

CHINA REPORT

ECONOMY

Charged Protest:
Tesla owners' struggle
over data privacy

SOCIETY

Tiger Uproar:
Claws out over wild
animal conservation

CULTURE

The Unsinkable Six:
Titanic story of survival
and discrimination

HUNGER GAINS

Women undergoing
weight-loss surgeries for
cosmetic reasons find
the risks are greater than
advertised



World Tourism Organization

Around the world tourism grows every single year. Tourism creates job opportunities, empowers communities and improves livelihoods.

Tourism is part of the economic value chain, from infrastructure and communication to food production and transport.

Tourism goes far beyond tourism alone! Delivering on its huge potential is the task of the **World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)**, the UN's special agency to promote tourism's many benefits on societies and the economy.

unwto.org



Published by China News Service

Publisher: Chen Lujun

Executive Director:

Chen Lujun

Editor-in-Chief: Tan Hongwei

Deputy Editor-in-Chief: Zheng Zhonghai

Editorial Office

Copy Editors: Kathleen Naday, James Tiscione

Lead Writers: Yu Xiaodong, Li Jia

Senior Editor: Wang Yan

Editors: Xie Ying, Du Guodong, Yi Ziyi, Zhang Qingchen, Xu Ming

Consultant Editor: Chen Shirong

First Reader: Andrew McEwan

Address: 5th Floor, 12 Baiwanzhuang South Street, Xicheng District, Beijing, China

Post Code: 100037

Tel: 86-10-88395566

Fax: 86-10-88388045

Email: audience@chinareport.co.uk

Website: www.ChinaReport.co.uk

Art Department

Art Director: Wu Shangwen

Art Editor/Designer: Zhang Dawei

Marketing/Advertising/Subscription

EMEA Office

Foremost 4 Media

Duty Editor: Sophie Lang

Email: sophie@foremost4.media

Tel: +44 20 7224 8812

Website: foremost4.media

Marketing Office in China

Director: Wang Chenbo

Account Manager: Ren Jie

Tel: 86-10-88388027

Circulation Manager: Yu Lina

Tel: 86-10-88311834

London Office: Zhang Ping

New York Office: Ma Delin, Liao Pan

Washington Office: Chen Mengtong, Sha Handing

Los Angeles Office: Zhang Shuo

San Francisco Office: Liu Guanguan

Houston Office: Zeng Jingning

Tokyo Office: Lu Shaowei

Paris Office: Li Yang

Bangkok Office: Wang Guan

Kuala Lumpur Office: Chen Yue

Moscow Office: Wang Xiuju

Manila Office: Guan Xiangdong

Berlin Office: Peng Dawei

Sydney Office: Tao Shelan

Brussels Office: Du Yongjian

Astana Office: Wen Longjie

Rio de Janeiro Office: Wang Xi

Johannesburg Office: Song Fangcan

Jakarta Office: Lin Yongchuan

Kathmandu Office: Zhang Chenyi

Legal Advisor: Allen Wu

ISSN 2053-0463

China needs to begin efforts today to achieve carbon neutrality by 2060

In April, during the virtual Leaders Summit on Climate attended by 40 world leaders, Chinese President Xi Jinping reiterated China's pledge to peak its emissions before 2030 and achieve carbon neutrality by 2060. Earlier in March, China also set an 18 percent reduction target for CO₂ intensity and a 13.5 percent cut in energy intensity (a measure of energy use inefficiency) from 2021 to 2025. But to achieve the goal of carbon neutrality by 2060, more drastic actions are required.

Based on current pledges from carbon peaking to carbon neutrality, it will take the European Union and the US 70 years and 45 years respectively, while China will need to transition in just 30 years. To achieve that, China needs a systemic revolution in its economy.

Some provincial governments and agencies have already taken action. For example, Shandong provincial government released an action plan to phase out or integrate the production of iron and steel, coal-fired power generation and the coking industry.

In Shanghai, the government vowed to peak emissions five years ahead of the national schedule of 2030. Regulatory agencies in the iron and steel industry also pledged to peak emissions by 2025.

But many local governments and authorities continue to adopt a passive or opportunistic attitude. Some even view the 10 years until 2030 as a window of opportunity to maximise carbon emissions in their jurisdiction.

China's leadership must show strong political will to tackle the climate crisis. To achieve carbon neutrality, the power industry, the largest carbon emitter that accounts for 40 percent of China's total emissions, must be overhauled. Energy-intensive sectors, including iron and steel, cement, chemicals and metals will have to undergo a major transfor-

mation. Along with the manufacturing sector, they are responsible for about 45 percent of China's total national emissions.

It is estimated that between 2020 and 2050, the efforts to achieve carbon neutrality will require investment of 100 trillion yuan (US\$15.4t). But rather than an economic burden, the investment will serve as a new source of economic growth in the following decades, presenting an opportunity to upgrade China's economy into one that is eco-friendly and more efficient.

It is estimated that between 2020 and 2050, the efforts to achieve carbon neutrality will require investment of 100 trillion yuan. But rather than an economic burden, the investment will serve as a new source of economic growth in the following decades, presenting an opportunity to upgrade China's economy into one that is eco-friendly and more efficient

According to an analysis by Boston Consulting Group, the expenditure can contribute 2-3 percent to China's GDP in the next 30 years. The International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) estimates that green industries could boost China's employment by about 0.3 percent.

Other than direct benefits, the application of smart technology in markets such as new energy vehicles will boost the overall technological advances of the economy. A carbon-neutral

economy will also help address the problems of pollution and natural disasters, contributing to the establishment of the ecological civilisation that is championed by the Chinese leadership.

But making all this possible will take the efforts of the entire nation, including governments at all levels, businesses and the public. China needs to redouble its efforts right now. To clarify how China can achieve its path to carbon neutrality, it could break down its climate targets to provide each sector with a detailed blueprint so it can hold stakeholders accountable.

For China, achieving carbon neutrality will be a challenge of the century, but it can also be an opportunity of the century. China should start taking action as soon as possible. ★

HARD TO STOMACH

Surgeons are taking advantage of societal pressures to promote often unnecessary bariatric procedures



P16

PHOTO BY CFP

EDITORIAL

- 01 China needs to begin efforts today to achieve carbon neutrality by 2060

INTERNATIONAL

- 10 Climate Change:
Cooling the Heated Rhetoric

POLITICS

- 13 Traffic Cameras:
For Profit Surveillance



P32

COVER STORY

- 16 **Bariatric Surgery:**
Scaled-up Surgery/Gut Reactions

SOCIETY

- 26 Crime:
Notes from the Underground
- 29 Lab Animals:
Monkey Wrench



P40



32 Tiger Conservation:
Man vs Wild

PROFILE
35 Architecture:
Urban Nature
40 Music:
Steps of the Devil

ECONOMY
43 Electric Vehicles:
Tesla's Trials and Errors
46 Cryptocurrency:
More Sides to the Coin

HISTORY
50 Ancient Global Supply Chain:
Trade Winds

CULTURE
52 Documentary:
Surviving Twice

VISUAL REPORT
56 **Seeing in the Dark**

OUTSIDE IN
60 Nanjing:
Ruling Legacy
04 **MEDIA FOCUS**
05 **WHAT THEY SAY**
06 **NEWS BRIEF**
08 **NETIZEN WATCH**
49 **CHINA BY NUMBERS**
62 **ESSAY**
64 **FLAVOUR OF THE MONTH/REAL CHINESE**

P10



ChinaReport, Chinese Edition

May 3, 2021

Debating Cancer Treatment



The diagnosis and treatment of cancers have become increasingly precise, which has altered the understanding of this often fatal illness. Patients' phobia about the disease has largely been alleviated. Many patients are living out their lives with long-term and expensive treatment. The information asymmetry between doctors and cancer patients, coupled with the arbitrariness of treatment methods have recently sparked disputes. Allegations of medical malpractice and professional ethics violations by a Shanghai-based doctor went viral after Dr Zhang Yu, a whistleblower in Beijing, claimed that improper treatment for cancer patients was widespread. An investigation by the National Health Commission later showed there were no serious violations of medical regulations, but this failed to dispel public doubts. Zhang has been urging the need for a public debate with medical experts in front of media. At a time when the demands of medical science are growing, there is an urgent need for an effective and scientific supervision mechanism targeting the practices of medical workers, particularly in the area of cancer treatment.

Caixin Weekly

April 12, 2021

Auto Sector Goes Digital



Chinese tech giant Xiaomi announced in March that it would set up a wholly owned electric vehicle subsidiary with investment of up to US\$10 billion in the next decade. Lei Jun, founder of the company, will serve as CEO of the smart vehicle business. Xiaomi's foray into the electric vehicle (EV) business is expected to fuel competition in the auto sector after it leverages its research capacity and influence into the new area. Xiaomi's new venture comes as a growing number of tech companies including Baidu and Huawei are staking their own claims in the auto industry, trying to build an AI-based smart vehicle ecosystem and make EVs more autonomous and interconnected. Xiaomi's cash reserves hit 108 billion yuan (US\$16.7b) by late 2020, enough to cope with potential risks. It remains unclear whether the company can afford the capital and time needed for the cash-intensive smart car business at a time when several tech companies have encountered severe financial difficulties after venturing into the industry.

