

# CHINA RIGHTS FORUM

NO. 3, 2007 / US \$8.00

## 2008 AND BEYOND

HE QINGLIAN HUMAN RIGHTS: THE TRUE GOLD STANDARD

XU JILIN THE MAKING OF A TRUE ATHLETIC SUPERPOWER

FAN BAIHUA LOOKING BEYOND THE 2008 OLYMPICS

CHEN KUIDE CHINA RASHOMON

ERPING ZHANG IMPROVING HUMAN RIGHTS IN A NEO-COMMUNIST STATE

LHADON TETHONG A TIBETAN ACTIVIST'S BEIJING BLOG

“ONE WORLD, ONE DREAM” AND UNIVERSAL HUMAN RIGHTS

HISTORICAL TURNING POINTS: MEXICO 1968, SEOUL 1988, BEIJING 2008

HRIC ASKS: WHERE IS THE “FRUGAL OLYMPICS”?

CHINESE BLOGGERS WEIGH IN ON THE OLYMPICS

PLUS A RESOURCE LIST ON THE 2008 OLYMPICS AND OVERSEAS ADVOCACY  
CAMPAIGNS, TAKING ACTION FOR 2008 AND BEYOND

# LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

The 2008 Beijing Olympics are indisputably a landmark event in the history of China. Beijing's hosting of the Games is particularly notable, given that the People's Republic of China only resumed participation in the Olympics as recently as 1984, after nearly three decades of boycotting the games over Taiwan's participation as the Republic of China. As observed by He Qinglian in this issue of *CRF*, China won its first Olympic gold medal in the 1984 Los Angeles Games and hasn't looked back since.

The 2008 Beijing Olympics marks China's rise as an influential member of the international community. Yet the 2008 Games also raise questions over how China will carry out its important leadership role. The Beijing Olympic Action Plan promises environmental, technological and social improvements to be implemented in preparation for the Games. Yet, as noted by many of this issue's contributors and our expanded Take Action feature, the implementation of these promises remains problematic. Preparation for the Games has often been at the expense of ordinary people, and has provided opportunities for the Chinese government to impose measures that could further limit freedoms after the Olympics.

Holding the Chinese government to the delivery of its promises is a challenge for the Chinese people and the international community. The efforts of individual activists and civil society groups to contribute to real environmental improvements, for example, remain highly sensitive, as described by articles in this issue of *CRF*. More recently, there have been reports that Heilongjiang rural activist Yang Chunlin was detained after collecting more than 10,000 signatures on a petition entitled, "We Want Human Rights, Not the Olympics." Yang's detention is especially notable given that the 2008 Olympics coincide with the sixtieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

In the final countdown to the Olympics, critical public views have begun to surface more frequently on China's Internet Web sites, at least until they are censored. This issue of *CRF* aims to provide a forum for these views, as well as suggestions on how the international community can do more to ensure that the Beijing Olympics take place under conditions compatible with the spirit of the Olympics movement, while also bringing benefits for China's people and environment. This is a challenging task that will require attention and commitment well beyond 2008.

—Stacy Mosher, Editor

---

# TABLE OF CONTENTS



We welcome unsolicited articles and letters. The opinions expressed in this journal are not necessarily those of HRIC.

## EDITORIAL ADVISORY BOARD

Ian Buruma  
Cheng Xiaonong  
Sharon Hom  
Hu Ping  
Perry Link  
Andrew Nathan  
Yan Li

## EDITOR

Stacy Mosher

## COPY EDITOR

Jackie Goodrich

## ASSOCIATE EDITORS

Carol Wang  
Elisabeth Wickeri

## DESIGN AND PRODUCTION

Jennifer Dossin Design

## PUBLICATION DATE

September 2007  
All copyright © China Rights Forum  
ISSN 1068-4166

Send subscriptions, related correspondence, letters to the editor, and submissions to:

HUMAN RIGHTS IN CHINA  
350 Fifth Avenue Suite 3311  
New York, NY 10118  
tel: 212 239 4495  
fax: 212 239 2561  
email: [hrichtina@hrichtina.org](mailto:hrichtina@hrichtina.org)  
web site: [www.HRIChina.org](http://www.HRIChina.org)

## 1 Letter from the Editor

## 6 Contributors

## 7 News Roundup

*May to July 2007*

## 2008 and Beyond

## 24 An Open Letter to the IOC President

*HRIC asks Jacques Rogge to publicly release the contents of the Olympic Host City Contract with Beijing.*

## 2008 IN PERSPECTIVE

## 26 Human Rights: The True Gold Standard

*He Qinglian believes opposition to the 2008 Olympics will continue to grow abroad and inside China unless the Chinese government demonstrates progress on human rights.*

## 31 The Tragedy of Athletic Politics

*Fu Guoyong warns that official emphasis on medals pulls resources away from improving the health and fitness of ordinary people in China.*

## 32 The Making of a True Athletic Superpower

*Xu Jilin went to Vancouver for the 2004 Olympics and found a society that valued sports and physical health more than counting medals.*

## 36 Two Historical Turning Points: The Seoul and Beijing Olympics

*Chen Kuide recalls how the Olympics spurred a change of values in South Korea 20 years ago, and suggests it could do the same in China.*

## 41 The 2008 Beijing Olympics: Remembering Mexico 1968

*Jean-Paul Marthoz observes that using the Olympics as a pretext for suppressing dissent can turn the Games into a catalyst for political change.*

## 43 Improving Human Rights in a Neo-Communist State

*Erping Zhang proposes a new assessment of China that might provide a more nuanced approach on the Olympics.*

---

#### **Our thanks to**

Helen and Robert L. Bernstein  
Joseph and Joan Birman  
Gregory C. Carr Foundation  
Cheng Xiaonong  
Jerome A. and Joan Lebold Cohen  
The Stanley & Fiona Druckenmiller Fund  
R. Scott Greathead  
Marie Holzman  
Sharon Hom  
Hu Ping  
Robert and Ardis James Foundation  
Joel Lebowitz  
Li Jinjin  
Li Jie and Li Lu  
Liu Qing and Han Xiaorong  
Christine Loh  
The John D. and Catherine T.  
MacArthur Foundation  
Paul Martin  
Robin Munro  
Andrew J. Nathan  
National Endowment for Democracy  
Oak Foundation USA  
James Ottaway, Jr.  
Reebok Human Rights Foundation  
Warren J. Sinsheimer  
Anne F. Thurston  
Svetlana and Herbert M. Wachtell  
Richard Lee and Linda Walter  
Megan and Russell Wiese  
  
and others for their generous support.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO HRIC  
ARE TAX DEDUCTIBLE

#### **48 Olympics Blacklist**

*Some Web sites posted purported excerpts of an official document listing out categories of people barred from participating in the Olympics.*

### **WHOSE OLYMPICS?**

#### **54 Where is the “Frugal Olympics”?**

##### **Domestic Voices Protest Extravagance**

*This HRIC Brief explores how public expressions of resentment are growing against costly publicity events promoting official prestige rather than the spirit of the Games.*

#### **62 A Worm’s-eye View of the Beijing Olympics**

*Wei Liu looks to the Internet for clues on how ordinary people in China feel about the Olympics.*

#### **66 Time to Speak Up on the Beijing Olympics**

*Liu Shui urges the international community to support the efforts of the people of China to speak up for their rights as the Olympics approach.*

#### **69 “One World, One Dream” and Universal Human Rights**

*An open letter by more than 40 mainland activists and intellectuals calls for measures by Chinese leaders and the international community to end human rights abuses in China before the 2008 Olympics.*

#### **73 Four Chinese Bloggers Weigh In on the Olympics**

*For some people in China, the 2008 Olympics has prompted reflection on China’s current social and philosophical challenges.*

#### **80 A Tibetan Activist’s Beijing Blog**

*Lhadon Tethong kept her readers informed of her efforts to meet IOC president Jacques Rogge in Beijing, and her brief detention as a result.*

#### **86 May No Other Mother Feel This Pain: An Interview with Gao Qinsheng**

*Shi Ping spoke with the mother of imprisoned Chinese journalist Shi Tao soon after she received the 2007 Pen of Freedom Award on his behalf.*

### **GOING FOR THE GREEN**

#### **90 What Will the 2008 Olympics Bring to China’s People**

*Liu Jingsheng finds that the goal of “green Olympics” has provided new means of infringing on the rights of ordinary citizens.*

**93 Looking Beyond the 2008 Olympics**

*Fan Baihua cites China's environmental challenges as an example of how the international community needs to look beyond Beijing, and beyond 2008, to ensure that the Olympics has lasting relevance for China.*

**98 Reflections on the Struggle for Environmental Rights**

*Huo Tao salutes the people of Xiamen in their effective united stand against a polluting factory.*

**104 The Xiamen Demonstrations and Growing Civil Consciousness**

*Zhao Dagong sees the Xiamen protests as a sign that the Chinese public, and also officials, have learned some important lessons from the 1989 Democracy Movement.*

**REGULAR FEATURES****110 Take Action: 2008 and Beyond**

*What issues are at stake in the Beijing Olympics, and what the international community can do to help.*

**122 Resource List**

*Web and print materials relating to the 2008 Beijing Olympics*

**126 Olympics Advocacy Campaigns****129 Reviews****Media Dialogue: China Rashomon**

*Chen Kuide responds to James Mann's Washington Post article on the apparent invincibility of China's rise.*

**Hope Floats**

*Charlie McAteer reviews Will the Boat Sink the Water?, by Chen Guidi and Wu Chuntao.*

**Portrait of a Survivor**

*Rene Wadlow reviews Zhou Enlai: A Political Life, by Barbara Barnoin and Yu Changgen.*

**136 Bulletin**

*HRIC's activities in June–August 2007*

---

# CONTRIBUTORS

## THIS ISSUE'S CONTRIBUTORS

**Chen Kuide** earned a Ph.D. in philosophy from Fudan University. After coming to the US as a visiting scholar in June 1989, he served as executive director of the Princeton China Initiative, and is now editor of *Guancha Magazine*, published by the China Information Center in Virginia.

**Fan Baihua** lost his teaching position at the Nanjing Institute of Posts and Telecommunications after participating in the 1989 Democracy Movement. He now works in the institute's library and regularly contributes essays to overseas Chinese Web sites.

**Fu Guoyong**, based in Hangzhou, has spent a total of five years in prison because of his writings. He has a special interest in the history of public opinion.

**He Qinglian**, an economist and author of *China's Pitfall* and *Media Control in China*, is a senior researcher in residence with HRIC.

**Huo Tao** is the pen name of a Beijing-based sociologist and writer who is involved in China's rights defense movement.

**Liu Jingsheng**, detained in May 1992 as one of the "Beijing Fifteen" of labor and democracy activists, was sentenced

to 15 years in prison for crimes of counterrevolution. Following a sentence reduction, he was released in November 2004.

**Rene Wadlow** is the representative to the United Nations, Geneva, of the Association of World Citizens, and former professor and Director of Research at the Graduate Institute of Development Studies, University of Geneva.

**Wei Liu**, born in China in 1970, came to the U.S. in 1999 and obtained two M.A. degrees in English. He works as a freelance writer and translator.

**Liu Shui** is a writer based in Shenzhen.

**Jean-Paul Marthoz** is editorial director of the Brussels-based foreign affairs quarterly *Enjeux internationaux*, and the author and editor of the forthcoming book *Où va l'Amérique latine?*

**Lhadon Tethong** is executive director of the New York-based Students for a Free Tibet.

**Xu Jilin** is a professor of history at East China Normal University in Shanghai.

**Erping Zhang** is a New York-based China specialist, and a graduate of Bei-

jing International Studies University, the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy and the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard.

**Zhao Dagong** is a writer based in Shenzhen.

**Shirley Hao, Cliff Ip, Trevor Lee, Bonny Ling, Charlie McAteer, Shi Ping** and **Carol Wang** are staff of Human Rights in China.

## THIS ISSUE'S TRANSLATORS

**Kevin Carrico** is an incoming graduate student in anthropology at Cornell University. He can be reached at [kevin-jocarrico@yahoo.com](mailto:kevin-jocarrico@yahoo.com).

**Paul Frank** translates from Chinese, German and French. He lives in Switzerland and can be reached at [paulfrank@post.harvard.edu](mailto:paulfrank@post.harvard.edu).

**J. Latourelle** is a California-based translator and writer who can be reached at [latourellej@gmail.com](mailto:latourellej@gmail.com).

## DIRECTORS

*Co-chairs* Christine Loh, Andrew J. Nathan   *Executive Director* Sharon Hom   *Secretary* Cheuk Kwan   *Treasurer* R. Scott Greathead  
*Chair Emeritus* Robert L. Bernstein

William Bernstein   Ian Buruma   Cheng Xiaonong   Han Dongfang   Hu Ping   Li Jinjin   Li Lu   Liu Qing   Robin Munro  
James Ottaway, Jr.   Megan Wiese

*Honorary Directors* Joseph L. Birman   Marie Holzman   Robert G. James   Joel Lebowitz   Torbjörn Lodén   Paul Martin  
Nina Rosenwald   Ruan Ming   Anne Thurston

## MEDIA CENSORSHIP

### Web sites shut down/blocked

Yahoo! reported on June 13 that its popular Internet photo site Flickr.com was blocked in China. Flickr allows users to post, store and exchange photographs online. Access to the site was blocked soon after photos of the 1989 Tiananmen Square crackdown began appearing there. (AFP)

“Forum of Contemporary Chinese Poetry,” a Web site operated by poet **Lu Yang**, was shut down on July 11 along with two other forums. Boxun reported that the closure followed postings related to June 4th. An Israeli-based literary Web site, *shvoong*, also became inaccessible in China in early July. (RFA, RSF)

The Maoist Web site *Maoflag* ([www.maoflag.cn](http://www.maoflag.cn)) was shut down in mid-July after it posted an open letter by 17 retired CPC cadres criticizing China’s reforms and official policies. (RFA)

At least six Inner Mongolian Web sites were shut down at the end of July. The authorities told the managers of one of the sites that it was closed because they had not registered the site’s bulletin board system (BBS). (RFA)

Workers’ rights Web site *Tongyipianlantiansia* ([www.blueseasky.cn](http://www.blueseasky.cn)) was shut down for two weeks before access was restored on July 26. (RSF)

### Xinhua accuses Voice of America of distorting facts

A spokesperson for the Foreign Information Administration Center of the Xinhua News Agency accused Voice of America (VOA) of distorting facts with “ill intention.” The spokesperson denounced an article published by VOA on May 1, which argued that the Measures for Administering the Release of News and Information in China by Foreign News Agencies, issued by Xinhua on September 10, 2006, restricts the development of foreign news agencies in China. (VOA, XH)

### TV signal hijacked and anti-Party message broadcast

A television signal was hijacked and anti-Communist Party messages were broadcast during primetime in Guangdong on May 1. The footage showed anti-government slogans urging viewers to abandon the Communist Party. It was reported to have lasted about 20 seconds before being blacked out. The broadcast also reached millions of viewers in several other cities. The hijackers are still unknown. (SCMP)

### China among “Enemies of the Internet”

Reporters Without Borders listed China as one of 13 “Enemies of the Internet” as it launched a Chinese-language version of its Web site on May 3. The Paris-based group appealed to the Chinese authorities not to block [rsf-chinese.org](http://rsf-chinese.org) and to stop censoring other Chinese-language news Web sites. (RFA)

### Chinese MySpace reports 30,000 users

MySpace China ([Myspace.cn](http://Myspace.cn)) announced on May 8 that the site had registered 31,826 users since its launch on April 27. (PE)

### Xinhua criticizes local government over cover-up

The Xinhua News Agency on May 15 criticized local authorities in Shandong Province for covering up information on hand, foot and mouth disease. (RFA)

### Increased controls over magazine and periodical publications

The General Administration for Press and Publications (GAPP) announced on May 23 that it will begin enforcing new rules, the Regulatory Basis for the Publication of Periodicals, in an attempt to tighten control over an estimated 9,000 weekly and monthly magazines and periodicals. The move has been interpreted as an effort to limit negative coverage before the 2008 Olympics. (RFA)

### Plan for real-name registration of bloggers dropped

Chinese officials announced on May 22 that a proposal requiring Internet bloggers to register under their real

---

names had been dropped. However, blog hosts would be held responsible for censoring sensitive blog entries. (FT)

### **Xiamen moves to ban anonymous Web postings**

Xiamen, the city where protesters successfully halted the construction of a chemical plant in June, is considering draft legislation to ban anonymous Web postings and require Web sites to approve all postings. Xiamen would be the first city in China to require the use of real names online after the central government backed down on its plans to require real-name registration in May. The vice-chief of the Xiamen CPC's propaganda department said the legislation was unrelated to the chemical plant protest, which was fueled largely by text messages and Internet postings. (WSJ, AP)

### **Boxun journalist taken into custody**

Nanjing-based journalist **Sun Lin**, a regular contributor to the overseas Boxun Web site, was detained by police on May 30. He was reportedly told that Boxun endangers national security. (RFA)

### **China's blacklist for Olympics**

It was reported at the end of May that the Ministry of Public Security issued an internal notice to police departments across China in April, requiring them to bar "hostile" overseas journalists and other blacklisted people from entry. (RFA)

### **HRW accuses China of backtracking on promises of greater media freedoms**

On May 31, Human Rights Watch (HRW) charged that "the Chinese government is already failing to deliver on its pledge to fully lift restrictions for foreign journalists ahead of the Beijing Games," referring to the relaxed controls that took effect on January 1. According to HRW, a number of foreign journalists have found that authorities ignore, or are unaware of, the supposed new freedoms and have obstructed their work as reporters. (AFP)

### **"Citizen journalism" fights China's censors**

While China continues to find new ways to block and censor "offensive" material, Chinese citizens are increasingly employing the Internet and other technological advances to express their opinions and voice

their complaints. One striking example was the letter posted on the Internet by 400 parents that led to the uncovering of the slave labor scandal. Text messages, particularly in the Xiamen protests, have also proven effective. (TA)

### **Men held responsible for journalist's death**

Seven men have been jailed over the beating to death of journalist **Lan Chengzhang** outside an illegal coal mine in Shanxi Province. The head of the mine, Hou Zhen-run, was sentenced to life in prison for "causing the death of another by malicious injury" by ordering the attack. Five men were given prison sentences of five to 15 years for carrying out the attack, while another received a one-year sentence for harboring the suspects. Lan was accused of being a "false journalist" seeking payments in return for not reporting problems at the mine, but the case still provoked a huge uproar among journalists and media groups. (BBC)

### **No new Internet cafés in 2007**

On June 5, a government notice stipulated that industry and commerce bureaus at all levels are not allowed to license any new Internet cafés in 2007. Meanwhile, regulators will carry out an industry-wide inspection amid concerns that violent games, sexually explicit material and gambling Web sites are harming young people. (AP)

### **Web sites barred from discussing leader's death**

Web sites in China were barred from discussing the death of CPC leader Huang Ju in early June. (RFA)

### **Newspaper editors fired over Tiananmen ad**

Three editors of the *Chengdu Evening News* were fired after the newspaper published an advertisement that read, "Paying tribute to the strong-willed mothers of June 4 victims," on the eighteenth anniversary of the Tiananmen Square crackdown. It appears that a young clerk allowed the ad to be published because she had never heard of the crackdown and was told that the date marked a mining disaster. The Communist Party has banned references to June 4th in the state media, on the Internet and in books, leaving most young Chinese ignorant of the event. The placer of the ad, surnamed Feng, was reportedly arrested. (RTR, RFA)



### Record of Internet use to be kept 60 days

It was reported on June 13 that China Netcom Group, a state-owned enterprise, would require records of Internet use to be kept at least 60 days in order to “suppress online pornography.” (BJN)

### English Wikipedia unblocked

The English-language version of Wikipedia was again accessible in China on June 15, although the simplified Chinese-language site remained blocked. One source cited the “bad PR” among foreign users as a reason that the English-language site was unblocked. (Info World)

### Internet user arrested over critical pictures

On June 16, an Internet user in Shandong Province was reportedly arrested for posting pictures of luxurious government buildings online. (RFA)

### Web site shut over corruption report

A Chongqing-based Web site launched in mid-March has been blocked since mid-June. The Web site revealed instances of corruption and led to a named official being placed under *shuanggui*, or “double regulations,” which is a disciplinary measure overseen by the CPC’s Disciplinary Inspection Committee. (RFA)

### Google to provide Internet content in China

On June 20, Google reported that it won an Internet content license from China’s Ministry of Information and Industry. The license will allow Google to potentially offer news in what has become the world’s second largest Internet market. (RTR)

### Two TV channels punished for running banned ads

The State Administration of Radio, Film and Television (SARFT) ordered two provincial-level television channels to suspend all commercials and acknowledge their mistakes in written reports as a punishment for repeatedly running banned medical advertisements. SARFT claims that the two channels continued to run the ads despite four prior warnings and notifications. The punishments were the toughest handed down since regulations banning such ads were issued in August last year. (XH)

### Draft law loosens restrictions on media

In a move to improve transparency, the second draft of

the emergency response law, advanced by the national legislature on June 24, would allow media to report on public emergencies without the government’s authorization. The first draft, which included fines of as much as 100,000 *yuan* (\$13,100) for reporting on emergencies without authorization or spreading fabricated information, was revised after it met with criticism. The second draft only bans the making up or spreading of false information. (PD)

### Media quiet after karaoke blast

A reporter for a Liaoning newspaper said the provincial propaganda department issued a gag order soon after an explosion on July 4 at a karaoke parlor in Tianshifu, Benxi County, Liaoning Province. The Xinhua News Agency, which is believed to have been the first to send reporters to the mining town, was the only official news source mainland readers could access to find out about the blast. However, a source within Xinhua said field reporters in Benxi had been ordered to stop reporting. (SCMP)

### China Development Brief shut down

It was reported on July 11 that the popular Western-run newsletter *China Development Brief* (CDB), which focuses on Chinese social and economic development issues, was ordered by the Chinese police to cease operations. CDB, with 11 staff in Beijing, published Chinese and English editions in print and on the Internet. Nick Young, who founded CDB in 1995, said officials representing the Beijing police and the local statistical bureau told him that he had violated the 1983 law on gathering statistics by conducting “unauthorized surveys.” Young said the authorities provided no specific reason for issuing the order, after allowing the publication to operate for 12 years. While *China Development Brief* did not have a license to publish in China, and its staff members were not registered as news correspondents, Mr. Young said the local authorities had closely monitored his business for years and seemed to understand that providing objective information was in China’s interests. (NYT)

### Magazine on civil society shut down

The Chinese-language magazine *Minjian*, published by a research center at Sun Yat-sen University, was shut down around mid-July. Like *China Development Brief*,

---

*Minjian* discussed civil society developments in China. (RFA)

### **Email disrupted by new China censors**

Adjustments to China's Internet surveillance system appear to have disrupted cross-border email flow in mid-July. Several IT companies confirmed that Internet users and clients in China and overseas complained of difficulty sending and receiving emails. An executive at a Shanghai-based media company reported that his company was advised to use local email, because a "new firewall system" being installed at state-owned China Telecom and China Netcom was leading to "some overseas email being scanned and cleaned off." The new firewall system will supposedly allow authorities to temporarily intensify their monitoring and control ahead of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization meeting in early August. (RTR)

### **New technology makes it harder to block bad news**

New technologies, including the Internet and mobile phones, are apparently making it more difficult for China to block negative news. In comments published in July 16, Wang Guoqing, a vice-minister with the cabinet's information office, said that "information blocking is like walking into a dead end." Wang said local governments need to be more transparent, citing the recent slave labor scandal as evidence that bad news needs to be managed and controlled rather than concealed. (AFP)

### **162 million Internet users in China**

The number of netizens in China reached 162 million at the end of June 2007, according to the twentieth report on the development of the Internet in China issued by China Internet Network Information Center (CNNIC) on July 18. (CD)

### **Reporter of cardboard meat buns story detained**

A freelance television reporter in Beijing was detained on charges of faking a report about street vendors who used chemical-soaked cardboard to fill meat buns, local media reported July 19. (AP)

### **China cracks down on fake news stories**

In the wake of the cardboard meat buns incident, China launched an unprecedented crackdown on fake news stories, according to reports in the state media on

July 25. The Publicity Department of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, the State Administration of Radio, Film and Television, and the State Press and Publication Administration jointly issued a circular to all news organizations ordering those who reported or released fake news to publicly apologize and correct the items. Furthermore, they said people who intentionally fabricated news that caused public anxiety and damaged the country's reputation would be harshly dealt with or even prosecuted. China's press watchdog also provided hotlines where members of the public could report news stories suspected of being false. (PD)

### **Journalist receives death threats**

Journalist **Pang Jiaoming** of the *China Economic Times* said in his blog on July 20 that he had received several death threats following the publication of two stories he wrote on the use of substandard materials to construct the Wuhan-Guangdong Railway. (RFA)

### **Publisher convicted over illegal book**

RFA reported that **Liu Xingwen**, publisher of a financial book, was sentenced around July 25 to three years' imprisonment on charges of illegal business activity. Liu has appealed. According to the report, the State Council had not granted permission for the book to be published. (RFA)

### **Interviews with foreign media led to jail threats**

Near the end of July, evictees protesting a land grab in Zhejiang were threatened with imprisonment if they continued to give interviews to foreign media. (RFA)

## **PETITIONS AND PROTESTS**

### **Career advancement linked to control of social unrest**

A senior Communist Party official stated on July 5 that "officials who perform poorly in maintaining social security in rural areas will not qualify for promotion." Police were also urged to investigate and report on disputes that might lead to "mass incidents" or crimes in rural areas. (AP)

### **Number of collective petitions falls**

Xinhua reported on July 10 that the number of collec-

tive petitions received by disciplinary inspection and supervision organs dropped by 16.9 percent from 2005 to 2006, while the number of people involved in those petitions dropped by 14.3 percent. No specific figures were given. (XH)

### **Revision of official policies on petitioners**

The Supreme People's Procuratorate issued a regulation on the handling of petitions, effective on May 13. Main points include: (1) Officials can be punished for abuse of power, dereliction of duty and other negligent behavior when they process petitions; (2) petitioners will be held criminally responsible for distorting facts and harming others' lawful interests; and (3) heads of local procuratorate offices must receive petitioners at least 12 times a year and for at least half a day each time they meet. (BJN)

It was reported in mid-June that the central authorities had issued an internal document controlling petitioners in Beijing ahead of the 17th CPC National Congress. The document states that petitioners caught in Beijing should be sent back to their hometowns, and that the more troublesome petitioners should be sent to psychiatric hospitals, "reeducation classes" and even prison. A petitioner told RFA that official "retrievers" had recently started openly arresting petitioners at petitioning offices, including petitioners who were not from their own provinces. (RFA)

According to a new opinion co-issued by the CPC Central Committee and the State Council on June 24, China will establish a national center to receive public complaints and petitions, as well as a national public complaints information system to improve monitoring of the public complaints process by officials and members of the public. The opinion emphasized the need for local government officials to be receptive to public complaints. (XH)

### **Local strategies to suppress petitioners**

It was reported on May 4 that authorities in Shanghai, Jiangsu and Chengdu have adopted various strategies to suppress petitioners. Shanghai's Office for Letters and Calls decided in an April meeting to train laid-off workers to monitor petitioners, and on April 29, its officials beat three petitioners and forced them to sign a

letter confessing to the crime of disturbing social order. Jiangsu authorities detained petitioners and made them attend "education classes," while in Chengdu, a notice issued on April 29 banned certain types of petitioning, including kneeling, shouting slogans and self-immolation. (RFA)

It was reported on May 11 that authorities from Huangshi, Hubei Province, have started sending staff to "accompany and lead" petitioners in order to achieve the two "No's": no petitioning in Beijing and no local chaos. (RFA)

### **Protest against police power abuse in Shanghai**

Some 280 petitioners gathered on a busy street in Shanghai on May 9 to protest police abuses of petitioners. Eighty petitioners were reportedly taken away by police. The protest was prompted by the May 4 police beating of **Chen Zonglei** after he petitioned the Shanghai authorities over a forced eviction. (RFA)

### **Petitioner prevented from tuberculosis testing**

Petitioner **Tan Jinhua**, currently serving an 18-month sentence in a reeducation-through-labor camp, began showing symptoms of a recurrence of tuberculosis in May. Although Tan was vomiting blood and complaining of chest pain, Hubei authorities refused to permit a diagnostic blood test unless she promised not to petition again. (RFA)

### **Petitioners beaten**

Petitioner **Zheng Mingfang** and her partially paralyzed husband were beaten by 20 people led by a local cadre in Tianjin on June 6. Local police barred other petitioners from helping Zheng when the assailants stripped off her clothes. (RFA)

### **Petitioner to be tried**

It was reported on June 7 that Henan petitioner **Li Yufeng** would be tried on June 11 on charges of "obstructing execution of official duties." The authorities alleged that Li attacked officials in charge of intercepting petitioners, otherwise known as "petition retrievers," in 2005. Li's sister argued that Li did not know the retrievers' official identity and that both sides sustained injuries. (HRIC, RFA)

---

### **Disabled petitioners harassed**

**Ma Wenjun**, a petitioner with disabilities, was forced to leave Beijing and return to his Hubei hometown on June 12 after local authorities threatened to cancel his social security payments if he continued to petition. Jiangsu rights defender **Zhang Jianping**, partially paralyzed, was barred from accessing the Internet for six months because of two “subversive” articles he wrote on the treatment of petitioners. (RFA)

### **Hospital allegedly turned away petitioners**

Police officers used metal chairs to beat five Liaoning petitioners, including three who were disabled, in Beijing on June 26. A petitioner told RFA that a hospital forced them to leave the same day they were admitted for treatment, but the hospital denied the allegation in a phone interview. (RFA)

### **Petitioner dies in confrontation with police**

On June 28, 10 petitioners from Liaoning Province planning to petition Beijing over a land dispute were confronted by police at the local railway station. One of the petitioners became so agitated that he jumped onto the tracks and was killed by a train, and another was seriously injured. The remaining eight were being held by police. (SCMP)

### **Healthy engineer given psychiatric treatment**

**Tan Linshu**, a naval engineer with the People’s Liberation Army (PLA), was admitted to a Guangxi psychiatric hospital in early July. His family insisted that he was healthy and that his admission was in retaliation for his petitions alleging a case of plagiarism in the navy. (RFA)

### **Needle injection for petitioner**

Xinjiang petitioner Wang Hongxiang said on July 5 that he had seen the authorities use a needle injection to subdue and arrest a female petitioner from Henan surnamed Li. The authorities denied the allegation. (RFA)

### **Petitioner’s sons sent to orphanage**

According to an RFA report on July 6, Ningxia authorities sent two sons of petitioner **Ma Yuanxin** to an orphanage and refused to let her take them back because of fears that they would accompany Ma to petition in Beijing. (RFA)

### **Students detained for interviewing petitioners**

Nine Beijing students were detained for five hours on July 23, the “County Chief’s Reception Day,” for interviewing petitioners in Ji County, Tianjin Province for a social research survey. (RFA)

### **Labor disputes on the rise**

Yang Jingyu, chairman of the Law Committee of the NPC, stated on July 23 that the number of “mass incidents” triggered by labor disputes has increased significantly in the past 12 years. He did not give specific figures, noting only that the number of labor disputes, mainly concerning unpaid wages, was 13.5 times greater in 2006 than in 1995. (XH)

### **Workers protest unpaid wages in Shenzhen**

About 400 workers began protesting unpaid wages and redundancy packages at the Eltop Electronics Factory in Shenzhen on May 21. The factory had announced in April that it would relocate to Dongguan at the end of May. About 200 police officers and uniformed security guards reportedly raided the factory on May 28 and 29, when protesters surrounded trucks transporting equipment. At least 18 people were detained and 10 injured after police used force in an attempt to end the protest. (SCMP)

### **Teachers beaten**

On June 25, Shandong police stopped bystanders from assisting petitioning teachers who were being beaten by thugs. The teachers had also been warned that their relatives’ jobs would be affected if they continued to petition over reduced employment benefits. (RFA)

### **Laid-off bank workers arrested over protest**

Nearly 1,000 former employees of Beijing’s Industrial and Commercial Bank of China were detained on June 25 after protesting compensation terms. (MP)

### **Tour guides in Guilin detained after protest**

More than 1,000 Guilin tour guides launched demonstrations on July 26 to demand official assistance in improving their working conditions. The protests were spurred by comments published in the *Guilin Daily* saying that tour guides were cheating visitors and earning too much in commission. The city has 8,000 to 9,000 tour guides, who do not earn salaries and are not

covered by a social security program. Protesters gathered in front of the city government offices to urge the government to cancel all cheap tours offered below cost, and to insist that travel agents pay the guides basic salaries. More than 600 tour guides were detained, and witnesses reported that some were badly beaten. (SCMP)

### **Taxi drivers on strike**

Some 20,000 Henan taxi drivers went on strike on July 30 to protest what they considered unfair government and taxi company policies. Non-striking taxi drivers were beaten by those who participated in the strike. (MP)

### **Increase in protests linked to anger over environment**

Zhou Shengxian, head of the State Environmental Protection Administration (SEPA), said in early July that petitions received by his agency were up 8 percent in 2007. He attributed the increase to people's growing discontent with environmental pollution in their localities. Protests against power and chemical plants have become more common, while health fears and unfair land grabs have also fuelled unrest. In a recent inspection of 529 firms along the Yellow and Yangtze rivers and other waterways, 44 percent were found to be violating environmental laws, while almost half of the waste water treatment facilities were inadequate or nonfunctional. Moreover, factory owners who violate state guidelines are often protected by local officials. (Guardian)

### **Protest by thousands halts construction of chemical plant in Xiamen**

A flood of text messages calling for street protests outside of government offices prompted the city of Xiamen, Fujian Province, to delay the building of a petrochemical plant. The leaders of Xiamen announced on May 30 on the city's official Web site that the building of the petrochemical plant would be postponed in order to weigh environmental objections. However, protesters wearing gas masks and holding banners marched through Xiamen on June 1, demanding that the government cancel, and not just suspend, plans to build the plant. At its peak, the protest boasted 20,000 participants following the circulation of a reported one million mobile-phone text messages urging participa-

tion in the protest. The messages compared the plant to an "A-bomb" because of dangers to the environment in the event of an accident. The plant was to be built only 1.5 kilometers away from the nearest residential area. (RTR, MP, FT)

It was reported on July 19 that Xiamen resident and Diaoyu Islands activist **Li Yiqiang** was arrested on June 3 on suspicion of organizing the June demonstrations. Li's family received the formal arrest warrant a month later. In addition to Li Yiqiang, at least three other Xiamen residents were detained in June in connection with the protests. **Huang Zhaohui**, 39, was detained for 15 days on charges of instigating and organizing the protest. **Huang Zhaopeng**, 20, was held on the same charges for five days. **Shi Kesheng**, 16, was detained for half a day and accused of "leading the parade with radical slogans." While all three were subsequently released, Li remained in detention at last report. All four detainees had marched at the front of the protest in June. (SCMP)

### **Clash erupts in Sichuan over polluted water**

Twenty people were injured and seven detained when thousands of protesters clashed with armed police in Shiyuan, Sichuan Province, on July 27 during demonstrations against a brewery's pollution of nearby rivers. Villagers alleged that local officials had been bribed to ignore the pollution caused by China Resources (Shifang) Breweries, and others were angry at the brewery's dismissal of many workers and its failure to keep up social insurance payments. (SCMP)

### **Villagers' protest against mine exploitation subsides**

Violent protests in May and early June against government exploitation of a lead and zinc mine in Daofu County, Sichuan Province, were reported to have subsided on June 25. During the protests, some 300 villagers gathered at the mine and smashed equipment and motor vehicles belonging to the developer and the local government, saying exploitation of the mine would damage the sacred mountain and cause natural disasters. Work teams from Ganzi Prefecture and Daofu County were also attacked. Two government workers were injured, and some villagers were subsequently detained by police. (XH)

---

### **Villagers ransack homes and offices of village leaders over land disputes**

During the first two weeks of May, villagers in 13 township communities in Guangdong Province ransacked homes and offices of village leaders in protest over news that almost all of their land had been sold to people with close connections to those officials. In Toupu Village, villagers first realized that all the land had been sold by the village Party secretary in October, when local authorities rejected all land allocation applications submitted by township enterprises. (SCMP)

### **Protesters bring suit against police**

On May 10, six Sichuan villagers lost a lawsuit against local police, who, they alleged, had illegally detained them after a land grab protest. The villagers complained that the court was controlled by government officials, as evidenced by the lack of defense witnesses and frequent interruption of the villagers as they tried to make their case. Villagers said the videotape of the protest provided by the police also failed to show police beatings of protesters. (RFA)

### **Tianjin protesters given heavy sentences**

Fourteen Tianjin villagers were convicted on June 5 of gathering a crowd to disturb social order, and other charges related to a land grab protest staged on a railway track in December 2006. Relatives of protesters **Ding Shuyin** and **Yang Tinglu**, who were sentenced to prison terms of twelve and one-half and nine and one-half years, respectively, said they were not given advance notice of the trial. An appeal has been launched. (RFA)

### **Local residents clash with police over land in Inner Mongolia**

Violence erupted between police and an estimated 5,000 protesters in Hohhot, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region on June 8. The protesters, mostly railway workers, were among local residents forcibly evicted to make way for a commercial and cultural project. More than 20 people were injured as protesters overturned three police cars and blocked roads. (SCMP)

### **Police assault villagers on second anniversary of land dispute**

Police assaulted 20 villagers attempting to go to Beijing

on June 11 for a protest marking the second anniversary of the violent deaths of six people involved in a land dispute in Dingzhou, Hebei Province. The protesters, who were relatives of the six victims, were reportedly attacked by 300 police officers as they prepared to petition Beijing over the municipal government's refusal to give them proper compensation and return the disputed 25 hectares of land. (SCMP)

### **Protest against forced demolition saves "nail house"**

More than 30,000 people demonstrated against the forced demolition of a house in Shaoqing, Zhejiang Province, on June 18 and 19. At least four police cars were overturned, while two protesters were arrested and dozens more beaten. The demonstration succeeded in dissuading local officials from demolishing a "nail house"—a four-story building in Shaoqing owned by 18 householders that had remained standing in spite of nearby redevelopment. (SCMP)

### **Protesters defend 90-year-old woman's home**

Violence erupted in Shengzhou, Zhejiang Province, on June 20 as 20,000 people clashed with police while protesting the attempted eviction of a 90-year-old woman, Zhang Xinghua. The conflict resulted in the injury of 20 individuals, with six protesters detained by the police. (CP)

### **Thousands protest Chongqing land deal**

A three-day protest was launched in Chongqing in July by farmers dissatisfied with variations in compensation offered by the government for land reclaimed for different phases of an industrial zone project. It was the third riot to break out in Chongqing within a month. Some 5,000 farmers who had sold their land three years ago were angry that the government was now offering double the compensation. More than 1,000 armed police and two armored vehicles were sent to deal with the protest, which eventually resulted in one death and more than 10 injuries. (SCMP)

### **Loss of property rights ahead of the Olympics**

Beijing residents petitioned in July against the annulment of their apartment ownership rights, which they believed would become increasingly difficult to restore due to Beijing's rapid development before the 2008

Olympic Games. In Qingdao, approximately 100 evicted families protested at the local government office on July 23 before being dispersed by police. The families complained that local officials had seized their homes in a city-wide beautification project in preparation for the Olympics. (RFA)

### **Clash over mysterious death of village head's wife**

Twenty people were injured when 1,000 Guangdong villagers clashed with police on July 8 over the suspicious death of the wife of a village head. The village head, surnamed Lin, had reportedly refused to agree to an unfair land deal. Earlier on July 5, the authorities had sent 100 people to Lin's home, and his wife was detained on the grounds that the couple had violated the one-child policy. She died an hour later. The official explanation was that she jumped to her death because she had refused to pay fines for the violation. But villagers argued that Lin had paid long ago, and that the couple's youngest son was already 12 years old. Local media were barred from covering the incident. (RFA)

### **Man attempts to set fire to Mao portrait in Tiananmen Square**

Chinese police arrested a man who allegedly tried to set fire to the giant portrait of Chairman Mao Zedong in Tiananmen Square on May 12. **Gu Haiou**, from Urumqi, threw a homemade object at the painting two hours after arriving in Beijing. Smoke and fire broke out briefly on the bottom left-hand corner of the portrait, which was promptly replaced. Apart from a brief report by Xinhua News Agency, all other news agencies and Web sites were silent regarding the incident. (BBC)

### **Protests over family planning rules**

Riots broke out across the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region between May 25 and May 31 in protest against forced abortions and sterilizations. From May 25 to 26, as many as 3,000 people throughout several counties clashed with police, some burning government buildings and overturning cars to vent their anger. Twenty-eight people were detained, according to state media. In Shitao Township, Rongxian County, residents reignited riots on May 29 over family planning rules that had taken effect in mid-May. Protesters surrounded local government offices and clashed with police. At least a dozen villagers were

arrested on May 30. Also on May 29, hundreds of protesters in Yangmei Township, Rongxian County, gathered in front of a family planning office and demanded a refund of fines imposed for having more than one child. A dozen alleged protest organizers in Shabi Town were reported detained on June 4 after a house-to-house raid by public security officers, who surrounded the town in 46 police vehicles. Similar incidents also occurred in Bobai County, and it was reported on July 23 that a man surnamed Peng and another surnamed Li were sentenced to prison terms of two years and one year, respectively, for falsifying an official document that led residents to demand refunds of "social support fees" collected in the family planning crackdown. (RFA, RTR, SCMP)

### **Tiananmen Mothers call for accountability**

**Ding Zilin** and more than 20 other members of the Tiananmen Mothers gathered at the end of May to commemorate the eighteenth anniversary of the violent crackdown on unarmed protesters in and around Beijing's Tiananmen Square on June 4, 1989. As an alternative to their previous open letters to the central government, members of the group held a roundtable discussion on May 24 and 26, during which they expressed their opinions and requests. (HRIC)

### **Students riot after street inspectors beat female student**

As many as 2,000 students clashed with 100 police officers in Zhengzhou, Henan Province, on June 6 after a student vendor was beaten by inspectors clearing her unlicensed stall. Five students and six inspectors were detained. (ABC)

### **10,000 protesters clash with police over murder**

10,000 protesters clashed with police in Chongqing on June 29 over the handling of the stabbing death of a Form One student. At least four people were reported arrested, and more than 10 injured in the clash. A blogger had reported that police delayed in rescuing the student, and the alleged perpetrators of the murder, also students, were reportedly released soon after questioning because they were too young to be charged. (SCMP)

---

## HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

### Harassment

It was announced on May 11 that **Xu Jiehua**, wife of detained Jiangsu environmental activist **Wu Lihong**, would carry on Wu's activism regarding pollution in Tai Lake. Xu announced that she had filed a lawsuit in the Beijing No. 1 Intermediate People's Court on May 9 against SEPA for naming their hometown of Yixing as one of the mainland's 44 "Green and Eco-aware Cities" despite the fact that thousands of people in Yixing have cancer because of pollution there. "The lawsuit was scheduled by my husband and his friend Chen Faqing before his arrest, and I am now replacing him to do that," Xu said in Beijing. Wu Lihong was detained by Yixing police on April 13 for alleged blackmail, and the family has suffered harassment for more than 10 years because of their activism. (SCMP)

Guangxi-based rights defender **Mo Jufeng** was forcibly sterilized on May 13 for violating the one-child policy by having two children. Mo argued that both his children were more than 10 years old, and he had no intention of having a third child. Mo noted that the authorities had not taken any action against him in the past 10 years, and he suspected the forced surgery was actually retaliation against his rights defense work. Mo has been monitored by the police, and his Internet access has been blocked. (RFA)

**Hu Jia**, a rights activist who fought for medical benefits for thousands of people in central Henan Province who were infected with HIV/AIDS from tainted government-run blood banks, was briefly detained and then placed under house arrest on May 18, after he attempted to leave for Hong Kong with his wife, **Zeng Jinyan**. Authorities had ordered him not to leave the mainland and had accused him of "endangering state security." On May 20, a Beijing policeman stationed outside Hu's apartment threatened to beat him with a wooden club spiked with nails. The policeman reportedly ordered Hu to pay compensation for a pair of sunglasses that were broken when other officers restrained him from attacking Hu. (AFP)

The home of 74-year-old **Li Changyu** was ransacked and his computer confiscated by Shandong provincial

authorities in early May. Li and others started a signature campaign calling for a reevaluation of the "Anti-Rightist" movement last year. (MP)

**Shuang Shuying**, the elderly mother of house church activist **Hua Huiqi**, was reported in late June to have been denied family visits in prison despite her serious health problems. Hua Huiqi himself was sentenced to six months in prison on June 4, 2007, and was also denied family contact. Both Shuang and Hua were detained for protesting forcible eviction from their home. Hua Huiqi's wife, Wei Jumei, said that she had tried several times to visit Shuang Shuying in the detention center but had been refused each time, with detention center police saying the decision was outside their control. (HRIC)

Shanxi police refused to investigate an incident on June 19 in which pregnant rights defender **Zhou Li** and her daughter were attacked during a trip. They were beaten by unidentified thugs after asking other hostel users to keep their voices down. Zhou's husband is rights defender **Sun Xiaodi**. (RFA)

Beijing-based rights defender **Liu Anjun** was released on June 19 after being detained for 20 hours because of his recent contacts with foreign media. He suffered head injuries during police interrogation. (RFA)

**Gao Zhisheng** was taken away from his Beijing home on June 24, preventing him from attending the American Board of Trial Advocates award ceremony in the US. He was allowed home on July 5. Around mid-July, Gao clashed with police who had stepped up surveillance on his home after petitioners learned that he could provide legal representation again. In related news, officials rejected an application by Gao's wife and children to travel abroad. (AP, RFA)

It was reported on July 12 that officials rejected **Jiang Yanyong's** application to travel to receive a human rights award in the US in September. Dr. Jiang publicized the Chinese government's cover-up of the SARS epidemic in 2003, and in 2004 called on the National People's Congress to reassess the June 4th crackdown. (MP)

Shanghai rights defense lawyer **Zheng Enchong** and a group of displaced residents of Shanghai's Dongbakuai



neighborhood were prevented from registering to attend the trial of Shanghai property tycoon Zhou Zhengyi on July 24. Zheng Enchong was reportedly surrounded by six police officers and beaten and dragged in an hour-long assault when he tried to go to the Shanghai Municipal Higher People's Court. The displaced residents were turned away from the court by security guards and court police. As reported by HRIC on July 17, Zheng and more than 100 displaced residents signed a petition demanding a public trial for Zhou Zhengyi and for an opportunity for residents to testify at Zhou's trial. (HRIC)

Rights defender **Zheng Dajing** was beaten by officials in Beijing on July 24 after he tried to intervene in the aggressive removal of a disabled petitioner. (RFA)

An application by human rights lawyer **Li Jianqiang** to renew his law license was rejected by the Shandong judicial authorities at the end of July. No reason was given for the rejection. (RFA)

### Arrest/Detention/Disappearance

Beijing-based rights defender **Qi Zhiyong** was detained on May 15 after inviting 30 other rights defenders to a birthday party he organized for himself. Rights defender **Liu Fenggang** was beaten by police for his involvement in the birthday celebration. (RFA)

China Democracy Party member **Chen Shuqing** had been on a hunger strike for over half a month as of May 18. Chen had been in detention for eight months without charge, and his family had not been allowed to visit him. (RFA)

### Trial developments

According to a posting on the Web site Boxun at the end of May, Hubei-based workers' representative **Zhou Yuanwu** was sentenced to a prison term of two years and six months for "obstructing the execution of official duties". (RFA)

It was reported on June 8 that the trial of environmental activist **Wu Lihong** had been postponed indefinitely, in order to investigate allegations that interrogators tortured Wu to extract a confession. Wu was arrested in April after he reported the worsening pollution at Taihu Lake. (RAN)

**Zhu Yufu** and his son, **Zhu Ang**, were formally arrested on May 18 on allegations of obstructing the execution of official duties and assaulting police officers. The Zhejiang dissident and his son were indicted on charges of "obstructing execution of official duties" on June 21. On July 10, Hangzhou's Shangcheng District Court sentenced Zhu Yufu, 54, to two years in prison, while Zhu Ang was given a suspended one-year sentence. (VOA, RFA, AP)

The family of Pan-Blue Alliance member **Zhang Zilin** was notified on June 22 that Zhang had been formally arrested on blackmailing charges. The girlfriend of another member, **Xiong Jiahu**, was notified on June 26 that Xiong had been sentenced to "custody and education" for two years for procuring sex. Xiong's girlfriend and the Pan-Blue Alliance criticized the sentencing procedures as unfair. The whereabouts of Pan-Blue Alliance members **Sun Buer** and **Cai Aimin** remained unknown in June. Another member, **Xie Fulin**, was taken away from his home on June 5, and the authorities told his family that he would be detained for 15 days. (RFA)

China Democracy Party member **Chen Shuqing** was tried on July 17, but the court had yet to hand down a decision as of August 5. Chen was indicted on charges of inciting subversion through articles he published on the Internet. His lawyer, Li Jianqiang, criticized the prosecution's presenting as evidence articles that had not been included in the indictment against Chen. (RFA)

It was reported on July 18 that rights defense lawyer **Li Shuangling** was sent to a custody and education facility for one year on charges of visiting a sex worker on March 25. Some Guangdong evictees argued for Li's innocence, saying that Li was detained while preparing to represent them in an administrative lawsuit over their eviction. (RFA)

Delivery of the verdict in the trial of Guangdong-based rights defender **Guo Feixiong**, also known as **Yang Maodong**, has been delayed for further investigation. Guo went on trial on July 9 on charges of "running an illegal business" in connection with the publication of a book. Guo's wife, Zhang Qing, called Guangzhou's Tianhe District Court on July 26 to find out when the verdict would be announced and was told that the

---

procuratorate had requested that Guo's case be sent back for supplementary investigation following the adjournment of his trial. (HRIC)

The appeal of Zhejiang-based China Democracy Party member **Chi Jianwei** against his three-year prison sentence was denied in a closed trial, and he began serving his sentence on May 31. Chi was convicted of "using a heretical organization to undermine implementation of the law." (RFA)

### **Imprisonment/prison conditions**

In early May, it was reported that imprisoned China Democracy Party member **He Depu** was beaten by another inmate, who had a good relationship with prison authorities. There have been previous reports of He being beaten by law enforcement agents. (RFA)

On May 3, Canada's House of Commons unanimously passed a highly unusual motion calling on China to give Canada consular access to **Huseyin Celil**, a Canadian Uyghur serving a life sentence in China for alleged terrorist links. (The Ottawa Citizen)

**Zhang Jianhong**, currently serving a jail term for inciting subversion, was diagnosed with muscle atrophy in mid-June. His wife said a doctor believed the serious condition should qualify him for medical parole. Zhang wrote a number of political essays under the pen name **Li Hong**. (RFA)

Prison authorities prevented the family of **Chen Guangcheng**, a blind, self-taught lawyer imprisoned in Shandong Province, from visiting him on May 8. They also refused to pass on to Chen a copy of the Law on the Protection of Disabled Persons (the version for persons with visual disabilities), on the grounds that they could not verify the contents of the book. His wife reported in June that she and Chen's brother had found him covered in bruises when they visited him in prison on June 16. Chen told them he had been beaten by fellow inmates after refusing to have his head shaved. He also said prison guards often deprived him of food. (RFA, RSF)

Shanghai petitioner **Chen Xiaoming** died on July 1, shortly after being released on medical parole. Chen's

family had previously made numerous requests on his behalf for medical parole, but they had been refused. Since his detention on February 15, 2006, Chen's family had only been allowed to visit him once, in April 2007. Around the end of April, Chen was transferred to Baimaoling Prison, after which family members were unable to visit him or receive any information about his health. On June 29, a prison official notified Chen's family that Chen had been transferred to Shanghai's Tiliangqiao Prison Hospital, where they found him vomiting blood and barely conscious. Given Chen's serious condition, his family was authorized to apply for medical parole, and on July 1, Chen was transferred to Shanghai's Zhongshan Hospital. However, he showed no signs of improvement, and at 7:30 that night, he died of a massive hemorrhage. (HRIC)

The family of Shanghai petitioner **Mao Hengfeng** told RFA on July 5 that Mao had been tortured in prison. According to her family, Mao was beaten and confined to a room with no sunlight or fresh air, and was forced to sleep on the floor. Mao was also force-fed after refusing to accept the food other inmates brought her because she feared poisoning. In addition, she was reportedly forced to strip half-naked in front of male inmates and police officers. (RFA)

It was reported on July 9 that Internet activist **Guo Qizhen** was beaten by fellow-inmates at Shijiazhuang prison, Hebei Province, at the behest of prison guards. His wife reported that he was covered in bruises when she was finally allowed to visit him on June 18. Guo was arrested on May 12, 2006, and sentenced to four years in jail for "incitement to subvert state power." He had a broken leg at the time of his arrest and has not received adequate treatment in jail, causing his health to deteriorate. (RSF)

### **Release**

Environmental activist **Tan Kai**, sentenced on charges of illegally obtaining state secrets, was released on April 19 after completing his 18-month prison term. Tan, a computer technician, founded a group called Green Watch in 2005 to look into complaints by local residents in Zhejiang that pollution from a chemical factory was destroying crops and causing birth defects. (RFA)

China Democracy Party member **Gao Hongming** was released on June 28 after eight years' imprisonment. He was convicted of subversion in 1999. (RFA)

**Chang Yongjie**, 42, a Beijing worker jailed for life for taking part in the 1989 Tiananmen Square protests, was freed on June 26 after his sentence was commuted. At least 12 others similarly sentenced remain in prison. (RTR)

**Sun Hong**, jailed after the 1989 Tiananmen crackdown, was released on July 7. He had been sentenced to death with a two-year reprieve on arson charges. (AP)

### June 4th-related incidents

On the night of June 3, Tiananmen Mother **Ding Zilin** was allowed for the first time to pay tribute to her son at the location where he was shot dead in Beijing 18 years ago. (MP)

Rights defender **Qi Zhiyong** was released on June 5 after being detained for a week. Qi has been demanding justice for the leg he lost due to gunshots during the June 4th crackdown. (RFA)

### Exile

President Bush met with the exiled leader of China's Uyghur Muslims, **Rebiya Kadeer**, on June 5. The meeting was significant amid international pressure on China to curb serious human rights abuses ahead of the 2008 Olympics. Kadeer's sons are currently in jail, while Kadeer herself was imprisoned for six years before being released into exile in the US. (AFP)

### Awards

Imprisoned Chinese journalist **Shi Tao** received the 2007 Golden Pen of Freedom on June 4 at the opening ceremony of the World Newspaper Congress (WNC) and World Editors Forum (WEF). The Golden Pen of Freedom, established in 1961 by the Paris-based World Association of Newspapers, is an annual award recognizing individuals who have made an outstanding contribution to the defense and promotion of press freedom. The presentation of this year's award on the eighteenth anniversary of the June 4, 1989, crackdown was particularly appropriate, given that Shi Tao was sentenced to 10 years in prison for circulating informa-



**Gao Qinsheng**, mother of imprisoned journalist **Shi Tao**, holds the Golden Pen of Freedom Award that she accepted from the World Association of Newspapers on behalf of her son. Photo: Reuters

tion about official security preparations for the fifteenth anniversary of June 4th, in 2004. WNC and WEF announced plans for an advocacy campaign demanding Shi Tao's release and drawing international attention to other cases of imprisoned Chinese journalists. (HRIC)

Blind activist and self-taught "barefoot lawyer" **Chen Guangcheng** was awarded Asia's equivalent of the Nobel Prize on July 31. Chen, who is currently serving a four-year prison term for exposing forced abortions and sterilization, was one of seven winners of the Manila-based Ramon Magsaysay Award this year. The Foundation lauded his "irrepressible passion for justice in leading ordinary Chinese citizens to assert their legitimate rights under the law." Chen's wife **Yuan Weijing** was given the "Victims' Family Members Award" by a US foundation in mid-July for her efforts to secure Chen's release. Yuan herself remains under stringent monitoring and harassment from the authorities. (RTR, RFA)

### LABOR

#### Labor Contract Law proposed

China's proposed Labor Contract Law, which was first presented in December 2005, was passed on June 29 by the standing committee of the NCP. The Labor Contract Law is the most significant overhaul of workplace regulation to date in China.

