowed closer contact with CPC leaders and delegates. (CD)

**Netizens use Internet to voice opinions**

As the 17th Party Congress began on October 15, Chinese citizens used chatrooms and online surveys to voice their ideas. Four of the top concerns were restraining the power of officials, reducing corruption, improving living standards and narrowing the wealth gap. On a bulletin board sponsored by *People’s Daily*, 7,000 messages were directly addressed to Hu Jintao and urged him to get rid of corrupt officials and provide more channels for people to raise complaints against officials. (XH)

**Restrictions on marriage-seeking advertisements**

On October 18, Shanghai Daily reported that the city’s civil affairs bureau in Zhengzhou City, Henan Province, placed additional restrictions on marriage-seeking advertisements. Violations of the new regulation by newspapers running the advertisements will result in a warning. Two warnings will lead to suspension, and violators will be shut down if they receive three warnings. The regulation will take effect in November. (SHD)

**U.S. supports Internet laws**

On October 24, BBC reported that legislation stopping Internet companies like Yahoo!, Google and Microsoft from revealing personal data to Chinese authorities gained support from the House Foreign Relations Committee. Under the legislation, companies would not be allowed to provide personal information to designated “Internet-restricting” countries except for legitimate law enforcement purposes as determined by the U.S. Department of Justice. Companies would also have to reveal to the U.S. Department of State the terms and phrases they filtered in those countries. The bill now needs approval from the House Energy and Commerce Committee. (BBC)

**Fake reporters jailed for extortion**

It was reported on October 25 that four Chinese men who had posed as reporters from China Legal News to

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blackmail an official were each given sentences of between three and eight years. The four men had tried to extort 100,000 *yuan* from an official in southern Hainan Province in return for not reporting the unauthorized commercial use of a piece of farmland. (AP)

### **Chinese film/TV bans**

The movies *Rush Hour 3*, *The Age of Tattoo* and *Lost in Beijing* fell afoul of Chinese censors in August. *Rush Hour 3*, with scenes on Chinese triad activities, was labeled “anti-China” by the Chinese authorities. The State Administration of Radio, Film and Television (SARFT) refused to permit Chinese director Jia Zhangke to shoot *The Age of Tattoo*, which is set during the Cultural Revolution. *Lost in Beijing*, originally scheduled to be shown in China in May, had yet to be shown as of August. The director claimed that the movie had been censored because its depiction of the sex industry and other “ugly” aspects of Beijing was considered to have an adverse effect on China’s image before the 17th Party Congress. (RFA)

In preparation for the 17th Party Congress, China banned talent shows from airing on primetime television starting September 21. SARFT cite vulgarity in design, judges, and contestant performance and appearance as the reason for banning the talent shows. The talent show ban from primetime was part of a wider effort to clean up the media before the 17th Party Congress convened. (RTR)

Since the beginning of September, SARFT has penalized seven radio stations for sex talk shows that contained material of an “extreme pornographic nature.” On September 25, SARFT announced that sex-related advertisements were banned from television and radio: approximately 2,000 were banned within the first two weeks of October. Stations that violate the ban will face severe penalties. By the end of September, China had also banned “sexually provocative sounds” and “tantalizing language” from airwaves. (XH, RTR, AFP)

In order to comply with China’s censorship rules, Ang Lee deleted thirty minutes worth of scenes from his erotic spy thriller, “Lust, Caution.” Mainland China has no formal film rating system. SARFT stated, “[f]ilms not suitable for children are not suitable for adults.” The film was scheduled to open in China on October 26. (AFP)

## **PROTESTS AND PETITIONS**

### **Tibetan convicted for expressing support for the Dalai Lama**

**Ronggyal Adrak**, a Tibetan of the Yonru nomadic group, was detained by local police in Lighthang on August 1 while attending a major festival of the region. He was reportedly taken into custody after calling out that Beijing should allow the Dalai Lama to return to Tibet. On October 29, Ronggyal Adrak was tried and convicted by a Sichuan court for subversion. The judge said the final sentence would be announced in six to seven days. He was also considered responsible for instigating subsequent protests in which 1,000 Lighthang nomads called for his release. (RFA)

### **Minor detained as petitioner mother escapes**

On August 1, 15-year-old petitioner **Wu Yinan** was taken back to her hometown in Ningxia for distributing leaflets describing her family’s grievances at Tiananmen Square in Beijing. Wu was detained again in Ningxia on August 11 after local authorities failed to arrest her mother, who continued petitioning in Beijing. Ningxia authorities reportedly presented no legal documents when they took Wu away. (RFA)

### **Tibet activists detained and deported**

The executive director of Students for a Free Tibet (SFT), **Lhadon Tethong**, and fellow activist Paul Golding were detained in Beijing on the afternoon of August 7, one day before the Olympics countdown celebration. Tethong and Golding were using the Internet and videos to draw attention to China’s human rights abuses in Tibet. SFT reported that Tethong and Golding had been under round-the-clock surveillance by Chinese authorities, at some points followed by up to 30 police officers. They were deported from Beijing on August 8. (HRIC)

**Hospital riot**

Eleven people involved in a riot outside a hospital in October 2006 were sentenced to prison terms of up to two years, according to the Information Center for Human Rights and Democracy on August 13. Two thousand people had protested in Guangan City, Sichuan Province, claiming that a four-year-old boy died because the hospital refused to treat him when his family was unable to pay for medical care. Authorities said that the child died because he drank “enough pesticide to kill 500 children” and not because he was refused treatment. (AP)

**Xiamen protester released on bail**

**Li Yiqiang**, detained on June 2 after leading protests against the construction of a paraxylene plant in Xiamen, was reported in mid-August to have been released on bail after being charged with illegal assembly. Construction of the \$1.4 billion paraxylene facility by Tenglong Aromatic PX (Xiamen) Co. Ltd. was suspended after mass protests over possible health threats. At least two other people were detained in June in connection with the protest. (AP)

**Tibetan festival turns into silent protest**

This year’s Khampa Festival in Qinghai Province was the scene of silent protests by Tibetans resisting attempts by Chinese authorities to turn the festival into a tourist attraction. Tibetans refused to participate in the singing and dancing led by Chinese announcers, and also followed the Dalai Lama’s call not to wear fur, explaining that the tradition is inconsistent with Buddhism. (NYT)

**Discontent over rising property prices**

On August 24, it was reported that **Yue Ming**, 28, was jailed in Beijing for 14 days after he posted online chat-room messages calling for a protest over high real estate prices. Police in the capital’s Xicheng District said that Yue was guilty of an administrative offence of inciting or plotting an illegal rally. Posting under the name “Proletarian Alliance,” Yue publicized the meeting via blogs, emails and mobile text messages, but claimed he did not plan to follow up on the protest. (AP)

**Evicted petitioner writes to German Chancellor**

Just before German Chancellor Angela Merkel’s visit to China in August, Shanghai petitioner **Chen Enjuan**

wrote an open letter asking the chancellor to take a stand on human rights issues related to German companies’ investments in China. Chen has been petitioning Beijing since she and her family were forcibly evicted from their Shanghai home in 2000 for a redevelopment project by a joint venture between Shanghai Pudong Iron Steel (Group) Co. Ltd. and the German-based Thyssen Krupp Stainless Co. Ltd. (HRIC)

**Land disputes lead to injuries**

Farmers in Yutian Village, Heilongjiang Province, set up roadblocks on August 25 to protest a planned commercial housing project that would require the demolition of their homes. The arrival of anti-riot police sparked a clash that resulted in two villagers being seriously injured and another two detained. (AP)

**Demobilized soldiers protest**

On the afternoon of September 3, approximately 2,000 demobilized Chinese soldiers rioted at training centers located in the cities of Baotou, Wuhan and Baoji. The soldiers destroyed classrooms, overturned cars and set fires in protest of their poor living conditions. Police suppressed the protest, resulting in 20 injuries and five arrests. On September 17, China’s Railway Ministry stated that the Associated Press report on the demobilized soldiers’ riots was inaccurate. The ministry said that only a small number of students were unhappy with the training, but provided no new details on the situation. (RTR, AP)

**Land rights protesters convicted**

Eleven Guangdong protesters of a local land grab were convicted of “disturbing social order” and sentenced to one to five years in prison on September 5. The protesters reportedly damaged construction materials at the disputed site, which they alleged was originally their land, but later sold secretly to developers by village cadres. One anonymous relative of a convicted protester said the defendants’ lawyers were not allowed to present their case in court. (RFA)

**Public urged to report Olympic protests**

It was reported on September 5 that Xinhua News Agency had issued a series of guidelines instructing spectators, athletes, and officials attending the Olympic Games on how they should react to any potential

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protests. The guidelines stated that witnesses should report them immediately to the police, volunteers, and any venue managers nearby, and that under no circumstances should they get involved. (SCMP)

### **Petitioner beaten by police**

Petitioner **Zheng Mingfang** was again beaten by the police on September 10 in Tianjin, where a Petitioners' Reception Day had been organized by the Public Security Bureau. Zheng, who was sentenced to two years in 2004 after applying to hold a demonstration in Tiananmen Square, told Radio Free Asia (RFA) that while many petitioners were waiting to be received, they were severely beaten and did not get to see the mayor. (RFA)

### **Jiangsu woman beaten during eviction**

It was reported on September 10 that, 67-year-old protester **Zhou Dazhen** was kicked unconscious on August 25 by Jiangsu authorities, who, (accompanied by thugs), had tried to forcibly acquire a plot of land in Guannan County, Jiangsu Province. Zhou has since been in a coma at the hospital. Local authorities admitted to beating Zhou upon RFA's inquiry, and the eviction was suspended after the incident. (RFA)

### **Child prevented from receiving medical treatment**

It was reported on September 11 that a 12-year-old Guangdong boy, who became gravely ill after a meningitis vaccination, and his family were stopped from going to Hong Kong to receive further medical treatment. The parents of two other children in similar conditions have lodged lawsuits, but are awaiting judgment. Local officials have prevented previous attempts by the parents to petition the local and central authorities. (RFA, HRIC)

### **Control tightens as CPC meeting approaches**

A Hong Kong-based human rights group said on September 13 that CPC central authorities had drafted a list of 7,000 petitioning cases in August. While local authorities were required to help solve 1,000 of these cases, the police were ordered to closely monitor the remaining cases. The NGO also claimed that local police were required to report any petitioners who were missing from their hometowns to senior authorities, in order to reduce the number of petitioners in Beijing in the lead-up to the 17th Party Congress. (RFA)

### **Students in south China protest rising food prices**

On September 13, students at Sun Yat-sen University in Guangdong Province called for a boycott of canteen food in protest of high prices, small portions and unsatisfactory taste. Other universities had launched similar boycotts in September. (RTR)

### **Petitioners detained**

It was reported on September 17 that Sichuan petitioners **Wang Shurong** and **Li Wenfeng** were arrested on charges of extortion and illegal possession of state secrets, respectively. Wang's sister argued that the alleged extortion sum of 11,000 *yuan* was a living allowance that Wang's original working unit had given her so that she would not petition. In Li's case, her ex-husband said that he believed the materials related to petitioning and did not contain state secrets. (RFA)

### **Disabled son of Hebei petitioner sent to RTL**

It was reported on September 18 that Hebei petitioner **Wang Guoying** was sentenced on July 19 to a year and three months of Reeducation-Through-Labor (RTL). Her disabled son was sent to a welfare institution and forced to work on human waste disposal. (RFA)

### **Petitioners' village demolished; apartment owners punished**

Early in September, Beijing warned the 3,000 petitioners living in Beijing's Fengtai District that their settlements would soon be demolished for a new railway station, to be opened in time for the Olympics. Petitioners who moved out of these areas before September 19 were given a cash reward. In addition, police reportedly issued an order on September 14 stating that hostels housing petitioners will be fined 20,000 *yuan*; petitioner **Liu Baochun** told RFA on October 25 that Beijing authorities said they would detain apartment owners for 15 days if they rent to petitioners. Many petitioners were consequently induced to move to outlying suburbs. On September 26, Beijing began demolition of the petitioners' community. Petitioners were not allowed to retrieve their belongings while several dozen police were stationed at the site. The police also used video cameras to tape people talking to reporters. (TheStar.com, RFA, AP)



Petitioners cram into a small room eager to share their stories with journalists visiting the village where petitioners stay in Beijing Thursday, Sept. 6, 2007. Photo credits: AP Photo/Ng Han Guan

### Anhui workers beaten for petitioning

On September 27, more than 1,000 workers in the Anhui iron and steel industry organized a mass demonstration after their factory allegedly employed thugs to beat them. At least 14 workers who had been protesting conditions related to the factory's privatization were reportedly injured. A woman told RFA that her husband was one of those beaten by metallic bars, and was hospitalized with bone fractures as a result. RFA discovered that most of the online posts discussing the incident were removed on October 3. (RFA)

### Petitioner forced into psychiatric hospital

On October 3, Hunan petitioner **Liu Ping** told RFA that she had again been forcefully admitted to a psychiatric hospital for 42 days beginning January 26. This forced hospitalization resulted from her petitions to Beijing since 2006 on the local government's failure to provide compensation after the factory where she worked went bankrupt. Liu was sent to a psychiatric hospital for the first time in September 2006 after similar petitioning in Beijing. (RFA)

According to the Sichuan-based Tianwang Human Rights Center, the Wuxi Bureau for Letters and Calls (which receives petitions from residents) in Jiangsu Province issued a document in 2003, stating that petitioners "with mental illness," such as **Lin Xiuqing** and **Zhu Shiqing**, were damaging Wuxi City's image. On October 25, RFA reported that Lin's forced admission to psychiatric hospitals in 2001 and 2003 was retaliation against her petitioning in Beijing over undercompensated eviction. Zhu had been kept in psychiatric facilities for more than 200 days because he had complained about the police's inaction over his beating by thugs in 1992. (RFA)

### Farmers and police clash over cotton sales

On October 4, Reuters reported that a violent clash between farmers and police in the Suxingtian area of Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR) over cotton prices left 40 people injured and 25 detained in late September. Tensions erupted after farmers sold cotton in the market rather than to the government-operated Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps

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(XPCC), because the farmers were not satisfied with XPCC prices. Police set up checkpoints to prevent the farmers from selling their cotton and made midnight raids on households. In response, the residents attacked the checkpoints and the Suxingtang police station. (RTR)

### **Petitioners demand democratic reform**

More than 12,000 mainland petitioners from 30 provinces sent an open letter to Communist Party of China (CPC) leaders urging democratic reform and basic human freedoms. The letter highlighted China's social problems and called for the abolition of the RTL system and an end to the persecution of petitioners. **Liu Jie** and **Wang Guilan**, two of the letter's main representatives, were arrested on October 11 and October 14, respectively, while the other two organizers **Liu Xueli** and **Cheng Yingcai** remain in hiding. (SCMP, RFA)

### **Mass incidents in Guangdong decrease**

Mass protests and riots in Guangdong have decreased greatly in recent years because of the government's efforts to solve social conflicts, according to statements by Guangdong's CPC chief Zhang Dejiang on October 16. (RTR)

### **Beijing employs thugs to manage petitioners**

On October 25, RFA reported that the Provincial Government's Regional Offices in Beijing increasingly employ thugs to deal with petitioners. Petitioners are captured and secretly held for days (sometimes months) in hotels transformed into illegal detention facilities, like the Yi Hua Hotel in Beijing Haidian district, the report says. According to petitioners who had been detained there, thugs are employed by the government to suppress dissent, and to terrorize and beat petitioners. Their wages are reportedly calculated according to the number of petitioners captured and beaten. (RFA)

### **Villagers demand land property rights**

On October 26, residents of Huangyong Village, Guangdong Province, surrounded the local village committee building to demand land property rights and a fair share of land profits. They were soon confronted by more than 1,000 policemen, who arrested four leaders and injured three elderly protesters. One of the detainees was released immediately, but the other three were detained for 10 days. (RFA)

## **HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS**

### **Harassment**

**Jiang Yanyong**, a military surgeon who broke government secrecy to reveal the true scale of Beijing's SARS outbreak in 2003, was reportedly prevented from leaving China in August to accept a human rights award in New York. In a later phone interview, he was quoted as saying he declined to attend the ceremony because the Human Rights of Scientists award by the New York Academy of Sciences was political, not scientific, in nature. He declined to comment on whether he had received pressure from the Chinese government not to accept the award. (WP, RFA)

Beijing-based rights defense lawyer **Li Heping** was abducted, beaten, and tortured with electric rods by a group of unidentified, masked men on September 29. He was held in a basement outside Beijing until early September 30, when he was dumped in the woods outside the city. As he was beaten, Li was told to leave Beijing with his family. When he returned home, Li discovered that his license to practice law and other personal belongings were missing. His computer had also been completely erased. Later, Li visited a hospital where doctors told him that he may have suffered serious head injuries. (NYT, HRIC)

**Hua Huiqi** was knocked unconscious on October 11 during a fight involving police and private security guards. Hua, his father, and his wife were removed from their residence by the police from Chongwen District and sent to Fengtai District on October 8. Police informed Hua that this move was due to the upcoming 17th Party Congress. Fengtai police brought Hua back to his Chongwen house on October 11, where a fight broke out between them, the Chongwen police, and private guards from the company New World China Land, which has been demolishing old houses in the neighborhood. Hua was knocked unconscious during the fight. Police and the hospital where Hua was admitted have reportedly declined comment. (HRIC)

Rights defense lawyer **Zheng Enchong** and his wife **Jiang Meili** were refused passports and travel permits to visit Hong Kong by the Shanghai Municipal Public



Security Bureau (PSB) Immigration Department, which claimed that Zheng is “a defendant or criminal suspect in a criminal case.” Zheng Enchong was released from prison in June 2006 after serving a three-year sentence for “illegally providing state secrets overseas.” Under the terms of his sentence, Zheng was further subject to an additional year of deprivation of political rights, under which he was prevented from resuming his law practice, speaking with news media or leaving his neighborhood. This one-year term ended at the beginning of June this year. (HRIC)

In October, Zheng was unable to pay his last respects to his dying mother because the police had disconnected his phone line. Hospital staff at the Social Welfare Institution for the Aged in Nanhui District, Shanghai, tried to call Zheng on the evening of October 11 to inform him about his mother’s deteriorating condition, but could not reach him. His mother died the next morning. He was also ordered by police not to leave his home when Shanghai tycoon Zhou Zhengyi’s trial opened on October 23. (HRIC)

Blind, self-taught lawyer **Chen Guangcheng** was unable to go to the Philippines in August to receive the 2007 Ramon Magsaysay Award for Emergent Leadership for “his irrepressible passion for justice in leading ordinary Chinese citizens to assert their legitimate rights under the law,” because he is currently serving a four-year and three-month sentence on charges of willfully damaging property and organizing a mob to disturb traffic. (Inquirer.net)

Chen’s wife, **Yuan Weijing**, attempted to fly to the Philippines on August 22 to accept the award on Chen’s behalf, but was detained by authorities in Beijing and reportedly beaten while being forcibly returned to her home in Shandong Province.

Yuan remains under close surveillance by local authorities. Zhang Jianfu, the party secretary of the local township government, also gave instructions that Yuan not be allowed to see a doctor outside of Shuanghou Township. On October 29, Yuan was again prevented from leaving town to see a dentist. (Kaisernetwork.org, RFA, HRIC)

Rights defense lawyer **Gao Zhisheng** was detained again

after writing a letter to the U.S. Congress asking them to help expose what he called China’s “ongoing human rights disaster,” and urging a boycott of the 2008 Beijing Olympics. He was seized by police on September 22. On October 28, Gao made phone contact with fellow human rights defender **Hu Jia** for the first time after he was taken away by police. Gao said he had been in Shaanxi and Shanxi during the past month, but he did not reveal further details. Hu said Gao’s wife, **Geng He**, and their daughter are being followed by police, and Geng was also warned not to talk to anyone about her situation. (AP, RFA)

**Huang Yan**, who from time to time publicized messages about the family of rights defense lawyer Gao Zhisheng, was detained by state security officers the same day, repeatedly beaten during her detention and forcefully sent back to her Hubei hometown from Beijing on September 26. She was freed on October 23. Huang reportedly attempted suicide during the house arrest after being harassed by police. (RFA)

**Hu Jia**, an HIV/AIDS and environmental activist, has been detained on numerous occasions by the Chinese government. **Zeng Jinyan**, Hu Jia’s wife, started a blog detailing her experiences and the repressive activities of the police against her and her husband. Her blog has been blocked in China, and she and Hu Jia have been harassed, intimidated and subjected to round-the-clock surveillance. (WP)

It was reported in October that organizers and participants of the rights defense campaign against three major communications giants were monitored, intimidated and prosecuted in recent months. (RFA)

Hunan rights defender **Chen Shuguang** was arrested in September for extortion, and he and fellow rights defender **Ye Jian** were detained. Chen’s wife said the approximately 10,000 *yuan* in dispute was compensation given to Chen lawfully.

Guangdong-based **Chen Shuwei**, one of the main organizers of the campaign, was kept under house arrest for 12 days so that he could not petition in Beijing during the 17th Party Congress. He was released on October 21. Chen said his relatives and friends were

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also harassed, and that the shop of fellow activist **Xia Chuhui** was splashed with red paint soon after he complained about one of the companies in September. In August, another rights defender **Wang Jianghui** was investigated for disrupting communications until he promised to cease his complaints.

Between July and August, Jiangxi-based **Zhang Renwen**, **Zhang Renwu** and **Zhou Meicen** were unlawfully detained until they agreed to stop their complaints.

In June, Qingdao-based **Geng Shengxue** was assaulted by unidentified thugs while he was making a complaint in the sales department of one of the companies.

On October 8, a group of lawyers, intellectuals, and rights defense activists issued an open letter to the State Council, Supreme People's Procuratorate, Ministry of Public Security, and Ministry of State Security, protesting the violent attack on the Beijing lawyer Li Heping. The letter urged the government to investigate and resolve the case quickly to ensure a safe environment for Li and other lawyers in China to practice their profession. The signatories demanded a prohibition on illegal kidnappings, illegal detentions, and violent assaults on lawyers, scholars, journalists, and other rights defenders. (HRIC)

### **Arrest/Detention/Disappearance**

**Lü Gengsong**, author of several books and articles on official corruption in China, was reportedly detained on August 24 on charges of "incitement to subvert state power" and "illegally possessing state secrets." Lü's detention has raised expressions of great concern in China and overseas, including a petition signed by 1,163 Chinese rights defenders, writers, scholars and lawyers calling for his release. His house was searched for eight hours and his computer was seized. At the end of September, Wang Xue'e, Lü's wife, received a formal arrest warrant for Lü on the charge of "subverting state power." (HRIC, AFP)

Two relatives of **Ye Guozhu**, a housing rights activist who was detained for organizing protests against forced evictions for the 2008 Beijing Olympics, were also detained on September 29. **Ye Mingjun**, Guozhu's son, was charged with inciting subversion of state power,

while **Ye Guoqiang**, Guozhu's brother, was charged with protesting forced evictions for the Olympics. (RTR)

Land rights activist **Yang Chunlin** was taken away on July 6, and formally arrested on August 3. Police told Yang's family that he was suspected of taking money from foreign anti-China organizations. However, Yang's family believes the true reason for his arrest was that he collected 10,000 signatures for his open letter, titled, "We want human rights, not the Olympics." Moreover, Yang's lawyers were prevented from seeing him because the case reportedly involved "state secrets." In detention, Yang had his arms and legs stretched and chained to four corners of an iron bed. According to a released inmate who served time with Yang Chunlin, he had been chained for days in the same position, and then was forced to clean up the excrement of other prisoners subjected to the same torture. (RFA, AP)

Pan-Blue Alliance spokesman **Sun Bu'er** was secretly arrested on subversion charges on May 23, his mother told RFA on September 11. She had been silent about Sun's whereabouts for more than three months because authorities had threatened her with additional punishment for Sun if she publicized his arrest. Sun's mother later changed her mind and asked RFA to reveal Sun's situation because authorities did not let her see her son. On September 11, a Hong Kong NGO reported that it had received an email from Sun. (RFA)

Chinese PEN member **Ouyang Xiaorong** was taken away by Yunnan police on September 27. Ouyang's mother speculated that his arrest was due to essays he posted online. Ouyang had also participated in the hunger strike launched by Gao Zhisheng. (RFA)

**Yao Lifa** and **Lü Banglie**, two of China's leading democracy campaigners, went missing a week before the 17th Party Congress. They were believed to be part of the crackdown on potential protesters before the key meeting. Lü has been engaged in fighting corruption and other illegal activities in village elections. Yao, who had been missing since October 1, campaigned to win an independent seat in his local Party-controlled congress and organized disgruntled citizens to challenge restrictions on political activity. (AFP, RTR)

### Prison conditions

Shanghai petitioner **Du Yangming** has been denied family visitation rights for refusing to admit guilt and wear a prison uniform, it was reported in August. Du is over 60-years-old and has serious health problems, including diabetes and a chronic back disorder. He was arrested prior to the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Summit in Shanghai in June 2006, and on December 18, 2006, was sentenced to two years and six months' imprisonment on charges of provoking serious public disorder. (HRIC)

There were unconfirmed reports in late August that **Nurmemet (Nurmuhemmet) Yasin**, author of the short story, "Wild Pigeon" (*Yawa Kepter*), had been tortured in prison. Yasin was arrested on November 29, 2004, following publication of "Wild Pigeon" in the Uyghur-language *Kashgar Literature Journal* earlier that month. The Chinese authorities accused Yasin of "inciting to split the state." At the time of Yasin's detention, authorities also seized his personal computer, which contained more than 1,600 poems, short stories and an uncompleted novel. (HRIC)

**Shuang Shuying**, a 77-year-old imprisoned for petitioning the authorities, was reportedly being denied family visits in an effort to pressure her son, Christian activist **Hua Huiqi**, into becoming a police informant. Hua says that when he refused to provide information, police threatened that he would never see his mother again. Hua Huiqi has been detained repeatedly in recent years for leading an underground house church, as well as for his rights defense efforts on housing and other issues. Shuang reportedly suffers from diabetes, high blood pressure, cataracts and neuralgia, and her health is deteriorating rapidly because of abuses in prison, her family said. Shuang was denied medical parole on September 11 on grounds that her health conditions were not severe enough, and that she had not yet served enough of her sentence. (HRIC)

In mid-September, it was reported that Shanghai rights defender **Mao Hengfeng** continued to protest her detention at the Shanghai Women's Prison. After being subjected to 70 days of solitary confinement in prison despite Chinese regulations stipulating the maximum of 15 days, Mao refused to wear a prison uniform as a

protest of her innocence, and had been forced to stay in her cell without clothes. Mao has been active against forced implementation of the family planning policy since the late 1980s, and has been repeatedly harassed and detained for her activism. (HRIC)

Mao's husband, **Wu Xuwei**, was prevented from visiting her in prison until October 26. His visit was delayed for 20 days, reportedly because the authorities did not want him to see Mao's bruises from a September 13 beating. Wu reported that Mao was again abused at the Shanghai Women's Prison and at a hospital she was taken to earlier in October. Mao was beaten and force-fed in retaliation for publicizing mistreatment in July and August. (HRIC)

Prison authorities threatened to deprive dissident **He Depu** of family visits after his wife, **Jia Jianying**, revealed that He had been denied outdoor exercise for nearly half a year. It was reported that Jia was warned by a prison official on September 25 against discussing prison conditions, and that if she did so again, she would not be able to visit her husband for up to six months. He is a veteran activist who has participated in the democracy movements since the 1970s, is currently serving an eight-year sentence for "incitement to subvert state power," and has been abused and beaten in prison. He also suffers from liver disease, hepatitis and substantial weight loss. (HRIC)

**Huseyin Celil** was visited by his mother and sister in a prison near Urumqi in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR) for the first time after 18 months of imprisonment. Huseyin fled China in the 1990s, was accepted as a refugee in Canada in 2001, and became a Canadian citizen in 2005. In 2006, he was arrested in Uzbekistan and extradited to China. In April 2007, Celil was sentenced to life imprisonment on separatism and terrorism charges by the Urumqi Intermediate People's Court. (RFA)

Mongolian dissident **Hada**'s health has continued to deteriorate. According to his son Uiles, he has been separated from other prisoners, and his prison cell does not have any sunlight. Hada was sentenced in 1996 to 15 years in prison on charges of separatism and espionage as a result of organizing the Southern Mongolian

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Democratic Alliance, which seeks greater rights for ethnic Mongols inside China. (RTR)

### Trial developments

**Wu Lihong**, an environmental activist detained in April 2007, was sentenced on August 10 to three years' imprisonment for extortion and fraud. Wu has been actively campaigning against the pollution of Lake Tai, and had previously been named as a top environmentalist by the government. Accused of extorting money from business owners, Wu said he had been paid a commission by a factory owner as part of the sale of a wastewater treatment system to factories, but the court refused to hear evidence on this point. Wu's wife said that no witnesses were called to testify during his trial, and that he was tortured during his interrogation. Wu's lawyer, Zhu Xiaoyan, says he plans to appeal the court's decision. Wu's sister was detained by police on August 17 for launching a signature campaign on his behalf. (CSM, RFA)

On August 16, the Hangzhou Intermediate People's Court sentenced Internet essayist **Chen Shuqing** to four years' imprisonment on charges of "incitement to subvert state power." Chen, who is also deprived of his political rights for one year, said he would appeal. (RFA)

Nine Chinese Christians who were arrested in Hubei on July 15 were sentenced to RTL ranging from one to one and a half years, on charges of using a reactionary sect or heretical organization to undermine the implementation of the laws. **Li Mei**, one of those sentenced but released temporarily, told RFA on October 8 that none of them were allowed to appoint lawyers. Li herself suffered from profuse uterine bleeding while detained, but was not given sufficient treatment. Her uterus eventually had to be removed. (RFA)

It was reported on October 24 that **Liu Guiqin** was sentenced to a year and a half in prison for illegally possessing state secrets. Liu was appointed as China's first civil mediator on petitioning matters by the Yunxi County government in Hubei Province in May 2007, but was placed under criminal detention in June. Dissident **Huang Qi** argued that the document in dispute did not actually contain state secrets; rather, Liu was charged because local officials were unhappy with her active involvement with petitioners. (RFA)

On October 30, RFA reported that **Chen Yunfei's** movements were currently restricted and he was not allowed to do media interviews. Chen was sentenced to six months' residential surveillance for inciting subversion.

**Environmental activist Wu Lihong, looks at a polluted and blackened canal next to a vegetable field, outside a factory in Yixing in Jiangsu Province, 16 March 2006. Photo credits: MARK RALSTON/AFP/Getty Images.**



He published an advertisement on the *Chengdu Evening News* offering a tribute to Tiananmen mothers on June 4. (RFA)

### Sentence reduction

Information emerged in August that dissident **Hu Shigen** had received a second sentence reduction of 17 months in February this year. He received his first reduction of seven months after meeting the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Torture, Manfred Nowak, in 2005. Hu was sentenced to 20 years' imprisonment in 1992 on charges of "counterrevolutionary propaganda and incitement." (RFA)

### Release

**Yang Jianli**, a permanent U.S. resident and a veteran of the Tiananmen Square student protest, returned to the U.S. after serving a five-year prison sentence for illegal entry and alleged espionage for Taiwan. Yang had been detained after using a friend's passport to enter China in April 2002 to investigate labor unrest in the northeast. On August 21, Yang gave a news conference with U.S. legislators on Washington's Capitol Hill, calling for a "taxpayers' revolution" in China to bring about greater openness and accountability. Yang said he spent more than a year of his sentence in solitary confinement, and was once handcuffed for two full weeks and beaten by several police officers. (The Independent, MP)

It was reported at the end of August that **Li Weihong** will be released in November this year following several reductions on his original sentence of death commuted to life. Li was convicted of "hooliganism" for taking part in street protests during the June 4<sup>th</sup> crackdown. (AFP)

**Cai Zhuohua**, a Protestant minister, was released on September 10, after spending three years in prison for printing Bibles and other Christian publications without state approval. (RTR)

**Mao Qingxiang**, one of the founding members of the China Democracy Party, was released on September 14 after serving eight years in prison. Mao was arrested in 1999 for joining the Chinese Democracy Party and was later sentenced on charges of incitement of subversion. More than 23 other members of the opposition party remain in prison. (RTR)

**Zhao Yan**, a research assistant at the Beijing bureau of *The New York Times*, was released on September 15 upon completion of a three-year prison sentence on fraud charges. Zhao was detained in September 2004 in connection with a *Times* article that predicted the resignation of Jiang Zemin from his last major post as head of the military. Zhao was held in detention for more than 19 months before trial on suspicion of leaking state secrets to the newspaper. (HRIC)

**Li Yuanlong**, a Chinese journalist imprisoned for "inciting subversion of state sovereignty," was released on September 16 after spending two years in prison. He was arrested September 2005 for posting politically sensitive essays on the Internet, including one entitled, "Being an American in Spirit." His reporter status has been revoked and, as a result, he is barred from working at state entities for the next two years. (AFP)

Wuhan dissident **Wang Dalin** was reportedly released on September 28 after serving two years in a RTL facility. Wang was detained in September 2005, three months after he wore a shirt printed with "Freedom and Democracy" and conducted a "patriotic cultural shirt campaign" in Tiananmen Square. His friend Liu Feiyue said Wang was beaten and abused. (RFA)

### Other news

On September 14, the one-year anniversary of the detention of rights defender **Guo Feixiong** [also known as **Yang Maodong**], his wife **Zhang Qing** sent HRIC a letter entitled, "In Commemoration of the First Anniversary of My Husband Guo Feixiong's Detention: Urging for His Unconditional Release." Zhang Qing's letter details Guo's current detention and treatment, and also examines previous instances in which Guo was detained and otherwise harassed by the police for his rights defense activities. (HRIC)

On September 14, **Ren Wandong**, a veteran pro-democracy activist, was allowed to travel to Hong Kong for the second time in 2007, where he awarded human rights prizes to 21 rights defenders. He will travel to New Zealand and the U.S. after his Hong Kong trip and reportedly was to return to China in late October. Ren spent a total of 11 years in prison for his participation in the democracy movements of the 1970s and 1980s. (RFA)

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On September 17, the U.S. House of Representatives passed a resolution urging China to release the children of Uyghur human rights activist **Rebiya Kadeer**. Her two sons, **Ablikim Abdureyim** and **Alim Abdureyim**, are serving nine and seven years in prison, respectively. They have been subjected to torture and other physical abuse. Their charges are widely considered to be in retaliation for their mother's activism. (UNPO)

Chinese human rights defenders **Zeng Jinyan** and **Hu Jia** were announced as finalists for the Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought on September 25. Zeng Jinyan reported human rights abuses in her daily blog while her husband, Hu Jia, is an AIDS and environmental activist. (Kuwait News Agency)

## LABOR

### Deaths from coal mine accidents decrease

According to the State Administration of Work Safety, the number of deaths from coal mine accidents per million tons of coal produced in 2006 has decreased by 60 percent from 2001. In 2006, 4,746 died in coal mine accidents, while 6,078 people died in 2001. China has closed more than 9,000 small mines over the last two years and has invested nine billion *yuan* in the mining industry to improve safety. (XH)

### Miners clash with security guards

Two thousand miners at the Tanjiashan Mine in Hunan Province went on strike in early August to protest being laid off without fair compensation. Two miners were injured in violent clashes that broke out between the protesters and security guards when it was announced that nearly 1,000 miners would be fired. (Radio Australia)

### Shenzhen workers dispersed

Thousands of workers went on strike on August 20–22 at the Shenzhen factory of Friwo, a multinational cell phone battery manufacturer. German-owned Friwo was accused of imposing unpaid mandatory overtime on workers with already inadequate salaries. Police in riot gear were called to break up the protest, which reportedly involved nearly all of the 18,000 employees working at two Friwo plants in the area. At least four workers were reported arrested. (Helsingin Sanomat)

### Conditions unacceptable in toy factories

China Labor Watch issued a report on August 21 stating that several multinational manufacturers use subcontractors in China who ignore international and domestic labor standards. The report stated, "Wages are low, benefits are non-existent, work environments are dangerous and living conditions are humiliating." The report found that major companies "turn a blind eye to safety" and "ignore the labor conditions in their supplier factories," while coaching employees how to answer questions during inspections, and sometimes keeping two sets of books. (RTR)

### China passes Employment Promotion Law

On August 30, the Standing Committee of the NPC passed the Employment Promotion Law, which will take effect on January 1, 2008. The law seeks to eliminate discrimination against job seekers on the grounds of gender, religion, race or disability. It also entitles the

A worker processes Santa Claus figures at an electric toy factory on September 29, 2007 in Yiwu, China. Photo credits: China Photos/Getty Images.



disadvantaged to tax reduction or exemption and micro-credit loans in entrepreneurial undertakings, and provides free professional education and training for children from zero-employment households. (XH, CD)

### **Slave work continues**

Nearly two months after the first slave scandal was exposed, migrant laborers were still working in illegal brick kilns. The executive vice governor of Shanxi Province, Xue Yanzhong, reported in August that another 359 migrant workers had been rescued since late June, including 15 children and 121 mentally disabled individuals. Authorities said 147 suspects had been arrested at 17 newly discovered brick kilns. (WSJ)

### **Report says child labor on rise**

On September 4, the Hong Kong-based China Labour Bulletin reported that child labor is a growing problem in China. The monitoring group blames the rise in child labor on poverty, weaknesses in the legal enforcement system and underinvestment in education. Currently, Chinese law bars children under the age of 16 from working, but many under that age enter the labor market every year. (AP)

### **Disney hit by labor abuse claim**

More than 70 Disney toy factory workers in Shenzhen submitted a complaint to the city's labor department on September 10, claiming that they were working under sweatshop conditions. They were paid below minimum wage and overworked. (CD)

### **China to establish new measures to solve labor disputes**

The All-China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU) announced on September 21 that it will establish a new mechanism to better prevent and solve labor disputes. The mechanism would encourage disputes to be solved through mediation. (CCTV)

### **Farmers-turned-workers join trade unions**

Approximately 62 million farmers-turned-workers have joined trade unions by the end of September. (XH)

### **Beijing to close illegal coal mines**

Beijing planned to close down 1,000 small, unlicensed coal mines before the 2008 Olympics. On September

30, all of the illegal coal mines in the vicinity of the city were ordered to stop operations immediately, dismantle their equipment, fire their workers and hand in explosives within 15 days. Mine owners who cooperated would face reduced or no punishment. Those who do not would face more than 10 years in jail. (AFP)

### **Coal mine cafeteria serves tainted food**

Eighty-nine of the 136 coal mine workers in the Midong area of Urumqi City, XUAR, were sent to the hospital after they ate half-cooked beans served by the mine's cafeteria. Ten were diagnosed with serious food poisoning. No deaths were reported. The city's health authority suspended the mine's cafeteria. (SHD)

### **Official defends punishments over slave scandal**

On October 20, Yu Youjun, the former governor of Shanxi Province, defended his handling of a slave labor scandal earlier in 2007. The scandal involved more than 1,300 people, including children and mentally handicapped people, who were forced to work at brick kilns under terrible conditions. Of the 95 CPC officials punished, only eight were expelled from the Party and lost their jobs. Yu said the punishments were proportional and unprecedented. (RTR)

### **China plans to assist unemployed factory workers**

To meet its emissions control goal, China will close factories in more than ten industries, including coal mining, steel and iron, construction materials, and electricity. To prepare for the mass unemployment, the central government plans to create new employment incentives to assist the factory workers. (CD)

### **Punished**

It was reported on August 16 that two Chinese sports companies producing products for the Beijing Olympics were fined for exceeding overtime limits and employing child labor. Feida Sports Products Co. Ltd. and Yurongchang Light Industrial Products Co. Ltd. were fined 833,700 *yuan* and 533,700 *yuan* respectively. (Fibre2fashion News Desk)

In late September, it was reported that a factory owner and four supervisors were sentenced to two years in jail for forcing mentally handicapped people to work in brick kilns in Anhui Province without payment. Police

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discovered the workers in June and rescued them. The mentally handicapped workers were forced to work during the daytime by means of threats and physical abuse. At night, they were locked in. (RTR)

Three mine managers of Yile Coal Mine in Guizhou Province were prosecuted at the end of September for a gas blast that killed 16 workers on January 28. The deaths were believed to be caused by a combination of poor management, operation and surveillance. (XH)

Chen Zongfei and Huang Shubin, the two owners of the Feida Shoe Factory in Putian City, were arrested on October 24 for failing to prevent a fire that killed 37 workers and injured 19 others. Qui Jincai, an official in charge of work safety with Xiuyu District Government in Putian, was also suspended from duty. In the aftermath of the blaze, a total of 64 workshops have been closed in Xiuyu because they had problems similar to Feida. A citywide campaign to inspect all shoe factories was launched and will last until March 2008. (XH)

Police detained four people suspected of being responsible for an October 25 coal mine explosion in Chongqing Province that left ten dead and one missing. The detained included Wang Dafu, board chairman of Yuejin Coal Mine, Li Shiwu, manager of the mine, a deputy manager and a staff member. (XH)

### **Labor accidents**

For details of industrial accidents reported in the media, see the Monthly Briefs posted on HRIC's website: [www.hrichina.org](http://www.hrichina.org).

### **DEATH PENALTY**

The Italian anti-death penalty NGO "Hands Off Cain" said in its report that China executed at least 5,000 people in 2006, while unverified sources suggested a higher number of 8,000. The organization continues to rank China as the world's "top executioner." (VOA)

For details of death sentences and executions reported in the press, see the Monthly Briefs posted on HRIC's Web site: [www.hrichina.org](http://www.hrichina.org).

### **ABBREVIATIONS**

AFP	Agence France Presse
AP	Associated Press
AT	Asia Times
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CCTV	China Central Television
CD	China Daily
CRD	Chinese Rights Defenders
CSM	Christian Science Monitor
FT	Financial Times
HRIC	Human Rights in China
MP	Ming Pao
NYT	The New York Times
RTR	Reuters
RFA	Radio Free Asia
SCMP	South China Morning Post
SHD	Shanghai Daily
UNPO	Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization
VOA	Voice of America
WP	Washington Post
WSJ	Wall Street Journal
XH	Xinhua News Agency



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# ENDURING FAMILY BONDS



Courtesy of Maddalena Procopio.

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# THE LIFE OF A POLITICAL PRISONER'S WIFE

By Ouyang Xiaorong

*An Internet essayist discusses the particular suffering of political prisoners' wives.*

LOVE SONG (1)

If I go now,  
I won't think of returning.  
Fix the autumn fence for me,  
Shut the wicket gate again.  
Forgive me,  
I am unable to pluck the world's loveliest bloom  
for you.  
If homebound craft no longer ply the Yangtze,  
I can only stroke  
your dew-soaked sleeve.  
Next year the green bristle grass will flourish  
on the prairie  
I'll be in an alien land  
Learning sorrow.

There is a time I've dreamed of more than once, a time in which a train belches thick coils of smoke as it rolls along on a frozen track, heading slowly for a distant wilderness. People carrying bread and boiled water and padded jackets arrive early to wait for the train on either side of the tracks. The winter wind blows snowflakes all around. The bread has hardened, the water turned to ice. A child asks: "Isn't the train here yet?" but most people are silent, waiting, watching; or they draw crosses, and pray.

That is the heaven of my dreams, for these people, immortal, fought for the freedom of that land sealed in ice, where they might die without regret.

If you have never seen a Decembrist wife,<sup>1</sup> take a look at this photo of Jia Jianying: thin and quiet; behind her

pale gaze and her smile, melancholy mingles with hope. She's lovely. She reminds one of Pushkin's Tatiana or Turgenev's Elena. But our society seems incapable of bearing the weight of such beauty. Souls alienated by thousands of years of totalitarian systems cannot bear beauty like this.

Ouyang Yi is a political prisoner. He is my second eldest brother. Luo Bizhen is his wife. When Ouyang Yi was made a political prisoner, people did not bring him water and bread; instead they wanted to gather around and get a look at these "red-haired, green-eyed" counterrevolutionaries, male and female. Chinese treat decapitations as passing entertainment, no matter whether the head that falls is of the flesh or of the spirit.

In 2006, toward the end of winter, I met Luo Bizhen. She was wearing simple winter clothes that made no attempt at stylishness. When we were introduced, she just smiled. Compared to her, I was just a kid, but she was shyer than I was. You could not tell that she was the wife of a political prisoner, that because she had fallen in love with this man, she now suffered all life's grief with him. You could not see her distress; she faced everything with composure: struggling on the edge of poverty, drifting from place to place with no improvement in sight. But if she harbored complaints against life, it did not show. Wittgenstein said we shouldn't ask what kind of world this is. We live in this world and that is enough; it is beautiful.

Luo Bizhen teaches in a rural school, returning on weekends to her home in the city of Suining in Anhui Province. She and Ouyang Yi used to teach together, but he lost his position long ago. Now he just stays home and writes, earning a little money from his manuscripts. When Ouyang Yi was driven out of the school

where he taught, Luo Bizhen was driven out too. The reason given was very simple: Who made you marry a counterrevolutionary? That makes you one too. We don't want you here anymore. Untold hardships followed until finally she found another teaching job in the countryside. Through all the changes of the years that followed, she kept to her little town of Suining, kept to her child, who was hurt and humiliated, and kept to her storm-battered husband. I think she's fortunate, because she loves and is loved.

The wives of political prisoners are a special group: not political prisoners themselves, they choose to suffer alongside political prisoners. Geng He is a handsome woman, but when a person has been immersed in terror, the most pleasant-looking among us takes on a frightening look. I have seen a picture of her, eyes wide and staring, her expression that of someone who has only just stopped weeping. She does not even note down the license plate of the car of the secret policemen who beat her. She said: "My husband Gao Zhisheng said, 'No use looking, it just flatters them.' So I never even look at their car."

Geng He did not flatter those state security people, though it would only have been to 'flatter' them with a look. When the state security came to take away her husband, they came with all kinds of men and vehicles, in an attempt to isolate her whole family, young and old, from society. After that, state security officials came to beat her. Two tall strapping men beating one woman, shouting accusations at her: "Geng He, you injured two policemen . . ." Where is the justice in that? If Geng He had been able to injure two big strapping men, then she would not be Geng He, she would be an Olympic judo champion like Sun Fuming. Later, state security beat her thirteen-year-old daughter, shouting as they struck her that she was a "little whore."

Geng He was filled with sorrow, but she bore it as before. This was her choice and when you make a choice, you stick with it.

When you decide to become a political prisoner, you have to be ready to bear the crushing instruments of tyranny along with the humiliations on every side. This is the tactic of the most terrifying tyrant in Chinese his-

**Human rights activist Hu Jia (R), at home with his wife Zeng Jinyan in Beijing during an interview. Photo credits: FREDERIC J. BROWN/AFP/Getty Images.**



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tory, Mao Zedong: “Bring them down and dishonor them.” When this happens to political prisoners, it is because they have convictions, a vision of transforming society. But it is different for wives of political prisoners who accompany their husbands into hardship solely out of love. I believe that there really is something called love in this world, even though so many people are always telling me there is no such thing. The moment I met Fang Cao, I was that much closer to knowing this thing I believed in, and my belief—that it not only existed but could be sought and obtained—was that much stronger. What is more, I believe that by relying on love, one can fight back at this absurd world. Examples are right in front of you.