Insight China

May 3, 2021

Skilled Worker Shortage

According to the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security, China had 200 million skilled workers, including 50 million highly skilled personnel, at the end of 2020. Skilled workers, however, account for only 26 percent of the total workforce. From the perspective of employment and economic development, China is still short of skilled workers in comparison with developed countries. In recent years, China has aimed to promote high quality development, adjust its economic structure and boost industrial transformation, and the need for a highly skilled workforce has become increasingly urgent. Nowadays, most high school students prefer to enter universities and few are willing to attend vocational schools. It is urgent to increase the status of skilled workers, improve the working environment and optimise career advancement.



Xinmin Weekly

April 26, 2021

Meningitis Concerns



Meningitis, a disease rarely heard of nowadays in China, claimed the lives of 164,000 people in 1967 when more than 3 million people were affected. From 1950 to 1979, 8.77 million people, many children below the age of 5, were diagnosed with meningitis. Some 570,000 died of the disease. In the 1980s, meningitis vaccines were widely used across the country and the disease faded away. Disease control experts caution that meningitis is under effective control, but in recent years a growing number of patients have been diagnosed, and there is a long way to go before the disease is fully eradicated.

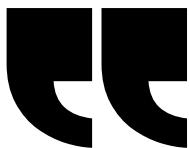
Oriental Outlook

April 6, 2021

Birthing a Baby Crisis



Statistics from the Ministry of Public Security showed that the number of newborns recorded in the country's household registration system dropped by 15 percent in 2020. Since 2013, the annual number of marriage registrations in the Chinese mainland began to decline and the proportion of women at childbearing age also shrank. Young couples are increasingly unwilling to have children even though family planning rules were relaxed in 2016, allowing couples to have two children. More and more Chinese women are independent and put their careers first. In addition, the surging expenses of raising a child have greatly damped the enthusiasm for having children. It is critical to create a maternity-friendly social and cultural environment to encourage couples to have children. The government should provide more support for parents, including quality education, postnatal care and social insurance.



WHAT THEY SAY

"I've walked a long road and suffered a lot to present this thesis to you. My 22-year scholastic journey was a slog and full of difficulties. Like a dream, it's as if I set out from home yesterday."

Huang Guoping, a PhD in computer science at the Chinese Academy of Sciences in Beijing, drawing attention online for describing his humble beginnings in a small mountain village in the acknowledgments section of his thesis



ILLUSTRATION BY XIAO ZHENDUO



"There are some unrealistic illusions and exaggerations about the role of the digital yuan. It's actually just a kind of improved currency and is not ready for international use."

Economist **Song Hongbing** in a Weibo post from April 28



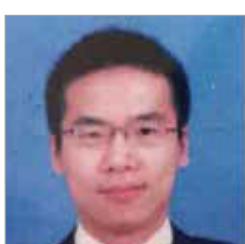
"There is a firm belief among many people that we have to choose between reducing carbon emissions and economic development... We have to replace such binary thinking with new ideas about mutual promotion... Moving from high emissions to zero emissions will promote economic growth rather than curb it."

Jin Liqun, president of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, at the 2021 Boao Forum for Asia held in South China's Hainan Province from April 18 to 21



"China has turned the doctorate into a bureaucrat-led officialdom. Schools are not allowed to train PhDs, appoint a doctoral supervisor or establish a doctoral-level discipline without approval from the Ministry of Education. It's ridiculous."

Xu Chenggang, a professor at the Cheung Kong Graduate School of Business in Beijing, in a recent interview with news portal *The Paper*'s social media account Scholar



"I pled with the National Health Commission (NHC) to face up to the problem that many areas of misconduct in the healthcare field are caused by a lack of supervision, and that misconduct has caused a great many patients to suffer unnecessary pain and even lose their lives."

Zhang Yu, an oncologist at Peking University Third Hospital, in an open letter posted to Zhihu on May 5, where he accused some of his peers of abusing expensive but ineffective and even unapproved cancer drugs and called on the NHC to investigate

"Making data useful rather than harmful to urban residents is a very big issue in our country."

He Yanling, a professor of public management at the Renmin University of China, appealing for a supervision system for data usage at an urban governance forum held in Fuzhou, Fujian Province on April 26

"In an era when the income gap keeps widening, buildings that blatantly show off wealth will be called 'ugly' no matter how elaborately they are designed."

Zhou Rong, an associate professor at the Tsinghua University School of Architecture, in an interview with *ChinaReport* Chinese Edition, saying that 'ugly' is a social concept whose appraisal should be based on public opinion

"The window for China's last baby boom will close in 2032. If we miss it, China's national fate and even the world's structure will change. We do not have a lot of time [to encourage birth]."

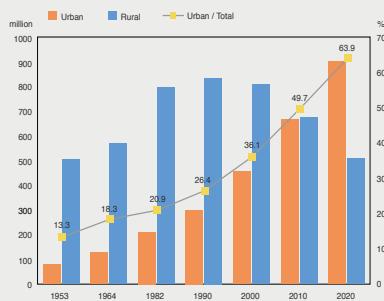
Shi Chencheng, a commentator with Kungfu Finance, a social media account engaged in financial news analysis, warning against China's sharp decline in the birth rate

"China has completed the greatest poverty reduction programme in human history, while homelessness in the West is at record levels. In last 40 years, China bomb nobody or isn't sanctioning any countries to death - Why is the EU allowing the US to drag us into a confrontation with China?"

Mick Wallace, a member of the European Parliament from Ireland, in a tweet from May 5



Top Story **Census Records Rise in Mainland Population to 1.412 Billion**



Source: National Bureau of Statistics

China's National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) released the seventh population census on May 11, which revealed the Chinese mainland is now home to more than 1.412 billion people, up from 1.34 billion recorded in the sixth census in 2010, a rise of 5.38 percent and around 72 million people.

The census, conducted in 2020, covers 31 mainland provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions. The ethnic breakdown shows the Han group accounting for 91.1 percent and other ethnic groups for 8.89 percent. The Han group increased by 4.93 percent to 1.29 billion, and other ethnic groups by 10.26 percent to 125.5 million on 2010 figures.

The seventh census still shows a male-female imbalance, with males at 51.24 percent and females at 48.76 percent, with a sex ratio of 105.1 males to 100 females, slightly lower

than in 2010. There are around 34 million more males than females.

Breaking down the figures by age, there were 253.4 million children aged 14 and under, 17.95 percent of the total, 1.35 percent higher than that in 2010. Senior citizens aged 60 and over accounted for 18.7 percent, 5.44 percent more than that in 2010, totalling 264.02 million. Those aged between 16 and 59 years old amounted to 894.38 million, 63.35 percent of the total, indicating that China still has a large working-age population. The average age remained steady at 38.8 years old.

Continuing urbanisation has led to an increase in the urban population to 63.89 percent of the total, 14.21 percent more than that in 2010, with 901.99 million people living in cities and towns. The rural population, 36.11 percent of the whole, dropped to 509.79 million, a decrease of 164.36 million. Meanwhile, those staying in a different city where they have registered for permanent residence (*bukou*) increased by 69.73 percent to 376 million compared to 2010.

After the Chinese mainland relaxed its family planning policy in 2016, allowing couples to have a second child, 2016 and 2017 saw an uplift in the birth rate, with 18 million births in 2016, 2 million more than before the ban was lifted, and 17 million in

2017. In 2017, second children accounted for more than 50 percent of total new births that year. The number of second births then declined, but it was still over 40 percent.

However, the fertility rate of mainland women of child-bearing age has dropped to 1.3, a relatively low level. NBS director Ning Jizhe attributed the drop to the decrease in the number of women of childbearing age and the weakening influence of the second child policy, plus people's worries over the uncertainties brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic.

"The fertility level is influenced by [government] policies as well as economic, social and cultural elements," Ning told the Xinhua News Agency, adding that societal and economic factors were becoming more influential. "As people's mindset on fertility is changing along with industrialisation and modernisation, the low fertility rate will be as big a challenge for China as it is for developed Western countries," he said.

Given China's big population base, Ning predicted that the population will continue to increase, but at a lower pace in the near future, although he could not give a specific time when the population will peak and then decline. The number of newborns recorded is decreasing annually, falling to 10.03 million in 2020, 7.83 million less than in 2016.

Medical

WHO Approves Sinopharm Shot for Emergency Use

The World Health Organisation (WHO) announced on May 7 that it will put the Covid-19 vaccine produced by the Beijing Institute of Biological Products, commonly referred to as the Sinopharm (Beijing) vaccine, onto the Emergency Use Listing, the first China-made vaccine to be so authorised by the WHO.