The law sets standards for layoffs, severance and the use of temporary workers, among other conditions. The

---

first draft of the law was made available to the public for comment and elicited 190,000 responses. A provision to punish government officials for abuse of office and dereliction of duty was added at the last minute in response to a recent slave labor scandal. (WSJ, AP)

### **Plans for more labor contracts by year's end**

The Ministry of Labor and Social Security announced on July 20 that it hopes to bring 90 percent of China's workforce under the protection of formal labor contracts by the end of 2007. A spokesperson said the government would further bring all enterprises with trade unions into the collective labor contract scheme by 2012. Other matters of priority include reemployment of laid-off workers and ensuring an appropriate salary growth rate. (XH)

### **Survey on wages of miners conducted**

In May, news reports highlighted a survey conducted by 10 undergraduate students of Hunan Normal University, which found that miners earn only 1,000–2,000 *yuan* (\$130–260) per month with barely any other benefits. The survey also found that 82 percent of the miners interviewed had less than a high-school education, 62 percent had no occupational skills, and 48 percent could not find other jobs. (AT)

### **Survey reveals that job discrimination is common**

A survey conducted by the Constitutional Government Research Institute of the China University of Politics and Law found that most people have experienced some kind of discrimination while seeking jobs, state media reported in June. Out of 3,500 respondents, 85 percent reported job discrimination, while slightly more than 50 percent said that "serious discrimination" exists. Physically disabled people were most likely to report discrimination, followed by people with HIV/AIDS or hepatitis B, and migrant workers. Another survey revealed that nearly 80 percent of foreign companies refuse to employ hepatitis B carriers, mainly because they fear carriers will pass the virus to healthy employees. (PD, XH)

### **Survey finds migrant workers are mistreated**

A poll by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences among 5,000 workers in several major cities found that migrant construction workers are overworked. About

53 percent of migrant workers lacked an official contract, and only 17 percent of workers with contracts said they understood its contents. A mere 31 percent of workers regularly received their full salary on time, and nearly two-thirds lacked disability insurance. The poll also found that 44 percent of respondents felt they were "looked down on" by locals. (TA)

### **Employment training for women**

Chinese authorities were reported in early May to be trying to increase employment of women and to increase training of laid-off female workers to ease their reemployment. More than 270,000 Chinese women have received employment training from labor departments, with 154,000 finding jobs or setting up their own businesses. About 21 percent of rural women in cities were fired after they became pregnant or had a child, state media reported on May 7. (XH)

### **Online job system helps rural unemployed find jobs**

The expansion of the government-supported online job information system serving rural areas in Hebei Province was reported in June to have helped many unemployed laborers secure jobs. The "fully employed community" program, part of Hebei's rural poverty alleviation program, provides jobseekers with cost-free information through links with networks operated by the labor departments in provincial administrations. The system aims to help at least 90 percent of unemployed farmers find jobs. (XH)

### **Eight million rural workers to be trained in 2007**

China will train eight million rural laborers in 2007 as part of a plan announced in early July by the Ministry of Labor and Social Security to provide job-training opportunities to a total of 40 million rural laborers over the eleventh Five-Year Plan period (2006–2010). (XH)

### **Companies accused of using child labor to make Olympic-licensed products**

In a June 10 report, PlayFair 2008 accused four factories in southern China of labor violations and criticized the International Olympic Committee for doing too little to prevent such abuses. Lekit Stationary Company, Ltd., Yue Wing Cheong Light Products (Shenzhen) Co. Ltd., Eagle Leather Products Ltd. and Mainland Headwear Holdings Ltd. were cited for using workers as young as 12 years of

age, falsifying employment records and forcing workers to lie about their terms of employment. Organizers of the Beijing Olympics said they took the allegations very seriously and threatened to cancel the companies' Olympics contracts if the allegations proved to be true. (AP)

### **Child labor uncovered at Shaanxi factory**

A quilt factory in Shaanxi's Qishan County was found to be using juvenile workers in early July. A reporter first discovered two workers of "a very young age" working without any protective equipment; later, authorities discovered a total of four workers aged 14 to 16 years, who had been forced to work 12 hours a day without pay for nearly six months. The factory was sealed off, and the owner was ordered to report to the Labor Bureau, where he was expected to be fined 5,000 *yuan* for each underage worker. (SCMP)

### **Worker dies after mob beating in wage dispute**

Migrant worker Lei Mingzhong, originally from Chongqing, died on July 2 from injuries sustained during a dispute on June 29 over unpaid wages in Dongyuan County, Heyuan, in Guangdong Province. Lei was one of approximately 300 workers with the Qiutian construction company who were attacked by an armed mob allegedly recruited by Qiutian's contractor, Fuyuan Hydropower Development Company, after they went on strike to demand unpaid wages. Fuyuan's security head, Ye Dingfa, was arrested with three others for leading and inciting the attack. (PD)

### **Work safety campaign to be launched**

The State Council released a document on May 15 stating that China will conduct an inspection and supervision campaign to try to improve work safety. The campaign will focus on high-risk industries such as mining, petrochemicals, non-ferrous metals, construction and fisheries. (XH)

### **Labor accidents**

On July 13, work safety authorities announced that 46 work accidents involving 205 deaths had been deliberately covered up in the first half of 2007. 177 of these deaths, or 86 percent, occurred in colliery accidents. On July 18 it was reported that companies could be fined up to five million *yuan* if caught deliberately covering up work accidents. (XH, CNA)

### **Rise in deaths from specialized equipment accidents**

It was reported in June that a total of 117 accidents involving specialized equipment had occurred in China in the first five months of 2007, leaving 110 people dead and another 124 injured. The death toll was seven percent higher than during the same period last year. (XH)

### **SAWS announces small mine closures**

The State Administration of Work Safety (SAWS) announced in June that it will close 10,000 small coal mines by the end of 2007. Small coal mines account for one-third of China's total production, but two-thirds of deaths from coal mine accidents. In 2006, accidents in small coal mines took 3,431 lives. (XH)

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

### **Punished**

China's Supreme People's Court announced on June 4 that it had prosecuted 193 people, including 16 government officials, for contravening work safety regulations such as those prohibiting the operation of illegal coal mines. Out of the 193 punished, 149 were imprisoned immediately, while the rest were put on probation. Five were sentenced to prison sentences of seven years, the heaviest possible punishment for the crime. (XH)

Coal mine owner Wang Jianjun was fined one million *yuan* (\$129,800) and sentenced to life in prison for covering up a gas blast that killed 21 people in Shanxi Province in March. Wang sealed off information, sent miners home and destroyed evidence after the blast. Two of his managers were sentenced to 20 years' imprisonment, and another 19 defendants, including eight civil servants, were jailed. (RTR)

Zhang Ruilin, one of the owners of an illegal coal mine in Shanxi Province where 14 people were killed in an explosion on April 30, was arrested on May 2. The police are still searching for the other owner, Zhao Laiyin, who, like Zhang, fled after the accident. Five other organizers have been detained in connection with the explosion. (XH)



**Parents searching for missing children exposed the kidnapping of workers, some under-aged, to serve as slave laborers in Shanxi Province brick kilns. Photo: Associated Press**

On July 3, the Intermediate People's Court of Linfen City, Shanxi Province, found three coal mine bosses guilty of illegal mining, tax dodging and forcing miners to work in a mine despite known risks. The charges stemmed from a gas explosion that had killed 28 miners two months earlier. Hao Yingjie, former owner of the Pudeng Coal Mine in Puxian County, Linfen City, was sentenced to 20 years in prison, while two chief directors of the coal mine, Zhang Xiaodong and Wang Zhangxi, received life and eight years' imprisonment, respectively. An additional 14 people responsible for the accident also received jail sentences, and the coal mine itself was fined 8.3 million *yuan* (about \$1 million). (XH, PD)

Seaweed farm owner Liu Songquan was sentenced to five and one-half years in prison on June 26 after being found responsible for the accidental deaths of 19 people in mid-April. Liu forced his employees, including his wife, to work overtime on his laver farm near the coastal Hezao Village in Rudong, Jiangsu Province. When the workers finally headed back to the village, their tractors became bogged down in the mud, and

they were swept out to sea when the tide came in. The court found Liu liable for failing to arrange for the rescue of his employees, for failing to ensure that he and his employees had received technical training on maritime safety, and for allowing employees to drive his tractors without licenses. (XH)

On June 16, authorities arrested five people from a brick kiln in Hongtong County, Shanxi Province, for enslaving workers at their factory. Kiln boss Wang Bingbing, foreman Heng Tinghan and three hired thugs were charged with "illegally holding and deliberately injuring laborers . . . and forcing them to do highly intensive manual labor." Reports of laborers made to work as virtual slaves in Shanxi brick kilns first surfaced in early June. The victims, who included children and people with mental disabilities, were abducted by human traffickers and sold to brick kilns owners in Shanxi and Henan provinces for an average of 500 *yuan* (\$66) each. Chinese state media estimate that other kilns and mines similarly abused more than 53,000 illegal migrant workers. By the end of the month, nearly 600 people had been rescued and 168 suspected kiln

bosses detained as tens of thousands of police were dispatched to investigate the scandal.

On July 17, Shanxi brick kiln owner Wang Bingbing received nine years in prison for unlawful detention and the use of slave labor. Foreman Heng Tinghan, convicted of beating and enslaving workers, was sentenced to life in prison, while another foreman, Zhao Yanbing, was sentenced to death for killing an enslaved worker. Dozens more were subsequently tried on various charges of abusing the workers. It was reported on July 16 that 95 officials at the county level or lower were punished by the CPC, receiving warnings, demotions and black marks on their records. Three were expelled from the Party, 33 were fired from their jobs, and eight officials will be criminally prosecuted. However, officials at the municipal level and above were found to be innocent of wrongdoing. (LAT, VOA, CD, XH, AP)

## DEATH PENALTY

It was reported in early June that the number of people executed in China had dropped in the first five months of the year after the Supreme People's Court resumed the right to review and approve all death penalties handed down throughout China. (PD)

A circular released by the Supreme People's Court on June 14 affirmed that first-instance hearings of death penalty cases must be open. It called for courts to carry out public trials for appeal hearings in criminal cases, and for more in-court announcements of judgments, and it emphasized the need for timely, "full-scale" public trials. (PD)

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

ABC	ABC News
AFP	Agence France Presse
AP	Associated Press
AT	Asia Times
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BJN	Beijing News
CD	China Daily
CNA	Channel News Asia
CP	China Post
CORG	China.org.cn
ED	EastDay.com
FT	Financial Times
Guardian	The Guardian (London)
HRIC	Human Rights in China
IHT	International Herald Tribune
LAT	Los Angeles Times
LD	Legal Daily
MP	Ming Pao
NYT	New York Times
PD	People's Daily
PE	Pacific Epoch
PTA	Press Trust of India
RAN	Reuters AlertNet
RTR	Reuters
RFA	Radio Free Asia
RSF	Reporters Without Borders
SCMP	South China Morning Post
SHD	Shanghai Daily
TA	The Age
VOA	Voice of America
WSJ	Wall Street Journal
XH	Xinhua News Agency



HRIC HEAD OFFICE  
350 Fifth Avenue, Suite 3311  
New York, NY 10118  
USA  
tel (212) 239-4495  
fax (212) 239-2561  
hrichina@hrichina.org

HONG KONG OFFICE  
GPO P.O. Box 1778  
Hong Kong  
tel (852) 2710-8021  
fax (852) 2710-8027  
hrichk@hrichina.org

EU LIASION OFFICE  
15 rue de la Linière  
1060 Brussels, Belgium  
tel (32) 2 609 44 20  
fax (32) 2 609 44 34  
hricEU@hrichina.org

www.hrichina.org  
www.zhongguorenquan.org

Jacques Rogge  
President  
International Olympic Committee  
Lausanne, Switzerland

September 11, 2007

Dear Mr. President,

When China won the bid for the 2008 Summer Olympic Games in 2001, both the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the Chinese government predicted the Games would have a positive impact on human rights and development in China. Since then, you have said the Olympics “can only be a catalyst for change and not a panacea.” We agree—there is no magic bullet for complex human rights problems. However, with greater transparency and accountability, the Games could help generate lasting improvements and launch reforms beyond 2008.

Human Rights in China (HRIC) requests that the IOC make public the Host City Contract with Beijing (the Contract), which sets out the legal, commercial and financial rights and obligations of the IOC and the Beijing Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games (BOCOG). You have expressed confidence that Beijing will host a successful Games and that BOCOG “will fulfill these requirements and obligations of the Host City Contract.” Without public disclosure of this Contract, however, the public cannot hold the IOC or BOCOG accountable to fulfilling these requirements and obligations.

Although restrictive state secrets provisions often limit the public’s right to know, disclosing the Contract would reinforce domestic Chinese open government initiatives underway, including a new law, the Provision of the PRC on the Disclosure of Government Information (effective May 2008). Releasing the Contract would also contribute to your efforts to ground public expectations regarding Beijing’s obligations as the host city. This action would also follow the spirit of transparency adopted by other host cities such as Atlanta, Sydney, Salt Lake City, and Athens.

As an international Chinese human rights organization, HRIC sincerely hopes that the Games will be successful and will benefit all the Chinese people—in 2008 and beyond. We look forward to your response and would welcome an opportunity to meet with you.

Sincerely,

Sharon Hom  
Executive Director

DIRECTORS

Co-Chairs **CHRISTINE LOH** and **ANDREW J. NATHAN**  
Treasurer **R. SCOTT GREATHEAD**

William Bernstein      Ian Buruma  
Li Jinjin      Liu Qing

HONORARY DIRECTORS

Joseph L. Birman      Marie Holzman  
Paul Martin      Nina Rosenwald

Executive Director **SHARON HOM**

Chair Emeritus **ROBERT L. BERNSTEIN**

Cheng Xiaonong  
Robin Munro

Robert G. James  
Ruan Ming

Secretary **CHEUK KWAN**

Han Dongfang      Hu Ping  
James Ottaway, Jr.      Megan Wiese

Joel Lebowitz      Torbjörn Lodén  
Anne Thurston



---

# 2008 IN PERSPECTIVE



Photo: Associated Press

---

# HUMAN RIGHTS: THE TRUE GOLD STANDARD

By He Qinglian

*The Chinese government needs to demonstrate progress on its commitments to improving human rights. Otherwise the 2008 Beijing Olympics will face growing opposition, not only in the international community, but also within China.*

## A MOVEMENT BORN OF BROKEN PROMISES

In stark contrast to the revelry at Beijing's victorious Olympic bid six years ago, the Chinese government now faces an embarrassingly defiant, and possibly inescapable, challenge: a rapidly expanding international boycott of the 2008 Beijing Olympics. Even organizations in Norway, a country known for its neutrality in the unpredictable world of international politics, are getting involved. Despite concerns about international opposition, however, the most disconcerting development for the Chinese authorities is undoubtedly the increasing participation of China's own citizens in this boycott movement: in one case, 3,000 peasants from Qinghua Village in Fujin, Heilongjiang Province, signed a petition declaring, "We want human rights, not the Olympics."<sup>1</sup>

Given that the myth of China's economic miracle has sustained its charm and shown no sign of fading over the past six years, what could account for the massive shift in international perceptions of China that is driving this boycott movement? To answer this question, we need look no further than the slogans promoted by the various participating groups. A quick review reveals that the Olympic boycott movement is the direct outcome of the Chinese government's deception of the international community and abandonment of its obligations. In order to relieve some of the pressures coming to bear during its bid for the Games in 2001, the Chinese gov-

ernment promised to improve human rights conditions in China. Since then, however, China's human rights situation has not only failed to improve even marginally, but has actually undergone a rapid deterioration due to mounting political suppression and a growing dependence on an ever-expanding army of secret agents.

The Chinese authorities prosecute even the most routine criticism in commentary or academic research by means of politicized criminal charges such as "endangering state security," "incitement to subvert state power" and "leaking state secrets," which routinely draw prison sentences of 10 years or more. Considering the government's excessive politicization of all matters, it is hard to know whether to laugh or cry at the irony of these same authorities appealing to the international community for a "depoliticized" approach to the Olympics. So-called "professors" have been dragged before the state media machine to assert that those who link politics with the Olympics "completely fail to understand the Olympic spirit," while at the same time referring to the boycott of the 1980 Moscow Olympics by the United States and 61 other nations as a "farce." The Chinese government, which has essentially politicized all public discourse, is the least qualified entity on earth to make such an appeal, which is clearly aimed at allowing the Party to maintain its exclusive hegemony over political power and discourse.

## THE CHINESE PEOPLE OPEN THEIR EYES: HUMAN RIGHTS COME FIRST

In the aftermath of the 2004 Athens Olympics, certain segments of Chinese public opinion had already begun questioning the government's game of "gold-medal politics."

The assumption that Olympic gold medals represent a nation's strength is a political illusion that has been hammered into the Chinese public consciousness through years of government propaganda and ideological education. The Chinese government has long described its primary political goal as the creation of a "wealthy and militarily strong country." Yet even with the transition from Maoist orthodoxy to "economic development," the Party's sights have remained much more closely focused on developing a strong nation than a wealthy citizenry, completely excluding human rights-related concerns from their policy considerations. This myopic vision has bred the specious concept that participation in the Games reflects a nation's strength, status, and political and spiritual well-being. Winning gold medals or hosting the Olympics becomes a tool for the government to boost the nation's international prestige, build "domestic harmony" and "unite friends from all around the world who love peace, for the enhancement of mutual understanding and the advancement of mutual progress." The Party has even gone so far as to claim that the Olympics pulled Japan and South Korea across the threshold of modernization to join the ranks of the advanced nations of the world, and to assure us that holding the Olympics in Beijing likewise destines China to a glorious future.

It is precisely this national ideology that has led to the unprecedented Chinese obsession with "gold medal politics." It began on July 29, 1984, after 28 years of isolation from the Olympics, when Xu Haifeng captured China's first gold medal during the Summer Games in Los Angeles. *China Youth Daily* reporter Sun Jie captured the surge of public excitement at this moment in Chinese Olympic history in his renowned dispatch, "Triumph: Rounds of Glory at Prado!" Xu's article was eventually incorporated into primary school language and literature textbooks, instilling a passion for gold medals in the hearts of our younger generation under the mask of "education."<sup>2</sup>

In this manner, gold medals soon became a central component of the Chinese people's dream of a great and powerful nation, and the ensuing "Olympics complex" became the Chinese government's not-so-secret weapon for unifying and manipulating popular sentiment. Many Chinese (even some living overseas) consider support

for the Beijing Olympics a test of patriotism, and when Beijing won its bid for the Olympics in 2001, many actually believed that this "success" was a sign of China's growing international prestige.

**It has become increasingly clear that there is no correlation between winning gold medals and improving ordinary people's livelihood.**

Since then, a league of elite athletes, nurtured at exorbitant costs to Chinese taxpayers, has achieved the dream of "capturing the gold," and masses of officials have reaped profits by attaching themselves like parasites to the Olympic dream. Upon closer inspection and reflection, however, it has become increasingly clear that there is no correlation between winning gold medals and improving ordinary people's livelihood. After China won the second largest number of gold medals in the 2004 Olympics, and the government busied itself with joyous celebrations, Chinese public opinion, which still had slight room to breathe at the time, began a process of reflecting upon the nation's "Olympic complex." Numerous indirect criticisms of athletic policy have been directed at two primary questions: the relationship between gold medals and the welfare of the people of China; and the actual cost exacted in obtaining these gold medals.

## **GOLD MEDALS AND LIVING STANDARDS**

At the 2004 Athens Olympics, China won a total of 32 gold medals, second in number only to the United States, which won thirty-five. The Chinese people should have been thrilled with these results, but some people had already begun to awaken from their "Olympic complex" trance and consider that these medals may not be a cause for celebration. Beset by an onslaught of social problems, the Chinese government has essentially absolved itself of responsibility for the welfare of its citizens, and instead has focused its efforts and financial resources on a series of face-saving projects of "national glory." The Olympics is one of the largest of these projects, yet despite the government's concerted focus and massive expenditures, the



**Xu Haifeng, who won China's first Olympic gold medal in the 1984 Los Angeles Games, ignited the Chinese public's enthusiasm for the Games. Photo: AFP/Getty Images**

policy of sacrifice for Olympic glory does not seem to have given China any competitive advantage over its former socialist brothers. Russia, together with nine other former Soviet republics, including the Ukraine, Georgia, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Lithuania, earned a total of 162 medals at the 2004 Olympics, 45 of which were gold, thereby far surpassing both China and the United States.

The Chinese people initially had no objections to setting aside massive state funds for the purpose of winning Olympic medals: after all, didn't the former USSR earn its reputation as an athletic superpower through similar means? But it has been nearly 20 years since Russia and other former Soviet states embarked on their process of democratization, a process that ended dependence upon totalitarian state machines to consolidate labor and financial resources for the sole purpose of winning gold medals. The exceptional performance of these nations at the 2004 Olympics thus constituted a victory of the determined efforts of individual athletes over the Chinese state's gold-medal machine. Along the same lines, the Chinese people have also long been aware that, with the exception of a few profit-dri-

ven spectator sports, the majority of US athletes competing in the Olympics are not full-time professionals, while Chinese athletes are all professional athletes supported by taxpayers' hard-earned money.

One cannot help but recognize that China's Olympic performance is far less impressive on a per-capita basis than the gross figures might suggest. Of the 10 countries that have won the greatest number of gold metals, most have won one gold medal for every million citizens, with the United States lagging slightly behind at one medal for every 2.85 million Americans. China, however, captured just one medal for every 20.59 million Chinese.

The shortcomings of China's athletics policy are even more evident at a

more personal level. Chinese studying abroad have noticed the inferiority of their physical condition compared with that of their classmates. Such discrepancies are not genetic, but rather the direct result of a national athletic policy that emphasizes the Olympics while providing virtually no public sports facilities for ordinary citizens.

The complications of China's misplaced athletic policy actually extend much further, to a mounting array of social crises in the fields of education, social security and health care. Chinese education is grossly underdeveloped, with more than 50 million children across the country deprived of an education. The government owes retired workers more than 1 trillion *yuan* in pensions, amounting to nearly half of the country's annual GDP. Meanwhile, those at the bottom of China's social ladder simply cannot afford to get sick under "medical insurance reform" that has proven to be nothing but a fancy name for cutting benefits to the absolute minimum. With ordinary Chinese people facing such hardship in their basic living conditions, the time has come to question the Chinese government's policy of spending astronomical amounts of taxpayers' money to sup-

port a group of elite athletes' efforts to win face for the Party: is such a policy really in the people's interest, and is it really what the people want?

### THE TRUE COST OF A GOLD MEDAL

Another flurry of discussion over the government's Olympic policies was driven by an Internet essay in 2004 entitled "Beware of the Gold Medal Ruse,"<sup>3</sup> which unveiled a shocking figure for the "cost" of a single gold medal: 700 million *yuan* (\$87 million). According to this article, the annual budget of China's General Administration of Sports (GAS) rose from 3 billion *yuan* to 5 billion *yuan* following the 2000 Sydney Olympics. Based on this figure, China would have spent a total of 20 billion *yuan* in four years "preparing for battle" at the 2004 Athens Olympics. Rounding off the number of gold medals won by the Chinese team to 30, the cost of each gold medal would come to roughly 700 million *yuan*, very likely an Olympic record for "the world's most expensive gold medals."

Bao Mingxiao, the director of the Institute of Physical Science under the General Administration of Sports, challenged the article's shocking conclusions,<sup>4</sup> in particular, faulting the author's decision to base the calculations on the GAS' total operating costs during the four years between the Sydney Olympics and the Athens Olympics. Claiming that the government's annual expenditures on a single Olympics contender came to roughly 4 or 5 million *yuan*, and considering that the Chinese Olympic Team consisted of about 400 athletes, Bao posited that total expenses were "only" 1.6 to 2 billion *yuan*. Dividing this total by the number of gold medals, Bao concluded that the cost of each medal was "only" about 50 or 60 million *yuan*.

In his efforts to defend China's athletic policy by refuting the figure of 700 million *yuan* for each gold medal, Bao Mingxiao failed to consider that in today's China, 50 or 60 million *yuan* is a far from insignificant sum. Ultimately, if even a professional researcher at a government-sponsored research center calculates such a high figure, we are forced to conclude that each gold medal costs China a massive sum of money that could be better spent elsewhere.

Despite the fact that China is winning more Olympic medals than ever, it is precisely these exorbitant costs that have muted the Chinese people's cheers of 20 years ago. Indeed, the response to the Athens Olympics was noticeably low-key, even in comparison with China's victorious return from the "battle for the gold" at Sydney just four years earlier.

### Exorbitant costs have muted the Chinese people's cheers of 20 years before.

Another factor that brought China's Olympic expenditures into focus was the timing of the 2004 Olympics at the outset of a new school year in which many impoverished Chinese families were struggling to pay for their children's education. The media carried stories on a daily basis of families pressed into utter despair, even suicide, by their failure to scrape together a few hundred or thousand *yuan* for school expenses. The extreme and obvious inequalities in Chinese society dimmed the luster of China's glimmering Olympic gold medals, and the looming shadow of individual pain and desperation led citizens to begin questioning the massive sums set aside for training elite athletes and sending officials abroad on "fact-finding trips" for the Olympics. Adding fuel to the rising fire of doubt and criticism, the "auditing storm" of 2004 revealed that officials in the Administration of Sports had improperly used funds earmarked for Olympics programs to build their own homes,<sup>5</sup> leading one Internet commentator to exclaim with a sigh, "Olympics, Olympics, how many corrupt acts have been committed in your name!"

Which is more important: gold medals or the people's well-being? This fundamental question, repeatedly ignored, has finally come to the forefront, awakening and uniting a segment of the population that is now crying out in a solemn and pained chorus: "We want human rights, not the Olympics!"

### RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IS THE ONLY TRUE MEASURE OF INTERNATIONAL STATURE

With less than a year until the 2008 Beijing Olympics,

---

the Chinese government's escalating expenditure on the Games is bound to arouse a growing popular discontent. The Chinese government might take a cue from Nazi Germany and the former Soviet Union: less than a decade after using the Olympics as an emblem of national prestige and the ruling party's "glorious, great and correct"<sup>6</sup> character, both of these totalitarian regimes disappeared from the face of the earth. The Chinese government risks the same fate if it persists in its disregard for human rights.

On April 30, 2007, Amnesty International released a 22-page report<sup>7</sup> that serves as a somber reminder that the international community's initial support for China's 2008 Olympic bid was based on the Chinese government's solemn promise to improve the human rights situation in China. Amnesty International found that since winning its Olympic bid, the Chinese government has subjected even more Beijing residents to detention and reeducation through labor to ensure that the Olympics will proceed "smoothly." Thus, the Olympics have been a catalyst for deterioration rather than for improvement of human rights.

Amnesty's critique covers only the cases of a few persecuted prisoners of conscience, but a deeper examination of the quality of life of the average Chinese citizen would provide an even clearer demonstration of the extent of China's human rights crisis. The recent discovery of modern-day slaves in the brick kilns of Shanxi Province is but one example of the tragedies occurring throughout China's shattered rural economy. In the current environment, the Shanxi brick kilns are certainly no anomaly.

As a Chinese scholar concerned for my country's future, I urge the Chinese government to expand its dreams of "great power" status to include human rights as a priority equal to that of wealth and military strength. Flaunting wealth and power before the world will be to no

avail so long as China's own citizens must resort to kneeling and begging for their lives. Regardless of how many face-saving projects of "national glory" such a country may embark upon, it will never be able to win the world's respect, or realize its dream of becoming a "world leader."

Translated by Kevin Carrico

This translation is of an edited version of an article originally posted on the Web site of HRIC's Chinese monthly online journal, *Ren Yu Renquan*, [http://www.renyurenquan.org/ryrq\\_article.adp?article\\_id=695](http://www.renyurenquan.org/ryrq_article.adp?article_id=695).

## Notes

1. The brief petition, "Bu yao Aoyun yao renquan," is posted on Qian-ming.net, [http://www.qian-ming.net/gb/viewarticle\\_gb.aspx?vID=2747](http://www.qian-ming.net/gb/viewarticle_gb.aspx?vID=2747). Other petitions with a similar message have since been posted on the Web site.
2. No online version of this article was found, but it is referred to in articles such as "Yimei Aoyun jinpai 7 yi yuan? Tiyu juguo tizhide leng sikao [One Gold Medal Costs 700 Million Yuan? State Sport System's Cool-headed Analysis]," Xinhuanet.com, September 6, 2004, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/fortune/2004-09/06/content\\_1949453.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/fortune/2004-09/06/content_1949453.htm).
3. The unattributed article, "Aoyun jinpaide xianjing," has been posted on a number of Internet bulletin boards since 2004, including <http://bbs.lasg.ac.cn/cgi-bin/forum/view.cgi?forum=10&topic=438>.
4. "Yimei Aoyun jinpai 7 yi yuan? Tiyu juguo tizhide leng sikao," op. cit.
5. See "China Uncovers Olympic Corruption," BBC News, June 24, 2004, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/business/3835019.stm>.
6. The motto "Guangrong, weida, zhengque" is used by the Communist Party of China to refer to its rule.
7. The report, entitled "The Olympics Countdown: Repression of Activists Overshadows Death Penalty and Media Reforms," can be accessed in full at <http://web.amnesty.org/library/index/engasa170152007>.

---

# THE TRAGEDY OF ATHLETIC POLITICS

**By Fu Guoyong**

*The official fixation on garnering medals in international competitions deprives ordinary Chinese of the most basic resources for recreation and physical fitness.*

Since that defining moment in 1984 when China won its first Olympic gold medal, our nation has been transfixed by one international athletic competition after another, and the shining gold medals of the Olympic Games seem to have become a kind of addictive stimulant for the people of our country. With its burgeoning population and expansive terrain, China has focused all of its athletic efforts upon a single objective: the gold medal. Our nation's long-standing tendency to view strength and victory as the sole determinants of true "heroism" fits quite naturally with the format of the "athletic duel," and we have become so wrapped up in winning these "duels" that the true meaning of the coveted medal has become inconsequential, as have the sweat and tears hidden behind the pursuit of this prize. We have permanently locked our gaze upon the false sense of pride and the fleeting moment of glory represented by that shining piece of gold. To experience that moment, we are willing to exhaust our nation's vast work force, its material resources, and its financial wealth; no cost is too great. This certainly makes our nation stand out from the crowd. I, for one, honestly cannot think of any other country in the world with a similar approach to athletics.

The true value of these medals—for which thousands of athletes have sacrificed their blood, their sweat and, in many cases, even their entire childhoods—has recently become a point of troubled reflection. It was revealed earlier this year that former marathon champion Ai Dongmei had been driven by hard times to sell 16 medals she had won in international and domestic competitions. She offered her gold medals for just 1,000

yuan (\$120) and her bronze medals for a measly 100 yuan (\$12).<sup>1</sup> Sadly, Ai's ordeal is not an isolated situation; with the exception of a few athletic superstars, most retired Chinese athletes (even those who have won gold medals in international competitions) are unlikely to face better circumstances. The domestic media has reported that nearly 80 percent of our 300,000 retired athletes have faced, to varying degrees, such difficulties as post-training injuries or illness, unemployment and poverty.<sup>2</sup> I think it goes without saying that these athletes' grim circumstances are not merely their own individual tragedy, but also a tragedy for Chinese athletics as a whole.

Returning to the topic of China's unique relationship with athletics, there have historically been three primary sources of motivation for the athletic endeavor:

- 1) The individual aspect, wherein athletics is seen as a means of exercising one's body and living a healthier life;
- 2) The communal aspect, wherein athletic activities provide an opportunity for a group to come together, to enjoy some recreation or even celebration, and to inculcate within its individual members the value of teamwork and solidarity;
- 3) A competitive motivation, which has gradually taken shape through the intersection of the individual and the group.

The third motivation, manifested in athletic competitions, was originally a byproduct of the other two but, in the modern era, has developed into the Party-state's primary objective. Athletics as the key to teamwork and a healthy lifestyle has been sidelined, and today in

---

China, the concept of athletics is automatically associated with its competitive aspect. Many of China's best athletes have been trained in settings characterized by highly repetitive regimens and a single-minded focus

on training, which can even be detrimental to physical health. In some cases, an athlete's well-being is considered a small price to pay for the sake of winning an athletic event. Such ruthless "training for the gold" has left

## THE MAKING OF A TRUE ATHLETIC SUPERPOWER

**By Xu Jilin**

I was in Canada during this year's [2004] Olympics, where I followed the Games online. I soon noticed that, in contrast to the average Chinese citizen, most Canadians did not follow the Olympics as intently as I had expected. Also, in contrast to China's crazed "race for the gold," Canada—a major First World power—managed to win just one gold medal. However, Canadians' subdued relationship with the Olympics is certainly not indicative of a dislike for athletics; in fact, it shows their true appreciation for the athletic spirit.

Immediately upon my arrival in Vancouver, I was struck by the vast expanses of lush greenery throughout the city, all of which, I soon learned, are completely open to the public at no charge. From my Vancouver apartment, a 10-minute walk in any direction brings you to acres of verdant parkland. While the city's parks are generally as quiet and still as the water of a secluded lake, they buzz with excitement on evenings and weekends. You can watch, or even join in, a game of soccer, football, Frisbee or baseball, as young boys and girls, dressed in vibrantly colored sporting outfits, hold their own "Olympics." Just as at any other sporting event, the blast of the referee's whistle rings sharply in your ears. Yet, unlike the situations to which we are accustomed in China, you can be sure that every call is the result of impartial judgment, rather than of bribes or pressure. The difference is that here competition is not the primary motivation; everyone just wants to relax and to take a break from the hustle and bustle of everyday life.

Apart from a few residential green areas designated for private use, most of these well-maintained parks are completely open to the general public. Anyone, whether rich or poor, can enjoy these spaces at no cost. Some of my fellow citizens may be surprised to learn that many of the same people who appear indifferent to the Olympics come out here every day to exercise and stay in shape: rowing boats, skiing, playing ball, swimming and jogging. While their country may be a minor player in the race for gold medals, Canadians' incorporation of physical activity into their daily lives qualifies Canada as a true superpower in the field of athletics.

The situation in China is exactly the opposite. While we put on great airs of self-congratulation at the Olympic Games, athletics has come to play an increasingly minor role in the average citizen's daily life. Let's not even delve into the problems in the countryside. Suffice it to say that one is unlikely to find so much as a Ping-Pong table or a basketball hoop in the impoverished mountain villages stretching across our rural hinterland. Yet, even in wealthier urban regions such as Shanghai, Beijing or Guangzhou, where can the average citizen go to play a game of ball or to run a few laps? Virtually none of China's so-called public athletic facilities are open free-of-charge to the taxpayers who fund them. Once schools go on break, their gates are locked tight. There is little hope that nearby residents will be able to use the facilities, since even students need to navigate a bureaucratic minefield to use the facility during summer vacation. Within residential areas, community centers and clubs offer comprehensive athletic facilities, but all are purely profit-driven, requiring residents to pay for memberships in addition to a monthly facility maintenance fee.

As China's cities grow increasingly congested, parks continue to be eaten up by developers, and the air



countless retired athletes suffering from debilitating injuries and illnesses.

These trends clearly indicate the incorporation of far

too many corrupting factors, antithetical to the original athletic ideal and at odds with the best in human nature. I must clarify that I am addressing my criticisms here to our professional athletic programs; there are

grows thick with toxic car exhaust. These trends create an environment that is far from amenable to the individual pursuit of athletics. It is one of the great ironies of our era that in expansive metropolitan areas, stretching as far as the eye can see, it is nearly impossible to find a decent place to jog.

Of course, not every athletic facility in Canada is free. For example, one must pay a fee to use public swimming pools and golf courses. However, even at profit-driven facilities, fees correspond to the average citizens' purchasing power; a game of golf in Canada costs no more than the average citizen's daily food expenditure. Thus, at the golf course near my Vancouver residence, rather than the "big bosses" or "gold-collar" types that make up the majority of golfers in China, you are much more likely to see a couple of elderly men out to have some fun for the day.

Canada is a country known for its high taxes and extensive welfare benefits. The government here does not use its tax revenues to nurture a tiny, elite group of athletic stars dedicated to capturing gold medals at the Olympics. Instead, the government actually uses tax revenues for the taxpayers' benefit, by building a network of public athletic facilities and public spaces throughout the country. This allows every citizen, rich or poor, a chance to take part in all types of athletics and to enjoy leisure activities, fresh air, greenery and sunshine. This is the main distinction between China's and Canada's approaches to athletics. Here in Canada, athletics is not a tool to flaunt the nation's strength and prosperity, but rather an indispensable part of daily life.

Watching the Olympics from Canada, I have been beset by extremely mixed feelings. I do feel a sense of pride for every gold medal that the Chinese team wins, but I also feel a twinge of sorrow whenever I

think about the price paid by our people for these medals. Athletics in China, from the grassroots to the central government, and from youth athletic schools to the national Olympic teams, is fixated upon one objective and one objective only: medals. Every athlete's ultimate goal is to win a medal at the international Olympic Games, or failing that, at China's own mini-Olympics, the National Games. Thus, the athletic endeavor is left with only one meaning and one goal: beating your opponents and winning a medal. This has created a brutal winner-takes-all mentality in which those who win gold medals become national icons, while everyone else, even runners-up, are just "losers." No one really cares about incorporating athletics into the average citizen's daily life, or even thinks about the true meaning of the athletic endeavor. It is as if the only way that we can experience the joy of athletics is through the supposed "national glory" of Olympic gold medals.

What a sad state of affairs. The Olympics come around only once every four years, yet we Chinese citizens must continue to live our lives, day in and day out. Does it really make sense to sacrifice so much, to banish athletics from our daily lives, just for the sake of a couple tiny gold medals? If we really must choose between winning gold medals at the Olympics or providing our citizens with athletic opportunities and a healthier lifestyle, then I would recommend taking Canada's path. We might become a minor player in the Olympics, but in doing so, we would become a true athletic superpower.

Translated by Kevin Carrico

The original Chinese article was published in the August 26, 2004, issue of *Southern Metropolis Daily*, and republished in Beijing Spring, <http://beijing.spring.com/c7/xw/wlwz/20040827001246.htm>.



**A Vancouver jogger enjoys access to recreational facilities that are a luxury in most of China. Photo: Reuters**

still countless ordinary people who, far removed from the harsh and merciless world of professional athletics, take the time to play some ball or to go jogging or swimming, purely for their own health or recreation. However, it is also important to remember that such displays of the athletic spirit are solely the result of individual initiative and are completely removed from any government support. Our government reserves its financial support for the brutal form of professional athletics described above, with the result that, over the past half-century, China's investment in and development of public athletic facilities and recreational spaces has lagged pitifully behind that of other countries.

Professor Xu Jilin of East China Normal University, in Canada during the 2004 Athens Olympics, was able to follow the Games online, while also taking advantage of this novel vantage point to observe and consider the average Canadian's attitude toward the Olympics and toward athletics in general. Xu shared his reflections in his insightful article "The Making of a True Athletic Superpower" [see accompanying article], observing that while the average Canadian was not particularly absorbed in the Olympics or in Canada's medal count,

athletics itself remained an indispensable part of everyday life in Canada.

Comparing what he saw in Canada with his experiences at home, Xu observed, with a hint of despair, that athletics in China "is left with one meaning and one meaning only: defeating your opponents. . . . No one really cares about incorporating athletics into the average citizen's daily life, or even thinks about the true meaning of the athletic endeavor." Xu concluded that "while their country may be a minor player in the race for gold medals, Canadians' incorporation of physical exercise into their daily lives qualifies Canada as a true superpower in the field of athletics."

The object of Xu's inquiry, "athletics with Chinese characteristics," is a project that has so completely lost course as to divorce itself from the essence of the athletic enterprise. Our tracks and fields are no longer the sites of unity or of friendly athletic competition, and athletics, as a whole, has been distorted to a point that it would be more appropriately referred to as "athletic politics" or "politicized athletics." Far too many nonathletic components have sullied the entire endeavor. The

primary objective of “athletic politics” is to boost nationalist delusions of grandeur and to communicate—to an audience of its own citizenry as well as to the citizens of the world—the leadership’s carefully crafted image of a powerful and prosperous nation.

We have thus strayed far from the original vision articulated in Athens, the home of humankind’s first Olympic Games. There, athletics was imagined as a means to encourage people to stay in shape, to become involved in public affairs and to develop into model citizens. Thousands of years later in China’s Republican era, Wang Yunwu, former director of the Commercial Press, China’s first modern publishing company, displayed a similar understanding of the athletic spirit. In an incisive analysis, Wang affirmed that a lifetime of athletic engagement could help cultivate a host of essential moral virtues, including a strong sense of teamwork, fairness in competition, loyalty, willpower, bravery, patience, humility, selflessness and respect for rules. Thus, echoing the vision articulated in Athens centuries before, Wang believed that the athletic field is a site not only for the cultivation of outstanding athletes, but also for the cultivation of outstanding citizens.

### The primary objective of “athletic politics” is to boost nationalist delusions of grandeur.

People engaged in sports are doing more than exercising; they are being educated in qualities characteristic of an ideal citizen. These ideals were transmitted from one generation to another for thousands of years; yet how odd and unfamiliar they seem to us today, almost as if completely divorced from reality. We have strayed so far from the core of the athletic enterprise that abstract and lofty ideals, such as virtue and education, seem much more foreign and unreal to us than cut-throat gold-medal-centered athletic politics.

The Beijing Olympics are just one year away. Holding the Olympics in this land of athletic politics, where gold medals constitute the Games’ sole meaning, is destined to bring with it an unprecedented surge of narrow-minded nationalist fever. The air will be thick with a false sense of pride, masking the deeper reality of

emptiness, weakness and impending collapse. Despite the fact that all of our medals are nothing more than a disguise for our failings, plenty of my fellow citizens will be wild with joy and glowing with smiles as they bask in the reflected glory of “great power” status provided by the mask of athletic politics. Their eyes will be fixed intently upon the sparkling gold medals, carefully calculating each and every gain and loss; for these medals no longer symbolize victory in a particular athletic event, but rather a vain, essentially false, yet addictive, dream of great power status. In this land of illusion, there is nothing but disdain for countries that lag behind in the race to snatch medals, and there is no chance of warm, sportsmanlike applause for the runners-up in a competition. Our nation’s massive athletic project clearly shows that in this land we call China, politics enshrouds our entire existence, smothering everything in its embrace, so that even if we try to avoid it, politics will forever follow us everywhere we may go, leaving us nowhere to escape its grasp.

What is the true essence of the Olympic spirit? And what is the spirit of athletics? Those trapped in the deceptions of athletic politics will never take the time to ask. However, there is one question that we, as a nation, must face. Considering the tragic fate of Ai Dongmei and her family, as well as struggles faced by the families of many other retired athletes, the true question is: does anyone, deep within their hearts, even care?

Translated by Kevin Carrico

The original Chinese article was posted on the author’s blog on May 31, 2007, <http://blog.sina.com.cn/u/48fe469010009ew>.