**Wives of political prisoners are a special group. Not political prisoners themselves, they choose to suffer along with political prisoners.**

Fang Cao is a typical northerner, married to a man much older than herself, a political prisoner with a daughter. This political prisoner has no money, no house. The reason she married him is simple, let her speak in her own words: “People in the democracy movement are noble and upstanding.” The reason she fell in love with and married an impoverished, down-and-out democracy activist was because of her own strong belief in these qualities. For that, she willingly bore it all.

She and her daughters live in a roughly-finished house in a slum on the outskirts of Bengbu, Anhui Province. To get there, you have to traverse a filthy muddy road whose ditches are filled with rotting fruit parings, vegetables and other garbage. When we met, she said: “My daughter is taking the high school entrance exam this year. My older daughter; I have two. But you won’t meet her today, she’s gone to her grandmother’s.”

I grew up reading foreign literature and I know that in the old days in the West, when winter came, vagrants would commit crimes so they could spend the cold weather in prison, where it was warm and there was food and drink. But this would not work in China. When somebody does time in China, the family has to pay. They even have to buy the bullets for the firing

squad. With her husband in jail, Fang Cao had to spend 400 *yuan* a month, a sum she and her daughter did not even spend on the outside. She was allowed to visit her husband once per month for about an hour each time. She says: “At first I went happily, but every time, as soon as I got there I started to cry. I couldn’t help it. He’d say, ‘Be strong.’ And I’d say: ‘I’m not crying because I’m not strong; it’s because when I see you I can’t help it.’”

Every time she goes to the prison, Fang Cao buys a lot of fruit, because her husband is fond of it. She buys fruit she and her daughters cannot afford to eat. She buys dozens of pounds of it at once, though she has to change buses, carrying her daughter, and all that fruit as she travels to faraway Tongling Prison. Her husband says to her: “What do you bring all this for? I’m fine here. You need the money at home.” She says: “I can make more money, but I can only come to see you once a month.”

I saw her again after that and she asked me: “How is the long-distance learning on the Internet? I want to study.” I said: “It’s a scam.” She asked: “So you still have to go to school?” I said: “Schools cheat you out of your money too, even worse.” She was silent. “Then what can I do?” I sighed: “Nothing. If you want to learn something, you don’t really have a choice . . .”

When Lomonosov,<sup>2</sup> a nearly illiterate fisherman’s son, left his fishing village for Moscow, he entered a school and asked for the headmaster, saying: “I want to study in your school.” The headmaster took him in and later, with a recommendation letter from that headmaster he went to university in St. Petersburg. After university his tutor gave him a letter and he went to Germany for further study. From the day he entered school to his return from studies in Germany, Lomonosov did not spend a ruble. He lived in 17th century Imperial Russia. Today we live in 21st century Communist China. Lomonosov became famous as a chemist and a scholar of rhetoric, a linguist, a poet and an artist in glass mosaics. China has so far not produced a Lomonosov.

Fang Cao did not own any presentable clothes, but she paid several thousand *yuan* to study away at her Internet courses everyday until late at night. Now it is midnight. While I fret over another day gone by in a

muddle, she has put the day's weariness out of her mind and is studying.

In August, her older daughter, the child of her husband and his former wife, was at last entering high school. She is an excellent student, very much like her father, and tested into a key high school. To make it easier for her to get to school, Fang Cao moved out of her roughly-finished house and rented a place near the school, increasing her financial burden.

"Fang Cao is like a woman in a beautiful poem," someone said. Yes, she's like her name.<sup>3</sup>

Without great women, there would be no great men. At Tiananmen Square in 1989, the poet Bing Xin, tears running down her cheeks, addressed the hunger strikers: "Children, please stop . . ." Bing Xin was a great woman. In her great maternal love she could not bear to see these young people, like flower buds yet to open, struggling in the grip of cruel reality, awaiting their troubled fate.

A teacher lives in an out-of-the-way corner of Suining, a typical woman of southern China: calm and unassuming, a woman of few words. She looks serene and composed. If you knew nothing about her, you might think she enjoys an untroubled, peaceful life; that you might happen on her holding fresh flowers, surrounded by happy children. You would be wrong. She is a political prisoner's wife. Her husband Liu Xianwu is spending thirteen years in a dark cell. She has to face interrogation by the police, has to face chats with the school "leaders". Her home is plain and sparsely furnished, a witness to her hard luck and eight years of work. Both her parents are living and she has an eight-year-old daughter, a daughter who was born after her father's arrest. This woman is Chen Mingxian, a language teacher at Suining Middle School.

Liu Xianwu had not been married long when he was arrested. The bride in Tu Fu's poem, "The Newlywed's Departure," is distressed because her husband has been drafted to fight the rebels, but perhaps the fighting will not go on long and her husband will soon return. Chen Mingxian's husband, however, has been taken to prison to be tortured. There is nothing of the glory of "defend-

ing home and country" about his departure. Both of them, husband and wife, must suffer the humiliation that comes with this "honor" of his being a convict sentenced to Reeducation-Through-Labor. His leaving will last thirteen years, thirteen years that are the best time of a woman's life. During these best years of her life, she and her husband will be separated.

The woman married to the merchant of Qutang complained that her husband "has failed each day to keep his word."<sup>4</sup> Chen Mingxian does not complain. She just works hard, waiting for her husband to be released. When that happens, their home will be ready for him. She bought a house and although it is very small, it will be home enough after those thirteen years. Their daughter is growing up and she is very gifted, delicate, and lovely. She likes to play the piano, paint, and act. She does outstandingly in all her classes.

I know why this is.

Chen Mingxian treats her students like close friends, though those children do not yet know how hard life is. When I met her, it was right around dinner time. She had a telephone call from one of her girl students, who asked if she'd eaten yet, because she and several of her classmates were going out. She invited her teacher to come along. Chen Mingxian smiled, talking to that child, and politely declined the invitation. The girl seemed rather disappointed and Chen Mingxian comforted her in a soft voice.

She is a good teacher. Yes, even though you did not know her story, you got it right. Sometimes she does have fresh flowers and a crowd of happy children around her.

In the czarist prisons, political prisoners had the respect of the other prisoners. The convicts would not let them work, but shared the heavy tasks out among themselves. You could not imagine this happening in Chinese prisons.

I cherish a tiny wish, or maybe I should call it an extravagant hope: whenever the sun sets in the west, I pray that political prisoners in China might receive the same treatment. I pray this because my friend Hu Jia faces the danger of being imprisoned at any time. Could he, with his frail, sickly physique, stand up to that inhuman place?

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Hu Jia's wife Jinyan<sup>5</sup> is happy. She might be the wife of a political prisoner, but she seldom worries. When she discovered she was being followed, she turned with relish and began following the agent who was following her. All he could do was run. The people following her turned this way and that, while she carried on, concentrating on memorizing English vocabulary. Jinyan has a famous line: "Who has less freedom? The follower or the followed?"

Of course the follower has less. But the follower doesn't need freedom. The followers can betray everything, so naturally they can betray freedom. What do they need it for? What good is it to them? While for the followed, freedom is breath itself. So if we measure from a special angle, it's still the followed who are less free.

Jinyan is only twenty-three. Maybe she does not know the taste of sorrow yet. May she never know. May she stay twenty-three forever.

#### LOVE SONG (2)

If your weeping footsteps  
Had not brought you to my heart's window  
Where would I go  
For hope of a future?  
You are the dove who brings me olive branches  
I am the firefly who sends you crabapple blossoms.

The Himalayas cut off the sky,  
The hawk scatters your news  
Into the snow-blown night.  
Every morning as I think of you, still dreaming,  
The news of freedom  
Begins to spread deep in the wilderness.

Translated by J. Latourelle

The original essay was published in HRIC's Chinese-language online journal:

Ouyang Xiaorong, "Zhengzifan de qizi" [The Wives of Political Prisoners], *Ren Yu Renquan* [Humanity and Human Rights] 2 (2007), [http://www.renyurenquan.org/ryrq\\_article.adp?article\\_id=595](http://www.renyurenquan.org/ryrq_article.adp?article_id=595).

#### Notes

1. Decembrist Revolt, December, 1825, Russia. Those revolutionaries who did not die on the spot under gunfire from the czarist troops were sent into exile in Siberia. Many of their wives followed them into exile.
2. Mikhail Lomonosov, Russian polymath (1711–1765).
3. Fang is a homophone for "fragrant" or "virtuous". Cao means grass.
4. Li Yi, "A Song of the Southern River": Since I married the merchant of Qutang, He has failed each day to keep his word. Had I thought how regular the tide is, I might rather have chosen a river-boy. "English Translation of 300 Select Poems From Tang Dynasty," *China the Beautiful*, [no date], <http://www.chinapage.com/poem/300poem/t300d.html>.
5. Her full name is Zeng Jinyan.

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# ABOUT MY FAMILY

**By Yang Tianjiao**

*The 10-year-old daughter of Guo Feixiong, an imprisoned human rights activist, writes about her family and her feelings for her father.*

## 1. I love my family

My family is warm and loving. There's me, mama, papa and my little brother.

Papa: My papa has a square face and wears glasses. His hair is thick and curly. He is a loyal patriot: He looked forward to the 2004 Olympics for a long time and every time a Chinese won a gold medal, he would shout, "[We] Chinese are really amazing!" He loves math too and often discusses math problems with me, but he's constantly reading the numbers wrong and makes it so you can't understand the problem.

Mama: Mama's face is shaped like a melon seed. There are a few spots on it, but they're not very noticeable and she has black hair, long black hair, very thick. She says her hair is her treasure, and she is always telling me how I should take care of mine.

Me: I'm a girl who really loves math and because I do, I always get over 95 percent in math. On my mid-term or final exams I always get 99 percent. And not only that, I'm very good at drawing. I'm young but I can already do sketches! I always draw in my notebooks, people . . . animals . . . I think I'm pretty good and my classmates do too.

Little brother: My little brother is really naughty. He's always touching things and peeking here and there. He's smart too. He's only a little over five, but he can do addition, like  $79 + 38$  really fast, and that's doing it in his head. He likes Ultraman,<sup>1</sup> Ultraman Air. He does all the Ultraman movements! And he always sings the Ultraman song at home. He likes the color blue. Doesn't matter whether it's a girl or a boy, as long as someone is wearing blue or has blue hair, he likes them.

That's my family—a warm, loving family.

May 2007

## 2. I love my papa

My papa is not tall, not very handsome and not often home, but I think of him every minute of every hour.

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He is very concerned about my studies. He watches over everything: homework, piano, exercise, playing computer games, but he's not too strict about it. During summer vacation, he has me practice characters, memorize some classical texts, copy English words, do math problems . . . but after I finish my "tasks," he lets me play 20 or 30 minutes of computer games—Intergalactic Three Kingdoms. Papa likes to play games too: when we first bought Intergalactic Three Kingdoms, he sat there playing and telling me how to form the soldiers for battle. He'd say, Zhao Zilong should go in the middle, Zhu Geliang at the back . . . . And he said he wanted to help me get to the next level. Actually he just wanted to play himself! But he's not as good at games as I am. I was the one who got us to the next level! Studying was full of happiness then. I really miss it!

He really takes good care of me. If I don't do so well on a test, 80 percent or so, he doesn't scold me, but just says gently, "Not so good this time. You have to try harder next time!" Now if it was my mama, she would have some harsh criticism for me. Sometimes when I do things wrong, rather than scold me, he tries to teach me and reason with me.

When school starts in September, we get new books! I'm so happy holding these little treasures. I look at them again and again, so afraid they'll get damaged. I put all my new books on papa's bed. I ask him to help me figure out how much they're worth altogether and to help me put pretty covers on them. Just like before, he takes great care in helping me put covers on them. He tells me: study hard.

But this year, in mid-September, he was gone! I don't know where. Did he go to work, or out of town on business? Mama says he will be back at the Spring Festival. Now there's only me, little brother and mama at home. Without him, without my papa, the house is cold, there's no laughter in it. That's how we spend our days. I asked my mama, "What day this year will you be happiest?" She says it will be the day papa comes home. Me too. I want him home too. I think of him every minute of every hour . . . .

December 2006

Translated by J. Latourelle

The original essays were posted on the Chinese-language online website: Yang Tianjiao, "Guo Feixiong Nu'er Yang Tianjiao de Liangpian Zuowen" [Two essays by Yang Tianjiao, daughter of Guo Feixiong], Huxian Weiquan Wang (2007), <http://fzh999.cn>.

## Note

1. Ultraman is a fictional Japanese character and main superhero, featured in television programs.



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# HADA IN PRISON: A VISITATION REPORT FROM HIS SON, UILES

*The following is an English translation of Hada's son Uiles' written account of his father's condition in prison, which he sent to the Southern Mongolia Human Rights Information Center (SMHRIC). Uiles visited his father in prison in August 2007. Hada, an ethnic Mongolian political prisoner in China, was arrested in 1995, and sentenced to 15 years in prison in 1996 on charges of "splitting the state and engaging in espionage," for organizing the Southern Mongolian Democratic Alliance (SMDA). He is currently serving his sentence at Inner Mongolia No.4 Prison (also known as Chifeng Prison) in Chifeng City, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region (IMAR). His son Uiles was also sentenced to three years' imprisonment in 2002 on trumped-up robbery charges.*

At the end of August 2007, I went to see my father. I had to wait from 9:30 to 11:15 a.m. before I was able to see him. His hair has already turned completely gray, and he looked so thin and small. He lives in a small prison cell where there is no sunlight, along with eight other inmates. My father brought his mattress with him out from the cell; it was so thin and dirty. I had brought a new cotton-padded mattress for him, but the prison authorities refused to let us to switch the old mattress for the new one. When I asked what he needed, he asked for a thick sweater.

Last year, my father ordered two newspapers, *Nanfang Weekend* and *Cankao News*, but he hasn't received a single page. When I asked the head of the prison's Culture and Education Department, Mr. Yu, why the newspapers haven't been given to him, Mr. Yu said that my father didn't want to read. Further, my father is still denied access to the books we send him. But, Mr. Yu said, my father does not have to do hard labor because his health is poor.

According to him, two people are specifically monitoring my father in his prison unit. He is not allowed to leave

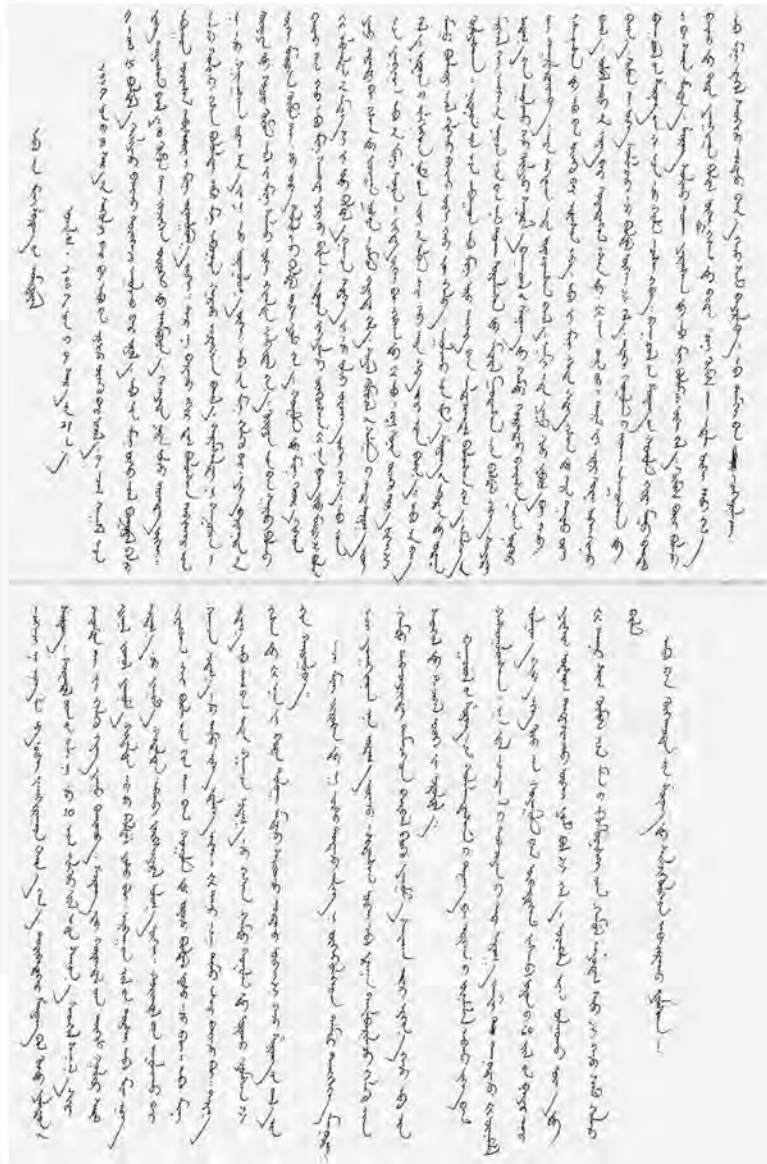
the unit, nor is he allowed to speak to others. He said he suspects he is being given some sort of special drug.

I had waited for a very long time to see my father, and while I was in the reception room, I happened to see a prisoner who had been in prison with me when I was serving my term at the Youth Jail.<sup>1</sup> He had been sent to jail again. I asked him how the prison food was, he said it is even worse than that in the Youth Jail. I know for a fact that the food in the Youth Jail was terrible. He asked me why I was there, and I told him that I was there to see my father, whose name is Hada. He didn't seem to know him, so I said he was sent to jail for political reasons. He replied, "Oh, him. He is monitored every day and not allowed to talk to anybody."

Purchases are generally permitted in prisons; for example, buying instant noodles, and so forth. But my father has never been allowed to purchase any basic supplies, not even once during his more-than 10 years of imprisonment. Moreover, inmates and visitors are usually allowed to have lunch together, but we have never been allowed to eat together, not even once. I asked the prison

**Hada at the Inner Mongolia No.4 Prison in Chifeng City; photo taken with a hidden camera. (Courtesy of SMHRIC)**





Uiles' original Mongolian-language correspondence. Courtesy of SMHRIC.

authorities, “You are building a big building extension. Can I have a meal with my father during my next visit?”<sup>2</sup> They replied, “This isn’t our decision to make.”

I discussed with my father about applying for a transfer to have him moved to another prison. He said it would be impossible. I asked why he would be denied if other transfers had been approved. He asked me, “Do you think that we are treated the same as the others?” It seems that his mind is still clear. He quit smoking; he said he always feels abnormal heart pulses. Imagine, Prison No.4 is a prison for felons. Most of the inmates are criminal

felons whose sentences exceed 10 years. How stressed they must be. My father told me that he is incontinent; I asked my friend who was majoring in medicine about this, and he told me that it is likely caused by a nervous system disorder.

My mother suffers from both heart and liver disease. I explained to my father why my mother was not able to visit him here, so far from our home. During my visit I also encouraged him and told him that everything will be fine as long as he keeps on.

Since I was released from the Youth Jail, I haven’t been allowed to own an identification card. This year the vice-head of the local police station in my area called me and told me that I can have an ID card if my mother and I promise not to “cause trouble” during the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region’s 60th anniversary. The vice-head also told us that what the Communist Party is afraid of most is people like us.

We hope we can transfer my father to a prison in Hohhot City where we live.<sup>3</sup>

Translated by the Southern Mongolian Human Rights Information Center

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(SMHRIC), [www.smhric.org](http://www.smhric.org).

### Notes

1. The jail referred to here is the Hohhot City Youth Administration Station.
2. It appears that the new building in the prison will increase the number of cells and common spaces, such as the cafeteria. Uiles’ question was meant to indicate that the prison would have plenty of space for them to eat together next time.
3. The distance between Hohhot and Chifeng is approximately 700 kilometers.

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# A FAMILY DIVIDED: A DAUGHTER'S STORY

**An interview with Kekenos Rouzi, daughter of Rebiya Kadeer**

**By Aaron Gray**

*Rebiya Kadeer is a prominent human rights advocate who is considered to be a spiritual leader of the Uyghur people. She spent six years in a Chinese prison for standing up to the authoritarian Chinese government. In 1999, while on her way to meet with a delegation of U.S. congressional aides, Kadeer was arrested and then sentenced to eight years in prison for “stealing state secrets.” On March 17, 2005, three days before an official visit to Beijing by the U.S. Secretary of State, she was released from prison on medical grounds. Kadeer has been actively campaigning for the human rights of the Uyghur people since her release.*

*Kadeer is the mother of 11 children. In an attempt to reduce her influence among Uyghurs by pressuring her into silence after her exile to the United States, PRC authorities began an intense campaign of intimidation against her children inside the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR), which is also known as East Turkestan.<sup>1</sup> Her children in East Turkestan have been harassed, fined, detained and arrested because of her human rights activities. Two of her sons, Ablikim and Alim, remain in prison.*

*Kekenos Rouzi, Kadeer's youngest child, is a seventeen-year-old high school senior. She was born in East Turkestan and currently lives in northern Virginia. She took a break from reading Hamlet for her English class to give this interview.*

**Aaron Gray (AG):** *You spent the first eight years of your life in East Turkestan. What are your main memories from there?*

**Kekenos Rouzi (KR):** All of my time there I spent with my family. Those were some good memories. My mom, she traveled a lot, doing her business and trade.

I wouldn't even know when she was coming back. I would wake up and she would be sitting there on my bed. I would get so excited and happy!

I remember when I was coming to America, my mom was dropping us off at the airport. I didn't even know that she wasn't going to be coming with us. I was so young, I did not even realize what was going on. She took us to the airport. As we passed through the gate, my sisters were crying. I saw my mother, standing on the other side of the gate and I was wondering why she did not cross. I didn't realize until I sat down in the airplane and I was thinking, “Oh my god, my mom is not coming with us,” so I started crying and I realized that she was not going to be around for a long time. I think that was my last memory of my mother before coming to America.

**AG:** *How old were you when your mother was arrested? What was that like for you?*

**KR:** I was about nine, because it was a year after I moved [to the U.S.]. At that age I didn't really grasp what was going on. At first when I found out that she was in jail, I was thinking that this was just another little thing, that she would get out, that this would not turn out to be an eight-year sentence. The first day that I found out, my sisters were crying and my dad was really, really quiet, he didn't know what to do. I guess that I was in shock, but as time went on, it started to dawn on me that it was real, that she was going to be in there for a while.

My sisters would visit her in jail. That was the only information that we would get, what she looked like or what she said when they visited her.

That age is a crucial time in a child's life; you have to be with both parents, you need that. I had family sur-



This photo, dated February 22, 2002, shows (L to R) Akida, Kekenos, Reyla and Rouxian Rouzi, the four daughters of Rebiya Kadeer, after appearing before the U.S. Congressional Human Rights Caucus on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. Photo credits: JOYCE NALTCHAYAN/AFP/Getty Images.

rounding me and they were a really good influence on me, but I needed to build that relationship with my mother. I love my mother and we have a great relationship, but it was seven years lost.

**AG:** *What about her release?*

**KR:** Throughout her six years [in prison], we would come to D.C. and try to campaign for her release. And I remember the first time, I thought, this is it, she is going to get out, I was so sure of it. And then nothing happened for a while, so I was extremely disappointed. After that I decided not to get my hopes up, and started to

look at it as though it was probably not going to happen.

So then, my sister was on the phone, and then she hangs up and turns around and tells me that my mom is getting out. I started crying and bawling, and even with all of that I still had something in the back of my head saying to not believe it 100 percent. I didn't want to go all the way, because I know how devastating it would be to find out that it wasn't true. So I cried, then I got really excited and happy, but the 100 percent didn't get there until I saw her and I actually touched her with my hands at the airport.

That was a couple of days later. There were so many people there, all of the Uyghur people and that was great. There was part of me that wanted it to be a family moment, too, but that's okay. The whole time that we were waiting, I was really on edge and I didn't want to talk to anybody. Anything could have pushed me into either crying or screaming at someone. We waited and waited and waited, and I was thinking in my head, "What if she does not recognize me?" I know that is a childish notion, but I expected her to come out with

her long dresses and her long hair, but it was cut really short. She was wearing this plain long coat and she had short hair and I just ran forward and hugged her. It was an emotional high, everybody was crying around me, but I wasn't aware of anyone else but her.

We waited and waited and waited, and I was thinking in my head, "What if she does not recognize me?"

**AG:** *What do you think of your mother's activism for Uyghurs?*

**KR:** I am not surprised at all that she got up the next day and started on things. When she sets out to get things done, she really gets them done. She sets herself goals and you might not know how she does it, but she gets things done and as soon as she got [to the U.S.] the next day, everything was getting started up to work towards our cause, and she has been doing it ever since.

**AG:** *How did you feel about your mother's two Nobel Peace Prize nominations?*

**KR:** Just being nominated is an honor. I am so happy that she was nominated at all, because there are so many people that could have been. The people nominated alongside her are all really great people. I thought, if she wins that would be great, that would put us on the map. More and more people would know about our cause, and that would help us so much. Not because my mom would be famous, I don't really care about it in that sense. It is so our cause is more known. She feels that same way. But just to be nominated is an honor in itself.

**AG:** *What is it like for your family to be split between East Turkestan and the Washington, D.C. area? Tell me about your family's current situation.*

**KR:** My family that is in East Turkestan right now, I haven't really seen them since I was eight. I love them to death, of course, they are my family, but I have not seen them for a long time, which is a strain on our relationship.

Both of my brothers are in jail right now. It is another situation like my mother's and we are fighting to get them out, but my mother was a lot more high profile than they are, so it was easier to get her out than it will be for them. It is going to take longer.

I want to do more, but we are limited in what we can do. My mom and dad cannot go back to China and personally bring them out. We are doing the most that we can here. If I was given a chance to take their place, I would without question. It is unjust, like everything that the Chinese government has done to us. Right now we are working to make people more aware. We have to make people see what is being done to us, what has been done to us, and what they will continue to do if we do not stop it now.

**AG:** *Do you find that people are aware of Uyghur issues in the U.S.? What do you tell them about your situation?*

**KR:** Not a lot. People that I meet everyday, the people that I meet at school, everywhere that I go, there are not a lot of people who know about it. Every time that someone asks me where I am from, I have to explain the history and the background. Then they usually will ask, "What is [East Turkestan]?" I tell them that it is in central Asia and that it was taken over by China, and it is not on the map. But when you go into Washington D.C., and in Congress, a lot of people know about the issues. The closer to the political center, then the more people know about it.

**AG:** *What would be your feelings about going back to East Turkestan?*

My family that is in East Turkestan right now, I haven't really seen them since I was eight. I love them to death, of course, they are my family, but I have not seen them for a long time, which is a strain on our relationship.

**KR:** I would love to! I have always wanted to. My parents are not going to let me go. If they do let me go, it would be with so many safety precautions. I don't think that I will be arrested or anything like that, because I am not really in the limelight. But my parents worry that having the youngest daughter back there might be an opportunity to get snatched up. I don't think that anything would happen and I really would love to go back. It is my home country. As much as I love America—and I do love America, this is my second home—I would love to go back and I do plan on going back someday.

#### Note

1. Editor's note: Rather than use the name given to the region by the Chinese, many Uyghurs prefer to use "East Turkestan" for their homeland. It is also alternatively spelled "East Turkistan."

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# USING OUR CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS TO ADVOCATE FOR OUR FAMILY MEMBERS

## An interview with Fu Xiang, wife of Yang Jianli

By Yi Ping

*When a loved one becomes a political prisoner, family members often find themselves taking up the role of advocate to reunite their families. Fu Xiang speaks with Ren Yu Ren Quan editor Yi Ping about how her husband Yang Jianli's involvement in the democracy movement and his imprisonment has affected and transformed their family.*

**Yi Ping (Yi):** *Thank you for accepting our interview! Now that Yang Jianli has been released and is back in the United States, I imagine you and your children must be tremendously happy. I would like you to talk about how you felt when you saw your husband upon his arrival.*

**Fu Xiang (Fu):** Of course I was happy, very very happy. Every single day for a long time, I've been looking forward to this moment. On the day of his return, I received a phone call from Senator Barney Frank's office out of the blue, and was told that Jianli would be arriving at the Los Angeles airport in an hour. It was 10 a.m. then. I was so pleasantly surprised that I jumped up and down. My daughter was in China at the time, so I went to pick him up with my son and a couple of friends at the Boston airport at 8 p.m. The moment I saw him, I breathed a sigh of relief.

**Yi:** *You haven't seen each other in five years, is that right?*

**Fu:** We did see each other in between. I went to China three times and saw him twice. Jianli was arrested in April 2002. I returned to China in May to visit him, but wasn't allowed into the country.

**Yi:** *Why didn't they let you through customs? For what reason?*

**Fu:** At the time, the status of Jianli's case was still unclear. They claimed that they stopped me because "state secrets" were involved. The next two times, I brought my son with me. The first time I saw Jianli, then, must have been in January 2005; I can't really remember. It was so difficult arranging to see him in person. It took a long time to apply, and the visa was only good for seven days. In short, it was a lot of trouble and came with all kinds of restrictions.

**Yi:** *Now you must feel relieved. Your voice is filled with happiness.*

**Fu:** Yes! Yes! I am truly filled with great joy indeed!

**Yi:** *Yang Jianli has PhD degrees from two famous schools, Berkeley and Harvard. Had he not participated in the democracy movement, he would have had a great future in either America or back in China. Involvement in the democracy movement is dangerous in China and brings trouble, even if you are overseas. For example, you wouldn't be able to go back to China, and you can jeopardize your family in China, not to mention that it is harder to make a living when you get involved in the movement. When Yang Jianli chose to devote himself to the movement, he sacrificed a lot. Did you support his choice at first? Did you ever have disagreements with each other over the issue?*

**Fu:** I am quite traditional. When it comes to my husband's career and choices, I respect his decisions in general.

**Yi:** *You are a typical virtuous wife and caring mother.*

**Fu:** I can't say that I'm a virtuous wife and caring mother, but I do admire Jianli greatly. I respect and believe in his thoughts, his judgment and his ability. The only thing that concerns me about his participation in the democracy movement is the effect on his health and safety. In terms of financial difficulties, I don't really care that much. Jianli has a good eye on things and is a very able person. For that reason, I normally don't question his decisions. The democracy movement he endorses is a good thing. It is so exceptional that he can have the heart for it. Jianli comes from a rural county; he has a special passion for poor people and the peasants. He understands what kind of life they are living. He strives for a better China, where its people can have a better life. If I tried to stop him from doing that, wouldn't I be too selfish? I support Jianli's career.

**Yi:** *I remember back in 1989, Yang Jianli rushed back to China from America to participate in that democracy movement and witnessed the June 4th incident. Did you agree with his decision to go back? What were your thoughts?*

**Fu:** In 1989, Yang Jianli was getting a PhD in mathematics at Berkley. He was elected by the Chinese students there to go back and support the democracy movement, mainly by delivering donations to students and workers on the Square. I had butterflies in my stomach when he left. It was, after all, a political movement and the military had been marshaled. But we didn't expect them to open fire. Jianli went back on around May 20. At the time, the most serious incident we knew of was the police hitting people with police sticks. We saw a woman bleeding on television. Even that was enough to outrage us, so how could we possibly have imagined that they would shoot people? On the night of June 4th, we saw on television that some students were shot dead in the Square; Jianli was in the Square with students from Beijing Normal University. I was so worried that I kept calling our mentor at Beijing Normal University, where Jianli lived in the dorm. But Jianli didn't return for the whole night, not until 10 a.m. the next morning. I was worried to death.

**Yi:** *It must have been horrible to think what might have happened.*

**Fu Xiang, along with daughter Anita Yang, look over family photos in their Rockville, Md. home on April 21, 2003. Photo credits: AP Photo/Matthew Cavanaugh.**



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**Fu:** Jianli returned after 10 a.m. in the morning.

**Yi:** *So you were relieved.*

**Fu:** I was only somewhat relieved. There were many rumors at the time; some said that a military truck was going to drive into Beijing Normal University and carry out a massacre on campus. As long as Jianli was still there, there was no way I could stop worrying. Fortunately, Jianli came back two or three days later. He was on standby at the airport, since it was impossible to get a ticket. He was lucky. He had secured his return visa to America before he went to China. Because of it, he was able to return quickly and later testify before Congress regarding June 4th.

He analyzed the situation and his plans with examples, thinking through the possibilities. He thought that he would not be arrested, but even if he were, it wouldn't be for long. He had been making preparations for so many years with such careful and detailed plans, not to mention that what he did was the right thing—what else could I say? Even if I was reluctant, I could do nothing but let him go.

**Yi:** *June 4th changed Yang Jianli's life path.*

**Fu:** It's all because of June 4th.

**Yi:** *Since then, he gave up on pursuing his math career and devoted himself to the democracy movement.*

**Fu:** Yes, it all changed after June 4th. Before that, he had always wanted to become a math professor.

**Yi:** *Yang Jianli went back to China in 2002. He was already a well-known dissident by then. It was dangerous for him to go back. There was a high risk of being arrested. As his wife and the mother of his children, you must have been reluctant to see him act in the face of that risk. But*

*Mr. Yang told me that it was you who helped him pack before he left. In other words, in the end, you were still supportive. How did you feel at the time? What convinced you to let him go back despite the risks?*

**Fu:** Jianli had wanted to go back for many years. But back then, all our kids were very young, so it was hard to leave home like that. This time before he left, he made a huge effort trying to convince me. He analyzed the situation and his plans with examples, thinking through the possibilities. He thought that he would not be arrested, but even if he were, it wouldn't be for long. He had been making preparations for so many years with such careful and detailed plans, not to mention that what he did was the right thing—what else could I say? Even if I was reluctant, I could do nothing but let him go. I remember when we were packing before he left, I said, "It's cold, bring a sweater!"

**Yi:** *Before he left, you never thought he would be sent to prison?*

**Fu:** To be honest, I was of course concerned, but I wasn't exactly mentally prepared. He had a concrete plan: how to enter, how to exit, what to do in the case of an accident. He even gave me a list of names that I should contact in case something happened to him. In the first ten days he was in China, he called me every day. That was the most torturous ten days. My sister took care of our children for me, and I anxiously waited for Jianli's phone calls every single day. I couldn't wait to learn if he was still safe or if he had been arrested.

**Yi:** *When did you learn that Jianli was arrested?*

**Fu:** A couple of hours after he was taken away. At 11 p.m. that night, I got a phone call from his friend—the friend didn't reveal his name. He told me that Jianli wanted him to send a message that he was in trouble. He was taken away at Kunming Airport and asked me to find ways to rescue him. I freaked out, not knowing what to do. An hour later, Jianli called me and said he was locked up in a room of a hotel close to Kunming Airport. They took all his forms of identification. They knew who he was and would probably transfer him somewhere else soon. There would be a period of time that he wouldn't be able to get in touch with me. At 10



a.m. the next morning, we talked to each other over the phone again. He was taken away an hour later. After that, I lost total contact with Jianli for a year and a half.

**Yi:** *Not a single clue of information in a year and a half?*

**Fu:** At the time, there were all kinds of rumors. Some said he was locked up in Kunming, some said he was in Beijing, and some pointed to Shandong, in the northeast. But there was one official report on Jianli's arrest on April 26. On May 10, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China made a statement: "There is a person who claims to be Yang Jianli who entered the country illegally. The Public Security Bureau is looking into the case." When I heard this, I was a little relieved. At least we knew he was in the hands of the government. He didn't go missing.

**Yi:** *The worst fear would be of his secret disappearance. If he went missing, you would have no idea what they could do to him.*

**Fu:** As soon as I learned the information, I went straight to the U.S. State Department, who immediately tried to communicate with the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs about the case through the U.S. embassy in China.

**Yi:** *After Jianli was arrested, you tried your best to get him released. But did you have any expectations as to how long he would be in prison?*

**Fu:** I thought he would come out fairly soon. It was around the time when President Hu Jintao was about to visit the U.S.—good timing to get Jianli out of prison. For two weeks, I lived in Washington, D.C., running around between Congress and the State Department. I met with the assistant Secretary of State in charge of human rights related issues. He told me to give him two days, that there might be some hope. I thought it was resolved. Days later, I was notified that the effort wasn't going smoothly: China refused to release Yang Jianli in the name of anti-terrorism. The U.S. is fighting terrorism; China is fighting terrorism, too. All those who carried falsified identification were to be punished strictly. I burst into tears when I heard this.

I didn't expect Jianli to be locked up for five years. I sought out every possible way to secure his release, hop-

ing that he would be freed soon. I tried so hard every single day, and now it's been five years already. Had I known that he would serve for five full years, I may not have had that much motivation.

**Yi:** *In China, there are a good number of political prisoners. What do you think is the biggest challenge for the family of those prisoners who are in prison? When Jianli was in prison, what was the most difficult thing for you?*

**Fu:** I think every political prisoner's family situation is different, and they face different challenges. It is also not the same between domestic China and overseas. For example, it must be much more difficult for a family in China. If the husband is in prison and the wife is laid off, making ends meet becomes a struggle. Illness of family members—parents of either side or children—is another example of these additional challenges. Also, discrimination from Chinese society against families of political prisoners itself is an invisible burden and torture. Based on these considerations, we are a lot better off being here in America.

Ever since Jianli was arrested, I have been under financial pressure, losing his income while having to cover the sizeable expense of running around trying to get him out of prison. Nevertheless, I had a job and we had friends who helped. Therefore, our finances were not a huge problem. The biggest challenge was our children's education. This broke Jianli's and my heart. When Jianli was arrested, our daughter was nine and our son was six. They lost a father's care and instruction at this stage of their development. And this is different from the situation of a divorced or separated family. For children from such families, their parents are simply separated: they are still able to see their father and spend time with him once in a while. No matter how great a mother is, she will never be able to replace a father figure. Without education from a father, a child's growth is flawed. This can have lifelong effects, that can never be erased.

**Yi:** *What specific impact did Jianli's arrest have on your children?*

**Fu:** Jianli's absence had a larger impact on our son. Sons crave fathers more. Without his father's protection, he lost his sense of security. He became sensitive, intimi-

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dated, and overly attached to me. Compared to his peers, our son is more naïve and matures more slowly. The first time I went to China to visit Jianli, I put our son at my sister's and didn't dare tell him. When I wasn't there, he became very anxious and couldn't sleep at night. Most children are not like this. That was the time when the Chinese government wouldn't let me in the country, so I came back two days later.

**When Jianli was arrested, our daughter was nine and our son was six. They lost a father's care and instruction at this stage of their development.**

**Yi:** *When Yang Jianli was in prison, you did a lot of advocacy and rescue work for him. I read a lot about it. For prisoners of conscience, outside advocacy is very important, including the family's efforts. What kind of advocacy work did you do for him? What kind of results did your efforts produce? From your experience through these years, how do you think the wife of a political prisoner should advocate for his release?*

**Fu:** There are many things you can do. Endless letters, faxes and emails to draft, a great amount of information to get out; you will find it impossible to finish them even if you work hard everyday. For these past few years, rescuing Jianli has become a major part of my life. I went to the U.S. Congress and the State Department frequently to meet with senators and report on developments in the case and on how he was doing in prison. I also brought my kids, Jianli's parents and sisters with me, holding press conferences with our legal consultants, Jerome Cohen, Jared Genser, and Senator Barney Frank, Representatives Christopher Cox, and Michael Capuano. I also wrote letters to President Bush, Secretary Powell, and Secretary Rice to get their help in putting pressure on the Chinese government. Twice when I visited Jianli in Beijing, I also paid visits to the American ambassador to China, Mr. Clark Randt. On the other hand, I also tried to get help from American civil society—churches, schools and companies—asking them to write petition letters to the American and Chinese governments. When Premier Wen Jiabao was visiting Harvard, I turned to

Jianli's mentor, who quickly organized a signed letter with many other Harvard professors, pleading for China to release Yang Jianli. The president of Harvard brought up this request when meeting with Wen Jiabao. I contacted various international human rights organizations, hoping that they could advocate within the international community. For example, I delivered two speeches at Amnesty International, both with an attendance of thousands of people. I met with head individuals from Human Rights Watch, Human Rights in China, Dui Hua Foundation, Laogai Research Foundation, Wei Jingsheng Foundation, and Chinese Democracy Education Foundation. I kept in touch with them so that we could get prompt help when in need. I also communicated frequently with Jianping's defense lawyer, Mr. Mo Shaoping. Our whole family is grateful for what he did. He was the only person who was able to see Jianli in person before the family was allowed to visit Jianli. Mr. Mo made a huge effort as the messenger between Jianli and our family before the judgment came out, which brought us tremendous comfort. Thanks to constant contact with the media, major American newspapers all reported on Yang Jianli's case, even more so among overseas Chinese media. In addition, I protested against the Chinese government. During the spring festival that year, our whole family, including Jianli's parents, went to the Chinese embassy and sat at the door on a hunger strike.

I am not a social person to begin with. I had never gotten involved with Jianli's work. But for these years, I've seen a lot and met a large number of people.

**Yi:** *All families of political prisoners hope that their beloved family member will be released soon. But many of them lack experience and are reluctant to seek help from the media or to advocate to the outside world. They especially resist contacting overseas organizations or people, fearing that they will be deemed hostile to the government and experience retaliation, resulting in greater pain and a longer term in prison for their beloved family members.*

**Fu:** It's very natural that they have such concerns. This is not only the case for families in China; we had similar fears initially, even when in America. Jianli was tortured while in detention. We did not utter a word to the outside world, fearing that Jianli would be retaliated against. However, Jianli insisted that we continue

protesting and petitioning, urging us to reveal the truth to the world. And so we did. The prison felt pressured by law and the media. The prison consequently apologized to Jianli and promised not to let anything like this happen again. Jianli wasn't ill-treated ever since.

We have to learn to fight, speak up and protect ourselves with the law. If our family members are persecuted or unfairly tried, we must fight through petitions, protests, and by finding legal representatives, getting the media's help, writing open letters or seeking help from the international community. All these methods are useful. We should have nothing to fear. Once they make a criminal of a member of our family, do you really think they will reduce the penalty simply because the family is obedient? If we advocate in a nonviolent way with the rights provided by the Constitution, what should we be scared of?

**Yi:** *Indeed. Many families of political prisoners think that keeping silent and doing whatever the government instructs will win some sympathy from the government and their loved ones will be better treated in prison. The truth is completely the opposite. The more intimidated and obedient the family acts, the more harassment and torture their family members will receive in prison. They will think they can do anything to you if you are quiet.*

**Fu:** All our methods of advocacy are legitimate rights that the law renders to the families of political prisoners. Aren't we all talking about safeguarding rights? As families of political prisoners, we should protect and exercise these rights, too.

**Yi:** *What you just said was great! I hope all families of political prisoners can hear it. I heard that Jianli is thinking of starting a project overseas for rescuing Chinese political prisoners. It is an important and practical matter. I wish him success and hope that people from all walks of life can support him. One component of the project should be assisting families of political prisoners.*



Representative Christopher Cox looks on as Fu Xiang, wife of Chinese dissident Yang Jianli, relates details of her husband's condition during a news conference in Washington, D.C., on January 19, 2005. Photo credits: AP Photo/Kevin Wolf.

**Fu:** Jianli's personal experience was his inspiration for this project.

**Yi:** *It is a necessary thing to do and we should all be supportive. So many sacrifices go unseen by people throughout this process of the democratic advancement of China. There is a family behind every political prisoner in China. Their wives, children, parents, brothers and sisters undertake tremendous work and pains every single day with their tears and blood. This is the most substantial sacrifice and contribution pushing China's development forward. I think the Chinese should not forget those people, either now or in future.*

**Fu:** Your words touch me deeply. It was worth it, going through all the pain.

**Yi:** Thank you! Thank all the wives and families of political prisoners!

Translated by Isle Arthur

This interview was conducted over the telephone in the U.S. in mid-October, 2007. To read about the perspectives and experiences of Yang Jianli, see page 57.



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# MINING THE PAST



Photo credits: Guang Niu/ Getty Images.

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# DECLINE OF POTALA PALACE

**By Woese**

*The changes Tibet has seen in the last half-century are evident in Lhasa's grand palace, the Potala. Tibetan writer Woese examines the way tradition and history have been erased by the Chinese-initiated economic development.*

Is it necessary to describe Potala Palace? This great piece of architecture, like a thousand beams of light illuminating the ancient city of Lhasa, is seen as the symbol of Tibet by people throughout the world. Straddling the peak of Marpo Ri at the center of the Lhasa Valley, whether by its appearance or in the eye of the beholder, it holds an irresistible attraction. At the beginning of the 20th century, an English correspondent who entered the rooftop of the world with armed troops invading Tibet, on seeing Potala Palace from a distance “like flames shining brilliantly under the sun,” sighed with emotion, “This is not a palace sitting on top of a mountain; it is a mountain of a palace.”

The history of Potala Palace extends over a millennia. One thousand three hundred years ago, Potala Palace had already taken on its citadel shape during the period of Tibetan King Songtsen Gampo. In 1642, the Fifth Dalai Lama established the Ganden Phodang authority and unified the country, becoming the highest religious and secular leader in all of Tibet. Another of his great achievements was to build the Potala Palace on the site where (according to Buddhist sutras) Avalokitesvara preached his sermons. Since then, the magnificent Potala has been the political and religious center of Tibetan theocracy, and its sacred status lasted until 1959.

Once upon a time this song was written and became popular among Tibetans:

*On the golden roof of the Potala, rises the golden sun  
It is not the golden sun, but the precious face of the Lama  
On the slopes of the Potala, starts the sound of the  
golden oboe*

*It is not the sound of the golden oboe, but the voice of  
the Lama chanting*

*At the foot of the Potala, multi-hued khatak are  
fluttering*

*They are not multi-hued khatak, but the robes of the Lama*

It is obvious to everyone that the Lama glorified in the song is none other than the Dalai Lama, for Tibetans the embodiment of Avalokitesvara, worshipped by Tibetans living in the snow land. But then, 1959 arrived. Late in the night of March 17, the Dalai Lama was forced to escape from another of his palaces, the Norbulingka. Two days later, in the midst of unprecedented shelling of Lhasa, the Norbulingka and Potala Palace were turned into killing fields, silent witnesses to this earthshaking event in Tibetan history. A soldier from the People's Liberation Army (PLA) who took part in “pacifying armed rebels in Tibet” recalls that the PLA's 308th Artillery Regiment, which had been stationed for years at the foot of Bumpa Ri on the far bank of the Lhasa River, had long been targeting several howitzers at Potala Palace. So finally, during the “pacification of the rebellion,” every single shell was shot precisely through the red-framed windows edged in black and exploded inside the palace. Yet a one-time “rebellious villain” of that era recalls that they gave up on their resistance because they could just no longer bear those demon-like shells damaging the Potala. Therefore, in some surviving photos and documentaries we can see “rebellious villains” walking down from the smoke-blackened Potala, holding white khatak above them, to surrender their weapons to the Liberation Army who was “liberating” Tibet. (Actually, this scene was filmed after the “pacifying rebellion”; those captives who were marched back to the Potala to reenact the scene were then all thrown in jail.)