According to Director-general Tedros Ghebreyesus, the WHO has approved six Covid-19 vaccines for emergency listing, which the WHO finds safe and effective for general use.

An inactivated vaccine, the Sinopharm Beijing's vaccine has an efficacy of nearly 80 percent

in preventing mild symptoms, and nearly 100 percent in preventing severe disease and death, according to Shao Yiming, a researcher at the Chinese Centre for Disease Control and Prevention and a consultant on the WHO's vaccine research and development commission. Phase III clinical trials were conducted in several overseas countries.

Shao told China Central Television (CCTV) that the WHO approval helps China to fulfil its promise to make Chinese Covid-19 vaccines a global public good and thus assist pandemic control in developing countries.



According to Shao, China has exported the Sinopharm vaccine to more than 60 countries and another vaccine produced by Sinovac Biotech to 30 countries.

Trade

First International Consumer Products Expo Held in Hainan

The first China International Consumer Products Expo was held in Haikou, capital of Hainan Province, from May 7 to 10, attracting 1,505 enterprises from 70 countries.

The Hainan expo, according to Chinese President Xi Jinping's congratulatory letter, was designed to provide a platform to display and exchange the world's high-quality consumer products, which Xi believes is good for global economic recovery as well as cooperation between China and other countries and regions.

Covering around 80,000 square metres, the expo hall accommodated international brands showcasing 83 new product releases and more than 100 promotional activities. Displays ranged from clothing, handbags and cosmetics to food products, beverages, alcohol and jewellery.

The expo set up livestreaming rooms which attracted over 1.6 million viewers, with the resulting transaction volume hitting 68 million yuan (US\$10m).

Hainan has been transforming into a free trade zone since 2018, which means the island province has been granted more privileges in opening-up. Analysts said the expo is a good chance for Hainan to show off its open and friendly business environment to potential foreign investors.



Investment

China-EU Investment Deal in Limbo

When is a deal not a deal? European Union and Chinese leaders had agreed on the EU-China Comprehensive Agreement on Investment (CAI) in December 2020 (see our report in Issue 93 February 2021) but now a spanner is in the works.

The transnational Parliament that represents member states has to consent to what could still become the most ambitious trade compact China has ever made. News of the hold-up came from the EU's administrative body, the Commission, with Executive Vice President Valdis Dombrovskis indicating that the current political climate was "not conducive to the ratification of the agreement." There is still, however, political heft at the very top for December's agreement. German Chancellor Angela Merkel argued strongly against abandonment, saying that the CAI was "a very important initiative that opens up greater reciprocity in access to our reciprocal markets."

Beijing is similarly keen to get the sign-off done. "China is willing to communicate and cooperate with [the] EU to promote the realisation of the deal as early as possible, to benefit people from both sides and to positively signal to the international community that China supports maintaining an open economy," Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said.

Diplomacy

UK Ambassador to Beijing Champions Stronger Ties

Caroline Wilson, UK ambassador to China, is making her mark. She has now become the Champion of Generation UK: China Network, a British Council initiative that gives Brits with China experience the means to stay in touch and encourages newly minted Sinophiles to take the China challenge.

"We are at an important moment in UK-China relations. Leaving the EU signifies a change in the way Britain will engage on the world stage. Much of our work now is about laying foundations for the future; for government, for business, for the whole of the UK to enjoy a strong and prosperous relationship with China," the ambassador said. She is supported by "Leading Lights" who are encouraging a new generation to become China-literate, whose role includes attending network events as guests, keynote speakers or panellists. A glance at the social networking site LinkedIn shows over 4,000 members in its Generation UK: China Network group. Once the pandemic eases and opportunities open up again to work, study and volunteer in China, further expansion of this dynamic and future-focused community will be inevitable.

Tourism

Labour Day Holiday Sees 230 Million Visits

According to China's Ministry of Culture and Tourism (MCT), scenic spots on the Chinese mainland received 230 million visits during the Labour Day holiday from May 1 to May 5, 119.7 percent more than in the same period of 2020.

Although the 2021 Labour Day holiday was two days longer than in 2020, the growth, according to analysts, benefited more from people's desire to travel which was curbed by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Data from Trip.com, a travel platform, showed that the number of bookings during the Labour Day holiday grew by 270 percent compared to that in the same period of last year, and by 30 percent compared to that in 2019. Meanwhile, the number of hotel bookings in the three days before the holiday increased by 70 percent compared to that in 2019.

Analysts warned that it does not mean a full recovery of the tourism industry, as revenue reached 113.2 billion yuan (US\$16.6b), only 77 percent of that before the Covid-19 pandemic even when that holiday was shorter.



Court Repeatedly Rejects Divorce Despite Domestic Abuse

A controversial case involving a woman whose divorce filings were repeatedly rejected despite her claims of abuse has brought the judicial system's handling of domestic violence under scrutiny. Ning Shunhua of Hunan Province was finally granted a divorce from her husband on April 30 amid public outcry over local courts turning her down four times in five years. According to media reports, Ning first filed for divorce in 2016, accusing her husband of excessive gambling. The court rejected her case, saying Ning had no evidence to prove the relationship was irreconcilable. Afterward, Ning said her husband was abusive, and threatened to kill her and her relatives if she insisted on the divorce. However, the courts rejected Ning's next three filings for the sake of preserving "family and social harmony," media reported. Netizens were shocked by the court rulings, with some offering personal stories of local law enforcement dismissing domestic abuse as family disputes. Many have called on authorities to raise public awareness of China's domestic violence law, which went into effect in 2016.



Reality Show Suspended for Milking Support from Fans

Armies of fans showed support for their favourite celebrities by buying milk – and then dumping it. Netizens were left boiling after viewers of vote-in reality show *Youth With You* reportedly purchased large quantities of Mengniu-brand milk, the show's sponsor, solely for the promotional QR codes printed on the bottle caps that allowed them to cast votes for their favourite star. Now in its third season on streaming platform iQIYI, the show has viewers vote for nine of around 100 contestants to form a pop super group. Netizens criticised the waste and accused iQIYI and Mengniu for encouraging the behaviour. Authorities have since suspended the reality show and Mengniu has issued an apology and promised to recall products packaged for the promotion. Following the news, China's cyberspace administration published a statement pledging to launch a campaign against any act that encourages the worship of celebrities.

Nursing Home Violence Prompts Safety Reforms

A 79-year-old man in a Henan Province nursing home was allegedly beaten to death by his 86-year-old roommate following an argument over the TV volume. During the police investigation, relatives of both men complained to local officers about the nursing home's poor conditions, sanitation and meals despite the 2,000 yuan (US\$294.1) monthly fees. China has seen an increase in violence and accidents at nursing homes in recent years. To make the safety of residents a top priority, authorities have worked out the country's first safety and security standards for elder care which will roll out on January 1, 2022.

School Investigated for 'Chicks Hatched from Boiled Eggs' Claim

A vocational school headteacher in Central China has egg on her face after it was reported she claimed to have led her students to hatch boiled eggs using their minds. In an article published in the June 2020 issue of science journal *Pictorial Geography*, Guo Ping, headteacher at Chunlin Education in Zhengzhou, Henan Province, claimed she taught a group of "special students" a "mental energy transmission" technique that turned 40 boiled eggs into raw ones, from which live chicks hatched. Media let loose on the paper, with outlets such as the Xinhua News Agency criticising Guo and co-author Bai Weiyun for blatantly deceiving the public and spreading pseudoscience. The journal has since suspended publication and local human resources authorities are investigating the school and authors. Some on social media said that training schools looking to make a quick buck with hyped claims seek out willing publications to give them credibility.

Poll the People

The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau under the China Banking and Insurance Regulatory Commission recently issued a warning for those considering financial products endorsed by celebrities. While some online said that such endorsements could lead adoring fans to make irresponsible investments, others argued that celebs have the right to endorse any product as long as they do not violate the law.

Do you think celebrities should be banned from endorsing financial products?

Yes, because they could lead fans to make risky investments 64.2%

No, we should not ban legal advertising 13.5%

Celebrities should bear part of the risk of such products so they are more cautious when choosing endorsements 20.7%

Not sure 1.6%

Source: ChinaReport Chinese Edition

Most Circulated Post



Reposted 4,462,544 times by May 10

"I believe I can be what I want to be. What I become is what China becomes."



Party newspaper the *People's Daily* posted a video about the unremitting efforts and sacrifices of generations of Chinese youth in the founding and development of the People's Republic of China to mark Youth Day on May 4. Originally started to honour those who participated in the 1919 May Fourth Movement, the holiday also encourages young people ages 14 and older to follow in their footsteps and bravely strive for their goals and dreams. The video garnered more than 4.4 million reposts.



公众号：英语译读

TOP FIVE SEARCH QUERIES

On Baidu 百度 for the week ending May 16

1. China Suspends Economic Talks with Australia 421,085

China's National Development and Reform Commission announced on May 6 that the country will "indefinitely" suspend all activities under the China-Australia Strategic Economic Dialogue, a diplomatic mechanism regularly held since 2014.