### Editor’s Notes

1. For more on the hardships of Chinese runner Ai Dongmei, forced to retire in 2002 due to crippling foot injuries, see “Image of Forgotten Star Troubles China,” AFP, posted on *Times of India*, [http://timesofindia.india.com/Sports/Other\\_Sports/Image\\_of\\_forgotten\\_stars\\_troubles\\_China/articleshow/1914450.cms](http://timesofindia.india.com/Sports/Other_Sports/Image_of_forgotten_stars_troubles_China/articleshow/1914450.cms).
2. “30 wan tuiyi yundongyuan, bacheng mianlin shenghuo wenti [Of 300,000 Retired Athletes, 80 Percent Face Hardship],” *Yangcheng Evening News*, April 16, 2007, posted at <http://news.sohu.com/20070416/n249474986.shtml>.

---

# TWO HISTORICAL TURNING POINTS: THE SEOUL AND BEIJING OLYMPICS

**By Chen Kuide**

*The Olympic Games spurred a change of values in South Korea in 1988. Will they serve a similar purpose in China in 2008?*

The spring of 2007 was very eventful in China. First, there was an uproar after eight books were banned in January.<sup>1</sup> Foreign banks began to operate in China, and the Shanghai and Shenzhen stock exchanges took a tumble, sending shock waves through the global financial markets and creating anxiety among shareholders. Then, to everyone's surprise, the National People's Congress and the Chinese People's Political Consultative Congress passed the Property Law amid much fanfare and lofty oratory by Wen Jiabao, although during the debates leading up to the ratification he had taken a low-key approach. In Shanghai, princeling Xi Jinping<sup>2</sup> was appointed head of the municipal Party committee. Then, a nation-wide debate was sparked by the case of the Chongqing "nail house" couple who tried to resist the demolition of their home to make way for a shopping center. In Beijing, a group of old "Rightists" met, their heads held high, to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the Anti-Rightists Campaign. The Zhang Ming incident at Renmin University added fuel to the flames,<sup>3</sup> followed by the reopening of the Reform and Reconstruction (*Gaizao yu Jianshe*) Web site, which had fallen to the censor's ax, and the news that dissidents Chen Ziming and Ren Wanding had obtained permission to go to Hong Kong.<sup>4</sup>

Although it is hard to avoid seeing a connection between all this and the expected realignment of power at the 17th Communist Party Congress later this year, from a broader and deeper perspective it is patently obvious that the 2008 Beijing Olympics are the unspoken background for these events. Faced with the Olympics craze here in Beijing, my mind drifts back

twenty years to the 1988 Seoul Olympics.

In the early hours of May 18, 1980, South Korean president Chun Doo-hwan declared martial law and dispatched thousands of paratroopers to the city of Kwangju to quell mass demonstrations. The paratroopers brutally suppressed thousands of students and ordinary citizens who had taken to the streets calling for democracy. The "Kwangju Incident," as this massacre came to be known, shocked the world and turned out to be the defining event of the 1980s in South Korea. It resulted in 191 dead, 122 seriously wounded and 730 lightly wounded civilians.<sup>5</sup>

After the Kwangju massacre, which was officially referred to as the "Kwangju Rebellion" and later the "Kwangju Incident," the South Korean media bowed to pressure to hush up the story.

In 1981, South Korea won its bid to host the 1988 Olympics. Thanks to its booming economy, South Korea had earned a place as one of the Four Little Dragons (Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan and South Korea), but it lagged behind politically and culturally. The South Korean government therefore hoped to use the Olympics to create a positive international image.

The South Korean government's suppression of the democratic movement triggered fierce and open resistance from the opposition parties. The international community, particularly the sports world, was very concerned about the situation, and many high-profile sports personalities proposed rescinding South Korea's award to stage the Olympics and finding another venue instead.

A rising democratic tide swept over South Korea.

Democracy activists demanded that the constitution be amended to provide for the direct election of the president, but the government refused to budge. On April 13, 1987, Chun Doo-hwan suddenly announced his decision to suspend constitutional debate until after the Olympics, and declared that the next president would be elected by the (extremely unrepresentative) electoral college, as provided for by the existing constitution. He threatened students and the opposition that any “violent or socially disruptive acts will be severely punished.”

The day Chun Doo-hwan announced his “grave decision,” more than 4,000 students from 11 universities took to the streets demanding his resignation. On April 17, more than 160,000 students from more than 40 universities marched in the streets and clashed with the police. On the anniversary of the April 19 uprising of 1960,<sup>6</sup> more than 4,000 students and Seoul residents staged demonstrations and rallies during which more than 300 were arrested. Even Cardinal Kim Sou-hwan called on South Korea’s 1.6 million Catholics to pray that democracy would soon be realized in South Korea.

In June 1987, mass demonstrations erupted throughout the country. One million people took to the streets of Seoul demanding an amendment to the constitution. In the half month between June 10 and 26, more than 8.3 million citizens staged more than 2,145 separate demonstrations. Chun Doo-hwan had never faced such fierce and prolonged popular resistance, which came to be known in history as the “June Resistance.”

Chun Doo-hwan was determined to follow the same old disastrous road and reenact the Kwangju Incident by carrying out a bloody suppression of the “April Resistance.” But events turned out differently.

The United States made it known that it opposed a government crackdown. On June 27, 1987, the United States Senate passed a resolution by a vote of 74–0 declaring US support of South Koreans’ efforts to establish fair and free elections and to evolve peacefully into a full democratic government. On July 1, 1987, the US House of Representatives passed a resolution by a vote of 421–0 calling for the democratization of South Korea. If it stuck to its guns, the South Korean government faced the prospect of losing its bid to host the

Olympics, which in turn could very easily bring down the government.

Chun Doo-hwan’s government concluded that since international pressure made further repression unfeasible, compromise was the only option. On June 29, Chun Doo-hwan’s heir apparent, Democratic Justice Party presidential candidate Roh Tae-woo, announced that the government would accept the opposition parties’ demands and implement an eight-point reform program consisting of: (1) a direct presidential system; (2) a fair presidential election law; (3) the release and amnesty of political prisoners; (4) a guarantee of fundamental human rights and the rule of law; (5) a guarantee of freedom of the press; (6) local autonomy and self-governance; (7) a guarantee of the basic rights of political parties; (8) guarantees of social stability and social reforms aimed at promoting public welfare and well-being.

**Since international pressure made further repression unfeasible, compromise was the only option.**

On July 1, Chun Doo-hwan announced that he accepted Roh Tae-woo’s reform program, and he resigned from the presidency of the ruling Democratic Justice Party on July 10. That same day, opposition leader Kim Dae-Jung was granted amnesty and the freedom to openly engage in political activities. Kim began campaigning for president and expressed his support for the Seoul Olympics.

On October 12, 1987, the Korean National Assembly adopted sweeping revisions to the constitution, which were ratified on October 27 by 93 percent of voters in a national referendum. This “Constitution of the Sixth Republic,” as it was called, was the first South Korean constitution based on a compromise between the ruling party and the opposition. It provided for the direct election of the president for a nonrenewable five-year term, rescinded the president’s power to declare a state of emergency and dissolve the National Assembly, guaranteed the fundamental and inviolable human rights of individuals and guaranteed the principle of a multi-party system.

In December 1987, personal rivalry between oppositionists Kim Dae-jung and Kim Young-sam resulted in Democratic Justice Party candidate Roh Tae-woo winning the election with 36.6 percent of the votes. This was South Korea's first peaceful and orderly transition of presidential power.

The twenty-fourth Olympic Summer Games, held in Seoul between September 17 and October 2, 1988, involved a record 9,421 athletes from 160 countries, and raised South Korea's political and economic profile in the international arena. Seoul's international image was further enhanced by its unprecedented synthesis of sports and culture. The Seoul Olympics thus became a turning point in the history of modern South Korea.

Very soon after the Olympics, the National Assembly reexamined the Kwangju Incident. In February 1990, two opposition parties led by Kim Young-sam and Kim Jong-pil and the ruling Democratic Justice Party led by Roh Tae-woo merged to form the Democratic Liberal Party. In December 1992, ruling party candidate Kim Young-sam won the election to become the

fourteenth president of the Republic of Korea. Upon taking office in 1993 as South Korea's first civilian president, Kim promised to build a national cemetery for the victims of the Kwangju Incident of 1980, and in 1997 awarded compensation to victims of the massacre. Within this same four-year period, Roh Tae-woo was arrested after confessing to amassing around \$650 million in slush funds while in office, and Roh and Chun Doo-hwan were sentenced to lengthy prison terms for their parts in the Kwangju massacre.<sup>7</sup> They were subsequently pardoned by former opposition leader Kim Dae-jung, who had by then been elected president of South Korea.

### A NEW VALUE SYSTEM

I have previously compared the Beijing Olympics with the 1936 Berlin Olympics as well. The Chinese leadership strenuously objects, for obvious reasons, to any comparisons with the Nazis, but they are equally reluctant for any parallels to be drawn with the historic turning point that allowed democratization to triumph over

**Olympic winner: The election of Kim Young-sam (c) as President of South Korea in 1992 had much to do with a change in political climate brought about by the Seoul Olympics. Photo: AFP/Getty Images**



Seoul's authoritarian regime. The wishes of Chinese leaders notwithstanding, the logic of history is a powerful force that, according to Communism's own theory of historical materialism, cannot be determined by human will. The contradictory and confused signals coming from Beijing since the beginning of 2007 indicate that China's leadership recognizes the potential threat to its power that the Olympics presents, but is not united on the best course to adopt.

Today's China differs from the South Korea of 20 years ago in terms of size, international influence, modern historical trajectory, ideology, institutional structure, geopolitical environment and popular mentality, but the two countries still offer some striking and fundamental parallels:

1. Both the Tiananmen massacre in China and the Kwangju massacre in South Korea were tragic and traumatic events of historical significance.
2. South Korea's economy took off more than two decades ago under an authoritarian political system; likewise, China's economy has experienced rapid growth for more than two decades, despite the central government's increasing political control.
3. The concepts of liberal democracy, human rights and the rule of law enjoy wide currency among students and intellectuals in both countries.
4. International cultural trends are exerting a strong and pervasive influence on both societies.
5. Christianity, broadly defined, is spreading rapidly among ordinary people in both countries.

These similarities are more significant than are particularistic differences between the two countries. In fact, the events in China at the beginning of this year all suggest a common thread. I would like to focus here on: changes in civil society, public opinion and the system of values.

Although the authorities in Beijing are still making every effort to block the free flow of information, in this age of the Internet, their ability is not equal to their

ambition. Indeed, the Internet, and in particular the huge and rapidly proliferating blogosphere, have not only created a forum for the expression of public opinion but have gradually become the leading engine of public opinion.

Most crucially, China's emergent civil society (*minjian*)<sup>8</sup> has already formed its own value system, which in its discourse opposes and transcends the official value system, and is becoming more vocal by the day. The official value system, on the other hand, is steadily losing ground in public discourse; the government increasingly declines to articulate its value system at all, and what public utterances it does attempt are halting, defensive and lacking in conviction.

A careful comparison of how Chinese print media and electronic media have reported the stories cited at the beginning of this article shows that Web sites lean more toward civil society and its value system.

For example, public opinion was very much in support of the "nail house" couple. China's left and right political camps are often at loggerheads and unwilling to make concessions to each other, but in the case of the Chongqing "nail house" incident, both expressed unrestrained support for the couple's resistance.

By and large, the broad spectrum of public opinion was also in agreement during the banned books incident, the Zhang Ming incident at Renmin University and the "Rightists" meeting.

Similarly, when *Freezing Point* (*Bingdian*) was shut down last year,<sup>9</sup> the director of the Central Propaganda Department brazenly claimed, "The Central Propaganda Department did not order *Freezing Point* to stop publication. The Youth League Central Committee took the decision and the Central Propaganda Department is now playing a passive role in this." Zhao Yong, the secretary of the Youth League Central Committee, also pleaded innocent: "The fact that *Freezing Point* has stopped publication has nothing to do with me." When officials make such feeble attempts to defend themselves, they show that they are very conscious of the value standards by which most people judge such incidents these days. They are aware of the judgment of history.

---

In one of his pompous moods, Mao Zedong once quoted a verse from a poem by the Tang poet Han Yu: “An ant, trying to shake a mighty tree, is ludicrously ignorant of its own weakness.” Mao was euphorically convinced that the mighty tree he had won by the barrel of a gun would endure through the ages as firm as a rock. Who would have thought that as government officials are increasingly disdained by ordinary people, those countless little ants might gradually succeed in shaking the foundations of that mighty tree?

We dare not underestimate the significance of changes in values and the formation of a new value system that could serve as the foundation for the establishment of a future constitution.

Translated by Paul Frank

The original Chinese article was first posted on the ObserveChina.net Web site, <http://www.observechina.net/info/artshow.asp?ID=43205>.

### Translator's Notes

1. In January 2007, China's General Administration of Press and Publications banned eight books by intellectuals and writers reflecting on sensitive events in 20th century history. They included *Past Stories of Peking Opera Stars*, by Zhang Yihe; the memoirs of *People's Daily* journalist Yuan Ying; *The Press*, by Zhu Huaxiang (about the Chinese news media); *This Is How It Goes at SARS.com*, by Hu Fayun; a book about the Great Leap Forward; and a book about an independent candidate for local elections. According to an official at the CCP Propaganda Department, these books were deemed to have “overstepped the line” in 2006. See <http://chinaview.wordpress.com/2007/01/25/china-urged-to-get-recent-ban-lifted-on-eight-books/>.
2. *Taizidang*, or “princelings,” are the children of high-ranking officials. Xi Jinping is the son of Xi Zhongxun (1913–2002), a founder of the Communist guerrilla movement.
3. Zhang Ming, dean of the political science department at Renmin University, was fired in March 2007 after he had posted articles on his popular blog detailing a row with his superior and attacking the “bureaucratization of Chinese universities” and the general lack of academic freedom. See *China Digital Times*, [http://chinadigitaltimes.net/2007/03/china\\_university\\_sacks\\_dean\\_after\\_blog\\_rant\\_reuters.php](http://chinadigitaltimes.net/2007/03/china_university_sacks_dean_after_blog_rant_reuters.php).

4. Chen Ziming, former director of the Beijing Research Institute of Social and Economic Sciences, was sentenced to 13 years' imprisonment in 1991 for “counter-revolutionary” activities and for serving as a “black hand” behind the pro-democracy demonstrations of 1989. He was released on “medical parole” in 1994 after pressure from the Clinton administration, but was rearrested in 1995 after staging a protest on the anniversary of the Tiananmen Square massacre. Ren Wanding, the founder of China's League of Human Rights, was first arrested in 1979 after the Democracy Wall Incident and spent four years in prison. He was arrested again in 1989 after the Tiananmen Square massacre. On Chen Ziming, see Radio Free Asia at [http://www.rfa.org/cantonese/zhuanti/redian/2005/07/22/china\\_Ren\\_yuan\\_din/?simple=1](http://www.rfa.org/cantonese/zhuanti/redian/2005/07/22/china_Ren_yuan_din/?simple=1); on Ren Wanding, see the BBC Chinese Service at [http://news.bbc.co.uk/chinese/trad/hi/newsid\\_6540000/newsid\\_6540500/6540535.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/chinese/trad/hi/newsid_6540000/newsid_6540500/6540535.stm).
5. According to the BBC, “Official figures put the death toll at 200, with another 1,000 protestors injured. But according to other estimates between one and two thousand actually died.” See “Flashback: The Kwangju Massacre,” BBC News, May 17, 2000, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/752055.stm>.
6. On April 18, 1960, 3,000 students from Korea University held a peaceful demonstration in Seoul to protest police violence and the cancellation of presidential elections. Government-hired thugs attacked many students that day. The next day, the police opened fire on a mass demonstration, killing hundreds of students. President Syngman Rhee imposed martial law and closed schools and universities, but opposition to martial law, including in the National Assembly, grew so vocal that he was forced to resign on April 27, 1960. See Jürgen Kleiner, *Korea, a Century of Change*, World Scientific, 2001, pp. 126–27.
7. Chun Doo-hwan and Roh Tae-woo were tried for their roles in the 1980 Kwangju massacre and the 1979 coup d'état. Chun received a death sentence, which was later commuted to life in prison; Roh was sentenced to more than 22 years in prison.
8. The term *minjian* does not have a direct translation in English. As an adjective, *minjian* usually means non-governmental, though it often implies only relative independence from the government and its officials. A *minjian* organization, for example, can serve as a bridge between private business and government officials. Nevertheless, a growing number of Chinese commentators are using the term *minjian* to imply true independence of thought and action from the government.
9. In January 2007, the authorities temporarily suspended *Freezing Point*, a weekly supplement of the official *China Youth Daily* newspaper that often challenged the Party line.



---

# THE 2008 BEIJING OLYMPICS: REMEMBERING MEXICO 1968

**By Jean-Paul Marthoz**

*Using the Olympics as a pretext for suppressing dissent may turn the Games into a catalyst for political change.*

China is bracing itself for the Olympic Games that will be launched in Beijing on August 8, 2008. The autocratic regime is taking no chances. This world event is seen as a celebration of the “peaceful rise of China” and the confirmation of its newly acquired status as a global power.

Beijing is playing to two different audiences. On the one hand, it has been courting the international community by announcing relaxed restrictions on foreign media and promising to become a force for good in Sudan, where its support for Al-Bashir’s dictatorial regime has been denounced as an instrument of the Darfur tragedy. On the other hand, it has increased control over its own population, tightening limits on press freedom, censoring the Internet, repressing social movements and rounding up dissidents.

Chinese leaders would be well advised to look back at the year 1968, when another authoritarian regime surfing on the waves of globalization hosted the Olympic Games and found itself suddenly engulfed in turmoil, controversy and violence.

Basking in the euphoria of strong economic development and expansion of Mexico’s middle class, the Díaz Ordaz government regarded its hosting of the Olympic Games as the nation’s “coming out” on the international scene and the symbol of its modernization. Contrary to all expectations, the Games turned into a nightmare and the beginning of the unravelling of an authoritarian model that Peruvian writer Mario Vargas Llosa would years later refer to as “the perfect dictatorship.”

Internationally, the Mexico City Olympics are remembered as the Games that were sucked into the contentious issue of the US civil rights and Black Power movements. The raised fists of US track medalists Tommie Smith and John Carlos have become icons of the collision of sports with history. But there was another clash, more brutal and yet largely erased from the world’s memory.

Ten days before the opening ceremony of the Games, Mexico City became a war zone. On the fateful night of October 2, the Mexican government, obsessed with eliminating any sign of dissent and challenge to its rule, ordered the army to brutally crush a demonstration by students on the square of Tlatelolco, in front of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Hundreds of civilians were killed and hundreds more were arrested. Journalists were among the targets, and a photograph of Italian reporter Oriana Fallaci lying wounded on the ground made headlines around the world.<sup>1</sup>

“The stamped-upon blood of hundreds of students, men, women, children, soldiers and old people has dried upon the soil of Tlatelolco,” renowned Mexican journalist Elena Poniatowska wrote in her wrenching account of the tragedy.<sup>2</sup> “Today the blood has returned to the place of its quietness. Later flowers will grow among the ruins and the sepulchres.” These were the flowers of democracy that slowly led to the demise of Díaz Ordaz’s Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) and the victory of the electoral opposition in 2000, after seven decades of one-party rule.

Nothing as dramatic is expected for the 2008 Beijing Olympics. The Chinese regime seems to have taken all necessary steps to squelch any potential protest and keep the Games under tight control. Nevertheless, the



University students rounded up by soldiers following protests in Mexico City's Tlatelolco Square 10 days before the opening ceremony of the 1968 Mexico City Olympics. Photo: Associated Press

independent of the United States. (But while Mexico did not join the Organization of American States' embargo on Cuba, it channelled all the information it could get on Fidel Castro to the US Central Intelligence Agency.)

In 1968, the regime's distrust of democracy and obsession with preserving stability and order during the Olympics resulted in the use of brutal force that ultimately proved to be the beginning of the end of PRI dominance. Pushed into the catacombs, a few isolated opponents chose the militant road, but many more built the foundations of an independent civil society alongside and against the paternalistic and authoritarian institutions of the regime, and their efforts finally led to the advent of democracy.

similarities between the current Chinese regime and Mexico's PRI are striking. Claiming its legitimacy in the tumultuous worker-peasant Revolution of 1910–1920 and the collectivist and socially progressive programmes of President Lázaro Cárdenas in the late 1930s, the PRI had implemented an economic model based on a strong state, tight control over strategic resources (mainly oil), the attraction of US investments and the protection of Mexico's small and medium-sized companies.

Reminiscent of the nineteenth century French royalist minister François Guizot, who famously exhorted his populace, "Enrichissez vous!" (Get rich!), the regime had pinned its stability and longevity on sustained economic growth with some trickle-down effect on the rising middle class. This economic strategy went hand-in-hand with strict limitations on opportunities for dissent. Trade unions were tamed, activists were silenced, intellectuals were seduced or repressed. The strategy also paid lip service to the regime's revolutionary roots by following a foreign policy rhetorically

In Beijing, the authorities seem to have forgotten the lessons of Tlatelolco; Amnesty International recently observed that China is using the 2008 Games as a catalyst for suppressing dissent in the name of stability.<sup>3</sup> There is still hope, however, that the Games could become a catalyst for fundamental change in China if Chinese civil society is able to peacefully "hijack" them to claim Chinese people's right to enjoy freedom and justice.

Remember Mexico City, 1968!

### Editor's Notes

1. See "1968: Student Riots Threaten Mexico Olympics," BBC News "On This Day," [http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/october/2/newsid\\_3548000/3548680.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/october/2/newsid_3548000/3548680.stm).
2. Poniatowska's report "La noche de Tlatelolco," in Spanish, can be accessed at [http://amolt.interfree.it/Messico/spagnolo\\_storia16\\_tlatelolco.htm](http://amolt.interfree.it/Messico/spagnolo_storia16_tlatelolco.htm).
3. "Games 'Catalyst for China Abuses,'" BBC News, April 29, 2007, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/6606339.stm>.

---

# IMPROVING HUMAN RIGHTS IN A NEO-COMMUNIST STATE

**By Erping Zhang**

*Differing views on China complicate efforts to take advantage of the 2008 Olympics as an opportunity to highlight human rights issues in China.*

Olympic medalist Carl Lewis once said, “Life is about timing.” Many China observers are hoping that the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games will present an ideal opportunity for promoting human rights and political freedom in China as billions of watchful eyes around the world focus on China during the run-up to the opening and throughout the Games. This wishful thinking could come true if the international community, or part of it, takes a principled stand and uses the opportunity to send a public message. At present, however, foreign attitudes toward China tend to be so divided that it is difficult to develop the kind of nuanced approach that might take most effective advantage of the Games.

The wide variance in attitudes toward China has much to do with China’s rapid economic development, which inspires both awe and intimidation, optimism and disparagement. Encountering the sweeping skyscrapers, glowing neon and vibrant energy of Shanghai or Beijing for the first time, a traveler to these cities is easily lulled into believing these are normal, bustling East Asian urban centers, much like Seoul or Taipei. But the real China is quite different from the economically developed and democratic South Korea, just as it cannot be said to resemble the autocratic and anachronistic North Korea. The traditional Communist economic model is now what Marx would call “contaminated” by capitalist greed, but its Draconian grip on society remains fearsome.

Defining China in terms of its political and economic system has become increasingly difficult, because it has

become a nation that displays different faces at the same time. Economists and Sinologists alike fail to bring clarity to the matter when they use terms as varied as state capitalism, socialism with Chinese or Nazi characteristics, neo-Leninism, socialism with market orientations, or combinations of the above. Although these descriptions appear to capture some aspects of China today, they fail to fully convey a comprehensive sense of what is going on.

Most nations in the world now engage in some form of commerce with China. As a result, a number of governments seem prepared to willfully ignore the fact that China remains ruled by one party, the Communist Party of China (CPC), and that, unlike former Eastern bloc nations, it has never renounced Communist dictatorship. For the United States, its growing trade deficit with China, along with the tremendous US debt now held by Beijing in the form of government bonds, greatly complicates formation of a coherent foreign policy with regard to China. And member nations of the European Union (EU), collectively or individually, are similarly preoccupied with and perplexed by trade and trade deficits with China.

Among China watchers, it is fashionable to be in one of two camps: “China exception” or “China threat.” The first is comprised mostly of left-wing academics, business investors and others who argue that China is no longer the old demonic Communist state. Some even assert that China is as capitalist as the West. The belief in this camp is that economic development will set China free and whatever the regime does along the way is simply part of the bumpy road to a more democratic society, driven by an expanding middle class. This currently prevailing view endorses a policy of appeasement, even in the face of China’s blatant human rights

---

violations and a political system that seems no closer to reform than when economic reform was launched three decades ago.

This “China exception” camp tends to look derisively at what they term the knee-jerk mentality of the more pessimistic “bombs and guns” types that dominate the “China threat” camp. Since the end of the Cold War, it has become terribly outré to be anti-Communist, and socialism is now considered an acceptable element.

For the “China threat” camp, an emerging economy of 1.3 billion people that is also one of the world’s principal manufacturers of consumer goods must develop a democratized and open society in order to ensure peace and stability in the region and in the world. China’s close ties with North Korea, Iran, Sudan, Cuba and other authoritarian regimes remains disturbing to the free world, and the prospect of the unimpeded rise of a “Fourth Reich” is central to the “China threat” camp. But its Cold War rhetoric tends to alienate the intellectual community and is certainly unwelcome among investors seeking to profit from China’s cheap labor market.

The concerns of the “China threat” camp are not altogether unfounded. In 2006 China announced a 14.7 percent increase in its military spending, for a total of \$35 billion (although US Department of Defense analysts believed that China’s actual total spending would range from \$70 billion to \$105 billion).<sup>1</sup> Given the lack of serious military rivals in China’s immediate vicinity, the Pentagon and the EU are pondering the reasons for this build-up. In addition, Beijing has spent an estimated \$1 billion on Internet surveillance and censorship directed at its own population in dealing with some 87,000 riots and mass protests officially acknowledged by the Chinese government in 2005.<sup>2</sup> It appears, as some analysts suggest, that China has embraced a form of market economics that is otherwise at odds with the ways of free societies.

So, which camp is right? Both views seem to have their merits, but their primary limitation is that they are rooted in political ideology, either liberal or conservative. The West needs to find a more accurate and pragmatic means of understanding the China of today, or it

will risk feeling its way along, blindfolded and unaware of what may lie ahead. I suggest that a more effective analysis would be to acknowledge China as a state operating under “neo-Communism,” a system that is markedly different from traditional Communism but, at the same time, not as different as many might wish.

### The West needs to find a more accurate and pragmatic means of understanding the China of today.

Not so long ago, China was a typical Stalinist Communist state, modeled after the former Soviet Union. It followed the traditional Communist orthodox doctrine of class struggle between the proletarian and bourgeois classes in which the CPC relied on the working class—the peasants and the workers. Unlike Mao and his cadres, recent leaders such as Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao inherited their power and have never enjoyed the political legitimacy of the early revolutionary figures. As a result, economic growth has, inevitably, become instrumental in allowing the CPC to maintain its grip on power, at least for the time being.

Today, the regime combines coercion with patronage toward business interests, the intellectual elites, the military, the various levels of government bureaucracy and foreign investors in an effort to retain its influence and relevance. In the process, it has abandoned its traditional partner—the 800 million-strong peasant class with more than 150 million of them subsisting on less than \$1 a day, according to World Bank figures.<sup>3</sup> In former times, the CPC monopolized and controlled both material wealth and the means of production. It is now willing to share part of this wealth with a small portion of China’s populace, as a substitute for sharing political power. In the face of the political and economic fallout of the early 1980s, maximizing that wealth obliged the CPC under Deng Xiaoping to liberalize part of China’s planned economy and abandon isolationism in favor of integration with the global economy.

Over the years, the CPC has emphasized “stability above all” and, more recently, “harmonious society,” precisely because China’s dynamic society is neither stable nor harmonious. The CPC has also sought to sustain its

longevity through incorporation of the “Three Represents” theory into China’s Constitution.<sup>4</sup> Since 2005 there has been a concerted *baoxian yundong*, which translates as “a campaign to preserve the advantages of the Communist Party.” More significantly, the CPC bylaws still advocate “worldwide revolution through violence,” as prescribed by Marx. And the ongoing, ruthless crackdowns against outspoken intellectuals and lawyers, Falun Gong practitioners, Tibetans and others demonstrate that Beijing still rules through violence, terror and censorship, much as the old Communist state did.

Most significant, the CPC has now absorbed capitalists into its membership, effectively co-opting the wealthy into the Communist camp; foreign investors and companies engaged in joint ventures with China must allow their Chinese employees to establish CPC branches. Deng Xiaoping took a lesson from the former Eastern bloc in his efforts to bring the People’s Republic of China into the modern age: he signaled left, but actually veered towards the right. His maneuvers were so subtle that he succeeded in saving the CPC where others had failed. To survive, Deng had his Party take off its Mao jacket and put on a Western suit, while maintaining a Communist heart. Thus, a true neo-Communist state was born.

The neo-Communist state is a complex animal. It has taken on the trappings of a free country, while maintaining the collective ambitions of a traditionally Communist state in which individuals are weak and the hand of the state is strong. It can draw upon the military and the government’s bureaucratic machinery to deal with an individual, a group or a nation. It can act quickly and effectively, and it will resort to any means. Most of the world’s free countries tend to be “weak states,” that is, the hand of the state is weak, while its individuals and corporate entities are empowered through the rule of law. A neo-Communist state, however, will always have the resources necessary to overpower even the strongest individuals or corporations.



American actress Mia Farrow lights a symbolic torch for a campaign pressing China to help end human rights abuses in Darfur before the 2008 Olympics. Photo: AFP/Getty Images

As Ethan Gutmann described in his book *Losing the New China*,<sup>5</sup> a number of foreign corporations attempting to enter the Chinese market have been forced to make concessions in the form of technology transfer and political compromise. The world has watched, all too often with indifference, as China has obliged one multinational corporation after another to play by China’s rules. So far, more than 300 foreign information technology companies including Yahoo!, Google, Microsoft and Skype, have signed a “self-disciplinary pledge” to practice self-censorship on the Internet in China. Beijing has also been making a concerted bid for foreign oil companies, offering prices far beyond the means of any private company.

**A neo-Communist state will always have the resources necessary to overpower even the strongest individuals or corporations.**

China’s appearance of world-class economic prowess is not entirely borne out by conditions at home. While

---

China's foreign currency reserves total nearly \$1 trillion, its nonperforming loans (NPL) have reached \$911 billion, or about 40 percent of its gross domestic product (GDP).<sup>6</sup> China is spending 25–30 percent of its annual GDP to bail out its NPLs, while 70 percent of its GDP growth comes from foreign direct investment. Late last year an official audit found that \$900 million had been misappropriated from China's \$37 billion social security fund.<sup>7</sup> With regard to living standards, a recent Asian Development Bank study found that Beijing suffers the highest rate of air pollution of Asia's major cities, with a recorded particulate level of 142 micrograms per cubic meter ( $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ ), compared with the World Health Organization guideline of 20  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ , and measurements of 27  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$  in New York City and 22  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$  in Paris.<sup>8</sup> China's own official data show that unemployment in 2007 will reach an all-time high, as more than 120 million farmers migrate to cities to compete for jobs with 15 million unemployed urban dwellers, and nearly 5 million university graduates entering the job market next year. The actual situation could be even worse; the Harvard Sinologist John King Fairbank once observed that China is heaven for journalists but hell for statisticians, because most official figures are unreliable.

China is well aware of the checkered nature of its international image and is engaged in a number of "soft power" strategies to more subtly wield its influence. One such effort involves funding 500 Confucius Institutes overseas by the year 2010. Modeled after Germany's Goethe Institute, Confucius Institutes are not intended to promote the teachings of Confucius, but to avidly promote simplified Chinese text in combination with Chinese socialist propaganda. It is worth noting that the government does not fund the propagation of Confucian teachings inside China and, according to a *Financial Times* report, recently banned a private Confucian school, the Meng Mu Tang School in Shanghai.<sup>9</sup> Indeed, with more than 10 million children lacking access to basic education in China, one cannot help but question Beijing's policy of spending millions of dollars to establish Confucius Institutes overseas to educate foreigners.

Earlier this year, Beijing announced that 123 Confucius Institutes had been set up in 49 countries at a speed of

one new school every three days.<sup>10</sup> Among them, the newly launched Confucius Institute for Business at The London School of Economics and Political Science seems most anomalous, given that Confucius valued pure scholarship and despised commercial interests. More than 2,000 "special Chinese instructors" have been dispatched worldwide to assist some of the estimated 30 million people outside China who are now learning Chinese. Jonathan Zimmerman, a historian at New York University, has cautioned that the Confucius Institutes resemble the Mussolini model, under which Fascist Italy financed Italian language schools in America, in the 1930s, for propaganda purposes.<sup>11</sup>

As noted by Xu Lin, head of the Confucius Institute Project in Beijing, "A strong nation comes with a strong language."<sup>12</sup> But the question is, whose language is it that should be strong: that of the Party or of China's own people?

As neo-Communist China increasingly makes its presence felt around the world—economically, politically and culturally—the questions that confront all of us are: How much is China, as an authoritarian state, changing our way of life? And how much are we in Western democratic societies doing to change China into a more open society?

### How much are we in Western democratic societies doing to change China into a more open society?

Pierre de Coubertin, founder of the modern Olympic Games, famously stated, "The most important thing in the Olympic Games is not winning but taking part; the essential thing in life is not conquering but fighting well." Beijing, however, makes no pretense of a fair fight in its reported decision to ban 43 types of individuals and groups from taking part in the 2008 Olympics, including "hostile" foreign media, members of underground churches and Falun Gong practitioners, pro-democracy activists, and other "undesirables" (see accompanying article). Other acts, such as Beijing's support for the genocidal dictatorship of Sudan and the reported harvesting of organs from imprisoned Falun Gong practitioners and others, have led some promi-

ment Westerners, such as American actress Mia Farrow and former Canadian parliamentarian David Kilgour, to call for a boycott of the Beijing Games, just as some countries boycotted the 1936 Olympics in Berlin under Hitler. Others prefer to use the Olympics as an opportunity to impress upon China the need to demonstrate that it is worthy of this international honor by better acknowledging and fulfilling the international human rights norms and conventions to which it is party.

As for the otherwise divergent “China exception” camp and “China threat” camp, both approach the Beijing Olympics with the premise that China must become a more responsible stakeholder in the international community. Although there may be differences of opinion on how best to accomplish this goal, each and every one of us should play our part. The 2008 Olympics provides a golden opportunity that we cannot afford to pass up.

This article is based on a paper presented at the Internationale China Konferenz 2007 in Königstein, Germany, on March 30, 2007.

### Editor's Notes

1. United States Department of Defense, “Annual Report to Congress: Military Power of the People’s Republic of China 2006,” <http://www.dod.mil/pubs/pdfs/China%20Report%202006.pdf>.
2. It should be noted that statistics on “mass incidents” in China are complicated by the lack of consistent official terminology and definitions. The Congressional-Executive Commission on China notes that media reports quoting the figure of 87,000 referred to Ministry of Public Security statistics for crimes of “disturbing public order,” as opposed to the “mass incidents” referred to in earlier reports. See “Ministry of Public Security Reports Rise in Public Order Disturbances in 2005,” <http://www.cecc.gov/pages/virtualAcad/index.phpd?showsingel=37602>.
3. “Economic Achievements and Current Challenges,” World Bank in China, [http://www.worldbank.org.cn/English/Overview/overview\\_brief.htm#L1\\_0](http://www.worldbank.org.cn/English/Overview/overview_brief.htm#L1_0).
4. “Three Represents” theory, put forward by former President Jiang Zemin in 2000, states that the CPC represents “the development trends of advanced productive forces, the orientations of an advanced culture, and the fundamental interests of the overwhelming majority of the people of China.” See <http://www.china.org.cn/english/zhuanti/3represents/68735.htm> and <http://www.idcpc.org.cn/english/policy/3represents.htm>. “Three Represents” was enshrined as one of the ruling theories of China in the Chinese constitution in 2004.
5. Ethan Gutmann, *Losing the New China: A Story of American Commerce, Desire and Betrayal*, Encounter Books, 2004.
6. Mark Trumbull, “Why US Speaks Softly with China on Trade,” *Christian Science Monitor*, September 21, 2006, <http://www.csmonitor.com/2006/0921/p01s02-usec.html?hns>.
7. David Barboza, “China Social Security Fund Loses \$900 Million in Fraud,” *New York Times*, November 24, 2006, <http://www.iht.com/articles/2006/11/24/business/pension.php>; “US\$900m Misused from Social Security Fund,” *People’s Daily Online*, November 24, 2006, [http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/200611/24/eng20061124\\_324716.html](http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/200611/24/eng20061124_324716.html).
8. Thomas Fuller, “Asian Conference Focuses on Worsening Air Pollution,” *International Herald Tribune*, December 15, 2006, <http://www.iht.com/articles/2006/12/15/news/pollute.php>.
9. Geoff Dyer, “Shanghai’s Confucian School Brings Little Harmony,” *Financial Times*, July 29, 2006, <http://search.ft.com/ftArticle?queryText=shanghai+and+confucian&y=0&aje=true&x=0&id=060729001307>. See also, “Authority Bans Shanghai School Vaunting Traditional Chinese Teaching Methods,” *People’s Daily Online*, July 27, 2006.
10. “Language, Culture Popularized Worldwide with More Confucius Institutes,” *People’s Daily Online*, January 2, 2007, [http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/200701/02/eng20070102\\_337613.html](http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/200701/02/eng20070102_337613.html).
11. Jonathan Zimmerman, “Beware China’s Role in U.S. Chinese Classes,” *Christian Science Monitor*, September 6, 2006, <http://www.csmonitor.com/2006/0906/p09s02-coop.html>.
12. Language, culture popularized worldwide with more Confucius institutes,” *People’s Daily Online*, op cit.

## “NOTIFICATION ON CARRYING OUT STRINGENT BACKGROUND INVESTIGATIONS ON INDIVIDUALS APPLYING TO PARTICIPATE IN THE OLYMPICS AND PERFORMING A PRE-SELECTION”

*Following is a translation of an edited excerpt of a purported official Olympics blacklist posted on Web sites affiliated with the Falun Gong spiritual movement. To date there has been no independent confirmation of the veracity of the document. 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, counter-revolutionary figures, the Dalai Lama and associates, Falun Gong practitioners, religious groups and individuals who incite discontent toward the Chinese Communist Party through the Internet.”<sup>1</sup>*

To public security organs in each province, autonomous region and municipality directly under the Central Government:

...

### I. Background Investigation on Targeted Individuals:

#### **1. International Olympic Committee (IOC) family members, including:**

- (1) IOC members and guests of the IOC;
- (2) Officials of the International Sports Federation, referees and their guests;
- (3) National and regional IOC members, including athletes, leaders of delegations and officials attending the Olympics;
- (4) Officials of the executive committee of the organizing committee of the host country, host city mayor, host country government leaders and their VIP guests;
- (5) Representatives from the host city for the next Olympics, and representatives from other cities bidding to host future Olympic Games;
- (6) Sponsors who have signed contracts with the IOC;
- (7) Athletes and delegations.

#### **2. Media: Media who purchased broadcasting rights and institutions who purchased broadcasting rights.**

#### **3. All Olympics staff members, including IOC employees, volunteers, contractors, security and temporary staff, and all others falling into this category.**

### II. Guidelines for Background Investigation/Criteria of Background Investigation:

Anyone who falls into the following 11 categories, subdivided further into 43 subcategories, must be excluded from the Olympics Games and competitions:

---

**Translated by T.R.**

**The original edited Chinese document is posted at <http://minghui.ca/mh/articles/2007/5/21/155261.html>.**



**1. China's enemies:**

- (1) Members of overseas hostile forces and hostile organizations;
- (2) Key individuals in ideological fields;
- (3) Individuals who actively participated in activities that are illegal or contribute to social instability (*liangfei liangluan*)<sup>2</sup>;
- (4) Hostile individuals in mainland China;
- (5) Individuals who were handicapped and family members of people who were killed during riots, who could possibly endanger society;
- (6) Individuals who have at any time been sentenced for counter-revolutionary or other crimes of endangering state security, close relatives of such individuals, and individuals who have close ties to them;
- (7) Individuals who escaped overseas and any suspected associates.

**2. Members of Falun Gong and other evil cults, and members of other harmful *qigong* organizations:**

- (1) Falun Gong and other evil cults, organizers of associated organizations and their practitioners;
- (2) Members of 14 organizations identified by relevant state agencies as evil cults in the guise of religions, and members of seven affiliated evil cults identified by relevant state agencies;
- (3) Members of 14 suspect *qigong* associations identified by relevant state agencies.

**3. Religious extremists and members of evangelical religions:**

- (1) Members of illegal religious organizations based locally or abroad;
- (2) Individuals who have been arrested or sentenced for engaging in unlawful religious activities;
- (3) Individuals who participate in illegally preaching religion;
- (4) Individuals who illegally distribute religious books and audio-video products;
- (5) Individuals who unlawfully establish religious organizations, institutions, schools or other religious venues, or other religious entities domestically and abroad.

**4. Separatists:**

- (1) Members of the "Three Forces" in the Xinjiang Autonomous Region, and individuals supporting them locally and abroad<sup>3</sup>;
- (2) The Dalai Lama's Government of Tibet in Exile and members of its affiliated organizations;
- (3) Individuals who take part in parades, demonstrations and protest activities with the goal of splitting up nations;
- (4) People who offer financial support to national separatist groups or activities locally and abroad.

**5. Media workers who pose a threat to the Olympic Games:**

- (1) Staff of any foreign entities or foreign media hostile to the People's Republic of China;

- (2) Staff of media organizations with a long-standing anti-communist slant or that viciously slander the Communist Party of China (CPC) and the Chinese government.

**6. Non-governmental organizations involved in activities that pose a threat to the Olympic Games:**

- (1) Foreign non-governmental organizations that are supported by foreign governments and that are known to be engaged in infiltrating, overthrowing and destroying the CPC and the Chinese government;
- (2) All members of various non-governmental organizations that are likely to jeopardize the Beijing Olympic Games.

**7. Dangerous elements, persistent petitioners and other individuals known to be strongly dissatisfied with the CPC:**

- (1) Individuals who show strong discontent with the CPC and the Chinese government;
- (2) Individuals who persistently file troublesome lawsuits or petition the higher authorities for support;
- (3) Individuals who cooperate with overseas forces to draw foreign attention.

**8. Individuals with files for investigation and prosecution by judicial authorities, or those under criminal and administrative orders:**

- (1) Individuals with files currently under investigation by public security authorities;
- (2) Individuals who are under residential surveillance or out on bail while awaiting trial, and those with restricted liberty;
- (3) Individuals who have been detained or arrested as criminal suspects and were released without being fully cleared;
- (4) All criminal fugitives;
- (5) Individuals with warrants against them and individuals under investigation;
- (6) Criminal suspects subject to border control.

**9. Criminal elements who are on parole or probationary supervision, who are awaiting sentencing, who have been released on parole or on bail for medical treatment, who are deprived of political rights, or others who have been sentenced to house arrest or to commuted sentences of rehabilitation or re-education through labor (RTL):**

- (1) Criminals sentenced to house arrest, those who are under supervision, who have been deprived of their political rights or who have been given a suspended sentence;
- (2) Criminals sentenced and released on parole, or whose sentence was commuted to temporary house arrest but who remain under surveillance, and who are serving criminal detention outside a detention center;
- (3) Individuals sentenced to serve re-education through labor outside of an RTL center;
- (4) Individuals released on bail for medical treatment, and those who applied for release under such a program.

**10. Violent terrorists:**

- (1) Members of terrorist organizations;
- (2) Individuals who offer support and assistance to terrorist organizations or their members;
- (3) Relatives of members of terrorist organizations or individuals who have close relationships with such members.

**11. Members of illegal organizations:**

- (1) Members of political organizations that are not legally registered;
- (2) Individuals who carry out activities in the name of organizations that are not lawfully registered;
- (3) Members of illegal organizations serving in any capacity to incite discontent toward the CPC through the Internet.

This notification requires Public Security Agencies and Bureaus in all provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities directly under the auspices of the central government to give priority to this directive and assign it top priority status. Group leaders are to be established at all levels. Deputy leaders responsible for public security inside mainland China must assume full responsibility. All related departments must cooperate. It is vital to keep this order and all associated activities secret and not to assign it to others. It is of utmost importance to give the appearance of a relaxed environment to the outside, while at the same time keeping a firm grip on all activities. Members of *liangfei liangluan* organizations, Falun Gong practitioners and petitioners should all be monitored closely and kept on a tight leash. No public explanation will be given for excluding anyone from the event. Everything must be kept confidential.

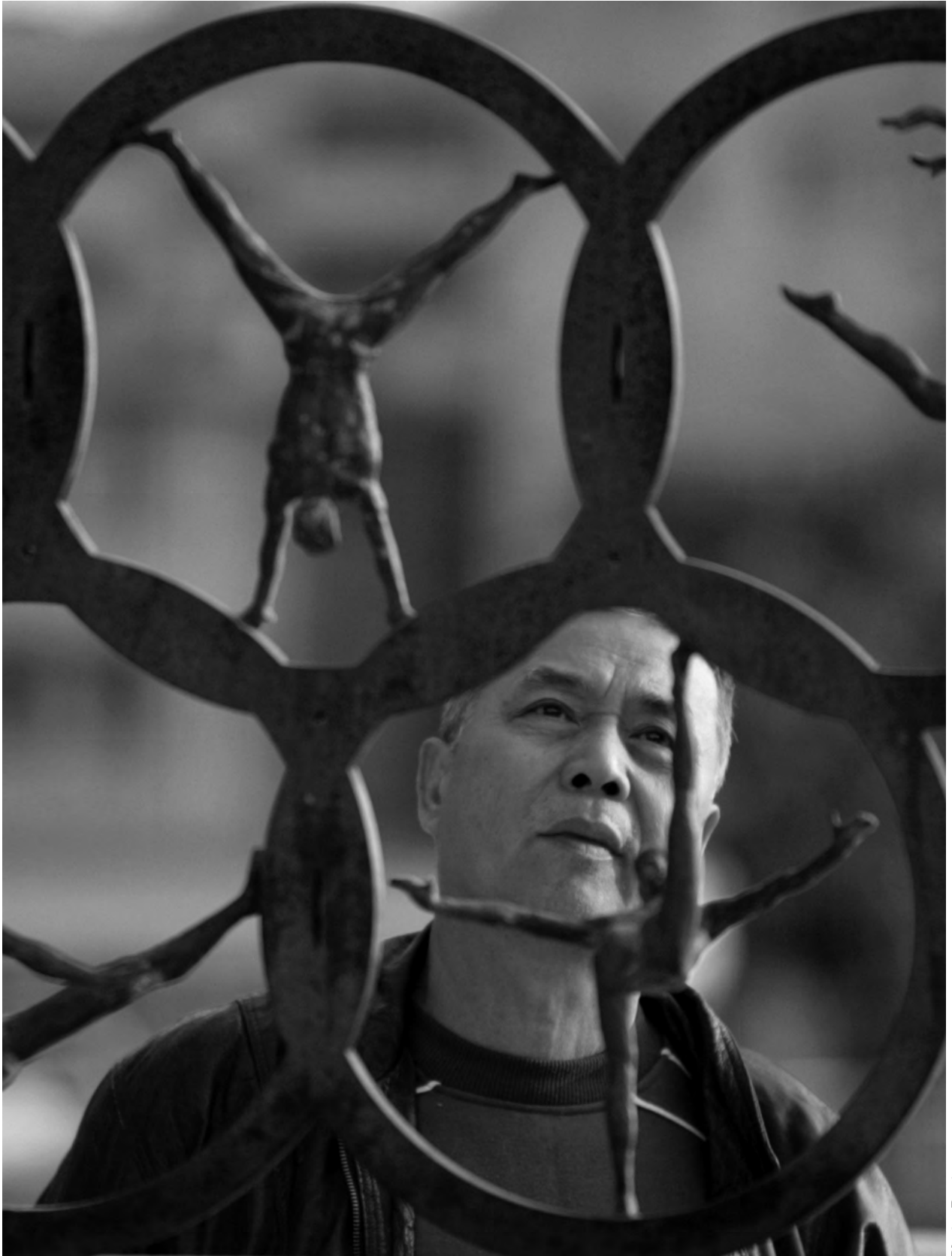
**Editor's Notes**

1. "Zhuze 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 Web page 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 Web sites: <http://2008.sina.com.cn/dt/other/2007-05-16/094912776.shtml>, <http://sports.gansudaily.com.cn/system/2007/05/16/010348207.shtml>, <http://www.2008oz.cn/2008olympics/dt/other/2007-05-16/094912776.shtml>.
2. It was not possible to determine what specific type of individuals this term refers to. The term seems to be an internal official reference that has not been used in public documents, and seems to refer to individuals engaged in two types of illegal activities and two types of activities that contribute to social instability.
3. The "three forces" are defined as separatists, extremists and terrorists. See "Xinjiang sangu shili jiang mianlin sixing [Xinjiang Three Forces Will Face Death Penalty]," Phoenix Television, March 12, 2007, [http://blog.phoenixtv.com/index.php/uid\\_623142\\_action\\_viewspace\\_itemid\\_715858](http://blog.phoenixtv.com/index.php/uid_623142_action_viewspace_itemid_715858).