Potala Palace has been an empty building since then.

In the years that followed, the Potala was no longer the center of Lhasa; it has been turned into a backdrop by

the occupiers of each period and for each situation. It is a backdrop of unlimited interest, a must-have backdrop, but also a backdrop that is a mystery to people. The Potala has never been, with the changing of time and space, so colorful, so odd, and even so helpless and sad, as it has been during this last half century.

### Backdrop to revolution

At first, the new offices and dormitory buildings of the government and the assembly hall, called the “Cultural Palace of Working People,” were built on the vast meadows, parks and swamps in front of the Potala. All these buildings looked exactly like a military camp, without any sense of beauty. Furthermore, as described in the songs of revolutionary singers, Lhasa had by then “been connected” with Beijing. Every political movement that started thousands of miles away in Beijing would be energetically responded to in Lhasa, often with the same zeal and excitement. Since the Cultural Palace of Working People could no longer hold the thousands of “liberated serfs” who had been mobilized, the location for staging 100,000-person assemblies had to shift into the open, still with the silent Potala Palace as its backdrop.

In 1966, the red terror and madness of the Cultural Revolution swept across Tibet. Under the call of Mao Zedong to “destroy the old and launch the new,” one after another monasteries were damaged, one after another stupas were toppled, one after another statues of buddhas were crushed, one after another stacks of scriptures were burned to ash. Even Potala Palace—scathingly denounced as “one of the feudal castles of the head of the three feudal lords who cruelly oppressed



A Tibetan pilgrim spins a prayer wheel during her Kora, or pilgrim circuit, around Potala Palace on August 3, 2005. Photo credits: Guang Niu/Getty Images.

the working class people”—nearly met a disastrous fate. It survived because throughout the vast Qinghai-Tibet plateau, there is no other more suitable backdrop than Potala Palace. It was probably for the same reason that, although the Norbulingka was re-named “People’s Park,” and although someone suggested renaming Potala Palace as the “Red Palace of the East,” the Potala still retained its old name, which is also a primary asset for the backdrop. Revolution needs targets; revolution needs backdrops. With the five-star flag raised over Potala Palace, and with the portrait of Mao hung high on its façade, a new Tibet of a “changed world” was born. Therefore, the effect of the Potala as a backdrop is incomparable.

However, while being extolled as the “true treasure of

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Tibet,” the Potala was almost robbed empty. According to records, over 100,000 volumes of scriptures and historical documents were amassed in Potala Palace, many of which were written with powders of gold, silver, turquoise, and coral; also, there were many storerooms for housing precious objects, handicrafts, paintings, wall hangings, statues, and ancient armour, etc., from the various eras of Tibetan history, all perfectly preserved. Everything was priceless. Yet, nearly nothing remains in Potala Palace where flourishing art and treasure were once collected. Those precious, those superlative, those countless and priceless objects, all that could be taken was taken away, leaving behind only those heavy stupas, since the relics of eight generations of Dalai Lamas preserved in the stupas were of no use to the atheists; leaving behind only mural paintings, though they too were painted red and quotations from Mao were written on them; leaving behind only those immovable statues and mandalas and some thangkas and ritual objects, to be displayed solely as decoration; leaving behind only the appearance of Potala Palace, which—while still looking magnificent—was almost an empty shelf.

A real story can be proof. In 1988, a budget of \$5 million was allocated by the Chinese government to renovate Potala Palace for the first time. At the ceremony launching the renovation, an official from the finance department repeatedly emphasized that, despite the central government having financial difficulties, they still tightened their belts to allocate a large amount to Tibet. Meanwhile, Ngabo Ngawang Jigme, vice-chairman of the National People’s Congress, the only high official from old Tibet accepted by the Chinese Communist regime and a well-known political vessel, made this remark: “Since the nation has its difficulties, we shouldn’t ask money from the central government. There’s a storeroom called Namsay Bangzod in the Potala where a large quantity of gold and jewels was deposited annually from the time of the Fifth Dalai Lama. This never stopped for over three hundred years, nor was it used. So let’s just open the storeroom today and use the treasure there to renovate Potala Palace. That would be more than sufficient.” In fact, this storeroom had been emptied, nothing was left there. It is said that Ngabo knew this fact, and made this remark deliberately. So, someone responded immediately: “The

storeroom has already been emptied. So, how could there be gold and jewels? They were all taken away by the nation and transferred to government treasuries in Shanghai, Tianjin and Gansu.” Then the official from the finance department stopped talking and kept quiet.

Forget about the material loss. Potala Palace—used only for the purpose of a backdrop—has been heavily painted with the colors of ideology. No matter whether to criticize “the darkest, the most reactionary, the most barbaric, the most cruel” old Tibet, or to eulogize the “brilliant” new Tibet, Potala Palace is needed for performances of this kind; as a result, the revolutionary stage simply sits at the foot of the Potala.

For instance, the once very popular “Revolution Exhibition Hall of Tibet,” in order to show “all sorts of astonishing atrocities committed under the old system,”<sup>1</sup> dramatically displayed more than a hundred extremely tragic sculptures, augmented with music and captions, dioramas of unbearable misery designed to provoke anger in visitors. In 1976, *China Reconstructs*, the magazine created to publicize achievements of the new China to foreigners, commented on the exhibition: “As soon as one pushes open the black curtain of the hall, one enters a hell-on-earth of old Tibet.”

In addition to an exhibition hall, there is a square, exactly the site needed for the revolution. The bigger the square, the higher the excitement at gatherings of what is called the “ocean of the masses.” The effect thus produced is unique. Hence the scale of the square kept on expanding, and the village of Shol, once situated below Potala Palace, with its traditional houses and typical Tibetan lifestyle and customs, was demolished in 1995. The 30th anniversary of the founding of Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) was celebrated on “Potala Square,” constructed with a huge allocation of money. This “Great Celebrating Project” was one of the 62 “Aid Tibet Projects”—very huge, inappropriate and out of proportion. Moreover, right at the center of the square, a platform was built, an imitation of the national flag platform in Beijing’s Tiananmen Square. Since then, whenever national holidays are celebrated, the flag-raising ceremony is held there by fully-armed soldiers.

Due to construction of the new square, the exhibition



hall also required relocation; it had completed its historic mission and it is said that the hall is due for reconstruction. The Tibet Museum, built in 1999, is located exactly between two historic landmarks, with the Norbulingka in front and Potala Palace to its rear. The purpose of the museum is to display Tibet's history and culture through thousands of antiques and works of art, yet it does not compare to Potala Palace. Additionally, though there is now no revolutionary exhibition hall, there is a revolutionary memorial, called the Memorial to the Liberation of Tibet, erected on the square in 2002 and directly facing Potala Palace. It claims to be "an abstract representation of Mount Everest," yet it has no sense of beauty at all; on the contrary, it looks more like a shell being shot into the sky, deeply piercing the hearts of Tibetans. It is exactly as the Czech writer, Klima, observed: the goal of building memorials is "to evoke people's loyalty towards the ruler," but the armed soldiers guarding the square are a stronger warning, all the time intensifying the real situation of the Potala and that of Tibet.

### **The square's unlimited potential for fame and profit**

Of course, nowadays Potala Palace is no longer used merely as a political symbol. Because of changing times, because of the Western Development Program, and because "development is the absolute rationale," the world-renowned Potala Palace has become—as it is described in the hip lingo of advertisements—a mine of "unlimited commercial opportunities." The place where once upon a time the Great Religious King and many high lamas gathered, the center where the power of secular and religious leaders was concentrated, is now a tourist site, like a bustling market. Deyang Shar, where the sacred and mysterious religious dances used to be performed, is now full of tourists yelling, shouting and having their photos taken as they wish. While the fragrant smoke of incense lingers, the atmosphere in the most sacred halls is no longer quiet and solemn; tourists, pointing their fingers at everything, brush shoulders with pilgrims carrying their butter lamps. In several rooms marked as the "White Palace" in tourist pamphlets, one can hear the voices of tour guides everywhere reciting in Chinese, English, and other languages: "This was where Dalai chanted, this was where

Dalai slept, this was where he ate, this was where he met with his guests, this is his radio, this is his teacup." This is similar to what happens in the newly opened Takten Mingyur Palace in the Norbulingka, where everyone can tour through the secrets of someone else's life by simply spending a few *yuan* for the entrance ticket and can even make uninhibited comments. "The dignity of the past has all gone." On a visit to Tibet in 1979, Lobsang Samten, elder brother of the Dalai Lama, made this heartbroken remark as he looked at Potala Palace—still shining brilliantly under the sun, but not the same as before.

According to a 2003 report, the Potala has received over half a million tourists and pilgrims annually in recent years, around 1,500 per day on average, and the number is increasing at the rate of 20 percent. Even though the entrance fee has been raised to over \$12, the highest record of visitors is up to 5,000 on a single day. The pressure generated by such a heavy flow of people has made Potala Palace, constructed from clay, timber, and stone, sag; various parts of the structure have cracked and even collapsed. Even though a new regulation restricts the number of visitors to no more than 50 every 20 minutes within morning opening hours, and 50 visitors every half hour during the two-and-a-half hours in the afternoon, the number of visitors is still as high as 850 per day. The Potala Palace is on mobile phone advertisements, on 50 *yuan* currency notes, on MTV, and on T-shirts. Potala Palace has even been miniaturized into models made from very cheap materials for use as window displays in hotels, restaurants, and shops, decorating the vulgar landscape of this commodity-driven society. Potala Palace, through such a process of endless reproduction, has been thrown down into the world of mortals from the heights of heaven.

In this world of mortals, all kinds of political slogans—"An Open Tibet Welcomes You!" "Creating An Excellent Market Environment" or "Oppose Splittism; Unify the Motherland"—appear one after another on the high walls around Potala Palace. As for the square in front of the palace, it has been put to use in more ways. In order to display "modernized" new Tibet, there are real estate promotions and car exhibitions, or various kinds of commercial fairs. Sleek, sexy girls in Tibetan dress—though not necessarily Tibetan—are enthusiastically

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promoting the sale of real estate in far away Chengdu or Chongqing, as well as various models of sedans and SUVs. Amidst yelling and shouting, daily necessities from inland China are hawked at double their price, some of which are inferior-quality fakes. Furthermore, lottery tickets in this or that name are also sold here, luring people with monetary or material rewards, making them greedy.

Under the dizzying Lhasa sunlight, the material desires of Tibetans have never been fueled with such excitement; but, after all, how many average Tibetans can actually afford those luxurious cars and houses? Look at those shops and restaurants that stretch along the two wings of the Potala Palace wall and spread around the square: they all look like clones of large or small cities in inland China. Together with the “modern” buildings covered in porcelain tiles, with windows framed in aluminum inlaid with dark blue glass, they are the culture of “contractor troops,” made up of peasants-turned-construction workers from the inland.

Most of the old willow trees have been felled, most of the prayer flags that used to fly above the pond have all gone, transforming the Zonggyab Lukhang (also called the Pond of the Dragon King) into a place for playing mahjong and cards, drinking tea, and eating kebabs, further rendering Potala Palace a lonely island isolated in the center of a secular ocean. But, rather complacently, the officials in the TAR declare to the world that “the rooftop of the world” has reached its greatest period as never before in history.

So, shall we all sing and dance to celebrate this greatest time in history? Shall we add more functions—entertainment or circuses—to the Potala, which has been insulted through politicization and commercialization for over half a century? Specifically speaking, this square, with Potala Palace as its backdrop, has become the stage for tourists arriving from all around, to use for publicity, for fame, and for fishing around to make profits. This trend has gone too far to control.

A performing arts group called “Hearts Joining Hearts” came from Beijing, bringing with them the utmost solicitudes of the central government. A group of TV stars, with khatak presented by Tibetans hanging

around their necks, ran out of breath performing a program eulogizing the solidarity of all the nationalities. It is said some of them even had to perform with oxygen bags because of altitude sickness. This pampered performance was finally met with thunderous clapping in the midst of them singing “Fifty-six Nations, Fifty-six Flowers,” and those masses who were energetically clapping were as usual selected from respected units, schools, and military establishments in Lhasa.

This was also the location of a modeling contest. As reported, “Fifty-one models from different parts of the nation gathered here, with the brilliant Potala as the backdrop, to the unique rhythms of Tibetan music, in their modern apparel, with their model gaits, displaying astonishing modern styles on the huge T-shaped stage.” What’s more interesting is that the high-ranking officials and military leaders of the TAR were also there to “deliver their congratulations,” and “offer the highest Tibetan honor, the sacred khatak, to the winning models.”

Known as “Asia’s Number One Flying Man,” Ke Shou-liang, a Taiwanese actor, offered a special gift on the national holiday, to the people who celebrated the holiday, by means of a flying car performance in a domestically-produced Jili on the Potala Square on October 1, 2002 (before his sudden death). Although this was not his best record, Ke felt very honored to be performing in Potala Square—particularly on the nation’s birthday. “The two sides of the Strait belong to the same family; China will become stronger if all the nationalities gather together in solidarity,” he said to a reporter.

What is a pity is that the pop singer Han Hong, who has half-Tibetan blood, also took the Potala as the backdrop for her publicity. She made plans to hold personal concerts on the Potala Square in the summer of 2004. To hype up the program, she told the media that she was going to “ride in a helicopter” and “land on Potala Palace.” Of course, the landing place—rather than being the golden roofs of the Potala Palace—was the Potala Square. Yet, such an explosive headline is shocking enough.

Please, ladies and gentlemen! Please respect the Potala! Please respect this sacred religious place, this miracle of the human realm! Simply because the Potala has been

listed as a “World Heritage Site” by the United Nations—not even considering the fact that the palace is actually the soul of a race—everyone who is rushing over to the Potala is repeatedly requested: please respect Potala Palace. Or else it is not unimaginable that there will be a day that, driven by the motivation of extreme greed, Potala Square will even become the playground for the world’s most famous circus. And the great magician, David Copperfield, who once “disappeared” the Statue of Liberty in New York, would also visit, reenacting the same program that captured the eyes of the world: making Potala Square disappear. Once such a day comes, TAR officials would again proudly declare: the rooftop of the world has been successfully “hooked up” to the world, and “globalization” has been achieved.

### Inside story of the renovation

Yes, authorities have indeed invested \$7 million, gold, precious stones, and five years of labor to renovate Potala Palace. Yes, authorities have again invested a large sum of money, and again for the renovation of Potala Palace. Yes, all that is fact, but some facts that

have been disguised, revised and forgotten are also worth mentioning.

For instance, who knows whether the shells that were fired at Potala Palace in 1959 to “pacify the rebellion” did not also at the same time destroy rooms full of statues, of buddhas, mural paintings, and other traditional artifacts; after all, the destruction to the building’s structure of clay and timber was not minor.

For instance, the agitation of “destroying the Four Olds” at the beginning of the Cultural Revolution also spread to Potala Palace. The general circumstances were similar to those outlined above.

After 1969, to carry out Mao Zedong’s strategic guidelines to “dig holes deeply, collect crops widely, and not claim to be a superpower,” Lhasa, along with other provinces, municipalities, and autonomous regions, initiated construction of the so-called “Civil Defence Project,” which launched trench-digging and air raid shelter construction. These shelters can even be seen today, right beneath Marpo Ri on which Potala Palace

**A paramilitary soldier on patrol marches past a crowd gathered in front of a replica of Tibet’s most revered landmark, Potala Palace, on September 26, 2006, built as an attraction on Tiananmen Square in Beijing for the National Day holidays. Photo credits: FREDERIC J. BROWN/AFP/Getty Images.**



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stands. While the one to the eastern side of the mountain has been sealed, the other to the west has been turned into a bar selling barley beer. The headquarters of air raid defense used to be across the road from Potala Palace, next to Chakpori, where a water company is today. It is said that there are also air raid shelters beneath Chakpori. According to popular belief, the reason for building them there was that since the location is close to the compound of the TAR Party Committee, if there was an air attack by enemies, officials could quickly run into those shelters. Of course, it is well known among Lhasans that digging holes under Marpo Ri, and using explosives to excavate the mountain, has damaged the foundations and the Potala building itself. A Tibetan who studied at Lhasa Middle School in those days can still remember the deafening sound of explosions during class. “When you passed by the area, sometimes you could feel the ground shaking.” So the renovation of the Potala Palace in recent years is precisely the result of the deeds of that time.

Yet even the renovation itself has created many problems and still further destruction. According to a February 3, 2004, broadcast on Voice of America, a cassette recording smuggled out of Tibet denounced the project: “The renovation project of the Potala was left to Chinese construction workers who know nothing about the delicate and complex nature of traditional Tibetan architecture and technology. It treated the renovation of the world-famous cultural heritage as a children’s game.” For instance, “According to Tibetans’ traditional architectural technology, a special wooden beam must be inserted into the wall; but, to make things easier, the Chinese used concrete and steel instead of it. Everyone knows that the history of concrete and steel used as construction material is only around a hundred years old. Using those materials for the renovation of Potala Palace, which is over 1,300 years, is a travesty of history. Not only that, these new materials are not compatible with the original ones, so the structure of the palace has been damaged.” This kind of renovation destroys the cohesiveness of the traditional Tibetan architecture of the Potala.

Potala Palace was built by Tibetans, so it should also have been renovated by Tibetans. Why has it been left to Han Chinese construction teams? The subtlety within is

just as the cassette recording pointed out. “The renovation project has been entangled with the phenomenon of corruption and wasteful spending,” which is the result of some kind of deal. As a matter of fact, the winds of corruption are prevalent in China, as are bribery and corruption everywhere in Lhasa, displayed to the full. But in all these years, they have never been laid bare. Isn’t Tibet really the last land of purity on earth? In fact, on “the rooftop of the world,” evils under the sun have never been extinct and stop at nothing under the cover of power. But there are reasons for the cover; one of the most tangible reasons is that “stability overrides all.” Therefore, in order not to disturb the “stability” of Tibet, even if the income from selling entrance tickets to the Jokhang, Drepung, or Sera Monastery was shared among the children of high-ranking officials, people would not dare voice their anger to stop this robbery. Even though Potala Palace is a World Heritage Site, it has been stained by black hands behind the curtain.

#### **“Defeated, but never cried”**

Today’s Potala Palace, still standing atop the mountain, is without its previous height. Today’s Potala Palace, still appearing as a land of purity, is wounded by time-weathered changes. To Lhasans who live their lives in communion with the Potala, the inherited lifestyle has been changed, replaced—what’s done cannot be undone, this is a reality. But on the other side of this reality there is a hidden, continuous and indomitable spirit being sustained. Nowadays, early in the morning, and even earlier, exactly during the darkest time before dawn, Tibetans walk out of their houses one after another for the fulfillment of faith in their hearts. Those Tibetans who are rolling the beads of their rosaries; those Tibetans who are turning prayer wheels; those Tibetans who are doing full body prostrations; those Tibetans who are making offering with tsampa, grains and juniper incense; those Tibetans who are circumambulating with their dogs and sheep whose lives have been saved, all are like whirlpools in a river circling around Lhasa. At the center of the river, like a lonely island, the Potala stands silently. A few dim lights shining from the Palace highlight its loneliness and vastness, but even though the path of light is slow-moving, nothing can stop its course.

In the summer of 1994, two giant, precious thangkas were displayed on the outer white wall of Potala Palace, which is dotted by many windows with red and black frames. This great ritual had not been held for over 40 years, and has not been celebrated since 1994. A Chinese poet from inland China recorded the scene on that day: “Every spot in Lhasa from where one could catch a glimpse of the Potala was crowded. I saw many country-folk. From where they were standing, there was no way they could see the thangkas, yet they silently shed their tears facing towards the direction of the thangkas . . . on that day thousands upon thousands of people moved clockwise, circumambulating Potala Palace. Dust was everywhere. Yet everyone—Tibetans, Chinese, Westerners, monks, and everyday folk . . . carrying babies, helping the elderly—looked like a great migration in human history.”

As 1999 was about to come to an end, nearing the start of the 21st century, and after 40 years of the Dalai Lama’s exile, the 14-year-old tulku Karmapa<sup>2</sup> suddenly left his country, becoming another famous Tibetan exile. India, a country of freedom that accepted the Dalai Lama and so many other exiled Tibetans, also became the shelter of the Karmapa.<sup>3</sup>

In India, he wrote a profound poem about Potala Palace:

Moon-like flowers,  
in the majestic medicinal land of snow,  
bubbles of joy now mounting up.  
Amidst the melancholic flute of a drizzle,  
in the arched drum of the rainbow  
blow the winds of truth  
chasing the clouds to the far north

Ah . . .  
Now then,  
Flowers of our prayers in thousands bloom.  
The pain of our suffering slowly wanes  
as the south wind of solidarity blows.

In the clear blue sky  
once again,  
flipping, flopping  
white clouds of joy start to dance.

Hey,  
neither being rich,  
nor being a beggar,  
sparkling spectacle Potala,  
in the illuminated small window  
dazzles your face like a blossom.

Oh . . . the grand mellowed sun,  
now in serene golden rays.

The heart that bled inside  
was all for truth to prevail.

Defeated, but never cried

Translated by Tenzin Losel, Bhuchung D. Sonam, Jane Perkins, and Tenzin Tsundue

The original essay was posted online: Woesser, “Decline of Potala Palace,” *TibetWrites* (September 2006), [www.tibetwrites.org](http://www.tibetwrites.org).

## Notes

1. Editor’s note: Author is quoting from official PRC documents.
2. His Holiness the 17th Gyalwa Karmapa, Ogyen Trinley Dorje, was born to nomadic parents in 1985 in the Lhathok region of Tibet. The first such reincarnation (tulku) was recognized in 13th century Tibet. His name was the Gyalwa Karmapa, “The Victorious One of Enlightened Activity.” The Karmapa is said to embody the activity of all the buddhas of the past, present, and future. “The Karmapa,” *Karma Triyana Dharmachakra*, [no date], <http://www.kagyu.org/kagyu/lineage/karmapa/index.php>.
3. On December 28, 1999, the 14-year-old Karmapa left Toling Tsurphu Monastery with a handful of attendants and secretly escaped from Tibet. He arrived in Dharamsala, India, on January 5, 2000, where he was met by His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama.

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# AN INDIVIDUAL ARCHIVE AND A HISTORICAL ERA

**By Du Gao**

*An individual's political archive is unearthed and turns up for sale at an antiques market. Du Gao reflects on reliving his experiences in administrative detention as a "Rightist" through the discovery of these documents.*

When I entered our conference room today, my mind was far from calm.

Though some people would compel us to forget, even forbidding us to reminisce, here we are. Our presence here is an expression of a historical spirit and attitude toward history. I come with a sincere heart and a sense of responsibility to later generations. Though the disaster we are remembering happened 50 years ago, it is a painful thing for me to be here. I did not come to mourn my destroyed youth, however, but so that later generations, our successors, will not have their youth destroyed.

I think of my fellow sufferers, who died tragically, and thinking of them, the tears come. My tears are not just for the unfortunate dead, but for our ill-fated people.

**It never crossed my mind that only my own archive, out of all the others, would not just survive unscathed, but actually appear in Beijing for commercial sale in a well-known antiques market.**

As for my own political experiences, from the 1950s—the Anti-Hu Feng Campaign, the Campaign against Hidden Counterrevolutionaries,<sup>1</sup> the Anti-Rightist Movement—to my 12-year stint of Reeducation-Through-Labor (RTL), up until the Anti-Rightist issue

was put right in 1979, I experienced a full 24 years of hardship, a whole era of tribulation. Then at the end of the 20th century came the amazing appearance of *The Du Gao Archive*, an extraordinary historical legacy of those extraordinary years of my life.

It is inconceivable that an individual political archive as complete as this has become available to people in China, an artifact sold in an antiques market. The Chinese archive system is kept under extremely close surveillance, and after the Cultural Revolution and the rectification of the Anti-Rightist issue, all such data on these campaigns was burned. It never crossed my mind that only my own archive, out of all the others, would not just survive unscathed, but actually appear in Beijing for commercial sale in a well-known antiques market. It was discovered and bought by the young scholar Li Hui. This is a miracle. This archive has followed me for 24 years, nearly a quarter of a century. For me, it is both mysterious and frightening. Naturally, when I first came face to face with this archive, laden with the dust of history, I was shaken to my soul.

My archive allowed me to see the “secrets” behind the political campaigns. The Special Task Force secret reports to the higher-ups, the leaders’ instructions, the prompts prepared for the criticism speech by the Special Task Force during the Anti-Rightist Movement, and so on. For the first time, I truly understood the way in which these movements for the brutal destruction of an individual, an innocent youth, were planned out in advance, how injustice was perpetrated.

In 2004, Mr. Li Hui brought out the original text of the archive under the title *A Desolation in Paper*, published by Literature Publishing House [*Zhongguo Wenlian Chubanshe*]. I wrote a book titled *Yesterday Revisited*,

which was published in the Century Life series by the October Literature and Art Publishing House in Beijing. These two titles drew a lot of attention from intellectual circles in China and overseas.

I have to say frankly that making this individual archive public taxed my determination, and brought a fresh dose of spiritual torment. It was not my intention to conceal myself. I was willing to lay bare all that was insupportable, my own humiliations, errors and disgrace, to uncover the truth of who I was in that historical environment and show it to the world. I wanted to restore the truth of history.

I am grateful that I have not been laughed at or despised; readers have not found the books unbearable. People understand me, even sympathize with me, because in me they come to know a historical era. The reasonableness and goodness of contemporary readers has moved me deeply.

What I had not expected was that the archive that has been published is not my archive in its entirety: one volume is missing. This volume was collected by a linguist, Mr. Li Jiang, a permanent resident of Australia, who found it in the Beijing Panjiayuan Antiques Market in the late 1990s and took it back to Australia with him. When he saw the two books which had been published in China, he visited me during his Spring Festival trip in 2007 to show me the contents of the volume and a partial copy.

That volume contains 97 documents of various kinds from my RTL period, over 250 pages of over 100,000 Chinese characters. It includes the criminal intake form with my fingerprints and palm print, along with the mug shot numbered 0115 on April 18, 1954, when I was taken from the China Federation of Literary and Art Circles (CFLAC) offices by Beijing Public Security. It also includes 21 items reporting on and exposing me, 18 transcripts from criticism meetings and reform evaluation meetings, as well as ten other items of various kinds. The final item is from November 4, 1969, a report regarding my request for work to the local police station after I was sent back from the RTL farm to my original residence.

This volume was a record of my entire RTL experience, an important missing part of the already-published Du Gao archive, and includes several items from informants, deadly attacks on me. I never thought I would be seeing the actual documents 50 years on.

In April 1961, for example, when I had been in RTL for three years, the public security bureau announced that my punishment would be extended another three years. The warden berated me. He said someone exposed me as having called the prison staff “Czarist turnkeys.” I was powerless to defend myself. All I could do was confess, head down, and accept my punishment. And now I was looking at the original of this terrible report.

Again, among the reports on the RTL team in August 1966, following the outbreak of the Cultural Revolution, the focus of the material was their exposure by an informant for circulating a hand-copied novel written by Zhang Zhihua, a Rightist student from the Chinese Department at Beijing University. Zhang had escaped from the RTL farm, wandered as far as the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region and then fled secretly to Shanghai, where he saw his classmate, Lin Zhao (later secretly executed during the Cultural Revolution). Lin Zhao was suffering from a serious illness at the time and was on medical parole from prison. Zhang Zhihua had one last long conversation with her. Not long afterward, Zhang was captured and returned to the farm. He was put in solitary confinement, where he set down in a notebook this moving record of his life as a fugitive. Zhang Zhihua was a youth with a great literary talent and his work was circulating secretly among us. The day the warden discovered it, the whole company was already out working; only a few on sick leave were left behind. I happened to be on sick leave myself that day. The work team office had tasked me with writing a play as a piece of propaganda for Mao Zedong Thought. I lay at the head of the *kang*<sup>2</sup> writing, my manuscript pages scattered all over its surface and the notebook of Zhang Zhihua’s novel hidden beneath my pages. The inspection didn’t find it and I gave it back to Zhang Zhihua. What we didn’t know was that this maneuver had been seen by someone else on sick leave. This informant wrote a secret report exposing me and gave it to the company office. When I saw that report in my archive, I felt deeply wounded all over again. In that

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cruel environment, those in charge of reform manipulated human weakness, mobilizing the Rightist prisoners to expose each other and strike out at each other. It was a terrifying method of control.

We can now say, following the discovery of the missing volume, that we have the Du Gao archive, complete in about 500,000 characters. To date, it is the only original individual archive of a Rightist that has not been changed in any way. History is specific. The essence of history can only be known through the fate of persons. Precisely because this is so, the Du Gao archive is the most dependable textual basis for knowing a historical era.

I read a number of reviews of *A Desolation in Paper* and *Yesterday Revisited* following their publication. Readers felt the archive provided an indispensable “historical testimony” for research and understanding of the method and mechanism of political control in Chinese society during the latter half of the 20th century. In the archival system, for example, one file can determine an individual’s political fate. That person has no right to know the details, but can only follow the “organization’s” ruling. The RTL system, another example, in fact is no different from the type of Reform-Through-Labor to which convicts are subjected in prison. Any unit of the national judicial organs, other major bodies such as those of the Party and government, and even minor bodies, the so-called mass groups, schools, stores—can all arbitrarily use authoritarian powers to put an innocent person in jail without judicial process.

Readers will see how—when the Hu Feng incident broke in 1955—anyone who had read Hu Feng’s books was, without exception, forced to confess and examine their thinking, and some were investigated. Simply because one of the writers in the Hu Feng clique, Lu Ling, was my colleague and good friend, I was locked up and “investigated in isolation,” losing my freedom for a year and seven months. All of my personal books and papers and my diary were confiscated and examined. Morning and night, I was “investigated and denounced,” the Special Task Force bombarded me with questions and used a “forced confession” to coerce a complete admission of guilt. They introduced authoritarian violence into the lives of everyday peo-

ple and attacked ordinary people as if they were enemies.

There is an abundance of material in the book on the Campaign against Hidden Counterrevolutionaries, all investigating the friendship and contact between myself and several young friends. This was aimed at uncovering a small clique, suspected of being filthy counterrevolutionaries. Today we would see our friendship as part of the completely mundane everyday lives of young people, particularly young people involved in the arts. But in that totalitarian age, this was not to be allowed. Except for Party youth organizations, there was an extreme dread of any sort of group. During the Campaign against Hidden Counterrevolutionaries, all sorts of small cliques were uncovered nationwide. My friends and I were charged with being the “Little Family” clique. An investigation of our every word and action, all our written work, was expanded into an investigation into our entire histories, from which the conclusion was drawn that all this was counterrevolutionary in nature. Included in the archive are materials written by the Special Task Force during the Anti-Rightist Movement for internal circulation, “A Compilation of Materials Concerning the ‘Little Family,’” and “Prompts for the Speeches at the Debate on the ‘Little Family.’” The latter were meant to compel the people to follow a premeditated format, and subsume the small clique into Wu Zuguang’s “Second-Class Court”<sup>3</sup> in order to mount a big criticism. This is a classic example of the kind of thing that happened.

This makes it clear that in those authoritarian times, an individual might not only be accused of a crime because of thought or speech; even young people’s most basic rights in life might be interfered with and trampled. The human personality was stifled, and friendship, family affection, love, and fellowship were taboo, subject to being charged as corrupt bourgeois behavior. People’s lives had to conform to one standard, they were assembled into one organization. Only love for the one leader was permitted and thought had to be unified. This was the overwhelming hallmark of political control in that era as it is vividly set out in the archive.

What readers feel worst about are the great number of so-called “confession materials,” the “informant



reports,” the “confessions,” the “exposés,” “reports,”—some were exposés and confessions my friends and I had no choice but to write during the Anti-Hu Feng and Anti-Rightist campaigns; some were attacks and false charges made against me in the workplace by colleagues wishing to express their political activism; some were the mutual attacks and back-biting among the inmates of the RTL team. These all seem to be individual initiatives, but in fact all took place at the prompting and coercion of the organization. This kind of manipulation was widespread in political life. You get me today; they’ll get you tomorrow. The names in my archive were those of leaders of the campaigns and activists. Later, during the Cultural Revolution, hardly any of them escaped an even more tragic end. People ask: What, in the end, is the point of setting a nation, a society, a people at each other’s throats like this, creating mutual hatred and universal insecurity?

The record provided in my archive of the three years of famine following the Great Leap Forward in 1959, the hardship experienced by the RTL inmates and Rightists, the tragedy of their suffering and death, is frightening and soul-shattering. Some essays have referred to my “two *wowotou* incident”<sup>4</sup> to describe the destruction of the spirit and personal dignity of intellectuals in that brutal environment. It happened in the days of starvation in the winter of 1960. It was my task to serve out the food. It happened that one person did not come and so there were two *wowotou* left over. I didn’t return them to the kitchen immediately; I had the idea of eating them myself. But I didn’t dare. Just then the warden discovered these two errant *wowotou* and questioned me about them. I immediately made an oral report, but he wasn’t through with me. He called a small group meeting, mobilizing the RTL convicts to expose and criticize me and ordered me to make a written report. On the eve of that great famine year 1960, while an armed guard stood outside the iron gates of the prison dormitory, I lay on the *kang* under the dim lights and flagellated my soul, word by word, making a full confession of the criminal at the bottom of my heart. I criticized my “shamefulness,” my “vileness,” my “rapaciousness,”—right down to my “anti-the-people” class nature, from my bourgeois individualism to my exploiter’s consciousness—the record of the small group meeting criticism and my written report are all

present in my archive as evidence of my crime. My self-examination is four pages of small, closely-written characters. The first three pages are included in *A Desolation in Paper*. The final page has now been discovered in that final volume of the archive in Australia.

**In the end, the experience of a long sentence of captivity, of devastation and torment, warps one’s vitality and dignity. One’s personality is crushed to pieces by a terrifying political vehicle.**

One critic wrote of it: “Having read to this point, how can one not be horrified? From this little farce, one can roughly imagine the setting. Those who have never lived in such an environment are quite naturally unable to imagine or respond to it. So when you study or critique this period of history, please have a greater understanding of those who have suffered to the utmost. Do not make fun of their weakness and submission, or blame them for their failure to take action.”<sup>5</sup> As I mentioned earlier, this is the reasonableness and goodness of contemporary readers that moved me so deeply.

In the end, the experience of a long sentence of captivity, of devastation and torment, warps one’s vitality and dignity. One’s personality is crushed to pieces by a terrifying political vehicle. In my archive, there are phrases the reader will often encounter: “apology to Chairman Mao,” “begging Chairman Mao’s forgiveness,” “What I have learned from studying the great works of Chairman Mao.” Such self-criticisms—what people call “prostrating oneself before the reformers,” “abusing oneself, expressing remorse, praising the great ones; being indebted to the graciousness of the leader”—these are slave-like attempts at vindication, the product of the era of the personality cult. I must swear myself to slavery so the order releasing me from RTL can be bestowed upon me.

As I have said, after 12 years of forced reform inside an electrified grid, I am no longer “me.” From a vibrant youth I have become “one wise in the ways of the world, one who has learned to deal with his surroundings,

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expressionless, an old, decrepit man tormented by poverty, someone who appears to be pathetically honest but within is constantly forcing down his emotions, a charlatan.”<sup>6</sup>

Those in power might see this as a “victory” of thought reform; but for an individual, it is a thorough eradication of the self.

This is how the essence of a historical era in this way determined the human fate of an intellectual. My case is not the most tragic among the 550,000 Rightists; there are millions whose fate was more tragic than mine. Have all their archives been incinerated? We should seek further “historical testimonies” and preserve them for future generations.

Today, 50 years later, the skies of history still reverberate with the calls for democracy, freedom and rule of law that enlightened people made 50 years ago. Today, however, democratic concepts and appeals are more specifically modern in their formulation. Chinese politicians and intellectuals should stand on the heights of the new century, reflect deeply on history, and push China toward more rapid democratization.

But because Chinese traditional culture lacks a habit of penitence, China’s politicians have always seen it as humiliation and have lacked the courage to admit their own historical errors. They will never willingly apologize to their victims. This makes today’s symposium even more significant. I hope it will produce a positive effect on the progress of historical reflection and political culture in China.

Zhang Kangkang, a writer of keen insight, responded to the publication of *Yesterday Revisited* saying, “The par-

ticular message we find here is a people which does not excel ‘today’ at interrogating ‘yesterday’ has no ‘tomorrow.’”

How well she puts it. Allow me to close my speech with her words. Thank you all.

Translated by J. Latourelle

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## Notes

1. The Sufan campaign, 1955–57.
2. *Kang* refers to a brick-bed common in northern China.
3. *Erliutang* [Second-Class Court] is the name given to a group of artists and writers.
4. A kind of steamed corn bun, which in those days provided little nutrition.
5. Dan Chen, “Weile Mingtian—Guanyu Du Gao de *You Jian Zhuotian*” [For Tomorrow—on Du Gao’s *Yesterday Revisited*], *Mingbao Yuekan* [Ming Pao Monthly], December 2004, <http://www.mingpaomonthly.com/cfm/Archive2.cfm?File=200412/book/01a.txt>.
6. Du Gao, *Yesterday Revisited* (Beijing: October Literature and Art Publishing House, 2004), 193.

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# PRISON IS A DIFFERENT KIND OF LIFE

**By Yi Ping**

*In 2002, after 13 years of exile, Yang Jianli returned to China to investigate the rights defense movement. He was arrested for using a fake passport and not released until April 27, 2007, after serving a five-year sentence. Ren Yu Ren Quan editor Yi Ping interviews Yang Jianli on his prison experience, the effect on his family, and his advice for other political prisoners.*

**Yi Ping (Yi):** First of all, I want to congratulate you on your return to the U.S. and on being reunited with your family after suffering so much during your five years in prison. The ambiguity that marks China's authoritarian system is well known to everyone. By going back in 2002, weren't you leaping right into the net? Can you say something about why you went back? What were your thoughts when you were arrested and sent to prison; for example, how long did you think the sentence would be? What kind of interrogation or mistreatment did you expect?

**Yang Jianli (Yang):** At the time, the labor movement was on the rise, especially in the northeast. It seemed to me to be part of a great trend, the start of a movement in China of people protecting their own rights and interests. My sense that I needed to go back was very strong. I felt I couldn't do otherwise.

Around 2000, I had come to the end of a certain stage in my own academic pursuits and in my work. I had written some essays on the nonviolent resistance movement. Then, when the Chinese labor movement started, especially in the northeast, I felt that this trend would set off a chain reaction, something the facts later bore out. The *weiquan* movement<sup>1</sup> took off nationally and more and more *weiquan* lawyers joined in. So it was time for me to go back. To be more specific, I had three goals for going back at the time:

First, it was illegal for me to enter China—I had no passport. After 1989, the Chinese Consulate refused to renew

my passport. Going back this time, I had to use illegal means to highlight nonviolent resistance: there's no reason for you not to allow me back, so I will use illegal means to resist. Citizens resist evil laws "unlawfully," while voluntarily accepting the imposition of legal sanctions at the same time. This is Gandhi's "civil disobedience."

Also, I was very concerned about the labor movement and had a lot of contacts in the movement around the country. I wrote several essays on nonviolent resistance especially for them, at their request. I needed to investigate the Chinese labor movement, to understand it for myself, to be part of it and to have real contact with the workers.

Furthermore, by returning myself, I hoped to encourage others to return and be involved in the democracy movement. There are a lot of dissidents overseas who are prevented from returning, but who can only truly fulfill their potential by returning to China. We have to break through the government's barriers and return to our own country.

**Yi:** Your taking the risk to return to China was actually very rational then. One could say it was the result of careful consideration.

**Yang:** My plans were very carefully laid, from entry to exit. I was prepared for a number of contingencies. I assessed the possibility of my being arrested on my return to be minimal. And, if I was caught, I didn't think I would be imprisoned for more than two or three years, maybe only one or two. I hoped I would get in, and get out, smoothly.

**Yi:** How were you arrested then?

**Yang:** It was happenstance, due to a minor slip up. If that hadn't happened, I would have carried it off. During questioning they told me: "We nearly let you get away with it."

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I was arrested because I used a fake ID—which many travelers use for the sake of convenience—to stay in a hotel. In the interior I had no problem using the ID; the trouble came at the border, trying to leave. The drug trade is so rampant in Yunnan that border security is especially strict. I tried to leave from Xishuangbanna, they discovered that my ID was fake, and I was taken into custody.

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**Yi:** So you were arrested on suspicion of drug dealing?

**Yang:** Right. To start with, I denied everything, saying I didn't know the ID was a fake, that I'd had it made purely for convenience. They looked at my U.S. passport and saw that everything was in order, so they believed me. They treated me pretty well. They were ready to let me pay a fine and release me. But then they discovered my notebook and notes on my visit to the labor movement. I had notes from nearly 100 interviews. That made them suspicious and they reported to the provincial Public Security Bureau and the provincial authorities reported to the Ministry of Public Security. The Ministry looked into it and everything came out. As for being arrested, I wasn't very anxious, because I was prepared for it.

**Yi:** When you went to prison, your family, especially your parents, your wife, and your children, suffered a lot. In general, dissidents in China can endure their own imprisonment, but it is terribly hard to get past the fact of involving their family members. This is their Achilles heel. Can you say a bit about your experience and your feelings? And how you dealt with it?

**Yang:** That's a painful question, a dilemma for all prisoners of conscience. It's a double-edged sword and there's no way around it. Mature dissidents deal with going to prison because this is their personal choice; but their families suffer because they are implicated by association. When I got out of prison, I saw a number of comrades who had spent time in prison, and all of them experienced this dilemma. Their deepest pain was not for themselves, but because they had involved their families. Families are subject to direct police harassment and persecution. They also experience the pain of losing friends and have financial difficulties. In addition there is social prejudice: they are unable to hold up their heads in public. It's terrible.

This is an unsolvable dilemma. What I've learned is that, since this is the case, we must do what we can to lessen the dilemma. First, in the normal course of things we must do more to explain things to our families, so that they understand our endeavors. We have to win them over and get their support. Second, as much as possible, we must be cautious in what we do and our plans must be as well-conceived as possible, in order to reduce the risks. At the same time, the community at large must be prepared to help. In this way, when someone is imprisoned, the news can get out immediately, a defense lawyer can be found and appeals can be made both domestically and internationally. Help from the outside is very important. Now that I am back, I want to set up a system to help prisoners of conscience in China. Third, we must do all we can to make prison less of a fearful place for people. Making prison into an overly terrifying place doesn't help. In general, families worry most about how their loved one suffers in prison. If they think your situation in prison is not too bad, not that frightening, they will be in a better frame of mind to deal with it.

**Yi:** While you were in prison, I often saw news of your wife, Fu Xiang: her protests, appeals, and so on. She was working on your behalf during those years. She's an impressive person!

**Yang:** She helped me pack when I left. She really wasn't happy about my going back to China, but at the same time she thought I was doing the right thing. She worked to support me. She's well-educated, strong, and

very capable. When I went to prison, the financial burdens for the family fell on her shoulders. She had to work and take care of the family, teach the children, and she had to work for my release as well, going to Congress, seeing Congressional members and staff, liaising with NGOs, constantly writing letters, making appeals in the media, protesting to the Chinese government, even leading the whole family in a hunger strike in front of the Chinese embassy.

**Yi:** As this was your first time in prison, I'd like to ask if you felt afraid right after your arrest. How did you deal with that? What were your thoughts? How did you overcome that inner fear?

**Yang:** When I actually went to prison, I realized that before I came back to China I should have sought out someone who had spent time in prison and asked them about their experience. I was prepared to go to prison and I was on my guard. I had thought a lot about what it must be like, but still, when it came to the real thing I had no experience.

When I was arrested at the Yunnan border, I wasn't afraid at first, just disheartened. I'd almost made it, just missed it. I went back in order to encourage others to return as well, but as soon as I was caught, no one else would dare to return. And I was a little curious too: you've got me, now what? I was taken from the border to Kunming, to the Yunnan Public Security Bureau where they treated me very politely: no handcuffs. From Kunming I was taken under escort to Beijing by plane. When I got off the plane, four black sedans were waiting. I was handcuffed, blindfolded, and put in a car. Then I felt afraid, because I didn't know where they were taking me or what they were going to do to me.

We were in the car a long time. Afterwards, I was locked in a nine-by-nine-meter cell. Two other prisoners were in there with me because they were afraid I might try to kill myself. I was pretty scared all this time. I didn't know whether I'd have any contact with the outside from then on. That was the most frightening thing—being cut off from the outside world, completely incommunicado, because then they can do whatever they want with you.

**Yi:** How long were you in that state of fear?

**Yang:** Not terribly long. One of the prisoners secretly told me that we were in Qincheng Prison.<sup>2</sup> Fear left and anxiety took its place. How was my family? My children? How long would they hold me? If I was locked up for a long time, would it affect my mind? Would I lose my ability to think, to speak?

**Yi:** Your lawyer was Mo Shaoping?<sup>3</sup> He's had a lot of experience defending political prisoners. Can lawyers do anything in a political case in China?

**Yang:** It was Mo Shaoping. He's an excellent lawyer and I'm really grateful to him. In the Chinese system, as far as the outcome of the verdict in a case like ours, the lawyer serves no function. We don't have an independent judiciary. But lawyers are still really important. They can help political prisoners maintain contact with the outside world. They communicate your situation and needs to the outside, and bring you news of the outside world as well—public opinion about your case and what appeals are being made. What incarcerated political prisoners fear most is losing contact with the outside. What's more, the lawyer represents the law and monitors an unjust trial. Lawyers are important to ensure the integrity of legal proceedings. He can put pressure on the judge and prosecutor. More importantly, the lawyer is a witness for history. Thus, a lawyer is still important in political cases, and political prisoners need to work well with their lawyers.

**Yi:** And, the lawyer can provide the prisoner with psychological support.

**Yang:** That's true. Seeing my lawyer brought me peace of mind. I felt like I had a link to the outside world, like I was no longer isolated, and that no matter what, they still had to observe the legal proceedings. And so, I began to plan my life in prison, to think of ways to make up for what I was losing. How I would be able to read, exercise, and write, for example.

**Yi:** You are a determined and optimistic person. I know you are a Christian. Did your faith help you overcome your fear?



Yang Jianli hugs his wife Fu Xiang as he speaks to reporters 21 August, 2007 on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C . Photo credits: TIM SLOAN/AFP/Getty Images.

**Yang:** It did, it was very important. When I prayed, I gained an inner calm, a confidence. A lot of things cannot be seen clearly from the human angle. Take prison as an example. From a human angle it looks like very bad luck, but if we see it through God's eyes, it becomes God's way of tempering us, God's good intention and plan. If we think of it this way, prison is not intolerable; it is the fate God has provided for you. Therefore, we should rely on God, drawing support from God's vision and strength.

**Yi:** A person's attitude is important in any sort of situation. It determines how you will react to people and things around you. At the same time it also determines how others will treat you and determines what your life is like in that situation. With what sort of attitude do you think a political prisoner should approach prison?