2. Chinese Telecom Firms to be Delisted from NYSE 419,080

China Mobile, China Unicorn and China Telecom will be delisted from the New York Stock Exchange following a failed round of appeals, Reuters reported. The move reflects a ban on American investment in Chinese enterprises with ties to the country's military instated by former US President Donald Trump.

3. Chinese Mainland Home to 1.412 Billion People 401,385

According to China's seventh population census released on May 11, the Chinese mainland has a population of 1.412 billion, 5.38 percent more than recorded in its sixth population census in 2010.

4. Bill, Melinda Gates Divorce 374,896

Bill Gates and his wife Melinda announced on May 4 that they will end their marriage of 27 years.

5. Chinese Covid-19 Vaccine Gets WHO Emergency Approval 288,230

The World Health Organisation (WHO) announced on May 7 that it had listed the China-produced Sinopharm Covid-19 vaccine for emergency use

TOP BLOGGER PROFILE

Takeuchi Ryo

Followers: 4,522,692 by May 11

Japanese director Takeuchi Ryo has once again drawn netizen attention for his documentary *The Mountain Beyond* about the transformation of cliffside villages in the Daliang Mountain region of Sichuan Province through China's poverty alleviation campaign. "I was curious about the present-day Daliang area and also a little bit suspicious about the poverty alleviation campaign there," he posted on Sina Weibo. Ryo first visited the area a decade earlier while shooting another documentary about China, and said the region's poverty left a lasting impression on him. Ten years later, Ryo returned to find stark changes. Villagers who previously lived on the edge of sheer cliffs had moved into housing built by the local government, while vocational training was provided to members of ethnic groups. The government also brought in teachers from cities to the mountainous area. China is a running subject in Ryo's documentaries. He became known among Chinese audiences in 2020 for his documentaries about how the people of Nanjing, Jiangsu Province and Wuhan, Hubei Province fought the Covid-19 pandemic. "I am creating balance," he told news portal *The Paper*. "In the eyes of many Japanese, China is purely bad, and I want to show them the good side of China."



WHAT'S HOT? WHAT'S NOT?



Cuddly Memorials

A craftswoman got a flood of orders after a video of her making a lifelike figurine of a customer's recently departed pet in wool felt went viral online. Known by her online name "Miaoxianxian," the woman told media her wool felt dolls help grieving pet owners cope with their loss. To sharpen her skills, Miaoxianxian references books on animal anatomy and behaviour. Sixty percent of her orders come from overseas.



Do Not Feed the Zoo Animals!

Shanghai Zoo launched a campaign in April asking visitors to stop feeding its animals because it is making them sick. An unnamed zoo employee told media that one of the zoo's older orangutans has developed high blood pressure and other ailments from years of visitors feeding it sugary snacks. Visitors feeding animals has been a recurring problem at the zoo. In 2001, a 6-year-old deer that died was found to have 3.5 kilograms of plastic bags in its stomach. In 2005, a colobus monkey was injured by a kebab skewer. The zoo called on the public not to disrupt the animals' healthy diets with potentially harmful foods.



PhD by His Bootstraps

Huang Guoping, a computer science PhD at the Chinese Academy of Sciences in Beijing, touched hearts online with his inspiring story of struggle and success. In the acknowledgements section of his thesis, which went viral, Huang described how he left his poor mountainous hometown and struggled to get into one of the nation's most prestigious schools. Huang's mother left when he was 12 years old. His father, then his grandmother who took care of him, passed away. He was so poor that he had to wear rags and could not afford tuition. But Huang kept studying, believing that an education would change his fate. Netizens praised Huang for working hard to determine his own fate.



Abuse Over Unfinished Homework

A single mother in Jiangsu Province lost custody of her 12-year-old daughter after physically abusing her for not studying. According to the court, the victim's grandmother pressed domestic abuse charges, claiming her daughter had repeatedly beaten the child and burned her hand with a hot shovel. The child has been placed in her grandmother's custody. Netizens said fierce scholastic competition has pushed some parents over the edge and called on authorities to take drastic measures.

Climate Change

Cooling the Heated Rhetoric

Amid intensifying strategic competition, the US and China are seeking common ground on climate change

By Yu Xiaodong

After months of mutual antagonism with US President Joe Biden largely continuing the anti-China agenda of the previous Trump administration, the US and China seem to have finally found one issue where they can work with each other.

On April 15 and 16, US Special Presidential Envoy for Climate John Kerry visited China, the first senior US official from the new administration to do so. In the joint statement issued after the visit, the US and China said they are committed to cooperating on the pressing issue of climate change.

Biden also invited Chinese President Xi Jinping, one of 40 global leaders, to attend the US-organised Leaders Summit on Climate held virtually on April 22 and 23. During the meeting, the US announced it would adopt a new nationally determined contribution (NDC) for the US which aims to achieve a 50-52 percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 compared to 2005 levels. It marked the US' formal re-entry to the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, which former president Donald Trump pulled the US out of on his first day in office.

Biden pledged to create a carbon emission-free power sector by 2035 and achieve a net zero emission economy no later than 2050.

In his speech at the virtual summit, Xi reiterated China's pledge made in September 2020 that it will reach peak emissions before 2030 and achieve carbon neutrality by 2060.

On China's controversial levels of coal consumption, Xi said that China will hit peak coal consumption before 2025.

"China will strictly control coal-fired power generation projects and strictly limit the increase in coal consumption over the 14th Five-Year Plan period [2021-2025] and phase it down in the 15th Five-Year Plan period [2026-2030]," Xi said.

Xi also said that "China welcomes

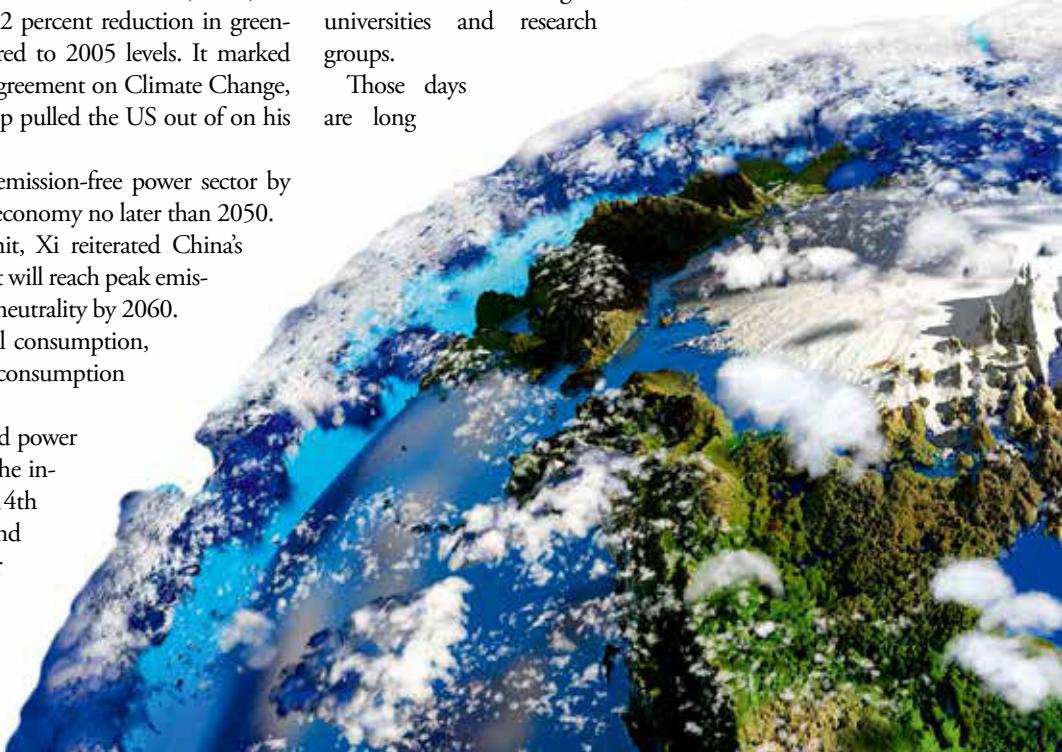
the US return to the multilateral climate governance process," and that China looks forward to working with the US to jointly advance global environmental governance.

The virtual meeting was the first between the two leaders since Biden took office on January 20, and it sparked a round of much-needed optimism about the prospect of cooperation between the world's two largest economies and carbon emitters.

Source of Conflict?

The US and China previously had close ties on climate change. During the Obama administration, the two governments launched a climate dialogue, and cooperation initiatives were established between local governments, universities and research groups.

Those days
are long



gone. With bilateral ties at their worst in decades, climate issues are inevitably intertwined with the broad diplomatic relationship between the two countries. While both the US and China have been trying to emphasise the importance of cooperation, climate issues can be a source of conflict as well.