---

# WHOSE OLYMPICS?



---

# WHERE IS THE “FRUGAL OLYMPICS”? INTERNET VOICES PROTEST EXTRAVAGANCE

## An HRIC Issues Brief by Bonny Ling and Trevor Lee

*Comments posted on the Internet suggest that public resentment is growing against costly publicity events promoting official prestige rather than the spirit of the Games.*

The one-year countdown to the 2008 Beijing Olympics and its media fanfare have come and gone, leaving behind persistent calls for an “economical and practical” Olympics to counteract perceived waste and excess in preparing for the Games. Increasingly, in the past few years, such sentiments have found their way onto the Internet, in blogs, discussion forums and local papers as a full accounting of the spending on various Olympic constructions and events has yet to be fully disclosed to the public.

Similar to the open letter “One World, One Dream and Universal Human Rights” from 40 Chinese academics, writers and human rights activists, these sentiments against an extravagant and wasteful Olympics provide another perspective often hidden from the media glare aimed at festivities and publicity campaigns. This HRIC Issues Brief provides a sample of the range and diversity of these critical views on the Beijing Olympic Games expressed by Chinese Netizens on general blogs and Internet discussion and news forums.

In particular, efforts were made to identify public reactions to Olympics-related news in the online editions of local papers, as well discussion threads in news forums where such articles are posted.<sup>1</sup> Due to the sophisticated Internet censorship system in place in China, the Internet voices represented in this Brief cannot be considered comprehensive, but should be seen as a small sample of the totality of views.

The goal of running a frugal Olympics has been reiterated through the Beijing Olympic Action Plan released in March 2002 and in subsequent official speeches promoting the Beijing Games. Marking the first anniversary of Beijing’s successful Olympic bid, Liu Qi, then mayor of Beijing and also president of the Beijing Organizing Committee of the 2008 Olympic Games (BOCOG), said, “Our Central Government has made clear that in the course of preparing for the Olympics, we should follow the principles of being *frugal, pragmatic instead of seeking luxury*.”<sup>2</sup> He also stressed that since Beijing is a city in a developing country, “it is more necessary for Beijing to show its singularity and attach importance to frugality and pragmatism in hosting the Games.”<sup>3</sup>

### LACK OF FUNDING TRANSPARENCY

BOCOG has yet to provide the Chinese public with an update on the Olympics budget and costs. An increase to the budget for security and sanitation was acknowledged in 2005 and submitted to the International Olympic Committee (IOC) for approval,<sup>5</sup> but BOCOG has not made the specific figures public to date.

Operational costs for the 2008 Games had originally

“We will avoid extravagance in running the Olympic Games and do our utmost to bring about social and economic developments to the capital city and to the country, creating a unique legacy for China as well as for the whole world.”  
—Beijing Olympic Action Plan, Section 1.1,  
“Overall Strategic Concept: Guidelines.”<sup>4</sup>

been budgeted at \$1.609 billion,<sup>6</sup> and BOCOG continues to insist that its budget will not exceed that of the 2004 Athens Games, which stood at \$2.4 billion.<sup>7</sup> The most updated figure for the Beijing Games came at the 117th session of the IOC in Singapore in 2005, when an IOC news brief mentioned, without offering additional details, that “the new BOCOG budget was going to be just over \$2 billion, which was in line with manageable expectations.”<sup>8</sup>

This lack of transparency also extends to projected Olympic revenues. On March 7, 2007, Yuan Bin, BOCOG’s director of marketing, publicly stated that Olympic merchandise is likely to net China at least \$70 million, but declined to indicate how much money had been made so far by the Olympic licensing program.<sup>9</sup> This lack of financial transparency makes a comprehensive assessment of Olympic spending impossible, and contributes to a growing public resentment over what some perceive as extravagant publicity events that do little to promote the Olympic spirit in China.

## BIG AND EXTRAVAGANT

Public discontent over wasteful spending on the Beijing Olympics centers on extravagant preparations that seem aimed mainly at gaining media attention and providing financial benefit to local officials rather than benefiting the local community or promoting the Olympic spirit.

Despite the lack of official figures, critics contend that construction of the National Stadium, known as the “Bird’s Nest” because of its appearance, and the swimming stadium, known for the same reason as the “Water Cube,” have substantially exceeded their original budgets. The original design of the “Bird’s Nest” was, in fact, modified after 10 senior Beijing academics with links to the construction sector sent a report to Premier Wen Jiabao indicating that it required an excessive amount of steel and was deficient in both practicality and security.<sup>11</sup> On July 27, 2004, at the seventh plenary session of the ninth CCP Beijing Municipal Party Committee, Beijing mayor Wang Qishan supported a plan to downsize Olympic construction projects,<sup>12</sup> and soon after

On Jan 10, 2007, organizers first admitted problems with cost controls for Olympic construction. Xu Bo, an official from Beijing’s 2008 Projects and Construction Headquarters, said that some contractors faced problems in controlling costs. “Their actual spending [on certain projects] is higher than their expectations at the time of their bidding.”<sup>10</sup> Despite this, BOCOG authorities have yet to publicly update and detail the cost figures included in Beijing’s bid to host the 2008 Games.

that, construction of the “Bird’s Nest” was suspended for a redesign that eliminated the retractable roof.<sup>13</sup> The new design used 100,000 fewer tons of steel,<sup>14</sup> and reduced costs by an estimated 1.6 billion *yuan* (about \$210 million).<sup>15</sup>

Although the trimming of the “Bird’s Nest” construction represented a concrete effort towards a “frugal Olympics,” there is still no institutional mechanism for the general public to express concern about Olympic extravagance and waste. The public has therefore increasingly resorted to blogs, forums and local papers to criticize impressive architectural projects such as the Bird’s Nest for failing to portray the true spirit of the Games in China. An anonymous engineer was quoted in one online article as saying, “The entire mentality behind [the Olympics] is wrong. We have returned to the Soviet mold—each thing must be done in a big and extravagant way.”<sup>16</sup>

Similar charges of extravagance extend to events generating publicity for the Olympics. Coming under particular criticism on the Internet are events incorporating the number 2,008.<sup>17</sup> Some of these events include:

- 2,008 professional drummers were recruited in Beijing in January 2007 for a three-month long celebration marking the 500-day countdown of the Beijing Olympics.<sup>18</sup>
- 2,008 senior citizens assembled in Tianjin to perform Tai Chi one morning in May 2007.<sup>19</sup>
- 2,008 people gathered to play the Chinese zither together in an attempt to set a Guinness World Record in Yangzhou on August 8, 2007.<sup>20</sup>

- 2,008 pairs of young children in Jincheng, Shanxi Province, arranged an aerial image of the number “2008” and the Olympic rings, while playing chess at the same time, in an attempt to set another Guinness World Record on August 8, 2007.<sup>21</sup>
- Efforts recently began in Beijing to recruit 2,008 couples for a mass wedding ceremony on the same day as the Olympics opening ceremony next year.<sup>22</sup>

Many critics suggest that some participants in these events, especially children and the elderly, might not have voluntarily offered their participation.<sup>23</sup> One news article quoted the observations of a Shanghai neighborhood cadre:

To organize these types of big events, every neighborhood must send a certain quota of people. And it is not just about sending people; all neighborhoods have to show support by providing funding. There are simply too many of these types of activities and meetings for higher-level officials, but neighborhood and residential committees are obliged to attend them. When the camera turns to them, their job is to smile, and if they are interviewed, they should just say some rehearsed lines.<sup>24</sup>

Increasingly, public comment describes these events as pure hype and a waste of resources. In the words of a neighborhood cadre in Shanghai, “This kind of extravagant practice takes no account of cost, but only strives toward two goals: attracting the attention of the leadership and the media.”<sup>29</sup>

From this perspective, organizing Olympic celebrations is regarded as a means for local officials to demonstrate their support for the central leadership through contributions to the nationwide Olympic project, and to showcase their own local achievements through ostentatious Olympics-related activities. One local official noted the lack of genuine enthusiasm behind such events: “There have been a number of such [Olympic] activities carried out purely for the attention of the leadership. In some cases, when it turned out that leaders were unable to attend after all, the activities were simply abandoned.”<sup>30</sup>

## ONLINE SENTIMENTS AGAINST THE OLYMPIC “SHOW”

“Some people even shout out the slogan, ‘Spare no money to host the Olympic Games.’ [However,] hosting the Olympic Games is not about showing off because, fundamentally, the Olympic spirit shouldn’t be about vanity.”<sup>25</sup>

“[These events are] only for image engineering!”<sup>26</sup>

“These events are grandiose, but do not treat individual people with respect. Some local authorities even use the administrative machinery to spend taxpayers’ money for these irrelevant vanity displays. This is not the original spirit of the Olympics, and has nothing to do with people’s livelihoods.”<sup>27</sup>

“Between the choice of adding more communal athletic equipment for people to improve their health, or gathering 2,008 residents for an Olympic-welcoming event to make an aerial view of a smile, which choice would genuinely bring a smile to people’s faces? This simple question reflects local government’s true view of their achievements.”<sup>28</sup>

## CORRUPTION

In March 2004, Beijing Olympics organizers voiced their determination to curb corruption in the construction of facilities for the 2008 Games. Wan Jun, vice-minister of the State General Administration of Sports (SGAS), underlined the importance of “clean” Games by stating that “projects for the Beijing Olympics should be projects ‘in the sunshine.’”<sup>31</sup> Nevertheless, serious allegations of official corruption continue to plague the Beijing Olympics. For example, a 2005 audit report found that the SGAS had made illicit stock investments with 27.8 million *yuan* (about \$3.66 million) diverted from a special fund for “an honorable Olympic Games” and “national fitness.”<sup>32</sup> It was later discovered that this 27.8 million *yuan* had originally been moved as early as February 2000 from a lottery



fund allocated to developing sports in China.<sup>33</sup> A year earlier, in 2004, an audit report submitted to the National People's Congress had found that since 1999, the SGAS had misused 131 million *yuan* (about \$17.2 million) of Chinese Olympic Committee funds to build staff housing and provide duty subsidies for its staff.<sup>34</sup>

Censorship and official preoccupation with image ensure that few cases of corruption associated with the Olympics are reported in depth by domestic media. The seriousness of the situation was highlighted, however, when the Communist Party handed over former Beijing vice-mayor Liu Zhihua to face corruption charges on June 11, 2006.<sup>35</sup> Liu, who oversaw Olympic construction projects, has been accused of taking millions of *yuan* in bribes and helping his mistress reap huge profits in construction projects. Beijing Olympic organizers have repeatedly dismissed any link between Liu's wrongdoing and Olympics projects,<sup>36</sup> in spite of articles and commentaries suggesting such involvement.<sup>37</sup> In December 2006, Liu Zhihua was dismissed from all administrative posts and expelled from the Party.<sup>38</sup>

Many Chinese have expressed concern over "letting the Beijing Olympic Games become an appetizer in a public-funded feast,"<sup>41</sup> especially during the 2004 Athens Games, when many Chinese officials went to Athens to "monitor" the Games. Reports emerged that some officials brought along family members and spent as much as 170,000 *yuan* (about \$22,500) per person, lavishing public funds on four-star hotels, gourmet meals and private tours around Europe.<sup>42</sup> One Netizen wrote, "As a Chinese, I'm ashamed of this kind of phenomenon, and I'm not optimistic about [the promise of] holding a 'frugal Olympics' that China has stressed time and again."<sup>43</sup>

"Where can officials go to pocket profits if not construction projects?"<sup>39</sup> a blogger commented on the demolition of a 15-year-old 24-floor high rise in Qingdao to make way for Olympic construction. The Beijing Olympic Action Plan states, "Existing facilities that can be adapted or expanded for Olympic purposes will be used instead of building new ones, and temporary venues will be built in place of permanent ones."<sup>40</sup>

## PUBLIC RESENTMENT

Lack of transparency over Olympic expenditures and reports of corruption continue to fuel public concern about waste and misallocation of public funds. Below is a short selection of comments from Chinese blogs and online news and general discussion forums exploring how the funds might be better spent.

### General

"Those idiots running our country are spending common people's hard-earned money to dress the capital up like a prostitute, then they'll bring back some gold medals from the Games and split the benefits . . . If you don't have enough money to put food on the table for your kids or see the doctor when you're sick, how can you afford to go see some shitty Olympics?"<sup>44</sup>

—April 30, 2007, a Yahoo! China blog

"There are other ways of spending this money to meet more dire needs, such as helping the poor, helping the low-income strata of our society, investing in education, assisting emergency relief efforts, strengthening national defense and so on. Putting it bluntly, China can't afford this kind of grand gesture right now . . ." <sup>45</sup>—July 17, 2007, *Xinhua online news discussion forum*

"[China] really shouldn't talk about being extravagant [with events]. We're still a developing country and should focus on development and on steadily and solidly embarking on research for development."<sup>46</sup>—July 20, 2007, a *Xinhua online news discussion thread*

"To organize the Olympic Games really costs a lot of money! Isn't it better to use this money to help the people [?!]"<sup>47</sup>—August 27, 2007, *BBS Forum QQ*

### Education

"As for investing in compulsory education, China is indeed showing the spirit of a 'frugal education.'"<sup>48</sup>—Sept. 2, 2004, a *www.eepw.com.cn* blog



Scores of children play traditional Chinese guzheng on the Great Wall to celebrate the one-year countdown to the 2008 Olympics. Photo: Reuters

## Poverty Alleviation

“While people are elated about the Olympics, sports are playing an increasingly smaller role in the daily lives of ordinary people. This is particularly true in rural villages—I don’t know if there is a single Ping-Pong table or basketball hoop in poor rural villages.”<sup>52</sup>—*September 2, 2004, a [www.eepw.com.cn](http://www.eepw.com.cn) blog*

“The media like to emphasize how much effort athletes and coaches put into winning gold medals, but how much taxpayers’ money was spent to win them? Would winning all the Olympic gold medals make China invincible? How about spending all that money on ordinary people? Do they know that there are still lots of people living below the poverty line?”<sup>53</sup>—*October 31, 2004, BBS Forum Langye Luntan*

“The country is wasting so much, and has anyone ever stopped to wonder what kind of life farmers must be living?”<sup>54</sup>—*May 1, 2007, a Yahoo! China*

“Bidding for the Olympic Games was the desire of all the people in this country, but the truth? Everyone knows the truth deep down. Did anyone ask the poor farmers who make up 80 to 90 percent of China’s 1.3 to 1.4 billion people, and who spend their lives trying to earn just enough to keep warm and healthy? As they have always said, their greatest desire is nothing more than to have enough to eat and warm clothes to wear.”—*May 1, 2007, one Yahoo! China Blog*

“Just the word ‘Olympics’ makes me angry! On what basis should China’s 1.3 billion people hand over their money to build up Beijing? On what grounds can we pay for the Olympics with our tax money and then be ignored? What about the farmers? The People’s Republic was built with the blood and sweat of farmers, and now they want to throw us aside!”—*May 26, 2007, a Yahoo! China blog*

“The Olympic Games waste too much of what should rightfully belong to the poor. A concrete example is real estate, in addition to the attention of

“There will be no talk of extravagance or ostentation in organizing the Olympic Games. We should save every drop of water and every unit of electricity in the construction of the Olympic venues.”<sup>58</sup>—Premier Wen Jiabao during the inspection of several Olympic venues on July 17, 2007.

the media that shape news and information. When I really think about it, the Olympics were forced upon us.”<sup>57</sup>—August 25, 2007, *BBS Forum QQ*

## PROMISES, PROMISES

Along with the promises of a green, high-tech and people's Olympics, a frugal Olympics is a central obligation in BOCOG's Beijing Olympic Action Plan, and all levels of the Chinese government are committed to fulfilling this promise. Nearly four years after the publication of the action plan, we are again seeing assurances of frugality and economy from the highest levels of the Chinese government.

It remains to be seen whether these promises will turn into concrete actions during the final countdown, or if the celebratory events will simply become even more extravagant as the opening ceremony approaches. One meaningful way for China to show that it is serious about Olympic frugality is to promptly disclose detailed figures on Olympics-related finances, without which a meaningful assessment of costs, revenues, over-budgeting and corruption is impossible.

In terms of China's other commitments for the Olympics, it is clear that serious human rights issues, including China's obligations regarding the fundamental right of freedom of opinion and expression, have come into critical focus over the past six years. The international community should renew its calls for a full and transparent progress report by China in this one-year countdown to the 2008 Games to ensure that all of its Olympic promises are being kept.

## Notes

1. In cases where online contents have already been removed, this Issues Brief cites cached versions of the Web sites, where available.
2. “Beijing Reconfirms Commitment to ‘Frugal and Open’ Olympics,” Xinhua News Agency, August 9, 2002, available at [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/en/doc/2002-08/09/content\\_243624.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/en/doc/2002-08/09/content_243624.htm).
3. Ibid.
4. Beijing Olympic Action Plan, Chapter I, “Overall Strategic Concept,” Section 1, “Guidelines,” <http://en.beijing2008.cn/18/93/article211929318.shtml>.
5. “Beijing to Unveil 2008 Olympic Budget This Year,” Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the United States of America, January 13, 2005, <http://www.china-embassy.org/eng/gyzg/t179743.htm>.
6. Ibid.
7. Tang Yuankai, “Olympic Countdown,” *Beijing Review*, August 24, 2006 (updated December 11, 2006), [http://www.bjreview.com.cn/olympic/txt/2006-12/11/content\\_50480.htm](http://www.bjreview.com.cn/olympic/txt/2006-12/11/content_50480.htm).
8. “News About Singapore 117th IOC Session. Singapore 2005: Olympic Programme and OCOGs on the Morning Agenda,” Official Web site of the Olympic Movement, July 8, 2005, [http://www.olympic.org/uk/news/events/117\\_session/full\\_story\\_uk.asp?id=1422](http://www.olympic.org/uk/news/events/117_session/full_story_uk.asp?id=1422).
9. Tan Yingzi, “Olympics Merchandise to Net \$70m,” *China Daily*, March 8, 2007, [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2007-03/08/content\\_822294.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2007-03/08/content_822294.htm).
10. Shi Jiantao, “Several Olympic Projects Over Budget,” *South China Morning Post*, January 11, 2007.
11. “Aoyun ‘niaochao’ fengbolu [The Saga of the Olympic ‘Bird Nest’],” *Zhongqing xianshang*, August 13, 2004, available at <http://big5.cri.cn/gate/big5/gb.cri.cn/3821/2004/08/13/110@265059.htm>; and “Siyuanshi shangshu zongli gaibian niaochao beijing aoyun ‘shoushen’ diaocha [Scholars from the Four Academies Petition the Premier to Change Construction of the ‘Bird Nest’; Beijing Olympics Is on a ‘Slim Down’ Survey],” *Nanfang Weekend*, August 12, 2004, [http://big5.xinhuanet.com/gate/big5/news.xinhuanet.com/newscenter/2004-08/12/content\\_1765664.htm](http://big5.xinhuanet.com/gate/big5/news.xinhuanet.com/newscenter/2004-08/12/content_1765664.htm).
12. “Jiejian ban aoyun beijing 35 yi yuan ‘niaochao’ gongcheng tinggongdaigai [Hosting a Frugal Olympics: The Construction of Beijing's 3.5 Billion Yuan ‘Bird Nest’ is Halted and Awaits Modifications],” Xinhua News Agency, August 4, 2004, [http://big5.xinhuanet.com/gate/big5/news.xinhuanet.com/newscenter/2004-08/04/content\\_1708596.htm](http://big5.xinhuanet.com/gate/big5/news.xinhuanet.com/newscenter/2004-08/04/content_1708596.htm).
13. “Tinggong jin wugeyue de beijing aoyun ‘niaochao’ zhengshi huifu shigong [Beijing Olympics ‘Bird Nest’ Resumes Construction After a Five Months’ Break],” *chinanews.com.cn*, December 28, 2004, <http://www.bj.chinanews.com.cn/news/2004/2004-12-28/1/222.html>.

14. "Games Stadium Redesign May Save US\$336m," Xinhuanet.com, August, 24, 2004, available at [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/english/doc/2004-08/24/content\\_368225.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/english/doc/2004-08/24/content_368225.htm).
15. Ibid.
16. Ou Sang, "Zhongguo aoyun shehuafengmi, waishang xiade bugantouqian [The Extravagance of the Chinese Olympics Scares Away Foreign Firms from Investing]," Chinese Media Net, August 24, 2005, <http://blog.chinese.newsnet.com/?p=1071>.
17. See the example of Olympic activities hosted by Haidian District in "Ying aoyun daojishi yizhounian haidian duoxiang huodong jun you 2008 ren canjia [Haidian's Activities to Welcome the Olympic One-Year Countdown All Packed with 2008 Participants]," *Fazhi Wanbao*, July 26, 2007, available at <http://beijing.qianlong.com/3825/2007/07/26/2540@3968744.htm>.
18. "'Gudong beijing'—aoyun guyue biaoyan zhaomu 2008 ming gushou ['Drumming in Beijing'—Olympic Drum Show Recruits 2008 Drummers]," cctv.com, January 24, 2007, <http://big5.cctv.com/gate/big5/news.cctv.com/sports/aoyun/2008beijing/20070124/100582.shtml>.
19. "2008 ren qiwu taiji ying aoyun [2008 People Performed Tai Chi to Welcome the Olympics]," *Metro Express (of Tianjin)*, May 26, 2007, available at <http://www.tianjin.gov.cn/html/news/2007-5/26/2007526142121.htm>.
20. "2008 ren guzheng tongzou 'molihua'! [2008 Zither Musicians Play in Unison to the Tune of the 'Jasmine Flower']," *Yangzhou Evening News*, June 28, 2007, [http://www.yznews.com.cn/news/2007-06/28/content\\_778438.htm](http://www.yznews.com.cn/news/2007-06/28/content_778438.htm).
21. "Nie Weiping Lin Haifeng 20 nian hou zaizhan Chen Zude Cao Xunxuan shoudou jiaoshou [Twenty Years Later, It is Again Nie Weiping Versus Lin Haifeng, but Chen Zude Meets Cao Xunxuan for the First Time]," Sohu.com, August 8, 2007, <http://sports.sohu.com/20070808/n251479232.shtml>.
22. "Daxing jiti hunli xiangyue changcheng 2008 dui xinren gongzhu beijing aoyun [2008 New Couples Will Wed in a Group Ceremony for the Beijing Olympics]," *Beijing Times*, May 9, 2007, <http://2008.sohu.com/20070509/n249916815.shtml>.
23. "Ying aoyun rezhong coushu 2008 zhuiqiu xingshi laominshangcai [Packing 2008 Participants to Welcome the Olympics Only Chases After the Superficial, Wastes Money and Bothers the Public]," *www.ChinaReviewNews.com*, June 1, 2007, <http://gb.chinareviewnews.com/doc/1003/7/9/4/100379426.html?coluid=20&kindid=235&doid=100379426>.
24. Ibid.
25. Qin Henhai, "Youganyu wenzongli de ban aoyunhui 'bujiang paichang' [Heed Premier Wen's Call for Hosting the Olympics Without Extravagance]," Xinhua News Agency, July 17, 2007, <http://big5.xinhuanet.com/gate/big5/forum.xinhuanet.com/detail.jsp?id=45251367>.
26. Blogger's comment on August 29, 2005, in the Tianya forum, <http://cache.tianya.cn/publicforum/Content/develop/1/62719.shtml>, under the reprinted article, Ou Sang, op. cit.
27. Quote attributed to sociologist Gu Jun at Shanghai University. "Ying aoyun rezhong coushu 2008 zhuiqiu xingshi laominshangcai," op. cit.
28. "Ying aoyun shaoxie laominshangcai de xuhuo [Lessen the Superficiality in Olympic Welcoming Activities That Wastes the Public's Time and Money]," *China Youth Daily*, June 5, 2007, available at [http://big5.xinhuanet.com/gate/big5/www.zj.xinhuanet.com/talk/2007-06/05/content\\_10210104.htm](http://big5.xinhuanet.com/gate/big5/www.zj.xinhuanet.com/talk/2007-06/05/content_10210104.htm).
29. "Ying aoyun rezhong coushu 2008 zhuiqiu xingshi laominshangcai," op. cit.
30. Ibid.
31. "Beijing Reiterates Commitment to Host Corruption-Free Olympic Games," Xinhua News Agency, March 10, 2004, available at <http://english.cri.cn/144/2004-3-10/20@95250.htm>.
32. "42 bumen danwei 2005 niandu yusuan zhixing shenji jiegou gonggao (xia) [The Audit Report for 42 Departments' 2005 Annual Budget is Released (Part Two)]," Web site of the National Audit Office of the People's Republic of China, September 12, 2006, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/fortune/2006-09/12/content\\_5078696\\_4.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/fortune/2006-09/12/content_5078696_4.htm).
33. Ibid.
34. "Guojia tiyuzongju nuoyong zhongguo aowehui zhuanxiangzijin 1.31 yi [The State General Administration of Sports Diverted 131 Million Yuan from the Chinese Olympic Committee]," *Beijing Times*, June 24, 2004, <http://www.people.com.cn/BIG5/jingji/1037/2594651.html>.
35. "Party Expels Olympics Works Chief Over Graft," *South China Morning Post*, December 13, 2006.
36. Ibid.
37. See "Beijing yuanfushizhang Liu Zhihua an zhongjiwei zhongdian duban [The Case of Former Beijing Vice-Mayor Liu Zhihua is Under Key Supervision of the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection]," *www.ChinaReviewNews.com*, June 13, 2006, <http://www.chinareviewnews.net/doc/1001/5/6/9/100156960.html?coluid=7&kindid=0&doid=100156960>; and Shui Pi, "Aoyun niaochao gongcheng bianshang de lanweilou hai le Liu Zhihua [Liu Zhihua Was Brought Down By Unfinished Buildings Related to the 'Bird Nest' Olympic Project]," *China Business Times*, July 5, 2006, [http://www.singtaonet.com:82/china/t20060705\\_271380.html](http://www.singtaonet.com:82/china/t20060705_271380.html).
38. "Dismissal of Former Beijing Vice Mayor Not to Affect Olympic Preparation," Xinhua News Agency, December 15, 2006, <http://www.china.org.cn/english/olympic/192501.htm>.
39. Blogger's comment on January 11, 2007, in the BBS forum at Yahoo.com.cn, "24 ceng gao de lou shuo zha jiu zha le, zhe jiao jiejian ban aoyun? [How Can This Be Called a

- Frugal Olympics When a 24-Floor Building is Demolished at Whim?],” [http://cn.bbs.yahoo.com/message/read\\_finance\\_339864.html](http://cn.bbs.yahoo.com/message/read_finance_339864.html).
40. Beijing Olympic Action Plan, Chapter II, “Development of Olympic Venues and Related Facilities,” Section 1, “Principles, Status and Locations,” <http://en.beijing2008.cn/14/93/article211929314.shtml>.
  41. Xu Bin, “Bierang aoyunhui lunwei gongkuan shengyan shang de yidao kaiweicai [Don’t Let the Beijing Olympic Games Become an Appetizer in a Public-Funded Feast],” *China Youth Daily*, June 22, 2007, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/politics/2007-06/22/content\\_6275187.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/politics/2007-06/22/content_6275187.htm).
  42. Cao Jing and Guo Jian, “Dapi zhongguo guanyuan chuguo kaocha aoyun zuigao renjun huafei 17 wan [Numerous Chinese Officials Went to Monitor the Athens Games, Highest Average Cost Per Person Ran to 170,000 Yuan],” *China Youth Daily*, August 31, 2004, available at <http://www.scol.com.cn/economics/cjxw/20040831/2004831155448.htm>. See also Lian Hongyang, “Kaocha Yadian aoyun, huale duoshao qian? [How Much Money Was Spent to Monitor the Athens Olympic Games?],” Xinhua News Agency, August 31, 2004, [http://big5.xinhuanet.com/gate/big5/news.xinhuanet.com/comments/2004-08/31/content\\_1930008.htm](http://big5.xinhuanet.com/gate/big5/news.xinhuanet.com/comments/2004-08/31/content_1930008.htm).
  43. Lian Hongyang, op. cit.
  44. Blogger’s comment on April 30, 2007, in a Yahoo! China blog post, “Aoyun, ni qiongren cou shenme renao? [What Are the Poor Doing at the Olympics?],” <http://i.cn.yahoo.com/blog-2v4csUE9f7zGH759esLGjQA-?cq=1&p=414>.
  45. Qin Henhai, op. cit.
  46. Blogger’s comment on July 20, 2007, in a Xinhua online news forum, <http://forum.xinhuanet.com/detail.jsp?id=45251367>, under the article, Qin Henhai, op. cit.
  47. Comment posted on August 27, 2007, in the QQ BBS forum (bbs.qq.com), “Beijing aoyunhui, qiongren ye zaozui [The Poor Suffer for the Beijing Olympics Games],” [http://big5.qq.com/gate/big5/bbs.qq.com/cgi-bin/bbs/show/content\\_div?groupid=114:10322&st=&sc=&messageid=24178&titlepage=0](http://big5.qq.com/gate/big5/bbs.qq.com/cgi-bin/bbs/show/content_div?groupid=114:10322&st=&sc=&messageid=24178&titlepage=0). The content of this blog post was removed, but a cached version of the Web page was saved and made available by the Google search engine.
  48. Blogger’s comment on September 2, 2004, in an Electronic Engineering & Product World blog post, “Aoyun jinpai, bu ke chengshou zhi zhong! [Cannot Take the Weight of an Olympic Gold Medal!],” <http://forum.eepw.com.cn/thread/33688/1>.
  49. Blogger’s comment on August 24, 2005, in the Tianya forum, <http://cache.tianya.cn/publicforum/Content/develop/1/62719.shtml>, under the reprinted article, Ou Sang, op. cit.
  50. Blogger’s comment on April 8, 2007, in a 51CTO.COM blog post, “Ni weishenme wei aoyun xingfen?—Du Xu Zhiyuan 2008 nian zhihou yougan [Why Are You Excited About the Olympic Games? Thoughts After Reading Xu Zhiyuan’s Article, ‘After 2008’],” <http://jczqd.blog.51cto.com/144338/23083>.
  51. Blogger’s comment on May 8, 2007, in a Yahoo! China blog post, “Aoyun, ni qiongren cou shenme renao?” op. cit.
  52. Blogger’s comment on September 2, 2004, in an Electronic Engineering & Product World blog post, “Aoyun jinpai, bu ke chengshou zhi zhong!” op. cit.
  53. Comment posted on October 31, 2004, in the *Langye luntan* BBS forum (langya.cn), “Wei le aoyun, huafei le duoshao? Zhibuzhide? [How Much Was Spent in the Name of the Olympics? And Is It Worthwhile?],” <http://218.56.128.131/bbs/dispbbs.asp?boardID=59&ID=10082&page=9>.
  54. Blogger’s comment on May 1, 2007, in a Yahoo! China blog post, “Aoyun, ni qiongren cou shenme renao?” op. cit.
  55. Ibid.
  56. Blogger’s comment on May 26, 2007, in a Yahoo! China blog post, “Aoyun, ni qiongren cou shenme renao?” op. cit.
  57. Comment posted on August 25, 2007, in the QQ BBS forum (bbs.qq.com), “Beijing aoyunhui, qiongren ye zaozui,” op. cit.
  58. “Olympics—China’s Wen Urges Green Olympic Construction,” Reuters, July 18, 2007, [http://today.reuters.co.uk/news/articleinvesting.aspx?type=oilRpt&storyid=2007-07-18T030127Z\\_01\\_PEK71537\\_RTRIDST\\_0\\_OLYMPICS-BEIJING.XML&s=g](http://today.reuters.co.uk/news/articleinvesting.aspx?type=oilRpt&storyid=2007-07-18T030127Z_01_PEK71537_RTRIDST_0_OLYMPICS-BEIJING.XML&s=g).

---

# A WORM'S-EYE VIEW OF THE BEIJING OLYMPICS

**By Wei Liu**

*Amidst all the hype and publicity, how do ordinary Chinese feel about the 2008 Olympics? It's not all that easy to find out.*

China, a country with 1.3 billion people still under Communist rule, will host the Olympic Games for the first time in 2008. Some people in democratic countries have called for a boycott. For example, the Paris-based organization Reporters Without Borders referred to China as “the world’s biggest prison for journalists and cyber-dissidents” and, to illustrate the statement, transformed the five circles on the Olympic flag into five handcuffs on the Chinese flag. On July 19, 2007, US Congressman Dana Rohrabacher told thousands of Falun Gong practitioners at a rally in Washington DC that the US should not send its sports teams to a China ruled by a Communist regime that persecutes its people.<sup>1</sup>

Clearly, there are voices outside China that oppose Beijing’s hosting of the 2008 Games.

It might be taken for granted that people inside China are more enthusiastic about the Beijing Olympics; certainly there was much celebration there when Beijing won its bid for the Games. But the reality is not so straightforward.

Let’s look at the basic conditions in China. With the Communist Party still in control of the economy, the average income of China’s one billion adults was about \$107.50 per month in 2005, according to the World Bank, while some 150 million people were living on less than \$1 a day.<sup>2</sup> In today’s China, many people still lack access to basic standards of housing, education and medical care. In the meantime, Communist officials and their families have become millionaires through their privileged access to privatized state enterprises and assets.

Next, let’s examine the conditions for athletes in China. In the 2004 Athens Olympics, China won 32 gold medals, taking second place among the world teams, while the United States took first place with 35 gold medals. How could the Chinese team perform so well when most people in China struggle for a basic living and do not enjoy a good standard of health?

The fundamental principles of the Olympics state that “Every individual must have the possibility of practicing sport, without discrimination of any kind and in the Olympic spirit, which requires mutual understanding with a spirit of friendship, solidarity and fair play.”<sup>3</sup>

But look at the situation in China. In China, a sports coach enters a primary school or middle school to pick out students who show an aptitude for sports. These students are then sent to a special school, where the sole focus is sports. It is not uncommon for coaches at these schools to yell at or strike students at their whim. Without the distraction of intellectual endeavor, students at the special sports schools focus their efforts on acquiring the skills and the fitness needed to beat their opponents and rise to the next level of competition—from city teams to provincial teams and, ultimately, to the national team. China’s athletes are housed and provided with living expenses by the government; they don’t have to concern themselves with anything but preparing themselves to win competitions. At the same time, they live under tremendous pressure; for them, the ideals of friendship, solidarity and fair play are replaced by a more oppressive reality.<sup>4</sup>

For the average student in China, on the other hand, sports facilities are poor. It’s typical to see a physical education class in which 20 students share only one basketball or four pairs of badminton racquets. Where

no medals are at stake, a teacher often is not concerned with performance or how long a student might have to wait to use the equipment, only whether the balls and racquets are accounted for at the end of the session.

Once out of high school, China's rural residents usually have access to ample physical exercise through arduous labor on farms or urban construction sites. The challenge for urban residents is different, given the generally sedentary nature of their work and the scarcity of public sports facilities. When I lived in Chongqing, a city of seven million people, I can recall seeing only one public tennis court, with enough space for no more than four players at one time—and it seemed to be closed most of the time. Most tennis players have to make do with finding a wall they can hit a ball against.

Since the 1980s, the most common physical exercise for Chinese people has been *qigong*, or breathing exercise. This kind of exercise does not require any special equipment or facilities, and large numbers of people can be seen practicing in parks or other open areas. However, some types of *qigong*, such as Falun Gong, have attracted so large a following that it has been banned by the government on grounds that it constitutes an “evil cult.”

Under these circumstances, how meaningful for the average Chinese are the Olympics medals hyped by Chinese officials and the government-controlled media? What would it really say about China if the Chinese team won the largest number of gold medals in 2008? In the 2004 Olympic Games, China won 32 gold medals compared with Russia's 27. Does that mean the Chinese can claim to be more physically fit than Russians? Few people would agree.

Indeed, there is a real question of how ordinary people in China feel about Beijing hosting the Olympic Games. Most know little about the spirit or the principles behind the games and are only familiar with the Chinese government's promotion of the physical goal of “faster, higher and stronger” and how the hosting of the games represents China's increasing political and economic stature in the world. The official media have also shied away from revealing the real cost of the games, focusing on the 15 billion *yuan* in organizational costs, while the actual total cost is closer to 280 billion *yuan*, or about \$35 billion.

**China's professional athletes face tremendous pressure to excel in careers that often end abruptly. Photo: Reuters**



---

Three people in China, with whom I talked over the telephone, were all in favor of Beijing hosting the Games, and one planned to go to Beijing to watch them. In hopes of obtaining a broader sampling of opinion, I posted an essay about the Beijing Olympics on some China-based Internet forums and invited people to express their views on the Games. I found that my essay was deleted from some of the forums, but was left up on a few others and got a total of 400 hits. Seven people responded to the essay, among whom, two approved of Beijing hosting the Olympics, two disapproved, and three took a neutral position. Among the disapproving comments, a poster calling himself Brave Man wrote, “Our country has spent the people’s resources on official vanity projects for decades.” The next morning, I found that his reply had been deleted from the forum, and I wondered if others had been deleted before I had a chance to read them.

I then went to a well-known overseas Chinese Web site, [www.boxun.com](http://www.boxun.com), which overseas Chinese can visit freely and which some people inside China can also access through firewall-breaking software. That essay attracted 230 hits and 50 replies.<sup>5</sup> Below are some of the comments that were posted:

- I need health, not a gold medal.
- In the ProAmerica World Sports, Cuba got more gold medals than America. Does that mean Cuba is stronger than America? And East Germany always got more gold medals than West Germany. Did that mean anything?
- Can we say we are No. 1 in the world to those peasants confined to their villages by the household registration system? Can we say it to workers who spend more than ten hours a day in factories and worksites and sometimes don’t get paid?
- I’m not happy. Our school is closed for the summer, and the only public soccer field nearby has been converted into a parking lot. Now I can’t find a place to play soccer.
- The concentrated athletic training system of China has many problems. I saw the badly injured

feet of Ai Dongmei.<sup>6</sup> Where is the so-called glory? Sports are used to harm the body instead of benefiting it. . . .

- I live like a beast of burden. The gold medal has nothing to do with me. Our athletes struggle for gold medals; the athletes of foreign countries participate for the Olympic Spirit.
- Chinese people surely need Olympic gold medals, not only for the glory, but also as the incarnation of national spirit. It can encourage people in all trades to work with passion and make our nation strong. The Olympic slogan of “faster, higher, and stronger” encourages all people to exercise hard, improve their physical fitness and contribute to the revival of our Chinese nation.
- Athletic achievement is a symbol of our nation’s strength, which we can show the outside world. It is not the gold medal that matters, but patriotic morality.
- The Olympic Games can help the slave workers in Shanxi Province forget their misery and enjoy some immediate happiness in front of the TV.
- It has nothing to do with me.
- The government is cautious about how much of its budget is for sports. It has never allowed spending on sports to affect the people’s basic necessities. And it’s normal for athletes to get injuries. Are you going to tell me athletes in foreign countries just sleep and don’t have to train ?
- Is it worth all the trouble for the people in China? Isn’t it just a game?
- Ordinary people care about their daily life, not gold medals. Even if China gets ten thousand gold medals, does it mean anything? Also, it should be expected for China, with the largest population in the world, to get the largest number of gold medals. I think it’s better for China not to get the largest number; then those guys can’t use the medals to claim that conditions in China are very good.



- To Chinese citizens who don't have enough money for tuition and school fees, gold medals don't mean anything.
- In autocratic countries, it seems that official vanity always outweighs putting bread on people's tables.
- The Olympic Games have nothing to do with me.
- What kind of life do those slave workers in Shanxi Province lead? It's inhuman. The foreigners say we don't have human rights, and it's true.
- I like to play basketball and I need someplace to do it.
- In foreign countries, athletes use their own money to train, while in China, athletes use other people's money to train.

There were more replies along the same lines. Altogether, among the 50 people who posted comments, five individuals (10 percent) expressed approval of Beijing's hosting of the Olympic Games, the same number expressed neutral views, and 40 people (80 percent) expressed disapproval.

Even this, of course, is still not a reliable depiction of the views of China's 1.3 billion citizens. In the countryside, where 80 percent of China's population lives, people have limited access to the Internet or even to telephones. The average peasant focuses on little beyond survival, and it is hard to believe that many of them are paying any significant attention to the Olympics.

Still, some peasants have taken the trouble to protest the Olympics. By July 2007, a petition entitled "We Want Human Rights, Not the Olympics" had gained signatures from some 10,000 people throughout many provinces and from a wide variety of trades. One activist interviewed on an overseas radio broadcast said, "We are struggling to stay alive. We cannot go to the stadium to watch the Games with no food in our stomachs and no clothes to cover our bodies."<sup>7</sup>

In the final analysis, it is very hard to gauge public support for the Beijing Olympics in a system where the media are under tight government control and free expression is suppressed. There can be no doubt that many Chinese regard Beijing's hosting of the Olympics as a point of national pride, but if the Chinese government is confident that hosting the Olympics is in the best interests of China and its people, dissenting opinions and the reasons for their objections should also be allowed a hearing.

### Notes

1. For a full transcript of Rohrabacher's speech, see <http://www.clearwisdom.net/emh/articles/2007/8/3/88270.html>.
2. The World Bank, "China Quick Facts," <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/EASTASIAPACIFICEXT/CHINAEXTN/0,,contentMDK:20680895~pagePK:1497618~piPK:217854~theSitePK:318950,00.html>.
3. The Fundamental Principles of Olympism are included in the Olympic Charter, and can be accessed in full at [http://multimedia.olympic.org/pdf/en\\_report\\_122.pdf](http://multimedia.olympic.org/pdf/en_report_122.pdf).
4. For more on the training of China's athletes, see Calum MacLeod, "China Ties Olympic Gold to Quest for World-wide Esteem," *USA Today*, June 13, 2007, [http://www.usatoday.com/sports/olympics/2007-06-13-china-sports-schools-1a-cover\\_N.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/sports/olympics/2007-06-13-china-sports-schools-1a-cover_N.htm).
5. "Auyun jinpai dui Zhongguo laobaixing zhende zhongyao ma? [Are Olympics Gold Medals Genuinely Important to the Ordinary People of China?]." The essay and comments, originally posted on the China-based NetEase Internet portal, <http://bbs.163.com/shishi/3943275,246.html>, were reposted on the US-based Boxun Web site: <http://www.peacehall.com/forum/boxun2007a/357300.shtml>.
6. Chinese runner Ai Dongmei, 26, was forced to retire in 2002 due to crippling foot injuries. In April 2007 she went public with plans to sell off her medals as she sued her former coach on allegations that he had used abusive training methods and had taken most of her winnings. "Image of Forgotten Star Troubles China," AFP, posted on *Times of India*, [http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/Sports/Other\\_Sports/Image\\_of\\_forgotten\\_stars\\_troubles\\_China/articleshow/1914450.cms](http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/Sports/Other_Sports/Image_of_forgotten_stars_troubles_China/articleshow/1914450.cms).
7. "Shidi nongmin: Zhongguo hai bu jubei juban aoyunde zige [Displaced Peasants: China Does Not Have the Qualifications to Host the Olympics]," <http://soundofhope.org/programs/162/66956-1.asp>.

---

# TIME TO SPEAK UP ON THE BEIJING OLYMPICS

By Liu Shui

*The most basic freedom—of thought and expression—remains elusive to the people of China in the run-up to the Beijing Olympics.*

The 2008 Beijing Olympic Games have focused the international community's attention on the appalling human rights conditions in China. The past year has brought a sharp increase in cases of Chinese citizens put under house arrest, imprisoned or otherwise suppressed for expressing their views, practicing their religious beliefs or defending their rights. Equality and freedom are the intrinsic components of the Olympic spirit. Although the International Olympic Committee (IOC) is not responsible for monitoring the human rights conditions of a host country, the sustained deterioration of human rights conditions in China should be recognized as detrimental to the spirit of equal participation so valued in the Olympic Games. Obviously, the spirit of athletics cannot be separated from the spirit of liberty.

## THE IOC'S MISJUDGMENT OF CHINA'S POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT

If the Chinese government were to make sincere, substantial efforts to bring China's human rights conditions more in line with international agreements<sup>1</sup> and with China's own Constitution, no one would object to any consequent enhancement of China's international image; but even more welcome would be the resulting spiritual liberation of the Chinese people. However, it is obvious that the IOC has viewed China from the perspective of Western democracies, resulting in serious misjudgments. Human rights enjoy systemic protections in places such as North America and the European Union, and cases of rights violations are typically judicial matters rather than systemic problems. For that

reason, massive rights violations are rare in Western societies. Likewise, Western governments face systemic restrictions on interference with their countries' judicial systems. In China, however, the judiciary is one of the power bases of the Chinese Communist government, through which it can manipulate laws and even the Constitution. Public monitoring is severely restricted by the government, and China's system can be called "multi-party" only in the most superficial sense. The Communist Party hands down its power from one generation to the next, and without being elected or otherwise legitimized by the majority of China's citizens, the Chinese government has been able to use its monopoly on power to intimidate its citizens and impose a superficially stable and harmonious society that best serves the interests of the authorities rather than the people. For that reason, the Chinese government sees no need for a sincere effort to improve rights consciousness among the people of China.

Perhaps it is the misapprehension that the Chinese government represents the interests of the people that leads Western countries, and the IOC, to believe that they need to cooperate only with the Chinese government regarding the Olympic Games, and do not need to take into account the views of the Chinese majority.<sup>2</sup> As the Olympics draw near, they have gradually retreated from their firm stand on humanistic principles, and consciously or not, they have taken the side of the Chinese government. China's human rights situation has become a pseudo-issue or an issue that has actually ceased to exist, not only for the Chinese government, but also for Western countries.

The Beijing Olympics was supposed to provide China and the Chinese people with many precious opportunities and improvements in many areas—not only the

construction of grand, luxurious stadiums, but more importantly, improvements to the spirit and the human rights conditions of the Chinese people.<sup>3</sup> Did we place too much hope in the IOC? If so, it was based on the enlightened principle, contained in the Olympic Charter, that human rights are part and parcel of the Olympic spirit.

Unfortunately, a kind of ostrich mentality has reasserted itself. The IOC committed a similar error when it chose Berlin to host the Games in 1936 and allowed the Nazi regime to promote fascist ideology to the world. Moscow's hosting of the 1980 Games the year after it invaded Afghanistan, in contravention of international law, brought about the greatest crisis since the Games were reestablished in 1894. The United States and China boycotted the Games, and only 81 of the 147 countries and regions acknowledged by the IOC at that time took part.

By ignoring the political environment and the human rights conditions of the host country, the IOC discards universal human values in a way that harms not only the citizens of the host country, who pay for the Olympics with their tax dollars, but also the spirit of liberty inherent in the Games. In its efforts to cooperate with the governments of host countries, the IOC alienates itself from the people of those countries. What significance do athletic competitions have for people in a country that has no freedom? In a country where people are deprived of freedom of speech, freedom is more important than grand stadiums and gold medals. The IOC should consider exactly what benefit the people of a country will gain from the massive expenditure of their taxpayer dollars.

## **WESTERN COUNTRIES ACCEPT TRADE IN EXCHANGE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS**

Given the serious restrictions under which people live in China, no one could object to any improvements the Olympics might bring to the political situation through the economic and political influence of contact with Western society. The optimal situation would be for athletes and tourists from all over the world to personally experience the reality of China and to share their

cultures and their sense of freedom with the people of the host country. The Olympic Games are not just for athletic performance or competition, but also to encourage the sharing of profound cultural values. This effect has yet to be seen in China. In 2001, during its bid to host the 2008 Olympic Games, the Chinese government symbolically released several political prisoners. However, once it won its bid, the government redoubled its repression, and since that time, the human rights environment in China has continued to deteriorate, with an upsurge in arrests of journalists, writers, rights defenders and religious believers.

**The weakness of the IOC has made the Chinese government more obdurate and harsh in its suppression.**

The weakness of the IOC has made the Chinese government more obdurate and harsh in its suppression, with many writers sentenced to lengthy jail terms over the past year, and many religious believers persecuted. At the beginning of 2007, the Chinese government went so far as to put a renowned AIDS doctor, 80-year-old Gao Yaojie, under house arrest before she visited the United States to accept an award.<sup>4</sup> It also prevented the release of eight books,<sup>5</sup> and prevented writers and others from going abroad to attend international conferences or receive awards.<sup>6</sup> Promises to give foreign journalists more freedom reporting in China in the run-up to the Olympics fell by the wayside when a BBC journalist was blocked in his attempt to report on violent protests against a rise in bus fares in Yongzhou, Hunan Province.<sup>7</sup> Meanwhile, Sun Lin, a reporter for the US-based Boxun Web site, had his press card seized in March and was arrested and imprisoned at the end of May.<sup>8</sup> Recent cases of censorship and suppression of journalists are indeed too many to mention here.

There is a classic definition of freedom: "The most basic freedom is speaking one's mind."<sup>9</sup> Silent masses of China, your lips have been sealed by fear. Dare we believe you will finally be allowed to speak your minds during the Olympic Games next year?

While the Chinese government mobilizes the resources

of the nation to host the Olympic Games with full pomp and fanfare, human rights disasters occur, one after another, demonstrating the strategic “wisdom” of Asian autocracy. Virtually from the moment it won its bid for the Olympics in 2001, the Chinese government has increasingly gained the advantage in its bargaining with the international community, first with the IOC and then with various Western governments, in turn. The placating policies of the IOC and of many Western nations<sup>10</sup> will eventually come back as bitter pills for them to swallow.

So far it’s been a win-win game for the Chinese government, Western countries and the IOC. Many Western countries seem to have been more than willing to sacrifice human rights in China for the sake of the enormous economic benefits they have reaped through Olympics contracts and trade. The IOC has also had its decision widely endorsed with no harm to its own interests. Meanwhile, the voice of international human rights organizations and the “silent majority” of Chinese civil society is barely audible, but their determination in defending freedom has not abated. Freedom must be won through our own effort, even if it means personal sacrifice. With individual cases of human rights violations becoming the norm, the people of China are entitled to say to the international community and Chinese government, “The Beijing Olympics have no value for us.”