**Yang:** I think you should be composed, act according to your usual character. You shouldn't be abject, but you shouldn't be arrogant either. In prison, you must not fall into the hero thing; never mimic heroes in movies or novels. That can really hurt you. Don't put on any act. You are who you are, an ordinary person, made of

flesh, blood, and feelings. And your convictions. You need to compose yourself and think: for the next few years, I'm going to be spending my life in prison, living each day as it comes. You have to arrange your own life as well as you can, living life to the fullest, finding some small things of value in it. If you're always thinking of yourself as a hero, you'll always be in a state of tension. No one can stand that. It will warp your mind; you may fall apart.

**If the police decide to torture and abuse political prisoners during questioning, you have to stand up to it, don't be afraid of them, maintain your protest and submit an appeal. This is the only thing that will do any good.**

**Yi:** In your experience, how should a political prisoner respond under questioning? For example, what should you say, what should you not say? When should you remain silent? How do you endure?

**Yang:** I was held in Qincheng for eight months. After that I was transferred to a detention facility. I went through over 100 interrogations. I gained some experience and I learned a few lessons.

First, you have to get rid of your fear of interrogations. Generally speaking, the police are somewhat wary of using torture on political prisoners. Political prisoners are not the same as criminals. Most of them have some knowledge of the law and the outside world is interested in them. But if the police decide to torture and abuse political prisoners during questioning, you have to stand up to it, don't be afraid of them, maintain your protest and submit an appeal. This is the only thing that will do any good.

Furthermore, you have to remain silent during interrogation. The law provides that a criminal has the right to remain silent.<sup>4</sup> Say nothing, "zero evidence." Let them proceed against you on the evidence they have. The more you say, the more likely it is to say something by mistake. Also, if you say nothing, it will reduce the length of your trial, which will otherwise be drawn out. They will fasten on what you say, have to investigate, and your trial will be delayed. As a political prisoner, the shorter your trial and your time in the detention facility, the better.

One thing I learned was that I chatted too much with my interrogators. If they can't get a confession out of you, they turn to conversation. They'll chat about anything. Also they had collected a bunch of my essays and asked me to autograph them. Well, I thought, since I wrote them, I can sign them. In fact, I should not have signed them, because then they looked for faults in the essays that had to be checked and this delayed my trial. They use this stuff to convict you.

There are a few other issues to be aware of during questioning. First, they will deliberately try to break your spirit and they are very clever about it. For example, they will say, "You're going to be here for the rest of your life." "You'll get at least ten years. Think about it, what will you be able to do ten years from now?" Second, they will use your family affections to attack you. They will say, "Your parents and your children are having some trouble, but we can't tell you anything about

their situation." Third, they try all sorts of ways to undermine your convictions. They will say: "What do you think you're doing? Look at your democracy movement types. Here you are in prison and they're out there gloating about it. They made copies of essays criticizing me and showed them to me. Fourth, they'll use all sorts of tactics to trap you into a confession. These are things you have to be on guard against during interrogation.

**Yi:** Political prisoners have to deal with the police and prison guards. These are people who mistreat prisoners on a regular basis. Can you say something about how political prisoners get along with them? How do you manage the brutality and abuse in prison?

**Yang:** First, we have to be clear about the fact that it is the Chinese authoritarian system we oppose. We must make a distinction between the system and the ordinary people who work in it. Public security, the interrogators, the guards: we need to understand them. They are human beings, they have their own problems. What they do is not necessarily what they want to be doing. Generally, it is not a given that they wouldn't get along with you on a one-on-one basis. This is their job, so they have to make their reports. You have to understand this and not get into personal rivalries with them. Don't be abject; don't be arrogant; don't be afraid of them. You also have to avoid unnecessary conflict. You set rules for yourself, that's all. Personal rivalries easily become grievances and that just adds to your troubles. Your days in prison will be that much harder.

**Democracy means defending human rights. We must bring the work of human rights to wherever we find ourselves. But we must make an accurate assessment, and grasp what is important, identifying what is achievable—something reasonable, something that will have an effect.**

Of course, you have your bottom line, and you can't go back on your principles. For example, when they torture or mistreat you, you have to stand your ground. Make an issue of it, and make a strong appeal to the

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authorities. The police and the guards are not all horrible. There are some who are quite decent. There was one guard who was very sympathetic and treated the prisoners well, especially those who were Falun Gong practitioners. Of course, there were really nasty police and guards too, who would casually insult and abuse prisoners. You can't be soft where these people are concerned. You have to resist them.

Violations of human rights are everywhere in China's prisons; they occur 24-7. We can't keep track of every instance of mistreatment or violation of human rights that happens in prisons; that would be impossible. But that does not mean we should be indifferent to illegal maltreatment there. Democracy means defending human rights. We must bring the work of human rights to wherever we find ourselves. But we must make an accurate assessment, and grasp what is important, identifying what is achievable—something reasonable, something that will have an effect. While I was in the detention facility, prisoners had to “sit the plank” everyday. Two hours in the morning and two in the afternoon . . .

**Yi:** What does that mean, “sit the plank?”

**Yang:** The prisoner has to sit up straight on a stool, facing the wall. You're not allowed to turn your head, let alone talk. No moving at all. I took this to be corporal punishment and I was determined to resist it. One day, I went to see the deputy director and told him: “Starting tomorrow I'm not going to ‘sit the plank’ anymore. You can do whatever you want about that.” He asked why. I said, “Making a prisoner hold one position without shifting for so long constitutes corporal punishment under international standards, including the UN Convention Against Torture. China is a signatory to this UN Convention. ‘Sitting the plank’ is a form of corporal punishment.<sup>5</sup> You are mistreating prisoners and this is illegal.” He was quite taken aback and said, “We'll take it under advisement.” After that, the guards abolished “sitting the plank” and replaced it with study sessions. You have to take aim at one or two instances of the huge array of abuses of prisoner human rights and compel the prison authorities to address them.

**Yi:** Were you ever punished or mistreated? How should a political prisoner respond in such cases?

**Yang:** I was beaten in prison and forced to squat in a single-person cell. I was transferred from Qincheng Prison to the detention facility and when I first got there, the police there didn't know anything about my case. The prison rule was no cold showers, but when they announced the prison rules, I didn't hear them because the announcement system was broken. So the second day I was at the detention facility, I took a cold shower. The police were furious and made me sit in a chair to reflect on what I'd done. As I sat there I began to pray. The guard noticed me mumbling. He thought I was sick and shouted at me to be quiet. But I kept praying and told them: “I have the right to freedom of religion and I have the right to pray.” That evening, four policemen came. They said, you just got here and already you're protesting. You have to be dealt with. They took me to the interrogation room, twisted my arms, forced me to the floor, and used their nightsticks on me. Afterwards, I declared solemnly to the authorities that this is torture, it's illegal, and I will take you to court. I told my lawyer about it and told him I wanted to bring charges. I wanted my lawyer and my family to announce to the outside world that I was suffering this mistreatment in prison. At first, my family didn't want to make the incident public because they were afraid there would be retribution. But I was determined. The guards saw how tough I was and were afraid to let the incident become any bigger. They apologized to me repeatedly, saying nothing of the sort would ever happen again. And it didn't.

When political prisoners encounter torture and abuse in prison, they have to insist on making an appeal, and not be deterred, and they have to see that news of it gets out. In this, neither the prisoner nor the prisoner's family can be weak.

[T]he more widely the news is circulated the better, and it is even better to have it reported overseas. Public opinion will result in pressure and pressure brings results.

**Yi:** Outside appeals are extremely important for political prisoners. Pressure has to be applied through public



and international attention before the situation of political prisoners will improve. Otherwise persecution of political prisoners can continue in the dark. But the families of many political prisoners, and their relatives and friends, are not willing to publicize the news, especially overseas. They're afraid of retribution, that additional charges will be brought and that the person concerned will face greater hardship in prison. What do you think about this?

**Yang:** My family thought this way once too. It's very natural. But it's a mistake. The prison authorities often try to scare them with: "If this gets out of hand, the prisoner's offense becomes more serious," and so on. They are just saying the contrary. They are afraid news of mistreatment will get out and be condemned by public opinion and then higher authorities might discipline them, so they want to keep the family from contacting the outside world. Therefore, the family cannot weaken. When punishment and abuses arise, they have to contact the lawyer and make an appeal. They must not be compliant; don't let them off the hook. Then make it public. The more widely the news is circulated the better, and it is even better to have it reported overseas. Public opinion will result in pressure and pressure brings results. Even when the family of an ordinary criminal makes a "fuss" in public, public opinion brings results.

**Yi:** Political prisoners and ordinary criminals are locked up together in China and prison officials often deliberately have criminals keep a watch on political prisoners. How do you think political prisoners should interact with criminals?

**Yang:** In general, criminal offenders are pretty sympathetic to political prisoners and respect them. Though these prisoners have committed a crime, most of them have been treated unjustly. Some took the criminal path because of unjust treatment in society. They are victims of the Chinese judicial system and most have received heavy sentences. Political prisoners oppose the current system, so it is natural for the criminal offenders to sympathize with them. Furthermore, these criminal offenders respect people with education.

First of all, you should not look down on them, don't look at them as criminals. You have to respect their char-

acter, not be arrogant or aloof, but treat them as equals. Then you will get along with them very easily. The majority of criminal offenders haven't received much education and they have their faults: they can be crude, or brutal. But you have to be open-minded about this. You can't give them the cold shoulder. Necessities are in short supply in prison. If you share things like food and daily necessities with regular prisoners, they will accept you as one of them. Also, you need to conduct yourself well. Criminal offenders have many bad habits, but that isn't to say they don't know the difference between right and wrong. We need to be sympathetic towards them, do something for them. When they are in trouble we should help them out. Help them get medical attention, for example, or say a word on their behalf when they are bullied by the guards.

**Yi:** I heard that you did a lot for ordinary prisoners while you were incarcerated—teaching math, logic, English, helping them with problems—all of which was really appreciated by the prisoners and by the prison authorities.

**Yang:** I began by offering a class in logic to the prisoners, using my own materials. I wanted to offer logic because I saw that they had difficulty speaking clearly about their own cases; they were not able to defend themselves. Later, I offered classes in things they had an interest in: English, economics, math, calligraphy. And I coached a basketball team so they could learn to play.

Most criminal offenders are uneducated. Add to that the fact that society looks down on them, and it's often the case that their personalities become warped. In another environment, they could see that people can live properly and develop the good side of their natures. I offered the classes because I hoped these criminal offenders could change their lives. At one point, my wife wrote saying my son wouldn't listen to her, that he wasn't doing well in school. This really worried me; I was unhappy about this. But a prison friend exhorted me: "Don't worry, you'll be able to teach your son to be good. Look at how you've changed all us adults. A child will be no problem." During my time in prison, this was the most moving thing that was said to me. Another prison friend said, "Wait 'til we get out of here. Watch what we do then."

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**Yi:** How does a political prisoner protect himself in prison? His health, physical and mental state? What was your experience?

**Yang:** As I've already mentioned, you first have to keep your composure. Since you are there you have to make the best of it. You have to order your life in prison well, make it as normal, as rich, as meaningful as possible; keep an optimistic attitude. I learned to play the guitar in prison, to sing and play; I wrote well over a hundred poems, read quite a few books, did a lot of thinking. I kept up my Bible reading and I prayed twice a day, morning and night. I even did a little evangelizing.

**Yi:** Religious faith was very important for maintaining your spirit, for your mental health.

**Yang:** The political prisoner goes to jail so that he can come out and continue his work, so he must protect his physical and mental health. In prison you first have to have a positive attitude. Keep your spirits up and your health will follow. Second, do your best to ensure you're getting the proper nutrition. The food in prison is pretty bad, but the prisoners can buy some additional food. So you have to take some care to buy those foods with high nutritional value. Third, you have to keep fit, get some exercise everyday; do what you can in the situation, push-ups and sit-ups, for example. Fourth, if you are sick you must go to the doctor and insist that you be treated. Prison is a place with utter disregard for human life. If you don't insist on being treated when you get sick, they won't pay any attention to you.

**Yi:** Thank you very much for this interview, Mr. Yang. Your experience will be extremely helpful to Chinese dissidents who are sent to prison. People say you have three doctorates: one in math from the University of California at Berkeley; one in political economy from Harvard; and now one more: one in being a political prisoner from a Chinese prison. There aren't many who have all three. I wish you all the best.

**Yang:** Thank you.

Translated by J. Latourelle

This interview took place in New York in early October 2007. To read about the perspectives and experiences of Yang Jianli's wife, Fu Xiang, see page 36.

## Notes

1. The rights defense, or *weiquan*, movement represents an increase in activities that are more internationally seen as "civil society" advocacy or political and social activism by individuals and groups on a wide range of issues.
2. Qincheng Prison is about 20 miles north of central Beijing and is where political prisoners are often detained. Other political prisoners, such as Jiang Qing, Bao Tong, Dai Qing, and Wei Jingsheng, also spent time in Qincheng.
3. Mo Shaoping specializes in defending political activists. For an interview with Mo, see "A Rights Defense Lawyer Takes the Long View," *China Rights Forum* 2 (2007):76–82.
4. Chinese domestic law does not guarantee any absolute right to remain silent. Article 93 of the Criminal Procedure Law requires a criminal suspect to truthfully answer questions raised by investigators, as well as to state the circumstances of his guilt or explain his innocence. However, the same provision also provides that criminal suspects may refuse to answer questions that are *irrelevant to their case*. Reports indicate that the issue of the right to remain silent is under discussion by the National People's Congress as a possible matter for new legislation or legislative amendment.
5. The UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, ratified by China on October 4, 1988, prohibits torture, which is defined, in Article 1, as "any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person" to obtain information or as punishment. Although the Convention does not go into specific details on the types of acts that will constitute torture or other degrading treatment, other international standards do specifically prohibit corporal punishment, including punishment that does not specifically include beatings. Further, the term "cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment" is generally interpreted by international experts so as to extend the widest possible protection against abuses, whether physical or mental, including the holding of a detained or imprisoned person in conditions which deprive him, temporarily or permanently, of the use of any of his natural senses, such as sight or hearing, or of his awareness of place and the passing of time. See *Body of Principles for the Protection of All Persons under Any Form of Detention or Imprisonment*, G.A. res. 43/173, annex, 43 U.N. GAOR Supp. (No. 49) at 298, U.N. Doc. A/43/49 (1988).

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# EVILS UNDER THE RED CROSS

**By Guan Zhonghe & Yan Jiawei**

*The red cross is a universal symbol of compassion, mercy and humanity. Yet the circumstances of Jiang Xin's death under the banner of this hallmark emblem demonstrate the true cruelty and indifference that characterized Mao's "revolutionary humanitarianism."*

"You must bow your head to the people to admit your guilt before we can practice revolutionary humanitarianism on you."

The world knows that the symbol of the Red Cross<sup>1</sup> stands for the sanctity of charity and the spirit of human fraternity—caring for and helping the sick and wounded, regardless of race, class, wealth, or faith, like the life-giving spring breeze and rain. Yet in China, Mao Zedong's political ideology distorted these sacred, universal values beyond recognition, especially during the class struggle of the 1960s and 1970s, when false reasoning and fallacies spread through the country like a pestilence. Thus it happened that a political murder case eventually played out under the banner of the Red Cross.

The main player in this tragedy, Jiang Xin, was a technician at the Sichuan Nanchong District Geophysics Research Institute in the 1950s. The 1957 Anti-Rightist Movement devastated his work unit because the institute secretary and chief, both of whom came from army backgrounds, were what could be termed "scientifically illiterate." Having no understanding of geophysics, they created havoc in the institute with their ill-informed decisions. For instance, the secretary refused Jiang Xin's application to purchase several imported instruments his laboratory needed for research purposes: "Buying foreigners' things brings disgrace on our state system. We defeated the American imperialists and the Kuomintang with millet and rifles. What do we need foreign machines for?" These nonsensical words brought research and development to a halt. Jiang Xin, who had become a scientific expert, referred to this incident in

1957 to help the Party rectify work styles, with the hope that leadership would eliminate bureaucracy. Party leadership feigned praise at the time for this "well-raised point." However, as soon as Mao Zedong issued the "Anti-Rightist" order, Jiang Xin was labeled an ultra-Rightist, discharged from public employment and assigned to Reeducation-Through-Labor (RTL).

Jiang Xin was assigned to an RTL team codenamed "P.O. Box 4.15," where he was essentially nothing more than a convict. However, Jiang Xin considered himself innocent of any crime and nothing could change his mind, not even the inhuman punishment of forced labor or the brainwashing of "political education." On the many occasions when he faced the RTL cadres, he declared that he was not an anti-Party Rightist, that he had not committed any crime, and that the Rightist label had been forced upon him. For this reason, whether he was at a mass rally or small struggle session, he consistently refused to admit his "guilt."

Jiang Xin was a very modest, friendly, and warmhearted person. He was of slight build, with thick-lensed glasses. He wore a shabby woolen work jacket, which was so tattered and covered in patches of every size and color that his fellow inmates called it the "coat of many flags." During the Cultural Revolution of 1967, Jiang Xin and his fellow inmates were assigned to work construction on the Neikun railway, which ran from Yibing in southern Sichuan through Neijiang to Kunming. When they were constructing the Bao'ershan tunnel (near Jinshawan on the Yibing-Neijiang section), an RTL cadre member named Yue, who was particularly malicious, made it a rule that every person must complete five cubic meters of crushed stone per day. If they failed, they first had to stand in front of the Mao statue after dinner and apologize, then work overtime on the night shift until they finished. Only then were they allowed to go to sleep. Heavy construction work like this was extremely strenuous, especially for a slight, frail scholar



A handout photo shows a woman from Sichuan province, carrying a bag of rice and a blanket which she received from the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), August 2, 2007. Photo credits: REUTERS/Gu Qinghui/IFRC.

like Jiang Xin. On the day before his death, Jiang Xin could not finish his task and was working the night shift along with fellow inmate Guan Zhonghe (one of the authors) and others. They had worked for more than two hours and were completely exhausted when Jiang Xin suddenly felt a terrible pain in his right abdomen and fell to the ground, crying, “Aiya! The pain is killing me!” Guan Zhonghe and two other members of the RTL team carried him to the medical room immedi-

ately. The medical worker, Lin Jingui, gave him an injection to stop the pain, but it had absolutely no effect. Quickly becoming flustered, the medical worker, who was also an RTL inmate, went straight to his team leader to report. The team leader was absorbed in a game of chess with his friend and had to tear himself away to listen. “I’m not a doctor,” he said impatiently. “I can’t do anything. Give him a couple more painkillers and see how he is then.” The medical worker knew that painkillers could relieve skeletomuscular pain (in the back or legs, for example), but would be ineffective on the smooth gastrointestinal muscles. Yet he did not dare disobey the team leader’s words, which were tantamount to law. After another half hour of restlessly tossing and turning in pain, Jiang Xin was drenched in sweat. The medical worker had no choice but to go back to the team leader. Fortunately by now the team leader had finished his chess game. After a moment’s thought, he said reluctantly, “If he really isn’t okay, you’d better take him to the detachment hospital!” As the health worker turned away, he heard the team leader comment, “These stinking intellectuals make such a huge fuss over a little bit of illness.”

Their workplace at Jinshawan was tens of kilometers away from the detachment hospital in Shahe Town. There was not even a public bus at the time, let alone an ambulance. Guan Zhonghe set out with two other prisoners, Wu Xun and Zhong Zehua, pulling Jiang Xin on a handcart. The team leader gave each of them a piece

of steamed corn bread as “compensation.” Heedless of their own fatigue after a hard day, they hastened towards Shahe, thinking of nothing but saving their friend. They pulled the cart for the entire night, finally arriving at the Shahe detachment hospital just before daylight. The detachment hospital had ground to a standstill during the Cultural Revolution, and all the experienced doctors had been subjected one by one to criticism, denouncement, and investigation. The Red Guard “doctors” had no idea what was wrong. One of them even suggested, “The skin on the abdomen is not red or swollen. Is it because he’s eaten too much?” Guan Zhonghe and the others pleaded as hard as they could, and eventually the Red Guards showed some “mercy” and said, “Go and get that old guy to come and have a look.” The “old guy” arrived shortly—an elderly doctor with a northern accent who the revolutionaries called “Old Man Che.” The old doctor asked about the symptoms, palpated the lower right abdomen and then pressed down with his hand, causing the patient to scream in pain. When the old doctor quickly lifted his hand away, the patient cried out in pain again. The old doctor gave his diagnosis immediately: “Tetany of the abdominal muscles, tenderness indicated in the lower right abdomen, obvious rebounding pain. Classic symptoms of acute appendicitis.”

The revolutionaries, who did not understand what he was saying, reprimanded him impatiently: “Instead of coming out with those counterrevolutionary capitalist class theories, just tell us what to do.” The old doctor said, “Admit him to hospital immediately and prepare him for surgery—we must act fast.”

Guan Zhonghe urged the old doctor to write out a hospital admission card. Assuming that Jiang Xin would now be saved, they all breathed a sigh of relief; but the hospital was under the control of a group of Red Guards, and patients had to obtain approval for admission from a revolutionary nicknamed, “One-Knife Wang.” This individual, Wang Weidong, was a poor-performing student of Yibing Medical School who had seized power during the Cultural Revolution. Lacking medical skill, moral character, and any sense of responsibility, he had committed serious mistakes during a number of operations, leaving patients dead or injured. Because there was so much confusion at the time, no

one had investigated. One-Knife Wang looked at Jiang Xin’s admission card and said affectedly, “The highest authorities instruct: practice revolutionary humanitarianism by healing the wounded and rescuing the dying. You are an anti-Party, anti-people Rightist. You must bow your head to the people to admit your guilt before we can practice revolutionary humanitarianism on you.” With these words, he flung the admission card at Guan Zhonghe and said, “Ask him to submit a written request for hospital treatment as an anti-Party, anti-people Rightist element, etc., and personally sign his name.” With incredible willpower, Jiang Xin, who was in so much pain he could hardly draw breath, managed to raise himself up on the stretcher and assert with glaring eyes, “I am not a Rightist. They’ve forced this title on me!”

Perhaps because this was so unexpected, One-Knife Wang was dumbstruck for a moment. He quickly recovered, however, and said with a callous grin, “The Great Leader Chairman Mao teaches us that imperialism and reactionaries are all paper tigers. If you will not bow your head today to admit your guilt as a Rightist element, we will not give you any treatment. I think you will hang on for quite a long time.” With these words, he began to leave and reminded the two young men present, “To be admitted to the hospital he must sign his own name, admitting he is a Rightist. Accompanying persons’ signatures are invalid.” At this, Jiang Xin retorted, “I’d rather die than accept the Rightist label this guy is forcing on me.” Wang, who had been at the point of leaving, turned around and said enigmatically, “Let me have a look today. Is it possible that there are any Sister Jiangs and Xu Yunfengs<sup>2</sup> among the anti-revolutionary class enemies?” Saying this, he swaggered off with a cigarette dangling from his mouth.

In this state of impasse, time passed slowly. Feeling as if they were being stabbed in the heart and powerless to resolve the situation, his fellow inmates kept watch over Jiang Xin, whose brow was beaded with sweat from the pain. Several times, Guan Zhonghe whispered in Jiang Xin’s ear, “Why don’t you sign? We’ll go and plead on your behalf, okay?” Jiang Xin answered feebly, “Thank you, but I’d rather die than accept this Rightist label . . . !” Not only was he in great pain with acute appendicitis, but he also had not eaten in a long time nor received any

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treatment, like fluid infusions or painkillers. This terrible suffering, exacerbated by the poor health he suffered because of habitual, long-term hardship and undernourishment, caused him to lose consciousness briefly just after 9 a.m. Guan Zhonghe and the others appealed three times to the hospital villains on his behalf, pleading that they would resolve the matter of the signature after he was admitted to the hospital. But these villains of the revolution, who regarded people as worthless and cared nothing for the life of a Rightist, responded shamelessly: “The irresolvable aspirations of the capitalist-class Rightists extinguish the power and prestige of proletarian revolutionaries like us. Don’t mention the death of one Rightist. If ten Rightists die, that’s five pairs of them gone. And one less Rightist means one ration of grain saved.” Although they were seething with rage at these inhuman words, Guan Zhonghe and the others had no way out of the situation and could only stare at the cruel and malicious people blocking the way. At around 10 a.m., Jiang Xin briefly emerged from his state of shock. Tugging on Guan Zhonghe’s hand, he painstakingly kept saying, “If I die . . . I’ll be free . . . Brother, you can get out alive. I just ask one thing: be sure to give that English dictionary I have to my wife.”

At that moment, a scene from the past came to Guan Zhonghe: Jiang Xin always had a shabby little book with him, a specialized English dictionary he used for his work, the cover of which was filled with tiny writing in English. In the midst of the Cultural Revolution, an uneducated team leader, also named Wang, had called it a “feudalist, capitalist and revisionist book.” He was about to confiscate it when Jiang Xin lost his temper and said angrily, “This is an English edition of Chairman Mao’s quotes.” At this, team leader Wang, who could barely recognize more than a handful of Chinese characters, became frightened, respectfully put the book down at once and left without saying a word. Why did Jiang treasure this book so much? He had told his friend Guan Zhonghe privately that he had been making English notes on the cover about important things that had happened while he was on the RTL team. In his mind, Guan Zhonghe replayed the scene of Jiang Xin writing; once Jiang was cured and had his health back, they would talk

about this again. But at that moment, gritting his teeth, Jiang Xin muttered, “Don’t . . . don’t say anything. Brother, I . . . it’s better to die in glory . . . than to live in dishonor.” With these words, he suddenly rolled himself off the stretcher and onto the floor. Beating the floor with both hands, he struck his head against a stone pillar. His head began to pour with blood, and, taking his last breath, he died. At that moment, the symbolism of the big red cross on the hospital wall changed; for Jiang Xin’s friends, it became the red “X” that appears on the announcement of a death sentence.

Jiang Xin’s death brings shame on China’s use of this international symbol of compassion, and renders utterly meaningless the “revolutionary humanitarianism” of which those revolutionaries spoke.

March 2007

Translated by Annie Knibb

The original essay was published in HRIC’s Chinese-language online journal: Guan Zhonghe and Yan Jiawei, “Hongshizi Xia de Zui’e” [Evils Under the Red Cross], *Ren Yu Renquan* [Humanity and Human Rights] 3 (2007), [http://www.renyurenquan.org/ryrq\\_article\\_adp?article\\_id=736](http://www.renyurenquan.org/ryrq_article_adp?article_id=736).

## Notes

1. The use of the distinctive emblem of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement—a red cross on a white background—does not necessarily mean that the entity using the emblem is officially associated with any organization under the Movement. Rather, the symbol of the Red Cross may be used as a protective device by medical services associated either with the armed forces or (with permission, in times of armed conflict) civilian groups. See “Emblems of Humanity,” International Committee of the Red Cross, 2007, [http://www.icrc.org/Web/Eng/siteeng0.nsf/htmlall/p0876/\\$File/ICRC\\_002\\_0876.PDF!Open](http://www.icrc.org/Web/Eng/siteeng0.nsf/htmlall/p0876/$File/ICRC_002_0876.PDF!Open).
2. Two fictional heroes of the novel *Hongyan* [Red Crag] (Lou Guangbin and Yang Yiyan, 1961), who were persecuted by the Kuomintang and died as martyrs in prison.

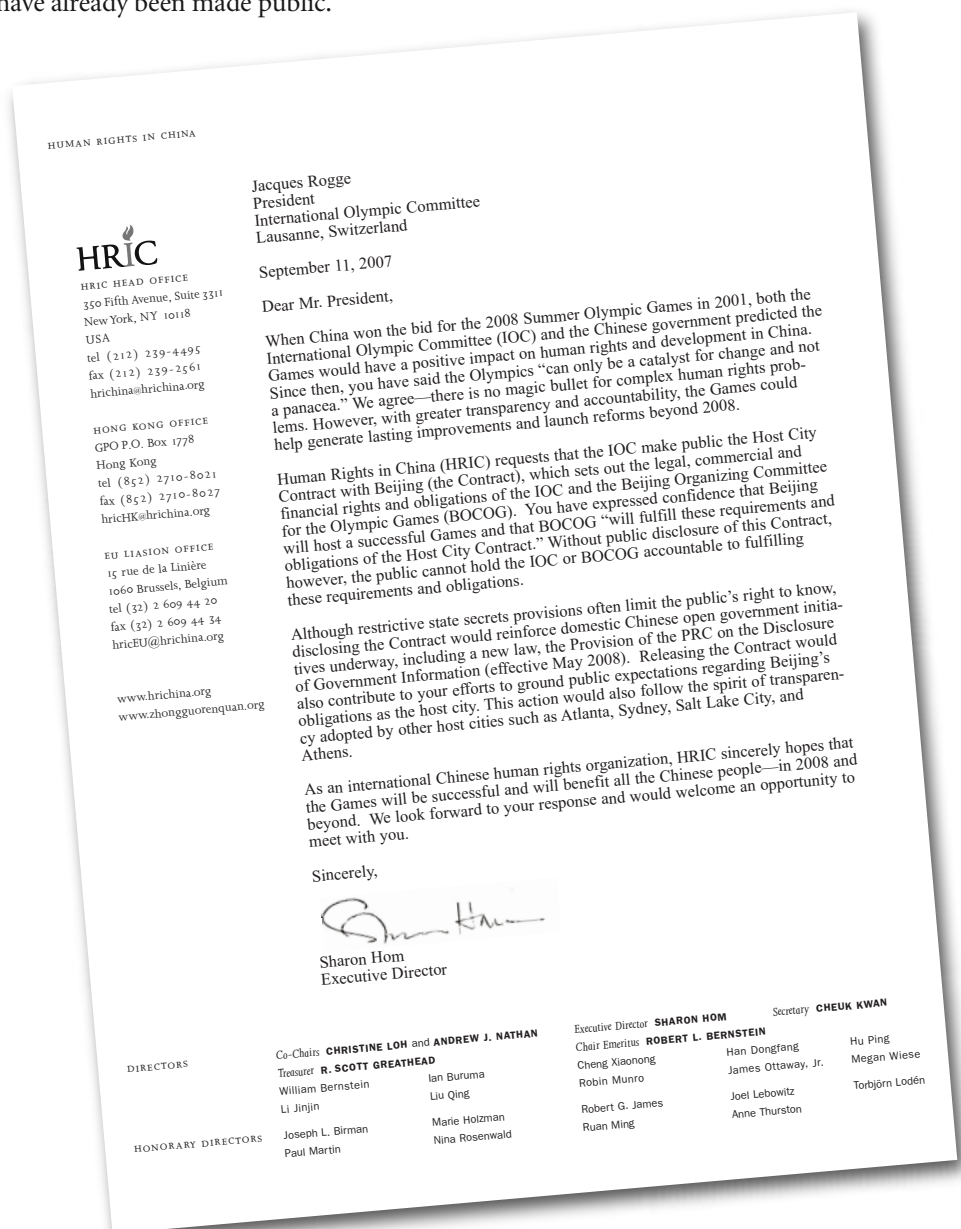
# EXPOSING MANY CHINAS



# IN THE INTEREST OF TRANSPARENCY . . .

On September 11, 2007, Human Rights in China issued an open letter to Jacques Rogge and the International Olympic Committee (IOC), calling for the disclosure of Beijing's host city contract in the spirit of "greater transparency and accountability . . . to help generate lasting improvements and launch reforms beyond 2008." The host city contract describes the legal, commercial, and financial rights and obligations of the IOC and the host city. The host city contracts of other recent past and future Olympic host cities have already been made public.

On October 22, 2007, HRIC received a faxed response from the International Olympic Committee which addressed the IOC's hope that "organized sport can help bring positive developments from within Olympic Games host countries." The IOC neglected to mention any mention of Beijing's host city contract or react to HRIC's request that it be publicly released. It carefully avoids even the use of the term "human rights." Both letters are reproduced here.





CIO Fax S103-4

22-Oct-07 10:02 AM PAGE 1/001



INTERNATIONAL  
OLYMPIC  
COMMITTEE

Human Rights In China (HRIC)  
Mrs Sharon Hom  
Executive Director  
By Fax: 001 212 239 2561

Lausanne, 22 October 2007

Dear Mrs Hom,

Thank you for your letter received at 11 September 2007. The International Olympic Committee (IOC) appreciates being made aware of your organisation's focus on China and your concerns regarding issues of international interest.

It appears that the IOC and HRIC have many shared hopes for a world that continues to undergo great transformation.

The IOC believes that organised sport can help bring positive developments from within Olympic Games host countries. We take a patient and quiet approach based on our Olympic values, in partnership with Olympic Games Organising Committees. We are proud of what this achieves, knowing from our past experiences that this approach brings results.

Consistent with any Olympic bid process, the Beijing 2008 bid process covered obligations that specifically concern the organisation and management of successful Games. Those obligations did not cover commitments on broader national social or political issues. Those are the concern of the Chinese government, not the Beijing 2008 Organising Committee or the IOC. Therefore the IOC will measure China's success or failure by the Organising Committee's ability to organise and host operationally successful Games which allow the world's best athletes to compete at the top of their sport. If the benefits in Beijing have an effect beyond sport arenas, then everyone will win.

We understand that you would like to see further progress in China more quickly. We believe, however, that the Beijing Olympic Games are an opportunity to open a new door to China to benefit its citizens and its relationships with other nations. An open-door approach in principle is something that the IOC trusts will have benefits to future Olympic Games long after closing ceremonies.

Sincerely,

International Olympic Committee

INTERNATIONAL OLYMPIC COMMITTEE  
Château de Vidy, 1007 Lausanne, Switzerland, Tel. +41 21 821 8111 / Fax +41 21 821 8216 / [www.olympic.org](http://www.olympic.org)

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# CRITIQUING THE OLYMPIC GAMES

## A Debate Hosted by the Guiyang Democracy Salon

*The Olympic Games can be the Chinese Games only if all Chinese people can participate, and only if critical views are permitted. Chen Xi, Chen Defu, Wu Yu, Du Heping, Liang Fuqing, Quan Linzhi, Huang Yanming, Liu Xinliang, and Li Renke discuss their views.*

### Chen Xi

Any critique of the Olympics is bound to annoy the Chinese government. They say, “While the entire country is joyously celebrating the countdown to Olympic Games, you want to criticize the Olympics? And you still call yourself Chinese?” In the lead-up to the Olympics, the Chinese government is both censoring online media and stepping up pressure on dissidents and rights defenders. The Chinese Communist regime abuses the good name of the Games by continuing to violate human rights. Meanwhile, self-satisfied Chinese intellectuals and cultural professionals—those who have grown accustomed to the regime’s monopoly over culture—are hostile toward “Socratic gadflies” like us who sing a different tune about the Olympics. Otherwise, the Central Committee’s Propaganda Department would have instituted a special column entitled “Comments on the Olympic Games.”

The Olympic Games are staged by the Chinese Communist regime, which has arrogated all power to itself, and therefore cannot fully represent Chinese people so long as dissidents and opposition members are barred from participating in and critiquing them. The International Olympic Committee awarded the 2008 Olympic Games to the Chinese government, but the Chinese Constitution guarantees our right to comment on the Olympics.

My comment begins with a question: How far removed are the Beijing Olympics from the Olympic spirit? To put it bluntly, the Beijing Olympics have strayed from the Olympic ideal and betrayed the Olympic spirit.

The modern Olympic movement, which was founded a little over a century ago, is descended from the ancient Greek Olympic Games, which were first celebrated in 776 B.C. and combined religious and athletic celebrations. The worship of Zeus—the supreme god in the Greek pantheon—was part of this religious expression. The Greeks believed that only athletes who excelled in physical beauty, strength, skill, courage, and determination, and who possessed sincerity and the highest ethical character could honor Zeus. The Olympic Games were therefore considered to be the loftiest of human endeavors.

While the ancient Olympic Games were celebrated, a fire was kept burning at the altar of Zeus, prayers were recited, sacrifices offered, performances demonstrated, and oaths sworn. A crown of olives symbolizing peace was given to winning athletes, who embodied the Olympic spirit from head to toe. Today’s Olympic Charter extols the values of unity, friendship, peace, and progress. It is perhaps not too far-fetched to say that these Olympic values are pleasing to God and fulfill his hopes for humankind. Tradition has it that during the ancient Olympic Games, warring states and fighting tribes suspended hostilities and laid down their arms as a mark of reverence to Zeus. No one was allowed to carry a weapon within the sacred precincts of Olympia. The modern Olympic Charter states, “The goal of Olympism is to place sport at the service of the harmonious development of man, with a view to promoting a peaceful society concerned with the preservation of human dignity.”<sup>1</sup> These principles also express God’s love and concern for humankind.

If we accept that Olympism is an expression of God’s will, we may then ask whether now that China has become the modern Olympia, the country actually understands the intent of the Olympic spirit.

Although China is about to host the Games, it is clearly

not abiding by the Olympic Spirit. During the countdown to the Olympics, the Chinese government has actually stepped up its harassment and repression of human rights defenders and dissidents. Originally intended to banish injustice and arbitrary power, the Olympic Games have been perverted by the Chinese Communist government to legitimize both.

An atheist nation is incapable of understanding the Olympic spirit.

### Chen Defu

In fact, the 2008 Olympic Games are just a big show. But what are they meant to show the world? Is what is being put on display genuine? Is it beautiful? Is it good? Does it really deserve such jubilation from the Chinese people?

Based on my own observations, I would say that the 2008 Beijing Olympics are a show intended to advertise the achievements of the Communist Party. They are a desperate attempt by the regime to win legitimacy. As such, they will be an exercise in grandstanding and false advertising. China's current economic situation is a good illustration. On the surface, China's economic development is both rapid and robust. In fact, however, China's economic development revolves around a "window economy," or, urban economy. Behind that window is China's vast countryside. The western regions of the country remain extremely poor and backward. The regime's monopoly on power and the widening gulf between rich and poor have produced countless child laborers and forced laborers working in brick kilns.

**For Liu Xiaobo's article on child and forced labor in China's kilns, see page 80.**

The "window" phenomenon is even more evident in China's sports industry. Chinese taxpayers' money is being used to train child athletes—not to improve the physical health of the Chinese people but to win glory for the Party-state. Huge amounts of resources and money are being invested in an extremely small number of professional athletes.

The author of an Internet essay entitled "The Olympic

Gold Medal Trap" estimated the cost to China of each gold medal by using the following formula: If the billions of *yuan* China's sports authorities spent in the four years leading up to the 2004 Athens Olympic Games are divided by the 30 gold medals China won (China actually won 32), each gold medal cost approximately 700 million *yuan*.<sup>2</sup> Bao Mingxiao, the director of the Sports Social Science Research Center of China's General Administration of Sport, gives the lower figure of 200 million *yuan* per gold medal. Either figure would make China's gold medals the most expensive in the world as well as an extraordinary waste of money and resources. With Olympics such as these, I can understand why China's farmers are crying out, "We want human rights, not the Olympic Games!"<sup>3</sup>

The Olympic Games represent humanity's aspiration for beauty, harmony, goodness, and respect for the dignity of every single human being. By focusing on these humanistic values, the Games seek to raise society's moral and spiritual condition. It seems to me that the Chinese Communist government's Olympics are focused on attracting foreign business and investment and building up prestige for the Party. From the start, profit has been the primary motivation. Transcending materialism has never been a consideration. If the government were really serious about the Olympic spirit it would have to turn over a new leaf, give up its brutal and despotic rule over the Chinese people, respect the human rights of every Chinese citizen, and fulfill its Olympic pledge.

### Wu Yu

The jubilation in the run-up to the Olympics suggests that there is a lot of optimism out there. But I would say to the Chinese Communist government: There is no cause for optimism.

First of all, there is no cause for optimism in Cross-Strait relations. Next March, just a few short months before the Beijing Olympics, Taiwan's two main political parties will be contesting Taiwan's presidential election. The Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) has declared that if it wins the election, it will press ahead with its "Taiwan independence" agenda, which would be hard for the Chinese Communist government to



Laborers work at a tapestry workshop, which produces tapestry souvenirs of Fuwa, the official mascots of the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games, in Tianjin on July 19, 2007. Photo credits: REUTERS/Vincent Du (CHINA).

swallow. But if the DPP wins, there is nothing they will be able to do about it. If the Kuomintang (KMT) wins the election, the Chinese government may be presented with a situation almost as unpalatable, because under Ma Ying-Jeou, the KMT is likely to copy the DPP's Taiwan independence agenda.<sup>4</sup>

Second, the situation within China itself gives no cause for optimism. The reason people are enthusiastic about the Olympics is that during the past two decades of economic reforms they have been able to fill their stomachs. More than anything else, Chinese people are inter-

ested in tangible benefits, and they think that's what hosting the Olympics will bring them. If they didn't they would be opposed to the Olympics. China's current stock market prices are a barometer of this general feeling. According to government figures, in the lead-up to the Beijing Olympics, the number of households playing the stock market has grown from 70 million to more than 100 million. What's on the minds of these people? What's their motivation for playing the stock market? Before the lead-up to the Olympics, people felt that there was something abnormal or not quite kosher about the stock market. But now that the Olympics are less than a year away, all these stock-crazed investors are convinced that they can only win, not lose.

The stock market is booming now, so people are rushing to invest in it. But as soon as the market takes a dive, they'll be singing a different tune because their money is all tied up in stocks. If they keep their money in stocks longer than they should and the market tumbles, we'll see people jumping from skyscrapers. If the stock market continues to pay off next year and people are able to withdraw their investments when they want to, everyone will be happy. If

not, hundreds of millions of shareholders will turn their backs on the Olympics. If it were up to the hundreds of millions who have been playing the stock market, the bubble would keep getting bigger and bigger. But what happens when it bursts?

### Du Heping

I would like to discuss three issues: First, will the Beijing Olympics resemble the 1936 Berlin Olympics? Second, are the Beijing Olympics compromised? Third, I will give my own opinions about the Beijing Olympics.

The Berlin Olympics were a disgraceful chapter in the history of the Olympic movement. The Nazi government used them to show off the strength of the German nation and whitewash totalitarianism. Three years after showing the best face of his dictatorship to the world, Hitler plunged the world into another war. Will the Chinese government likewise use the Olympics to legitimize its dictatorial rule? And once the Games are over, will it brazenly continue that rule and possibly launch even more bloody crackdowns to consolidate one-party rule, as it did in Tiananmen Square in 1989? Let's look at the arguments for an international and domestic boycott of the 2008 Beijing Olympics. Internationally, the Chinese government supports dictatorships. Within China, it is stepping up pressure on the media, closing down websites, and arresting democracy activists and dissidents. Like Hitler, the Chinese Communist regime may well use the Olympics to affirm and feed its illusions of grandeur.

Now on to my second point. The Beijing Olympics are compromised because the Chinese government's motives for hosting them are anything but pure. Sport is the starting point for the Olympic spirit, but the universal values of human rights and international trade are also essential elements. When Li Qiu, the former mayor of Beijing, traveled to Moscow in 2001 as head of the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games Bidding Committee delegation, he declared that if the Games were awarded to China, they would "help promote economic and social progress and also benefit the further development of our human rights cause." The Chinese government understands full well the connection between the Olympic Games and development of sports, but its main focus is on business opportunities. As was the case during the ping-pong diplomacy of the Maoist era, human rights don't enter into it.

Third, despite all of this, I support China's hosting the Olympic Games. The only way forward for China is through openness. I for one hope that the Games will enable the Chinese government and people to see how far they are from the civilized world, and not just see their own magnificence; that the Games will enable them to focus on integrity and sportsmanship among people, rather than on profit and selfish gain; that they will generate confidence in civil society, rather than on

the one-party state; and that they will promote the cause of freedom and democracy, rather than boost the prestige of the dictatorship. In short, my hope is that this international sports competition will further China's political progress and social development. This is my wish for the Beijing Olympic Games.

### **Liang Fuqing**

Everybody is much too bright-eyed, hopeful, and optimistic about these Olympics. Wu Yu says "there is no cause for optimism." But I am downright pessimistic.

The damage done by the Communist dictatorship to China's culture, society, and people over the past few decades is obvious to everyone. The Olympic Games are being staged in a country that has been ravaged by the one-party state.

The motto of the Olympics—"Faster, Higher, Stronger"—is a call to surpass one's own limits, to overcome old ways of thinking and acting, and to cut lose from stale traditions. Well, can the Communist Party surpass its own limits, overcome its old ways of thinking and ruling, and break loose from its stale traditions? The whole world has abandoned Marxism, but the Communist Party remains unwilling to renounce it. It has enshrined Marxism in the Chinese Constitution and continues to uphold it as the guiding ideology for the Chinese people. Can we really expect this dogmatic Party to change its mentality?

I, for one, do not.

### **Quan Linzhi**

What I sense in all this gushing about the Olympics is insincerity. I used to be an athlete, so I have a personal connection with the Olympic spirit. I hope that China will host a successful Olympics. But as to whether the Chinese people and government have a real appreciation of the Olympic spirit? I have my doubts. There is too much politics and ideological posturing in the Beijing Games.

The Olympic movement has its own ideals, aims, regulations, trajectory, and principles. The Olympic Games

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are a stirring display of human strength. They are an opportunity for individual athletes to become stronger, run faster, and jump higher, and for humanity to stage ever grander games in beautiful, state-of-the-art stadiums and facilities. Everything about the Games manifests human strength and endurance. At the same time, however, the Games show individuals that they are a small part of a big picture and that despite the limits of human strength, team spirit and shared goals enable people to achieve greatness. The Games also encourage people to meet life's challenges with enthusiasm and to learn from past mistakes. The Olympic Charter declares that the Olympic spirit "requires mutual understanding with a spirit of friendship, solidarity and fair play."<sup>5</sup> The Olympic spirit encompasses the principles of participation, competition, fairness, friendship, and struggle. Participation is the first, and foundation, of these principles because without it there would be no Olympic ideals and principles. Pierre de Coubertin, the founder of the modern Olympic Games, declared at the 1936 Olympics, "The important thing is not winning, but taking part. The essential thing is not conquering, but fighting well."

What we are witnessing, however, is that the Chinese Communist government is afraid to let certain people from China and abroad play a part in the Olympic Games. In early April 2007, the Ministry of Public Security sent a secret directive to public security bureaus at the provincial, autonomous region, and centrally administered city levels demanding strict background checks of individuals applying to compete in or attend the Olympic Games and Olympic trial events.<sup>6</sup> The directive bars 11 categories and 43<sup>7</sup> subcategories of people in China and abroad from entry to Olympic events, including "key individuals in ideological fields," "Falun Gong and other evil cults, organizers of associated organizations and their practitioners," "individuals who show strong discontent with the CPC and the Chinese Government" and "individuals who collude with outside forces to complain to foreigners."<sup>8</sup> Since it issued this directive, the government has arrested human rights lawyers, stepped up pressure on journalists and the news media, and closed down websites and periodicals.

## Huang Yanming

I would like to critique the Olympic Games from a cultural studies perspective.

We could see the Olympics as a purely western thing that is not part of eastern culture. Asian culture does not encourage individual initiative, which is the purpose and spirit of the Olympic Games. In this country, we see obstacles to individual initiative everywhere. Competition is discouraged and instead the established social hierarchy is implemented on all fronts. The principles of fairness and honesty are ignored, while string pulling and bribery are tolerated and expected. The ideals of friendship and equal rights are ignored, while class distinctions, national characteristics, and nationalism are celebrated. And individual struggle is unacceptable because it challenges dictatorial privilege and the Party's position of absolute leadership.