As the Biden administration uses competition with China as a key message in promoting its policies, climate change is apparently no exception. On April 20, just two days ahead of the virtual climate summit, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken made clear that the climate issue is an integral part of a strategic competition with China that the US has to win.

"If we don't catch up, America will miss the chance to shape the world's climate future in a way that reflects our interests and values, and we'll lose out on countless jobs for the American people," Blinken said.

Blinken also said that the Biden administration will not let other countries "get away with bad practices such as human rights abuses" even if they are making progress on curbing climate change, obviously referring to China.

Then on April 22, almost the same day as top leaders from the two countries were holding talks in the virtual climate summit, the US Congress stepped up bipartisan efforts to counter China by pushing three bills, including the US Strategic Competition Act of 2021 and two Xinjiang-related bills.

China was hardly likely to ignore these words and actions. The next day on April 23, in the virtual dialogue with the US Council on Foreign Relations, Wang Yi, China's State Councilor and Foreign Minister, warned that the US has adopted the wrong approach to China.

"To be frank, the US, in shaping its China policy, has not stepped out of the shadow of the previous administration, has not gotten over its misperception of China, and has not found the right way to engage with China," he said.

Describing climate change as "the most

outstanding" area of cooperation between the two countries, Wang said that the key to the bilateral relationship is "whether the US can accept the peaceful rise of a major country with a different social system, history and culture, and in a different development stage; whether it can recognise the Chinese people's right to pursue development and a better life."

Comments and moves from politicians from both sides suggest that it is unlikely that the issue of climate change will be detached from the overall strategic rivalry between the two countries.

Leadership Role

Besides the overall political climate surrounding the bilateral relationship, another focal point of climate cooperation with the two countries that could become a source of conflict is their respective position and responsibility in the fight against climate change.

When Trump pulled the US out of the Paris Agreement in 2017, his major argument was that it was unfair to the US, as it allows China and other countries like India to continue to use fossil fuels while the US had to cut emissions.

Although the Biden administration rejoined the Paris Agreement, the argument that China needs to do more remains as strong as before, if not stronger in the US. This is why Kerry met strong criticism from Republicans in the US upon his return, as China did not announce additional emissions targets.

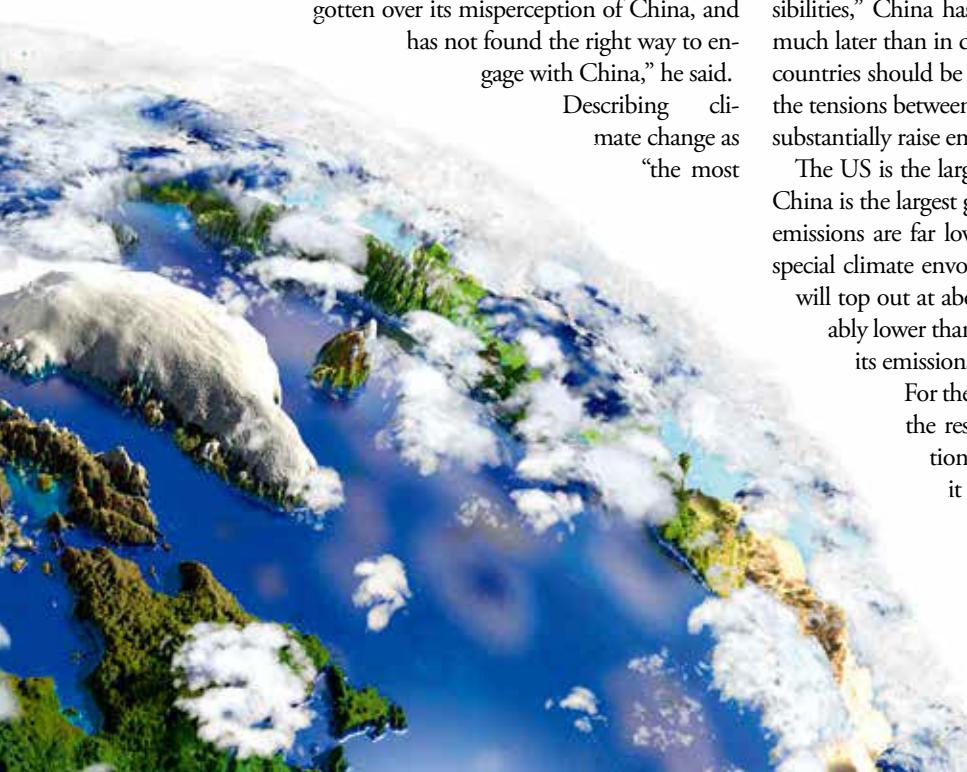
"The US Congress is now much more critical about China than before, and it would not accept China's claim that it is a developing country, not a developed country," Max Baucus, former US ambassador to China told *ChinaReport*. "China always says that it wants to be equal with the US, then it should take equal responsibilities with the US," Baucus added.

Upholding the principle of "common but differentiated responsibilities," China has long argued that as its industrialisation began much later than in developed countries, China and other developing countries should be allowed more time to hit peak emissions. Given the tensions between the US and China, it is unlikely that China will substantially raise emissions targets.

The US is the largest emitter of greenhouse gases in history, while China is the largest gross emitter currently, though China's per capita emissions are far lower than that of the US. Xie Zhenhua, China's special climate envoy, has claimed that China's per capita emissions will top out at about 7.2 tons when they hit peak levels, considerably lower than the US's per capita emissions of 19.9 tons when its emissions peaked between 2005 and 2007.

For the US, Biden's return to the Paris Agreement marks the resumption of its global leadership on climate action. While China welcomes the return of the US, it does not see the US as the sole leader in climate action, nor does it want to be lectured by the US.

In answer to a question about a statement from the US State Department that said China "is not yet on a path that will allow the world to meet the Paris Agreement's





Chinese President Xi Jinping at the virtual Leaders' Summit for Climate on April 22, 2021

PHOTO BY XINHUA

goal,” Zhao Lijian, a spokesperson for China’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a regular press conference that the return of the US to the Paris deal is “by no means a glorious comeback but rather the student playing truant getting back to class.”

Le Yucheng, China’s vice foreign minister, made similar comments in an interview with the Associated Press on April 18, saying that the US should redouble its efforts to make up for time lost during its absence in the past years by providing more technological and financial support to developing countries. As for China, “addressing climate change is not what others ask us to. We are doing so on our own initiative,” Le said.

High Stakes

Although the cooperation on climate change appears unlikely to change the overall relationship between the US and China, it does not mean there is no room for progress, especially as the stakes go far beyond the bilateral relationship.

In the press briefing following the meeting with his counterpart John Kerry in Shanghai, Xie Zhenhua told media that the two sides would start a working group. “We will not just talk to each other, but we will take concrete actions,” Xie said.

Zhou Tianjun, a professor at the Institute of Atmospheric Physics of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, told *ChinaReport* that despite Trump’s withdrawal from the Paris Agreement, scientists from both sides have maintained close cooperation in scientific research.

“We have maintained comprehensive cooperative relationships with major American scientific agencies on climate change at various

levels,” Zhou told *ChinaReport*.

Kerry appeared upbeat about the prospects of US-China cooperation. In an interview after the virtual climate summit, Kerry said he was optimistic that China would raise its emission targets before the UN climate talks (COP26) in Glasgow, Scotland in December.

According to Zou Ji, CEO and president of Energy Foundation China and former deputy director-general of China’s National Centre for Climate Change Strategy and International Cooperation, China could hit peak emissions well ahead of its current 2030 schedule.

In an interview with news portal *guancha.cn* on April, Zou said that carbon emissions in 13 provinces and municipalities accounting for 43 percent of China’s total emissions have already peaked, while emissions in 10 other provinces that account for 37 percent of China’s total have flattened in recent years. As 80 percent of China’s carbon emissions have roughly peaked, it is feasible that China can achieve its goal of peaking emissions by 2025.

In a press briefing on April 22 after the virtual climate summit, China’s Vice Foreign Minister Ma Zhaoxu told media that the country has included carbon peaking and carbon neutrality in the overall plan for ecological civilisation and will make “determined efforts” to deliver on its commitment.

Ma said that if China can deliver on its commitments by transitioning from carbon peaking to carbon neutrality in 30 years (2030-2060), it would “achieve the world’s largest decline in carbon emissions in the shortest time in world history.”

“To achieve that, China needs an extensive and profound systematic revolution in its economy and society,” Ma said.★



Traffic Cameras

For Profit Surveillance

A netizen's finding that one traffic camera had captured hundreds of thousands of violations in a year, amounting to millions of yuan in fines, led to a public backlash over the perceived profit-driven model of traffic law enforcement

By Xu Tian

Traffic cameras are installed above a road

When a driver in Foshan, Guangdong Province surnamed Yuan tried to pay a traffic ticket through a mobile app, he noticed the system showed the same surveillance camera at the same location had reported more than 620,000 violations over the previous year, an average of 1,700 violations a day, according to his calculations. Yuan shared his discovery on social media, which led to an instant backlash against what many are calling a profit-driven system of law enforcement by China's traffic police.