Translated by Wei Liu

The original Chinese article was published in HRIC’s online monthly journal, *Ren Yu Renquan*, [http://www.renyurenquan.org/ryrq\\_article.adp?article\\_id=623](http://www.renyurenquan.org/ryrq_article.adp?article_id=623).

## Notes

1. For example, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which China signed in 1998.
2. It could be argued that the writer is giving too much credit to the illusions of Western countries rather than to the economic benefits they enjoy by cooperating with the Chinese government.

3. In its Olympic Action Plan, published in March 2002, the Chinese government promised a variety of social improvements tied with the goals of a “people’s Olympics,” a “green Olympics,” a “high-tech Olympics” and so on. See “Beijing Olympic Action Plan,” <http://en.beijing2008.com/59/80/column211718059.shtml>.
4. See “Gao Yaojie Holed Up in Henan,” posted on February 4, 2007, by Jonathan Ansfield on the China Digital Times Web site, [http://chinadigitaltimes.net/2007/02/gao\\_yaojie\\_holed\\_up\\_in\\_henan\\_gao\\_yaojie.php](http://chinadigitaltimes.net/2007/02/gao_yaojie_holed_up_in_henan_gao_yaojie.php).
5. For details of the book ban, see, “China Book Ban Controversy Underscores Public Opposition to Government Censorship,” China Media Project, Journalism and Media Studies Center, The University of Hong Kong, January 22, 2007, <http://cmp.hku.hk/look/article.tpl?IdLanguage=1&IdPublication=1&NrIssue=1&NrSection=100&NrArticle=770>.
6. For example, many writers were prevented from attending two separate overseas conferences in late 2006 and early 2007. See “A Movement for Chinese Cultural Freedom,” and “Hong Kong Literary Conference Also Hit by Official Interference,” *China Rights Forum*, No. 1, 2007, [http://hrichina.org/public/PDFs/CRF.1.2007/CRF-2007-1\\_Movement.pdf](http://hrichina.org/public/PDFs/CRF.1.2007/CRF-2007-1_Movement.pdf) and [http://hrichina.org/public/PDFs/CRF.1.2007/CRF-2007-1\\_Conference.pdf](http://hrichina.org/public/PDFs/CRF.1.2007/CRF-2007-1_Conference.pdf). Dr. Jiang Yanyong was also prevented from going to the United States to receive the Heinz R. Pagels Human Rights of Scientists Award from the New York Academy of Sciences. See [http://chinadigitaltimes.net/test\\_tag.php?id=+jiang+yanyong](http://chinadigitaltimes.net/test_tag.php?id=+jiang+yanyong).
7. James Reynolds, “Reporting Protests in Rural China,” BBC News, March 16, 2007, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/6458565.stm>.
8. “Journalist with News Website Boxun Arrested,” Reporters Without Borders, May 31, 2007, <http://www.protectionline.org/Sun-Lin-Arrest.html>.
9. The precise reference is unknown, but in 1937, US Supreme Court Justice Benjamin Cardozo wrote, “Freedom of thought . . . is the matrix, the indispensable condition, of nearly every other form of freedom.” See US Supreme Court, *Palko v. State of Connecticut*, 302 US 319 (1937), <http://caselaw.lp.findlaw.com/cgi-bin/getcase.pl?court=us&vol=302&invol=319>.
10. The author originally included international human rights organizations among the placators, but since this article was published, a growing number of rights groups have come out with statements and reports condemning China’s human rights situation in the run-up to the Olympics.

---

# “ONE WORLD, ONE DREAM” AND UNIVERSAL HUMAN RIGHTS

## An open letter proposing seven changes for upholding Olympic principles

*At the start of the one-year countdown to the 2008 Beijing Olympics, more than 40 mainland activists and intellectuals signed an open letter addressed to Chinese leaders and the international community, proposing measures to end human rights abuses and calling for the release of prisoners of conscience before the Olympics. Jacques Rogge, Chair of the International Olympic Committee, was in Beijing at the time to attend a two-day ceremony marking the one-year countdown, and many activists were put under close watch, while petitioners were rounded up and removed from the city.*

An Open Letter to Chinese and World Leaders on the 2008 Beijing Olympics:

Hu Jintao, President, People's Republic of China  
Wu Bangguo, Chair, Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of China  
Wen Jiabao, Premier of the State Council of China  
Jacques Rogge, Chair, International Olympic Committee  
Doru Romulus Costea, President, United Nations Human Rights Council  
Louise Arbour, High Commissioner, United Nations Office for Human Rights  
Leaders of democratic states concerned about promoting freedom and human rights  
International NGOs concerned with human rights  
Members of the communities of sports, arts and entertainment, academe, and business around the world

Respected Leaders and Fellow World Citizens:

Upholding the fundamental principles of the Olympic spirit, including “respect for universal fundamental ethical principles” and “the harmonious development of

man, with a view to promoting a peaceful society concerned with the preservation of human dignity” (Olympic Charter, Preamble);

Taking note of the Chinese government's official 2008 Olympic theme “One World, One Dream” and the Beijing Olympic Committee's stated objectives of hosting an “Open, Green, and Humane Olympics”; and

Mindful of the growing number of questions and criticisms in our own society and from around the world about the violations of the human rights of Chinese citizens in the name of the Beijing Olympics;

We, the undersigned citizens of the People's Republic of China, here voice our concerns and to propose changes in the ways in which our government is handling its preparations for the Olympics.

Today, August 8, 2007, marks the start of the one-year countdown to the 2008 Summer Olympics, a mega-event for China and the world. We, as citizens of the People's Republic of China, ought to be feeling pride in our country's glory in hosting the Games, whose purposes include the symbolization of peace, friendship, and fairness in the world community. We also ought to feel uplifted by the watchword chosen by the Beijing Olympic Committee: “One World, One Dream.”

Instead, we feel disappointment and doubt as we witness the continuing systematic denial of the human rights of our fellow citizens even while—and sometimes because—Olympic preparations are moving forward. We hear “One World” and wonder: What kind of world will this be? “One Dream”? Whose dream is it that is coming true? We are gravely concerned about the question of whether authorities in our country can suc-



Photo: Reuters

cessfully host the Olympic Games in an authentic Olympic spirit so that the 2008 Beijing games can become an event of which China and the world community can be proud.

As the one world that we share “globalizes,” lives and dreams are becoming increasingly intertwined. One person’s “world dream,” especially if it is implemented with unchecked power, and with endorsement from the world community, can turn into misery and nightmare for others. “One world” can still be a world where people suffer discrimination, political and religious persecution, and deprivation of liberty, as well as poverty, genocide and war. Millions of people who survived such miseries and disasters in the 20th century have come to appreciate, and to pursue, human rights. Universal human rights have become the bedrock concept in pursuing lasting peace, sustainable development and justice.

If “one dream” is truly to belong to all cultures and communities, it must involve protection of basic rights and liberties for all. Even the powerful, the rich and

privileged might be punished unjustly tomorrow if fundamental rights are not assured today.

The government that rules our country has pledged to the Chinese people and to the world to protect human rights. It has acceded to obligations under numerous international human rights conventions and treaties, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and it has amended the Chinese constitution to include guarantees of human rights.

In order to avoid misunderstanding, and in order to alert the international community to un-Olympic conduct that tarnishes the true spirit of the Games, we, the undersigned citizens of the People’s Republic of China, endorse the government’s Olympic slogan with the following vital addition:

*“One World, One Dream, and Universal Human Rights.”*

Without promoting human rights, which are the fundamental principle of universal ethics in China and elsewhere, it is gratuitous to promote “One World.”

Without the protection of the human rights of all Chinese citizens equally—i.e., without abolition of the rural-urban residential control system, without an end to discrimination against women and sexual, ethnic and faith minorities, and without ending the suppression of political dissent—it is senseless to talk about “One Dream” for all of China.

China’s government has promised the International Olympic Committee to “promote human rights” and has pledged to the United Nations Human Rights Council to “uphold the highest standard of human rights.” On paper it has taken certain steps toward improving human rights—in 2003, for example, abolishing the arbitrary detention system known as “Custody and Repatriation” and in 2004 adding “human rights protection” as an amendment to China’s constitution. We believe that the government should be able to do much more.

Little has been done, in practice, to carry out the promises that have been made on paper. On the contrary, we have experienced and witnessed violations of human rights many times—in press censorship and control of the Internet, in the persecution of human rights defenders and of people who expose environmental or public health disasters, in the exploitation of poor or disadvantaged social groups and in retaliation against them when they protest, and even in abuses by corrupt officials who are involved in the construction of Olympic facilities and city beautification projects that are aimed to prepare for the Olympics. All of these actions violate not only international standards but provisions of the Chinese constitution as well.

We find no consolation or comfort in the rise of grandiose sports facilities, or a temporarily beautified Beijing city, or the prospect of Chinese athletes winning medals. We know too well how these glories are built on the ruins of the lives of ordinary people, on the forced removal of urban migrants, and on the sufferings of victims of brutal land grabbing, forced eviction, exploitation of labor and arbitrary detention.

Out of deep affection for our motherland and our sense of duty as citizens of the world, we will do our best, and urge leaders in China and in the world community to

join hands with us, to make the Beijing Olympics a turning point in China’s rise to greatness. China has the opportunity to use the Games to build true harmony on the basis of respect for human dignity and freedom and to become a respectable member of the community of civilized nations—not by loud rhetoric or brute force, but by taking action to promote human rights at home and in the world.

In the “One World” in which we live, the dreams that are coming true in China today will significantly shape everyone’s future. Therefore, in order to promote a successful Olympics consistent with human rights, we propose the following measures:

1. Declare amnesty for all prisoners of conscience so that they can enjoy the Olympic games in freedom.
2. Open China’s borders to all Chinese citizens who have been forced into exile for their beliefs, expression or faith, so that they can reunite with their loved ones and celebrate the glory of the Olympics in their motherland;
3. Implement the government ordinance to allow foreign journalists to conduct interviews and reporting without preapproval by authorities before October 17, 2008, granting Chinese journalists the same access and independence.
4. Provide fair compensation to the victims of forced evictions and land appropriations that have been done in order to construct Olympic facilities, and release people who have been detained or imprisoned (often violently) for protesting or resisting such actions.
5. Protect the rights of workers on all Olympic construction sites, including their right to organize independent labor unions; end discrimination against rural migrant laborers and give them fair compensation.
6. End police operations intended to intercept, detain or send home petitioners who try to travel to Beijing to complain about local officials’ mis-

---

conduct; abolish illegal facilities used for incarcerating, interrogating and terrorizing petitioners; end the “clean up” operations aimed at migrants that demolish their temporary housing and close down schools for their children.

7. Establish a system of citizen oversight over Olympics spending and provide public accounting and independent auditing of Olympics-related expenditures; make the process of awarding contracts to businesses transparent, and hold legally accountable any official who embezzles or wastes public funds.

We further suggest setting up an independent Beijing Olympics Watch Committee, composed of independent experts and representatives of non-governmental organizations and affected communities such as migrant laborers and people who have been forcibly relocated. This Committee would oversee the implementation of the above proposals. It should be allowed to operate independently, to examine plans, to interview freely and to release its findings to the public. Citizen participation is key to a successful Olympics.

If proposals even as straightforward as the foregoing cannot be adopted, we feel certain that the Beijing Olympics will not go down in history as the glorious events that everyone wishes them to be. We do not want to “politicize” the Olympic movement. However, pushing the Games through in ways that violate human rights and that hurt people who are forced into silence, all in the name of a “dream” that belongs only to “some” people, not our whole world, will only plant seeds of resentment that will exacerbate the crises in China and affect the future of the world.

Sincerely yours,

Signed (name followed by location of residence and profession):

DING Zilin (Beijing, professor, leader of “Tiananmen Mothers”)

LIU Xiaobo (Beijing, writer, president of independent Chinese PEN)

BAO Zhunxin (Beijing, historian)

YU Haocheng (Beijing, legal scholar)

DAI Qing (Beijing, writer/journalist)

BAO Tong (Beijing, former member of CCP Central Committee)

JIANG Peikun (Beijing, professor)

ZHANG Xianling (Beijing, engineer, leading member of “Tiananmen Mothers”)

JIANG Qisheng (Beijing, scientist/writer)

CHEN Ziming (Beijing, scholar)

ZHANG Zhuhua (Beijing, scholar)

LIAO Yiwu (Sichuan, writer)

WANG Yi (Sichuan, scholar)

JIAO Guobiao (Beijing, scholar/writer)

CHEN Xiaoya (Beijing, scholar/writer)

LIU Junning (Beijing, scholar)

XU Youyu (Beijing, scholar at Chinese Academy of Social Science)

HE Weifang (Beijing, professor, Peking University)

XIA Yeliang (Beijing, economist)

AI Xiaoming (Guangzhou, professor)

ZHANG Hong (Shanghai, professor)

YU Jie (Beijing, writer)

YU Shichun (Beijing, scholar/writer)

MA Bo (Beijing, writer)

FU Guoyong (Zhejiang, writer)

RANG Yunfei (Sichuan, writer)

GAO Yu (Beijing, journalist)

ZAN Aizong (Zhejiang, journalist)

PU Zhiqiang (Beijing, lawyer)

TENG Biao (Beijing, lawyer)

ZHUANG Daohe (Zhejiang, lawyer)

XIA Lin (Beijing, lawyer)

HU Jia (Beijing, independent activist)

WEN Kejian (Zhejiang, writer)

ZHAO Dagong (Shenzhen, writer)

QIN Geng (Hainan, writer)

WANG Debang (Beijing, writer)

This letter was a project of Chinese Human Rights Defenders, a non-political, non-governmental network based in China and dedicated to nonviolent advancement of rights through rule of law. The letter appeared on the network Web site <http://crd-net.org> on August 7, 2007. The original Chinese version can be viewed at [http://crd-net.org/Article/Class5/200708/20070807151034\\_5304.html](http://crd-net.org/Article/Class5/200708/20070807151034_5304.html).



---

# FOUR CHINESE BLOGGERS WEIGH IN ON THE OLYMPICS

*The Beijing Olympics prompt deep reflection on the social and philosophical challenges China currently faces.*

## Wei Zhou

Posted: June 27, 2006

<http://weizhouhiwang.blogbus.com/logs/2006/06/2699416.html#cmt>

### MATERIAL GLUT AND SPIRITUAL EMPTINESS

China's rapid economic surge often reminds Westerners of Japan—"a Japan that is 10 times bigger and on steroids." Yet almost no one points out that China will also face the material glut and spiritual emptiness that Japan has experienced.

The 1968 Tokyo Olympics and the 1970 Osaka World Expo signaled that Japan had achieved what it had been striving for in the century since the Meiji Restoration: recognition as a great power on an equal footing with the West. In the winter of 1970, the writer Yukio Mishima called on the people of Japan to reassert the essential Japanese spirit, then proceeded to commit ritual suicide by seppuku. Mishima's suicide was a watershed in post-war Japanese history; after more than two decades of rapid economic growth, the Japanese people had reached the peak of material fulfillment and were now plunged into a prolonged and painful period of confusion and apprehension.

Four decades later, China is about to stage two similar events: the Beijing Olympics in 2008 and the 2010 Shanghai World Expo. During these two events, the people of China will be caught up in excitement that has been building for several years. There is no doubt that during this period of affirmation and recognition

of the Chinese people, there will be an outpouring of pride both from the government's propaganda machinery and from most ordinary Chinese people. In this respect, we are no different from our long-despised neighbors.

China is like a young man from the country who goes to the city vowing that he will overcome prejudice and discrimination, realize his own ideals and remain true to his values—only to find that everything he strives for is measured by material standards. His struggle is an epic and marvelous story, but it ends in tragedy. Because he has failed to pursue his own goals, his achievement of material fulfillment leaves him feeling empty inside. To avoid becoming interminably mired in confusion, he would first have to answer the question, "Who am I?"

Economic development has become the ruling party's main source of legitimacy. "Model business leaders" are the heroes of the age, and government officials focus on business to the exclusion of all else because GDP growth is the main criterion for evaluating career success. This country resembles an old jalopy, rattling along at an alarming speed, and dropping parts along the way. As it kicks up dust, the car is in danger of disintegrating at any moment, and roadside spectators are either gasping in admiration at its dizzying speed and future prospects or agonizing over the dangers it is running at every turn. But one thing is certain: anyone standing in its path had better make way.

China has at long last achieved its wish to advance along the road of industrialization. But while Chinese people, who have a strong tendency toward wishful thinking, pat themselves on the back, they would be naive to think that they can avoid the postindustrial

---

collapse of idealism that the West has experienced. The astonishing annual economic growth rate China has maintained up to now is not only cause for self-satisfaction, but also raises the question, “If the economic growth bubble bursts, what can replace it?”

### We are about to enter a stage during which the collective anxieties plaguing China will explode.

According to the government’s official philosophy, material scarcity is an evil, and we are building an ideal future society of material abundance based on the principle “to each according to his needs.” Although most people nowadays are much more interested in the present than in this future, “without a [personal] commitment to economic growth, what is the *raison d’être* of capitalism?” (Daniel Bell, *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism*, 1976).<sup>1</sup>

Most people don’t have the time to stop and consider this question—until circumstances force them to. One trend is already apparent: that “production heroes” are being replaced by consumer/culture heroes, and that the virtues required by industrialization will be replaced by a “fun morality” in which what is wrong is not the satisfaction of forbidden desires but the inability to fulfill one’s desires.

Growing prosperity is accompanied by rapid social disintegration. There are no longer any shared values to bring people together. Intellectuals engaged in the public sphere are all debating the problem of migrant workers and their struggle for basic subsistence. Their prescription for reducing the destructive force of antagonism between social strata created by society’s growing prosperity is to increase material standards of living. This is certainly one aspect of the problem, but there is perhaps a more important issue: growing prosperity is also creating internal destructive forces that are caused not by material scarcity but by material excess. For the time being, these forces are manifested only in certain obscure works of art, but the point is that there is no easy prescription to diminish their destructive power.

The opening of the Qinghai-Tibet Railway may turn out to have been a pivotal event in contemporary Chinese history. More and more people will travel to distant places to escape from themselves or to find themselves. There may be a genuine opportunity for a revival of Confucianism, as long as a period of spiritual emptiness is followed by an attempt by the nation to return to its roots. We are about to enter a stage during which the collective anxieties plaguing China will explode and mental illness will become a widespread social phenomenon. After a prolonged period of rapid economic growth, in the 1990s Taiwan experienced a religious revival that may well turn out to have been a dress rehearsal for what will happen on a much larger scale in China.

“The dragon will have cause to repent. A state of fullness should not be indulged in long.”<sup>2</sup> A reaction may take some time to emerge, but the more importance we place on material fulfillment to the exclusion of all else, the greater the destructive potential of this reaction is likely to be. Unfortunately, by the time we see it, it may be too late.

### Ran Yunfei

Posted: July 15, 2006

[http://blog.tianya.cn/blogger/post\\_show.asp?BlogID=185021&PostID=6049959&idWriter=0&Key=0](http://blog.tianya.cn/blogger/post_show.asp?BlogID=185021&PostID=6049959&idWriter=0&Key=0)

### THE OLYMPICS ARE ONE BIG CONGEE-EATING CONTEST

The 2008 Beijing Olympics are fast approaching, but the authorities have been very sketchy about what benefits the Games will bring to ordinary people. The Olympics are being paid for with taxpayers’ money, but why don’t they make public where the money is being spent, where it is being misspent and which corrupt officials are in charge of which construction projects? Nor have they studied or informed us ordinary people about the harm the Olympics may cause Beijing and even China. Dictatorial governments often act arbitrarily and claim that their actions are the will of the people. I will therefore take a leaf from the writings of Lu Xun to scrutinize the government’s actions.

Americans are usually keen to host the Olympics because the Games can give a boost to the economy and are a real money-making opportunity. When America hosts the Olympics, ordinary Americans are informed of how the money is being made and also told what tangible benefits they get from the games. In China the authorities may say that the Beijing Olympics are a money-making opportunity, but where is that money going? They don't tell ordinary people what tangible benefits, if any, they will get from the Olympics. Why is this? Because the regime uses the Olympics to improve its international relations and dupe ordinary people into thinking that it is doing a great job in governing the country. It spouts worthless clichés such as “hosting the Olympics is the road to a great national revival.” Although the Olympics are far removed from the concerns of the ordinary citizens whose tax contributions are paying for them, the regime will use any gold medals won by Chinese athletes as a diversion from the increasingly sharp contradictions that are plaguing Chinese society.

I've always felt that to a small potato like myself, the Olympics are about as important as a neighborhood congee-eating contest.<sup>3</sup> During the 2004 Olympics I wrote a newspaper piece entitled “The Olympics Are One Big Congee-Eating Contest,” which I'm posting below to show how I feel about the Olympics and gold medals. Although it is an old article, what I wrote is probably new to a lot of people. Like many things, sports are just a matter of common sense, but people with ulterior motives conceal the truth about them or use them for their own ends. What I have to say about the Olympics may seem almost as critical as what has been said about behavior during the Cultural Revolution, but it is all factual and in no way slanderous:

*I remember how drunk with elation I felt in college 20 years ago when the Chinese team returned from the Olympics. Xu Haifeng had won China's first Olympics gold medal and earned worldwide fame.<sup>4</sup> Yao Ming, who would later compete in the Olympics, was still a snotty-nosed kid then. . . .<sup>5</sup>*

*What are the Olympics about? The Olympics Committee will tell you quite frankly that the main purpose of the Games is to take part. You could compare the Games to a*

*congee-eating contest. If you go into the contest with the attitude that you'll eat as many bowls of congee as you can, and you end up eating a few more than that, you may well become a congee-eating champion. But there's a limit to what you would do to become a champion congee-eater. You wouldn't put all your savings into the contest; nor would you bet your life on it. I think that the way China will stage the Olympics will be to spend money that rightfully belongs to a very large number of taxpayers on a very small number of people who can eat a lot of congee, which is not what the Olympic spirit of taking part in the games is about. It's only natural and fitting that on the day of a congee-eating contest every eye should be fixed on the contestants, and that the fellow who can eat the most bowls of congee should bask in the applause of the crowd. A congee-eating contest can certainly be an occasion for fun and merriment, but if your neighbor happens to become a congee-eating champion, your life will not be noticeably different on that account. For life cannot be a daily series of congee-eating contests. Life follows its own course and daily rhythms, and if you want to enjoy it in peace and security, you had better not forget who you are.*

**If your neighbor happens to become a congee-eating champion, your life will not be noticeably different on that account.**

*Naturally, in terms of scale, influence and number of spectators, no congee-eating contest can compare with the Olympic Games. But for someone like myself, who doesn't like to use high-flown words and who prefers to look at big events from the perspective of everyday life, there are countless parallels between the Olympics and a congee-eating contest. Having watched the Olympics for 20 years, we ought to know that leading a decent and dignified life is more important than winning any number of gold medals. From this perspective, what Chinese people need is a collective gold medal and a spirit of sportsmanship and to rid themselves of their false pride and constant fixation on gold medals. What they need more than gold medals is a good attitude and genuine self-confidence. In this spirit, let us drink to the Athens Olympics.*

Published in Western China Metro News (Huaxi Du Shibao) on August 3, 2004.

---

## “Feather Halberd” (Wo shi yu ge)

Posted: September 15, 2006

<http://shenyuanzhuren.bokee.com/5657913.html>

### WHOSE OLYMPICS ARE THESE ANYWAY?

The night China won its bid to host the Olympics, the whole nation joined in jubilation. I’ve forgotten what I was doing that evening, but there was no way I was going to join the celebrations organized by our school, because I’ve always felt very far removed from that sort of collective revelry. I recently saw a movie that brought back memories of that night. “Unknown Pleasures” tells the story of two socially disaffected 19-year-old friends named Xiao Ji and Bin Bin. One evening, Xiao Ji’s girlfriend steals money from him, so he goes to a nightclub and threatens people with a kitchen knife. Bin Bin holds him back, and as the two friends are about to exchange blows, we hear loud cheering. The camera turns to a crowd of people watching the television announcement that China has won its bid to host the 2008 Olympic Games. Instead of fighting it out, Xiao Ji and Bin Bin are drawn into the sea of jubilation. The built-up suspense of their fight comes to nothing. I was left confused and annoyed that China was awarded the Olympics.

I was reminded of this by a news report I saw on several major Web sites this evening. According to the report, the “Olympics Legislative Coordination Task Force thinks that most of Beijing’s floating population consists of rural migrant workers employed in urban infrastructure construction projects. It is estimated that during the Olympic Games alone, Beijing will have one million migrant workers employed by the building industry. The government is therefore planning to send these people back to their home districts.” (*Xinjing Bao* [Beijing News], September 15.) My first reaction on reading this was the same as when I saw “Unknown Pleasures”: the 2008 Olympics are a damn nuisance. First they deprive me of a good fight scene in a movie and now they’ve spoiled my plans. Given my bad luck these last two years, I was planning to go to Beijing next year to get some work in the building industry. But if the government goes through with this plan, I’ll have to go someplace else.

But emotion aside, a rational assessment of the situa-

tion and some conclusions are in order. If we assume that the authorities are just doing this to improve their image, we are underestimating their intelligence. *Beijing Times* reports that the authorities are also considering measures and regulations to force members of the floating population who work in beauty salons and barber-shops<sup>6</sup> to leave Beijing. The State Council has been asked to approve regulations to restrict the number of people entering Beijing by requiring an authorization from a county-level government office or above.

(*Jinghua Shibao* [Beijing Times], September 15, 2006.) Readers will recall that at last year’s meeting of the Beijing Political Consultative Conference, PCC member Zhang Weiying proposed establishing a “population access system” to control the number of migrants coming into Beijing. Ms. Zhang’s ludicrous proposal quickly became the target of public criticism. In my opinion Zhang did not come up with her “population access system” on her own. Clearly, the government wanted to avoid drawing fire against itself, so it floated a trial balloon through a private individual. The reason the authorities are prepared to take heavy-handed measures to solve the problem is that since the late 1990s there have been signs that the rising tide of rural migrant workers has the potential to cause all sorts of crises, and these floating populations have already seriously strained municipal organizational structures, the household registration system, the social security system and other basic government services, and have also shaken the government’s authority and reputation.

“Persuading” a million rural migrant workers to clear out of Beijing and return to their home districts, ostensibly as part of the effort to clean up the capital for the Olympics, is the continuation of the population access system mentioned above. The only difference is that this time the government has a more high-sounding goal. The authorities may even be able to dupe enough people to turn a serious crisis into something more manageable. To boost its international image, the government is promoting the “One World, One Dream” slogan for the 2008 Beijing Olympics. The government will no doubt attempt to whitewash its image as a brutal dictatorship by driving a million workers from the capital, paving the streets with fresh flowers and tying silk ribbons on trees, but the truth cannot be covered up, and a flimsy fig leaf may actually focus public attention on the situation.



Photo: Reuters

Even if two years from now the noise of the Beijing Olympics carnival reaches 200 decibels, it will not drown out the cries of Tiananmen Square and the bottled-up bitterness of the petitioners at Dongzhuang.<sup>7</sup>

One has to wonder if these policy makers, who are, after all, far removed from the common people and their reality, aren't thinking that many rural migrants will be perfectly happy to go home and live in poverty there. But what about those who don't go home—where will they go? The answer is not hard to figure out: most of them will drift to other cities to eke out whatever living they can find there as migrant workers. This will not only aggravate the unemployment problem and the urban-rural conflict in these cities, but will also increase their crime rate. Migrants who return home will face even worse prospects. It follows that the government's decision to drive migrant workers from the capital may have the unexpected and disastrous consequence of intensifying political and economic contradictions across China. Consequently, burdens Beijing now shoulders as the nation's capital will be shifted to other cities, and discrimination based on both class and regional origin will become an increasingly serious problem. Those who favor this ludicrous "population access" policy should learn the lessons of traditional water control programs, which proved successful because they emphasized draining rather than blocking up. If tensions that have been building up for a long

time are blocked and repressed by the authorities, sooner or later they will explode into a full-blown social crisis.

The authorities are no doubt aware of the problem, but they've found no better cure, or perhaps they have found it but are not willing to pay the price to apply it thoroughly. The required medicine, which is bitter and painful but will scrape the toxins off the bones, is to give every member of society—regardless of sex, social class, household registration or political status—an equal place in society; to make an all-out effort to narrow the growing gap

between cities and rural areas and between the rich and powerful and disadvantaged groups; and to implement the rights guaranteed by the constitution and the laws promulgated under it. Let the Olympic motto "Better, Faster, Stronger" become the motto for China's political reform. The use of the "population access" policy to attempt to cure old ills may end up causing new ills that will be like gallstones and kidney stones in the social body. By the time we find out which ills are worse, the old or the new, there will be no time left to treat either.

**This is the sad lot of little people overtaken by historical events much bigger than themselves.**

Let me finish with that scene from "Unknown Pleasures." Xiao Ji is holding a kitchen knife and Bin Bin has just been hit in the face. When they hear the crowd cheer because China has just been awarded the Olympics, the two friends are reluctantly drawn into a vast narrative not of their own making. That is also my experience. This is the sad lot of little people overtaken by historical events much bigger than themselves. I am not being argumentative for the sake of argument. But it behooves us to ask: Whose Olympics are these anyway? "Persuading" a million migrant workers to return to their rural homes will make the song and dance of the Olympic Games a nightmare for them. The

---

Olympic Games will not be theirs, although they will have played a bitter role in their success.

As an individual, the best attitude one can have is to practice nonviolent resistance and refuse to watch the 2008 Beijing Olympics. Just like government censors who cut certain scenes from movies and chapters from books, during the Olympics I am going to tear pages from my diary to mark this disgrace. The simple reason is that I, too, am a rural migrant worker.

## **Zhaoyang Lushang** **(“Dawn on the Road”)**

Posted: June 18, 2007

<http://pinerpiner.spaces.live.com/Blog/cns!BCF9D7544B7A7579!1573.entry>

### **OLYMPIC CRIMES**

I remember the weekend they announced the winner of the Olympic bid. I was visiting Tanzhesi Temple in Beijing, and a group of people had stayed at the temple that evening to watch the Olympic announcement on TV. When they heard the word “Beijing,” everyone cheered, and then they opened a bottle of red wine to celebrate. I felt like crying but I didn’t want to be a spoilsport.

It’s amazing how far apart people can be. I don’t believe that the Olympics will bring any benefits to China, Beijing or ordinary Chinese people.

**The games the Communist Party is  
staging are a shady business that can  
only invite trouble for us.**

I remember the tragic events that accompanied the celebration in 1999 of the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of the PRC. Without warning residents beforehand, the authorities closed off large sections of the city to prepare for the celebrations, and many people were unable to go home and were forced to stay in hotels. I heard about it at the time, but what I didn’t realize then was that some people died because they couldn’t obtain emergency medical attention. Since

then, I have hated national celebrations of this sort. I take it as a given that the games the Communist Party are staging are a shady business that can only invite trouble for us.

On Christmas Eve of 2006, I was taking a stroll in Hong Kong’s Victoria Park when I noticed an industrial exhibition that looked lively and interesting, so I bought a ticket. As I was going in, a young woman holding a box stopped me and motioned that I was supposed to put my ticket in the box. I didn’t understand right away, so she said in stiff-sounding Mandarin, “Support the Olympic Games.”

Surprised to see this sort of thing in Hong Kong, I said loudly, “I detest the Olympics!” The girl was stunned, but I was glad to have enjoyed the freedom that exists in Hong Kong.

In the exhibition hall there was a big contraption on which visitors were encouraged to leave notes wishing the Chinese Ping-Pong team the best of success. At least 5,000 people had done so. When I returned to Beijing I told a Hong Kong friend about this. Curling her lips, she told me, “Don’t assume that Hong Kong people aren’t dupes.”

She’d hit me where it hurt, because I had always had a special place in my heart for Hong Kong. But that’s another story. The Olympics are fast approaching, and there are more and more news reports about them. Some strike a discordant note. Here are just a few of them:

At the end of March, a tunnel under construction for the No. 10 subway line collapsed, burying six workers. Work on the tunnel had been accelerated because Line 10 will go to the Olympic Village and has to be completed before the Games open. Other accidents have claimed more lives, but they have invariably been reported as exceptional and unrelated incidents, and no one has looked into the common thread connecting them all. A slogan on the streets of Beijing reads, “I participate, I contribute and I enjoy.” Can these words be said in good conscience to the dead and wounded?

On June 5, a Foreign Ministry spokesperson rebutted a

report by an international human rights organization by claiming that all citizens evicted from their homes to make way for the Olympics had received adequate compensation and that “not one family has been forced to leave Beijing.”<sup>8</sup> This categorical statement cannot be verified, but there are photographs of farmers in northern Beijing who have been demonstrating for years against the demolition of their homes and forced evictions to make way for the Olympics.

On June 10, 15-year-old gymnast Wang Yan broke her neck at the national championships and will likely be paralyzed for life. This tragedy was not completely accidental: to qualify for the Olympics, athletes are being forced to go beyond their limits. Wang Yan is just another teenage victim of the Olympics.

On June 11, on the eve of the World Day Against Child Labor, an international NGO reported that a factory in Dongguan, Guangdong Province, was using low-paid child labor to make Olympic-licensed products. The factory owner’s explanation was very revealing: “We do put children to work, but not to make Olympic-licensed products.”<sup>9</sup>

I would put these scattered news stories under one banner headline: “Olympic Crimes.”

Pressure from certain Western mischief-makers who are calling for a boycott of the Olympics appears to be causing China to change its attitude toward the Darfur problem in Sudan. But I think this is an exception. The CPC is so unyielding that the Olympics cannot really be used as leverage.

The other day, a mischief-maker encouraged me to stage a personal boycott of the Olympics. That hurt, because I’m an inveterate sports fan and can’t resist watching sports. So I told myself that I was going to watch the world’s Olympic Games, not the CPC’s Olympic Games. But I couldn’t help feeling ashamed. A poem I read recently put it well: “Living is shameful.” Only because this happens to be my motherland?

Translated by Paul Frank

### Translator’s and editor’s notes

1. Daniel Bell wrote, “but without a commitment to economic growth, what is the *raison d’être* of capitalism?”; the Chinese quote adds the word “personal” or “own” to the idea of commitment to economic growth. See Daniel Bell, *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism*, 1976 (Harper Collins 1996 edition), p. 80.
2. This quotation from the *Yijing* (Book of Changes) could be loosely translated as “pride comes before a fall.” See, Richard Wilhelm and Cary F. Baynes, trans., *I Ching: Or, Book of Changes*, Princeton University Press, 1967, 1st ed. 1950, p. 9; F. Max Muller, ed., James Legge, trans., *The Sacred Books of China Part II: The Sacred Books of the East Part Sixteen* (1879), Kessinger Publishing Co. 2004 reprint, pp. 59, 60; Appendix II, p. 267.
3. Congee is rice porridge.
4. Xu Haifeng won a gold medal in shooting at the 1984 Los Angeles Olympic Games. He is currently chief coach of the Chinese national shooting team.
5. Yao Ming, widely thought to be the best center in the National Basketball Association, competed for China in the 2004 Olympics and is expected to play for China in the Beijing Olympics.
6. That is, people who are engaged in prostitution.
7. The Dongzhuang section of Yongdingmen district in Beijing is the site of what has come to be known as the “Petitioners’ Village,” a shantytown where poor petitioners who have traveled to the capital find lodging for a few *yuan* per night. See “The View Beneath the Bridge,” *China Rights Forum*, No. 1, 2004, [http://www.hrichina.org/public/PDFs/CRF.1.2004/b4\\_TheView1.2004.pdf](http://www.hrichina.org/public/PDFs/CRF.1.2004/b4_TheView1.2004.pdf).
8. The Foreign Ministry was responding to the report “Fair Play for Housing Rights: Mega-Events, Olympic Games and Housing Rights,” released on June 5, 2007, by the Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions, [www.cohre.org](http://www.cohre.org).
9. The report in question, “No Medal for the Olympics on Labour Rights,” was issued by the group PlayFair2008 and can be accessed at [http://www.playfair2008.org/docs/playfair\\_2008-report.pdf](http://www.playfair2008.org/docs/playfair_2008-report.pdf).

---

# A TIBETAN ACTIVIST'S BEIJING BLOG

By Lhadon Tethong

*Lhadon Tethong, the executive director of Students for a Free Tibet (SFT), traveled to Beijing for the one-year countdown to the Beijing Olympics. She and Paul Golding, another Tibet activist, were in Beijing for a week, during which they were placed under round-the-clock surveillance by Chinese authorities, detained and finally deported to Hong Kong. Following are excerpts from the blog Lhadon kept during and after her trip to Beijing: [www.beijingwideopen.org](http://www.beijingwideopen.org).*

China has invited the world to visit in August 2008. Exactly one year out, I've traveled to the heart of the nation that has brutally occupied my homeland for over 50 years. Follow this blog, as I share what I see, feel and experience . . . leaving Beijing wide open.

## FAKE TIBET IN "RACIST PARK"

August 4, 2007

Beijing's "National Ethnic Minorities Park" is a sickening place. Located directly across from the Olympic Village site, it's a patronizing and offensive display of Chinese cultural imperialism, and only a fool could be taken in by it. It's too bad the mistranslated signs (right) that once pointed the way to "Racist Park" have been replaced by a more politically correct version.

Seeing this twisted place firsthand has only stoked my rage and passion to fight until Tibet is free from China's occupation.

The park showcases what China calls its "56 ethnic minority nationalities" like animals at the zoo. There are different sections dedicated to different "minorities." Brief descriptions of each "species" are accompanied by photographs describing their strange habits and unique customs. If the visitor is lucky, he or she will arrive when the animals are dancing and singing and

can get a close-up look at these weird and wonderful creatures.

Horrified yet?

The park showcases what China calls its "56 ethnic minority nationalities" like animals at the zoo.

Thankfully, there were few other visitors there with us today under the thick and smoggy skies (fittingly—the worst we've seen yet). Most decent guide books do not recommend this trip. Even if one doesn't care so much about the peoples on display, the shabby condition of the buildings and the inauthenticity that oozes from every corner and every structure is enough to scare anyone away.

I could not bring myself to go close to the young Tibetan dance troupe that performed there today. I didn't want to watch or take pictures or look them in the eyes. Although I don't know their individual stories, I can imagine the roads that brought them to this terrible place.

Paul was really shaken up after his visit inside a stone house, where he found a young Tibetan girl in a small room with a photo of Mao on the wall. She was answering questions from several Chinese tourists. Paul took out his camera to record the scene. When the tourists left, Paul asked the girl if he could take her photo. He took several and then she started to sing and dance. Suddenly he felt mortified and wanted her to stop, but he didn't because he felt it was more important to get the footage. So he filmed as long as he could stand it.

It is no coincidence that the Tibetan section of the park is located right by the entrance and is visible from the main street. China has placed the battle for Tibet at the



center of its Olympics-related public relations campaign. This battle has been ongoing for years now, but was intensified in 2000 after a high-level government-sponsored meeting put Tibet-related propaganda at the top of the official agenda.

This is an excerpt from a leaked document: “Tibet-related External Propaganda and Tibetology Work in the New Era,” June 12, 2000:

External publicity on Tibet is an important element of our country’s external propaganda. It is also a very important element of our struggle against the Dalai clique and hostile Western forces. We need to carry out result-oriented and pinpointed research on the Tibet issue. We also need to carry out diligent external propaganda on Tibet. These efforts are related not only to national and nationalities unity, but also to the open-door reform, progress and stability of our country. Therefore, this is the common responsibility of our propaganda department and cultural institutes.<sup>1</sup>

The Chinese authorities believe that if they show enough happy, singing and dancing Tibetans, then the world will accept China’s rule over Tibetans as legitimate. And the Olympics provide them the perfect opportunity to showcase this fraud.

The one highlight of the visit was seeing the bridge right by the “Tibetan” section of the park where my good friends, Han (from SFT) and Liam (from Australia Tibet Council), staged their banner-hanging action in August 2004, on the morning after the Beijing mayor received the Olympic flag at the close of the Athens Games.<sup>2</sup>

## THE BIRD’S NEST

August 4, 2007

There’s been so much hype and excitement about it. I just had to come see the Olympic Stadium (nicknamed the Bird’s Nest) for myself. It’s enormous and obviously meant to inspire awe and reverence in Chinese and foreigners alike, regardless of the cost (which at this point

is estimated at 3.8 billion *yuan*—or \$500 million). Of course, the construction is still going on . . .

The Chinese government’s obsession with audacious mega-projects is nothing new (Three Gorges Dam, Tibet Railway), with each serving different military and economic purposes. There is a common, psychological theme running through all of these projects, including the Bird’s Nest: all of them are meant to communicate China’s technological progress and prowess. However, the architectural scale and engineering sophistication of these projects cannot gloss over the absence of the two most basic rights of China’s people: freedom and democracy. Will freedom and democracy ever come to China? Does economic progress automatically lead to an opening up of restrictive, repressive political systems, as so many academics and China apologists claim? In fact, as China’s economy gets more advanced, the tools of repression and fear also seem to become more sophisticated.

As a Tibetan born and raised in exile, I have come to cherish the freedom I enjoy outside of my own homeland. Freedom is addictive, and once you taste it, you’re hooked; you only want more. There was a time when my grandparents lived in a free Tibet and led free lives. Mine is an unfortunate generation of Tibetans, either wandering in foreign lands or living under oppression in our homeland.

As I write this, 14 Tibetans sitting on the street in Delhi are entering the 27th day of a hunger strike. They hunger for freedom more than they hunger for food. They have vowed to die in the face of oppression rather than resort to violence. My thoughts and prayers are with them.<sup>3</sup>

And even though the feeling of repression hangs over this place like smog, I also feel strongly that change is at hand, not only for Tibet but also for China. The charade has gone on long enough. As I turned back for one last photograph of the Bird Nest, it suddenly looked almost toy-like.

An old Chinese proverb quotes a scholar who said:

When man fights nature  
Nature kills man.

---

The sky turns black  
And empires crumble.

Well, the sky here is nearly black.

“And this is the country that claims to develop Tibet for the better?” I said to myself, as I imagined the vast, blue, blue, blue sky of my homeland Tibet.

## OPEN LETTER TO THE IOC

August 5th, 2007

Mr. Jacques Rogge  
President, International Olympic Committee

Dear Mr. Rogge,

My name is Lhadon Tethong. I am the Executive Director of Students for a Free Tibet, a worldwide organization of Tibetans and their supporters. I am here in Beijing and would like to meet with you to discuss the ways that the Chinese government is attempting to use the glow of the Olympics to blind the world to its violent oppression and occupation of my homeland.

On July 13, 2001, the day that Beijing was awarded the honor of hosting the 2008 Olympic Games, the then International Olympic Committee Executive Director Francois Carrard said, “Bet on the fact...that the situation will be improved. We are taking the bet that seven years from now we will see many changes.”

You stated yourself in a 2002 BBC interview that the IOC was “convinced that the Olympic Games will improve human rights in China.” But according to a report released by Human Rights Watch last week, “the Chinese government shows no substantive progress in addressing long-standing human rights concerns.”

Not only has the IOC failed to secure improvements in human rights in China but it has abetted suppression of dissent by Chinese authorities. At an IOC meeting in Guatemala last month, Hein Verbruggen, the IOC’s chairman of the 2008 Olympics Coordination Committee, said, “The way in which the Games are being

used as a platform for groups with political and social agendas is regrettable.” Such statements only embolden a notoriously repressive Chinese regime, further endangering those inside China and Tibet who advocate for freedom and human rights at tremendous risk already.

With the Games just a year away, the Chinese government has not only shown no commitment to ceasing its systemic violations of fundamental human rights, it has used the Olympics to promote a false image of progress on a number of fronts where it has in fact regressed. Just last week in eastern Tibet, hundreds of Tibetans were rounded up after a peaceful protest calling for the return of the Dalai Lama. Crackdowns like this are commonplace.

**The Chinese government has made Tibet a central theme in its Olympics-related public relations blitz, in an attempt to legitimize its brutal occupation of Tibet, once and for all.**

Most disturbing to Tibetans and their supporters worldwide is the way that the Chinese government has made Tibet a central theme in its Olympics-related public relations blitz, in an attempt to legitimize its brutal occupation of Tibet, once and for all. Having traveled around Beijing and seen the Olympics propaganda firsthand, it is obvious to me that China is politicizing these Games, and yet the IOC has remained silent, enabling the Chinese authorities to continue oppression of my homeland while wrapping themselves in Olympic colors.

We demand that the Chinese government not pass the Olympic torch over Tibetan soil, and that the opening and closing ceremonies contain no references to Tibet: its land, its culture or its people. We are calling on the IOC to publicly oppose these propaganda efforts, and use its influence to affect substantive progress on human rights in China and a meaningful resolution to the occupation of Tibet.

Mr. Rogge, you must do something. Without public censure from the IOC in the coming months, the Chinese government will continue to abuse human rights

in Tibet and China, and will only be emboldened to brutally silence peaceful opposition during the Games themselves.

It is in your own interest to take measures now and use your influence while you have it. Otherwise, the IOC will only have itself to blame when the Beijing Games become synonymous with human rights abuses and crackdown on dissent as we are already seeing in the lead up to the one-year countdown.

I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Lhadon Tethong

Cc: Hein Verbruggen, Chairman, IOC's 2008 Olympics Coordination Committee  
Liu Qi, President, Beijing Organizing Committee of the Olympic Games

## TRYING TO MEET THE IOC PRESIDENT

August 6th, 2007

We just got back from Tiananmen Square, where a massive stage is being built for the one-year countdown on August 8. Senior IOC officials have invited more than 200 National Olympic Committees to Beijing to attend this event, which will start at 7:00 PM and be attended by 10,000 people.

While in the Square, I called Robert Roxborough, the IOC communications coordinator, to ask for a meeting with IOC president Jacques Rogge. Roxborough had just arrived in Beijing and said that he hadn't had a chance to figure out the schedule yet. I explained that I had written an open letter to IOC president Jacques Rogge and wanted to meet with Rogge to discuss how China is using the Olympics to legitimize its rule in Tibet.

Roxborough took my name and numbers and said that he'd call me back. So now I am waiting. And if you read this, Robert—I trust that you will call me back soon.

## A SURPRISE VISIT

August 6, 2007

Tonight we decided to pay a surprise visit to IOC president Jacques Rogge. We arrived at his hotel, but missed him by seconds as he breezed in with his bodyguards and walked straight into the elevator. I tried to get him on the phone—with no luck of course. I did manage to speak to Paul Foster (IOC "Head of Protocol Events and Hospitality"), who insisted that I go through Robert Roxborough, the communications coordinator I had originally called from Tiananmen Square, to get an appointment with Rogge. I told him I'd been waiting for Robert to call me back, and said that I would wait in the hotel lobby for a while.

Soon after we talked to the hotel's general manager—whom I approached after we found him peering nervously at us from across the lobby—Robert showed up in the lobby. He's a polite young Scottish guy, who came to deliver the message that Jacques's schedule is too tight to fit in a meeting with me. I told him that this was an opportunity for the IOC to address the issue of human rights one year before the Games, especially as many people are upset with comments made in Guatemala by IOC coordination commissioner Hein Verbruggen.<sup>4</sup> Robert listened politely as I described the situation in Tibet and expressed our outrage at the fact that China is using the Games to legitimize its rule in Tibet. Finally, I asked him to take a message back to Rogge asking him to reconsider my request for a meeting. I said I would come to the hotel in the morning and wait for an answer. Robert didn't seem too keen on that, but he said he'd let me know tomorrow. So that's where we stand now.

All in all it was another bizarre but productive day in China's pollution-choked capital. It felt good to stand in Tiananmen Square and speak confidently in front of Mao's portrait. In the evening, it was surprising to find so little security at Rogge's hotel. At the end of the long day, it was strangely comforting to return to our hotel and find no fewer than five plain-clothed security agents waiting for us in the lobby.

Let's see what tomorrow brings . . .



Tibet activists protest outside the Chinese Embassy in Washington, DC, in August 2007. In China, it's not so easy. Photo: AFP/Getty Images

## A (BRIEF) CLOSE ENCOUNTER

August 6, 2007

After missing IOC president Jacques Rogge by seconds on Monday, I decided to head back to the lobby of his Beijing hotel this morning and wait for him. The video's not the best, but check out our brief encounter . . .

*[A YouTube video shows Lhadon approaching Rogge, who ignores her. She is blocked by a man with Rogge. The video can be viewed at <http://beijingwideopen.org/2007/08/06/a-brief-close-encounter/>.]*

## THOUGHTS AS I RETURN HOME . . .

August 10, 2007

I am on the plane and we've just started our descent. According to the captain we'll be landing in 20 minutes.

I think there's a guy following me on the plane. Or maybe I'm just totally paranoid now. But I'm pretty

convinced . . . is this what happens after just one week in China as a dissenter?

One thing is clear in all this Olympics mess: the Chinese government cares what the world thinks. Knowing this, we must push them to change.

They pulled Kate and me over at Hong Kong immigration. Not Sam. Just us. They said they had a message from the police to stop us so that they could interview us. After much paperwork and copying our passports and typing information into various computers, they let us go. According to the official, who said he wasn't allowed to ask any questions, the police no longer wanted the interview. Yeah, right. They have all the info they think they need now to keep us out. But they can't. It's not that easy.

I've been able to read the blog properly now, as it's not blocked outside of the mainland of the People's Republic of China. And it's been amazing to see all the support we've received from people around the world.

Thank you to each and every one of you. And to all our critics and dissenters. Please, critique away. It's not a problem. That's the beauty of democracy and of truly free and open societies—you can express your opinion and, even if you're against us expressing ours, you won't get locked up!