On the face of it, the 2008 Olympics are helping western values advance eastward, but in essence they are promoting a clash of civilizations between East and West. What do I mean by this clash? The Chinese government saw a blank check to legitimize its dictatorial rule and put forward a bid to host the Olympics. Yet because dictatorship is incompatible with the Olympic spirit, the government may get more than it bargained for. Its plan to whitewash its image is running into resistance from the public and from numerous NGOs in the international community as well as in China.

In this respect, I think that China needs the Olympics. Inevitably, the Chinese dictatorship will clash with western democracy, because friction with and resistance from the West may enable Chinese people to see the ugliness in their society and spur the regime to carry out political reform.

That said, we also need to consider the obstinate nature of Chinese autocratic culture.

## Liu Xinliang

I would like to discuss two points: First, China needs the Olympic Games. Second, the Olympics and democracy.

First, China needs the Olympic Games. I'd go so far as to say that the Chinese nation needs these Games. As everyone knows, in modern times China fell behind more advanced countries that bullied it as the "sick man of Asia." Chinese people will remember the infamous sign at the entrance of a Shanghai park, which read "Chinese and dogs not allowed."<sup>9</sup> China was long marginalized and excluded by the civilized world. Today, we need to open up and return to the world. China needs to recover its glorious past and take its rightful place among nations. Now that China's booming economy and growing power are enabling it to engage ever more deeply with the world, China needs the Olympics to show the world its 5,000-year-old civilization. The Olympics will enable the world to understand and get to know China.

Everybody is saying that the Chinese Communist government is using the Olympics to whitewash its dictatorial rule and that the Games have nothing to do with the people. I don't think that's a fair way of putting it. You cannot say that just because the Chinese Communist government is using the Olympics to consolidate its hold on power, the Games are of no concern to the people. Any government would jump at this opportunity. Just because the Chinese government is jumping on the Olympic bandwagon doesn't mean that we do not need the Olympics.

Then there is the question of the Olympics and democracy. Some have argued that China has wasted the people's hard-earned money on building a large number of Olympic stadiums and facilities. To my mind, this is a self-satisfied argument that is typical of Chinese peasant mentality. For 5,000 years, Chinese people stored up their wealth and were afraid to spend it on anything but themselves. As a result, in its 5,000 years of history,



**A woman begs in front of an Olympic Games sign in Beijing on October 31, 2007. Photo credits: REUTERS/David Gray (CHINA).**

China was never able to create markets and develop a market economy. I think that from the perspective of modern economic development, as long as the government spends money on construction projects within the country, it is money well spent. Because the construction projects for the Olympics are being run by a dictatorial government, there will undoubtedly be some corruption and waste, but thanks to all these new stadiums and facilities countless workers have obtained work, many underutilized construction companies and factories have obtained building contracts, and many state-of-the-art facilities have been developed and are being utilized. The Olympics are a huge shot in the arm for the Chinese economy and have filled a great many

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order books. Consumption and “waste” are creating a market as well as new room and opportunities for economic development.

## Li Renke

In Beijing, the Chinese Communist government has been trumpeting slogans such as “Green Olympics” and “Good Luck Beijing.”<sup>10</sup> But the fact remains that the regime is using the Olympics as a pretext to continue along the path of power politics. Internally, the central government has strengthened its grip on power; externally, it has intensified its violation of human rights and persecution of rights activists.

Public security and city administration departments have been arrogantly harassing ordinary citizens under colorful banners proclaiming “Green Olympics” and “Good Luck Beijing.” As one 60-year-old Beijing woman put it, smiling bitterly: “The Olympics bring ‘good luck’ to officials, but to ordinary people they are a disastrous turn of bad luck.” According to the Geneva-based Center on Housing Rights and Evictions (COHRE), by mid-2007 more than one million Beijing citizens had already been evicted from their homes due to urban development linked to the Olympic Games, and 1.5 million are expected to be displaced due to Olympics-related development by the time the Games open.<sup>11</sup> The case of brothers Ye Guozhu and Ye Guoqiang<sup>12</sup> shows that the government has made a travesty of the Olympic spirit, using heavy-handed tactics against citizens who try to defend their rights when faced with arbitrary evictions. Despite official talk of “Green Olympics” and “Good Luck Beijing,” blood and tears have already been shed to make way for the Olympic Games. In light of these forced evictions, it would be more appropriate to speak of “Red Olympics,” “Bitter Luck,” and “Black Beijing.”

On August 13, 2007, the Public Security Bureau’s National Security Brigade in Jiamusi City, Heilongjiang Province, arrested Yang Chunlin on charges of “incitement to subvert state power.” His only crime had been to help a group of more than 10,000 farmers in Fujin City in Heilongjiang to draw up a petition entitled “We want human rights, not Olympic Games.” The petition was a protest against the authorities’ seizure of their

land. Yang Chunlin’s is a classic case of infringing freedom of speech; the way that the Chinese Communist government handled the case clearly violates the Olympic spirit.

As I see it, the Chinese people need the Olympics Games but they need human rights even more. If human rights and the Olympics are at loggerheads, I will of course choose human rights.

Guiyang City, Guizhou Province, September 16, 2007

Translated by Paul Frank

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## Notes

1. International Olympic Committee, *Olympic Charter*, in force as of July 7, 2007, p. 12.
2. These references to the cost of China’s Olympic medals were provided by the author.
3. A number of petitions have been circulated inside China recently, calling for greater attention to human rights, rather than such focus by the government on the Olympic Games. For one example, see “‘One World, One Dream’ and Universal Human Rights: An open letter proposing seven changes for upholding Olympic principles,” *China Rights Forum* 3 (2007): 69–72.
4. Editor’s note: The KMT’s official position supports the one-China policy. This reference is likely a result of Ma’s statement, made in February 2006 while he was in Europe, that while the KMT favors reunification, the party respects the opinions of the people, and that independence is a choice to be made by the Taiwanese.
5. International Olympic Committee, *Olympic Charter*, in force as from July 7, 2007, p. 12.
6. *Guanyu yange kaizhan Aoyunhui ji ceshisai shenqinrenyuan beijing shencha de tongzhi* (Circular on strict background checks of applicants to the Olympic Games and Olympic trial events). See Lu Zhenyan, “Yangzhu zhengzhihua he



aoyun qu zhengzhihua” (The politicization of pig farming and the politicization of the Olympic Games), *Renmin Ribao* (People’s Daily), August 21, 2007, <http://renminbao.com/rmb/articles/2007/8/21/45303.html>.

7. Although online reports indicate that there are 43 subcategories, the available regulation itself lists 42 subcategories.
8. These regulations are purported to be an official Olympics blacklist and was posted on websites affiliated with the Falun Gong movement. To date there has been no independent confirmation of the veracity of the document. This kind of internal directive is not usually openly available or disseminated to the public. However, the China-based Sina Web portal posted a news item in May stating, “China’s Ministry of Public Security issued an internal secret directive that lists 43 categories of people who will be investigated and barred from the 2008 Beijing Olympics. Some examples of the groups included are overseas hostile forces, counterrevolutionary figures, the Dalai Lama and associates, Falun Gong practitioners, religious groups, and individuals who incite discontent towards the Chinese Communist Party through the Internet.” See “Zhuce renyuan xu yange zige shencha Beijing Aoyun jiang ju qian keyi duiyuan [Registration officials must strictly check qualifications; Beijing Olympics Will Bar Participation by Suspicious Individuals],” <http://sports.sina.com.cn/o/2007-05-16/09492924196.shtm>. This website is no longer available. Other articles mentioning a ban on “suspicious individuals,” without further details, have also been posted on Sina.com and other China-based websites. For an English translation of an excerpt of these regulations, see *China Rights Forum* 3 (2007): 48–51.
9. The derogatory phrase was used during the period of foreign concessions in China. There is some dispute as to the specifics details of the sign’s existence.
10. This phrase is a play on words on the Chinese word for Olympics.
11. Center for Housing Rights and Evictions (COHRE), *Fair Play for Housing Rights: Mega-Events, Olympic Games and Housing Rights*, 2007, available at <http://www.cohre.org/>. See also Li Zimu, “Yige rang shijie hundao de xiaoxi” (Earth-shocking news) *Renmin Ribao* (People’s Daily), August 19, 2007, <http://www.renminbao.com/rmb/articles/2007/8/19/45289.html>.
12. Between 2001 and 2003, the government demolished the homes and restaurant of Ye Guozhu and Ye Guoqiang. Ye Guozhu, who had applied for legal permission to hold a protest march over forced evictions, was sentenced to four years in prison in December 2004. Ye Guoqiang was sentenced to two years in prison for disturbing the social order after he attempted suicide by jumping into the Jinshui River near Tiananmen Square. See Human Rights Watch, “China: Release Housing Rights Activist,” September 28, 2004, <http://hrw.org/english/docs/2004/09/28/china9400.htm>.

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# FURTHER QUESTIONS ABOUT CHILD SLAVERY IN CHINA'S KILNS

By Liu Xiaobo

*Liu Xiaobo examines the issue of child slavery in the black kiln scandal, criticizing the Chinese authorities' ability to maintain monopolies. He laments, "A ruling clique that makes maintenance of its own monopoly on power its first priority cannot treasure the lives of its people, including those of its children."*

It has been nearly two months since the shocking news of the "black kilns" run on slave labor in Shanxi came to light. But consider the storm of public opinion at home and abroad demanding greater accountability; or the numerous instructions, the staff, the apologies, and the tens of thousands of police who blanketed the site in their investigations; and especially the Shanxi authorities' urgent command that all slaves be rescued within ten days. By comparison, the way the case has ended all seems a bit too mechanical. The phenomenon of slave labor kilns, widespread for over a decade, has now been reduced to a single black kiln in Caosheng Village, Guangshengsi Town, Hongdong County. Very few perpetrators have been prosecuted and the charges have been reduced to three: illegal detention, forced labor, and malicious injury. The charges of illegal child labor, abduction, kidnapping, and child abuse have vanished. The court's decision was to sentence kiln supervisor Zhao Yanbing to death and to sentence labor contractor Heng Tinghan, from Henan, to life imprisonment. Other defendants were sentenced to terms ranging from nine years to 18 months.

The contrast between the reaction to the case and the way it has ended is most glaring in the various punishments meted out to involved officials. On July 16, the authorities announced that numerous cases of malfeasance by officials were being investigated. Ninety-five Party cadres and public officials were to be subject to Party disciplinary action. The number is considerable,

but the quantity masked the poor quality. All those disciplined were low-level local officials; the highest-ranking were from Hongdong County: County Party Secretary Gao Hongyuan received a serious warning, Deputy County Party Secretary and County Head Sun Yanlin was removed from office, and Deputy County Head Wang Zhengjun received a serious warning and administrative dismissal.

Such minor penalties for such major crimes hardly seem acceptable. It is an act of greater injustice to the victims, contempt for popular public opinion, and a travesty of justice. Yet, no matter how loudly the Hu-Wen central government proclaims "putting people first," and no matter how sincere the review and apology of the Shanxi governor appears to be, it all falls short. None of it serves to truly eradicate the system that produced slave labor on a large scale, nor can they rescue the Communist regime from the bankruptcy of its political integrity and authority. In other words, no attempt by the authorities to deal with the case of the black slave kilns will stand up to further interrogation.

**Question No.1:** *Why was the official effort to rescue child laborers so ineffectual?*

On June 5, a "blood-and-tears"<sup>1</sup> appeal was posted on the Internet on behalf of 400 fathers. "The child abuse incident in Hongdong has caused a sensation, but this is only the tip of the iceberg; more than a thousand lives are at risk . . . save our children!" Two weeks later, the majority of these fathers had still not recovered their children. On June 20, the fathers again posted an appeal online, saying in an open letter that though over 100 children had been rescued through family efforts, most of them were not from Henan. Many children still had not been found or may have been moved. They appealed

for a continued increase in rescue efforts and proposed that the search be enlarged to a nationwide scope.

At the same time, public opinion continued to clamor for government accountability. For example, a June 27 editorial in the *Southern Metropolis Daily*, headlined “Is it possible to rescue everyone without exception?” and asked, “Is it possible to leave evil no quarter, to rescue every victim? If all we have to rely on are high-sounding words from Shanxi officials, the rescue will fail. Right now, the government has to examine itself more thoroughly, society must cooperate more sincerely, and citizens must come to a deeper awareness, before actions to rescue illegal slave laborers can be completely successful, and every victim rescued. That is the only way to thoroughly eradicate an environment in which slave labor flourishes. This is more urgent and concrete than political posturing.”

**[N]o matter how loudly the Hu-Wen central government proclaims “putting people first,” and no matter how sincere the review and apology of the Shanxi governor appears to be, it all falls short.**

As I complete this article, no new progress has been made in the rescue of the child slaves. The number of child slaves disclosed in the mainland media was only one hundred or so, just ten percent of the over one thousand missing children. This shows that for all its advantages and its enormous resources, the government comes off badly in this test of strength against the triads.

Given the blanket investigation by tens of thousands of police, the results of the rescue operation are shockingly pathetic. Does this mean criminals are out of control? Or does it mean the government is incompetent? One can only answer: The latter.

We know that our authoritarian government has a monopoly on major social resources, yet its performance serves up a difficult paradox: to stabilize its power and to gain special rights and privileges, it suppresses civil rights, monitors dissent, controls the media, and

involves itself in corruption and embezzling public property. In these endeavors, the government and its officials are not only competent, they are experts and will stop at nothing! Numerous police cars and police can be mobilized to keep a single dissident under observation. Yet in serving the people, in providing social justice, improving social welfare and righting wrongs, the government and its officials are not only incompetent, they are completely and hopelessly inept. In fact, the government has long been aware of the widespread practice of child slavery.

**Question No. 2:** *Why are Chinese officials so thick-skinned and cold-blooded?*

On the instructions of Hu Jintao and Wen Jiabao, the Hongdong County government sent 11 working groups to 12 provinces and cities to personally deliver letters of apology, wages, and condolences into the hands of the rescued farm laborers. The Party Discipline Commission also intervened in the investigation of misconduct by officials involved in the incident. On June 20, Premier Wen Jiabao presided at a meeting of the State Council at which Shanxi provincial governor Yu Youjun presented a review of the case on behalf of the Shanxi provincial government. On the 22nd, the State Labor Protection Department, the Ministry of Public Security, and the All-China Federation of Trade Unions Joint Working Group held a press briefing in Taiyuan at which Yu Youjun apologized to the farm-laborer victims in the black kiln incident and their families on behalf of the provincial government, and made a self-criticism to the people of the province.

On June 28, NPC deputy Wang Quanjie, from Shandong, sent a letter to Shanxi governor Yu Youjun, “An appeal for the resignation of the Minister of the Shanxi Provincial Office of Labor and Social Security.” In his letter, Wang Quanjie pointed out:

The recent Shanxi black kiln affair has shaken the whole country . . . and has been universally condemned. Shanxi governor Yu Youjun presented a review of provincial authorities’ behavior before the State Council, apologized to the victims, and made a self-criticism to the people of Shanxi. But those at the vortex of the affair, those who directly supervise



**A boy from Yunnan, after being rescued at a brick kiln at Liuwu Village in Yuncheng, in China's Shanxi Province Friday, June 15, 2007. Photo credits: AP.**

labor and employment, the officials of the Shanxi Provincial Office of Labor and Social Security, remain in place. Not a single person has come forward to take responsibility, not one has apologized to the people. Only a few courageous labor supervision departments and public security departments have come forward. People want to know: Does the labor supervision department bear no responsibility when something this big happens? . . . Can the head of the Shanxi Provincial Office of Labor and Social Security lead provincial rescue efforts with a clear conscience? Article 82 of the PRC Law on Civil Servants clearly provides that “[l]eading members who make serious mistakes in their work, or are in dereliction of duty, causing major losses or adverse social impact, or who bear major leadership responsibility for accidents, should take the blame and resign from leadership positions.” This term, “resign,” is a great step forward for the legal community. Only when negligent officials are made to

resign will officials have the confidence of the people. . . . When serious accidents occur on a government official’s watch, that official should resign. This is conventional political behavior. It shows sincere respect for the duties of office, a fear of public opinion and voluntary acceptance of public supervision. It is a manifestation of the human shame reflex. But there are officials who withstand public censure through an application of the principles of “the thick and the black,”<sup>2</sup> clinging to their respected official posts. These officials not only have no fear of public opinion, they have no shame. . . . Finally, I again solemnly appeal to the Minister of the Shanxi Provincial Office of Labor and Social Security, who bears inescapable responsibility in the black kiln incident, to face public complaints from across the country and have the courage to accept responsibility. He should see that the time has come and bow to the will of the people. Let him resolutely resign and act the part of an upright official by apologizing to the citizenry!

In spite of the public outcry and demands for the resignation of high Shanxi officials, there have been no provincial-level or bureau-level resignations to date. Why? Why doesn’t the central government call for accountability from these provincial officials? Why do the media focus attention on the black kilns of Shanxi while turning a blind eye to the authorities in Henan, where most of the missing children are from? In these circumstances, the Shanxi governor’s self-criticism and apology amounts to little more than a meaningless performance.

In Shanxi, it is the county- and town-level officials who have been punished, while the Party and government organs and officials in the Linfen District have simply been ordered to undergo inspection. According to a July 16 report on chinanews.com, the Shanxi provincial Party committee had instructed the Party committees of Linfen City and Yuncheng City to undertake a thorough inspection, while the provincial government had instructed the governments of Linfen City and Yuncheng City, the Provincial Office of Labor and Social Security, the Provincial Ministry of Land and Resources, and the Provincial Industry and Commerce Bureau to submit thorough reviews to the provincial

government. The leading official in each city and in the cadre system made reports to the assembly.

The truth, however, is that those who should apologize and resign are in no way limited to Shanxi. High officials in Henan should also come forward to accept responsibility. If we examine the chain of events in this case, it is clear that criminal activity in Henan has been no less important than that in Shanxi. Among the missing minors mentioned in the appeal letter issued by the 400 fathers, over two-thirds are from Henan. That so many children should be missing for so long in Henan illustrates the extent of human trafficking there, such that it has become one of the primary sources for slave labor. Clearly, when so many fathers have failed to find their children after an extended search, the public security organs in Henan are concealing the facts. This is an extremely serious instance of misconduct and the public security organs in Henan should admit their responsibility. At the very least, Henan governor Xu Guangchun should do as Shanxi governor Yu Youjun has done, and make a public apology to the victims and their families.

**That so many children should be missing for so long in Henan illustrates the extent of human trafficking there, such that it has become one of the primary sources for slave labor.**

What makes Communist Party officials at all levels so cold-blooded and irresponsible is the privatization of public authority under the Chinese Communist system and its monopoly on official appointments. The Communist Party ensures its one-party dictatorship and its privileged class of vested interests through firm control of the appointment and removal of officials at all levels. It is thus taking power out of the hands of the people, and using it as a private tool of the Party. As a result, officials are produced at every level, not from the bottom up through a mandate of the people, but rather from the top down. Such a mechanism for filling official posts means that officials work towards self-gain, rather than in the best interests of the people. For example, in an interview with *Southern Weekend*,

Shanxi provincial governor Yu Youjun deflected responsibility onto the central government. He said, “The central government sent me to Shanxi, charging me with a heavy responsibility. The NPC selected me as the provincial governor. Expectations were high; I had to defend the territory, to share the central government’s burdens, and relieve the people’s woes.”<sup>3</sup>

It is not just the provincial-level officials who have not resigned. Not one of the leading officials of Hongdong County and Linfen City who bear direct responsibility in the black kiln case has yet resigned. For a long time, the public security organs in Shanxi and Henan did nothing about the reports of missing children. Yet no high police officials in that province have publicly acknowledged misconduct. A judicial system that is a tool of dictatorial party power will inevitably create a situation in which the law can be enforced against ordinary citizens, but in which nothing is done to address official collusion.

**Question No. 3:** *Why, when black kiln slave labor has existed for so long on such a large scale, is it only now coming to light?*

In a civilized country, the discovery of child slavery would be headline news tracked by all major media outlets—even if it involved only a few people. But in China, when the Shanxi case came to light, sending shockwaves around the world, headlines in the mainland media remained firmly occupied by the comings and goings of CPC leaders. Positive news and promoting the government is still the core of Chinese news reporting. The responsibility for this situation lies firmly at the door of the CPC Central Propaganda Department, the Press and Publication Administration, and other authorities. They are like ideological watchdogs set at the government’s gate to monitor the media, forcing it to act as the Party’s mouthpiece, depriving the public of its right to know and the press of its freedom.

As a result, China has no freedom of the press or freedom of expression. There are longstanding restrictions on the media which long ago became an official tool for keeping the people ignorant. The flow of information is strictly controlled, keeping information concealed from the public, and often leading to major crises. Furthermore,

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when a great public catastrophe is exposed, the CPC manipulates the media to turn villains into benefactors, bad government into good government, and misdeeds into achievements. It uses this sort of prominent press coverage in its attempt to repair the shattered Hu-Wen image. So when the shocking Shanxi “child slavery” case was exposed, coverage of the child slaves’ experiences and whereabouts gave way in the media to reportage on the reaction of Hu, Wen and other high officials. The parents’ search for their children was replaced by the rescue activities rolled out by the local government. As a result, the government monopoly of the media once again fulfilled its magical function: its reports of the words and deeds of officials high and low were given pride of place, and the words and deeds of the victims, for the most part, were only available on the Internet.

**Question No. 4:** *To this day, why has there been no effective control and containment?*

These issues in China’s black economy—its abuse of workers, large-scale use of child labor, and trafficking in children—have existed for a long time. Such shocking cases as these are not uncommon. Yet it is precisely because unlawful and criminal behavior like the use of illegal workers and child slaves were not brought to a prompt halt long ago that such activities have developed on a vast scale. Behind enterprises of all sizes that use criminal means to enrich themselves there are vested interest groups, local government, and officials who act as “protective umbrellas” for criminal elements. These authorities gloss over their actions with high-sounding rhetoric, calling it “developing the local economy” and “ensuring peace.” Chinese society has thus become one where there is a nexus of officials and criminals: criminal forces have official authority and official authority acts criminally. For example, the majority of rich and powerful criminals all have NPC or CCC titles; official power draws on criminal power to keep things in order.

True, this official-criminal nexus means that the illegal kiln boss and the local official should bear responsibility. The central government, however, has no effective means of dealing with this rampant collusion between officials and criminals, or with protectionism at the local level. These outrages have been allowed to go on for so long that whether the reason for it is an objective

“cannot” or the subjective “will not,” the result is the same: connivance between officials and criminals at the local level. And this leads one to wonder whether this may not also be happening at the highest policy-making levels of the central government.

**Question No. 5:** *By what standard can a Party congress that is indifferent to these social ills call itself a public institution?*

The highest authority in China lies with the NPC and its representatives. The law clearly provides that the NPC has the responsibility to oversee every government department. However, setting aside the tiny number of representatives who act according to conscience, why was there such widespread indifference toward this vile malfeasance at the local government level? According to recent media reports, there was one NPC deputy from Hunan who struggled with the illegal kilns over a period of nine years, but his NPC body and the other deputies never got involved. How does a Party congress like this call itself a public institution? Does such a Party congress still have the nerve to claim it represents the people?

**Chinese society has thus become one where there is a nexus of officials and criminals: criminal forces have official authority and official authority acts criminally.**

Under the Chinese system, the lack of supervision from the NPC has been a longstanding issue, on a par with the longstanding abuse of power by the government. This is because the NPC and the government have their source in the same party dictatorship; both give priority to serving that party dictatorship. For example, farmers make up the largest segment of the population, at 80 percent. Yet within the People’s Congress System, they are the most vulnerable, receiving only a quarter as much representation as urban residents, who make up the remaining 20 percent. But the people in general have no genuine representation under the system of People’s Congresses: the Standing Committee of the Politburo is the chair of the NPC, local Party heads serve as directors of the people’s congresses at all levels, and members of the ruling

Party and government officials at all levels account for upwards of 70 percent of deputies in the NPC.

When the Party bestows authority to the NPC, it is reduced to being a rubber stamp for Party power. When officials and NPC deputies are one and the same, there is no separation between the right to govern and the power to supervise. Systematic oversight does not exist. If officials are People's congress deputies, how is it possible for them to supervise Party and administrative power? How can they supervise power that is in their own hands? Haven't you noticed that the father of kiln boss Wang Binbin of Caosheng Village, Guangshengsi Town, Hong Dong County, Linfen City, Shanxi, is Wang Dongyi, an archetypical "official-deputy unit" at its most basic level? He is the secretary of the village Party branch; at the same time, he is a two-term deputy in the Hongdong County People's Congress.

**When officials and NPC deputies are one and the same, there is no separation between the right to govern and the power to supervise. Systematic oversight does not exist.**

**Question No. 6:** *Why, since Hu and Wen came to power, have there been repeated catastrophes that evolved into major public crises and international sensations?*

Each of these crises should have been nipped in the bud. Some examples include the SARS crisis in 2003, the Songhua River water crisis in 2005, and the series of public safety crises arising in 2006 that involved toxic food products and fake medicines.

The main reason lies in concealment and inaction by an authoritarian central government. If not for the fact that the Internet cannot be totally blocked, and that there are people of conscience exposing the truth of these crises and thus forcing a response from the Hu-Wen government, the consequences would be disastrous. In this sense, the Internet is truly God's gift to the Chinese people for defending their rights.

Specific to the black kiln child slavery case, the Hu-Wen

central government cannot slough off onto local government responsibility for mistakes made, for wasn't that local government appointed by the central government? They cannot even excuse themselves on grounds that information was "concealed" or "not received."

As early as March 8 this year, Yang Aizhi, a resident of Zhengzhou in Henan Province, began to look for her child, Wang Xinlei, who is not yet sixteen years old. At the end of March, Yang Aizhi and another parent from Meng County, Henan, whose child was also missing, went to Henan together to search for their children. They went to over a hundred kilns, but did not find them. In early April, with five other parents of missing children, Yang went again to search in Shanxi, but still with no success.

On May 9, Henan TV Metro Channel reporter Fu Zhenzhong and the parents rushed to Shanxi, where the reporter secretly filmed the tragic scene at the black kiln and recorded a television report headlined, "Crimes too numerous to record; Tragedy beyond comparison." When the report was televised, over 1,000 parents responded. On June 5, a posting appeared on Henan's online River Forum with the subject line: "The vile way of criminals! A 'blood-and-tears' appeal by 400 fathers whose children were sold to Shanxi kilns." On June 11, Yang Aizhi sent an urgent appeal to Premier Wen Jiabao, a mother's tearful appeal.

Then the media began to focus on the black kiln slavery incident. Over three months were wasted between March 8 and June 15 when Hu, Wen, and other top officials finally issued instructions. During all this time, searches by parents, exposure on Henan TV, and an Internet appeal for assistance by 400 fathers, failed to get the attention of the central government.

It is especially galling that as early as 1998, nine years ago, Chen Jianjiao, the chairman of Xinguan Town, Shimien County, Hunan Province, and deputy of the Provincial People's Congress, had been struggling against black kilns in Shanxi, Hebei, and other provinces, and had rescued hundreds of trapped workers, many of them children. Eventually, on September 8, 2006, out of a sense of powerlessness that came after battling alone for a long time, Chen wrote directly to Premier Wen Jiabao. In

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order to solve the overall problem of black kiln slave labor, he proposed a nationwide cleanup of “black kilns,” and a comprehensive rescue effort.

However, the deputy’s letter sank like a stone. There was no response from Wen Jiabao or from any relevant department of the central government. Imagine if Wen Jiabao had responded to Chen Jianjiao’s letter with alacrity, brought the black kilns under control, rescued the slave laborers, attacked criminal kiln bosses and investigated officials guilty of misconduct. Things would have been resolved at least six months earlier. Having treated a letter from a Provincial People’s Congress deputy in this manner, shouldn’t the Hu-Wen central government have come out to apologize to the victims when the case broke? If the central government treats a deputy of a Provincial People’s Congress so rudely, how will it treat an ordinary citizen who has no power?

The Hu-Wen duo’s favorite act since coming to power has been “putting people first.” They repeal custody and repatriation regulations, they change the policy toward SARS, they write human rights into the constitution, give relief from agricultural taxes. They travel the countryside, helping migrant workers negotiate for wages, selling peaches for farmers, spending the eve of the Spring Festival down a mineshaft, wearing old sports shoes, crying over people’s grievances any number of times. . . . Through a media monopoly that carries news of their doings every day of every month, Hu and Wen have created an image of “putting people first.” However, their closeness to the people is a matter of superficial expression, for TV appearances. The coldness is in the bone, in the secret deals by which decisions are made. They are, after all, the leaders of the current oligarchic authoritarian clique and they must maintain their authoritarian power and the primacy of the vested interested groups formed by special privilege. It is impossible for them to give priority to mainstream public opinion, grievances of the people, or the interests of society. They make highlighting government achievements and displaying a bright and positive image the media’s primary task. It would be impossible for them to allow the media to examine their feet of clay. Disclosure of this “black kiln child slave” crime has once again punched holes in their promises of accountability and the myth that they put people first.

It is not a lack of humanity on the part of individual officials that makes the Hu-Wen regime so cold-blooded, but the brutality of the authoritarian system itself. An authoritarian system will never learn to respect life and protect human rights. A ruling clique that makes maintenance of its own monopoly on power its first priority cannot treasure the lives of its people, including those of its children. It is precisely because an authoritarian system does not treat people as human beings that such heinous crimes take place.

In short, authoritarian power is as cold as ice. All eyes are on the prize of obtaining an official position; they cannot allow themselves to feel. Throughout the years since they came to power, Communist dictators have demonstrated that they care only about their own power; human life does not matter. Without systemic change, evils like the black kilns will hardly be affected, let alone rooted out.

July 16, 2007, at home in Beijing

Translated by J. Latourelle

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## Notes

1. The appeal letter (Chinese only) is available online at: <http://news.qq.com/a/20070608/002356.htm>. To learn more about what you can do on this case, visit HRIC’s website: Human Rights in China, “HRIC Action Bulletin: Shanxi Slave Labor Case,” June 28, 2007, <http://www.hrichina.org/public/contents/category?cid=44161>.
2. “Thick-faced (shameless) and “black-hearted” (cruel), two qualities claimed by Li Zongwu (1917-1989) in his book (*Hou Hei Xue*) to be the keys to success throughout Chinese history.
3. “Frank Remarks from Yu Youjun about the Black Kiln Incident,” *Southern Weekend*, July 5, 2007.



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# THE REAL SITUATION IN PRE-OLYMPICS CHINA

**By Teng Biao and Hu Jia**

*A number of petitions have been circulated inside China recently, calling for the government to focus greater attention on human rights rather than the Olympic Games. Here, Teng Biao and Hu Jia expound on the current situation.*

When Beijing won its bid to host the Olympics on July 13, 2001, government officials promised the whole world that they would “improve the human rights situation in China.” In June 2004, China announced its slogan for the Olympics: “One World, One Dream.”

The modern Olympics movement, which was established in 1896, came about in order to promote human dignity and peace. The people of China and of the world are full of hope that the Olympics will bring political progress to China.

That said, has China kept its promise? Have human rights in China improved?

Perhaps you will come to Beijing for the Olympics. If you do, you’ll see tall skyscrapers, broad boulevards, modern sports facilities, and a passionate people. What you’ll see is real, but it’s not the whole picture. It is just like seeing a glacier at sea. You may not know it, but some of these fresh flowers and smiles, this harmony and prosperity are built on abuses, tears, imprisonment, torture, and spilled blood.

We will explain these truths in China. We believe that for those people who are hoping to avoid embarrassment surrounding the Olympics, facing these problems and knowing the truth is the first step to actually resolving the problems.

Fang Zheng is the holder of two national records in dis-

cus throwing for disabled athletes. On the morning of June 4, 1989, while trying to save his classmates, both of his legs were crushed by tanks in Tiananmen Square. Because his injured legs remind people of June 4, he has been prevented by the government from participating in the Special Olympics for handicapped people.<sup>1</sup> In April, an internal document issued by the Ministry of Public Security stated: political investigations would be secretly stepped up, with 11 categories and 43<sup>2</sup> types of people prohibited from participating in the Olympics, including political dissidents, human rights defenders, some news organizations, religious groups, and others.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, Chinese police up until today have not notified the Chinese public or the international community about these regulations.

A huge amount of money has been invested in the Olympics, including many deals that took place behind closed doors. As there is no financial transparency, taxpayers have no way of effectively supervising the investment of more than \$40 billion in the Olympics. The phenomena of corruption and bribery are serious and widespread. In order to build Olympic sports facilities, the home of Ye Guozhu and Ye Guoqiang, two brothers who live in Beijing, was forcibly demolished. Because the two brothers petitioned the government to defend their rights, they were convicted. Ye Guozhu’s hands and feet were shackled together many times in prison; he was also tied to his bed and beaten with an electric baton. With one year left until the Olympics, he remains in Chaobei Prison in Tianjin and continues to be tortured. According to reports, 1.25 million people have been forced from their homes to make way for the construction of Olympic facilities. This figure is expected to rise to 1.5 million by the end of this year. Some 400,000 internal migrants have been forcibly removed from their homes, which were demolished

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without any resettlement scheme. Of this number, 20 percent of the families were left in poverty or were made more destitute.<sup>4</sup> For the purpose of holding the Olympics sailing competition, the city of Qingdao forcibly demolished residential homes, and detained and convicted many citizens and rights defenders.<sup>5</sup> Shenyang, Shanghai, Qinhuangdao, and other Olympic venues have all had similar incidents of forced removal and demolition of homes.

**China continues to detain and crackdown on rights defenders, dissidents, writers, and journalists who dare to speak out. Chen Guangcheng, the blind human rights defender named by *Time Magazine* as one of the 100 most influential people in the world and a recent recipient of the Ramon Magsaysay Award, was framed by judicial authorities, charged with a crime, and imprisoned for four years and three months because he exposed the practice of forced abortions and sterilizations, and widespread use of torture.**

In order to establish the image of a civilized city, the government has intercepted, detained and forcibly repatriated petitioners, beggars and homeless people, putting some of them in so-called “homeless centers” or Reeducation-Through-Labor centers for excessive periods of detention. City officials use barbaric tactics to seize the means of living for street vendors, and also often use violence against these people. On July 20, 2005, Lin Hongying, a 56-year-old Jiangsu farmer who sold vegetables, was beaten to death by city officials.<sup>6</sup> On November 19, Wu Shouqing, a 54-year-old bicycle repairman, was beaten to death by Wuxi City officials.<sup>7</sup> In January 2007, Duan Huimin, a petitioner from Shanghai, was beaten to death by police.<sup>8</sup> On July 1, 2007, a Shanghai rights defender, Chen Xiaoming, was detained for a long period; he was denied timely medical treatment and died as a result.<sup>9</sup> With one year to go

until the Olympic opening ceremony on August 8, 2008, Beijing has arrested 200 petitioners.<sup>10</sup>

China continues to detain and crackdown on rights defenders, dissidents, writers, and journalists who dare to speak out. Chen Guangcheng, the blind human rights defender named by *Time Magazine* as one of the 100 most influential people in the world<sup>11</sup> and a recent recipient of the Ramon Magsaysay Award, was framed by judicial authorities, charged with a crime, and imprisoned for four years and three months because he exposed the practice of forced abortions and sterilizations, and widespread use of torture. The government has refused to allow friends or relatives to provide him with Braille reading materials or a radio, and he recently suffered a beating in the Linxi Prison in Shandong Province. On August 24, 2007, his wife, Yuan Weijing, was preparing to go to Manila in the Philippines to receive her husband’s Ramon Magsaysay Award, but was kidnapped at the Beijing airport by Shandong national security police officers.<sup>12</sup> On August 13, 2007, Yang Chunlin, a rights defender from Heilongjiang Province, was formally arrested on the suspicion of subverting state power because he launched a petition, on behalf of several tens of thousands of peasants who had lost their land, declaring “We want human rights, not the Olympic Games!” China has continually instigated literary inquisitions, with more journalists and writers in prison than any other country. According to incomplete statistics, more than several hundred journalists and writers have been imprisoned since 1989. At least 30 journalists and 50 Internet users are currently detained in China,<sup>13</sup> and more than 90 percent of these were arrested or sentenced since China won its bid to hold the Olympics on July 2001. For example, journalist and poet Shi Tao was sentenced to ten years in prison after he sent an email to overseas websites. Xu Zerong, a Oxford University PhD, was sentenced to 13 years in prison because he did research on the Korean War and thus charged with “illegally providing intelligence outside the country.”<sup>14</sup> Writer Qing Shuijun (Huang Jinqiu) received a 12-year sentence because he published an article on the Internet.<sup>15</sup> Some writers and dissidents have been prohibited from leaving China; others are prohibited from returning home.<sup>16</sup>

Every year a countless number of domestic web sites are



Guests view the display on the 2007 Ramon Magsaysay awardee, blind Chinese human rights activist Chen Guangcheng, after ceremonies at the Cultural Center of the Philippines in Manila, on August 31, 2007. Photo credits: ROMEO GACAD/AFP/Getty Images.

shut down, and countless blogs of Chinese citizens are deleted and banned. Any article with sensitive words is filtered.<sup>17</sup> Many international websites cannot be accessed in mainland China, and foreign radio broadcasts and TV programs are interfered with or are strictly blocked. Although the government had promised to lift restrictions on reporting by foreign journalists for 22 months up to October 17, 2008 (after the end of the Olympics),<sup>18</sup> the Foreign Correspondents' Club of China said in a survey that 40 percent of foreign reporters based in China carrying out reporting in Beijing and other places had described being harassed, detained or warned by local authorities. Some journalists reported that they and their staff had on several occasions been expelled with brutal force. Even more serious is that the Chinese citizens who were interviewed by these foreign journalists may have been put in danger.<sup>19</sup> In June 2006, Fu Xiancai was paralyzed from the neck down from being beaten by police after he had given an interview to a German media organization.<sup>20</sup> In March 2007, Zheng Daqing was beaten and detained after being interviewed by the BBC. On Sep-

tember 7, he was abducted, taken back to Hubei, and put under criminal detention.

The government continues to suppress freedom of religion. Cai Zhuohua, a Protestant minister in Beijing, was sentenced to three years' imprisonment in 2005 for printing copies of the Bible.<sup>21</sup> Zhou Heng, a house church minister in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, was accused of illegal business activity simply because he received several dozen boxes of the Bible.<sup>22</sup> From April to June in 2007, China expelled more than 100 people from the United States, South Korea, Canada, Australia, and other countries who were suspected of engaging in missionary work. Included among these were some English teachers and humanitarians who had worked in China for more than 15 years. The goal of this large-scale campaign to expel foreign religious believers, code named "Typhoon No. 5," is to strike against foreign religious organizations attempting to take advantage of the opportunity presented by the Olympics to proselytize.<sup>23</sup> On September 30, 2006, dozens of Tibetans were attempting to escape



A woman holds a placard as she participates in the Sydney leg of the Global Human Rights Torch Relay (HRTR), 27 October 2007. Photo credits: GREG WOOD/AFP/Getty Images.

to Nepal from Tibet when a Chinese border force opened fire on them, killing a 17-year-old Buddhist nun and wounding a 20-year-old male.<sup>24</sup> Although this incident was witnessed by several international observers who were at the scene, Chinese police authorities still announced that they opened fire only after first coming under a surprise attack. One year later, Chinese control of Tibetan Buddhism is becoming harsher. Beginning on September 1, a new regulation was implemented in Tibetan areas requiring that the reincarnation of lamas be approved by government departments, a brazen and crude attempt to interfere with the centuries-old system of selecting reincarnated Living Buddhas in these areas.<sup>25</sup> Furthermore, the government continues to obstruct the Dalai Lama, the religious leader of Tibet and renowned throughout the world as a pacifist, from returning to his homeland.

Since 1999, members of religious groups whose ability to worship has been restricted by the authorities, such as members of the Falun Gong and Three Grades of Servants, have been the victims of extremely cruel treatment and systematic persecution. Many were killed, and some were tortured or persecuted to the point of psychological illness. Others face prison because they have refused to abandon their religious beliefs, are in posses-

sion of religious books, or have made CD disks or written articles exposing the truth of this persecution.<sup>26</sup>

China continues to be the world leader in carrying out death sentences. The number of death sentences is considered a state secret, but according to estimates by experts, some 8,000 to 10,000 Chinese are executed each year,<sup>27</sup> including people who commit both violent and economic crimes. Of those Chinese citizens sentenced to death, some are completely innocent. For example, Nie Shubin, Teng Xingshan, Cao Haijin, and Hugejiletu were all only proven to be innocent through extraordinary, fortuitous circumstances.<sup>28</sup> Chen Guoqing, He Guoqiang, Yang Shiliang, Zhu Yanqiang,

Huang Zhixiang, Fang Chunping, Cheng Fagen, and Cheng Lihe were eight innocent farmers who confessed under intense, cruel torture by the police. The judge clearly knew the accused were innocent, but still handed down death sentences. A stay of execution was granted, and the eight men are now being held separately in Hebei and Jingdezhen Prison.<sup>29</sup>

Torture goes on regularly in China's detention centers, Reeducation-Through-Labor camps, and prisons. Methods of torture include electric shocks, burning, the use of electric needles, hanging for prolonged periods, sleep deprivation, forced injections of substances that damage one's nervous system, needles forced into fingers, and more. Every year, there are Chinese citizens who are tortured by police and prison officers to the point of becoming crippled or even killed.

China still employs the arbitrary detention system of Reeducation-Through-Labor, which means police units can deprive a person of his or her personal liberty for as long as four years without a court trial. In addition, there is also the temporary shelter system in which the police have the power to deprive a person of his or her freedom for anywhere between six months to two years. In order to simplify procedures and confuse the public,

relevant authorities will sometimes simply put dissidents or rights defenders in Reeducation-Through-Labor camps, temporary shelters, or even psychiatric hospitals.<sup>30</sup>

The world's largest secret police system—the Ministry of State Security and the Ministry of Public Security's Internal Security Bureau—exercises extensive extrajudicial powers. They can monitor and follow people, place citizens under house arrest, and detain and torture them. On June 3, 2004, China's secret police brazenly put heroin into the hands of Xu Fangping, a Chongqing dissident, in order to frame him for selling drugs. Xu Fangping was later sentenced to 12 years in prison for subverting state power.<sup>31</sup>

The Chinese people have no right to elect their national leaders, or to choose local leaders or representatives. In reality, they have never freely and genuinely exercised the right to elect representatives for the local people's congresses. Sun Buer, a member of the Pan-Blue Alliance from Wuhan, ran as an independent in the election for deputies to the county-level People's Congress in September 2006, and was beaten so badly that blood covered his entire face. He has been missing since May 23 of this year, and to date, his whereabouts remain unknown.<sup>32</sup>

China continues to implement a barbaric discriminatory system with respect to rural and urban areas. According to China's electoral law, a rural resident has one-fourth of the electoral representation of an urban resident.<sup>33</sup> In June 2007, the media brought the "Black Kilns Incident" to light, exposing the story of several thousand minors who were abducted and sold into forced labor. These children were beaten and persecuted; a large number of them were left injured and disabled, and some were even buried alive. Of the children who were tricked into doing harsh labor at these kilns in Shanxi Province, the youngest was just eight years old and the oldest 13. Almost every one of these kilns had a connection to government officials.

Chinese political and judicial units have illegally prevented people infected with HIV/AIDS from seeking legal redress from government units that bear responsibility [for the spread of the disease]. Secret police often

intimidate, place under house arrest, or arrest those who work for civil society organizations in the HIV/AIDS field, as well as individuals with HIV/AIDS who are aware of and speak up for their own rights.

The Chinese government sells weapons and supports ethnic conflict and killings in Sudan's Dafur region, and other African nations where armed conflicts occur.

The Chinese government forcefully repatriates North Korean refugees, even though it clearly knows that these refugees risk being put into labor camps and may even face execution when they return home. This is a violation of the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees, to which China is a state party.

Everyone should know that the country that is about to host the Olympics is one without democratic elections, freedom of religion, independent courts or independent unions. It prohibits protests and labor strikes. It is a state that carries out widespread torture, discrimination, and employs a large secret police system. It is a nation that violates human rights standards and human dignity, and is not ready to fulfill its international obligations.

We all live in "one world," and we all long for "one dream." We hope that some day, the Chinese people and the peoples of all countries will be the same and can enjoy the same human rights, freedom, democracy, peace, and all those things that have timeless value all over the world.

Everyone should consider whether the spirit of the Olympics can co-exist with religious persecution, Reeducation-Through-Labor, modern-day slave labor, social discrimination, secret police, and violence against humanity.

We all live in "one world," and we all long for "one dream." We hope that some day, the Chinese people and the peoples of all countries will be the same and can enjoy the same human rights, freedom, democracy, peace,

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and all those things that have timeless value all over the world. However, we see a China that is not yet prepared to honor its promise—all the preparations for the Olympics carried out by the Chinese government until now have shown that the hosting of the Olympics has become, on the contrary, an excuse for the government to restrict civil rights and to suppress human rights.

**If there is no human dignity or human rights, then there can be no real Olympics. For the sake of China and for the sake of the Olympics, defend human rights.**

We don't want to see a blockaded or isolated China. However, it is only through the pressure generated by adhering to human rights principles and a frank dialogue that China will be spurred to improve its current situation. Ignoring the above realities and covering up the various violent actions committed behind Beijing's glittering Olympic rings is a blatant disregard of the Olympic Charter. Protecting human rights takes time, but we should take immediate steps to ensure that the human rights situation in China does not continue to deteriorate. Allowing a country that tramples on human dignity to hold the Olympics does not bring honor to the people of this country, nor does it bring glory to the Olympic Games.

We sincerely hope that the Olympics will bring the values of peace, equality, freedom, and fairness to the 1.3 billion people of China. We pray that the Olympics will take place in a China that is free. We must promote a 2008 Olympics that is truly in accord with the Olympic Charter and the achievement of the same dream of human rights that exists in the rest of the world. We believe only this type of Olympic Games will help promote the advancement of democracy in China and foster world peace.

If there is no human dignity or human rights, then there can be no real Olympics. For the sake of China and for the sake of the Olympics, defend human rights.

September 10, 2007

The original Chinese essay was posted online: Hu Jia's MSN Spaces blog, September 11, 2007, <http://hujiachina.spaces.live.com/blog/cns!2E61195DD50A5E9A!327.entry>.

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# CHINA: A COUNTRY WITHOUT FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN RIGHTS

**By Tie Liu**

*A veteran activist's reflections on why there are no human rights in China, based on his own experiences.*

As I'm writing this, there are three or four unidentified men sitting at the gatehouse of my building complex, no more than three hundred meters from my home. They are in plainclothes, claiming to be authorities from the Beijing Tongzhou Yongshun District. It's been five days since they put me under 24-hour surveillance. This is why I say that there are no fundamental human rights in China.