Driving Revenue

On April 13, Foshan traffic police said the actual number of reported violations was 184,383 as of April 2, far less than the alleged 620,000. The police said that traffic cams had helped to more than halve the annual number of traffic accidents in that location from 85 to 39, while reducing the number of people injured due to accidents from 13 to 3.

But the explanation did little to appease public anger, as the new figure is still extremely high. The camera was installed on March 8, 2020, and 475 violations were reported a day. As a ticket typically costs a driver 200 yuan (US\$31), it means just this one camera installed at one junction generated some 37 million yuan (US\$5.6m) in revenue for local police.

Most of the fines were for changing lanes. Many Foshan drivers complained that unclear signage meant they could not enter the turn lane in time, forcing them to cross the solid white lines between lanes. This had led to repeated fines. In addition, three points are deducted from a licence with each infraction – losing 12 points in a year means a suspended licence.

Foshan police said later they have improved road signage and painted dotted lines to guide vehicles at that junction.

Han Deyun, a Chongqing-based lawyer and delegate to the National People's Congress (NPC), has been a long-time critic of police abuses of digital surveillance devices, raising the issue during the annual NPC session in Beijing in March. According to Han, even though annual fines meted out by traffic police in 2020 amounted to 300 billion yuan (US\$46.2b), equivalent to about 1,000 yuan (US\$154) per vehicle, there is no effective public supervision of the police over either the law enforcement practices or how they use the money raised through fines.

There are no accurate publicly available figures on the amounts of fines levied. The figures Han cited come from a spreadsheet detailing the amount of traffic fines in each province, which started circulating

on social media in January. It was widely cited and discussed by media and experts, and authorities never denied or confirmed the data it provided.

"The use of digital police devices in recent years makes it easy for traffic police to detect traffic violations," Han told *ChinaReport*, "but without effective regulation and supervision, this increased efficiency can be easily abused."

The use of surveillance cameras to enforce traffic law in China started in 1997, when a new law allowing their use went into effect. But there has been rapid growth in these "digital police devices" in recent years. On April 4, 2009, the Ministry of Public Security issued a decree requiring local police to publicise the location of surveillance devices, although the requirement itself is vague. This means it is enforced in different ways in different places, although many cities have since revealed the number and location of cameras that are already in place or will be installed.

In 2009, Beijing police said it had installed 2,178 traffic surveillance devices. The figure almost quadrupled within four years to 8,368 in 2013. Since then, Beijing police have not updated the total number of traffic surveillance devices citywide. Based on periodic announcements, 9,145 additional traffic surveillance devices were installed between March 2020 and March 2021 alone.

As there is no established legal procedure regarding the installation and management of surveillance devices, there is no check on cities that aggressively expand their surveillance networks. Although police are required by law to reveal when and where they are installing traffic cams, the regulation is poorly enforced. When the information is available, the sheer number of surveillance cameras is overwhelming.

Local governments' enthusiasm for surveillance systems led to a boom in the sector. According to a report by newsjie.com, an industrial consulting group, the market for digital police equipment in China amounted to 13.2 billion yuan (US\$2.4b) in 2019.

Punitive Profits

According to Li Zuhua, standing director of the Society of Police Law of Shaanxi Province, a common problem among all local traffic police divisions is that the use of surveillance systems is not driven out of consideration to improve road safety and efficiency, but to maximise penalties. "In some cities, the speed limit on wide and open roads is just 40 kilometres per hour, which inevitably causes traffic congestion, or traffic surveillance cameras are installed in hazardous sections that could cause more accidents," Li told *ChinaReport*.

"They can shorten the duration between when traffic lights change so drivers are more likely to run red lights," Li added.

In 2018, *Dazhong Daily*, a local newspaper in Shandong Province, found that on one section of highway, the speed limit changed seven times, ranging from 40 to 80 km/h within just 20 minutes of driving.

According to Li, a major driving force behind these abuses of power is that many local governments use traffic fines as a source of government revenue. While there are no established legal procedures on procurement and installation of traffic surveillance systems, local governments have adopted various models to fund them.

Song Lining, an executive at a Chinese surveillance equipment company, told *ChinaReport* that the BOT (Build-Operate-Transfer) model was once very popular with local governments. Under this model, local governments do not have to appropriate funds for surveillance system projects. These projects are installed and operated at the expense of the installation company, which is reimbursed through the collection of traffic fines.

The BOT model not only amplified the financial incentives behind these surveillance projects but also led to other serious problems. According to a 2017 industrial report from ocn.com.cn, a Shenzhen-based consulting company, some local governments authorised surveillance system companies to enforce traffic laws on their behalf under the BOT model. In Xingping County, Shaanxi Province, a surveillance system company reconfigured a speed camera so it would issue at least 1,000 speeding tickets every day regardless of how many drivers were speeding.

As many provincial governments opted to ban the BOT model, Song said that most surveillance projects are now installed and operated under the public-private partnership (PPP) model. Under the PPP model, surveillance system companies are responsible for installation and technical support but play no role in law enforcement.

But similar to the BOT model, local governments still do not pay up-front for these projects. Contractors are reimbursed only after the system is handed over to police and it starts collecting fines.

Although police are required by law to reveal when and where they are installing traffic cams, the regulation is poorly enforced. When the information is available, the sheer number of surveillance cameras is overwhelming

Power Unchecked

Many local governments said that now neither local police nor surveillance system companies have a hand in the traffic ticket payment system and there is no direct link between the spending on traffic surveillance systems and the revenue earned from traffic tickets. But for as long as traffic violation payments remain a major revenue source for local coffers, the financial incentives to maximise revenue from traffic tickets remains as strong as in the past.

In a report published in April, *Banyuetan Journal*, a publication under the Xinhua News Agency, found in an unspecified county in northern China that traffic ticket payments amounted to over 30 million yuan (US\$4.6m) in 2020, accounting for about 30 percent of

the county's annual government revenue of some 100 million yuan (US\$15.4m).

Many of the traffic violation payments are generated on a provincial highway where the speed limit drops abruptly from 60 to 30 km/h when it enters the county.

On April 13, in a meeting on traffic law enforcement, the Ministry of Public Security pledged to strengthen regulation of local police forces and crack down on what it called "excessive, profit-driven and rough" law enforcement.

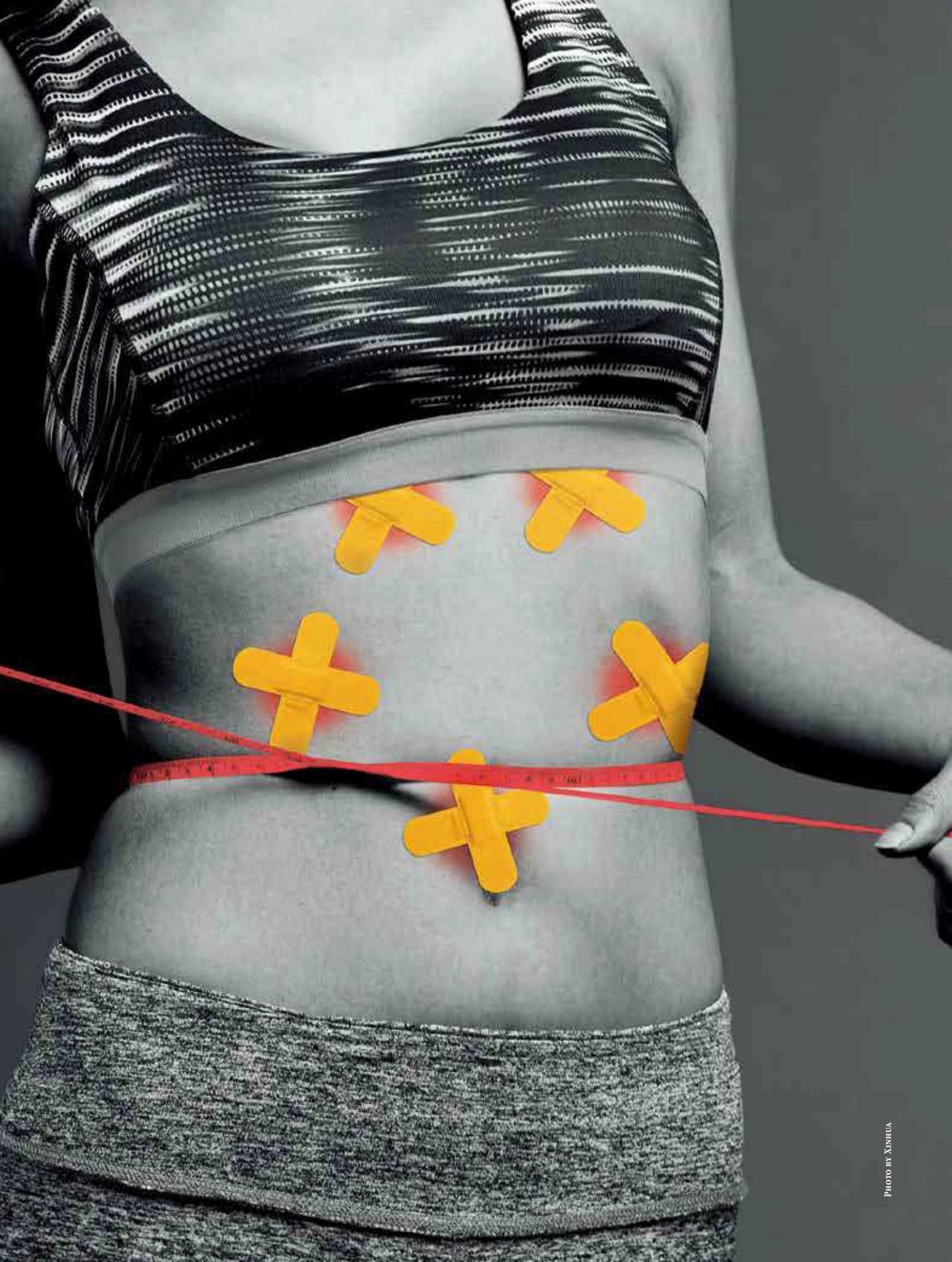
But according to Mao Mingchen, a law professor at Wenzhou University, Zhejiang Province, there is no way the problem can be solved by law enforcement authorities alone given their embedded interests. Mao said the fundamental problem is not whether the public is informed about where the surveillance cameras are or whether there is a way to appeal a traffic ticket, but who holds the power to decide whether and where to install surveillance systems.