I know we did this and got off pretty easy. And while I appreciate that some people think I did something brave, I'm not sure I did. Bravery is standing in front of a tank in Tiananmen Square. Bravery is getting on a stage in Tibet and calling for the return of the Dalai Lama. Bravery is going to Beijing to petition to get compensation for your confiscated farmland from the very same government that probably took it in the first place. All this, with no protection. No foreign passport, government or official body that will defend you.

What I did, what we did, it was nothing in comparison. But I hope and I pray that somehow we have made a difference in the battle for human rights and freedom in Tibet and in China. The Olympics spotlight is on the Chinese leadership now, and they want the world to believe they are open and free. But they are not. They demonstrated this by deporting me at the very moment that the one-year countdown to the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games was taking place in Tiananmen Square. Paul and I just wanted to attend. To see it for ourselves and to blog about it like one should be able to in any place that truly enjoys freedom.

Some people have said we got what we deserved. Others have suggested that we got off too lightly and should act more responsibly next time. I think it is the regime in Beijing—unelected, unaccountable and tyrannical—that should act more responsibly. I think our government, governments around the world, corporations doing business in China and the IOC itself, should act more responsibly. They are the ones who have clear and direct influence over Beijing. They are the ones who could make a huge impact by doing just a little in the way of speaking up for and promoting human rights and democracy.

Until this happens, we will keep doing what we have to do—challenging China's control over Tibet and work-

ing to make the occupation too costly to maintain. One thing is clear in all this Olympics mess: the Chinese government cares what the world thinks. If they didn't, they wouldn't spend so much time trying to get us all to like them with slogans like, "One World, One Dream." Knowing this, we must push them to change. And if our direct actions are seen as stunts by a few, I trust the vast majority will see them for what they really are, nonviolent expressions of dissent and protest to bring positive social and political change to people living under brutal oppression.

For Tibetans, Uyghurs, Southern Mongolians, Taiwanese, Falun Gong, Christians, Catholics, farmers, factory workers, lawyers, doctors, journalists and every other person who lives under fear of persecution by the Chinese Communist Party and their goons, I say, we will never give up.

We stand with you.

On behalf of our wonderful members and supporters around the world,

Lhadon Tethong  
Executive Director  
Students for a Free Tibet

## Notes

1. The full article can be accessed on the Web site of Students for a Free Tibet, <http://www.studentsforafreetibet.org/article.php?id=423>.
2. See <http://www.studentsforafreetibet.org/article.php?id=339>.
3. For a record of the hunger strike, see <http://phayul.com/news/specials/0707tychungerstrike/>.
4. Hein Verbruggen stated at the IOC's Congress in Guatemala City on July 5 that the Beijing 2008 Games were "being used as a platform for groups with political and social agendas which is often regrettable. [...] We cannot allow those albeit important agendas to distract us from our primary position, which is of course to ensure that a successful Games is hosted." "Rights Groups Slam Top IOC Official's Stance on Beijing," Agence France Presse, July 13, 2007.

---

# MAY NO OTHER MOTHER FEEL THIS PAIN

## An Interview with Gao Qinsheng, Mother of Shi Tao

By Shi Ping

*Shi Tao, a journalist and member of the Independent Chinese PEN Center, is currently serving a 10-year sentence for “leaking state secrets.” The World Association of Newspapers recently honored Shi with its 2007 Pen of Freedom Award in recognition of his contributions to the struggle for press freedom in China. Shi Tao’s mother, Gao Qinsheng, traveled to Cape Town, South Africa, to accept the award on behalf of her son. She then traveled to the United States to hold discussions with legal professionals about filing a lawsuit against Yahoo!, the Internet company that divulged Shi Tao’s personal information to the Chinese authorities. A writer for HRIC’s Chinese-language e-weekly, Huaxia Dianzi Bao, had an opportunity to speak with Gao Qinsheng in New York.*

**Huaxia Dianzi Bao (HXB):** *You recently traveled across the globe to accept the 2007 Pen of Freedom Award on behalf of Shi Tao. What experience during your travels has left the deepest impression on you?*

**Gao Qinsheng (Gao):** I have been most impressed with the innate moral sense within people’s hearts. All I have seen over the past few weeks has convinced me that our world is one of justice and righteousness. Back in China, I had no idea that so many people around the world had been following my son’s plight so closely. Such global empathy and support proves that Shi Tao is completely innocent, and was simply performing his duty as a journalist. Despite the difficulties of the past few years, I now know that we are not alone. I remember that when I went onstage to accept the Pen of Freedom Award on Shi Tao’s behalf, a picture of my son at a younger age was on display. Seeing that picture really struck me, and I couldn’t hold back my tears any longer. I shared a brief poem with the audience, written by my son in commemoration of the Tiananmen massacre, but I became overwhelmed by emotion and could sense that everyone else in the room did also. I

was later told that many had been moved to tears by my presentation and that it stood out as a highlight of the conference.

Shi Tao is my eldest son, and we have always had a special bond. He has always been such a wonderful child, but since his arrest, he has been worried that he has somehow let me down. It hurts him that he is unable to look after me, and he feels that his case has burdened me with constant anxiety and unnecessary trouble. These concerns have left him plagued with guilt over the past few years, but I disagree and wish he would stop worrying. In fact, I believe that my son has richly rewarded me for the care I took in raising him, and has given me the best gift that a son can give a mother: I have seen with my own eyes that people all around the world consider him an outstanding person. This is the greatest gift and reassurance that a mother can receive. My son, Shi Tao, is my life, and even if everyone else gave up and left him behind, I would never forget him—I will always be by his side.

I am retired and just try to make it through each day on my pension. I have had to sell off our family’s property and spend all of our savings in order to help my son with his legal dilemma. I am also in poor health and suffer from coronary heart disease, which has only added to our troubles. Yet despite all of these strains, I would never dream of missing the chance to visit my son at Chishan Jail each month. I have rented a basement room not far from the jail in Changsha, the capital of Hunan Province. It’s a dingy little room, and to make things even worse, it was completely submerged in the floods last year, washing away everything I had. But even in the face of these mounting difficulties, I remain determined to continue doing all that I can to support my son. I eagerly await the day that he is released from jail, safe and healthy.

**HXB:** *Human Rights in China* recently published a report on China's state secrets system. A spokesperson for the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, when questioned by an international journalist about this report, responded, "The Chinese government guarantees its citizens freedom of speech in accordance with the law. Only citizens who have violated the law will face legal penalties. No one will be punished simply for exercising their freedom of speech." What do you think of this claim?

**Gao:** It's simply a barefaced lie. The authorities accused my son of "divulging state secrets abroad," and handed him a merciless 10-year prison sentence. But how is the Tiananmen massacre a "state secret"? Everyone knows that the government engaged in unconscionable acts that spring, and that it remains unwilling to acknowledge its wrongdoing. It is no secret that they are obsessed with covering up and stifling any discussion of those events, obviously fearing the consequences of their actions. As June 4th approaches each year, the authorities hold meetings and issue documents listing innumerable restrictions and "taboo topics." Such restrictions apply year after year, and are far from "state secrets." In sharing the truth of this matter, Shi Tao simply did what any good journalist is supposed to do.

My son has always been an honest and idealistic young man. He organized a poetry group in college, and has always followed developments in our society closely. Whenever and wherever he saw injustice, he was always passionate about helping those in need. After graduating from college, he incorporated this passion into his media work: when he saw injustice, he made his opinions known and pleaded for those left behind by our society. But such passion for justice and truth can be problematic in our country; his commentaries on the Internet had caught the authorities' attention long before his arrest. His harsh 10-year sentence is simply an example of the government leaping at the chance to put him behind bars and set an example for everyone else.

Shi Tao is 100 percent innocent—he was jailed for exercising the freedom of speech granted to him, as a citizen, by our constitution. The irony is that in exercising this right, he became a victim of the Chinese authorities' drive to suppress freedom of speech and freedom of the press in active violation of their own constitu-

tion. No matter what the Ministry of Foreign Affairs might claim, my son's ordeal is a clear-cut example of the lack of freedom in today's China.

**HXB:** *Countless international organizations and institutions have joined hands to show their support and to demand, in one voice, "Release Shi Tao immediately." As the old adage says, "He who stands on the side of justice will always find support." Having witnessed such passion for this cause all around the world, do you feel optimistic about the prospects for saving Shi Tao?*

**Gao:** First, I would like to express my most sincere thanks to everyone for supporting my son and for keeping this cause in the public spotlight. I believe that the more people who get involved in this fight, the better our prospects will become. And there are already so many people involved: The World Association of Newspapers, Human Rights in China and many other groups have made such great efforts to apply continuous pressure to the Chinese authorities. All of these efforts make me, as a mother, feel greatly relieved and thankful. I hope that everyone will continue working together to force the Chinese government to release my son before the 2008 Beijing Olympics. Obviously, we still have quite a long road ahead of us, but I will never stop fighting to save Shi Tao. At the same time, we should also remember to look beyond this individual case toward the future. I came here to the United States not only to help my son, but also to push the US government to proceed with legislation to end American Internet companies' cooperation with the Chinese government, so that no one else will ever face the tragedy that has beset my family.

**HXB:** *Thank you for joining me for this interview. Please take good care, and have a safe journey home!*

Translated by Kevin Carrico

The original Chinese article was published in HRIC's online Chinese journal, *Ren Yu Renquan*, [http://www.renyurenquan.org/ryrq\\_article.adp?article\\_id=675](http://www.renyurenquan.org/ryrq_article.adp?article_id=675).





---

# GOING FOR THE GREEN



---

# WHAT WILL THE 2008 OLYMPICS BRING TO CHINA'S PEOPLE?

**By Liu Jingsheng**

*The “green Olympics” and Olympics projects, in general, have developed into pretexts for infringing on the rights of ordinary citizens.*

The Olympics countdown billboards scattered throughout Beijing remind people that there is just one year to go before the Olympics begin. For the sake of those 20 days in August 2008, Beijing has endured five years of torment. In that respect, the countdown billboards reassure the people of Beijing that they have, at most, one year left to suffer.

Today, Beijing is one big construction site; everywhere one looks, the ground is torn up, and smoke and dust mix in the air. Particulates are especially dense near the Olympics stadium and along the major tourist routes. Subways are being rapidly built, roads are being repaired, old walls refurbished, hills made straight, pedestrian walkways repaved . . . . The city is a forest of cranes competing to refurbish the exteriors of all major buildings under this most ambitious “image project” in the world, as China undertakes with great official fanfare the “final sprint to the Olympics.”<sup>1</sup>

Historically, cities hosting the Olympics have been located in industrially developed countries. The 2008 Olympics mark the first time that the Games are being held in a developing country, China—the “king of beggars” at this year’s China-Africa Forum. Amidst the massive demolition and construction projects for the Olympics, tumbledown shacks worthy of a Palestinian refugee camp lurk in the nooks and crannies of Beijing’s concrete jungle. The hungry moans of China’s poor are drowned out by the air being pumped into our bubble economy.

Having won its bid for the 2008 Olympics, Beijing feels

compelled to compete with its predecessors among developed nations by means of newly landscaped avenues and luxurious athletic stadiums. The environmental transformations needed for a “green Olympics” required a massive investment of \$1.5 billion, with ostentation and trickery on a similar scale. The sacking in 2006 of Liu Zhihua, Beijing’s deputy mayor in charge of capital construction, showed the world how easily the 2008 Olympics could breed millionaires among our bureaucrat-entrepreneurs.<sup>2</sup> The brothers Ye Guozhu and Ye Guoqiang, on the other hand, were early victims of the green Olympics, imprisoned in 2003 and 2004, respectively, after becoming part of the first contingent to petition against forcible eviction for Olympics construction.<sup>3</sup>

Just as China focused its resources on developing the atom bomb while millions starved during the 1960s, now Beijing is drawing on the nation’s resources to achieve its goals of “a green Olympics, a people’s Olympics, a high-tech Olympics.” The Water Cube, the Bird’s Nest, the new headquarters for CCTV, the national theater: investment for each one has exceeded 4 billion *yuan*.<sup>4</sup> More than a profligate drain on China’s labor and financial resources, this constitutes a reckless waste of nature’s bounty.

The ignorant might dream of basking in the glory of a strong nation, but hosting the Olympics does not a strong nation make; it cannot conceal the darkness in Chinese society, or raise the status of a nation that lacks human rights. In today’s China, boasting and bragging have become second nature after serving the purpose of impelling the Communist Party along its historical course, even as a new century driven by the tides of democracy is reducing the authoritarian Communist myth to a laughing stock.

China's social system has been taken over by vested interest groups: neither socialist nor capitalist, neither fish nor fowl, it has the body of a pig with the horns of a ram. There is no allegiance to anything but profit. Even before the furor over Shanxi's illegal brick kilns died away, news broke of cardboard-stuffed steamed buns being sold by hawkers in Beijing.<sup>5</sup> China's crisis of confidence and morals is evident everywhere. People have become dispirited, faithless, impetuous and disorderly. Society is no longer something people can depend on, and the government, by blocking human potential and releasing what is worst in human nature, has lost all legitimacy.

Only the Olympic Games can shift domestic attention away from all this—dissipating the incipient crisis and preserving the interests of vested interest groups. Without a doubt, this “relief Olympics” is a matter of life or

death to the Party-state, just as on June 4, 1989, the Party had to move forward at any price.

### Only the Olympic Games can dissipate the incipient crisis and preserve the interests of vested interest groups.

On the evening of July 13, 2002, the first anniversary of Beijing's successful Olympic bid, the Politburo Standing Committee turned out in full force at the China Millennium Monument, while even greater numbers of patriotic youths surged out of their homes and into the streets as if possessed. In Tiananmen Square, thousands of fluorescent light sticks flickered like jack-o-lanterns: our version of the Olympic Torch? But for all the profit-seeking and endless grandstanding, there hasn't really

Preparing for the Olympics, Beijing has become one big construction site. Photo: Getty Images



---

been anything worth celebrating in recent years. Even the euphoria from the successful Olympics bid was as transient as that from a Viagra tablet.

Designed to eliminate visual pollution, grandiose Olympics venues have actually created new visual pollution. The July 8, 2007, issue of *Jinghua Times* published a report describing how some 1,000 residents of the former Datun Village in Beijing's Chaoyang District were evicted for construction of a "green lung for the public welfare" in the vicinity of the main Olympic stadium, the Bird's Nest. Subsequently, some evicted residents accused the district government of administrative irregularities, and a local court has accepted the case. The *Jinghua Times* reporter found that most of the plots at the construction site of the "green belt" were actually being used for commercial exploitation: a golf course or luxury housing.<sup>6</sup>

This state media report clearly and unmistakably tells us that the 2008 Olympics are not only a reckless waste of nature's bounty, but have also become the means by which some local officials have legitimized exploitation of public interests. The construction projects of the 2008 Olympics are feeding the material and spiritual interests of vested interest groups. As for residents of the capital who have been forced to relocate, as well as laid-off workers, farmers who have lost their land, and urban residents who don't know where their next meal is coming from, who among them has any interest in paying hundreds of *yuan* for tickets to the Olympics? Who among them still cares about the waste of money and labor spent to create national honor in the form of Olympic gold medals?

Translated by J. Latourelle

The original Chinese article was posted on the Web site of ChinaEWeekly, [http://www.chinaeweekly.com/view\\_article\\_gb.aspx?vID=5743](http://www.chinaeweekly.com/view_article_gb.aspx?vID=5743).

## Notes

1. See "1 Year To Go" on the official Beijing 2008 Web site, <http://www.beijing2008.cn/1year/>. The official English translation does not use the word "sprint."
2. Liu Zhihua is alleged to have skimmed some 10 million *yuan* from Olympics construction projects. For summaries of articles about the Liu Zhihua case, and links to foreign and Chinese media, see the EastSouthWestNorth blog, [http://zonaeuropa.com/20060613\\_1.htm](http://zonaeuropa.com/20060613_1.htm).
3. 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 social order after he attempted suicide by jumping into the Jinshui River near Tiananmen Square. See "China: Release Housing Rights Activist," Human Rights Watch, September 28, 2004, <http://hrw.org/english/docs/2004/09/28/china9400.htm>.
4. The Water Cube is the nickname given to the National Aquatics Center, while the Bird's Nest is the nickname for the Olympic Stadium. Construction for the Olympic Stadium alone is estimated at \$450 million, or about 4 billion *yuan*. See "Beijing Olympic Venues—'Bird's Nest' and 'Water Cube'—Already Iconic," Associated Press, published in the *International Herald Tribune*, August 2, 2007, <http://www.iht.com/articles/ap/2007/08/03/sports/AS-SPT-OLY-Beijing-2008-Venues.php>.
5. The cardboard bun story was subsequently discredited as the invention of a television reporter. However, there is still some question over whether it might have been based on truth, and the fact that it was widely credited when first reported may also be indicative of something in Chinese society. See Keith Bradsher, "China Cracks Down on News Media as Party Congress Nears," *New York Times*, August 16, 2007, <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/08/16/world/asia/16china.html?ref=world>.
6. "Zao tengtui jumin xiang fayuan tiqi susong [Evicted Residents File Suit in Court]," *Jinghua.com*, [http://epaper.jinghua.cn/html/2007-07/08/content\\_125772.htm](http://epaper.jinghua.cn/html/2007-07/08/content_125772.htm).

---

# LOOKING BEYOND THE 2008 OLYMPICS

**By Fan Baihua**

*The international community needs to look beyond sports, beyond Beijing and beyond 2008 in order for the 2008 Olympics to have any lasting relevance for Chinese society.*

Some people say that sports are sports, and no other connotations should attach to them. The ancient Greeks would beg to differ, as would the founders of the modern Olympic Games and, at the other extreme, the Communist Party of China. From ping-pong diplomacy to the Olympic Games strategy, sports in China have long been unduly “politicized.” The cost of a single medal won on the playing fields to uphold national prestige will cost 700 million *yuan*, even without taking account of the cost exacted from China’s severely exploited athletes.<sup>1</sup> The absurd preparation and selection processes politicize the Olympics to an extent that makes a mockery of the spirit of the event.

Some people link the 2008 China Olympics (I feel it is inaccurate to refer to them as the “Beijing Olympics”) to the Games held in Germany (1936) and in the Soviet Union (1980). This analysis, while justified, overlooks too many differences. Just as with sessions of the National People’s Congress, the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference and the Party Congress, as well as various international summit meetings, the majority of China’s citizens take little notice of the Olympics. The situation has become one in which a small number of people manipulate their monopoly on power to chat and argue and congratulate themselves, while the majority of people have no idea what they’re saying or doing, or why.

On the surface, such indifference could also be attributed to many people in Europe and the United States. The difference is that in China there are a great many things about which people should concern themselves,

yet are unable to do so; for example, whether China is in fact capable of hosting the Games; whether Olympic venues should be so luxurious; whether, because of the Olympics, the children of Beijing’s migrant workers should be forcibly returned to their home villages, and 50 schools for migrant children should be closed . . . People in China do not have the right to know, the right to criticize, the right to participate or question; they are passive and scattered.

What Europeans or Americans care about is purely a matter of personal choice; what Chinese care about is what the Chinese government decides they should. The government is always instructing the people to care about various issues, but people learned long ago that all they should really be concerned about is how to obey the Party’s will and restrain their own.

In such a situation, what can anyone do regarding the Chinese Olympics? This appears to be a meaningless question, because if you are a Chinese citizen, all the government wants from you is your support and endorsement, or that you allow yourself to be posed in front of a camera lens and repeat a few inane comments.

However, if you are an official of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), or the United Nations Secretary-General or High Commissioner for Human Rights, or the leader of an important human rights organization, or a politician from a major nation, or a member of the press with the opportunity to come to China and make use of the new policy temporarily relaxing rules for foreign media, you should make a point of listening to the groans of Chinese laborers and the clang of shackles being broken by rights defenders; you should listen to the wails resounding throughout the vast land of China.

---

You need to do more than take in the spectacle of the Games or calculate how to make money out of the Chinese Olympics. You need to be able and willing to expose and halt the abuses that have been perpetrated through the Games right from the outset.

Some political leaders in Canada and the United States are already speaking of boycotting the “Chinese Olympics.” European Union political leaders have also issued a solemn warning, and human rights organizations have published reports on how the Chinese authorities have not fulfilled their promise to promote human rights through the Games.<sup>2</sup> It is very likely that progressive groups and individuals from overseas will perform some highly imaginative “sensitive acts” that Chinese rights defenders and ordinary Chinese people should be able to carry out but in fact find very difficult to do. This brings to mind certain people: Qin Yongmin—still in prison today—who 10 years ago mounted his own individual challenge to the Chinese Olympic bid<sup>3</sup>; rights defense activists who appeal for the release of political prisoners; banned civil society groups; hundreds of thousands of petitioners; forcibly relocated individuals shunted hither and yon, migrant workers. How will they be brought into the Olympics? Their situation leads me to suspect that human rights in China will be even more restricted as a result of the Olympics.

Will everyone in China and overseas who is concerned about human rights in China be like the French-based NGO Reporters Without Borders, which, following contact with some unnamed officials, suddenly abandoned their boycott of the Olympics?<sup>4</sup>

China’s economy is increasingly associated with an “Olympics bubble,” and many people expect to cash in even before the Olympics begin. Please, world, do not let the dazzling 10-day spectacle of the Olympics cause you to overlook the long-term sufferings of the Chinese people, which will not be cured by an increase in China’s GDP! Anyone with a sense of conscience must know that you can and should do something for the Chinese people before the Olympics conclude in August 2008. The Olympics should not be separated from the struggle for Chinese people’s freedom and democracy. Rescuing the spirit of the Olympic Games is an expression of love for humanity itself.

## **BENEATH THE SURFACE OF THE “GREEN OLYMPICS”**

Here I would like to focus more specifically on the environment, which is the focus of Beijing’s goal for a “green Olympics.” Ms. Gunilla Lindberg, vice-president of the IOC, stated that air pollution, traffic congestion and poor English skills are three major problems for the Beijing Olympics.<sup>5</sup> Pan Yue, the open-minded deputy director of China’s State Environmental Protection Administration (SEPA), has taken advantage of the Olympics to press for action on China’s environmental crisis, a highly commendable course.

The fact remains, however, that the selfish, narrow, petty, greedy and vicious nature of Communist bureaucrats is the main cause of the absolute mess that is China’s environment. The system foils the best efforts of a truly good and clean official such as Pan Yue, just as Shi Meilun could not reform China’s stock market and Li Jinhua has not been able to bring order to the financial chaos of central government organs.<sup>6</sup> Pan Yue’s reform of environmental monitoring has failed to halt deterioration of China’s environment, or bring about the slightest change to his SEPA colleagues, and I believe that his enlightened but largely ineffectual efforts are tolerated only for the sake of the 2008 Olympics.

**What is the relevance of a “green Olympics” when individual environmental activists are made to pay such a bitter price for their efforts?**

Chinese officials reported that, 10 years ago, Beijing had only 100 “blue sky days” per year. Last year, this figure reached 241 days, although Ms. Lindberg says it is very difficult to notice the change. The moment China won the right to host the 2008 Olympics, the government announced that in accordance with international requirements, China would make daily announcements of the pollution index for major cities nationwide. I pointed out at the time that the announcements would inevitably show constant improvement to the pollution index and the overall achievement of “blue sky” goals. And indeed, this has been the experience in Nanjing in the ensuing years,



Xu Jiehua (C), wife of environmental activist Wu Lihong, and his sister Wu Liying (L) leave the court where Wu was sentenced to three years in prison. Photo: AFP/Getty Images

with a huge gap between official pronouncements and what people actually experience.

The phenomenon may be similar to that reported in 2001 by Hong Kong political commentator He Lian-giang, who wrote, “A Beijing environmental activist revealed that along some of Beijing’s main thoroughfares, such as Chang’an Avenue, some of the grass is dry and yellow. So in order to impress the Olympics assessment team with Beijing’s suitability to host the games, the authorities actually painted the grass green.”<sup>7</sup>

Beijing is investing over 100 billion *yuan* in fixing the environment for the Olympics, apart from the huge outlay of capital needed to move the Shougang Steel plant several hundred miles outside of the city.<sup>8</sup> If China really can take this opportunity to bring environmental degradation under control, it will be a very good thing. But now that the one-year countdown has started, what worries me is that a great amount of time has already been squandered, and that the government will just leave ordinary people to bear the burden of the usual approaches, such as restricting private car use and clos-

ing down factories in Beijing, Shanxi and Hebei for a certain number of days, as it did during the World University Games.

In any case, what is the relevance of a “green Olympics” when individual environmental activists are made to pay such a bitter price for their efforts? A case in point is Wu Lihong, renowned as the “Guardian of Taihu Lake.”

## FIGHTING FOR GREEN BEYOND BEIJING

Official responsibility for Taihu Lake constantly shifts between the provinces that share it, Zhejiang and Jiangsu. I have previously proposed the establishment of a Taihu Province or a Taihu City to more closely bind the fate of the lake to those who live in its vicinity. But in fact, a single administration might protect the lake no better than the current joint arrangement, as demonstrated by the various waterways that fall under the sole jurisdiction of Nanjing. If not for the beautification efforts lavished on Nanjing for the 2005 National Games, the outer Qinhuai River would no doubt still be

---

as pungent and bereft of life as many of its tributaries remained even during the National Games.

The latest outbreak of pollution in Taihu Lake had tremendous impact. It is hard to know what is more terrifying: the fact that half of Wuxi City was without water for 100 hours, or the fact that the officials and department responsible for monitoring pollution escaped unscathed. It is likewise horrifying that the local government did not release news of the incident for three days afterward, and that the relatively well-educated people of southern Jiangsu Province did not follow the example of the people of Xiamen<sup>9</sup> and take to the streets in protest. The failure to hold accountable those responsible for the incident simply encourages officials and business owners to remain derelict in their duty to the public.

Mr. Pan Yue always warns against radicalism in civil environmental protection organizations, but what constitutes radical? I don't think there are any radicals among China's civil environmental organizations. Speaking frankly, even top environmentalists Liao Xiaoyi and Liang Congjie<sup>10</sup> are, if anything, too meek and mild. Back in the 1990s, in Yixing, more than 10,000 people who had reached the limits of their tolerance protested against the pollution in Taihu Lake. Were they too radical, or was it the officials who suppressed them who were barbaric? Could it not be said that it is because the people of Yixing were suppressed by militia back then that Taihu Lake ended up a reeking mess this year?

People all over the world admire America's scenic wonders, and while this is related in part to American government and business resources and strategy, who can deny the achievements of American environmental "radicalism" over the last century? The fact is that throughout history, China's least privileged have been called angry or enraged, but not radical.

This is the context of the arrest of Wu Lihong. For over a decade, Wu has devoted himself to protecting Taihu Lake from its primary polluters in Yixing City, Jiangsu Province, and exposing collusion between government and polluting industries. In 2005 he was named one of China's top 10 environmentalists.<sup>11</sup>

On April 13 this year, Wu was arrested by local police, reportedly just before going to petition the government in Beijing on Earth Day. Wu is now accused of extorting 18,000 *yuan* from a factory proprietor. His friend Zhang Jianping insists that Wu has been framed. "Governments and enterprises have tried many times to buy him off," Zhang says, "He refused them all."<sup>12</sup>

Wu's supporters observe that since 1993, Wu has fought thousands of chemical plants in the area, and has petitioned the higher authorities countless times about polluting enterprises and the corrupt officials who shield them. Local officials once offered Wu, then vice sales manager of the Nanfang Soundproofing Factory, a six million *yuan* machinery contract. The director of a large chemical plant also stated his intention to send Wu two million *yuan* worth of foreign trade business, while other enterprises promised him gifts, even a house. He refused it all. Wu once said, "I don't want questionable money. I might make only 20 *yuan* for a day's work, but my conscience is clear."

I wonder if Mr. Pan Yue would consider sending someone to investigate the truth behind the case of the Guardian of Taihu Lake. I read an excellent interview with Pan Yue by a reporter from *Southern Exposure* (*Nanfeng Chuang*), in which Mr. Pan expressed a great deal of frustration.<sup>13</sup> In fact, Pan and Wu have expressed a lot of the same concerns, using similar language. The forces that constrain Pan Yue are the same as those that have trapped Wu Lihong, and it is precisely these forces that are killing the people of Wuxi and of China.

The scope of the green Olympics includes more than Beijing, and more than 2008. The Chinese public has proven helpless in the Taihu Lake crisis. But is there really nothing the international community can do?

Translated by J. Latourelle

This article was compiled from two Chinese articles, originally published on the Web site of HRIC's online journal *Ren Yu Renquan*, [http://www.renyurenquan.org/ryrq\\_article.adp?article\\_id=640](http://www.renyurenquan.org/ryrq_article.adp?article_id=640) and [http://www.renyurenquan.org/ryrq\\_article.adp?article\\_id=678](http://www.renyurenquan.org/ryrq_article.adp?article_id=678).



## Editor's notes

1. Regarding the alleged cost of an Olympic gold medal and an official think-tank's lower estimate, see "Yimei Aoyun jinpai 7 yi yuan? Tiyu juguo tizhide leng sikao [One Gold Medal Costs 700 Million Yuan? State Sport System's Cool-headed Analysis]," Xinhuanet.com, September 6, 2004, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/fortune/2004-09/06/content\\_1949453.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/fortune/2004-09/06/content_1949453.htm).
2. For information on some boycott actions, see "Should the EU Boycott the Beijing Olympics?" <http://www.boycottbeijing.eu/4.html>.
3. Qin Yongmin was arrested in late 1998 after he applied to register the Hubei Provincial Preparation Committee of the Chinese Democracy Party, and was sentenced to 12 years in prison on charges of "subversion of state power." Qin had previously been arrested in 1993 and sent to a labor camp for two years after expressing opposition to China's bid to host the 2000 Summer Games because of the enormous cost. See "Chinese Government Must Free Pro-Democracy Advocates," Human Rights Watch, 1998, <http://hrw.org/campaigns/china-98/china-detainees.htm>, and Richard Dicker, "Human Rights Would Lose in a Beijing Olympiad," *International Herald Tribune*, June 23, 1993, <http://www.iht.com/articles/1993/06/23/eddick.php>.
4. Paris-based Reporters Without Borders (RSF) originally called for a boycott of the Beijing Olympics ("Call for the Boycott," August 21, 2001, <http://www.rsf.org/rsf/uk/html/asie/cplp01/cp01/200801.html>). In January 2007, however, representatives of the group were allowed their first official visit to China, after which they issued a press release noting the beginning of a "constructive" dialogue and "signs of change on the eve of next year's Olympic Games in Beijing," and stated the wish that "these games will be a success, an occasion for all participating countries to share in the humanistic values of the Olympic idea" ("First official visit by Reporters Without Borders to China," January 23, 2007, [http://www.rsf.org/article.php3?id\\_article=20564](http://www.rsf.org/article.php3?id_article=20564)). Shortly thereafter, the Chinese government announced a new penalty points system for the press, and also obstructed a number of foreign journalists attempting to take advantage of looser restrictions on reporting prior to the Olympics. On August 8, 2007, Reporters Without Borders held press conferences in Beijing, Paris, New York and Montreal harshly criticizing China's human rights record in the run-up to the Olympics, resulting in the brief detention of several foreign reporters in Beijing. See "Protests in Paris, New York, Beijing and Montreal One Year Before Start of 2008 Olympics," Reporters Without Borders, August 7, 2007, [http://www.rsf.org/article.php3?id\\_article=23180](http://www.rsf.org/article.php3?id_article=23180).
5. See Gao Peng, "Beijing Full of Confidence 500 Days Before Olympics," China View (Xinhua News Agency), March 27, 2007, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2007-03/27/content\\_5901980.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2007-03/27/content_5901980.htm).
6. Hong Kong native Shi Meilun, aka Laura Cha, vice-chair of the China Securities Regulatory Commission, resigned on September 13, 2004, after battling criticisms that reforms she proposed were "too foreign." See <http://www.walterhutchens.net/blog/archives/2004/09/13/laura-chashi-meilun-leaves-csrc/>. Li Jinhua, auditor general of China since 1998, has promoted a "sunshine policy" of publicity and transparency in his exposure of financial scandals, including misuse of funds earmarked for the 2008 Olympics.
7. The article quoted could not be found online. He Lian-giang works for Phoenix Television, which has official mainland connections but retains a level of editorial independence.
8. See "Shougang Confirms Plant Closure in Time for Olympics," Xinhuanet, posted on May 20, 2007, on the official Beijing 2008 Web site, <http://en.beijing2008.cn/76/95/article214079576.shtml>.
9. See Huo Tao's "Reflections on the Struggle for Environmental Rights" elsewhere in this issue of *CRF*.
10. Liao Xiaoyi is president of Global Village of Beijing and has served as an environment consultant to the Beijing Olympics. See <http://www.china.org.cn/english/features/cgw2006/198224.htm>. Liang Congjie is president of Friends of Nature. See <http://www.cctv.com/program/UpClose/20040628/100556.shtml>.
11. Simon Montlake, "Whistle-blower in China Faces Prison," *Christian Science Monitor*, August 14, 2007, <http://www.csmonitor.com/2007/0814/p01s03-woap.html>.
12. On August 10, 2007, Wu Lihong was sentenced to three years in prison on a charge of extortion. See Simon Montlake, *ibid*.
13. This particular article could not be located online. For further information on Pan Yue's forthright assessment of China's environment, see He Qinglian, "Who Is Responsible for China's Environment," *China Rights Forum*, No. 1, 2006, [http://hrichina.org/public/PDFs/CRF.1.2006/CRF-2006-1\\_Responsible.pdf](http://hrichina.org/public/PDFs/CRF.1.2006/CRF-2006-1_Responsible.pdf).

---

# REFLECTIONS ON THE STRUGGLE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL RIGHTS

By Huo Tao

*When government malfeasance caused an ecological crisis, ordinary citizens took a peaceful stand to protect their environment.*

June 5, 2007, was the thirty-sixth World Environment Day (WED). The overall theme of this year's WED was "Melting Ice: A Hot Topic?" and the theme for the Chinese region was "Reducing Pollution and Building an Environment-Friendly Society." To mark WED, the Chinese government published "China's National Climate Change Program" on June 4.<sup>1</sup> At the Group of Eight (G8) Summit in Heiligendamm, Germany, an agreement was reached on June 7 to "seriously con-

sider" reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 50 percent by 2050. At an outreach session hosted by the G8 leaders on June 8, Chinese President Hu Jintao declared, "China has persistently implemented a people-centered concept of making comprehensive, coordinated and sustainable scientific development; has actively promoted sound and rapid economic and social development; and has taken the road of civilized development characteristic of the development of production, an affluent life and a good ecological environment." The fly in the ointment is that China is currently experiencing an environmental crisis of unprecedented proportions that is directly attributable to government mismanagement.

Workers scoop out some of the algae choking Taihu Lake in June 2007.  
Photo: Reuters



## ENVIRONMENTAL CRISIS CAUSED BY BAD GOVERNMENT

On May 29, 2007, Taihu Lake in Jiangsu Province was rapidly covered by a blue-green algae bloom that caused a drinking-water crisis in the lakeside city of Wuxi. To dilute the algae, the local government promptly diverted more than 100 million tons of water from the Yangtze River, thereby averting an environmental catastrophe and quelling the anger of the local population.

As a result of the Wuxi water crisis, some local enterprises were investigated and prosecuted on charges of illegally discharging untreated wastewater into the lake, and five government officials in the nearby city of Yixing, which is under the jurisdiction of Wuxi, were accused of dereliction of duty and given administrative demerits and dismissals. But the corrupt high-level officials who wielded the actual decision-making power got off scot-free.

Prior to this, Wu Lihong, a native of Zhoutie Township in Yixing County, had spent years campaigning for authorities to clean up Taihu Lake. He had reported to the authorities that local chemical plants were illegally discharging untreated wastewater into the lake, depriving the 80,000 inhabitants of Zhoutie Township of potable water and causing many villagers along Caoqiao River, one of the waterways that flows into Taihu, to die of cancer (Wu Lihong himself has been battling cancer). But in April of 2007, the Yixing authorities put Wu Lihong behind bars on charges of having blackmailed local enterprises by threatening to expose how they were polluting the environment. In the meantime, China's State Environmental Protection Administration (SEPA) included heavily polluted Yixing as one of 68 Chinese cities considered models of environmental protection.

Government officials in Xiamen, Fujian Province, behaved in an even more overbearing and arbitrary way than those in Wuxi. On March 19, 2007, *China Business News* published an article revealing that 105 members of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) had jointly signed a "Proposal Recommending the Relocation of the Haicang PX Project in Xiamen."<sup>2</sup> Spearheading the proposal was CPPCC member Zhao Yufen, a member of the Chinese Academy of Sciences and professor of chemistry at Xiamen University. The article quoted him as saying, "PX is paraxylene, a dangerous, highly carcinogenic chemical that causes a high rate of fetal deformations, and the PX project is located in the densely populated Haicang District."

The *China Business News* article also quoted SEPA's Huan Pingsi as saying that the project had been approved by the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC), and that SEPA had no authority to make any decision regarding the relocation of the project.

Despite this challenge from the CPPCC, the public exposure of the project's potential environmental impact, and the public's opposition to it, He Lifeng, secretary of the Fujian provincial Party committee and the Xiamen municipal Party committee—who had long grown accustomed to closed-door dealings—refused to back down. On May 24, *Oriental Outlook Weekly*, published by China's official Xinhua News Agency, ran an article quoting He Lifeng as saying at a private meeting,

"Unify thought and understanding. The [CPPCC] members are entitled to their opinion, but we don't pay any attention to them. We have to speed up the project."<sup>3</sup>

At the behest of He Lifeng and others, on May 28 the *Xiamen Evening News* published a 10,000-word interview with the Xiamen City Environmental Protection Bureau director who was responsible for the Haicang PX project.<sup>4</sup> On the morning of May 29, the Xiamen municipal government instructed various government departments to carry out preparatory "stability and unity work" and to announce that the PX project was proceeding smoothly. But in a sudden reversal, on the morning of May 30, Xiamen vice-mayor Ding Guoyan called a news conference and announced a temporary halt to the Haicang PX Project. An imminent environmental crisis was thus averted.

## THE REASONABLE DEMANDS OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENT

According to a report by *Southern Weekend*, the Xiamen authorities ultimately and reluctantly adopted a conciliatory attitude because of a strong public backlash against government malfeasance:

May 27 was a cloudy day in Xiamen, with intermittent rain. On the tourist boats to Gulang Island, in the bustling roadside restaurants on Shahe Road and even in the remote villages in Haicang District, everybody was talking about the Haicang PX project. "Did you get the text message?" In no time, this question had become a standard greeting formula among residents of Xiamen. The Internet had already become a place for citizens to exchange information and voice their concerns. At popular Xiamen Internet forums such as the Little Fish Community and Xiamen University's public online bulletin board, posts discussing the PX project drew tens of thousands of page views. "Protect Xiamen" and "Give me back my blue sky" were frequently seen post headers.<sup>5</sup>

Among all the messages expressing public sentiments, one particular text message stood out for its rationality

---

and ability to mobilize people. It also expressed what most people were thinking. Although the situation has changed, I am still moved by the humanity and caring that is evident in this message, which reads:

Here is what the people of Xiamen ought to do:

- Don't be afraid. Talking about the CPPCC's top proposal is not a crime, and you won't be arrested.
- If you have a blog or online forum, please republish this story: "A Controversy Over the Safety of a 10 Billion *Yuan* Chemical Plant Project in Xiamen." Republishing a news story from a legal Chinese newspaper isn't a crime, and you won't be arrested for doing so.
- If you're afraid to do this, please talk soon to your friends, family and colleagues about this business. They may know nothing about the situation.
- If you're still afraid, just tell your immediate family and your closest friends about it.
- If you're not afraid, you should tell your friends in Zhangzhou and Quanzhou [two other cities in Fujian Province]. They are also in danger.
- You only need to say these few things and you'll be all right:
- This chemical plant project is objected to by 105 CPPCC members, including some of the most authoritative experts.
- For safety reasons, the PX project ought to be located at least 100 kilometers from the nearest city.
- To this day, the people of Xiamen are being deprived of the right to know the implications of the PX project. This proves that it is against the popular will.
- If the project goes ahead, it will cause an economic slump, a fall in property prices and a decrease in the number of visitors in Xiamen. It will also give the people of Xiamen a reputation for weakness and stupidity.
- If the project goes ahead, the probability that you will get cancer will be much higher.
- You don't have to perform any acts of heroics. Just let everyone around you know about this event.

This well-reasoned text message closed with a stirring appeal: "For the sake of our children and their children, take action! Join the March of 10,000 at 8 AM on June 1. We are marching to City Hall! Wear a yellow armband! When you read this text message, send it on to all your friends in Xiamen!"

On June 1, Children's Day, tens of thousands of Xiamen citizens wearing yellow armbands and carrying placards, many with their children by their side, bravely took to the streets to voice their concerns. This was the largest street rally in China since the democracy movement of 1989. It was also more reasonable, moderate and effective than the demonstrations of 1989. In other words, despite intimidation and enormous pressure from the regime, the people who mobilized popular opinion had the awareness and the wisdom to understand and respect the interests of ordinary people as well as the risks they were taking. Rapid progress has been made in this respect.

**The people who mobilized popular opinion had the awareness and wisdom to understand and respect the interests of ordinary people as well as the risks they were taking.**

In Wuxi the situation was different. The Xinhua Web site reported that a certain resident of Wuxi, who had spread a "rumor" by cell-phone text message saying that "carcinogens in Taihu are 200 times the acceptable levels," was arrested by the police on suspicion of disrupting public order and was held in detention for 10 days. Clearly, there was a miscarriage of justice. What a dictatorial regime labels as "spreading rumors" is, in civilized Western societies, the fundamental human right to "speak unwisely."

The arrest of an innocent citizen by the police in Wuxi calls to mind the old Chinese saying, "Officials are free to set the town ablaze, but ordinary people are not even permitted to light lanterns." By 2005, the authorities had spent a staggering 10 billion *yuan* on water management in Taihu Lake, but the lake's environmental problems were not brought under control and the city



Construction of a chemical facility in Xiamen was halted after protests in June 2007. Photo: Associated Press

of Wuxi was plunged into a water crisis. The local authorities should have apologized to the local population and taken effective measures to solve the problem. Instead, they arrested an ordinary citizen on charges of “spreading rumors.”

### NOW THAT THE DUST HAS SETTLED

On June 4, 2007, NDRC director Ma Kai announced at a news conference at the State Council Information Office that the city of Xiamen had temporarily suspended the Haicang PX project and would now proceed to solicit opinions from the public and various experts. A few days later, CCTV news reported that SEPA would send experts to conduct an environmental assessment of the PX project in Haicang, and on the following day, Shen Canhuang, deputy secretary-general of the Xiamen city government, declared at a news conference that the municipal government would rigorously cooperate with and promote the environmental assessment work.

Now that the dust has settled, rights defenders would

do well to make a reasoned assessment of the way local authorities flouted the will of the citizens of Xiamen throughout this episode.

The citizens of Xiamen expressed their opposition to a chemical plant project that threatened their health and life. Their aim was to protect their environment and their beautiful city, not to solve the problems of abuse of power and government mismanagement. No graffiti, Internet postings, instant messages or cell-phone text messages carried even a hint of political agitation or violence, nor were there any efforts to turn the issue of environmental protection into something different.

The Xiamen Party and government authorities, on the other hand, tried to prevent light from being shed on the chemical plant project, politicized the issue and operated in a “black box” (behind closed doors). They removed countless Web pages about the PX project, covered graffiti with propaganda posters, banned the sale of a *Phoenix Weekly* (Fenghuang Zhoukan) issue that included an article about the project, and made it very difficult for the media to publish anything about the public debate.

---

On the afternoon of June 2, the Xiamen Network Web site posted an announcement entitled, “Statement by Xiamen University Professor Zhao Yufen Issued through the Xiamen University Information Office,” which read: “(1) In the past few days, Chinese Academy of Sciences member Zhao has not given any interviews to the media, nor has he authorized the media to publish [his] views about the Xiamen PX project; (2) Academician Zhao thinks that the decision by the Xiamen city government to postpone the PX construction project and to conduct an environmental assessment of Xiamen’s [project] planning is practical and realistic and amply demonstrates that the municipal Party committee and the city government respect science, respect the popular will and take environmental protection seriously.”<sup>6</sup>

**The citizens of Xiamen aimed to protect their environment and their beautiful city, not to solve the problems of abuse of power and government mismanagement.**

On June 4, *Xiamen Daily* (Xiamen Ribao) published an article with the byline Xia Zhongping attacking “demons and monsters” who manipulated “so-called authorized information,” and “unscrupulous media organizations that make groundless accusations and even publish fabricated stories.”<sup>7</sup>

Shanghai journalist Hong Cha, however, defended the reporting of Zhao Yufen’s comments:

The *Financial Times* (Jinrong Shibao) had already conducted an interview with Zhao Yufen at the end of May, and so had I and a journalist for another newspaper on May 31. At that time, certain interested parties in Xiamen, along with some other media organizations, informed the Central Propaganda Department of this. Fortunately, there is a recording of my interview, otherwise I would probably have been accused of being a backstage manipulator.<sup>8</sup>

Another article around that time quoted a local store

owner as warning demonstrators, “You should think before you act, and you shouldn’t let yourself be used by people with ulterior motives.”<sup>9</sup> Likewise, the *Xiamen Evening News* (Xiamen Wanbao) published an article bylined Su Mu, who wrote, “Some people with ulterior motives are flaunting the banner of ‘Save our Hometown’ and using all sorts of improper methods to seduce and trick others into joining the street rallies. . . . I trust that the judicial authorities will punish them severely in accordance with the law, and will show no leniency toward them.”<sup>10</sup>

Despite this shameless intimidation by the local media, it is fortunate that humanistic commitment and scholarly integrity prevail at Xiamen University. It is fortunate that China still has journalists with intelligence and integrity. It is fortunate that during their protest against the PX plant, university professors, journalists and especially tens of thousands of citizens of Xiamen exercised the utmost forbearance and self-restraint in the face of Party and government officials devoid of the most basic scruples, as well as their shameless mouthpieces. Thanks to the protesters, the Xiamen incident did not end like the Tiananmen massacre of 1989, a historical tragedy that set Chinese society back immeasurably.

In the face of intimidation by a regime that cannot bear transparency, the most effective and powerful approach to defend rights is action that’s open and above-board and in accordance with the law. The success of the environmental rights defenders in Xiamen was above all due to the fact that they understood and respected the interests of ordinary people and the risks they were taking, and demonstrated a concern and openness that struck a chord in people’s hearts. Unlike traditional revolutionary propagandists, they did not demand that people sacrifice life and property, make revolution for the sake of revolution, seek freedom for the sake of freedom, or engage in politics for the sake of politics. As Lu Xun once said, “Revolution is to let people live, not to make people die.”

In today’s China, which lacks the most basic human rights guarantees, rights defenders can best overcome the forces of fear and intimidation by identifying problems that directly affect the community and by advancing people’s interests with the utmost transparency,

conscientiousness, sensitivity and reasonableness. Only then will they be able to mobilize their fellow citizens to gradually come out from under the shadow of political intimidation and say “No!” to those who wield power.

The organizers of the Xiamen demonstrations employed this very strategy. The cell-phone text message quoted above clearly and factually described the stakes and risks involved, and gave Xiamen residents the courage to emerge from the shadow of fear. As exemplified by the Xiamen authorities’ attempts to intimidate the local population, fear is an essential instrument of the regime. Democratic activism respects individual rights and freedoms; it provides citizens with factual information about the stakes, risks and costs involved, respects the wishes of participants and lets them choose for themselves. Resistance is not without sacrifice, but people must be able to weigh benefits and costs to decide for themselves whether they want to make a sacrifice, and if so, how much of a sacrifice.

In the coming years, demonstrations in defense of environmental and other rights will grow in frequency and intensity in China. Now that the first step has been taken, as long as rights defenders carefully consider the interests of ordinary people, stay as close as possible to their outlook and concerns, and remain practical and realistic about what can be achieved under existing conditions, a series of low-key symbolic actions may well mature step by step into a civilized constitutional democracy.

Translated by Paul Frank

The original Chinese article was published in HRIC’s online journal, *Ren Yu Renquan*, [http://www.renyurenquan.org/ryrq\\_article.adp?article\\_id=680](http://www.renyurenquan.org/ryrq_article.adp?article_id=680).

## Notes

1. “Zhongguo yingdui qihou bianhua guojia fangan,” posted on Xinhua Online, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/politics/2007-06/04/content\\_6196300.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/politics/2007-06/04/content_6196300.htm).
2. Qu Lili, “Xiamen baiyi huagong xiangmu anwei zhengyi

[Controversy Over the Safety of a 10 Billion Yuan Chemical Plant Project in Xiamen],” *China Business News* (Zhongguo Jingying Bao), March 19, 2007, <http://www.cb.com.cn/News/ShowNews.aspx?newsId=8809>.