At the age of 74, I already have one foot in the grave. It's puzzling why the Communist regime finds it necessary to spend so much energy monitoring an old man like me. Do they expect me to wave a flag and join protests? Or that I will create trouble and start a revolt? Or do they think that I will bomb Tiananmen Square?

Now that I'm retired, I go to bed at 10 p.m. everyday and wake up at 6 a.m., to water the plants and feed my dog and birds. Then I go with my wife to do some morning exercises at the local club, and I read and write for the rest of the day. My life has always been like this. Of course, I write essays that speak the truth about the historical disasters that this country and our people have experienced. I also wrote what I witnessed as an "extreme Rightist" (according to Mao Zedong thirty years ago), and then spent 23 years in prison. It is without doubt that these articles are not flowers that beautify the country or songs praising socialism. Instead, my essays are filled with tears, scars, and endless suffering. Naturally, they upset the Communist authorities. What can I do? I refuse to fabricate history or make things up! I say what I see, and take life the way it is. As you can tell, I will never learn how to lie; I will never "evolve." No wonder I'm stuck being a Rightist.

This year is the 50th anniversary of the Anti-Rightist Movement, a natural point for me to stand up and make my voice heard. I signed a petition aimed at the Central Committee of the Communist Party, with 61 other "Rightists." I also published numerous articles online that strongly criticize Mao's wrongs, and attended an international conference on the Anti-Rightist Movement in the United States. I don't know why, but I became a major target of government surveillance. Beginning April 9, 2007, three cars followed me everywhere I went for three days; my home phone and cell phone are both bugged. To use their words of warning: "We are watching your every move." My whole family was threatened and harassed. They were worried that I had violated some important national law.

Fortunately, I'm still mentally stable, and I can still smile. One month ago, for the future of this country and for the people, I published three now notorious articles online: "Advice for the 17th Party Congress: The Communist Party and the Liberation Army Should Be Renamed"; "Criticizing Mao Must Be on the 17th Party Congress Agenda"; and "If Mao Zedong is Not Condemned, There Can Be No Freedom and Democracy in China." I don't know what taboo these articles violated, or whose ancestors' graves they dug up, but they did cause so much trouble.

On October 3, I came back from vacation with my wife, relaxed and in a good mood. At ten o'clock on October 6, three men, claiming to be from Tongzhou Political and Legislative Affairs Committee, broke into my house without showing identification or a warrant. They warned me that "on behalf of the committee" I need to get their approval whenever I leave the house, or I will have to suffer the consequences. They also threatened me and asked what organizations I am a member of,

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what meetings I organize, and what “overseas hostile forces” I am involved with. I tried to argue that they have to provide evidence for such accusations. When they asked if I had any demands, I told them: 1) I hope the Communist Party will carefully examine historical lessons and learn from them, and widen freedom of speech; 2) declare the 1957 Anti-Rightist Movement a mistaken political movement and apologize to its victims; 3) pay victims their salaries retroactively from 1958 to 1980, and compensate for emotional loss; and 4) openly expose and condemn Mao Zedong’s guilt in persecuting the people.

Although the intruders were utterly unreasonable, in consideration of the bigger picture ahead of the 17th Party Congress and the harmonious society President Hu is trying to build, I proposed that I would only go as far as the local club for exercises with my wife, and that I would not attempt to go to Tiananmen Square or other controversial places. I also agreed not visit my friends. The intruders, however, did not understand my compromise and sacrifice. They sent people to watch me from the gatehouse all day long, beginning on October 7. Whenever I leave the house, they stop the car and ask me where I am going and when I’ll return, refusing to let me go until they get approval. Yesterday afternoon at two o’clock, when I was out getting a newspaper, two plainclothes men stopped me and asked, “Are you Tie Liu? Where are you heading?” I asked, “Who are you with?” They answered, “The Yongshun County govern-

ment.” Then I asked, “Do you have an ID?” “No” they said. I told them: “If you don’t have proof of identification, what right do you have to stop me? I am a citizen, what law did I violate?” They said nothing but continued to tail me. At the moment I have no idea what will happen to me and can only wait and see. But this is horrible; China is really a terrifying country, where people have no sense of security at all!

As my daughter wrote in her letter to President Hu Jintao, “I think that my father’s actions (giving speeches and writing articles)—whether they were right or wrong—did not violate any laws, and certainly did not violate the Constitution of the People’s Republic of China. All his demands are the legitimate, rational demands of a citizen.” In today’s China, both the government and the media are advocating “rule by law,” yet the country is not ruled according to the law. Many government bodies (such as those in my hometown in Tongzhou District) restrict and deprive a citizen’s personal freedom by stopping them, following them, and monitoring them, without any formal legal procedures. Freedom of speech and other personal freedoms are basic human rights in civilized societies. But these freedoms are not available to the Chinese people; in such an environment, how harmonious can this society possibly be? I call upon the international community to pay attention to the situation of human rights in China.

Translated by Isle Arthur

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# UYGHUR CULTURE FACED WITH ENDLESS CAMPAIGNS

**By D. T.**

*D.T. provides his observations on policy trends and the growing number of political campaigns targeting Uyghurs since 2002.*

Officially, nothing has changed in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR). The region continues to be extolled as a paradise for tourists and investors, both from abroad and other regions in China, a place to enjoy pristine landscapes, bountiful fruits and vegetables and exotic performances by “ethnic minorities.” Nonetheless, as the years go by, the CPC (Communist Party of China) continues to reinforce and adapt its strategy to ensure that the XUAR remains politically welded to the rest of the People’s Republic of China (PRC). As everywhere in China, “thought work” remains the preferred tool; nonetheless the promotion of its ideology is equally underpinned by stringent enforcement of selected laws and regulations (including a reportedly higher rate of capital punishment), that creates resentment among Uyghur and other “minority” (non-Han) populations in specific ways that differ from political dissent in “central” areas. Based on informal talks with a number of Uyghur, Kazakh, Hui, and Han Chinese individuals in the XUAR,<sup>1</sup> this piece is an attempt to assess the latest policy trends and the reactions they have provoked. Rather than a shift in paradigm, continued adaptations on behalf of the central government suggest that its objectives in the XUAR remain largely unchanged by shifts in the regional and international environment. Rather, the successive launching of the Western Development Strategy (Xibu da kaifa) campaign<sup>2</sup> in early 2000, and the new “antiterrorist strategy” as formulated in a January 2002 report by the State Council, have simply provided new and more sophisticated tools for the ongoing policy of integrating the XUAR into the political framework constituted by the CPC, into the dynamics of all-out economic growth, and into a form of cultural homo-

geneity associated with Chinese state culture that has been developed since 1949.

## **Religion and culture**

The primary target of campaigns remains Uyghur cultural specificities, in particular religion. While there seem to be no major changes to the framework constituted by the “Regulations on Religious Affairs” issued by the State Council in 2004,<sup>3</sup> the government continues to single out specific areas for new action—for example, pilgrimage has received special attention in 2007. While pilgrimage to Mecca (the Hajj), one of the “five pillars” of Sunni Islam, already fell under the 2004 Regulations,<sup>4</sup> control has increased markedly. In June, XUAR Party Secretary Wang Lequan, citing “new situations” and “new problems,” called to “step up the control of pilgrimages, severely attack the organizers of illegal pilgrimages, take forceful measures to put a stop to dispersed pilgrimages, and protect the personal interests of the masses from every ethnic group.”<sup>5</sup> Slogans coined from these catchwords cover the walls in southern XUAR, proclaiming: “Absolutely refuse dispersed pilgrimage, take the road of organized and planned pilgrimage!”; “Dispersed pilgrimage is an illegal religious activity!”; and “Resolutely attack the ‘snake heads’ organizing dispersed pilgrimages!”<sup>6</sup>

Uyghur individuals voiced specific complaints about the organization of the Hajj. Several sources indicated that only around 200 people each year from the XUAR are selected to take part in travel organized by official Muslim associations. One person stated that only men between the ages of 50 and 70 were eligible to apply. One young man in his twenties, who had received religious material from Pakistan, said that he felt if he did not permanently emigrate from China he would never be able to see Mecca. Another man mentioned an inci-

dent in which he believed Rebiya Kadeer had personally traveled to Pakistan to intervene in favor of a large group of Uyghurs applying for a visa to Saudi Arabia.<sup>7</sup>

In June 2007, as confirmed by three interviewees, one of whom is an employee in a state administration and a Hui Muslim, work units (or neighborhood committees) all over the XUAR began recalling the passports of all non-Han (i.e., all Muslim) passport holders.<sup>8</sup> There is some debate as to whether Han Chinese citizens' passports were also confiscated; one female Han interviewee stated that her work unit had announced that her passport would also be held. Routinely, it appears that work units inform passport holders that they may apply to retrieve them at local police stations in case they plan to travel abroad. The Hui interviewee felt that the government was, in this way, "going one step further in purposely conflating the 'three evil forces' [terrorism, separatism and extremism] with Islam in general," compelling many Hui people into a form of solidarity with Uyghurs, although their religious institutions

(mosques, associations) remain strictly separate. The equation of Islam with terrorism (unfortunately not unknown elsewhere in the world) seems to provide a justification for the Chinese authorities to target separatism (an entirely separate political agenda), no doubt because feelings of unease about Islam are both shared by local Han populations in Xinjiang and tolerated by the international community. For Hui communities, however, who have historically served as a go-between for Han and Uyghurs, it makes no sense.

Other obstacles to the free practice of religion continue to be ingeniously reinforced: according to two school employees, during the summer vacation of 2007, school-aged children were asked to attend mandatory classes at schools every Friday, effectively preventing them from attending Friday prayer at the mosque. Religious education remains forbidden to minors under 18, and can therefore only be provided to children in private study groups that continue to meet in secret, according to one Uyghur young man. He added that although he

**Children run outside the Sunday Market in Kashgar, XUAR, in July 2007. Courtesy of Sarah McKune.**



had studied medicine, he was not interested in practicing or teaching it as he would, in this case, have to submit to the ban on religious practice for state employees. Two secondary school teachers confirmed that they could not practice Islam. As a consequence, observers quoted by the U.S. State Department estimate that “fewer than half of the [23,900 XUAR] mosques were authorized to hold Friday prayer and holiday services.”<sup>9</sup> One may well wonder whether these types of repressive tactics may not end up creating exactly the sort of crystallization around the letter of Islamic doctrine that the authorities are trying to prevent.

But the denial of religious rights is only one of several ways in which traditional Uyghur culture is targeted by the government. The reconstruction of historic town centers is another obvious one. In Kashgar and Karghlik, the areas of old streets lined with mud brick houses surrounding the main mosque, as well as the squares on which the mosques are situated, are being largely rebuilt. Mud architecture is being replaced by brick buildings, and Id Kah square in Kashgar is now surrounded by modern buildings in “Muslim style,” effectively clearing the square of its small vendors of fruit, vegetables, and cooked food, who have been relocated to a covered area specifically built to accommodate them. These renovations largely resemble redevelopment in most Chinese cities, but local residents are particularly upset about the construction of a giant television screen on the cleared square, just in front of the mosque, which according to them interferes with prayers because television programs in Chinese can be heard inside the mosque (depending on the wind).

More generally, the rising numbers of tourists this “modernization” is supposed to accommodate have not brought many benefits to local populations. Chinese tourists from central areas travel in large groups with their own Chinese guides (sometimes showing little sensitivity to cultural differences), stay in Chinese-run hotels, and are toured around a set of historic sites in which the “inextricable” historical ties of the XUAR to China are routinely highlighted. A Uyghur tour guide underlined that there was very little trickledown from tourism to the local population:<sup>10</sup> although there are some home stays in Kyrgyz yurts at Karakul Lake, the XUAR government is basically implementing a policy

of sedentarization of Kyrgyz nomads in this area. (Several ghost towns, built on the fringes of the Taklamakan desert and as yet uninhabited, can be observed along the road between Kashgar and Hetan; local residents believe the towns are destined for resettlement of Kyrgyz nomads.) At the same time, a limited set of customs is singled out and subjected to “folklorization,” i.e., removed from its original context and cut off from its broader cultural signification (religious, for example). The submission by the Chinese government to UNESCO and subsequent proclamation of the 12 Kashgar Muqam as a “masterpiece of the oral and intangible heritage” is a case in point, while popular festivals such as the Meshrep are tightly controlled or banned outright.<sup>11</sup> Conversely, any uncontrolled creative activity in Uyghur is strictly monitored: a writer based in Urumqi underlined that since the arrest of Nurmemet Yasin in late 2004, control of Uyghur-language press and publishing companies has become such that many Uyghur writers prefer to refrain from publishing any of their writings at all.<sup>12</sup>

### Stepping up development and assimilation?

While the authorities sometimes recognize that modernization can negatively impact traditional culture, they routinely extol its benefits for local inhabitants. They pride themselves on implementing ambitious projects, to build infrastructure (rail, road, airports), subsidize industrialization, and “train talents.” While the Western Development Strategy is mocked by average Han Chinese and Uyghurs alike as a new means for corrupt officials to increase their kickbacks, it has more deep-reaching implications for the Uyghurs in terms of cultural identity. A speech by Wang Lequan illustrates the incompatibility the government seeks to establish between economic development and “unproductive” traditional beliefs: “We must resolutely implement unwavering long-term educational measures aimed at patiently and meticulously rallying the larger masses that hold religious beliefs, so that they devote themselves to working hard in order to become rich, improve their lives, [and] build a beautiful homeland.”<sup>13</sup>

The regional government continues to use a two-pronged strategy, targeting education and labor migration of young Uyghurs. In the area of education,

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authorities initiated China's equivalent of busing, the transfer of the best Uyghur students to so-called "Xinjiang neidi ban" (classes reserved for Uyghurs in Chinese schools in the central provinces), in September 2000, and the number of students has been continually expanding since then.<sup>14</sup> Xinhua News Agency reported in August 2006 that the number of students beginning studies in "Xinjiang classes" in senior high schools (*gaozhong*) in central China in September of that year would increase by almost 30 percent to 3,990 students.<sup>15</sup> Several Uyghurs living in the almost exclusively Uyghur-speaking Kashgar area confirmed that they were eager to send their children to such schools because they would learn Chinese and thus be able to find better jobs. For similar reasons, all-Chinese language primary and secondary schools in the XUAR, a policy implemented since 2004,<sup>16</sup> have met with a measure of success: a couple of schoolteachers in Karghilik who did not speak Chinese were both proud to show off that their children had learned fluent Chinese since being enrolled in a Chinese primary school. This conditional support for the extension of Chinese language training underscores that by emphasizing economic necessities, the government has successfully created a situation in which there is no perceived short-term alternative to integrating into the Chinese system. While almost all Uyghurs in the XUAR lament the loss of cultural identity that government policies in education (and other areas) have entailed, in a context in which China is the dominant power in the XUAR and increasingly in Central Asia, university education and professional opportunities are expected to be closely linked to the mastery of the Chinese language. While it does not violate the Chinese government's obligations under domestic and international law (as long as meaningful access to Uyghur-language education is guaranteed), this policy nevertheless remains inconsistent with incentives given by China's Law on Regional Ethnic Autonomy to encourage teaching in "minority languages" at primary level.<sup>17</sup>

In an international environment in which regional *linguae francae* have gained momentum worldwide (Russian in Central Asia, English in Europe, Mandarin all around China),<sup>18</sup> it is therefore probably not so much the prominence of Chinese itself as the fact that the Uyghur population has no say in the organization of its

educational system, in particular in the choice of its language, that appears unacceptable by international standards. For example, the right to "establish and control their educational systems" is reaffirmed in Article 14 of the recently adopted UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous peoples.<sup>19</sup> More broadly, Article 4 of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, lays down progressive obligations for states to create "favorable conditions" for persons belonging to minorities to express their culture.<sup>20</sup> The Chinese government has in this way effectively created a situation in which choosing an exclusively Uyghur-language education means drastically limiting intellectual and professional opportunities—at least within China.<sup>21</sup> A measure of cultural assimilation becomes the "price to pay" to benefit from the opportunities offered by China's development.

The second aspect of this policy is government-encouraged/initiated labor migration, which is presented as a form of "affirmative action" (*youhui zhitaengce*) in favor of minorities. In July 2007, the Xinjiang Labor and Social Security Bureau announced that it planned to extend its labor migration policy to 330,000 rural laborers in Xinjiang.<sup>22</sup> Residents in villages around Karghilik and Yengisar spoke of a campaign initiated in 2007 in their districts, under which representatives of factory owners in coastal areas of Eastern China toured the villages, accompanied by representatives of local governments, showing photographs of their factories to the families in order to persuade them to send their children to work there for several years. Families were promised monthly salaries of approximately 800 yuan, technical and Chinese language training before departure, and travel costs to be provided by local governments. They specifically mentioned bag and textile factories for Uyghur young women and shoe factories for young men, all situated in Tianjin. A local government official in Kashgar asserted that the policy was part of a larger scheme in which the companies from coastal areas, having trained a Uyghur workforce, would ultimately relocate their factories to Xinjiang, with local governments providing land at reduced rates or for free.

This policy is being implemented county by county, with Payzawat (Jiashi) and Puskam (Zepu) counties in

Kashgar Prefecture initiating the first round of recruitment in the spring of 2006, followed by a second round in 2007. It has so far met with a mixed response: mainland media have published rosy reports of happy Uyghur girls in Tianjin, integrated into the “great socialist family” of the motherland, with no mention of how these migrant female workers were able or allowed to practice their religion, but instead emphasized the “singing and dancing” that comes “naturally” to ethnic minorities.<sup>23</sup> Conversely, coerced relocation by local officials has been denounced by Radio Free Asia and other organizations.<sup>24</sup> According to the local government, Kashgar Prefecture has been investing large sums of money to train prospective migrant laborers, increasing its spending from 11 million *yuan* in 2004 to 18 million in 2006 and 28 million for the first four months of 2007 alone.<sup>25</sup> Nonetheless, in a context of widespread child trafficking in the autonomous region,<sup>26</sup> and given past practices in organized labor migration elsewhere in China, abuses by local officials seem inevitable, even though local residents are reluctant to talk about them or have not personally heard of any.

But the real issue, just as in the case of “Xinjiang classes,” is cultural assimilation: the Chinese government has responded to criticism regarding the lack of trickle-down of economic benefits to Uyghurs by creating a system which defines a binary choice between cultural assimilation within the Chinese system, or underdevelopment and isolation.<sup>27</sup> By tolerating the exercise of cultural rights such as schooling in Uyghur language, traditional religious practice, and the rural lifestyle with which it is interwoven, and at the same time fighting poverty and illiteracy only through assimilation into mainstream Chinese culture (as opposed to community-based development strategies), the government creates a double bind for local populations: the



Uyghurs attend afternoon prayers at the Id Kah Mosque on October 15, 2006, in Kashgar, XUAR. Photo credits: Guang Niu/Getty Images.

public exercise of cultural rights obstructs their access to higher education, economic opportunities, and ultimately political representation. In a UN working paper, Dru Gladney concludes: “To an extent never seen before, the continued incorporation of Xinjiang into China has become inexorable, and perhaps irreversible.”<sup>28</sup> To an extent, the situation resembles that of local culture and dialects in ethnically Chinese areas of the PRC; nonetheless, this reduction of Uyghur language, religion, and cultural traditions to a “local brand” of Chinese culture is precisely what most Uyghurs in the XUAR do not accept.

Once again, rather than the policy as such, it is the lack of political participation of the Uyghur population, and the resulting feeling of disenfranchisement, that is problematic. The question is ultimately one of political legitimacy: not so much whether it is a good idea to

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integrate the XUAR into the Chinese economic and cultural influence zone, but whether this is a trade-off that local populations have a say in.<sup>29</sup> The UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities affirms this right to political participation: “Persons belonging to minorities have the right to participate effectively in decisions on the national and, where appropriate, regional level concerning the minority to which they belong or the regions in which they live, in a manner not incompatible with national legislation.”<sup>30</sup> Similarly, Article 23 of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples specifically stresses the right of indigenous peoples to administer development programs “through their own institutions.” The spirit of these declarations is in fact enshrined in China’s regional autonomy law, as recognized by the State Council White Paper on the XUAR: “According to the provisions of China’s Constitution and the ‘Law on Regional Ethnic Autonomy,’ ethnic autonomous areas enjoy extensive autonomy. While exercising the functions and powers of local state organs, they shall have the power of legislation; the power to flexibly carry out or decide not to carry out decisions from higher-level state organs that are not suited to the actual conditions of the ethnic autonomous areas; the power to develop their own economy; the power to manage their own financial affairs; the power to train and use ethnic-minority cadres; and the power to develop education and ethnic cultures.” Unfortunately, these provision remain largely theoretical.<sup>31</sup>

### **“Border policy,” terrorism and state security**

One of the XUAR’s enduring specificities is its status as a “border region.” When Wen Jiabao toured the XUAR in August 2007, he underscored the importance of “special measures to accelerate the development of the three prefectures in South Xinjiang.” However, he also reaffirmed that the XUAR should “consolidate and strengthen national unity, maintain the harmony and stability of the frontier, and promote economic, political, cultural and social progress in ethnic minority areas,”<sup>32</sup> a task which he explicitly tied in with the role of the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps (XPCC or *bingtuan*).<sup>33</sup> The *bingtuan*, who report directly to the Center at the same time as to the regional

Party secretary, have maintained an unchallenged presence in Xinjiang, underscoring the region’s importance in the Center’s policies as a buffer, and as a both strategic and economic outpost in Central Asia (much in the same way as Eastern Europe was for the Soviet Union).<sup>34</sup> In the State Council white paper on “China’s National Defense in 2006,” minority policy is explicitly linked with the border question: “The Chinese government attaches great importance to work related to ethnic minorities and economic development in border areas; it has formulated a series of policies and adopted many strategic measures in this regard.”<sup>35</sup>

China’s antiterrorism strategy, insofar as it justifies a high level of military presence and pressure, fits into this framework. While the government had previously focused on ETIM (East Turkestan Islamic Movement or Dong Tujisilan Yundong)—the organized existence of which continues to be questioned by Western experts and academics—the year 2007 marked a shift towards targeting Hizb-ut-Tahrir (Yisilan jiefang dang) in government campaigns. Tolerated in Pakistan, Hizb-ut-Tahrir has been singled out as a terrorist organization in other Central Asian countries and within the framework of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). At this year’s SCO meeting on August 16 in Bishkek, Human Rights Watch reported that heads of state agreed on “a list of religious organizations deemed ‘extremist’ and that are banned in the SCO.”<sup>36</sup> According to the same report, Kyrgyz authorities have recently stepped up their enforcement of the ban on Hizb-ut-Tahrir, deporting a suspected member to Uzbekistan and pressing charges for “simple possession of Hizb-ut-Tahrir leaflets.”<sup>37</sup>

While no public reference to ETIM has been made recently in China, slogans in southern XUAR read, “Hizb-ut-Tahrir is a violent terrorist organization,” and “Severely attack Hizb-ut-Tahrir, strongly maintain social order.”<sup>38</sup> In May 2007, a cadre-education campaign took place in all administrative divisions of the XUAR with the slogan, “Rub your eyes clear and recognize the reactionary nature of Hizb-ut-Tahrir.” Study meetings subsequently took place in all townships and counties of the region, the “results” of which are posted proudly on their websites. Finally, on June 23–26, 2007, China convened a “Special SCO Member States Law





A general view shows the PetroChina's Karamay oil field in the XUAR. Photo credits: Stringer Shanghai / Reuters.

Enforcement and Security Ministry study conference on curtailing and attacking Hizb-ut-Tahrir” in Urumchi.<sup>39</sup> Despite the public nature of the campaign, most people do not know or admit they know the name of the party, and little is known about its presence in China, although suspected members have been sporadically arrested, most recently in 2001. Few facts seem to confirm its implantation in the XUAR, raising questions about whether this shift is not simply designed to ensure Central Asian cooperation in persecuting and extraditing political (notably Uyghur) activists—for example, Huseyin Celil in 2006.

Ongoing anti-terrorist campaigns seek to maintain a high-pitched mood of paranoia and justify generalized police surveillance, particularly in the Kashgar area, where ethnic Uyghurs make up over 90 percent of the population. Several English-speaking young Uyghur men in the southern XUAR confirmed that they were targeted by the “spy agency” or plainclothes police. These men had been interrogated for several hours (in one case repeatedly) after speaking with foreigners or, in another

case, after receiving a parcel with books from abroad. Interrogation did not always take place in official settings; hotels or tourist spots were also used. While no physical violence was exerted in these routine cases, pressure was intense and police carried out questioning in a repetitive way over several hours, combined with threats against relatives or threats of retaliation in case of further “suspicious behavior.” A tourist café was recently closed in Kashgar because it was allegedly run by missionaries suspected of spying for foreign governments.

According to several sources, police routinely offer rewards for transmitting information; 200 *yuan* is the usual fee for volunteers. Disenfranchisement among young Uyghur men makes many vulnerable to these offers. In Kashgar, a saying goes that if three people are talking together, one is probably a spy. Regular collaborators often tend to be Uyghurs who speak Chinese: in one case, a young Uyghur man surreptitiously attempting to eavesdrop on a conversation turned out to speak good Chinese, having spent several years working in a hotel in eastern China before returning to the XUAR,

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only to be forced into a socially stigmatizing (in a Muslim context) and underpaid job in a wine factory.

Yet the reality of terrorist organizations remains disputed. In January of 2007, the XUAR government claimed to have raided and destroyed a terrorist training camp in Kosrap District, Akto County, Kizilsu Kirghiz Autonomous Prefecture. Officially, 17 terrorists were killed, 18 were taken prisoner, and one Chinese People's Armed Police (PAP) member was killed. A Hong Kong reporter tried to access the area in the following days, but was stopped before reaching the village, while a reporter from the Southern Metropolis wrote that there was nothing to be seen in A'ertaxun Township (Uyghur name unknown) apart from a few herders and a coal mine.<sup>40</sup> Other accounts provided by Uyghur activists abroad suggest that terrorism was only a pretext to hide a dispute over the coal mine: local Uyghurs once collected coal for their private use until the land was taken over by a Han Chinese manager who tried to lock the mine, causing an uprising by Uyghur employees which was ultimately crushed by the PAP.<sup>41</sup> Pending further confirmation of these rumors, it is interesting to note that both Chinese journalists who traveled to the area mention the presence of a mine in the village in which the events—whatever their nature—took place.

## Conclusion

State security measures billed as anti-terrorism and ongoing campaigns targeting religion, economic development and cultural assimilation raise the question of the evolution of CPC policy in the XUAR. In his historical analysis of political forces in Xinjiang, Rémi Castets suggests that the recognition of rights of Han Chinese settlers displaced during the Cultural Revolution to return to eastern China generated hopes for “decolonization” in the 1980s. However, these hopes faded when the close succession of the Tiananmen crackdown, the Barin uprising in 1990, and the breakup of the USSR in 1991 triggered strong persecution of anti-Chinese elements in the 1990s, notably during the “Strike Hard” campaigns.<sup>42</sup> Furthermore, the events of 9/11 gave rise to a new readiness on behalf of the central government to recognize the existence of Uyghur opposition to Chinese administration in order to justify repression in the name of antiterrorism.

Hu Jintao offered a revealing outline of his opinions on ethnic minorities in a May 2005 speech to the State Ethnic Affairs Commission.<sup>43</sup> His arguments revolve around three basic ideas: 1) giving absolute priority to economic development, portrayed as the “key to solving all China’s problems” and the most important task that justifies the CPC’s exercise of power; 2) reaffirming the importance of socialism with Chinese characteristics and the rule of the party in minority areas; and 3) consolidating ethnic cohesion (the “three inseparables”) to ensure the “great revival of the Chinese nation” (*Zhonghua minzu de weida fuxing*). In this speech, Hu Jintao called for the government to enhance and strengthen freedom of religion and the regional autonomy system through better enforcement and dissemination of knowledge of China’s regional autonomy law. However, these calls have seemingly gone unheeded. There is certainly a will in the CPC to stress the absence of a specific bias inside the Party against religious or ethnic minorities: Hu Jintao reaffirmed the obligation of Han cadres to learn the language of their place of posting, and called for the adoption of ethnic quotas among local cadres and better recognition of their contribution to governance.<sup>44</sup> However, one wonders how these quotas can be met in areas of strong religious practice as long as atheism is a precondition for Party membership.

Nonetheless, the concluding part of Hu Jintao’s speech remains strongly political and appears to contradict his calls for enforcing autonomy. There, Hu recommends that officials “strengthen and improve the Party’s leadership in ethnic affairs” following four main courses of action: recruiting cadres, reinforcing political theory (i.e., stepping up propaganda and patriotic education), strengthening grassroots-level Party organizations in minority areas, and finally, using pragmatism to implement policy. The inherent contradiction raises issues of political and civil rights that China also faces on the national level—and to an extent, the XUAR’s difficulties may indeed stem from its status as a “border region” and a vital component in the strategy of the “great revival of the Chinese nation” as much as or more than its ethnic and religious differences. Nonetheless, the United Front<sup>45</sup> tactics of co-opting a measure of dissent and local leadership in order to better isolate any fundamental questioning of the CPC’s presence in the

XUAR has more deep-reaching consequences in terms of cultural rights than in most other areas of China.

## Notes

1. Specific details about interviewees have been withheld for their safety.
2. This is also referred to in English as the “Great Opening of the West.”
3. See Human Rights in China & Human Rights Watch, *Devastating Blows: Religious Repression of Uighurs in Xinjiang* (Human Rights Watch, 2005).
4. “Dishiyi Tiao Xinyang Yisilanjiao de Zhongguo Gongmin Qianwang Guowai Chaojing, You Yisilanjiao Quanguoxing Zhongjiao Tuanti Fuze Zuzhi” [Regulation No. 11: Travel abroad on pilgrimage by Chinese citizens who believe in Islam is organized under the responsibility of a national-level Muslim organization], Xinhua News Agency, September 9, 2007, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/zhengfu/2004-12/20/content\\_2356626.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/zhengfu/2004-12/20/content_2356626.htm).
5. “Wang Lequan: Jiaqiang Chaojin Guanli Weihu Qunzhong Liyi” [Strengthening Hajj Regulations for the Benefit of the Public], Xinjiang Ribao [Xinjiang Daily], June 19, 2007.
6. “Dujue lingsan chaojin, zou you zuzhi you jihua chaojin zhilu” [Absolutely refuse dispersed pilgrimage, take the road of organized and planned pilgrimage!]; “Lingsan chaojin shi feifa zongjiao huodong” [Dispersed pilgrimage is an illegal religious activity!]; “Jianjue daji zuzhi lingsan chaojin de ‘shetou,’” [Resolutely attack the ‘snake heads’ organizing dispersed pilgrimages!].
7. See also Alim Seytoff, “Pride, prejudice, protest and progress,” *China Rights Forum* 4 (2006): 61. The U.S. Department of State notes that the Islamic Association of China (IAC) is the only organization legally authorized to conduct Hajj tours, and reports that some Uyghurs complain of having to profess loyalty to the CPC in order to apply. Quoting IAC figures, it estimates the number of Chinese Muslims participants in the 2006–07 pilgrimage at approximately 9,700. U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, *China* (includes Tibet, Hong Kong, and Macau)—*International Religious Freedom Report 2007* (September 9, 2007), <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2007/90133.htm>.
8. “China Confiscates Muslims’ Passports,” Radio Free Asia, June 27, 2007, [http://www.rfa.org/english/uyghur/2007/06/27/uyghur\\_passports](http://www.rfa.org/english/uyghur/2007/06/27/uyghur_passports).
9. U.S. Department of State, *International Religious Freedom Report 2007*, op. cit.
10. This situation sharply contrasts with Kyrgyzstan, for example, where increasing numbers of travelers are channeled to home stays and sustainable or community-based tourism rather than being used to justify real estate or infrastructure developments and the “modernization” of traditional habitat.
11. For the ban on Meshrep, see, e.g., “China: Human Rights Concerns in Xinjiang,” Human Rights Watch Backgrounder, October 2001, <http://www.hrw.org/backgrounder/asia/china-bck1017.htm>. On Muqam, see “Proclamation 2005: ‘The Uyghur Muqam of Xinjiang,’” UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, October 24, 2007, <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/index.php?topic=mp&cp=CN#TOC3>.
12. On N. Yasin, see Nurmuhemmet Yasin, “Wild Pigeon,” *Kashgar Literature Magazine* 5 (2004). Translation available at Nurmuhemmet Yasin, “Wild Pigeon,” Radio Free Asia, June 27, 2005, [http://www.rfa.org/english/uyghur/2005/06/27/wild\\_pigeon](http://www.rfa.org/english/uyghur/2005/06/27/wild_pigeon).
13. “Wang Lequan: Jiaqiang Chaojin Guanli Weihu Qunzhong Liyi” [Wang Lequan: Strengthening Hajj Regulations for the Benefit of the Public], Xinjiang Ribao [Xinjiang Daily], June 19, 2007. The implicit assumption, often heard in the XUAR, is that “the Chinese work; the Uyghurs pray.”
14. This policy seems to have initiated in Tibet in the 1990s before being extended to Xinjiang. See Human Rights In China, *China: Minority Exclusion, Marginalization and Rising Tensions* (Minority Rights Group International, 2007), 29; “Jiaoyubu Ying Fa ‘Guanyu Neidi Youguan Chengshi Kaiban Xinjiang Gaozhong Ban de Shishi Yijian de Tongzhi’” [Ministry of Education Notification on distributing ‘Opinions regarding the implementation of creating Xinjiang senior high school classes in relevant cities in central areas’], January 24, 2000, [http://www.jyb.cn/jyzl/jyzc/mzjy/ndxjb/t20060509\\_17134.htm](http://www.jyb.cn/jyzl/jyzc/mzjy/ndxjb/t20060509_17134.htm).
15. “Jinnian Neidi Xinjiang Ban Luqu 3990 Ren, Shaoshu Minzu Zhan 90%” [This year Inland Xinjiang Classes Recruit 3990 Students, 90% from Minority Populations], Xinhua News Agency, August 21, 2006, [http://www.jyb.cn/xwzx/mzjy/t20060821\\_30544.htm](http://www.jyb.cn/xwzx/mzjy/t20060821_30544.htm).
16. “China Imposes Chinese Language on Uyghur Schools,” Radio Free Asia, March 16, 2004, [www.rfa.org/english/news/social/2004/03/16/130822](http://www.rfa.org/english/news/social/2004/03/16/130822).
17. Article 37 of the revised Law on Regional Ethnic Autonomy states that schools that “have the means” (you tiaojian de) should use teaching materials in “minority” languages, while progressively introducing Chinese classes between the end of primary school and the beginning of secondary school. National People’s Congress, *Law on Regional Ethnic Autonomy* [*Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo Mingzu*

- Quyū Zizhi Fa.*], as revised 2001, Art. 37, available at [http://www.gov.cn/test/2005-07/29/content\\_18338.htm](http://www.gov.cn/test/2005-07/29/content_18338.htm).
18. In neighboring and democratic Kyrgyzstan, for example, after a period of revival of the Kyrgyz language (related to Uyghur) following independence in 1991, virtually all University-level teaching has reverted to Russian, for reasons related to greater economic and scientific opportunities in Russia.
  19. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Art. 14, G.A. Res. 61/295, U.N. Doc. A/Res/61/295 (Sept. 13, 2007).
  20. Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, Art. 4, G.A. Res. 47/135, U.N. Doc. A/Res/47/135 (Dec. 18, 1992).
  21. Independent central Asian nations offer new opportunities to an extent; nonetheless, mastering Russian remains indispensable in all the countries except possibly Uzbekistan.
  22. “XJ to Implement Skill Training Project,” Tianshannet, July 20, 2007, [http://www.aboutxinjiang.com/news/content/2007-07/20/content\\_2087367.htm](http://www.aboutxinjiang.com/news/content/2007-07/20/content_2087367.htm).
  23. “Weiwu’erzhu Nongcun Guniang Zai Tianjin” [Uyghur Farm Girls in Tianjin], Tianshannet, May 14, 2007, [http://www.tianshannet.com.cn/news/content/2007-05/14/content\\_1859911.htm](http://www.tianshannet.com.cn/news/content/2007-05/14/content_1859911.htm). In this article, a Uyghur journalist visits three model factories in Tianjin, two textile factories (Shanlan Clothing and Tianxiang Textile), and a plastic film company (Lanqi). The journalist praises the living conditions as better than those she encountered when she went to university, and repeatedly emphasizes that the factory managers treat the migrant Uyghur laborers as their own children.
  24. See “Uyghur Girls Forced Into Labor Far From Home By Local Chinese Officials,” Radio Free Asia, July 11, 2007, [http://www.rfa.org/english/uyghur/2007/07/11/uyghur\\_labor](http://www.rfa.org/english/uyghur/2007/07/11/uyghur_labor). Abuses reportedly took place in Kachung no. 8 Village, Yarkand County, Kashgar Prefecture.
  25. “Youhui Zhengce Rang Mingong Tashi” [Preferential Policies Allow Practical Training for Migrant Workers], China Xinjiang Web, June 20, 2007, [http://www.chinaxinjiang.cn/news/tpxw/t20070620\\_255795.htm](http://www.chinaxinjiang.cn/news/tpxw/t20070620_255795.htm).
  26. Phoenix Weekly (Hong Kong) reported that 3,660 children, originally abducted and sold (for 1000 to 5000 yuan) into pickpocket gangs were brought back to Xinjiang between 2003 and 2005, of which more than 90 percent were Uyghurs from the Kashgar area. The number of abducted children would naturally be much higher. “Minzu zhengce cheng heibang ‘baohusan’: Weizu Ertong Bei Heishehui Daliang Bangjia Dao Neidi Dang Xiaotou” [Ethnic Policies Act as a Shield: Large Scale Abductions of Uyghur Children Taken to China’s Interior to be Thieves], Fenghuang Zhoukan [Phoenix Weekly], July 26, 2007.
  27. Nicolas Becquelin underscores that, for example, in Yili Kazakh Autonomous Prefecture, 98 percent of the official designated “poor” population is non-Han. Nicolas Becquelin, “Staged Development in Xinjiang,” *China Quarterly* no. 178 (June 2004): 372.
  28. Dru Gladney, “China’s Minorities: the Case of Xinjiang and the Uyghur People,” UN Commission on Human Rights, Sub-Commission on Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, Working Group on Minorities, 9th Session, 12–16 May 2003, UN Doc. E/CN.4/Sub.2/AC.5/2003/WP.16.
  29. It is revealing to note that the official CPC website is available in simplified and traditional Chinese, Tibetan, Korean, Mongolian, English, Japanese and Russian, but not in Uyghur, the fifth-largest “minority” in the PRC (after the Zhuang, Manchu, Hui and Miao). See “News of the Communist Party of China,” September 23, 2007, <http://cpc.people.com.cn/>. The Law on Regional Ethnic Autonomy stipulates that cadres in autonomous regions are to learn the language of the region, which, judging by empirical evidence, is far from the case in the XUAR. N. Becquelin, based on an analysis of the Xinjiang Yearbook 2000, notes that all 124 first Party secretaries in the XUAR at prefecture, municipal and county levels are Han. Becquelin, *op.cit.*, p. 363. Politburo member Wang Lequan, who has held the position of provincial secretary for 12 years (16 counting his years as acting vice-secretary), is a case in point.
  30. Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, Art. 2, G.A. Res. 47/135, U.N. Doc. A/Res/47/135 (Dec. 18, 1992), available at [http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/d\\_minori.htm](http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/d_minori.htm). As a Declaration, it is, of course, non-binding.
  31. See Information Office of the State Council, “History and Development of Xinjiang,” May 2003, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/zhengfu/2003-06/12/content\\_916306.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/zhengfu/2003-06/12/content_916306.htm). For a critique of the implementation of the Law on Regional Ethnic Autonomy, see Human Rights in China, China: Minority Exclusion, Marginalization and Rising Tensions, *op. cit.*
  32. “Wen Jiabao Made Important Speech in XJ,” Xinhua News Agency, August 23, 2007, [http://www.xinjiang.gov.cn/1\\$002/1\\$002\\$013/352.jsp?articleid=2007-8-23-0008](http://www.xinjiang.gov.cn/1$002/1$002$013/352.jsp?articleid=2007-8-23-0008).
  33. Tianshannet gives the 2003 population figure of the XPCC as 2,542,000 (13 percent of the population of the XUAR), of which 88 percent are Han Chinese. It is comprised of 14 divisions, directly administers five municipalities, runs two universities, a TV channel, a daily newspaper and has 11 publicly traded subsidiaries. The website candidly

- describes it as follows: “In its 50-year history, the XPCC has built farms, towns, and cities, and settled millions of migrants, mainly Han Chinese, into Xinjiang. As such, the XPCC is lauded in China as a cornerstone of stability and prosperity in an otherwise troubled region, and characterized as a vehicle of colonization and sinicization among supporters of East Turkistan independence.” “China Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region,” Xianshannet, September 25, 2007, <http://www.aboutxinjiang.com/index.htm>. The XPCC also plays a notable role in administration of labor camps in Xinjiang. See Richard Anderson, James Seymour & Fan Sidong, *New Ghosts, Old Ghosts: Prisons and Labor Reform Camps in China* (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 1998), 44–127.
34. Border areas (including Tibet) also remain a preferred location for nuclear facilities, as they were in the Soviet Union. A series of unverifiable and unlikely rumors circulated in Kashgar in 2007 about suspect dust clouds coming from the Taklamakan desert. In this respect, the recognition in Article 30 of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples that “Military activities shall not take place in the lands or territories of indigenous peoples, unless justified by a relevant public interest or otherwise freely agreed with or requested by the indigenous peoples concerned” is worth highlighting as a milestone. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, *op. cit.*, art. 30.
  35. Information Office of the State Council, “China’s National Defense 2006,” December 29, 2006 [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2006-12/29/content\\_5425025.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2006-12/29/content_5425025.htm).
  36. “SCO Summit: Crackdown Highlights Failings on Human Rights,” Human Rights Watch, August 16, 2007, <http://hrw.org/english/docs/2007/08/16/kyrgyz16698.htm>.
  37. *Ibid.*
  38. “Yanli daji ‘Yisilan jiefang dang’ quanli weihu shehui zhi’an”; “Chaliang yanjing, renqing ‘Yisilan jiefang dang’ de fandong benzhi”; “‘Yisilan jiefang dang’ shi yige baoli kongbu zuzhi.” Slogans observed in Southern Xinjiang, August 2007.
  39. “Shanghai Hezuozhuzi Chenyuanguo Zifa Anquan Bumen Fangfan Daji ‘Yisilan Jiefang Dang’ Yantaohui zai Jiang Zhaokai” [Shanghai Cooperation Organization Members Security Division To Combat Islamic Liberation Front], Tianshannet, September 17, 2007, [http://www.tianshannet.com.cn/gov/content/2007-06/28/content\\_2026385.htm](http://www.tianshannet.com.cn/gov/content/2007-06/28/content_2026385.htm).
  40. Xiang Letian, “Xinjiang tongdu liangjian jingwai cantou anzhan,” *Yazhou Zhoukan* [Asia Weekly], January 28, 2007; Yu Jian, “Jizhe Tanfang Xinjiang Fankong Xianchang: Zhishengji Sousuo Dongtu Fenzi” [Reporter visits site of anti-terrorist operation in Xinjiang], *Nanfang dushibao* [Southern Metropolis News], January 17, 2007, <http://news.sina.com.cn/c/2007-01-17/091412059808.shtml>. It is unclear whether the second reporter visited the site.
  41. See also Andrew McGregor, “Chinese Counter-terrorist Strike in Xinjiang,” Central Asia-Caucasus Institute, March 7, 2007, [http://www.cacianalyst.org/view\\_article.php?articleid=4735](http://www.cacianalyst.org/view_article.php?articleid=4735).
  42. Rémi Castets, “Opposition politique, nationalisme et Islam chez les Ouighours du Xinjiang,” CERI Working Papers No. 110, October 2004.
  43. “Hu Jintao zai Zhongyang minzu gongzuo huiyi shang de jianghua” [Hu Jintao’s Speech at the Central Nationalities Working Committee], May 27, 2005, <http://politics.people.com.cn/GB/1024/3423605.html>.
  44. *Ibid.*
  45. The United Front Office is one of the five organs directly under the Central Committee of the CPC. It is active in all areas in which the Party is confronted with forces which are not directly subordinated to its administrative authority, particularly Hong Kong, Taiwan and “ethnic minority work.”

### Editor’s Note

China’s official news agency reported in November 2007 that the Kashgar Intermediate People’s Court sentenced four Uyghurs to death, and another two to life imprisonment, in relation to the January 2007 incident mentioned by the author. Two of the men received death sentences with two years’ reprieve. They were charged with “separatist activities,” “training at a terrorist camp,” and “illegally making explosives.”



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# REGULAR FEATURES



Photo credits: Guang Niu/Getty Images.

This “Take Action” feature highlights the roundup of petitioners and human rights defenders in the lead-up to the 17th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (*Zhongguo Gongchandang di Shiqici Quanguo Daibiao Dahui*; referred to also as the “17th Party Congress”). Before significant events such as national congresses, sensitive anniversaries, or high-level visits from foreign dignitaries, roundups and harassment of rights defenders and petitioners take place. These are efforts to prevent any protests or incidents that may disrupt the official proceedings. These incidents are important, because the way that social control is exerted before and during the 17th Party Congress is an indication of the tactics to which dissidents and activists may be subjected before Beijing’s Summer Olympics next year.

### THE ROUNDUP

The increased harassment of petitioners and rights defenders before and during the 17th National Congress of the Communist Party of China violates their legally protected right to petition and right to freedom of expression, and undermines China’s promises of greater openness in advance of the Olympics next year. The three cases below are those on which HRIC has been active during recent months.



**LÜ GENGSONG**

**Anticipated release: ?**



Freelancer **Lü Gengsong**, 51, is a long-time advocate for democratic political reform in China. He has published several books on the subject, and published widely on the Internet regarding human rights violations. On August 24, 2007, Lü was detained in Hangzhou City, Zhejiang Province, after posting articles online that criticized local government officials for colluding with real estate developers in illegal land seizures. His wife was also detained for questioning. While his wife was released after three hours, Lü was formally charged on September 29 with “incitement to subvert state power,” and is currently being held at the Xihu Detention Center in Huangzhou. He was also initially charged with “possession of state secrets,” but the charge was dropped. On September 30, his wife Wang Xue’e was notified of Lü’s formal arrest. Lü is an active member of the banned China Democracy Party (CDP), and was a teacher at the Zhejiang Higher Professional School of Public Security before being expelled in 1993 as a result of his democracy activism. Lü’s detention has prompted expressions of great concern in China and overseas, including a petition signed by 1,163 Chinese rights defenders, writers, scholars and lawyers calling for Lü’s release.

*(continued on page 112)*



## CHINESE GOVERNMENT 101: THE 17TH PARTY CONGRESS

### Who

Approximately 2,200 delegates from across the country, comprising all levels of the CPC

### When

October 15–21, 2007

### Where

Great Hall of the People, Beijing, China

### Why It's Important

According to the Constitution of the Communist Party of China, congresses are convened every five years, and are some of the country's most significant political events.