"The problem is that the same group of people monopolise the power to both enact and enforce the law," Mao told *ChinaReport*, "and they do so often to benefit themselves." Until the public is involved in the decision regarding the installation of surveillance systems, the profit-driven system of traffic law enforcement will continue, Mao added.★

INSATIABLE FAD

Experts warn that abuse of bariatric surgery as a weight loss quick-fix is taking resources from the people who medically need it





Bariatric Surgery

Scaled-up Surgery

Hospitals and doctors are promoting weight-loss surgery for cosmetic reasons, leading to fears the operation is not targeting those who need it most

By Huo Siyi and Li Xiangyu

In August 2020, Yang Tianzhen, CEO of Easy Entertainment, a well-known company that reps some of China's hottest young stars, announced she would undergo bariatric surgery to treat type 2 diabetes. Although Yang said her choice was prompted by health concerns, many in China are undergoing weight loss surgery for cosmetic reasons.

Searches for "weight loss" on social media platforms such as Weibo or Douyin – the Chinese version of TikTok – reveal dozens of posts about hospitals and weight loss centres offering bariatric surgery.

Weight loss surgery is an emerging industry in China. Addressing this during a telephone interview, Francesco Rubino, professor of bariatric surgery at King's College London, told *ChinaReport* that bariatric surgery, which is intended to treat diseases of obesity by restricting food intake and triggering weight loss, has been "misconceived as a cosmetic operation." As an "efficacious therapy" used for diabetes, in reality, according to Rubino, "only a minority of people with obesity who have threats come to do a bariatric surgery."

Appetite for a Smaller Stomach

There are three main types of bariatric surgery: gastric band, gastric sleeve and gastric bypass. Developed in the 1950s, laparoscopic sleeve gastrectomy (sleeve gastrectomy) involves removing part of the stomach so it becomes much smaller, and recipients feel fuller on less food. Arriving in China more than 20 years ago, it has become popular in the past decade. Gastric bypass surgery is a proven therapeutic option for the treatment of severe obesity and severe type 2 diabetes. It creates a small pouch in the stomach which is connected directly to the small intestine, so people absorb fewer calories from the food they eat. A gastric band is a reversible surgery where a band is placed around the stomach to make it smaller and produce a feeling of satiety.

"The logic was, if you make your stomach smaller, or if you

bypass the intestine, you reduce the amount of food that somebody can eat, or the amount of food that somebody can absorb. You reduce the energy intake, therefore, people will lose weight," Rubino said. Compared to a sleeve gastrectomy, a gastric bypass can induce more weight loss and better glycemic control, but it may lead to higher risk of post-operative complications and long-term malabsorption of nutrients.

Both sleeve gastrectomy and gastric bypass are well-accepted and safe surgical procedures. Normally, the surgery is done when diet and exercise have not worked or when the patient has serious health problems due to obesity.

According to statistics released by the "Annual Report 2019 of China Obesity Metabolic Surgery Database," in 2008 there were only 117 cases of bariatric surgery nationwide, but by 2019 it had soared to 11,700, indicating a 100-fold increase over a decade.

In 2013, out of a total of 4,106 bariatric surgeries nationwide, only 777 were sleeve gastrectomies, while over 80 percent were gastric bypasses. By 2014, 2,200 sleeve gastrectomies were performed, and 2,920 gastric bypasses. Sleeve gastrectomy, a much more radical procedure, became more popular and by 2019 accounted for 86 percent of all bariatric surgeries performed in the Chinese mainland.

As chief physician of general surgery at the China-Japan Friendship Hospital in Beijing and head of its health management centre for weight-loss diabetes surgery, Meng Hua is regarded as China's top surgeon for bariatric surgery. His Douyin account has millions of followers.

Since 2012, Meng has performed over 4,000 bariatric surgeries. According to the "Annual Obesity Report 2019," less than 55,000 bariatric surgeries were performed from 2012 to 2019.

In 2020, affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, Meng and his team resumed routine procedures in July, and by the end of 2020, they



Dr Meng Hua and his team perform sleeve gastrectomy surgery, China-Japan Friendship Hospital, Beijing, December 31, 2020

PHOTO BY LI XIANGYU

had performed around 500 bariatric surgeries. Meng told *ChinaReport* that his hospital would likely perform more than 1,000 bariatric procedures in 2021.

"At present, no [other] hospital in the country can perform 1,000 bariatric surgeries a year. Most hospitals can perform at most dozens," Meng said. On the first day of 2021, Meng performed seven procedures. *ChinaReport* learned from the hospital that the surgery is so popular there is a five-month waitlist.

Even so, in Meng's opinion, demand for bariatric surgery will grow. "Among the 330 million people in the US, 300,000 to 350,000 bariatric surgeries are conducted annually, accounting for 1 percent of the population. Thus in China, the number of bariatric surgeries can reach at least one million per year, 100 times more than we do now," he said.

Li Guangwei, former director of Endocrinology at the China-Japan Friendship Hospital, said that the increasing trend of weight-loss metabolic surgery in China is "astonishing."

Cosmetic vs Health

Yang Tianzhen's surgery is aimed at reducing her blood sugar levels. She has had to take insulin daily since she was diagnosed with type 2 diabetes six years ago. Type 2 diabetes is associated with diet and obesity, but it can be reversed with diet, exercise and other healthy lifestyle behaviours. Yang said medication is not effective enough to control her blood sugar level, so she decided on the surgical route.

The Diabetes Surgery Summit in Rome in 2007 was the first of its kind. Professor Francesco Rubino was one of the initiators and organisers. He told *ChinaReport* that after the summit, international experts realised that bariatric surgery could be used to treat diabetes, and this should be the main purpose of the surgery. "We could offer this to more people with diabetes because it could save lives," Rubino said.

China, which tops the global league tables in many areas, now also leads in obesity with some 90 million people and diabetes at 129.8 million. However, the majority of people undergo the procedure in



PHOTO BY VCG

Entertainment company CEO Yang Tianzhen announced in August 2020 she was having bariatric surgery due to type 2 diabetes

China not for medical reasons, but to lose weight or other cosmetic motivations.

There are criteria to be considered for a sleeve gastrectomy. According to the “Guidelines for Surgical Treatment of Obesity and Type 2 Diabetes in China (2019),” there are two main indications for sleeve gastrectomy: a person’s body mass index (BMI) is 32.5 or higher to indicate extreme obesity, or a person’s BMI is 27.5 to 32.5, and that person has serious weight-related health problems to such a degree that they are beyond the help of medications or lifestyle interventions.

ChinaReport found that in clinical practice, many private and public hospitals do not strictly implement these medical indications. The reporter consulted leading hospitals that perform sleeve gastrectomy surgery, including Shanghai Ninth Hospital, Chengdu No.3 People’s Hospital and Zhengzhou No.2 People’s Hospital, and was informed that even when a person’s BMI is below 30 and the person does not have other health complications, they could still have bariatric surgery.

Wu Canghui, director of integrated surgery at Xingtai No.9 Hospital in Hebei Province, told our reporter that one can have the surgery even if their BMI is below 30 and there are no other complications.

Meng Hua is a visiting surgeon at Xingtai No.9 Hospital who performs procedures on weekends. Wu told the reporter that if a person chooses Meng as their surgeon, they must pay 10,000 yuan (US\$1,546) to skip the normal waiting list on top of the usual fee.