3. “Baiming zhengxie weiyuan nanzu Xiamen baiyi huagong xiangmu [A Hundred CPPCC Members Are Unable to Stop 10 billion Yuan Chemical Plant Project in Xiamen],” *Oriental Outlook Weekly* (Liaowang Dongfang Zhoukan), posted on NetEase, May 26, 2007, <http://news.163.com/07/0526/00/3FCJU17S00011SM9.html>.
4. “Haichang PX xiangmu yi an guojia fading chengxu pizhun zaijian [The Haicang PX Project Has Completed All Approval Procedures in Accordance with State Laws and Regulations and Is Currently under Construction],” posted in two parts on May 29, 2007, on the Web site of the Xiamen Municipal Government, [http://www.xm.gov.cn/xmyw/200705/t20070529\\_164540.htm](http://www.xm.gov.cn/xmyw/200705/t20070529_164540.htm), [http://www.xm.gov.cn/xmyw/200705/t20070529\\_164539.htm](http://www.xm.gov.cn/xmyw/200705/t20070529_164539.htm).
5. “Xiamen huagong xiangmu yinfa wuran chuanwen, zhengfu jinji jiao ting [Government Calls a Stop to Rumors about Pollution from Xiamen Chemical Plant],” *Southern Weekend* (Nanfang Zhoumo), posted on June 1, 2007, the Web site of the Institute of Public & Environmental Affairs, <http://www.ipe.org.cn/dtxxview/index.jsp?XH=700>.
6. “Zhao Yufen yuanshi weituo Xiamen Daxue xinwen fayanren fabu shengming,” [http://www.xmg.com.cn/news/article/xm\\_34028.asp](http://www.xmg.com.cn/news/article/xm_34028.asp).
7. Xia Zhongping, “Manyi zanhuan jianshe Haicang PX xiangmu: Bie haole shangba wangle teng [Temporary Suspension of the Haicang PX Plant Construction Project: Don’t Forget the Pain after the Wound is Healed],” *Xiamen Daily* (Xiamen Ribao), posted on Xiamen Net, [http://www.xmnn.cn/xwzx/jrjd/200706/t20070604\\_223159.htm](http://www.xmnn.cn/xwzx/jrjd/200706/t20070604_223159.htm).
8. “Zai shinian kanchai boshang guanyu Zhao Yufen yuanshi shengming he Xiamen wumao de zhenglun [The Debate on the Ten Years Chopping Wood Blog about Academician Zhao Yufen’s Statement in Xiamen],” <http://www.douban.com/group/topic/1676634/>.
9. “Shimin piping feifa xingzhe bu lizhi xingwei, huyu hai kaosheng ningjingde huanjing [Citizens Criticize the Illegal Demonstrators’ Unreasonable Behavior and Ask That Students Studying for their Exams Be Given a Peaceful Environment],” <http://www.xmtax.net/PowerEasy/Article/new1/200706/9544.html>.
10. Su Mu, “Ling zai bi xin, fa zai bi xing [Orders Must Be Trusted and the Law Must Be Enforced],” <http://www.360doc.com/showWeb/0/0/535855.aspx>.

---

# THE XIAMEN DEMONSTRATIONS AND GROWING CIVIL CONSCIOUSNESS

**By Zhao Dagong**

*When the authorities block channels for the expression of public opinion, citizens have no alternative but to take to the streets.*

On June 1, 2007, more than 20,000 people demonstrated in the streets of Xiamen without a permit from the Public Security Bureau to protest plans to build a paraxylene (PX)<sup>1</sup> chemical factory in their city. At nightfall, dozens of Xiamen residents continued to stage a peaceful sit-in in front of City Hall. The possible consequences of “breaking the law” no longer deterred the citizens of Xiamen from undertaking the largest demonstration in a major Chinese city since June 1989.

Before the demonstration, more than one million Xiamen citizens sent out cell-phone text messages opposing the PX chemical factory project. All contained the same warning: “Taiwanese businessman Chen Yuhao’s Xianglu Group has invested in a joint venture project to build a chemical factory to manufacture paraxylene (PX) in Haicang District. Making this deadly poison [here] would be like dropping an atomic bomb on Xiamen Island. It would mean that in the future, the people of Xiamen would live with leukemia and deformed children.”

Street demonstrations are a means for citizens in a modern citizen society (*gongmin shehui*)<sup>2</sup> to exercise their right to free expression. In democratic societies, exercising this right to demonstrate is not a problem; nor is it a problem even under the “one country, two systems” regime in Hong Kong. But under mainland China’s dictatorial system, the Communist authorities have effectively deprived citizens of this legitimate right. Although China also has a “Law on Assemblies, Marches and Demonstrations,”<sup>3</sup> public security bureaus never issue demonstration permits to citizens who

apply for them. On the rare occasions that permits are issued, they are for small demonstrations organized by the authorities themselves.

After Chinese troops fired on students and crushed the democracy movement on June 4, 1989, the Chinese Communist authorities realized that street demonstrations threatened the foundations of their dictatorship. It was for that reason that on October 31, 1989, they promulgated the “Law on Assemblies, Marches and Demonstrations” to stop citizens from exercising their right to demonstrate and express their opinions. In the 18 years since, the Chinese government has continued to insist that “stability overrides everything.” As a result, the Chinese government has made every effort to conceal the growing social contradictions behind China’s economic boom by blocking access to the Internet, online discussion forums, blogs and other methods citizens use to petition the authorities and express their opinions.

But ordinary people still take to the streets when they can no longer endure social injustice, oppression and exploitation by those who wield power and wealth. The authorities have been unable to stop countless spontaneous protests, particularly in the countryside where heavily polluted areas and neighborhoods have been gobbled up by government officials and rich businessmen. In such places, ordinary people have taken to the streets again and again, placing local governments in a constant state of anxiety.

In April 2005, the farmers of Huashui Township in Zhejiang Province clashed with the local authorities while staging a protest against chemical plants that were polluting the environment and threatening their livelihood.<sup>4</sup> Although the farmers paid a heavy



price—armed police put down the protest by force and arrested several of them—ultimately rights defenders scored an important victory, and the factories were shut down. Today, the most recent protests by the citizens of Xiamen against the government's PX chemical factory project have alarmed the authorities so much that the city government has announced a "postponement" in the construction of the chemical factory. Demonstrators standing up for their rights have once again scored a seminal victory.

### **CITIZENS DEMONSTRATE IN DEFIANCE OF AN UNJUST LAW**

When ordinary people have been deprived of their means of livelihood by a savage dictatorship, they no longer fear death. When people no longer fear death, why threaten them with it? The citizens of Xiamen faced the threat of evil laws and prison by taking to the streets in protest, and as a result, the authorities reconsidered their construction project. This shows that if citizens endure their anger in silence and allow government action to harm the collective public interest, the authorities will feel no scruples in violating citizens' rights more and more. But if citizens rise up and take a stand, the authorities may yield ground, and may even be forced to accept the popular will.

If citizens rise up and take a stand,  
the authorities may be forced to  
accept the popular will.

With officials and wealthy entrepreneurs colluding in a frenzied pursuit of profits in utter disregard for the lives of ordinary people, construction projects are springing up like mushrooms throughout China and polluting the country's land, water and air. While pollution treatment takes second place to the pursuit of profit, polluting industries generate the GDP growth that wielders of power showcase as a mark of their achievements. But the fact that pollution seriously damages the health of the powerful as well as the disenfranchised ultimately lends broad appeal to environmentalists' arguments, and many of the Xiamen protesters were solid members of the middle-class.

Because the regime has blocked channels through which citizens could have expressed their views, they have no alternative but to demonstrate without a permit. Wu Lihong, a farmer who in 2005 had been nominated by the Jiangsu Province environmental agency as one of China's "Top Ten Environmentalists," was arrested by the police in April, a few weeks before an algae bloom fed by pollution in Taiwu Lake forced the city of Wuxi to shut off its supply of drinking water. Shrugging off Wu's arrest, Yang Weize, the city's Communist Party committee secretary, said that Taiwu Lake's pollution was an inevitable consequence of industrialization. The citizens of the lakeside city of Wuxi ought to follow the example of the citizens of Xiamen and demonstrate against pollution and for the right to a clean environment.

### **GROWING AWARENESS OF CIVIL RIGHTS**

The fact that the citizens of Xiamen have been willing to take to the streets to demonstrate and thereby risk persecution shows that their civic consciousness is continuing to grow. The old Chinese saying that "everyone

**A public protest against the construction of a chemical plant in Xiamen on June 1, 2007, was the largest public demonstration in China since the 1989 Democracy Movement. Photo: Associated Press**





Protesters calling for the Xiamen chemical plant to be scrapped were rallied through a mobile-phone text message campaign. Photo: Associated Press

sweeps the snow on their own doorstep and ignores the ice piling up on the neighbor's roof" speaks to the traditional tendency to consider only one's own interests and meekly submit to oppression. The Chinese authorities have persistently used force to suppress growing civic consciousness among the Chinese public. China has a constitution, laws and many regulations, but the government is unwilling to let citizens wield these rights-protection instruments.

To be sure, many citizens have very low levels of civic consciousness; they live in fear of the government and neither know nor understand the law. A few years ago, journalist Zhao Yan and legal scholar Li Boguang offered legal assistance to farmers seeking compensation for confiscated farmland and found their efforts enthusiastically welcomed. The simple act of providing farmers with information about laws and regulations to defend their rights shamed and enraged the authorities, who threatened, harassed and ultimately arrested Zhao and Li on trumped-up charges.<sup>5</sup>

The development of the Internet and the spread of information is contributing to the growth of civic consciousness among China's citizens. But it goes without saying that the million text messages sent out in Xiamen would have been useless without the civic consciousness of Xiamen residents. Likewise, the fact that the Xiamen authorities did not respond to the protest with brute force may signify progress, but it may also indicate that the government is afraid of citizens' growing civic consciousness.

## PROTESTING POLLUTION IN DEFENSE OF CITIZENS' RIGHTS

China has ample environmental protection mechanisms in place at both the central and local government levels. A comprehensive set of environmental laws and regulations—more than 30 in number—have been passed since 1989, including the Water Pollution Prevention and Control Law (*Shui wuran fangzhi fa*), the Air Pollution Prevention and Control Law (*Daqi wuran*

*fangzhi fa*), the Radioactive Pollution Prevention and Control Law (*Fangshexing wuran fangzhi fa*), the Regulation on the Environmental Protection Management of Construction Projects (*Jianshe xiangmu huanjing baohu guanli tiaoli*), the Solid Waste Pollution Prevention and Control Law (*Guti feiwu huanjing wuran fangzhi fa*) and the Marine Environmental Protection Law (*Haiyang huanjing baohu fa*). The main impediments to implementation of these laws are situations in which government officials collude with the enterprises that cause the pollution.

**The main impediments to implementation of environmental laws are situations in which government officials collude with the enterprises that cause the pollution.**

In recent years, as the number of environmentally related protests has grown, the authorities have also ostensibly increased their investment in environmental protection, while continuing to protect polluters and destroy the environment. During this time, ordinary people have been the only ones who have really made a stand against environmental pollution, and only because they have been driven beyond the limits of endurance. In this process, agencies of state power at all levels have almost always stood in opposition to the common people and have even used armed force and underworld thugs to suppress protesters. As a result, the anti-pollution activities of ordinary people are treated as anti-government activities.

In Xiamen, for example, the polluter was a chemical company, but the project was initiated and approved by the government. Local people may strongly oppose a project that threatens to pollute their town, but when economic growth, a career-boosting project and the interests of corrupt officials are at stake, the government charges ahead with no consideration for the life and health of the people. Consider the result if, instead, the public had been consulted about the proposed PX chemical factory project in Xiamen, and the objections of opposition parties and revelations of independent media organizations had been made public. Could the

project have been approved? Of course not. Nor would the citizens of Xiamen have had to take to the streets to voice their opposition.

The environmental rights struggle is, in fact, an expression of citizens' dissatisfaction with the government. But it is not the only such struggle—struggles by farmers for land rights, by workers for labor rights and by residents against arbitrary eviction are also the struggles of ordinary people against their government.

Translated by Paul Frank

The original Chinese article was published in HRIC's online journal, *Ren Yu Renquan*, [http://www.renyurenquan.org/ryrq\\_article.adp?article\\_id=677](http://www.renyurenquan.org/ryrq_article.adp?article_id=677).

**Translator's and Editor's Notes**

1. Paraxylene is a petrochemical feedstock used to make polyesters, which have applications in clothing, packaging and plastic bottles. According to the *Shanghai Daily* of June 4, 2007, "Paraxylene is a highly polluting and carcinogenic petrochemical, which will also increase the chance of fetal abnormality."
2. Ping-Chun Hsiung et al. translate the term *gongmin shehui* literally as "citizen society" and explain that it "embodies a political conception of civil society in which political relationships between state and society are based on principles of citizenship, rights, representation, and rule of law." Ping-Chun Hsiung, Maria Jaschok, Cecilia Nathansen Milwertz, *Chinese Women Organizing: Cadres, Feminists, Muslims, Queers* (Berg Publishers, 2001), p. 279.
3. The *Zhonghua renmin gongheguo jihui youxing shiwei fa* was ratified by the tenth meeting of the executive committee of the Seventh National People's Congress on October 31, 1989. See Human Rights Watch, "We Could Disappear At Any Time" *Retaliation and Abuses Against Chinese Petitioners*, [hrw.org/reports/2005/china/1205/6.htm](http://hrw.org/reports/2005/china/1205/6.htm).
4. For an account of the Huashui protest, see Mark Magnier, "As China Spews Pollution, Villagers Rise Up," *Los Angeles Times*, September 3, 2006, posted on the Web site of Pacific Environment, <http://www.pacificenvironment.org/article.php?id=1900>.
5. Zhao Yan was ultimately sentenced to three years in prison on an unrelated (and apparently trumped-up) fraud charge in August 2006. See "Zhao Yan Appeals Against Three-year Sentence on Fraud Charge," Reporters Without Borders, September 4, 2006, [http://www.rsf.org/article.php3?id\\_article=18663](http://www.rsf.org/article.php3?id_article=18663).



# REGULAR FEATURES



## TAKE ACTION | 2008 AND BEYOND

The Organizing Committee for the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games issued the “Beijing Olympic Action Plan,” which laid out guiding principles and a series of promises as part of Beijing’s preparations to be host city.

In 2003, Human Rights in China (HRIC) launched the Incorporating Responsibility 2008 Campaign to encourage Beijing to keep these promises.

HRIC issued an initial assessment of Beijing’s progress in a 2005 report entitled “Promises, Promises.” This update focuses on what has happened over the past two years and what remains to be done before the Games open in August of next year.

In coming months, HRIC will be releasing additional Olympics material and interactive features, which will be available on our Web site.

---

***Compiled by Charlie McAteer, Carol Wang and Elisabeth Wickeri***

### “GREEN OLYMPICS” POLLUTION AND THE ENVIRONMENT

#### THE BEIJING PROMISE

“By 2008, we will achieve the goal of building the capital into an ecological city that features green hills, clear water, grass-covered ground, and blue sky.”

---

**Beijing Olympic Action Plan, 2002**

## IMPLEMENTATION CONCERNS

While China’s government has taken some superficial environmental steps, such as planting more trees in Beijing, it has a long way to go in tackling major environmental challenges. Such problems need long-term solutions, and the cooperation of other governments, regional organizations, transnational corporations and ordinary citizens, as well as the Chinese government itself. China’s efforts to educate Beijing residents and work toward short-term solutions are a step in the right direction, but its promise of a “green Olympics” by 2008 appears too ambitious to achieve.

#### → KEY PROBLEMS

---

A short-term approach may hinder long-term progress

---

Ensuring adequate water supplies for Beijing and other host cities during the Games may worsen the water crisis in other parts of the country or in neighboring countries.

## THE REALITY

China's environment is deteriorating on several fronts—air, land and water. Researchers estimate that pollution in China causes more than 300,000 premature deaths every year,<sup>1</sup> and China is home to 17 of the 20 most polluted cities in the world.

Jacques Rogge, president of the International Olympics Committee, has warned that events could be postponed if conditions are unhealthy, and some athletes say they plan to arrive in Beijing as late as possible to minimize their exposure to pollution. Efforts are being made to address some of the problems during the Games but some of these are being viewed skeptically. While there are plans to reduce Beijing traffic flows, for example, Dr. Michal Krzyzanowski of the World Health Organization wonders whether the effect of reducing traffic in the city will be offset by pollution from other parts of China.<sup>2</sup>

According to one of China's leading environmental lawyers, only about 10 percent of the country's environmental laws and regulations are actually enforced.<sup>3</sup> But pollution has economic as well as human costs, resulting in losses of an estimated 10 percent of China's GDP.<sup>4</sup>

And while the government is trying to improve conditions, it is also silencing voices of protest and thereby eliminating a major catalyst for change—grassroots activists.<sup>5</sup>

**“In a very real and immediate sense, you can look at a dust event you are breathing in China and look at this same dust as it tracks across the Pacific and reaches the United States.”<sup>9</sup>**

**Jeff Stith, National Center for Atmospheric Research**



### CHINA'S ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS ARE THE WORLD'S ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS

**Korea  
Sea of Japan  
USA**

Storms in the Gobi and Taklamakan deserts of western China each year hurl sand across China to Korea and over the Sea of Japan, picking up factory pollutants from China's industrialized coast, and eventually scattering the dust across the western United States.

**Russia**

A chemical plant blast on November 13, 2005, dumped 100 tons of benzene into Jilin Province's Songhua River, a waterway also used by Russia. The World Wide Fund for Nature said the river faces “ecological catastrophe.” Experts say the damage is likely to be long-lasting, and the river could take more than 10 years to flush out absorbed pollutants.<sup>6</sup>

**Myanmar  
Indonesia  
Russia  
Gabon  
Equatorial Guinea**

China is the world's largest importer of forest products, with imports—many of them illegal—tripling in less than a decade. Nearly 75 percent of the wood used in Chinese furniture and plywood products is imported from Russia, Burma and Indonesia.<sup>7</sup> Other source countries include Gabon and Equatorial Guinea, both exporting over 60 percent of their timber to China.<sup>8</sup>

## ACTIVISTS AT RISK



### WU LIHONG

Anticipated release: 2010

Environmental activist **Wu Lihong** is an avid campaigner against the pollution of Taihu Lake, the third largest lake in China and a major source of drinking water for the border area between Jiangsu and Zhejiang provinces. Although Wu was named by the government as one of the top 10 individuals who “moved China with their service to society,” he has been harassed constantly for his activities. He was detained on April 13, 2007, and accused of extorting money from business owners after he reported worsening pollution at Taihu Lake. 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. Just prior to his arrest, Wu had been preparing to sue the state over its designation of his home town, Yixing, as a “Model Environmental City.” Wu was sentenced in August to three years in prison for fraud and extortion. Wu’s wife said that no witnesses were called to testify during his trial, and police statements were not challenged.<sup>10</sup> Wu also stated that he was tortured during a five-day interrogation. Zhu Xiaoyan, Wu’s lawyer, says he plans to appeal.



### SUN XIAODI

For more than a decade, **Sun Xiaodi** has pressed the central authorities to clean up radioactive contamination from the No. 792 Uranium Mine in Gannan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Gansu Province, and to stop illegal mining, allegedly carried out by local officials. For his efforts, Sun Xiaodi was presented with the prestigious Nuclear-Free Future Award in Window Rock, Arizona. Residents of the prefecture where Sun Xiaodi lives suffer an unusually high rate of ailments linked to radioactive contamination, and in November 2006, a medical examination revealed a tumor in Sun’s abdominal cavity. In February 2007, with his condition worsening, Sun and his daughter traveled to Beijing, where a specialist recommended surgery costing 120,000 *yuan* (approximately \$15,000). Friends are currently attempting to raise the funds to pay Sun’s medical expenses.<sup>11</sup> Sun’s harassment has intensified since he won the international award. After Sun and his daughter left for Beijing, his wife was also threatened and harassed by unknown individuals. Sun’s family believes they were hired by local officials, who feared that Sun had gone to Beijing to report on abuses at the uranium mine.



# “HIGH-TECH OLYMPICS”

## USE OF SECURITY TECHNOLOGY

### THE BEIJING PROMISE

“We will make all-out efforts to guarantee the security during the Olympic Games on the basis of a sound social order, reliable public transport and fire fighting systems, safe medical and health structures, and well planned supporting measures.”<sup>12</sup>

**Beijing Olympic Action Plan, 2002**

## IMPLEMENTATION CONCERNS

China has long been known to use its security network to arbitrarily detain and imprison individuals. While the safety of the Games is crucial, China has made no assurances that sophisticated new security systems won't be used to spy on and repress activists who are exercising their rights to freedom of expression, movement and association.

Beijing's security strategies could lead to the abuse of security systems during the Olympics and afterwards.

### → KEY PROBLEMS

Since there is no independent judiciary, checks on the government's authority are inadequate. This makes it hard to balance the protection of individual rights with the need for public order.

Beijing's security strategies could lead to the abuse of security systems during the Olympics and afterwards.

## THE REALITY

Armed with new security technology acquired for the Olympics, China will have an even greater capacity to monitor and restrict individual rights beyond 2008. Tian Yixiang, the director of the Military Bureau with the Olympics Beijing Olympic Games Security Work Commanding Center, stated, “The Beijing Olympic Games is still facing complicated security situations, including rampant international terrorism, the ‘East Turkistan’ terrorist organization and the Falun Gong cult.”<sup>13</sup> Additionally, it was announced publicly at the China Public Emergencies and Emergency Technology Forum held in May that “Beijing's Olympics Intelligence Center will conduct a background check and risk assessment on all athletes attending the Olympics in Beijing.”<sup>14</sup>

China's Ministry of Public Security has issued the

### → CAMERAS, CAMERAS EVERYWHERE

More than 450 technology projects are currently planned or have already been implemented in preparation for the Olympics security network. The equipment acquired for this network includes barcode scanners, biometric fingerprint cards, hidden cameras and microphones.

*(continued on next page)*

“Notification on Carrying Out Stringent Background Investigations on Individuals Applying to Participate in the Olympics and Performing a Pre-Selection,” listing 43 categories of “unwanted” who may be barred from the 2008 Beijing Olympics.<sup>15</sup> Vulnerable groups, including ethnic minorities and religious practitioners, may be increasingly at risk of surveillance and repression.

The Olympic organizing committee says it will spend about \$300 million on security.<sup>16</sup> And China’s security budget is expected to continue to grow after 2008 at an annual rate of at least 20 percent.<sup>17</sup> The country is already the second largest security equipment market in the world, after the United States.

## → CAMERAS, CAMERAS EVERYWHERE, *cont.*

Certain control centers will be capable of monitoring surrounding areas with real-time images that can be quickly transmitted to the municipal public security bureau and all sub-bureaus.<sup>18</sup>

Face recognition system will be installed in 500 shopping centers by 2008,<sup>19</sup> and “anti-terrorism” cameras will be placed in high-end hotels. In all, a network of 90,000 cameras will be in place to monitor traffic and track individuals. A nationwide database will be in place containing personal information on nearly 96 percent of the country’s population.<sup>20</sup>

## THE PRICE OF RELIGIOUS PRACTICE



**JIN WEI**

**Anticipated release: 2018**

**LI XIANGDONG**

**Anticipated release: 2017**

**SHU JIANQIU**

**Anticipated release: 2011**

**LI WEI**

**Anticipated release: 2009**

Falun Gong practitioners **Jin Wei, Li Xiangdong, Shu Jianqiu, Li Wei** and **Liu Chunshu** tapped into local television transmissions on January 1, 2002, to broadcast documentaries countering the government’s attacks on their religion. All five were sentenced on May 18, 2002, to prison terms ranging from 7 to 16 years. Jin Wei received the harshest sentence as the alleged ringleader, found guilty of “organizing and using a cult to undermine implementation of the law” and sabotaging broadcasting and television facilities.<sup>21</sup> Liu Chunshu died as a result of an “illness” while in custody.



**TENZIN DELEK RIMPOCHE**

**Life sentence**

**Tenzin Delek Rinpoche**, a lama from Kardze Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, is a respected leader who worked to provide nomadic Tibetan communities with access to education, health and other social services.<sup>22</sup> Officials considered his influence a threat to their control of the region, and regularly monitored and harassed him for over a decade. He was detained on April 7, 2002, and charged with “inciting separatism” and “crimes of terror” in connection with a bombing in Chengdu in April 2001. He was sentenced to death on December 2, 2002. Rinpoche reportedly went on a hunger strike to protest torture in detention and the lack of a fair trial.<sup>23</sup> Despite sustained international protests, and promises from Chinese authorities that he would be given a retrial, his appeal was rejected on January 26, 2003, after a secret retrial. A former monk charged in the same case, Lobsang Dhondup, was executed. On January 26, 2005, Rinpoche’s death sentence was commuted to life in prison.<sup>24</sup>

# “FREE AND OPEN OLYMPICS”

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND ACCESS TO INFORMATION • TRANSPARENCY AND CORRUPTION

## THE BEIJING PROMISE

“In the preparation for the Games, we will be open in every aspect to the rest of the country and the whole world. We will draw on the successful experience of others and follow the international standards and criteria.”

Beijing Olympic Action Plan, 2002

Wang Wei, secretary general of the Olympic Organizing Committee, promised to give the international media “complete freedom to report when they come to China.” But while China has taken a step in the right direction by loosening restrictions on foreign journalists, an open and transparent Olympics is still only a dream at this point.

## THE REALITY

A recent Foreign Correspondents Club of China (FCCC) survey found that 40 percent of 163 journalists who responded had experienced some form of interference since new Olympics media regulations were put into effect. The situation for domestic journalists is even worse, given that the regulations did not apply to them in the first place.

### → KEY PROBLEMS

It is unclear whether the new regulations will be applied evenly to all foreign journalists. The freedom to report is not at all guaranteed for domestic journalists. Chinese officials still forcibly shut down peaceful demonstrations.

Corruption continues despite disproportionately harsh punishments for some high-profile offenders.

China has responded to a string of major corruption scandals by cracking down on a few highly visible individuals. Zheng Xiaoyu, former director of the State Food and Drug Administration, was swiftly executed in July after being found guilty of accepting 6.49 million *yuan* (\$832,000) in bribes. Last summer, the vice-mayor of Beijing, responsi-

### → CHINA'S RECORD ON PRESS FREEDOM

China ranked 177th out of 194 countries in Freedom House's 2006 Global Press Freedom ratings. It was classified as “**not free**.”<sup>25</sup>

China ranked **163rd out of 168** countries in the fifth annual Worldwide Press Freedom Index prepared by Reporters Without Borders, dropping from 159 in 2005.<sup>26</sup>

The Committee to Protect Journalists identified China as the **world's leading jailer of journalists** for the eighth consecutive year, with 31 journalists imprisoned in 2006.<sup>27</sup>

## → SOME OLYMPIC FIGURES <sup>29</sup>

<b>Over 224 million</b>	Profits, in US dollars, estimated by the International Olympic Committee from the Beijing Games. Beijing officials suggest that profits will amount to only \$16 million. <sup>30</sup>
<b>300 million</b>	Estimated proceeds from the sale of <i>fuwa</i> , the official Beijing mascot. <sup>31</sup>
<b>65 million</b>	What a sponsor in The Olympic Partner Programme (TOP) must pay. <sup>32</sup> This is \$25 million higher than what TOP sponsors paid for the Sydney Games in 2000. <sup>33</sup>
<b>54</b>	The number of official sponsors who have signed on for the Games. <sup>34</sup>
<b>5 billion</b>	The amount expected to be spent on advertisements and television sponsorships even before the events begin. <sup>35</sup>
<b>40 billion</b>	What Beijing has spent on Olympics preparations. <sup>36</sup>
<b>4 billion</b>	The expected audience for the Beijing Olympics—one billion more than the Athens Olympics in 2004. <sup>37</sup>

ble for Olympics projects, was removed from office after he was found to have built himself a private palace from the proceeds of kickbacks.<sup>28</sup> The Games preparations have been plagued by corruption, forced relocations and a lack of transparency and independent monitoring mechanisms.

## THE PERSONAL COST OF REPORTING AND WRITING



### **GAO QINRONG** **Released in 2006**

A former journalist for Xinhua News Agency, **Gao Qinrong** in 1998 reported the involvement of high-level officials in a bogus irrigation scheme in Yunchung, Shanxi Province, during a severe drought. Blamed for the ensuing media scandal, Gao was detained on December 4, 1998, and sentenced to 13 years' imprisonment on charges of bribery, embezzlement and organized prostitution.<sup>38</sup> After his wife, Duan Maoying, made high-profile appeals to the international community, the Supreme People's Court reopened the case. Gao's release in 2006 after eight years in prison was widely publicized, but the authorities quickly ordered the story removed from print and Internet pages.<sup>39</sup>



### **NURMEMET YASIN** **Anticipated release: 2014**

Uyghur writer **Nurmemet Yasin** is known for his many poems, essays, and short stories.<sup>40</sup> On November 29, 2004, Yasin, who is 33 and married, with two children, was arrested for his short story, "Wild Pigeon," which Chinese authorities said incited "Uyghur separatism." His personal computer, which contained more than 1,600 poems, short stories and an uncompleted novel, was also seized.<sup>41</sup> Following a closed trial in February 2005, Yasin was sentenced to 10 years in prison. His appeal was denied. On May 19, 2005, he was transferred to Urumqi No. 1 Prison, and has not been permitted any visitors. Unconfirmed reports in August 2007 state that Yasin was tortured to death in prison.

# “PEOPLE’S OLYMPICS”

## ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

### THE BEIJING PROMISE

“The Olympic Games will give an impetus to economic development and urban construction and management, and bring about increasing benefits for the people. We will make the preparations for the Olympic Games a process of substantially improving the people’s living standard, both materially and culturally.”

Beijing Olympic Action Plan, 2002

## IMPLEMENTATION CONCERNS

Although the Chinese government has spent large amounts on economic development in Beijing, not all have benefited equally. Some vulnerable groups are experiencing forcible evictions and crackdowns on their homes rather than the fruits of development.

## THE REALITY

**Inequality has widened** in recent years, with a growing income disparity between rural and urban residents. The incomes of rural residents are less than a third of those of their urban counterparts. Taking account of the disparity in health care services and access to other social benefits, the gap is actually even greater.<sup>42</sup>

With overpopulation already straining Beijing’s resources and environment, the city’s 5.1 million **migrants** have been feeling some heat. Although they have been instrumental in providing labor for the construction of Olympic sites, they have been subject to evictions and other tactics aimed at keeping them out of the cities included in the “Olympics clean-up” campaign. The Ministry of Public Security has demanded that all Chinese cities set up systems by the end of 2009 to more easily track migrants.

In June of this year, PlayFair 2008 reported that four Chinese factories contracted to produce Olympic souvenirs were **violating labor laws**. After investigations, the Organizing Committee terminated its contract with Lekit Sta-

### → KEY PROBLEMS

Government spending priorities have widened the **gap between urban and rural** areas.

**Migrants**, who have been crucial in building Olympic sites, will be left jobless when the Games are over.

**The Olympic preparations have trampled on workers’ rights.**

**Ethnic minorities** in border regions remain vulnerable to repression, even as the government points to their cultures as symbols of a “diverse but happy” state.

**Demolition** planned for the construction of Beijing Olympic facilities disregards cultural heritage sites and people made homeless by the building boom.

tionery Company, Ltd., for employing underage laborers and paying its employees less than 50 percent of the legal minimum wage.<sup>43</sup> The committee said it was also dropping the three other companies named in the PlayFair 2008 report because of “overtime issues.”

The “war on terror” continues to be used to justify repression of **Uyghurs, Tibetans** and **Mongols**. In Beijing, the commoditization of ethnic minorities is evident in their portrayal as pre-modern and exotic at the National Ethnic Minorities Park.

The number of **people displaced** by Olympics-related development in Beijing rose to 1.25 million in early 2007. Another 250,000 are expected to be displaced over the next year.<sup>44</sup>

## THE PERILS OF PROTEST



**WANG SEN**

**Anticipated release: 2011**

**Wang Sen**, a China Democracy Party (CDP) member based in Chengdu, was detained after criticizing the sale of tuberculosis medication at full price by a public health center that had received the medicine for free from the Red Cross in 2001.<sup>45</sup> The previous year, Wang Sen and Hu Mingjun, another CDP member, had issued a statement supporting workers at the Dazhou Iron and Steel Factory in Sichuan Province, where more than 1,000 steel workers were protesting to demand unpaid back wages.<sup>46</sup> On April 30, 2001, Wang Sen was arrested in Dachuan, along with Hu Mingjun. He was convicted of “incitement to subvert state power” and sentenced to 10 years’ imprisonment on May 30, 2002. The Dazhou Intermediate People’s Court ruled that the CDP was an “enemy organization.”<sup>47</sup> Wang Sen was diagnosed with severe diabetes in 2004 and has lost a great deal of weight; his wife reported that he was almost unrecognizable during a recent visit.



**HUANG XIRANG**

**Anticipated release: 2012**

**LIN HANRU**

**Anticipated release: 2010**

**HUANG XIJUN**

**Anticipated release 2010**

**Huang Xirang, Lin Hanru** and **Huang Xijun**, residents of Dongzhou Village, Guangdong Province, led protests against the construction of a power plant in their village in December 2005. The event was widely covered by the international media when the People’s Armed Police opened fire on the protesters, reportedly killing three civilians. Residents opposed construction on the grounds that compensation was inadequate and that the plant would block access to a lake they relied on for fishing and power generation. In May 2006, a court named Huang Xirang a ringleader of the protests and sentenced him to seven years. Lin Hanru and Huang Xijun received five-year sentences<sup>48</sup> for the illegal manufacture of explosives, illegal assembly and disturbing public order.<sup>49</sup>

# CRF TAKE ACTION

## WHAT YOU CAN DO!

### Are you planning to go to China in 2008?

- Blog and document your experience! Send HRIC your photos and stories, or publicize human rights concerns through interactive Web and technology tools such as cell phones, PDAs, Flickr, YouTube and others. Send us your links!
- Are you a writer or a journalist? Take advantage of the promised greater media access for foreign journalists and cover underreported human rights stories. You can also submit your essays to *China Rights Forum*!
- Experience Internet censorship in China first-hand and let us know what happened. Keep checking IR2008.org for the latest updates on HRIC's *Log on for access!* launch and how you can be part of the campaign.
- Read the Olympics Blacklist feature in this issue of CRF and find out if you are one of the 43 categories of people reportedly being targeted for investigation and screening by China's Ministry of Public Security. Be alert!

### Do you write, publish or blog?

- Make the "People's Olympics" pledge mean something! Highlight the individuals featured in this Take Action, so that their stories 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're doing about China!
- Contact HRIC to explore taking action on a case or issue.

### Find an International Olympic Committee member near you!

- Ask the IOC member to push for the Beijing Host City contract to be made public, like other contracts. Releasing the contract, which spells out the legal, commercial and financial obligations of the IOC and host city, would make the management of the Olympics more transparent.
- Ask the IOC member to help make public the progress report on Beijing's preparations for the Games. This report has been completed, but remains secret.

### Do you live in a Sister City?

- Find out if you live in a city with a relationship to Beijing or one of the other 2008 host cities.
- Write to your mayor or city government expressing your concern with the problems outlined above.
- Visit HRIC's Web site for more ideas, to learn how you can send these letters, and how you can send copies to the Beijing mayor and members of the BOCOG!

### Beyond 2008!

- Human rights obligations, promises and commitments do not have an expiration date! Chinese civil society must continue to flourish even after the closing of the Olympic Games.
- In the lead-up to 2008 and after, all governments, UN bodies, foundations and other organizations that have technical assistance programs in China must assess their projects with relevant indicators and international standards.

**VISIT OUR WEB SITE FOR MORE DETAILS ON HOW TO "TAKE ACTION" AND FOR OTHER IDEAS ON HOW YOU CAN HELP!**

## Notes

1. Leta Hong Fincher, "Worldwatch Institute: 16 of World's 20 Most-Polluted Cities in China," *Voice of America*, June 28, 2006, <http://www.voanews.com/english/archive/2006-06/2006-06-28-voa36.cfm?CFID=80136531&CFTOKEN=47681177>.
2. "Beijing smog raises health fears," BBC, August 17, 2007, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport2/hi/other\\_sports/6949483.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport2/hi/other_sports/6949483.stm).
3. Elizabeth C. Economy, "The Great Leap Backward?," *Foreign Affairs*, September/October 2007, <http://www.foreignaffairs.org/20070901faessay86503/elizabeth-c-economy/the-great-leap-backward.html?mode=print>.
4. Shi Jiangtao, "Green Crisis Wipes 10pc off GDP," *South China Morning Post*, June 6, 2006.
5. For additional information on China's environmental crisis, see Human Rights in China, "Trends Bulletin: China's Environment and Situation of Water," February 2007, <http://www.hrichina.org/public/contents/32368>.
5. According to a Chinese expert, Zhang Qingxiang, of the Environmental Studies Department at Shanghai's East China University of Science and Technology, cited in "China river town shuts down water supply," Associated Press, November 30, 2005, <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/servlet/story/RTGAM.20051130.wchina30/BNStory/International/>.
7. Jennifer L. Turner and Juli S. Kim, "China's Filthiest Export," *Foreign Policy In Focus*, February 7, 2007, <http://fpif.org/fpiftext/3978>.
8. Africa: Environmental Impact—More of the Same? Illegal-logging.info, December 14, 2006, [http://www.illegal-logging.info/item\\_single.php?item=news&item\\_id=1844&approach\\_id=1](http://www.illegal-logging.info/item_single.php?item=news&item_id=1844&approach_id=1).
9. Robert Lee Hotz, "Huge Dust Plumes From China Cause Changes in Climate," *Wall Street Journal*, July 20, 2007; Page B1.
10. Benjamin Kang Lim, "China jails environment activist, cuts dissident's term," Aug 11, 2007, <http://sport.guardian.co.uk/breakingnews/feedstory/0,-6842674,00.html>.
11. Human Rights in China, "Sun Xiaodi Harassed, Faces Financial Hardship," March 27, 2007, <http://www.hrichina.org/public/contents/34797>.
12. Beijing Organizing Committee for the Games of the XXIX Olympiad, "Beijing Olympic Action Plan," March 2002, <http://en.beijing2008.com/59/80/column211718059.shtml>. Unless otherwise noted, all promises referenced throughout are drawn from this document.
13. "Chinese Military preparing for Beijing Olympic security," *People's Daily Online*, June 29, 2007, <http://english.people.com.cn/90001/90776/6201549.html>.
14. "[Zhuce renyuan xu yange zige shencha Beijing Aoyun jiang juqian keyi duiyuan], Sina.com, May 16, 2007, <http://2008.sina.com.cn/dt/other/2007-05-16/094912776.shtml>.
15. See "Olympics Blacklist" elsewhere in this issue of CRF.
16. "Beijing Forms Helicopter Police for 2008 Olympic Games, says official," *People's Daily Online*, March 12, 2007, [http://english.people.com.cn/200703/12/eng20070312\\_356603.html](http://english.people.com.cn/200703/12/eng20070312_356603.html).
17. "Security products aimed at Olympics 2008—report from CIPATE, 2007 Beijing," *tdctrade.com*, June 19, 2007, <http://gbcode.tdctrade.com/gb/www.tdctrade.com/imn/07061903/security006.htm>.
18. "Security Measures Ready for Olympics," *China Daily*, July 14, 2006, <http://www.china.org/cn/english/sports/174694.htm>.
19. "Security Measures Ready for Olympics," *China Daily*, July 14, 2006, <http://www.china.org/cn/english/sports/174694.htm>.
20. "Tingzhong lun zhongguo jianli gongan xinxi ziyuanku," VOA News, April 21, 2006, available at <http://www.voanews.com/chinese/m2006-04-21-voa66.cfm>.
21. Article 300, Criminal Law of the People's Republic of China, revised on March 14, 1997. Reporters Without Borders (RSF), "Severe crackdown in defence of the State monopoly on information," May 21, 2002, [http://www.rsf.org/print.php3?id\\_article=1386](http://www.rsf.org/print.php3?id_article=1386).
22. Students for a Free Tibet, Campaigns: "Tenzin Delek Rinpoche," <http://www.studentsforafreetibet.org/article.php?id=458>.
23. International Campaign for Tibet, Campaigns: "Tenzin Delek Rinpoche," updated February 07, 2007, <http://www.savetibet.org/campaigns/tdr/index.php>.
24. International Campaign for Tibet, Campaigns: "Tenzin Delek Rinpoche," updated February 07, 2007, <http://www.savetibet.org/campaigns/tdr/index.php>.
25. Freedom House, "Table of Global Press Freedom Rankings 2006," <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=271&year=2006>.
26. Reporters Without Borders (RSF), Worldwide Press Freedom Index 2006 (Paris: RSF, 2006) Available: [http://www.rsf.org/rubrique.php3?id\\_rubrique=639](http://www.rsf.org/rubrique.php3?id_rubrique=639).
27. Special Report 2006, "Internet fuels rise in number of jailed journalists." Committee to Protect Journalists [http://www.cpj.org/Briefings/2006/imprisoned\\_06/imprisoned\\_06.html](http://www.cpj.org/Briefings/2006/imprisoned_06/imprisoned_06.html).
28. Oliver August, "Olympic Greed: How crooked Chinese officials have cashed in on the 2008 games, U.S. News and World Report, August 19, 2007, <http://www.usnews.com/usnews/news/articles/070819/27china.htm>.
29. All dollar amounts are in U.S. dollars.
30. "China's Olympic Marketing Drive," *Al Jazeera*, June 7, 2007, <http://english.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/2B716C01-93B7-4B74-96C4-698A91A90DB6.htm>.
31. According to the PlayFair report, *No Medal for the Olympics on Labor Rights*. "Beijing Olympics Breaking Labor Rules: Study," *Taipei Times*, June 11, 2007, <http://>



- www.taipeitimes.com/News/front/archives/2007/06/11/2003364706.
32. Created in 1985, the TOP programme, managed by the IOC, is the only sponsorship with the exclusive worldwide marketing rights to both Winter and Summer Games.
  33. "Beijing to Set Record for Olympics Revenue," *Xinhua News Agency*, December 26, 2005.
  34. "China's Olympic Marketing Drive," *Al Jazeera*, June 7, 2007. <http://english.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/2B716C01-93B7-4B74-96C4-698A91A90DB6.htm>.
  35. "China's Olympic Marketing Drive," *Al Jazeera*, June 7, 2007. <http://english.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/2B716C01-93B7-4B74-96C4-698A91A90DB6.htm>.
  36. Breffni O'Rourke, "China: Beijing Seeks Intelligence Cooperation in Olympic Preparation," January 17, 2007. <http://www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2007/01/b39b43d4-c832-4dd5-9bb5-757449e4d81f.html>.
  37. "Beijing Expects 4 Billion TV Viewers for '08 Games," *Reuters*, June 13, 2007.
  38. "Journalist Case File: Gao Qinrong," from the blog of Angry Chinese Blogger, February 21, 2005, [http://angrychineseblogger.blog-city.com/journalist\\_case\\_file\\_gao\\_qinrong.htm](http://angrychineseblogger.blog-city.com/journalist_case_file_gao_qinrong.htm); Xu Ying, "Why Gao Qinrong Could Not Get Vindicated Over Eight Years, [Youth Weekend] January 4, 2007.
  39. Jonathan Ansfield "Gao Qinrong Silenced Again," *China Digital Times*, December 17, 2006, [http://chinadigital-times.net/2006/12/gao\\_qinrong\\_silenced\\_again.php](http://chinadigital-times.net/2006/12/gao_qinrong_silenced_again.php).
  40. PEN American Center, Honorary Member: Nurmuhmet Yasin, [no date] <http://www.pen.org/viewmedia.php/prmMID/765/prmID/174>.
  41. Radio Free Asia, "Wild Pigeon: A Uyghur Fable," June 27, 2005, [http://www.rfa.org/english/news/arts/2005/06/27/uyghur\\_literature/](http://www.rfa.org/english/news/arts/2005/06/27/uyghur_literature/).
  42. Jim Yardley, "China tries to narrow urban-rural gap," *New York Times*, February 22, 2006, <http://www.ihf.com/articles/2006/02/22/news/china.php>.
  43. PlayFair 2008, *No medal for the Olympics on labour rights*, June 11, 2007, [http://www.playfair2008.org/docs/playfair\\_2008-report.pdf](http://www.playfair2008.org/docs/playfair_2008-report.pdf).
  44. Center on Housing Rights and Evictions, *Fair Play for Housing Rights: Mega-Events, Olympic Games and Housing Rights* (Geneva: COHRE, 2007), [www.cohre.org/mega-events](http://www.cohre.org/mega-events).
  45. Reporters Without Borders (RSF), "China: 51 Journalists Imprisoned," 2007, [http://www.rsf.org/article.php3?id\\_article=1875](http://www.rsf.org/article.php3?id_article=1875).
  46. Erik Eckholm, "Chinese Court Hands Down Prison Sentences for 2 Leaders of a Banned Party," *The New York Times*, June 1, 2002.
  47. John Leicester, "Rights group: Chinese dissidents sentenced; veteran activist's wife protests," *Associated Press*, May 31, 2002.
  48. "China Sentences Dongzhou Villagers For Their Part in Clashes," *TMCnet News*, May 25, 2006.
  49. Clifford Coonan, "Chinese villagers thrown into jail after power plant protest," *The Independent*, June 2, 2006.

---

# RESOURCE LIST | THE 2008 BEIJING OLYMPICS

Following is a list of online resources relating to the 2008 Beijing Olympics from a variety of official, news, academic and commercial sites. The list also includes the official Web site of the worldwide Olympic Movement maintained by the International Olympic Committee as a general reference.

## OFFICIAL RESOURCES

### The Olympic Movement

[www.olympic.org/](http://www.olympic.org/)

English, French

This is the official site of the worldwide Olympic Movement, which includes the International Olympic Committee (IOC), the various National Olympic Committees and the athletes. This site introduces the development of the Olympic Movement, lists host cities for previous summer, winter and Paralympics games since 1896, and describes the work of the IOC, whose members select Olympics host cities.

See also: **Beijing 2008, Games of the XXIX Olympiad**

[http://www.olympic.org/uk/games/beijing/index\\_uk.asp](http://www.olympic.org/uk/games/beijing/index_uk.asp)

English, French

This archive of documents includes information on China's successful bid for the 2008 Games, and news on the Beijing Games.

See also: **The Olympic Charter**

[http://www.olympic.org/uk/organisation/missions/charter\\_uk.asp](http://www.olympic.org/uk/organisation/missions/charter_uk.asp)

English, French

The Olympic Charter governs the IOC and the running of the Olympic Movement, and also sets the conditions for the celebration of the Olympic Games.

### Beijing 2008 Olympic Games

<http://www.beijing2008.cn/>

Chinese, English, French

This official Web site for the Beijing 2008 Olympic

Games provides information on sports and venues, as well as on other topics such as the torch relay, the background of the Olympic Movement and the Beijing Organizing Committee for the Games of the XXIX Olympiad (BOCOG). The site also has useful information for spectators, media and volunteers.

See also: **Beijing 2008—One Year To Go**

<http://en.beijing2008.cn/1year/>

Chinese, English, French

This site marks the one-year countdown to the Beijing Olympics with information, interviews and photos on the countdown celebrations.

See also: **Beijing Olympic Action Plan (2002)**

<http://www.bjoe.gov.cn/ayybj/aygh/ayxdgh/default.htm/>  
(Chinese)

<http://en.beijing2008.cn/59/80/column211718059.shtml>  
(English)

The *Beijing Olympic Action Plan* (BOAP) was released in March 2002 by BOCOG and the Beijing Municipal Government after Beijing's successful bid in July 2001. The Action Plan outlines the commitments that China has made on the concept of hosting a "Green Olympics, High-tech Olympics and People's Olympics," and describes the planned development of Olympic venues and other infrastructure projects.

See also: **Beijing Paralympic Games**

<http://en.beijing2008.cn/paralympic/>

Chinese, English, French

This Web site provides background and news updates on the Beijing Paralympic Games, which will be held on September 6–17, 2008.

See also: **Service Guide for Foreign Media Coverage of the Beijing Olympic Games and the Preparatory Period (2007)**

<http://www.beijing2008.cn/media/latest/n214070949.shtml> (Chinese)

<http://en.beijing2008.cn/media/latest/n214074441.shtml> (English)

Following the promulgation of the "Regulations on Reporting Activities in China by Foreign Journalists

---

**Compiled by Cliff Ip with Bonny Ling**

during the Beijing Olympic Games and the Preparatory Period” on January 1, 2007, this Service Guide outlines issues and procedures that affect the work of foreign journalists reporting on the Beijing Olympic Games.

### **Chinese Olympic Committee**

<http://www.olympic.cn/>

Chinese, English

The Chinese Olympic Committee (COC) provides daily updated news, most of which is sports-oriented and focuses on well-known Chinese athletes, in addition to information on preparations for the Beijing Olympics. Information is also available on the COC’s official visits, China’s sports-related regulations and its anti-doping work and “national fitness project.”

### **Security Command Center for the Games of the XXIX Olympiad**

<http://www.bjayab.cn/webapp/>

Chinese, English, French

The Center describes itself as the official site on security work for the Beijing Olympics. It provides security news related to the Games and reports on the development of the Center’s work. It also promotes international cooperation and exchanges concerning Olympic security, with an emphasis on countering terrorism.

### **Beijing Shunyi Management Committee of Olympic Venues**

<http://www.bjshyagw.gov.cn/>

Chinese, English

Beijing’s Shunyi municipal body provides information on Olympic venue construction, visits from foreign guests and general information on topics such as Beijing’s transportation, environment and culture. The Shunyi Olympic Rowing-Canoeing Park will be the site of several water sports competitions during the Games.

### **Olympic Economy**

<http://www.bjoe.gov.cn/>

Chinese

The Beijing Municipal Commission of Development and Reform provides updated news on Olympics-related business, technology and environment, along with the full texts of some related regulations. The Web site also provides links to the Games’ partners, sponsors and exclusive suppliers.

## **NEWS RESOURCES**

### **China Central Television (CCTV)—Beijing 2008**

<http://2008.cctv.com/>

Chinese, English, French, Spanish

The state-run television station’s Olympics site provides information on Olympic news, venues, preparations, tickets, economy, history and China’s other event-hosting cities. It also maintains a bulletin board system and individual blogs for public use.

### **See also: Beijing 2008—One-Year Countdown**

<http://aoyun.cctv.com/special/C19052/05/index.shtml>

Chinese

This site marks the one-year countdown to the Beijing Olympics with information on the countdown celebrations in video format. It also contains general information on Olympics-related activities.