At Party congresses, the Party line is established for all major policy sectors, and the political blueprint for priorities and tasks is designed. Decisions announced at the congress, however, are usually determined ahead of the event, so there is no public debate over matters on the table.

Additionally, one of the congress's main tasks is to elect a new Central Committee, which will lead the Party until the next Party congress. The Central Committee then appoints a new party leadership, which includes the following:

- Politburo and its Standing Committee
- Central Military Commission
- Secretariat (the oversight body for implementation of Politburo decisions throughout the political hierarchy)
- General Secretary

### What Happened

At the 17th Party Congress, Shanghai Party chief Xi Jinping, 54, and Liaoning Party chief Li Keqiang, 52, were promoted into the Politburo Standing Committee, while several existing Politburo members, including Luo Gan, Wu Guanzheng, and Zeng Qinghong, retired. President Hu Jintao solidified his power.

Policy-wise, Hu Jintao's announcement of a "Scientific Development Concept" [*Kexue Fazhan Guan*], a framework for a national development strategy to decrease the growing gap between rural and urban areas, was formally endorsed as Party policy. The Scientific Development Concept includes egalitarian elements such as "putting people first," social welfare, sustainable development, and a harmonious society. Additionally, strong support was shown for improving and building internal democracy within the Party.

## THE ROUNDUP



**HUA HUIQI**  
**SHUANG SHUYING**  
Anticipated release: 2009



Activist **Hua Huiqi** has been detained repeatedly in recent years for leading an underground house church, as well as for his rights defense efforts on housing and other issues. His mother, **Shuang Shuying**, is also a committed member of the underground church. On October 8, 2007, the police forcibly removed Hua, his father, and his wife from their residence in Chongwen District and sent them to Fengtai District. Police specifically informed Hua that this action was due to the upcoming 17th Party Congress, and that Hua and his family would have to stay in Fengtai for a month. However, Fengtai police brought Hua back to Chongwen on October 11. When they arrived at Hua's Chongwen house, a fight broke out between them and the Chongwen police, as well as private guards from a demolition company working in the neighborhood. Hua was knocked unconscious during the fight.



Earlier this year, Hua and Shuang attempted to petition the National People's Congress over the forcible clearance of their home, but were detained by police officers of the Public Security Bureau's Asian Games Village division and severely beaten. Hua was then arrested on February 8 for interfering in official business, and was jailed until July 25 on charges of "obstructing official business." Meanwhile, Shuang was arrested while protesting Hua's detention, and on February 26, 2007, was sentenced to two years in prison for "intentional damage of public and private property." Shuang is currently held in Beijing Women's Prison.



**LI HEPING**



**Li Heping** is a Beijing-based human rights lawyer. On September 29, 2007, he was abducted by a group of unidentified masked men and tortured with electric rods. He was held in a basement outside Beijing until early September 30, when he was dumped in the woods outside the city. As he was beaten, Li was warned that he should leave Beijing with his family. Upon returning home, Li discovered that his law license and other personal belongings were missing. His computer had also been completely erased. Li has a master of laws from Renmin University of China Law School, and is now partner at a Beijing law firm. Li has served as defense counsel for several human rights defenders and activists, including imprisoned journalist Yang Zili, environmental activist Tan Kai, house church leaders, Falun Gong practitioners, and victims of forced eviction. In 2005, Li also appealed to the Beijing Bureau of Judicial Affairs on behalf of imprisoned lawyer Gao Zhisheng.

# CRF TAKE ACTION

## WHAT YOU CAN DO!

### Write to the Chinese government!

Join the international community in calling for the immediate and unconditional release of these and other human rights defenders. You can send copies of letters expressing concern for prisoners to the following officials and organizations:

→ **Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of China to the United Nations Office at Geneva and other International Organizations in Switzerland**

11, Chemin de Surville  
1213 Petit-Lancy  
Geneva, Switzerland  
Email: mission.china@ties.itu.int

→ **Minister of Justice, Wu Aiying**

Ministry of Justice  
10 Nandajie Chaoyangmen  
Chaoyangqu  
Beijingshi 100020, PRC  
Fax: 011 86 10 65 292345  
Email: minister@legalinfo.gov.cn

→ **President Hu Jintao**

The State Council General Office  
2 Fuyoujie  
Xichengqu  
Beijingshi 100017, PRC

→ **Minister of Foreign Affairs, Li Zhaoxing**

Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
2 Chaoyangmen Nandajie  
Chaoyang District  
Beijingshi 100701, PRC

And for those subjected to ill-treatment:

→ **Chinese Medical Association**

42 Dongsi Xidajie  
Beijing 100710, PRC  
Fax: 86-10-6512-3754  
E-mail: cmafrd@public3.bta.net.cn

→ **International Committee of the Red Cross**

19 avenue de la Paix  
CH 1202 Geneva  
Fax: 41 (22) 733 20 57

### Do you write, publish or blog?

- Highlight these human rights defenders in your writing. Make sure that the stories of these individuals are not lost!
- Link HRIC's banner supporting Chinese voices to your blog or Web site.

### Are you a member of a business or professional association?

- Is there a corporate social responsibility or human rights committee in your association? Find out what they are doing about China!
- Contact HRIC to explore taking action on a case or issue.

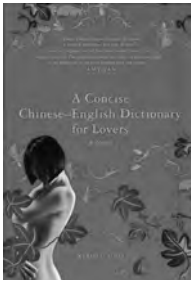
**VISIT OUR WEB SITE FOR MORE DETAILS ON HOW TO "TAKE ACTION" AND FOR OTHER IDEAS ON HOW YOU CAN HELP!**

# RESOURCE LIST | HOLIDAY READING

HRIC’s staff and friends have compiled a selection of books published in 2007, in either Chinese or English, for your holiday reading adventures.

## ***A Concise Chinese-English Dictionary for Lovers: A Novel***

**Guo Xiaolu (September 2007)**



This book follows the development of a young, naïve, and affectionate Chinese woman through the course of her love affair with an older and somewhat flawed English man, while simultaneously charting her growing ability to understand and use the English language. *A Concise Chinese-English Dictionary for Lovers* includes flashes of humor while at the same time remaining a poignant account of growing up in a strange land. This is a book for anyone who has endeavored to understand a foreign landscape, lover or language.

## ***Selection of Literary Writings from Chinese Writers in Prison*** [                    ]

**Huang Heqing and Wang Yiliang, eds. (January 2007)**

A compilation of works from 53 writers who have been imprisoned in China, this book showcases the free spirit, sacrifice, and courage of the authors, including Cheng Xiang, Wang Bingzhang, Zhao Yan, Shi Tao, Yang Tianshui, Liu Shui and Yu Dongyue. The book features poetry, novel excerpts, prose, and political commentary, and includes many pieces written while the authors were in prison. China tops the list of countries in the world with the greatest number of writers in prison. Against such a backdrop, this selection represents the Chinese spirit of resistance.

## ***Homeless Dog: What I Learned from the Analects***

[                    :                    ]

**Li Ling (May 2007)**



Based upon Kongzi’s original work *The Analects*, *Homeless Dog* reexamines and appraises the life of Kongzi (Confucius). Li demonstrates that in contrast to the image of a “sage” propagated by the emperors of past dynasties and taken for granted by the public, Kongzi came from a

lower-class family background, yet was idealistic and daring enough to criticize the current political situation. While attempting to lobby local governments to adopt his philosophy, he drifted around, destitute and homeless. Following the recent revival of Confucianism on the mainland, memorial ceremonies in honor of Kongzi can be seen everywhere, with some even proposing the institution of Confucianism as the national religion. In the current environment, this provocative book has caused a huge stir but has been favorably received.

## ***The China Fantasy***

**James Mann (February 2007)**



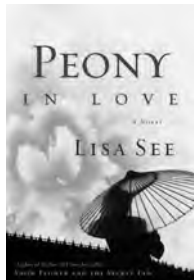
In *The China Fantasy*, Mann (a former Beijing correspondent for the *Los Angeles Times*), examines recurring China scenarios advanced by policy elites—the Soothing Scenario (capitalism will bring about rule of law and democracy) and the Upheaval Scenario (growing contra-

dictions will lead to collapse, chaos). He then posits a third scenario (a strong enduring authoritarian regime). However, Mann is not asserting conclusions about China, but a cogent critique of the hidden assumptions, rhetoric, ideological and other investments that (mis)shape U.S. understanding of China and assessments of its engagement policies. He has apparently hit some raw nerves, judging by ongoing debates it is generating among China policymakers and scholars.

**Poems and Tanks [ ]**  
**Meng Lang and Yu Jie, eds. (January 2007)**

This is an anthology of literary writings from the Independent Chinese PEN Center, a writers' association affiliated with the International PEN Center. *Poems and Tanks* contains works from over 100 writers, including poetry, novels, prose and commentaries. While China still lacks press freedom, this publication provides what Chinese literature is currently lacking: "grounding in truth to tell the full story" and "a reflection not only of our current time but the larger view of humanity and morality."

**Peony in Love**  
**Lisa See (June 2007)**



Set in 17th century China, See's newest novel is a coming-of-age love story, a tale steeped in traditions and ritual, a family saga, and a historical narrative of the many Chinese women who sought literacy and freedom during a time of restriction. Fifteen-year-old Peony is the well-educated and cloistered daughter of a wealthy family and is betrothed to a man she has never met. Yet, when Peony attends a performance of the romantic opera, *The Peony Pavilion*, she falls in love with a man in the audience, thus beginning a haunting and vivid tale filled with longing, true love, and poetry.

**Cultural Revolution: Historical Truth and Collective Memory [ ]**  
**Song Yongyi, ed. (March 2007)**



This collection—divided into two volumes and comprised of over a million characters—is a monumental work, both in scope and quality, which features commemorative essays on the Cultural Revolution. Editor Song Yongyi, a renowned Cultural Revolution historian, returned to China from the U.S. in 1999 to conduct research, but was arrested by the Chinese authorities

and charged with espionage. He was later released in 2000. Professor Lin Peirui from Princeton University commented, "This book collects articles reviewing Mao Zedong's Cultural Revolution written by Chinese people who have a sense of responsibility to history, national interest, and ethics. Although the Cultural Revolution occurred 40 years ago, these excellent articles can be seen as a starting point and an extremely valuable beginning to its study."

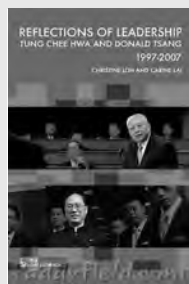
**BOOKS PUBLISHED BY HRIC STAFF AND BOARD MEMBERS IN 2007**

**Zhou Enlai, The Last Perfect Revolutionary. Gao Wenqian. Translated by Peter Rand and Lawrence R. Sullivan. (New York: PublicAffairs, 2007).**



This biography is an expanded English version of the banned Chinese best seller, *Wannian Zhou Enlai* [*Zhou Enlai's Later Years*], published by Mirror Books in Hong Kong in 2003. The author is the former official biographer of Zhou Enlai and spent a decade researching his subject in the Chinese Communist Party's secret archives. The result is an inside picture of the Cultural Revolution and a humanized portrait of one of China's most respected leaders.

**Reflections of Leadership: Tung Chee Hwa and Donald Tsang 1997–2007. Christine Loh and Carine Lai. (Hong Kong: Civic Exchange, 2007).**



For a full book review by Jonathan Mirsky, see page 128. The authors compare the political personalities of the two Beijing-backed leaders of Hong Kong and analyze their contributions to the political system of China's wealthiest city.

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***A Thousand Miles of Prison Walls: An Interdisciplinary Analysis of the Contemporary Chinese Labour Camp***

[ ]  
**P. Williams, Wu Yanna (February 2007)**

This book presents a careful theoretical analysis of the history, culture, and social roots of the Reeducation-Through-Labor (RTL) system in China. *A Thousand Miles of Prison Walls* describes the conditions of RTL during Mao Zedong's rule. In analyzing the historical data of memoirs, personal notes, and biographical work, the authors argue that China's labor camps during Mao Zedong's era were worse than the Gulags of the Soviet Union. Supplementing this theory with a large number of illustrations, this book offers a key to the secret world of the RTL system.

***The Inside Story about the Tiananmen Square Massacre***

[ ]  
**Wu Renhua (May 2007)**

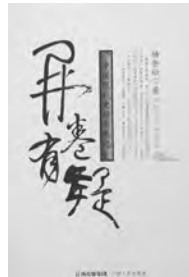


This is the first work to date that comprehensively chronicles the entire sequence of events on June 4. The author, a philological scholar, was in Tiananmen Square that night, and witnessed the disturbing scene of tanks rolling over and crushing students. Eighteen years in the making,

this book contains a substantial amount of supporting material and solid analysis. It unveils many inside stories and details that were not previously made public, such as the numbered designation of military units, the commanders' names, and the routes used by the troops to enter the city. It reveals that in the area of Liubukou, a tank rolled back and forth in a bike path, killing 11 students and injuring another 13, all of whom were retreating. Also disclosed are the victims' names and their schools.

***Reading by Critical Thinking: Reading Notes on Modern Chinese History***

[ ]  
**Yang Kuisong (April 2007)**



This book is comprised of literary reviews of volumes on modern Chinese history, including over ten works on modern politics, military history, and diplomacy. Not only does Yang's work provide a pertinent assessment of these books in terms of academic achievement and features, it also questions and identifies each volume's biases, pitfalls, and limitations.

***Flows along Yangtze River under Waning Moon***

[ ]  
**Zhang Yihe (May 2007)**



This is the other great work of Zhang Yihe, the author of *Wangshi Bingburu Yan* [Memories Are Still Vivid]. *Flows along Yangtze River* includes two biographies: the first records the story of Zhang Bojun, who was the author's father, the leader of the Chinese Democratic League, and one of the few "Rightists" who was never rehabilitated. The second is the story of Luo Longji, another famous leader of the Chinese Democratic League, who also never underwent rehabilitation. Zhang's book includes several important historical documents and original pictures.

***Zhao Ziyang: Captive Conversations***

[ ]  
**Zong Fengming (January 2007)**



Zong Fengming, a CPC senior cadre and former consultant for the State Commission on Economic Restructuring, used his role as a "qigong master" to gain access to Zhao Ziyang, who was placed under house arrest after the June 4 crackdown. From 1991 to 2004, Zong Fengming

audio-recorded numerous private conversations with Zhao and then edited them into this volume, which is now an important historical record. Zhao discusses the divergence of the CPC's leadership and policymaking, and includes his assessment of Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping, as well as criticisms of Jiang Zemin and Hu

Jintao. These conversations also include Zhao's review and analysis of the history of communism, Sino-American relations, the Soviet Union, and the issue of Taiwan, creating a comprehensive record of Zhao Ziyang's thinking in his later years.

#### **ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS**

***Oracle Lake*, Paul Adam (July 2007)**

***The Fourth Sacrifice*, Peter May (February 2007)**

***The Walking Boy*, Lydia Kwa (April 2007)**

***The Russian Concubine*, Kate Furnivall (June 2007)**

***The Thorn of Lion City: A Memoir*, Lucy Lum (New ed. May 2007)**

***Beijing Confidential: A Tale of Comrades Lost and Found*, Jan Wong (October 2007)**

***Confessions: An Innocent Life in Communist China*, Kang Zhengguo (June 2007)**

***Sweet Mandarin*, Helen Tse (February 2007)**

***Inside the Red Mansion*, Oliver August (July 2007)**

***Daughter of Heaven: The True Story of the Only Woman to Become Emperor of China*, Nigel Cawthorne (September 2007)**

***Charm Offensive*, Joshua Kurlantzick (May 2007)**

***Baptism: An English Translation of Xizao*, Yang Jiang (April 2007)**

***Brothers*, Da Chen (June 2007)**

***February Flowers*, Fan Wu (August 2007)**

***Shanghai Tango*, Jin Xing (September 2007)**

# CHINESE PUBLICATION HIGHLIGHTS

## FROM THE PAGES OF *HUAXIA DIANZI BAO* AND *REN YU REN QUAN*

*Huaxia Dianzi Bao* and *Ren Yu Ren Quan* are HRIC's ongoing online Chinese-language publications. *Huaxia Dianzi Bao* is a weekly online newsletter sent to a quarter of a million subscribers in mainland China, providing uncensored and underreported news on rights defenders, forced relocations, the environment, and other pressing issues. *Ren Yu Ren Quan* is a monthly online journal, publishing analysis, research and commentary by independent scholars, writers, and activists.

As part of its editorial commitment to introduce English readers to diverse independent Chinese voices, *China Rights Forum* translates and publishes works by Chinese contributors. This new regular feature will include a translated table of contents and select article highlights to provide readers a reference tool to access HRIC's Chinese publications. Additional translations can be found online at HRIC's website, <http://www.hrichina.org>.

Translated by Victoria Kwan

## HUAXIA DIANZI BAO

<http://www.huaxiabao.org>

Each issue of *Huaxia Dianzi Bao* includes several short articles and a series of news briefs. New installments, published each Thursday, and archived issues are available on *Huaxia Dianzi Bao*'s website.

### From Issue No. 217, published on November 8, 2007

#### ARTICLES

- **He Qinglian**, As Economic and Political Capital are Exhausted, the Decay of Chinese Government is Exposed [ " " ]
- **Zhang He**, Police Frustrate Dissidents' Efforts to Participate in Beijing Memorial Service for Bao Zunxin [ " " ]
- **Ji Fuwen**, Daddy, Please Return to Your Daughter [ " " ]
- **Yuan Weijing**'s Letter of Appeal to the All-China Women's Federation [ " " ]
- **Hu Kunming**, Various Interpretations of Reports from the 17th Party Congress [ " " ]
- **Ceng Hudou**, The Story of the "South China Tiger News" Sham [ " " ]

#### NEWS IN BRIEF

- Authorities Continue to Arrest Petitioners After 17th Party Congress [ " " ]
- Authorities Shut Down Events Commemorating Bao Zunxin [ " " ]

- Yahoo! Apologizes to Shi Tao's Mother and Wang Xiaoning's Wife [ " " ]
- Yang Chunlin Case Returned to Public Security Bureau After Evidence Deemed Insufficient [ " " ]
- Tai Lake Defender Wu Lihong's Appeal Rejected [ " " ]
- Xi'an People's Congress Candidate Zhang Zong'ai Severely Beaten and Injured [ " " ]
- Conflicts Erupt Again in Shanwei, Guangdong [ " " ]
- Two Thousand Teachers Not on Government Payroll Petition in Yichuan, Henan [ " " ]
- Gao Yaojie and Zhang Yihe Honored by the China Democracy Education Foundation for Outstanding Contributions to Democracy [ " " ]
- Human Rights Watch Urges International Olympic Committee to Pressure China into Upholding Commitments [ " " ]



# REN YU REN QUAN

<http://www.renyurenquan.org>

New issues are available on *Ren Yu Ren Quan's* website on the first of every month. Archived issues are also available on the website.

## From the November 2007 issue on “The 17th Party Congress and the Political Situation in China”

### RIGHTS DEFENSE (WEIQUAN) ACTIVISM: THE DRIVING FORCE BEHIND CHINESE POLITICAL REFORM [ — ]

By Zhao Dagong

At the close of the 17th Party Congress, RYRQ invited renowned writer Zhao Dagong to express his views on the current and future state of political affairs in China. Zhao contends that since the Chinese Communist Party has no intention of pushing political reform, the impetus behind any kind of democratic development in China must come from the people. China's masses are showing increasing awareness of their civic obligations, and their rights defense (*weiquan*) activities pose a threat to the Communist Party's autocratic rule.

### THE 17TH PARTY CONGRESS AND THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN CHINA [ — ]

By Yang Guang

Yang provides commentary on the recent happenings of the 17th Party Congress, arguing that the Party Congress proved the Communist Party to be outdated, both in its beliefs and in its abilities to govern. As such, the government is ill-equipped to handle the complexities of contemporary society.

### WHY THE FREE WORLD URGES CHINA TO INTERVENE IN BURMA [ — ]

By Liu Xiaobo

Liu analyzes the Burmese political situation and the relationship between the despotic governments of

China and Burma. Due to economic growth, China has become the world's largest dictatorship and an ally for many smaller dictatorships around the world. Hence, the promotion of political reform in China has profound effects on the promotion of democratization globally.

### MEMORIES AND THOUGHTS ON CONFRONTING VIOLENCE [ — ]

By Teng Biao

Renowned Chinese human rights lawyer Teng Biao recently visited the offices of Human Rights in China. In this essay, Teng vehemently condemns the kidnapping and beating of lawyer Li Heping, pointing out the barbaric methods by which the authorities threaten and curtail right defense activities. He maintains that human rights lawyers in China will not be silenced, but will continue to push for the rule of law.

#### Also featured in this issue:

- **Mou Chuanheng** criticizes the corruption of the Chinese media, claiming that it has become an institution that creates rather than exposes lies;
- **Li Yuanlong**, a journalist who was recently released after three years' imprisonment for “inciting subversion,” examines the case of detained writer Lu Gengsong;
- Dissident **Ceng Jinyan** explains the various ways in which the authorities have persecuted and pressured dissidents, both before and after the Party Congress.

#### TO RECEIVE ENGLISH-LANGUAGE HIGHLIGHTS AND ORIGINAL CHINESE-LANGUAGE ISSUES VIA E-MAIL:

English-language highlights of *Ren Yu Ren Quan* and *Huaxia Dianzi Bao*:

→ E-mail [communications@hrichina.org](mailto:communications@hrichina.org) with “HXB/RYRQ – SUBSCRIBE” in the subject heading.

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Notification of new Chinese-language issues of *Ren Yu Ren Quan*:

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## CULTURAL REVIEWS

### Bian Zhongyun: A Revolution's First Blood

By Wang Youqin

*The senseless death of a school teacher set the tone for Mao Zedong's 10-year reign of terror, the Cultural Revolution.*

Bian Zhongyun was born in 1916 in Wuwei, Anhe Province. Her father worked his way up from a struggling apprentice in a private bank to the wealthy and socially prominent owner of his own private bank. After Bian Zhongyun graduated from high school in 1937, her plans to enter college were interrupted by China's war with Japan, and she participated in the resistance effort in Changsha. She was finally able to attend college in 1941, and became a member of the Communist Party of China (CPC) in the same year. She graduated in 1945 and then joined her husband, Wang Jingyao (who had studied with her in college), in the Party-controlled area of China. In 1949, Bian began work at the Beijing Normal University Attached Girls' Middle School (hereinafter Attached Girls' School), first as a teacher, then gradually rising through the ranks to become vice principal. By the time of her death at the age of 50, Bian had been working at the Attached Girls' School for 17 years. She was the mother of four children. Her husband was a historian in the faculty of philosophy and sociology at the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

The Attached Girls' School was established in 1917, one of the oldest secondary schools in Beijing. When the CPC came to power in 1949, all of the school's administrators were replaced with Party members. The school was located in Beijing's Xicheng District, only a kilometer away from Tiananmen Square and Zhongnanhai, where Mao Zedong and the rest of China's top leaders

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**This article is an edited excerpt from a book chapter: Wang Youqin, *Wenge Shounanzhe* [Victims of the Cultural Revolution: An Investigative Account of Persecution, Imprisonment and Murder] (Hong Kong: Open Magazine Publishing, 2004).**

lived. Given its proximity to the central government and State Council, as well as its long-standing reputation for excellence, the Attached Girls' School was inevitably attended by many daughters of China's top leaders.

At that time, entry to all secondary schools required passing city-wide examinations for both middle and high school. Prior to the Cultural Revolution, however, examination results were not the sole criteria for entry. In the autumn of 1965, shortly before the Cultural Revolution began, half of the students at the Attached Girls' School were the daughters or relatives of senior government officials. This element became an important factor leading to Bian Zhongyun's death.

The sequence of events resulting in Bian Zhongyun's death began on June 1, 1966. On that evening, the China Central People's Broadcasting Network broadcasted the contents of what Mao Zedong referred to as "China's first Marxist-Leninist big-character poster," which had been plastered to a wall at Peking University. Apart from attacking the administrators of Peking University, the poster also called for the "determined and thorough eradication of all cow ghosts and snake spirits" (the labels applied to those considered enemies of the state). At noon the next day, three students from the Attached Girls' School, led by upperclassman Song Binbin, put up that school's first big-character poster, which called for students to "pledge your lives to the Party central, pledge your lives to Chairman Mao," and attacked the school administration.

In fact, this student protest was not responding merely to the Peking University poster. On May 16, the Party's central leadership had issued a comprehensive, 10,000-word notice that launched the Cultural Revolution and explicitly called for a "thorough criticism of academia, educators, journalists, artists, publishers and other representatives of the capitalist class, and seizing the leaders of the cultural sector." One day earlier, the Party had published a letter that Mao had written to his lieutenant, Lin Biao, on May 7, in which Mao stated that "the phenomenon of capitalist intellectuals controlling our schools cannot be allowed to continue."

Under Bian Zhongyun's administration, the Attached Girls' School gave special attention to the daughters of senior officials. Many, but not all, class monitors and leaders of the student council were daughters of top leaders. However, girls from ordinary backgrounds were also included among the student leaders, and class monitors, who enjoyed potentially considerable influence, were elected by the students themselves. Thus, even though not all students enjoyed equal status, the school administrators clearly did not believe that the daughters of top leaders should monopolize leadership positions within the student body. This policy embodied one of the traditional principles educators brought with them; during imperial times, the exam system was largely independent of the power structure. The first month of the Cultural Revolution's full-scale launch provided the first opportunity for the children of top leaders to make a grab for power within the schools. What started out as an attack on school leadership was eventually depicted as a romanticized revolt. But any objective examination of the facts reveals that this was no rebellion against the power structure, but rather an extension of totalitarian power.

After students posted the first big-character poster at the Attached Girls' School, the Communist Youth League sent a "working group" to the school on June 3, 1966. The working group immediately voiced enthusiastic support for the efforts of Song Binbin and other revolutionary students to "expose and criticize" the errors of the school administrators.

The working group pushed aside the school's administrators and took over school supervision. It also established a Revolutionary Teachers and Students Committee, with the leader of the working group as its head and Song Binbin as vice chairman. Each class had a representative on the committee, and all but one of those representatives were daughters of the most senior officials, including Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping. These committees and their particular composition were replicated throughout Beijing's other secondary schools.

The big-character posters at the Attached Girls' School accused Bian Zhongyun of a number of "crimes." First among them was participation in a "counterrevolutionary coup d'état" by the previous Beijing Party Commit-

## CULTURAL REVOLUTION: CHRONOLOGY

**May 16, 1966:** Chinese Communist Party led by Mao Zedong issues the "May 16 notice" proclaiming the start of a "Great Proletariat Cultural Revolution."

**May 29, 1966:** First group of Red Guards forms at Tsinghua University Middle School.

**August 18, 1966:** First Red Guard rally in Tiananmen Square. Mao stands at peak of Tiananmen Square Gate as millions of Red Guards gather and cheer.

**January 1967:** Rebel organizations snatch power from local government officials in Shanghai, with the encouragement of Mao. This scenario repeats itself across the nation.

**December 1968:** Mao begins the "Down to the Countryside" Reeducation Movement. Hundreds of thousands of youths, intellectuals and cadres are forced from cities into rural areas.

**April 1, 1969:** The 9th Party Congress begins, where Minister of Defense Lin Biao is designated as Mao's successor.

**September 13, 1971:** Lin Biao dies in a plane crash en route to the Soviet Union. Afterwards he is denounced by the government as a counterrevolutionary.

**1974:** Mao initiates the "Criticize Lin (Biao), Criticize Confucius" political campaign.

**April 5, 1976:** Thousands congregate in Tiananmen Square to pay last respects to the late Zhou Enlai and to protest government policies and the Gang of Four (consisting of Mao's wife Jiang Qing and Shanghai Party leaders Zhang Chunqiao, Yao Wenyuan, and Wang Hongwen). The government orders the military to disperse the protestors.

**September 9, 1976:** Mao Zedong dies. Hua Guofeng becomes Party Chairman.

**October 6, 1976:** All members of the Gang of Four arrested as the Cultural Revolution draws to a close.

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**Compiled by HRIC**

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tee.” Even allowing that any such plot existed, a secondary school student could not possibly have known about it. However, no one voiced any doubts about the accusation, nor was Bian allowed a chance to deny it. Another of Bian’s alleged crimes was “opposing the Party’s class road.” The main supporting evidence cited was President Liu Shaoqi’s daughter’s denied admission to the Attached Girls’ School in 1962 because her exam score fell short by two points. In fact, the city’s key schools used admission criteria at the time, but gave preference to the children of top leaders. Even with this advantage, Liu Shaoqi’s daughter had fallen short of the mark. The school made a point to consult Beijing’s Party Committee and the Education Ministry, and on the basis of their advice had not admitted Liu’s daughter.

Bian was also accused of “opposing Chairman Mao.” The students cited as supporting evidence an incident in March 1966, just after an earthquake had hit a suburb of Beijing. As a precaution, administrators of the Attached Girls’ School told students that if an earthquake should hit the school, they should quickly leave the classrooms. A student asked if anyone should take the trouble to remove the portraits of Chairman Mao that hung above the blackboards in each classroom. Bian Zhongyun did not answer directly, but told the students to move as quickly as possible out of the classrooms and into open areas outside of the school.

One big-character poster was posted on the door of Bian’s home in June 1966:

You Rightist who slipped through the net, you black element conspiring with the former municipal Party committee, vanguard of opposition to the Party, you bastard implementing bourgeois dictatorship over revolutionary students and teachers, you damned petty despot, come clean or face the unsparing consequences!

Another poster was affixed to her bedroom door:

Despotic dog, poisonous snake Bian, you’d damn well better listen: if you dare to continue to run roughshod over the working people, we’ll whip your dog’s hide, rip out your dog’s heart, lop off your dog’s head. You’d damned well better not place any

hopes in a comeback! We’ll cut you off without descendants and smash you to smithereens!

On June 23, 1966, the school’s student working group held a “struggle session” against Bian Zhongyun, which all students and teachers were required to attend. At the beginning of the session, several students dragged Bian onto the stage of the assembly hall, and escorted the school’s four other administrators to the front of the stage to face the assembly. The targets were forced to bend 90 degrees at the waist to show they were “bowing under their guilt.” The students responsible for exposing and criticizing the offenders mounted the stage and furiously screamed accusations at them, beating and kicking them at the same time. The exaggerated self-regard of many participants, coupled with the demands of this kind of political performance, make it difficult to imagine what the experience was like for their targets. During the struggle session, students ran onto the stage to strike at Bian with iron-clad wooden training rifles. Each time Bian fell to the floor, someone would douse her with cold water and drag her upright again by the hair to endure further criticism.

After the struggle session, Bian wrote a letter to Party officials criticizing her own “errors,” including some she had never committed, and expressing her support for the Cultural Revolution. She then requested that no violence be used against her:

During the public criticism, I was shackled and tormented for more than four hours: I had to wear a dunce cap and bow in a kneeling position while I was struck and kicked. My hands were tied behind me, and two dummy rifles used for militia training were jabbed into my back. Mud was stuffed into my mouth and smeared all over my face and body.

She never received a reply to her letter. The quotation above comes from a draft that she saved. After Bian died, her family worried that Red Guards would search their home and discover the draft, so Bian’s husband hid it in a space behind a wall until the end of the Cultural Revolution.

Meanwhile, the working group divided the school’s administrators into four types according to the severity

of their “errors,” ranging from “relatively good” to “bourgeois rightist.”

In mid-July, the Beijing student working groups sent the majority of the city’s secondary school students to a military base for training, while those students regarded

as “problematic” were sent out to labor in the countryside. Students who qualified as “leftists” remained at the schools to deal with the teachers and administrators, whom they rounded up and divided into separate groups for “debriefing” or “self-criticism.” Teachers from the Attached Girls’ School were sent to Mashen-

## SILENCING THE DEBATE, SUPPRESSING NATIONAL MEMORY: RECENT CENSORSHIP OF THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION

**Academic Research** In August 1999, Song Yongyi, an expert on the Cultural Revolution, was detained in China and charged with “the purchase and illegal provision of intelligence to foreigners.” Song, who is based in the U.S., had been in China collecting information on the Cultural Revolution. Despite the fact that the materials he gathered had been widely available in Chinese markets, Song was held for five months. He was released in January 2000 after growing international pressure on China.

**Film** Hu Jie’s 2006 Cultural Revolution documentary, *Though I Am Gone*, is currently banned in China. In March 2007, the Yunnan Multi Culture Visual Festival was suspended after the film was included. Hu himself had stated in a 2005 interview, “I feel we could and should have numerous films only about the Cultural Revolution . . . because the Chinese official authority does not want us to remember the history, we non-official people should remember on our own.”

China has also banned fictional films partially set in the years of the Cultural Revolution, notable examples being Zhang Yimou’s *To Live* (1994), and Chen Kaige’s *Farewell My Concubine* (1993).

**Textbooks** To this day, details about the Cultural Revolution are routinely left out of Chinese textbooks. In September 2006, John Pomfret of the Washington Post published an article describing the experiences of Wu Xiaoqing, whose parents were killed by Red Guards. Wu later joined the Communist Party, and in recent years was asked to write a chapter on the Cultural Revolution for a high school history textbook. Wu said that he had tried to include a critique of the Cultural Revolution in his chapter, but that this part was eventually removed.

**Commemorations** The forty-year anniversary of the Cultural Revolution in 2006 was met with silence in the state media and continued censorship efforts by the government:

- In March 2006, Culture Minister Sun Jiazheng stated in response to reporters’ questions that there would be no special events observing the anniversary, saying that China should “look to the future.”
- Top Cultural Revolution scholars in China were barred from participating in a May 2006 conference in New York commemorating the start of the revolution. The conference was organized by Song Yongyi.

Compiled by HRIC

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miao Primary School, where the working groups required each teacher to write a self-criticism before being processed individually. All over China, even in the border regions, educators were being handled in this same way.

At the end of July, Mao Zedong ordered all Cultural Revolution Working Group leaders to withdraw from the schools where they had been deployed. On July 31, the schools announced the establishment of their own Red Guard units. After the working group members left, schools fell under the control of these Red Guard units and the Revolutionary Teacher and Student Committees that the working groups had established. Most of the members of the Teacher and Student Committees were in fact students, and these students were also Red Guard leaders.

Members of the Red Guard unit at the Attached Girls' School enjoyed three major privileges: (1) they were allowed to conduct struggle sessions against students designated as "degenerates" based on their "bad family backgrounds"; (2) they could conduct struggle sessions against teachers and administrators without obtaining prior permission; (3) they were allowed to use violence in their attacks on students and teachers.

On August 4, 1966, the day before Bian Zhongyun was beaten to death, the Red Guard unit at the Attached Girls' School carried out a struggle session against students with "bad family backgrounds." During a struggle session in one of the classes, Red Guard members bound ten students with ropes and forced them to "explain" their "reactionary thoughts" and the "crimes" of their parents. At the end of the session, they were forced to repeat three times, "I am a son-of-a-bitch, I am a scoundrel, I deserve to die." Similar sessions took place in the other classes.

That afternoon, a group of Red Guards chanting, "No reactionary gangs allowed," burst into a classroom where school administrators were being held and beat them with wooden training rifles and leather belts. That night at home, Bian Zhongyun said to her husband, "To beat someone in my position to death is the same as killing a dog." She knew she was in mortal danger, but could think of no way out. She and her husband discussed whether it would be better to send another letter to the leadership pleading for help, or simply to make a run for it. But they did neither. The next morning, Bian's elderly housekeeper pleaded with her, "Don't go to school." But Bian Zhongyun, resigned to her fate, went to school at her usual time.

The reality in Beijing at that time was that there was no place to hide or seek refuge, much less any opportunity to resist. Knowing that the school had reached a crisis point, another vice principal, Hu Zhitao, rose at dawn on August 5 and went to the Beijing Municipal Party Secretariat seeking the official responsible for education and culture. Hoping to find some sympathy and support, she told the official that people at the school were in danger for their lives. But the only reply she received was, "Go back to the school." And so Hu returned to the Attached Girls' School in despair, and that same afternoon witnessed the murder of her colleague of many years, beaten to death before her very eyes, while she herself was seriously injured.

Translated by Stacy Mosher

To see Wang's virtual memorial to the victims of the Cultural Revolution, see [www.chinese-memorial.org](http://www.chinese-memorial.org).

## Refusing Amnesia: A Conversation with Gao Wenqian on *Though I am Gone*



***Though I am Gone* (2006)**  
**Director, Editor & Camera: Hu Jie**  
**Running Time: 68 minutes**  
**(Mandarin with English subtitles)**

Sharon Hom discusses Hu Jie's documentary and the legacy of the Cultural Revolution with Gao Wenqian, HRIC's Chinese Editor-in-Chief. Gao was previously an associate research fellow and editor-in-chief at the Research Center on Party Literature for the Communist Party of China. He is the author of *Zhou Enlai: The Last Perfect Revolutionary*, and received an Asian Pacific Award for the Japanese edition.

From 1966 to 1976, China underwent a decade of terror, fear, and chaos during the Cultural Revolution unleashed by Mao. *Though I am Gone*, by documentary filmmaker Hu Jie, looks at the violent death of Bian Zhongyun, a vice principal of Beijing Normal University Attached Girls' Middle School. Teacher Bian's death was the first, but was followed by millions of other victims who were beaten, tortured, or persecuted to death by zealous Red Guards. More than 40 years after the Cultural Revolution was launched, the Chinese leaders are still suppressing critical reflection and accountability, and remain intent on enforcing a collective historical amnesia.

Time, memory, and death are made painfully visible in the documentary's opening sequence. The ticking of a clock as backdrop to a visual alternating between the past and the present: between the murdered teacher, Bian Zhongyun; the camera's eye staring out at us, the viewers; and Wang Jingyao, her husband. The filmmaker's camera closes in on the old camera in Wang Jingyao's hand. The credits and title appear—*Though I am Gone*—Wang Jingyao looks out at us, shots of Teacher Bian's battered corpse, close up of Wang trying to remember, a shot of her corpse again. The interview

begins, and a voice asks, *Was it hard to take pictures of your wife's corpse?* He answers, *Of course, but I want to record history. This is evidence.*

**SH:** Watching this film from our two different perspectives and backgrounds, I was aware of what a difficult experience it must be for you, since you actually lived through the Cultural Revolution. Even for me, it was painful to be a witness—although a mediated one—to the terror, violence, and death. And it wasn't just Teacher Bian—there were millions after her. Her death was just the beginning.

**GWQ:** Yes—the hysteria, violence, and blood in the documentary are not foreign to me. I was an eyewitness to the Cultural Revolution. I was thirteen at the time. And after I watched the film, my first thought was, I can't bear to remember this.

Even after you gave the documentary to me to watch, I kept putting it off. Why? Because I lived through it. Because of my personal experience, after so many years, it is still a wound to the heart. The wounds may seem to have closed, but watching the film was like reopening them. Watching it brought me back to those years where I experienced the Cultural Revolution.

This documentary has a lot of history to it. That was the wildest and most frenetic period in modern Chinese history. You can see how bloody and violent and fearful the environment was back then.

When I was watching it, I took especial note of the expressions in people's eyes. There were two expressions that were particularly meaningful—the sincere expression of the pure and young people who really believed in what they were doing (even as they were beating and torturing others)—they were so convinced that they were right. The second expression I noticed was fear—those who recoiled at the sight of the beatings but were scared, and did not speak out.

Bian was not like the other teachers. She was the vice principal of the school, and she was a Party leader there. Why were the students in the documentary so cruel? Because they had been raised on “wolf's milk.” When I say “wolf's milk,” I am referring to the Communist Party

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culture of indoctrinating youth with hateful thoughts. In our generation, there is a very famous saying, “Living in the new China, we grow up under the red flag.” The Communists taught even the very young to hate, and continued to instill hatred in them as they grew up.

The Party divided people into different categories—if you were categorized as the enemy, no mercy would be shown to you. The Lei Feng way of thought that Mao had established has a saying that goes: You must be as ruthless to your enemies as the harshest winter. And so, as the students increasingly viewed Bian as the enemy, they became merciless towards her. They beat Bian to death in the most inhumane manner. This was a result of the long-term indoctrination of hatred that the Communist Party endorsed.

It was also a competition to see who could be the most revolutionary. Those who did not beat her were seen as not being as revolutionary as those who did. Cruelty became a sign of your loyalty to the cause of revolution.

Why did Mao Zedong do this? He just used the students as weapons to strike down his opponents. He took blank pages and painted them with hate, brainwashing naïve, young, pure students (teenagers mostly). He planted these seeds of hatred in the Red Guards. They were incited to enact violence against their enemies.

**SH:** That is a very powerful phrase—being raised on wolf’s milk. Yet there were those who did not buy into the ideology, like you. Why was this, when everyone else was being brainwashed? How is it possible for people all drinking wolf’s milk and exposed to the same propaganda to act, to think differently?

**GWQ:** Each person is different because of family, environment, or personality. When I was six years old, my father was labeled as an “enemy of the Party.” In 1959, my family was kicked out of our house. So by the time the Cultural Revolution started, we were already suspicious and doubtful of its tenets. The suffering of those who were persecuted in the Cultural Revolution was already familiar to me.

However, there were also those who fell in the middle (not to either extreme of being either revolutionary or

enemy class) and for them, the Cultural Revolution became an opportunity to express and develop their revolutionary fervor.

**SH:** If one person witnesses two students beating teachers—or 100 students beating a teacher, in the second situation, there arises a kind of mob mentality that intimidates and makes any witness less likely to speak out.

**GWQ:** When I saw people being beaten, I felt shaky inside. But I didn’t tell people to stop, and I didn’t speak up to tell them that it was wrong. Even though people were destroying each other, their families, themselves, it was so rare for someone to stand up and say that it is wrong.

The person who was responsible for starting all this was Mao Zedong. In the documentary, there is the infamous scene showing Song Binbin, a fervent young Red Guard, meeting Mao for the first time. When Mao asked her name, Song replied politely, Binbin. But Mao exhorted: The Revolution does not want Binbin to be polite! Be Violent!

It was not Mao Zedong who physically persecuted or killed hundreds of thousands of people. Mao did not order Teacher Bian to be beaten to death. But it was through a series of things he did that ordinary people became so vicious and turned on one another.

**SH:** Throughout this process, from the beginning of the Cultural Revolution—there was a steady intensification in rhetoric. There was rhetoric condemning others as the enemy, and rhetoric casting others as demons, monsters, inciting and calling for violence. This rhetoric of violence is tragically not unique to China—it was used in Rwanda also, where an entire ethnic group was labeled as cockroaches, not even human. So what you describe as Chinese Communist Party culture, and this rhetoric of violence denying a group its humanity, has been historically used by dominant powerful groups to suppress, murder, or exploit others all over the world, for example genocide in Rwanda, slavery in America, or apartheid in South Africa. This is the danger when you start dehumanizing people.



Atrocities occurred under the Communist flag, but similar scenarios happen around the world. It's really a mixture of power and fear that allows these terrible things to happen. I have to ask myself—if I had lived back then and witnessed those brutal things, would I have helped those being beaten? Would I have had the guts to stand up to them, or take the risks like the priests and others who hid people in Rwanda from the butchery at risk of their own lives? I am just grateful that I have not had to stand that test.

**GWQ:** Nobody stood up. It was fear. If the Communist Party said anything against you—it was over. They dehumanized their enemies. And afterwards, they prohibited any public discussion on the Anti-Rightists movement and the Cultural Revolution, and tightly controlled information on the Revolution. The whole nation “lost” its memories of the Cultural Revolution, lapsing into a collective historical amnesia. But to understand the present, you have to first understand the past.

**SH:** Yes, and you have to understand the past to know how to act in the present—so that there is a possibility for an alternative future.

**GWQ:** After Mao died, the Communist Party did acknowledge that the Cultural Revolution was a mistake. Yet they still forbid people from talking about it. Even though Mao is dead, the Communist Party has used the same medicine, but under a different label. They need to preserve their legitimacy. For example, the Shi Tao case, the Guo Feixiong case—the reasons for all those cases are the same: the Communist Party does not want people to truly understand history.

**SH:** In mainland China today, there is no possibility for ordinary people to reflect on their national history. Overseas, there are processes of transitional justice (such as in South Africa) where perpetrators and victims can speak about their experiences and confront one another. Perpetrators have to admit, “This is what I did,” and give details, and apologize. Participating in this process sometimes allows them to avoid criminal prosecution. This process may not always be successful, forgiveness is complex, but it's a start. This kind of process, of collective memory, responsibility, opening the way to healing, is something I've thought that

China could explore, but the attempts to totally censor the past during the 40th anniversary of the Cultural Revolution made it clear: this process of healing cannot even start.

**GWQ:** There are two reasons why this would be difficult in China. First of all, the conditions don't exist for this—the Party would not allow this. Mao's corpse is still in Tiananmen. The Communist Party is willing to go after the small perpetrators but not the big ones.

The second reason is the refusal of ordinary civilians to acknowledge past wrongs committed. There are a few exceptions, such as the anonymous person who witnessed the murder of Teacher Bian and wrote to Wang Jingyao—that was a brave act. But that was the limit of courage. That person was not willing to talk about it even now, and is still afraid to be interviewed on camera.

The Revolution has been over for forty years, but it is still rare to find former Red Guards who are willing to engage in self-introspection and reflect upon the things they did. This has to do with traditional Chinese culture, which does not advocate repentance and confession. In this way, Chinese culture is very different from Western culture.

**SH:** This is the enduring power of the fear, even 40 years on. There were some themes of the documentary—the theme of time—time of now, the time of 40 years ago. I think that the film was very conscious about time passing. The second theme was something we already discussed—how did the process become so increasingly violent, and then explode so terribly?

And finally, what remains—those family members left behind—silent witnesses then but speaking out after 40 years, revealing the truth, and excavating the preserved evidence: the old suitcase, the photos, the contents of Teacher Bian's bag, Mao's little red book, all the revolutionary pamphlets—the tangible last remains of a life—her school ID badge, strands of hair, her torn blood stained shirt and soiled pants, and her watch, stopped at 3:40 when the terror began and ended.

**GWQ:** The shot of the clock stopping at 3:40 holds great significance. It wasn't just time that stopped during the

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Revolution—the system had also stopped. The Chinese political system was exposed for its phony superficial changes. It may have shifted in its form during then, but underneath, its essence was still the same. The Communist Party still controlled everything. The stopped clock is a symbol of a frozen Chinese political system that has not changed.

Yet, although China may currently be transitioning from a totalitarian society to a post-totalitarian society, the authorities' rule still depends upon their interpretation of history, and this interpretation is built upon lies. They have covered up China's historical and present problems with falsehoods. And just like the child in the Hans Christian Andersen story "The Emperor's New Clothes," the masses do not dare to expose the lies because they live in a climate of fear. What really struck me was the fact that the anonymous letter-writer in the documentary risked persecution in writing the letter that year, but still cannot stand up publicly and talk about it 40 years on. The Revolution ate its own children and created a tragedy, but there is not enough reflection about it. We can't forget the human cost.

During the Velvet Revolution, Vaclav Havel exhorted the Czech people to follow their consciences, speak the truth, and refuse to forget, saying that this was the "power of the powerless." In the documentary, Wang Jingyao took the bloody clothes of his wife and put them in a leather suitcase. He has slept with this suitcase under his bed for 40 years. This is his refusal to forget.

The power that the ordinary people have is, as Havel said, to resist lies, refuse amnesia and tell the truth. If each person adhered to this philosophy, we could influence our families, our friends, and our society. We could tear down the lies that have preserved this totalitarian system. The day we all vanquish the fear inside our hearts is the day that the Communist regime will collapse.

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## In Search of a Breath of Fresh Air

**A Review of *Reflections of Leadership: Tung Chee Hwa and Donald Tsang 1997–2007***

**By Christine Loh and Carine Lai  
Civic Exchange Hong Kong, June 2007  
303 pages**

**By Jonathan Mirsky**



This well-documented and convincing deconstruction of the two men who have ruled Hong Kong on behalf of Beijing since July 1997 reminds us how a city of remarkable citizens can survive and even thrive despite leadership worse than it deserves.

I state immediately that I know the principal author, Christine Loh, as well as Tung Chee Hwa and Donald Tsang. Ms. Loh and Mr. Tsang are also both good friends.

Ms. Loh, one of the most admired women in Hong Kong and at one time a star of its Legislative Council, is the founder of the non-profit think tank Civic Exchange, which lobbies on public issues such as Hong Kong's environment and its need for representative government. Carine Lai works for Civic Exchange and is a well-known political cartoonist.

The essence of this admirably expressed book (Ms. Loh's best-written to date) is that while Mr. Tung and Mr. Tsang could not be more different in background and personality, both distrust democracy and are out of touch with the convictions and hopes of Hong Kong people. The book relies on copious quotations from speeches and policy statements of both men. Since both they and their speechwriters command clear English, there can be no doubt about what was on their minds.

The authors underscore that for both Mr. Tung and Mr. Tsang, the demands of their masters in Beijing were and remain paramount. From the time of Deng Xiaoping, Beijing's leaders have suspected Hong Kong people of disloyalty. This suspicion arose when Hong Kong residents demonstrated in huge numbers against the Tiananmen killings in 1989, and again in 2003 when

hundreds of thousands marched in protest against a public order law championed by Beijing and Mr. Tung. That second march—which unfortunately the authors fail to fully explain—also signaled the public’s rejection of Mr. Tung, and became a major factor in his resignation in 2005 before his term expired.

One of the book’s most interesting analyses is of what the authors call “state corporatism” in which society is organized along the “functional constituencies” that constitute Hong Kong’s lines of occupation. Organized first by Britain, functional constituencies “appear superficially representative of society while being fairly politically homogeneous and avoided subjecting candidates [for the Legislative Council or for the position of Chief Executive] to broad popular approval.” In China, as the authors rightly observe, this is called the “United Front strategy”; it aims to “co-opt the friendly and neutral minority in order to better isolate and attack the hostile minority.” In Hong Kong, this united front strategy is carried out by the Beijing State Council’s Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office, which aims to “build support for the Chief Executive of Hong Kong and to galvanize nominations and the vote for the selection of the Chief Executive.” The only caveat I have here is that in Hong Kong the excluded “hostile” group is unquestionably the majority.

The authors ask if Hong Kong people should reject functional elections altogether because they see them as a hindrance to creating a fair society. “Surely there is a danger in sustaining an electoral system that pitches the interests of the people against the interest of Beijing.”

This exclusion of the majority, the authors argue, explains why democratization remains “the key tussle between the people of Hong Kong and Beijing ten years on from 1997.” It explains, too, why “the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region is squeezed between Beijing and the people of the city.”

While describing the common challenges of the two Chief Executives, the authors compare and contrast their political personalities. Mr. Tung admirably suited Beijing’s definition of a “patriotic capitalist.” Heir to a tottering shipping empire, he was bailed out of virtual bankruptcy by Henry Fok, another tycoon who was

close to Beijing. An American-educated businessman from a rich Shanghai family, Mr. Tung was close to the Shanghai clique that elevated Jiang Zemin to high office—the very same Jiang whose televised handshake with Mr. Tung long before his “election” revealed to everyone in the city what the future held.

As the authors note, Mr. Tung based his policies on appeals to the “Chinese identity” of Hong Kong’s people, and therefore to their patriotism. This is a complex issue; the people of Hong Kong are indeed patriotic, but their Hong Kong identity is a core characteristic. (On more than one occasion, Mr. Tung said to the foreign press, “you can’t understand my policies because you are not Chinese.” I asked him how he would have felt if British governors had said to Chinese reporters that they couldn’t understand because they were Chinese. As usual, he looked amiable and blank.)

Mr. Tung also rang the changes on “Chinese values” of trust, love and respect for family, integrity, honesty and a commitment to education (though he offered no reply to comments that these were also Western values). He contrasted these values with “the deterioration of social order” he had observed in the West. However, when it came to actual social order, to be enforced by Article 23 (the bill to control dissent), and what to do about the SARS epidemic, Mr. Tung faltered and failed.

Donald Tsang’s background, as the authors correctly say, couldn’t have been more different. The son of a police station sergeant, Mr. Tsang performed brilliantly as a graduate student at Harvard without having been to college, and worked his way up the civil service ladder on merit. He was knighted by Hong Kong’s last governor, Chris Patten, but never uses his title. Hong Kong welcomed his succession to Mr. Tung as a local boy made good, a tune that Mr. Tsang has often, and justifiably, played. He has said more than once that while he personally favors universal suffrage, “the development of our political system is not up to me alone, I must also operate within certain parameters.”

It is far from clear, however, that Mr. Tsang genuinely favors universal suffrage. The authors note that he has “never bothered to explain why many democracies are also vibrant economies. Indeed, the freest democracies

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are often the best economies on a sustained basis.” Ms. Loh and Ms. Lai sum up his “naked desire to be a ‘strong leader’” (his words), heading a “strong government.” They see a “steam-rolling streak in him” and quote his dislike of organized opposition, which he terms a “horrible animal.” He calls the city’s democrats “bloody-minded politicians” and freely admits to dealing differently with “friendly and hostile camps,” demonstrated by his tendency to ignore hostile members of the legislature. On one occasion, he told Ms. Loh that he would discuss a policy question with her “only if she agreed with him” in advance. Mr. Tsang still enjoys favor in public opinion, but when asked whom they would prefer to be Chief Executive, most Hong Kong people do not name him.

Christine Loh’s determination and productivity (her books are published in Chinese as well as English) provide an excellent opportunity for Hong Kong people and the wider world to inform themselves about the

current situation in the richest city in China, and the interests and hopes of its people. Another book authored by Ms. Loh, *From Nowhere to Nowhere: A Review of Constitutional Development 1997–2007*, expands on the themes in *Reflections of Leadership*. The cleverly titled *Still Holding Our Breath: A Review of Air Quality in Hong Kong 1997–2007*, and *Idling Engine: Hong Kong’s Environmental Policy in a Ten Year Stall 1997–2007*, coolly and comprehensively survey problems that Donald Tsang still refuses to take seriously. China is now the most polluted country on the planet, and Hong Kong, a city whose inhabitants are literally gasping, could provide important lessons for the whole country. Even if he cannot bear the notion of genuine democracy, Mr. Tsang, a local boy, could really make good if he turned his excellent mind and devotion to his native city, in particular to an environment that chokes its inhabitants. If he does, he could become a breath of fresh air.

Tenzin Tsundue

WHEN IT RAINS IN DHARAMSALA

When it rains in Dharamsala  
raindrops wear boxing gloves,  
thousands of them  
come crashing down  
and beat my room.

Under its tin roof  
my room cries from inside  
and wets my bed, my papers.

Sometimes the clever rain comes  
from behind my room,  
the treacherous walls lift  
their heels and allow  
a small flood into my room.

I sit on my island-nation bed  
and watch my country in flood,  
notes on freedom,  
memoirs of my prison days,  
letters from college friends,  
crumbs of bread  
and Maggi noodles  
rise sprightly to the surface  
like a sudden recovery  
of a forgotten memory.

Three months of torture,  
monsoon in the needle leafed pines  
Himalaya rinsed clean  
glistens in the evening sun.  
Until the rain calms down  
and stops beating my room

I need to console my tin roof  
who has been on duty  
from the British Raj.  
This room has sheltered  
many homeless people.

Now captured by mongooses  
and mice, lizards and spiders,  
and partly rented by me.  
A rented room for home  
is a humbling existence.

My Kashmiri landlady  
at eighty cannot return home.  
We often compete for beauty  
Kashmir or Tibet.

Every evening,  
I return to my rented room;  
but I am not going to die this way.  
There has got to be  
some way out of here.  
I cannot cry like my room  
I have cried enough  
in prisons and  
in small moments of despair.

There has got to be  
some way out of here.  
I cannot cry,  
my room is wet enough.

This poem is reprinted with permission from Tenzin Tsundue.

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## Shi Tao

### JUNE

My life  
Will never move beyond "June"  
In June, my heart died  
My poetry died  
My lover  
Died too, in a romantic pool of blood

In June, the scorching sun burned away my skin  
Exposing the true state of my wounds  
In June, the fish left the blood-red sea  
Swam away to hibernate elsewhere  
In June, the land shifted. Rivers fell silent.  
Letters piled up; no way to deliver them to the dead.

### REPLY

A cigarette gave me the strength to believe  
An afternoon spent pondering  
A Bible story  
The mess of a child's face  
slashed by the butcher's knife  
These gave me the strength to believe

What is  
crueler than  
killing a person's faith?  
They are looking for me, even now  
Their bullets are about to break and enter  
And I am readying my reply

## 师涛

### 六月

所有的日子  
都绕不过“六月”  
六月，我的心脏死了  
我的诗歌死了  
我的恋人  
也死在浪漫的血泊里

六月，烈日烧开皮肤  
露出伤口的真相  
六月，鱼儿离开血红的大海  
游向另一处冬眠之地  
六月，大地变形、河流无声  
成堆的信札已无法送到死者手中

### 答案

一只烟给了我信仰的力量  
一个下午的沉思  
一段《圣经》故事  
一张被屠刀砍得乱七八糟的  
儿童的脸  
给了我信仰的力量

有什么方法比  
杀死一个人的信仰  
更残酷呢？  
他们正在找我  
他们荷枪实弹，准备破门而入  
我正为他们准备好一个现成的答案

Translated by J. Latourelle

These poems first appeared in Chinese online: "Shi Tao's Collected Works," *Boxun*, [http://www.boxun.com/hero/shitao/63\\_1.shtml](http://www.boxun.com/hero/shitao/63_1.shtml).

## SADNESS

I've forgotten all language  
Starting with the simplest word

Memory is a lantern held by a slave  
On my knees I plead with it to last forever

The night comes on inch by inch  
I seek my living before the dawn

No news of a ship docking at the wharf  
A sea breeze touches my face

Its scent is called  
sadness

## 忧伤

我忘掉所有的语言  
从一个最简单的词语开始

记忆犹如奴隶手中的灯盏  
我跪在它面前乞求它永恒

黑夜一寸一寸地进步  
我在黎明之前谋生

没有船舶停靠码头的消息  
有一种吹到脸上的海风

它的味道叫做  
忧伤

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## Yang Jianli

## 杨建利

### SONG OF THE MIGRANT WORKER

### 农民工吟

Your sun is found in the scarlet seals of power  
While mine can only be sought in perspiration  
Your moon is wine and women  
While mine is blood and tears  
Your holidays are a collection of glimmering smiles  
    developing between the two corners  
of your mouth  
While mine are a sense of emptiness and bitterness  
    developing on a journey between two  
corners of our country.

你的太阳是大印  
我的太阳是汗水  
你的月亮是酒色  
我的月亮是血泪  
你的节日是堆在两耳之间的油光欢笑  
我的节日是挂在长路两头的空囊苦涩

I see your world through the window frames  
    of my native home  
The city's rising scaffolds hold high the hopes  
    of the frail and overworked  
Diligence was my entry permit to this city  
For I come from a place where only the city's outcasts  
    would journey  
This city, a plant watered with tears and blood  
Blossoms forth with madness towards the heavens  
My beads of sweat, splattering on the ground, are met  
    with an ice-cold stare.

老家的窗框套着眼眶  
城里的脚手架高举着劳瘦的希望  
苦力是我进城的签证  
我来自城里人犯了错误才去的地方  
血泪浇灌的城市向高处疯长  
摔碎的汗珠惊起一片片冰冷的目光

My sisters watched over this city's children as they grew  
Just as I watched over this city's prestige as it grew.  
We country bumpkins reach for the skies  
    on your towering edifices  
Yet never attain the bottom line of dignity  
My seed can never be firmly planted in your rigid paved roads  
The long trip home for me is like squeezing milk out  
    of a dry shriveled breast.

我的姐妹抱大了城里的孩子  
我抱大了城里的威严  
土秧子在乍耸的高墙上攀爬  
找不到尊严的底线  
坚硬的马路播不下我这颗种子  
回乡的长路像干瘪的乳房挤出的奶汁

Translated by Kevin Carrico



Migratory birds grab hold of the suburbs' branches  
 Taking a rest in the breeze  
 The red flags rising above the city's construction sites  
 Never raise my hopes up with them.  
 I long to migrate like a bird  
 I could fly from hunger and cold to warmth  
 And everywhere that I flew would become my home.

The dark spots of the sun have again clipped my wings  
 I lost my land, and my heavens too.  
 The forces of injustice bask in one grand opening celebration  
 after another  
 Rejoicing amidst their vast white balloons filled with lies  
 A gathering of dark clouds covers the sun,  
 hiding its captured booty of gold.  
 My one chaotic metamorphosis after another  
 Is nothing but a shadow-puppet show upon  
 your expansive red wall.

The slowly-rising voice within my chest  
 Was once a worm but now a snake.  
 My honest yet inarticulate lips  
 Can no longer hold back its course  
 I instinctively lift up my wings  
 Watch . . .  
 Nature resurrected  
 Will overcome the darkness illuminating your sunlight.

候鸟抓住郊野的树枝  
 在风中歇晌  
 城里工地上的红旗  
 舞升不了我的希望  
 我渴望像候鸟  
 把饥寒飞成温暖  
 落到哪里都是故乡

太阳黑子又一次击伤了我的翅膀  
 我失去了土地 我也失去了天堂  
 恶风拥着装满谎言的白色气球  
 招摇一场又一场庆典  
 乌云牵着乌云替太阳窝藏金色的脂肪  
 我一次又一次杂乱无章的蠕动  
 只不过是红墙上一出一出的皮影哑剧

我腹中涌动的声音  
 从蛔虫变成了火蛇  
 我木讷的双唇  
 已咬不住它的奔腾  
 我不由地举起臂膀 看吧  
 复活的森林 就要  
 进化那堂皇而不光明的太阳

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## SEPTEMBER

(For Fu Xiang, on September 26, 2005, our twentieth wedding anniversary)

September  
I know that I will see you today  
Today, the entire world is nothing but September  
I know that I will see you  
September

Hiding away in Shelley's west wind  
The rays of the sun, opened you unto me  
I said  
"In this life journey of mine  
I want a chance to see September"  
I want to see the beauty that I have yet to see  
To see for myself the happiness that I have never doubted.

The sunlight of Shelley's west wind  
Is actually  
Me  
I once spent a spring wandering  
Tying flowers together  
—The daughters of time  
I said to time,  
I'll pay you back in the future  
And  
I had  
September

That dawn  
With the morning dew brewed beneath the moonlight  
I kissed you deeply  
And your face grew a scarlet red with timidity  
The fruits of September were red  
The mountains of September rustled  
With the rhythm of the cool winds

But you flatly denied your coyness  
saying  
"It took too much for me to reach this point  
My whole body is red with exhaustion."

The sky in September  
Above us is the sky and nothing but the sky  
Extending directly to the heavens  
This September, in this most resplendent kingdom under the heavens

## 九月

(2005年9月26日 结婚20周年 给傅湘)

九月  
今天我一定会遇到你  
今天世界的一切都属于九月  
我一定会遇到你  
九月

躲在雪莱的西风里的  
阳光 解开了你的抹胸  
我说  
"我来世间一趟  
我要看看九月"  
我要看看尚未看到过的美丽  
我要见证从未怀疑过的美满

雪莱西风里的阳光  
其实就是  
我 曾在春里闯荡  
绑了花朵  
—时光里的女儿  
我对时光说  
拿未来来赎吧  
于是 我就有了  
九月

那个清晨 我啜饮你  
用月光酿成的露滴 满面酒红  
你害羞了  
九月的果子 红了  
九月的山峦 在爽风中  
起伏流虹

你矢口否认  
你说：  
"我成长太过用力  
挣得满身通红"

九月的天空  
上面 还是天空 天空  
天空直通天堂  
这九月 这天堂下最敞亮的王国

The color of blood is the kingdom's master, sitting proudly  
upon its hefty rump  
Dying red every corner of this kingdom  
Where the heavens and the earth meet.

This ancient story  
—This eternal legend of the sunlight and the orchard, in September  
Finds a fresh conclusion  
Kissing the crab apple till it breaks  
Leaving the mark of my feelings  
What a savage civilization it is that peels an apple before eating it.

September, the fall of civilization in the Garden of Eden  
In September, I eat of the fruits  
In September, I am nude  
In September, I eat of the fruits, nude  
In September, there is no shame  
In September, I eat of the fruits without shame  
I plant myself in September.  
You gave your abundant and moist body to allow  
My shriveled self to grow.

Oh, September  
You lift up the fruits from the earth—the teat of our land  
A light, burning the milk  
Illuminates the westerly winds'  
Direction on their journey from afar  
You know that  
In the winter  
I often  
Feel a fiery longing, my dear  
You  
Know that  
In the winter  
I often  
Quietly recite  
Songs of grief

With the first snow of 2005  
Shelley would still be pondering  
“If winter comes, can spring be far behind?”  
The poet cannot comprehend  
That only two seasons exist in our world  
September  
and  
Waiting for September

Translated by Kevin Carrico

这血色是主人 住在自己丰满的臀上  
染红每一片天和地  
交合的地方

这古老的故事  
——阳光与果园的幽长传说 在九月  
有了新鲜的下落  
亲破海棠 写下感语  
吃苹果削皮是多么野蛮的文明

九月 伊甸园的文明下落  
我在九月吃果子  
我在九月赤裸  
我在九月赤裸吃果子  
我在九月没有羞耻  
我在九月没有羞耻赤裸吃果子  
我把身子种在九月  
我用你的丰润嫁接我  
干瘪的爱心

九月啊  
你擎着果实——大地的  
乳房 燃烧乳汁  
的灯盏 照亮西风  
远行的方向 你知道  
我常会在冬天里 火热  
渴望 亲爱的  
你 知道我  
常会在冬天里 低吟  
悲情的诗歌

在2005年的第一场雪里  
雪莱还会说  
“冬天到了 春天还会远吗？”  
其实诗人雪莱不懂  
这世上只有两个季节  
九月 和  
等待九月

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## Yang Tianshui

## 杨天水

### SPRING HOPE

Trees by the river send their tenderness to the prison  
intense grassy perfume drifts from hillsides  
Beside the wall wutong leaves face green into the wind,  
peach blossoms on the hillside show red through the rain

Fog obscures the way home, as orioles murmur,  
immense mist, dreamlike, at the way station  
No one has ever stopped time,  
in a night, my hair turns grey

Spring, 1996

### RAINY NIGHT

Incessant spring rain flows in a clear stream  
Toads' thunderous croaking shakes the land  
Green prairie wind gathers into a bugle call  
In the cell the heart shapes an iron-clad plan

A thickness of a few feet makes a thousand-*zhang*\* wall  
A few autumns become a millennium  
May we ever live in Spring,  
Striving, heads down, oxen for the people

Spring, 1991

### 七律 春望

江树多情对狱中 飘香山草万千重  
墙边梧叶迎风碧 岭上桃花隔雨红  
雾断归程莺自语 烟茫驿站梦相从  
光阴自古谁留住 一夜青丝染雪容

### 七律 雨夜

连天新雨注清流 蟾吼雷鸣动九州  
青野风成军号曲 牢房心造铁戈谋  
厚墙数尺犹千丈 天宇千年似数秋  
但愿人生春永在 孺牛俯首奋无休

Translated by J. Latourelle

These poems first appeared in Chinese online: "Yang Tianshui's Collected Works," Boxun, <http://www.boxun.com/hero/yangts/>.

\*about 3 and a half meters

## REACHING OUT TO INTERNATIONAL POLICYMAKERS

HRIC regularly engages with key global policymakers, including the **European Union (EU)**, to press for systemic legal reforms in China. HRIC had several opportunities in late summer and fall to brief member states of the EU.

In September, the **foreign ministries of Denmark and Norway** invited Executive Director Sharon Hom and European Liaison Officer Isabella Nitschke to introduce HRIC's advocacy and civil society building work to various government representatives, NGOs, and academic audiences. Briefing topics also included the role of bilateral human rights dialogues, China's role in the international arena, and the lead-up to the 2008 Olympics.

On the invitation of Thomas Mann, the chair of the **Tibet Intergroup**, Isabella gave a briefing on HRIC's report, *State Secrets: China's Legal Labyrinth*, at a meeting of the European Parliament in Strasbourg on September 26.

In October, Isabella participated in the **China Europa Forum**, an event designed to explore opportunities for greater cooperation between European and Chinese civil society. The event, consisting of 46 workshops in different fields of EU-China cooperation, was funded by the European Commission and organized by several European and Chinese academic institutions and foundations.

Also in October, Law Program Director Elisabeth Wickeri joined Isabella in HRIC's Brussels office to support HRIC European outreach. In preparation for the EU-China Human Rights Dialogue in mid-October, HRIC provided background to the **European Council Working Group on Human Rights (COHOM)**, and updated the council members on HRIC's state secrets report. Elisabeth and Isabella also attended an event at the European Parliament for the nominees to the 2007 Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought.

HRIC's Brussels office provided several background briefings to European institutions ahead of meetings with their Chinese counterparts. Written and oral contributions were provided to the **European Interparliamentary Delegation** ahead of its meeting with a delegation from the National People's Congress on September 26–27 in Strasbourg. HRIC also gave background information to the **European Economic and Social Committee** in preparation for the second EU-China Round Table on November 14.

On November 7–8, Isabella attended a **European Parliamentary Conference on Tibet** organized by the European Parliament Intergroup for Tibet, International Campaign for Tibet, and the Bureau of Tibet in Belgium. The topics of the conference were the state of the **environment** in Tibet and the **Beijing Olympic Games 2008**. The conference brought together European and national parliamentarians, environmental experts, academics, journalists, and representatives of several NGOs and Tibet support groups (TSGs). Isabella met with representatives of the Parliament of the Central Tibetan Administration, together with a number of other Brussels-based NGOs, to introduce HRIC's work with European institutions.

## ADVOCACY ON BEHALF OF INDIVIDUALS

HRIC supports individual human rights defenders in China through its work with international institutions and the international media. HRIC's efforts both increase international attention to and awareness of these cases, and provide solidarity and support for the defenders and their families.

In order to highlight the cases of individuals who have been arbitrarily detained by the PRC government, HRIC regularly makes submissions to the **UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention**, an international independent reviewing body. HRIC provides the Working Group with factual background to each case, and an analysis of international and Chinese law. Since 2002,

HRIC has submitted a total of 49 cases. During the September and November sessions of the Working Group, HRIC submitted six cases.

## HRIC SPEAKS

“As the international community increases its scrutiny of China in the lead-up to the Olympics, it is appalling that this kind of attack on lawyers continues. . . . These attacks raise serious concerns about the will and ability of the Chinese government to protect lawyers’ personal safety and right to practice law, which are essential elements of a system of rule of law.”

HRIC statement in support of Li Heping, quoted in “Chinese Lawyer Recounts Abduction,” *New York Times*, October 3, 2007.

“. . . [A]ctivists’s efforts to generate controversy around the Games could be bolstered by the recent spate of China-made product recalls. Getting American consumers to care about human rights in distant China was difficult . . . . But if you say the reason you are getting contaminated food and toys—all of these things directly affecting you—is because the Chinese government is not accountable, and transparent . . . I think that that link is going to be easier to make.”

Sharon Hom quoted in “Games Backers Play Up Green,” *Wall Street Journal*, November 15, 2007.

HRIC issued 18 press releases between September and mid-November advocating on behalf of mainland Chinese human rights defenders and raising broader systemic policy issues. HRIC criticized Chinese authorities for undermining journalist **Zhao Yan**’s due process protections through the manipulation of state secrets charges, and jailing him for three years in spite of the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention’s decision concluding that his detention was arbitrary. HRIC also engaged in media work on behalf of human rights defenders **Guo Feixiong**, **He Depu**, **Mao Hengfeng**, and **Li Heping** as well. Finally, HRIC raised awareness of the crackdowns on expression leading up to and during the **17th National Party Congress**, raising concerns regarding similar crackdowns in the run-up to next summer’s Olympic Games.

## ENGAGING CORPORATE LEADERS

Access to information is the gold standard for any rights defender, and the Internet serves as a robust tool for news gathering and information sharing. HRIC has been actively participating in a private multi-stakeholder process convened by **Business for Social Responsibility** (BSR) and **Center for Democracy and Technology** (CDT) aimed at confronting the challenges faced by technology providers doing business in authoritarian countries. This initiative includes a diverse group of companies, academics, investors, technology leaders, and human rights organizations, working on drafting guidelines and an assurance framework for protecting freedom of expression and privacy rights. Sharon and Robert L. Bernstein Fellow in International Human Rights Cynthia Wong participated in the September meeting in Manhattan.

## HOSTING WRITERS, ADVOCATES, AND LEGISLATORS

On September 14, Liu Bao Pu gave a talk entitled “Analyzing Chinese Politics for Human Rights Activism” at HRIC’s New York office. Mr. Liu, who served on the HRIC Executive Committee from 1992 to 1999, is a publisher at New Century Media and Consulting and a freelance writer on Chinese politics.

On October 2, Yang Jianli gave a talk at HRIC's New York office for HRIC staff, board members, and friends. Dr. Yang served a five-year prison term for entering China on a borrowed passport to investigate labor unrest in the northeast. Dr. Yang is president of the Foundation for China in the 21st Century, a non-profit think tank, and active in the 1989 Chinese democracy movement. An interview with him can be found on page 57. An interview with his wife, Fu Xiang, can be found on page 36.

HRIC also hosted an informal briefing by a Hong Kong delegation of legislators and human rights activists on October 22.

## OUTREACH AND CONSULTATIONS

### NGO outreach

Representatives of governments, NGOs, academic institutions, and civil society gathered in Taipei in early September at the **International Symposium on Human Rights in Tibet**. In addition to sharing HRIC's recent publications, Program Officer Carol Wang met with staff from the Taiwan Foundation of Democracy in order to develop a better understanding of each other's programs and explore future cooperation.

Sharon gave a short briefing on China to a meeting of the International Steering Committee for the **Community of Democracies Nongovernmental Process** on September 26. The meeting was hosted by the Open Society Institute.

### Consultations

In late September, Sharon, invited in her individual capacity as a China expert, participated in a one-day consultation on China organized by the **John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation** at its office in Chicago.

On October 11, Sharon joined a panel of media, environmental, and health experts for an event sponsored by the **Carnegie Endowment for International Peace** in Washington D.C. The conference—"China's

Olympian Challenge: Can Beijing Deliver on its Promises?"—examined various opportunities and challenges presented by next summer's Olympic Games.

### Academic outreach

HRIC staff gave several academic talks as part of HRIC's ongoing outreach efforts. Senior Researcher Bonny Ling spoke at the **Hong Kong University (HKU) Faculty of Law** on "The Case of Journalist Shi Tao: Through the Lens of Human Rights Advocacy in China." Hong Kong Program Director Roseann Rife presented "Legal Developments in China's Labor Protection" at the **HKU Center for Comparative and Public Law Rights** Talk Series, "China and International Human Rights Diplomacy" at **HKU's Department of Politics and Public Administration**, and "Trends and Challenges with Gender and Labor in China" at the **City University of Hong Kong's Department of Asian and International Studies**. Elisabeth was a panelist at "China: The State of Secrecy," hosted by APALSA and the International Law Society at **Brooklyn Law School**. Sharon guest lectured at Don Clarke's Chinese law class at **New York University School of Law**.

### HRIC ORGANIZATIONAL NOTES

HRIC held its fall board meeting in New York at the end of September. Sharon and Roseann presented a work report and outlook on 2008 programs. The board also discussed strategic challenges to and opportunities for HRIC's domestic and international advocacy programs.

In staff news, **Tina Tan**, previously a Leitner Fellow at HRIC, joined the organization as a full-time Law Program Officer. She practiced law for over 12 years in China, including criminal defense, civil and corporate litigation, international arbitration, and other legal work. She obtained her BA and LLM degrees in China. She also participated in a Lord Chancellor's training program for young Chinese lawyers in England.

**Sarah McKune** joined HRIC as the Special Assistant to the Executive Director. She graduated from Michigan State University in 1999 with a BA in international rela-

## RECENT HRIC EVENTS

On November 26, Executive Director Sharon Hom will speak at a hearing on China in the **European Parliament Sub-Committee on Human Rights**.

The hearing will focus on China's development ahead of the Olympic Games in 2008. Other speakers include representatives from International Campaign for Tibet and Human Rights Watch, and Dirck Sterckx, Chair of the European Parliament Delegation for Relations with the People's Republic of China.

Together with the **Brussels China Forum** and the **Institute for European Studies**, HRIC will host a panel discussion on November 27 in Brussels focusing on corporate social responsibility (CSR) in China in light of the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games. Sharon will focus on the role of foreign actors and the opportunities for them to advance human rights and CSR concerns in China. Other speakers include the Belgian Chamber of Commerce and the European Commission.

On December 4, Sharon will speak at the **Hudson Institute**, a non-partisan policy research organization, about the challenges and opportunities raised by the intersection of business and human rights.

HRIC will host two events this winter to celebrate the launch of its latest publication, **Challenging China: Struggle and Hope in an Era of Change**. This collection of essays by activists, journalists, authors, and former government officials explores the growth of individual and group activism in the face of the complex human rights challenges facing China. On December 4, Board Co-Chair Andy Nathan will introduce the book at an event at **Book Culture** in New York City, and on December 11, Sharon and writer Yan Li will present the book at a luncheon at the **Foreign Correspondents Club** in Hong Kong.

HRIC's Hong Kong office, along with other local human rights organizations, migrant rights groups, and social service organizations, will host interactive information booths at the **International Human Rights Day Carnival** in Hong Kong on December 9, which attracts around 1,000 local and mainland visitors.

tions, and obtained her JD in 2002 from the University of Michigan Law School. During her studies, she interned with the U.S. State Department in Hong Kong, and with the International Law Commission of the United Nations in Geneva. From 2003 to the beginning of 2007, she practiced law as a litigation associate in New York City. Until August 2007, she taught English in Hefei, Anhui Province, China.

HRIC hosted three interns this fall:

**Tendon Dahortsang**, Legal Intern, graduated from the University of Zurich and the University of Bern with a graduate degree in law. She previously served on the executive committee of the Tibetan Youth Association of Europe from 2004 until 2006, and also provided legal advice at Lamtoen to Tibetan asylum seekers. She has previously worked as a law clerk in Switzerland, and in the finance and accounting department of Bank Von Ernst & Cie.

**Victor Lai**, Undergraduate Intern, graduated in 2007 from National Taiwan University with a BA in international relations. He has previously interned at the World Federation of the United Nations Association and the U.S.A. State of Arizona Trade and Investment Asia-Pacific Office. In addition, he volunteered with Amnesty International Taiwan and Students Against Hunger while an exchange student at the University of Toronto.

**Sandy Wong**, Undergraduate Intern, is a second-year student at Dartmouth College, and spent the summer of 2007 abroad at Beijing Normal University. She has previously interned at *The New York Times* and Bloomberg, and worked part-time at Woodside Houses Summer Youth Employment Program.





## IR2008

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BEIJING 2008

### SHOPPING FOR THE HOLIDAYS, SHOPPING AT THE OLYMPICS: WHO PAYS THE PRICE?<sup>1</sup>

For holiday shoppers, the “Made in China” label has taken on new meaning this year. Reports of lead-coated toys, poisoned toothpaste, and tainted seafood imported from China remain fresh on the minds of consumers everywhere. Chinese authorities are determined to restore consumer confidence in Chinese-manufactured goods, but in fact may find this easier than expected: despite the uproar over dangerous toys and products, Chinese exports continue to expand.<sup>2</sup>

In short, the price is right: consumers’ demand for low prices at their local big-box retailer and increasing global competition continue to drive manufacturing to China, in spite of the social costs. This IR2008 update focuses on the labor rights violations and regulatory failures that are at the root of recent recalls of Chinese-manufactured goods—and that are relevant concerns for the massive Olympics merchandise market. This update also identifies actions different actors can take to expand protections for workers and consumers, in China and abroad, in the run up to the Olympics and beyond.

#### Global Competition and Opportunism

Global pressure to keep prices low encourages companies to cut corners and ignore regulations that protect Chinese workers and international consumers alike. Labor rights advocates have been highlighting the dilemma of this “race to the bottom” since labor violations in toy, sports, and apparel factories in Asia and Latin America were first brought to consumers’ attention in the 1980s. As discount retail chains increase their clout, these concerns are heightened.

China alone accounts for 15.5 percent of total U.S. imports,<sup>3</sup> bolstered in recent years by looser trade restrictions. Due to intense competition and the rising clout of discount retail chains, the supply chain in China is under extraordinary pressure to cut costs. Yes-

terday, Wal-Mart’s “Made in America” mantra aimed to help protect domestic jobs; today, the focus is exclusively on low prices—resulting in the ubiquitous “Made in China” label. While consumers may feel relief in their pocketbooks, they pay the price of cost-cutting in the form of lead-laden toys and tainted seafood. The more severe the price pressure, the more likely suppliers will turn to less reliable subcontractors, use unsafe raw materials, or cut corners in worker safety.

Workers in China bear the brunt of the costs when firms cut corners to meet price demands. Workers have few choices in a highly competitive job market, with no real legal protections or independent unions. For example, this fall, an investigation conducted by Students and Scholars Against Corporate Misbehavior uncovered labor violations at a factory supplying Disney with stuffed toys, including withholding workers’ wages, paying substandard overtime rates, and requiring excessive hours, especially during the pre-holiday peak season.<sup>4</sup> In addition, many workers endure unsafe conditions ranging from exposure to toxic chemicals to working excessive hours, which can result in accidents, amputations, and fatal diseases.<sup>5</sup>

**At times, the behavior of multinational companies has a destructive ripple effect. . . . Other times, foreign corporate behavior blatantly lowers the bar.**

At times, the behavior of multinational companies has a destructive ripple effect. By steering manufacturing overseas, where labor costs are lower and the regulatory regime less robust, foreign companies also export the associated problems. Chinese activists and officials are increasingly connecting the dots between China’s grow-

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ing pollution problems and demands by foreign companies for ever-lower prices. In China, toxic runoff from textile factories is one reason why many people lack access to drinkable water, yet an estimated 20–30 percent of China’s water pollution comes from products manufactured for export.<sup>6</sup> In Shenzhen, the process of export manufacturing releases about 89 percent of sulfur dioxide emissions.<sup>7</sup>

Other times, foreign corporate behavior blatantly lowers the bar. In 2006, business associations working on behalf of American and European companies lobbied for reducing certain proposed protections for domestic workers.<sup>8</sup> The American Chamber of Commerce in China, representing over 1,300 corporations—including some Olympic sponsors—submitted a detailed commentary on a draft of the Labor Contract Law to the Law Committee of the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress. It warned of the bill’s potential “negative effects on China’s investment environment.”<sup>9</sup> This commentary reflects pressures on corporations to keep prices low, and how they may contribute through their lobbying activities to weakening protections for Chinese workers and on the quality of products produced.

### **Labor Rights and Regulatory Failure**

The lax and incomplete implementation of labor laws and regulations make workers subject to abuses and vulnerable to the pressures of the market economy. While some corporations have implemented codes of conduct in their supply chains, they also acknowledge that costs are lower in China because of China’s lax regulatory environment.<sup>10</sup> Downward price pressure and fierce competition create incentives to overlook codes and regulations that are in place. Instead, corporations externalize those costs, passing them off on Chinese workers who pay the price of inadequate health and safety protections, non-enforcement of wage and hour laws, and crackdowns on efforts to form independent unions. Multinational corporations argue that internalizing these costs would mean substantially (and perhaps intolerably) higher prices for consumers.

The lack of independent trade unions in China contributes heavily to these regulatory failures. There is

only one officially recognized labor union, the All-China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU). All unions must register with the ACFTU to exist legally. Authorities regularly deal with attempts to organize outside that structure with harsh repression.<sup>11</sup>

Normally, labor unions help ensure employers follow labor laws designed to protect workers’ interests but the ACFTU does not play this rights-protecting role. Chinese labor laws include occupational health and safety regulations,<sup>12</sup> wage and hour laws,<sup>13</sup> and social insurance provisions, which are often not enforced.<sup>14</sup> Increasing price pressures and the prevalence of local corruption encourages employers to unlawfully deny benefits to cut costs and increase profit margins. Some estimate that China’s refusal to permit independent unions reduces the cost of manufactured imports anywhere between 11–44 percent.<sup>15</sup>

This lack of enforcement extends not only to labor laws, but also to regulations aimed at product quality control and consumer protection—such as those laws aimed at preventing defects in toys and consumer products. Workers often report corruption, scripted answers for safety inspections, and no penalties for violations.

Information control and lack of transparency also exacerbate these regulatory failures. The Chinese government treats related issues of labor rights and quality supervision as state secrets.<sup>16</sup> State secrets regulations can restrict dissemination of information that would benefit workers and civil society in fighting corruption, asserting labor rights, and advocating for stronger domestic consumer protection.

International concerns over the quality and safety of Chinese exports in 2007 have spurred efforts by the Chinese government to address many of these issues, since exports are key to China’s development.<sup>17</sup> Many corporations argue that efforts like increased inspections, certification requirements, and mandatory testing may raise the cost of doing business in China for foreign businesses that are used to cheap costs and a lax regulatory scheme.

## Chinese Consumers and the Olympics Brand at Risk

While recent bad press over the quality and safety of Chinese exports may motivate the Chinese government to undertake reforms and restore international confidence in the “Made in China” brand, the motivation for similar improvements for the benefit of domestic consumers is less clear. Much of the global concern has focused on exported products, but distributors sell similar products in a vast and expanding domestic market lacking in quality control mechanisms. Foreign consumers of Chinese exports may benefit from relatively greater protection when their own governments regulate exported goods. Chinese consumers and workers, on the other hand, pay the full price of China’s regulatory failures.

**The 2008 Beijing Olympics presents an opportunity for the international community to raise many of these issues by increasing consumer awareness about the human costs behind officially licensed Olympics merchandise.**

Chinese authorities have launched a highly visible campaign to confront problem suppliers, including suspending export licenses, arresting those involved in producing substandard or harmful food,<sup>18</sup> even executing the former head of the nation’s food and drug administration. Efforts to address the safety of products destined for export versus consumption in domestic markets are not systematic, however. The government insists that 99 percent of food exports still meet safety standards.<sup>19</sup> At the same time, the government acknowledges in one survey that only 82 percent of food tested in cities across China met food safety standards, and nearly 30 percent of restaurants surveyed failed inspections.<sup>20</sup> An overhaul of regulations and enforcement mechanisms will be required to see concrete lasting change.

The 2008 Beijing Olympics presents an opportunity for the international community to raise many of these issues by increasing consumer awareness about the human costs behind officially licensed Olympics merchandise. Olympics sponsors have invested tens of mil-

lions of dollars for the opportunity to showcase their brands. Yet, problems continue to emerge. PlayFair 2008 uncovered violations of both international and Chinese

## RECOMMENDATIONS

**For businesses:** Share best practices and review internal mechanisms to ensure consistent and rigorous enforcement of laws on quality control, labor rights, and worker safety. Conduct independent, transparent, and reliable monitoring of all supply chains or other operations associated with your business. Demonstrate your commitment to the protection of your customers and employees by staffing executives on-site in advance of the Olympics to monitor compliance with regulatory standards.

**For consumers:** Low prices of goods in the market today are increasingly linked with major supply-side problems, including mistreatment of workers, and inadequate quality and safety oversight of products. Stay informed about these consumer issues and promote labor rights by encouraging increased corporate diligence. Investigate the manufacturing background of toys or items you purchase. Explore creative alternative gift giving such as making a donation to a worthy cause.

**For governments:** Urge China to enforce its own regulations on labor standards and uphold its promises as an Olympics host in order to achieve a truly successful Olympics. Offer technical assistance and cooperation on the health and safety issues impacted by the Games, and monitor the Olympics corporate sponsors based in your country to ensure compliance with applicable domestic and cross-border laws.

**For the IOC:** Olympics merchandise produced under conditions that violate the rights of Chinese workers undermines Olympics principles, and diminishes Olympics branding. The IOC must increase transparency of the economics behind the Olympics by releasing the Host City contract with Beijing.

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labor laws in companies supplying products for the Olympics.<sup>21</sup> PlayFair's inspections of four factories this year revealed issues of child labor, underpayment of wages, no union representation, and routine cover-ups during factory inspections. These factories not only manufacture officially licensed Beijing 2008 products, but also produce goods for familiar, international consumer brands, such as Disney, Reebok, and Kangol.<sup>22</sup>

So long as low prices remain the overriding goal, the inspection cover-ups and violations of international and Chinese labor law are simply business as usual. And in the factories and retail outlets where Barbie and Thomas the Tank are produced and sold, Chinese workers and consumers continue to pay the human price of everyday low prices.

## Notes

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14. Articles 70–76, Labor Law.
15. Tofani, op. cit. (citing research of Professor Mark Barenberg).
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# STATE SECRETS: CHINA'S LEGAL LABYRINTH

A Report by Human Rights in China



SHI TAO



REBIYA KADEER



CHEN GUANGCHENG



HUANG JINGAO



ZHAO YAN



ZHANG SHANGUANG



TOHTI TUNYAZ



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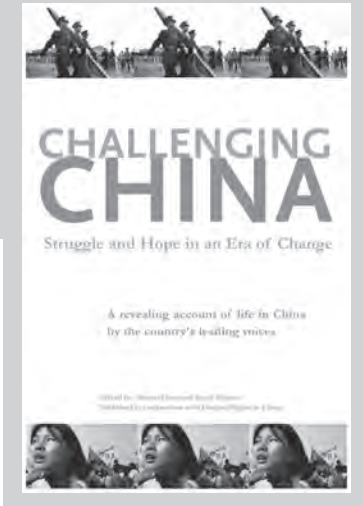
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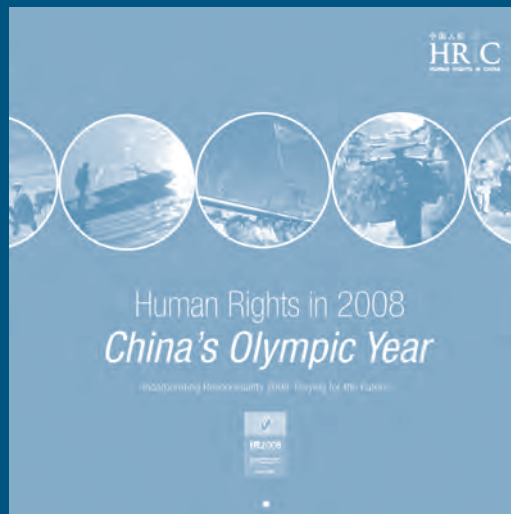
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# INCORPORATING RESPONSIBILITY 2008 PLAYING FOR THE FUTURE

## BEIJING'S PROMISES

HRIC's IR2008 campaign promotes compliance with China's human rights obligations and with the promises laid out in the 2002 "Beijing Olympic Action Plan," to hold:



### → International Commitments\*

\* As an active and responsible member of the international community, China must implement its international human rights, environmental, and labor law commitments, including economic, social, and cultural, civil and political rights for Chinese citizens.

### → "Green Olympics"

Putting environmental protection first.

### → "High-Tech Olympics"

Making cost-effective, content-rich information services available to all.

### → "Free and Open Olympics"

Providing access for journalists, implementing "tight but friendly" security measures, running the Games openly and fairly.

### → "People's Olympics"

Promoting nationwide economic and social development, promoting Chinese culture and heritage, minimizing costs.

## 2008 AND BEYOND

The IR2008 campaign leverages windows of opportunity to:

- **Expand independent civil space and access to information;**
- **Support domestic activists and reforms;**
- **Monitor human rights progress and compliance with Beijing's Olympics and other obligations.**



**TAKE ACTION!** Chinese human rights defenders need you!

**Publish and blog for individuals in detention!**

**Find out if you live in an Olympics host sister city, and urge your city to take action!**

**Join or establish the human rights committee of your business or professional association!**

**Urge the International Olympics Committee (IOC) to release Beijing's host city contract!**

...See this issue's **TAKE ACTION** section and visit HRIC's website at <http://www.hrchina.org>.  
Learn what you can do for human rights in China!



### WHAT HRIC IS DOING NOW

#### Reaching out to international policymakers

HRIC engages with key policymakers to press for systemic legal reforms and advocate on behalf of individuals. Recently, HRIC met with the foreign ministries of Denmark and Norway, and also held briefings for committees and working groups at the EU.

#### Advocacy on behalf of individuals

We raise awareness through media work about crackdowns on expression related to the **17th National Party Congress**. Recent press releases focused on mainland Chinese human rights defenders, including **Guo Feixiong, He Depu, Mao Hengfeng and Li Heping**.

#### Engaging corporate leaders

HRIC participates in the private multi-stakeholder process convened by Business for Social Responsibility (BSR) and Center for Democracy and Technology (CDT), aimed at confronting the challenges faced by technology companies doing business in authoritarian countries.

#### Outreach and consultations

HRIC continues to reach out to diverse groups. Recently, staff participated in events at the Carnegie Endowment, the Community of Democracies NGO Process, and the International Symposium on Human Rights in Tibet.

Human Rights in China's 2008 12-month calendar  
is available at <http://www.hrichina.org>

## HUMAN RIGHTS IN 2008 CHINA'S OLYMPIC YEAR

Incorporating Responsibility 2008: Playing for the Future

### The calendar includes:

- 12 full-color photographs capturing diverse views and landscapes across China
- 12 profiles of individuals who have been imprisoned for trying to exercise their human rights
- The names of over three hundred human rights defenders and prisoners of conscience, listed on the anniversaries of their detentions, who are scheduled to remain in detention throughout 2008
- Specially marked Beijing Olympic dates, key United Nations dates, and China specific dates
- Holiday dates for the People's Republic of China, Hong Kong, the European Union, and the United States

"The year 2008 should be a banner year for advancing human rights in China . . . Through our campaign *Incorporating Responsibility 2008: Playing for the Future*, Human Rights in China (HRIC) will promote compliance with both Olympics promises and international human rights obligations undertaken by the Chinese government towards the Olympics and beyond. We invite you to join in our effort."

—Christine Loh Kung Wai and Andrew J. Nathan, *Co-Chairs*  
Human Rights in China