### **China.org.cn—2008 Beijing Olympic Games**

<http://www.china.org.cn/english/olympic/114380.htm>

Chinese, English, French, German, Japanese, Russian, Spanish, Arabic

This governmental portal site, published under the auspices of the State Council Information Office, aggregates Olympics-related news from other Chinese news sources on a daily basis. The Web site also contains information on Olympics venues, merchandise, volunteering for the Games, learning basic Chinese, Chinese festivals and other travel tips that may be useful for tourists.

### **Chinese Radio International—Countdown to 2008**

<http://english.cri.cn/webcast2007/events/down2008/index.htm> (English version)

China Radio International (CRI) is a state-operated overseas broadcaster with services in approximately 40 languages. Its Olympics page in English has information on countdown celebrations and presents news stories on the cultural and environmental aspects of the Games. Most reports are available in audio and written formats.

### **CNN—Countdown to Beijing**

<http://edition.cnn.com/SPECIALS/2007/countdown.to.beijing/>

English

CNN’s past news stories on the Beijing Olympics are

---

aggregated on this site. Topics range from athletes to the design of Olympic venues, as well as broader governance issues such as piracy and human rights. The site also includes slideshows, galleries and a timeline on China's participation in the Olympics.

### **People's Daily—Beijing 2008**

<http://olympic.people.com.cn/>

Chinese, English, Japanese, French, Spanish, Russian, Arabic

*People's Daily* provides regularly updated Olympic news, some focusing specifically on BOCOG, other Olympic cities in China and the global Olympic Movement. Practical information is also provided on Olympics business opportunities and ticket purchasing.

### **Xinhua—Olympics Page**

<http://www.xinhuanet.com/olympics/>

Chinese

Xinhua, China's state news agency, provides daily updated Olympics news and archived information on particular themes, such as the green, high-tech and people's Olympics, as well as on sports, business opportunities, official news and venue construction.

See also: **Discussions of the National People's Congress (NPC) and Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) on the Olympics**

[http://news.xinhuanet.com/sports/2007-03/16/content\\_5816717.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/sports/2007-03/16/content_5816717.htm)

Chinese

This site compiles Xinhua reports on Olympics-related discussions during the NPC and CPPCC sessions in March 2007. Special topics of focus include security, building Beijing's image, environmental protection and expenditure.

## **ACADEMIC RESOURCES**

### **Humanistic Olympic Studies Center, Renmin University of China**

<http://www.c2008.org/index.asp>

Chinese, English

The Center's aim is to "improve, strengthen and coordinate academic efforts in preparation for the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games." The Chinese version of the Web site

includes brief synopses of research articles on various aspects of the Games, including the Olympics concept, planning, management, development, economy, law and culture. Hyperlinks to daily Olympics-related news from different Chinese local papers are also provided.

## **TRADE AND COMMERCIAL RESOURCES**

### **Baidu—29th Olympic Games in 2008**

<http://www.baidu.com/2008/>

Chinese

Baidu is one of China's most popular online search engines. Its Olympics page provides general information about the Beijing Olympics and maintains an Olympics bulletin board system, as well as a library of more than 200 MP3 songs on the 2008 Olympics.

### **China Orbit—2008 Olympics**

<http://www.chinaorbit.com/2008-olympics-china.html>

English, French, German

Sponsored by two German companies, this site provides information on Beijing's bids for the 2000 and 2008 Olympics, and on how global concerns over human rights violations in China have been used to support and oppose Beijing's bid by different actors. The site also provides brief descriptions of 2008 Olympics venues and the accreditation process for foreign journalists, in addition to basic information on Games events.

### **Chinese-Tools.com—Beijing 2008**

<http://www.chinese-tools.com/beijing2008>

English, French, Spanish

This site, maintained by a UK-based marketing and technology company, targets the international Chinese language-learning audience. It aggregates Olympics news from English, French and Spanish sources, and provides basic information about Olympics venues, emblems and travel in Beijing. The general Web site, available also in German, Italian, Portuguese and Polish, has simple Chinese lessons translated into the respective host language, while the Chinese site includes a basic online dictionary.

### **Hong Kong Trade Development Council—2008 Beijing Olympics**

<http://olympics.tdctrade.com>

Chinese, English

The Trade Development Council, governed by Hong Kong business leaders and senior government officials, promotes the business interests of Hong Kong-based companies around the world. Its Beijing Olympics Web page aggregates news and other information on Olympics-related business and investment opportunities.

#### **Kidzworld**

<http://www.kidzworld.com/article/1049-olympics-head-to-china-in-2008>

English

Hosted by Kidzworld Media in Canada, this Web site for children and teens provides simple background on the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, and a summary of China's bidding history and issues of concern.

#### **Sina—The 2008 Games of the XXIX Olympiad**

<http://2008.sina.com.cn/>

Chinese

This Web site of the widely used Chinese Web portal Sina.com carries daily updated Olympics news, and includes links to Sina bloggers' comments on the Olympics. There is also information about the Olympics, business opportunities and venue construction, as well as an online map of Olympics venues, tourist attractions and hotels in Beijing.

#### **Sohu—Beijing 2008 Olympic Games**

<http://2008.sohu.com/olympic-news/index.shtml>

Chinese

Search engine Sohu carries daily updated Olympic news from official and other news outlets. The Web site also has links to worldwide Olympic corporate sponsors, and promotes public involvement in volunteering for the Olympics. Sohu has an exclusive contract with BOCOG as the sole Internet sponsor and operator of the official Web site of the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games.

### **BLOGS AND FORUMS**

#### **Beijing Wide Open**

<http://beijingwideopen.org>

English, Tibetan

Tibetan activist Lhadon Tethong details her trip to Beijing for the one-year Olympics countdown celebrations

in August 2007, and her brief detention and subsequent expulsion by the Chinese authorities. The blog also contains video clips filmed in Beijing, as well as an online interactive map of the city. The blog will continue to be updated with Tibet and Olympics-related posts from Lhadon's home base in New York, where she is executive director of Students for a Free Tibet.

#### **Bokee.com**

<http://2008.bokee.com/>

Chinese

Chinese blog-host Bokee provides links to many blogs discussing the Beijing Olympics. While some focus on the athletes and sports, others discuss social aspects of the Games, such as expenditures for the Beijing Olympics and effects on the livelihood of Beijing residents, including migrant workers.

#### **Old Beijing.net**

<http://bbs.oldbeijing.net/>

Chinese

This bulletin board provides a discussion forum for people concerned with Beijing's development and culture. Many posts focus on the destruction of and evictions from various historical neighborhoods in Beijing, and the affect on the city's cultural heritage in the years to come.

#### **Zhang Yongheng's Olympics Blog**

<http://zhangyongheng.blshe.com/>

Chinese

This is the blog of Zhang Yongheng, editor of the "Humanistic Olympics" section of the overseas edition of *People's Daily*. His blog entries discuss various aspects of the Beijing Olympics centered on exploratory questions such as, "What can the Games bring China?" and "How does one understand and evaluate the meaning and purpose of the 2008 Olympics?" There are also entries on athletes' performance, the effect of the Olympics on China's economy and what Beijing could learn from the Doha Asian Games.

---

## RESOURCE LIST | OLYMPICS ADVOCACY CAMPAIGNS

The Chinese government has made a bet that by hosting the 2008 Summer Olympic Games in Beijing, it can present a prosperous and modern China to the world. Officials hope that a successful event will not only bur-nish their international image, but also influence other arenas, such as foreign investment and tourism. With the international spotlight on Beijing for a few weeks next summer, however, the less polished side of China's rise will also be revealed.

Many organizations around the world have seized this opportunity to raise issues ranging from human rights to media freedom, from repression in Tibet to China's relationship with Sudan. This resource list highlights several advocacy campaigns that will be putting the heat on Beijing in the run-up to the Olympics and beyond. The campaigns include those conducted by single organizations, networks and other coalitions, with some organizations participating in more than one campaign.

The campaign descriptions that follow were provided by campaign organizers, or drawn from campaign Web sites.

### INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

**Beijing 2008: Race for Tibet** (<http://www.racefortibet.org/>) is a coalition campaign initiated by the International Campaign for Tibet (ICT) to unite Tibetan groups worldwide in making the 2008 Beijing Olympics a catalyst for change in Tibet. The campaign aims to encourage China to take advantage of the opportunity presented by the lead-up to the Games to engage the Dalai Lama and make important changes to its human rights policies in Tibet.

### INTERNATIONAL TIBET SUPPORT NETWORK

The **2008-FreeTibet** (<http://www.supportteamtibet.org/>) campaign, launched by the International Tibet Support Network (ITSN), deploys educational and protest activities related to the 2008 Olympics to seek support from people around the world to press for free-

dom in Tibet and throughout China. ITSN is calling on the Chinese government to respect the rights of the Tibetan people and to resolve the Tibetan issue through sincere dialogue with the Tibetan Government-in-Exile and the Dalai Lama, as well as urging all governments to pressure the Chinese authorities to immediately release all political prisoners.

### STUDENTS FOR A FREE TIBET

Students for a Free Tibet (SFT), a member group of the larger International Tibet Support Network, believes that China must end its illegal occupation of Tibet before it can enjoy the international prestige of hosting the 2008 Beijing Olympics and be recognized as a respected leader on the global stage. Through global protests, nonviolent direct action and educational events, SFT's **Free Tibet 2008: Beijing Olympics Campaign** (<http://www.FreeTibet2008.org>) aims to use the global focus on the Olympics to draw attention to China's human rights violations in Tibet and push for Tibetans' fundamental right to self determination.

### HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

Human Rights Watch (HRW) has launched a new Web site, *Beijing 2008: China's Olympian Human Rights Challenges* (<http://china.hrw.org/>), featuring photo essays, a media guide, a take-action page with online advocacy tools and a discussion forum. Each month, HRW highlights a specific area for reform, beginning with media censorship. Other areas of concern include migrant labor rights, forced evictions, repression of ethnic and religious minorities, state-sponsored executions, obstruction of HIV/AIDS prevention efforts, stifling of dissent through house arrests, and ties to regimes perpetrating rights violations such as Sudan's abuses in Darfur.

### PLAYFAIR 2008

**PlayFair 2008** (<http://www.playfair2008.org/>) is an international campaign taking advantage of the lead-up to the 2008 Beijing Olympics to push for respect for workers' rights in the global sporting goods industry. The campaign—a global alliance of trade unions, NGOs and labor groups—urges sportswear and athletic

---

**Compiled by Charlie McAteer and Victoria Kwan**

footwear companies, the International Olympic Committee (IOC), National Olympics Committees and national governments to take steps to eliminate the exploitation and abuse of workers in the global sporting goods industry.

### REPORTERS WITHOUT BORDERS

Reporters Without Borders (RSF) ([http://www.rsf.org/rubrique.php3?id\\_rubrique=174](http://www.rsf.org/rubrique.php3?id_rubrique=174)) calls on the Chinese authorities to implement nine reforms before the 2008 Beijing Olympics: (1) release all detained journalists and Internet users; (2) abolish the restrictive articles in the Foreign Correspondents Guide; (3) disband the Publicity Department that controls the Chinese media; (4) end the jamming of foreign radio stations; (5) end the blocking of news and information Web sites based abroad; (6) suspend the “11 Commandments” of Internet censorship; (7) end the blacklisting of overseas journalists and human rights activists; (8) lift the ban on Chinese media using certain foreign news agency video footage and news reports; (9) legalize independent organizations of journalists and human rights activists.

### COMMITTEE TO PROTECT JOURNALISTS

The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) urges the Chinese government to fulfill the promises it made in 2001 when Beijing was awarded the 2008 Olympics, including assurances that authorities would allow the media “complete freedom.” CPJ recently released a report in Beijing, *Falling Short: As the 2008 Olympics Approach, China Falts on Press Freedom* ([http://cpj.org/Briefings/2007/Falling\\_Short/China/index.html](http://cpj.org/Briefings/2007/Falling_Short/China/index.html)),

to illustrate the yawning gap between these promises and China’s continuing lack of press freedom. CPJ’s report includes demands that China—the world’s leading jailer of journalists—release all journalists currently imprisoned for their work.

### OLYMPIC DREAM FOR DARFUR

Dream for Darfur is an advocacy campaign raising awareness of China’s role in enabling the Sudanese government to continue to commit atrocities. On August 8, 2007, one year before the opening of the Beijing Olympics, Dream for Darfur launched an **Olympic Torch Relay** that will bring a torch to historic places of genocide, including Rwanda, Cambodia, Bosnia and Germany. Dream for Darfur has also joined the Save Darfur Coalition to organize a 21-state US Olympic Torch Relay (<http://www.savedarfur.org/page/content/torchrun>), scheduled to begin this fall. The relays are aimed at urging China to pressure Sudan into ending the Darfur killings, and sparking a global anti-genocide movement.

### OLYMPIC WATCH

Olympic Watch (<http://www.olympicwatch.org/>), established in Prague in 2001, seeks to monitor the human rights situation in China and to campaign for its improvement ahead of the 2008 Beijing Olympics. It focuses in particular on the areas of freedom of speech and access to information; opposition to the death penalty and torture; a free Tibet; tolerance of dissent and democratic reform; and relations between mainland China and Taiwan.



BEIJING 2008  
RACE FOR  
**TIBET**  
[www.racefortibet.org](http://www.racefortibet.org)



Olympic Watch joined with the Laogai Research Foundation and the International Society for Human Rights to release “Minimum Standards for Beijing 2008” (<http://www.olympicwatch.org/news.php?id=74>), listing requirements that China should meet in order to be a good host for the 2008 Beijing Olympics. The three groups called for China to: (1) ratify and implement the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; (2) end the use of military force against peaceful democratic action; (3) impose a moratorium on the death penalty; (4) engage in open talks with the Tibetan Government-in-Exile; (5) guarantee democracy in Hong Kong; and (6) abolish the extrajudicial detention “laogai”/“laojiao” camps.

### AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

Amnesty International (AI) (<http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGASA170242007?open&of=ENG-CHN>) is campaigning for a lasting human rights legacy for the Beijing Olympics. AI will monitor the Chinese government’s performance particularly closely in areas with a direct link to: (1) preparations for the Olympics; (2) core principles in the Olympic Charter; and (3) promises of human rights improvements made by Chinese officials in 2001 at the awarding of the Games to China. AI will mobilize thousands globally to press the Chinese authorities to deliver a positive human rights legacy to the people of China by making substantial reforms in four key areas: (1) the death penalty; (2) punitive administrative detention and fair trials; (3) arbitrary detention and harassment of human rights defenders; and (4) unwarranted censorship of the Internet.



PLAYFAIR2008.org



### LE COLLECTIF CHINE JO 2008/CHINA 2008 OLYMPICS COLLECTIVE

Le Collectif Chine JO 2008, known in English as the China 2008 Olympics Collective (<http://pekin2008.rsfblog.org/>), is composed of nine French NGOs, including Amnesty International-France, FIDH and Reporters Sans Frontières. In the lead-up to the Olympics, the Collective is urging Chinese authorities to implement “8 Requirements For Beijing”: (1) release those imprisoned for participating in the Tiananmen demonstrations and all other prisoners of conscience; (2) end the control of media and information; (3) suspend all executions pending abolition of the death penalty; (4) end non-judicial detention; (5) end torture; (6) allow freedom of association for trade unions; (7) repeal Article 306 of the PRC Criminal Law, used as a repressive measure against lawyers; and (8) end forcible evictions.

### COALITION TO INVESTIGATE THE PERSECUTION OF FALUN GONG

The Coalition to Investigate the Persecution of Falun Gong (<http://cipfg.org/en/>) calls for the Chinese government to end the persecution of Falun Gong practitioners, their supporters and defense lawyers; to release all practitioners who have been imprisoned for their beliefs; and to engage in discussions with CIPFG on opening up prisons, hospitals, labor camps and other facilities for inspection by independent investigators. On August 9, 2007, CIPFG launched a Global Human Rights Torch Relay (<http://www.humanrightstorch.org/>) that will span five continents to draw attention to human rights violations in China.





---

# MEDIA DIALOGUE

## China Rashomon

By Chen Kuide

*Is China really as invincible as a recent article by a prominent Western observer suggests, or is it threatened by the same internal collapse that brought down the former Soviet Union and other authoritarian regimes?*

### How unprecedented is the “China model”?

China’s expanding presence on the international stage continues to generate debate, especially with regard to the “China model” that is credited with this rise in prominence. But what is the “China model”? And indeed, what is the “real” China? The diversity of views on this subject brings to mind Akira Kurosawa’s famous film “Rashomon,” bewildering the observer with a variety of mutually exclusive conceptions of China.

On May 20, 2007, the *Washington Post* published an article by James Mann entitled “The China Challenge: A Shining Model of Wealth Without Liberty.”<sup>1</sup> In his article, Mann pronounced China victorious in its “startling new challenge to the future of liberal democracy”:

We’re used to thinking of China as an economic miracle, but it’s also becoming a political model. Beijing has shown dictators that they don’t have to choose between power and profit; they can have both. Today’s China demonstrates that a regime can suppress organized opposition and need not establish its legitimacy through elections. It shows that a ruling party can maintain considerable control over information and the Internet without slowing economic growth. And it indicates that a nation’s elite can be bought off with comfortable apartments, the chance to make money, and significant advances in personal, non-political freedoms (clothes, entertainment, sex, travel abroad).

James Mann is a veteran China scholar and writer who headed the Beijing bureau of the *Los Angeles Times* in the late 1980s. He is the author of several books on

China, notably *Beijing Jeep* and, most recently, *The China Fantasy*. He is currently an author-in-residence at The Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University. Given his expertise and renown, Mann’s description of the China model as unprecedented and extraordinary in its aims and accomplishments is being taken very seriously. But I cannot dismiss nagging doubts about whether the China model is actually as pioneering as Mann claims it is.

Several decades ago, dictators Hitler and Stalin, each at the height of their powers, likewise stressed their nations’ unique rejection of Western democratic models of political and economic development. Hitler, for example, on the third day after taking office in 1933 delivered a proclamation to the German nation in which he affirmed the Third Reich’s unique (anti-Western) national character, and its forging of a path separate from those of England, France and the United States.<sup>2</sup>

China’s rapid economic growth has also not broken historical records. The Soviet Union maintained even more rapid economic growth from the beginning of the 1930s to the 1950s, while commentators around the world marveled at the new lifestyle that the Soviet system had apparently created for humankind. In Germany, Hitler declared that he would rescue German farmers from financial ruin while simultaneously launching an all-out offensive to deliver workers from unemployment. He actually did resurrect Germany from its economic morass and virtually eliminated unemployment; in 1938, Germany’s unemployment rate was only 1.3 percent, and between 1932 and 1938, Germany’s gross domestic product (GDP) grew by 102 percent. As in the case of today’s China, the rapid economic expansion of Germany in the 1930s was regarded with awe and trepidation, just as the burgeoning economies of South Korea and Taiwan, under their respective authoritarian regimes, dazzled the international community from the late 1960s into the 1980s.

Like today’s China, these totalitarian regimes suppressed organized opposition and spurned the oppor-

---

tunity to establish legitimacy through an electoral process. Like today's China, they were not forced to choose between economic growth and a monopoly on power; they had both. But how has history judged them decades later? The Soviet Union and Nazi Germany, those extraordinary challengers of liberal democracy—where are they now? Like the authoritarian regimes that ruled South Korea and Taiwan, these unprecedented models have crumbled into the dust of history, while the countries they ruled with iron fists have shifted toward the mainstream of liberal democracy.

Looking back at history, it is hard to believe that China's current "miracle" is truly without precedent, and it is likewise difficult to believe in its inevitable "triumph" over liberal democracy.

### **"Five freedoms" and a complacent middle class**

James Mann noted five freedoms that China's urban elites now enjoy: the opportunity to invest and make money, to buy and wear what they want, to enjoy themselves, to see the world and to have love affairs. These freedoms certainly have more pizzazz than the four homely aspirations of the Roosevelt era.<sup>3</sup> Appearances would suggest that China's elite have all they need and could desire nothing further, and as a result, Mann observes, "the middle class supports or at least goes along with the existing political order; after all, that order made it middle class in the first place."

There is little to argue in Mann's description of China's middle class. In its situation and attitudes it is reminiscent of the Soviet elite during the late Brezhnev era; with access to the best cars, homes, food and clothing, what reason should they have for discontent?

It is this middle-class complacency that prompts Mann to discredit the seemingly naïve predictions of Western leaders that affluence might bring democracy to China:

In 1997, President Bill Clinton said China was on "the wrong side of history." Political change would come "just as, inevitably, the Berlin Wall fell," he predicted. President Bush has repeated many of these same themes: "Trade freely with China, and time is on our side," he once said. British Prime

Minister Tony Blair said two years ago that he thought there was "an unstoppable momentum" toward democracy in China. Not quite.

Are Mann's arguments strong enough to categorically rule out the validity of these Western politicians' predictions? Around 20 years ago, many Western Kremlinologists ridiculed President Reagan's speech calling for the toppling of the Berlin Wall. These scholars had observed the Soviet Communist Party's stubborn survival through various crises and saw the Soviet Union, with its formidable defense force, as a permanent fixture among the world's superpowers.

But it is not Reagan whom history has mocked; the dramatic changes in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe in 1989–1991 left most of those Western analysts and experts scrambling for a new theoretical foothold.

As we now know, it was not external forces that defeated the former Soviet Union, but the Soviet Union itself; it was defeated by its own people, led, to a significant extent, by its apparently complacent elite. Why did these privileged classes contribute to the collapse of an empire that had brought them so much personal benefit? Because intellectuals and others of influence recognized where their long-term interests lay. The Soviet Union, like Communist China, was a fundamentally anti-intellectual regime, intent on monopolizing power, inherently unable to trust its cultural and economic elite.

Yes, the middle and upper classes can be temporarily bought off with comfortable apartments, the chance to make money, and significant advances in personal, nonpolitical freedoms, but eventually they will tire of their lack of representation in the power structure, the restrictions on freedom of expression, and their lack of control over their own fates and interests. After all, if your benefits derive largely from official whims, they can disappear just as suddenly and as arbitrarily. However comfortable their existence, those who live privileged lives under a totalitarian regime know that their castles are floating on air and that, lacking stable institutional support, they have no long-term future.

We have seen how many of China's wealthiest tycoons

have either been imprisoned or have fled into exile after being targeted by the Chinese authorities. Yang Bin, once listed second on *Forbes'* list<sup>4</sup> of Chinese business magnates, was arrested in 2002 on charges of tax evasion and was eventually sentenced to 18 years in prison.<sup>5</sup> Yang Rong, once third on the *Forbes* list, fled to the US in 2002 after being accused of economic crimes.<sup>6</sup> Former movie star Liu Xiaoqing, who made a fortune in real estate, ended up in Qincheng Prison,<sup>7</sup> and the enlightened Confucian merchant Sun Dawu has disappeared from public view after receiving a suspended three-year sentence for "illegally accepting deposits from members of the public."<sup>8</sup> Inclusion on the *Forbes* list is increasingly regarded as a kiss of death, and some entrepreneurs have reportedly quietly requested removal from the list.

What leads the Zhongnanhai authorities to sometimes turn against the "red capitalists" to whom they have previously extended a warm welcome? I suggest two main causes: (1) Beijing needs to confiscate the wealth of these tycoons in order to fill the huge gaps in the accounts of state-owned banks; (2) the government needs to acknowledge the grievances of China's underprivileged citizens regarding the growing gap between the rich and the poor.

The wealthy children of high-ranking officials, of course, manage to escape the noose, while even the most blameless private entrepreneurs can enjoy no feelings of security.

In an environment lacking constitutional guarantees of political and legal rights, and where bureaucratic whim can transform a "golden mountain" into a mirage, members of China's wealthy elite and middle class are forced to constantly reconsider their long-term interests. Under these conditions, political apathy cannot last forever, because only those with finely honed political intuition will be rewarded. We have seen that even a place with a reputation for entrenched political apathy such as Hong Kong has become more engaged in politics since reunification with the mainland. The reasons, I think, are self-evident.

## Are diplomatic achievements bringing China into the mainstream?

It should be acknowledged that Beijing has actually scored some significant diplomatic points in recent years. James Mann observes:

China's single-party state offers continuing hope not only to such largely isolated dictatorships as Burma, Zimbabwe, Syria and North Korea but also to some key US friends who themselves resist calls for democracy (say, Egypt or Pakistan) and to our neighbors of Cuba and Venezuela. . . . Repressive regimes elsewhere are increasingly looking to Beijing. And often the sympathy flows both ways: China has, in recent years, helped to prop up Zimbabwe, Sudan, Uzbekistan, Cuba and North Korea.

There is much truth in Mann's observations. Chinese civilization is well known for its focus on relationships and "face," its emphasis on the difference between "insider" and "outsider" and on the need to maintain appearances. Chinese officials nurtured in this atmosphere naturally develop exquisitely fine-tuned diplomatic skills. Zhou Enlai represented the pinnacle of China's achievement in this respect as he established and developed the CPC's basic diplomatic practices. China's economic boom has provided it with additional financial incentives to offer prospective allies, greatly enhancing Beijing's image of diplomatic prowess at a time when the United States has suffered an increasingly negative international reputation.

Does this diplomatic situation, however, really indicate that Beijing has created a new and attractive institutional model, or a new set of universal values to compete with those of democracy, freedom, human rights and the rule of law?

Let us be frank about exactly what image is created by the partnerships Beijing has formed with the regimes of countries such as Burma, Zimbabwe, Syria, North Korea, Sudan, Uzbekistan, Venezuela and Cuba. I think it is fair to say that the majority of Chinese people, particularly members of the elite, would be ashamed to acknowledge these "friendships." Is this really how Beijing plans to make China part of the "international community"?

---

Everyone is familiar with the saying “birds of a feather flock together,” and if China has any real aspirations on the world stage, it will need to extend its partnerships beyond rogue nations. In any case, while the United States is constantly criticized for acting like “the policeman of the world,” whenever a crisis develops, even China’s “little brothers,” North Korea and Vietnam, are more likely to turn to the US than to China for help.

In the final analysis, the fact remains that since the collapse of the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe during the years 1989–1991, China has become an island, albeit a very large one, in the vast international mainstream. And it remains a deviant, despite its smiling face, just as a monkey retains its basic nature even when dressed up in a smart little tuxedo.

### **A nation of slaves**

The crux of China’s problem is internal. As a veteran observer of China, James Mann is certainly aware of the recent incident that shocked people throughout China and the rest of the world with revelations that migrant workers (including many children and teenagers) had, through deception or abduction, been forced to work under horrific conditions at brick kilns in the backwaters of Shanxi and Hubei provinces. This was not a recent phenomenon, but one that had been ongoing for some years over a broad geographical expanse. This case, along with the June 4th massacre and the SARS incident, has exposed China’s profound systemic flaws and raises real questions about the fundamental nature of China’s rise in wealth and influence. It alerts us to the need for China to reshape its system through a constitutional order capable of genuinely protecting basic rights of life, liberty and property.

If the Chinese government is confident that its model is really so desirable, why does it feel compelled, as James Mann observes, to “maintain considerable control over information and the Internet”? Why has it built its massive “Golden Shield” to block the flow of information from the outside world? If the Chinese have developed a winning system, why have so many CPC leaders chosen to transfer their financial assets and send their sons and daughters to the supposedly “outmoded” United States and other Western countries?

Beijing’s presentation of its “successful model” as a preferable alternative to universal human values merely delays the inevitable moment of truth. At present, this model is constructed from two main elements: (1) China’s control of information and the packaging of its image to the outside world; (2) the lessons China has learned from the collapse of the former Soviet bloc and other totalitarian regimes, regarding the need to quickly plug every leak in the dike of social control, rapidly address every symptom of discord and nip all buds of unrest. The root systemic causes of popular discontent, meanwhile, are largely ignored. But a dike can be built only so high, and it requires constant upkeep. The danger remains that the floodtides of unrest in China will continue to rise faster than Beijing can build new levees, threatening a social deluge of Katrina-like proportions that will have lingering and far-reaching consequences.

What then of this lustrous model of wealth without liberty?

### **Notes**

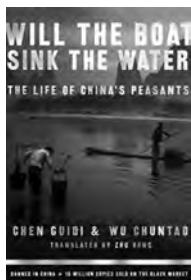
1. James Mann’s article can be read in full at <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/05/18/AR2007051801640.html>.
2. A full English translation of Hitler’s proclamation is posted at <http://www.humanitas-international.org/showcase/chronography/speeches/1933-02-01.html>.
3. Franklin Roosevelt’s “Four Freedoms,” outlined in a speech on January 6, 1941, were freedom of expression, freedom of worship, freedom from want and freedom from fear.
4. For the most recent *Forbes* list of “China’s 400 Richest,” see [http://www.forbes.com/lists/2006/74/biz\\_06china\\_The-400-Richest-Chinese\\_land.html](http://www.forbes.com/lists/2006/74/biz_06china_The-400-Richest-Chinese_land.html).
5. See “Yang Bin Convicted of Fraud, Sentenced to 18 Years,” *People’s Daily Online*, July 15, 2003, [english.peopledaily.com.cn/200307/14/eng20030714\\_120183.shtml](http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/200307/14/eng20030714_120183.shtml).
6. See “Yang Rong Sues Liaoning Government,” *Epoch Times*, August 19, 2003, <http://en.epochtimes.com/news/3-8-19/2607.html>.
7. See “Actress Arrested for Tax Evasion,” *Shanghai Star*, August 1, 2002, <http://app1.chinadaily.com.cn/star/2002/0801/bz9-1.html>.
8. See Qin Hui, “Two Tycoons, Two Fates: Zhou Zhengyi and Sun Dawu,” *China Rights Forum*, No. 1, 2004.

---

# BOOK REVIEWS

## Hope Floats

**A Review of *Will the Boat Sink the Water? The Life of China's Peasants***



**By Chen Guidi and Wu Chuntao  
(translated by Zhu Hong)  
Public Affairs Books, 2006  
229 pages, \$15.95**

**By Charlie McAteer**

Banning a book in China can achieve the contrary effects of suppressing its influence on the mainland while boosting its circulation in the West. But few contemporary books on China have had both the enduring domestic impact and the international reach of *Zhongguo Nongmin Diaocha*, published in English last year as *Will the Boat Sink the Water?* and released in paperback this spring. Originally published in 2003, the Chinese version sold 250,000 copies before it was banned by the Chinese authorities. But the book had already struck a deep chord throughout Chinese society, and through more unorthodox distribution methods, proceeded to sell more than eight million copies.

The authors, investigative journalists Chen Guidi and Wu Chuntao, were both born into peasant families, and the ease with which they relate to the struggles of peasant life emerges in these intimate stories of protest and courage. Set for the most part in Chen's native Anhui Province, these tales depict villagers challenging the burden of arbitrary taxes imposed by local governments rife with corruption. Zhu Hong's translation preserves Chen and Wu's captivating prose, which invites the reader to share in the hopes of these peasants, only to see them crushed by official arrogance and greed. Nearly four years after their original publication, these stories continue to resonate, thanks to the ever-expanding wealth gap between urban dwellers and rural peas-

ants and the social unrest reverberating throughout China's countryside.

In one horrifying account, a local leader in Zhang Village, Tangnan Township, seeks revenge against a group of local villagers trying to audit the books and develop procedures for government oversight. The village deputy chief, enraged over the suggestion that villagers should have any say in official business, gathers his sons to join him in a murderous rampage in which four of the volunteer auditors are slaughtered. The gruesome incident prompted the author of a *Southern Weekend* article to comment, "We have a government that has signed international conventions regarding human rights, and after all we are in a civilized age. How could we tolerate such rampant evil among us?"

Chen and Wu acknowledge attempts by the central and provincial governments to restrain local cadres. They find, however, that even when Beijing designs policies aimed at reducing the poverty gap, these directives are imbued with a mixed message that prioritizes economic growth at all cost. As *Will the Boat Sink the Water?* illustrates, township governments have stifled or flat out ignored these reforms to the detriment of the largest segment of China's population. This disconnect must be apparent to China's top officials, who, while banning Chen and Wu's book, have reportedly passed it among themselves as a must-read. These stories also provide a stunning counterweight to the "China rising" narrative that dominates Western media coverage. Out of the spotlight of the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, China's peasants continue to face limited opportunities and restrictions on personal mobility.

Chen and Wu came to the United States for the first time earlier this year and discussed their research at the PEN American Center's World Voices Festival in New York City. They promised to continue writing about China's villagers and farmers, perhaps focusing their next book on China's staggering environmental threats. If their new book generates the tremendous media cov-

---

erage and policy reforms that their first one did, they will be performing another invaluable service, not only to China's peasants, but to all who suffer the effects of China's environmental devastation.

After years of listening to stories of tragedy and perseverance, Chen and Wu remind us that, despite delirious odds, hope still flourishes in rural China.

## Portrait of a Survivor

### A Review of *Zhou Enlai: A Political Life*



**By Barbara Barnouin  
and Yu Changgen**  
**The Chinese University of Hong  
Kong, 2006**  
**397 pages, \$52**

### By Rene Wadlow

In early April 1976, during the Qingming festival, when the Chinese traditionally mourn their dead and sweep their graves, millions of people flocked to Tiananmen Square to pay tribute to Zhou Enlai as a symbol of reason and rectitude after the chaos of the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976). Yet as this first-class biography of Zhou points out, Zhou was not a model of rectitude but a survivor:

In China, it required toughness and ruthlessness to outlast, for more than half a century, the incessant infighting that was endemic in the Chinese Communist Party. To hold the post of prime minister for twenty-six years, working under the command of one of the most powerful, capricious, and distrustful emperors in Chinese history, called for adroitness, adaptability and the capacity for shaping his positions according to the political winds, notwithstanding his own convictions.

Zhou Enlai and Mao Zedong in many ways became a

single soul in two bodies after 1943, when the doctrine that “Mao Zedong Thought is Marxism-Leninism, Chinese Bolshevism and Chinese Communism” all at once was enshrined as the sacred creed and guiding principle in the conflicts against the Nationalist government of Chiang Kai-shek and the Japanese. Mao knew that he needed a skilled administrator and a subtle diplomat to meet with foreigners—skills he himself did not have. Although Mao eliminated all others who had worked with him during the early years, Zhou Enlai was with him until the end. Both men died the same year, 1976, as if the soul of one could not exist without the other. It was a rare blending of destinies.

Stalin, with whom both Zhou and Mao had to deal before coming to power, and again once the Communist government took power in China, had no such agent of his will. Stalin ruled alone, destroying one after the other all those around him. Mao always had a faithful echo of his views in Zhou, even though Mao changed these views often, driven by myths rather than an overall view of facts.

All the same, Mao and Zhou were very different individuals. Zhou came from a mandarin family, highly educated though not wealthy or powerful. As Zhou's father was often away seeking government work, Zhou was raised by his aunt in his grandfather's book-filled home. Zhou learned to read early and became familiar with classical Chinese thought. As there were many children in Zhou's extended family, the clan had its own family school, which stressed Confucian values and the concept of self-cultivation. In the Confucian tradition, the first task of a learned person is to establish order and harmony and to serve his country and its people. The other Confucian value Zhou learned young was the golden mean—the avoidance of excess as expressed in a Confucian maxim “*to go beyond is as wrong as to fall short.*”

Although Zhou was party to all the excesses of his government, the ideal of Confucian moderation stayed with him. Thus, there is a certain irony in the fact that late in his life, during the attacks on Confucian thought that were a key policy of the Cultural Revolution, Zhou's enemies, unable to attack him directly, associated his name with the Duke of Zhou, a famous civil servant of an early emperor.

After his home schooling concluded when he was 12, Zhou began attending a public school, living with his uncle in Mukden, then the capital of Manchuria. As Manchuria was a meeting point of cultures, his teachers introduced him to the intellectual debates of the time concerning patriotism, democracy and reforms influenced by Japan or the West. When his uncle was transferred to Tianjin, Zhou attended one of China's most progressive schools, the Nankai Middle School, influenced by English education in the form of strict discipline, sports and intellectual debate. Zhou became the editor of the school journal, embarking on a life-long interest in writing as well as drama.

Zhou next attended Tianjin University, but political debate and agitation had already begun to take over from his studies. This was the time of the "May Fourth movement" of 1919. Among the student leaders was Deng Yingchao, Zhou's future wife. Zhou's student politics did not prevent him from getting a government scholarship to study in France, and he left China in 1920, visiting England on the way.

In France, he became caught up in the debates in French intellectual circles concerning socialism and the Russian Revolution. Zhou came to feel that Communism was "the wave of the future," and with a few Chinese students in France organized the Chinese Youth Communist Party in Europe even before a Communist Party was officially organized in China. Among these student leaders in France was Deng Xiaoping, as well as others who would eventually become important leaders of the Party in China. Thus, in Europe Zhou established a network of relationships upon which he would draw for the rest of his life. In addition, Zhou's four years in France provided him with knowledge of the Western world that would later serve him in his diplomatic activities.

The subtitle of Barbara Barnouin and Yu Changgen's deeply researched book is unnecessary. Zhou had only a political life if one considers war making and espionage as politics by other means. From his return to China in

1924 until his death, Zhou was engaged in an endless series of adventures: military, diplomatic, administrative and internal party politics. He had no children, and although his wife stayed with him to the end, there must have been little time for family life. Zhou had many co-workers, but apparently few friends. Those he had he was willing to sacrifice when the political winds changed. His charming personality, intelligence and eloquence allowed him to maintain contact with a wide range of people, and it is as a diplomat dealing with the Russians, Americans, French, Central Europeans, Indians, Koreans and Vietnamese that he made his mark.

From 1943 on, Zhou Enlai played an important role in many crucial activities—the war against the Japanese, the Chinese civil war and the establishment of the Peoples' Republic, the war in Korea, the break with post-Stalin Russia, the rise of the Non-aligned Movement, the war in Vietnam, the reestablishment of relations with the United States, and the Cultural Revolution. Yet whoever Zhou Enlai was before 1943, his personality and individual goals left no evident mark on his activities afterwards. All that is evident is the administrator of Mao Zedong Thought.

Zhou often had doubts about Mao's aims and especially his methods, particularly during the Cultural Revolution. Yet every time that speaking out might have made a difference in favor of a more rational policy, Zhou Enlai was silent. He was willing to write elegant self-criticism of himself, and he was willing to turn away from colleagues in political trouble. As the authors observe: "Political survival clearly required Zhou to faithfully execute Mao's arbitrary instructions. For this he had not much choice; any defiance by him would have unavoidably resulted in his downfall, since an array of radicals was closely watching him and waiting for him to take a false step to oust him from power."

Thus on his tomb in those poster-size characters of the Cultural Revolution there should be only one word—survivor.

## TURNING RESEARCH INTO ACTION

HRIC launched ***State Secrets: China's Legal Labyrinth***, a report examining the Chinese government's complex and opaque system of state secrets. Executive director Sharon Hom's presentation of the report at a **Council on Foreign Relations** event hosted by professor Jerry Cohen in June drew a standing-room-only audience. The report garnered extensive media coverage in both English and Chinese-language press, and prompted a response from China's Foreign Ministry that resulted in rare exposure for HRIC in the mainland press. HRIC will continue to actively advance recommendations made in the report, the publication of which dovetails with the State Council's current review of the state secrets law and other ongoing domestic reforms.

HRIC attended the **5th session of the Human Rights Council** in Geneva, where law program officer Elisabeth Wickeri and law intern Vivian Shen shared the state secrets report in meetings with numerous UN special procedures, special rapporteurs, working groups and NGO representatives. The team also presented HRIC's research on issues ranging from environmental pollution to the rights of children and strategized over how to implement the report's recommendations.

To bring attention to cases of individuals detained in violation of international human rights and to promote an international independent review of those cases, HRIC regularly makes submissions to the **UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention** with factual information and analysis of international and Chinese law. Since 2002, HRIC has submitted a total of 43 cases to the Working Group, including those of journalist Shi Tao and pro-democracy activist **Hu Shigen**. In September 2007, HRIC is preparing to submit the cases of **Chen Shuqing, Chi Jianwei, Shuang Shuying** and **Zhang Jianhong**.

## KEEPING JUNE 4TH IN THE SPOTLIGHT

HRIC's Web sites received an upsurge in visitors around the eighteenth anniversary of the 1989 Tiananmen crackdown, and **HRIC's June 4th podcast series** of interviews with participants of the 1989 movement drew an increase in downloads, topping 79,000 since its launch in June 2006. The Chinese-language report ***Media Control in China***, written by He Qinglian, HRIC's senior researcher-in-residence, was downloaded more than 23,000 times during the same period. Meanwhile, the **June 4th Archive** ([www.64memo.org](http://www.64memo.org)), HRIC's Chinese-language Web site documenting the crackdown, received almost 3 million more hits than the previous peak one year ago.

HRIC staffed a table at the annual **Candlelight Vigil and Commemoration for June 4th at Victoria Park in Hong Kong**, which attracted an estimated 55,000 people. The annual event commemorates the 1989 Tiananmen crackdown and calls for official accountability. Staff from HRIC's Hong Kong office distributed 5,000 copies of a June 4th podcast booklet, which included quotes from interviews with participants and witnesses of the events of 1989.

HRIC senior researcher Bonny Ling gave a talk entitled "Looking at China's Environmental Protection from a Human Rights Perspective" at an event arranged by the **Hong Kong Alliance in Support of Patriotic Democratic Movements of China** in the run-up to the June 4th anniversary.

## CREATING USEFUL TOOLS AND RESOURCES

In June, HRIC unveiled its Action Bulletin, a new resource designed to complement international news coverage with concise analysis on current human rights issues, and suggestions on specific actions readers can take to address the problem. The first Action Bulletin dealt with the slave labor cases in Shanxi and Henan provinces. To join others in getting involved, visit <http://www.hrichina.org/public/contents/44173>.



A revised and updated version of He Qinglian's report on media control (mentioned above), circulated widely on Chinese Web sites since its original publication, has been translated into English and will be published by HRIC this fall as ***The Fog of Censorship: Media Control in China.***

## AMPLIFYING CHINESE VOICES THROUGH INTERNATIONAL MEDIA

HRIC's press strategies target specific audiences in China and abroad with updates on cases of individual human rights defenders, as well as critical analyses and perspectives on human rights issues, including preparations for the Olympics. In 14 of 16 press releases issued from June through August, HRIC advocated on behalf of mainland Chinese rights activists, including rights defender **Guo Feixiong**, rights defense lawyer **Zheng Enchong**, Christian activist **Hua Huiqi** and petitioners **Du Yangming** and **Shuang Shuying**.

## COMMUNICATING WITH POLICY MAKERS AND CORPORATE LEADERS

HRIC executive director Sharon Hom participated in a panel discussion entitled "**Hong Kong, Ten Years After**" at the **Heritage Foundation** in Washington, DC, in June. The event provided a significant opportunity for HRIC to share its research and insights with policy researchers and policy makers. Other panelists included representatives from the Committee for Policy Studies, the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office and Human Rights Watch.

HRIC EU liaison officer Isabella Nitschke and the International Campaign for Tibet informally briefed the **European Parliament Interparliamentary Delegation to China** in preparation for its visit to Tibet and China in late June. The briefing aimed to inform the delegation members of human rights concerns in Tibet and help them create a strategic roadmap to maximize the visit's impact. Another goal was to provide officials with important leverage points that would put political pressure on

Tibetan and Chinese authorities to advance reforms.

Information technology companies have been feeling the sting of criticism for acquiescing to censorship limitations in their business operations in China. HRIC has been participating in an effort to identify practical solutions to the human rights challenges faced by these companies. This **private multi-stakeholder process**, convened by **Business for Social Responsibility (BSR)** and the **Center for Democracy and Technology (CDT)**, involves companies, academics, investors and human rights organizations in drafting and adopting human rights guidelines for participating companies on human rights. HRIC executive director Sharon Hom participated in the June meeting in San Francisco with Hong Kong program director Roseann Rife.

## SHARING INFORMATION AND STRATEGIES

As the Chinese government continues to tighten control over domestic groups, especially in the run-up to major events such as the Party Congress and the Olympics, HRIC executive director Sharon Hom spoke at "**Defending Civil Society**," a meeting hosted by the **World Movement for Democracy** in Bangkok, Thailand, in July. The World Movement is a global network of democracy activists and policy makers initiated by the **National Endowment for Democracy**. Ms. Hom spoke about the strategies Chinese civil society organizations develop to cope with constricted legal and political space.

Civil society groups inside China, as well as those outside providing them with invaluable assistance, are facing unique challenges and advocacy opportunities in the lead-up to the 2008 Olympics. At the **Rights Now! Forum** organized by the **China Rights Network** in June, HRIC program officer Carol Wang conducted a workshop that explored this dynamic playing field with a spotlight on freedom of speech and Internet censorship. China Rights Network is a coalition of Toronto-based NGOs formed to address pressing human rights issues in China, as well as the bilateral relationship between Canada and China.

senior researcher Bonny Ling spoke to a group of MBA students led by an associate dean of the Babcock Graduate School of Management and a professor of international business of Wake Forest University in June. The group was passing through Hong Kong at the conclusion of their China study tour and wanted to learn more about the human rights situation in China from an advocacy perspective.

## HRIC ORGANIZATIONAL NOTES

Continually building staff capacity and program reach, this summer HRIC welcomed four new staff members to its office in New York, including an experienced mainland Chinese lawyer. T.R., a Leitner Fellow, practiced law for more than 12 years in China before coming to New York to pursue an LLM degree at Fordham Law School. Her practice areas included criminal defense and corporate litigation.

**Victoria Kwan**, program assistant, graduated from Columbia University in 2007 and previously worked as an intern at HRIC, Hong Kong Human Rights Monitor and Senator Hillary Clinton's 2006 re-election campaign. **Annie Cheng**, program assistant, graduated from Cornell University in 2007 and has worked as an intern for the Orange County Public Defenders and a corporate law firm.

In August, **Cynthia Wong** joined HRIC as the first Robert L. Bernstein Fellow in International Human Rights. She received her BS from the University of Texas and her JD from New York University in 2007. During law school, she worked as a law clerk at the Center for Democracy & Technology, as well as volunteering as a legal intern at HRIC. Prior to law school, Ms. Wong served as an Americorps\*VISTA volunteer at two non-profit organizations with a focus on technology and education.

This summer, HRIC's New York and Hong Kong offices were buzzing with a total of **9 energetic and gifted interns**: the New York crew included three law students from the University of Bern, the University of Virginia and the University of Michigan, and three undergraduates from National Taiwan University,

## HRIC SPEAKS

HRIC actively fields press inquiries and provides insights to international media. Recent press coverage has focused on preparations for and concerns surrounding the 2008 Beijing Olympics, as well as the publication of HRIC's state secrets report. Following are quotes by HRIC executive director Sharon Hom.

"This kind of vast surveillance and security system is like a hanging sword over the whole games."

"Will Olympic Security Chill Protests?" **TIME** magazine online edition, August 9, 2007, <http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1651206,00.html>

"On ideological control, it has been a clear policy of this particular regime to equate any assertion of cultural, religious or ethnic identity—in language, in rhetoric, in propaganda, in law—with terrorism."

**WNYC Public Radio's Leonard Lopate show, "Underreported: China's Uighurs" August 9, 2007. You can listen to or download the mp3 of the broadcast at:**<http://www.wnyc.org/shows/lopate/episodes/2007/08/09>

"The scope and comprehensiveness and retroactivity of this system is not really known. Environment issues, natural disasters, population statistics, health hazards—all of these can be swept in and retrospectively classified as state secrets."

"China's culture of secrecy 'deadly to society,'" **The Independent**, June 12, 2007, <http://news.independent.co.uk/world/asia/article2646263.ece>.

Princeton University and Columbia University, while the Hong Kong team included two undergraduate interns from Occidental College and the Chinese University of Hong Kong, and a graduate intern from the Sorbonne University.

HRIC also said goodbye to three staff members: **Tina Nguyen**, who will be pursuing a master's degree at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London in the fall, **Roberta Raine** who accepted a teaching position at Lingnan University in Hong Kong, and **Madeline Earp**, who plans to start working at the Committee to Protect Journalists this fall. We wish them all the best of luck!



IR2008

INCORPORATING  
RESPONSIBILITY  
•  
BEIJING 2008

# 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.

## IR2008 CAMPAIGN GOALS: 2008 AND BEYOND

Leveraging 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.

### WHAT WE'RE DOING NOW -

- Talking to governments, funders, and corporate leaders
- Keeping an eye on Olympics preparations
- Creating tools and resources
- Turning research into action
- Sharing information and strategies

## 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 IOC to release Beijing's host city contract!
- See this issue's TAKE ACTION section and visit HRIC's Web site, [www.hrichina.org](http://www.hrichina.org). Learn what you can do for human rights in China.

HUMAN RIGHTS IN CHINA  
350 Fifth Avenue, Suite 3311  
New York, NY 10118, USA  
address correction requested

NON-PROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
HANOVER, PA  
PERMIT NO. 4

## IN THIS ISSUE

It has become increasingly clear that there is no correlation between winning gold medals and improving ordinary people's livelihood.

—He Qinglian

What is the relevance of a "green Olympics" when individual environmental activists are made to pay such a bitter price for their efforts?

—Fan Baihua

One thing is clear in all this Olympics mess: the Chinese government cares what the world thinks. Knowing this, we must push them to change.

—Lhadon Tethong

## COMING UP IN THE NEXT ISSUE

The "Human" in Human Rights

Personal Sacrifice for the Public Good

The Contagion of Courage

Founded by Chinese students and scholars in March 1989, Human Rights in China (HRIC) is an international Chinese non-governmental organization with a mission to promote international human rights and advance the institutional protection of these rights in the People's Republic of China.