The cost of a sleeve gastrectomy varies according to hospital, ranging from 40,000 to 90,000 yuan (US\$6,184-13,914). Wang Cunchuan, Chairman of the Committee of Surgeons on Obesity and Diabetes and vice president of the No.1 Affiliated Hospital of Jinan University, told *ChinaReport* that about 400 hospitals in China can carry out minimally invasive bariatric surgery, and 30 to 40 of those perform more than 100 procedures a year.

At present, most doctors who carry out bariatric surgery in China do it in addition to their usual practice in fields such as gastrointestinal surgery or stomach cancer. There are less than 10 full-time surgeons in this field in China.

To market bariatric surgery in China, doctors began to promote themselves on social media platforms and set up WeChat groups to expand the potential patient pool.

BMI level seems to have become the only standard indicator. Some patients who underwent the surgery told *ChinaReport* that they contacted doctors through Weibo or Douyin, and instead of being asked health-related questions, they were only asked about their BMI before being told they were

eligible. Some patients said they had got the impression that the process is like an assembly line.

In order to meet the BMI criterion, some people who would not normally qualify are encouraged to gain weight quickly before the surgery, which is widespread in both the US and Europe too, according to Rubino. The situation is the same in China. Some of Meng Hua's patients told *ChinaReport* what they did to gain weight quickly to qualify.

One patient joked that it was an endeavour of "gaining weight to lose weight."

Sustainable Losses

At some public hospitals, such as the China-Japan Friendship Hospital, weight-loss surgeons told patients that gastric surgery could reduce their excess weight by 70 to 80 percent. But some patients told the reporter that there was a gap between the effect of bariatric surgery and what doctors claimed. Patients are unaware that the touted figure of 70 to 80 percent loss of excess weight refers to the ideal result in the first year after surgery.

Dr Scott Kahan, director of the National Centre for Weight and Wellness in Washington, DC, told *ChinaReport* that long-term sustainability for post-operative effect is the real challenge. Healthcare institutions in the US are more cautious in conducting such surgeries and tell patients that gastric surgery will see them lose about 50 percent of their excess weight. They tell patients at the same time that the best weight-loss effect comes four to six months after surgery, but long-term, adopting a healthier lifestyle is necessary.

Dr Yu Jianchun, chief surgeon at Peking Union Hospital, conducted follow-up research on 75 obese patients who underwent sleeve gastrectomy surgery in the hospital from 2012 to 2017. Yu found they lost an average of 81.6 percent of their excess weight in the first year after the operation, and the figure remained at 79.7 percent in the third year after surgery.

In an article titled "Effectiveness of Laparoscopic Sleeve Gastrectomy in Treating Obesity and its Co-morbidities" published in 2018 on the Peking Union data, the authors reached a conclusion that "sleeve gastrectomy is effective and safe in treating obesity and its co-morbidities in China."

In addition, due to differences in dietary structure between Eastern and Western people, the effect of sleeve gastrectomy surgery on weight loss for obesity in Chinese is likely to be better than that shown among Westerners. However, the paper added that "nearly half of the cases were followed up for less than three years, which may lead to deviation in the final results. In international practice, an assessment of the long-term effects of a surgical procedure should be tracked for at least five years, and preferably over 10 years."

Abuse vs. Under-utilisation

In China, the lower threshold for the weight-loss gastric surgery in many hospitals has enabled more people, most of whom are women, to pursue an easy route to weight loss.

This is happening everywhere around the world. In recent decades, there are continued "misconceptions and stigma around obesity," Rubino said. "Obesity is considered the fault of an individual which is a mistake... Obesity is the end result of complex environmental factors and genetic factors." Globally, the majority of patients for gastric surgery are overwhelmingly female. According to Rubino, it is mostly due to societal pressure.

According to the fourth annual report of the International Federation for the Surgery of Obesity and Metabolic Disorders (IFSO) published in 2018, the federation reviewed 394,431 cases of bariatric surgery from 51 countries and found that 73.7 percent of the patients were female in the four years from 2014 to 2018.

According to the 2019 report "Northern China Clinical Database on Bariatric and Metabolic Surgery," among the 2,259 cases included (while amounts to about 20 percent of those performed in China that year) from 19 provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities, women accounted for over 70 percent of patients and the median age was 31.

Rubino said that aesthetic discrimination and social prejudice surrounding obesity are the main causes of the gender disparity. Compared with the effect of bariatric surgery to alleviate diabetes, people focus on its weight-loss effects, a common misconception. Men, more than women, fear that having surgery will make them look weak, which possibly contributes to fewer men seeking gastric surgery in any country. The main problem is, according to Rubino, that bariatric surgery is abused considering that too many people who do not need it have had it, whereas in reality it is under-utilised for those who really need it. In fact, the problem of the abuse contributes to this trend in other parts of the world. "Because inevitably, the abuse of the surgery could lead to regulators or insurance or others to say we should not do it at all, [so] we should restrict it," Rubino said.

To avoid misuse of the surgery, Rubino said the profession has the responsibility to self-regulate and recommends creating quality standards. He told *ChinaReport* that in many countries, organisations check the validity of clinical services, and they have created a system of networks to provide properly trained professionals to do the surgery.

Rubino cautioned that as China is in the early days of bariatric surgery, there is an opportunity to course correct and not make the same mistakes as countries like the UK and the US. "This surgery should be offered to people who need it. If you offer it to people who need it, there should be no reason to be afraid of an expansion issue. The expansion is actually necessary," he added.★

Bariatric Surgery

Gut Reactions

Patients undergoing bariatric surgery for cosmetic reasons are discovering that post-operative complications can be physical and mental, and adjusting is much harder than they are led to believe

By Huo Siyi

An online search for sleeve gastrectomy brings up countless descriptions of the surgery, which is intended as a procedure of last resort to help severely overweight people with associated health complications to lose weight. Few detail the side effects and complications of the surgery, which include anorexia, acid reflux and mental health issues. Having a smaller stomach means becoming a new person, not only physically but also psychologically.

Driven by the societal pressure to be skinny, many people, mostly young women and mothers, are lining up for what they believe to be a magic solution to real or perceived weight issues, regardless of medical need.

Pretty Perfect

Yang Yang decided on weight loss surgery to improve her looks. She picked the most radical of the most common procedures, sleeve gastrectomy, in which part of the stomach is removed, leaving a pouch about 15 percent of its original size.

Working at a Japanese firm, Yang has a side hustle as a social media influencer, blogging about cosmetic surgery on Sina Weibo. She cares about her appearance and figure, and has surgically altered nearly every part of her face, including her chin, cheek bones, forehead, eyes, nose, lips and eyebrows. She also got breast implants.

"When there was nothing left to alter, I decided to make myself slimmer which I believed would make me look prettier. A 55-kilo person will look totally different if she weighs 45 kilos. A lighter weight will make her facial features more symmetrical and elegant," she told *ChinaReport*.

Yang believes that gaining weight is much worse than the malnutrition caused by the surgery.

Yang's concern about her appearance started when she was a

student in Japan, and experienced negativity from her boss and customers at work. She became convinced that appearances determine how people are perceived.

Although she worried about the risk every time she went under for a cosmetic procedure, she told herself she would rather die than stay ugly.

At 1.63 metres tall, Yang weighed around 50 kilograms before the sleeve gastrectomy, a perfect BMI (body mass index). Still, she wanted to get down to 42.5 kilos like the women who went viral in 2016 for doing the paper waist challenge – comparing their waist size to the width of a standard sheet of A4 paper.

She tried pills, but suffered side effects like a racing heart rate. She stopped after developing a resistance to them. Never a big eater, just going on a diet did not work either. She decided surgery was the only way forward.

Yang said she wanted a gastric balloon at first, which is less invasive. A silicon balloon is placed in the stomach and inflated with saline. She consulted doctors in Japan, but as her BMI was only 20 they refused her. A BMI of 18.5 to 25 is considered healthy, 25 to 30 is overweight, and over 30 is categorised as obese. Back in Beijing, she consulted with a Taiwanese physician known for bariatric surgery who recommended a gastrectomy, but the high price scared her away. Due to her low BMI, no public hospitals in the Chinese mainland agreed to operate.

Yang finally turned to a private hospital who agreed to do the surgery if she increased her weight to 65 kilos, giving her a BMI of 24.46, still within the healthy range and lower than the BMI threshold for a sleeve gastrectomy, which is 27.5.

Before the surgery, Yang ate hotpot, pork trotters, watermelon and milk tea, as she would not be able to enjoy them for a while. Because



Li Xinran weighs 100 kilograms before undergoing a sleeve gastrectomy in October 2020 and 76 kilograms six months after the surgery



COURTESY OF INTERVIEWEE



Liu Fei weighs 85 kilograms one month before the bariatric surgery in August 2019 and weighs 55 kilos in April 2021

COURTESY OF INTERVIEWEE

she had gained weight, she felt disgusted with her new shape and wanted to get the surgery done as soon as possible. Asked if she felt afraid before the surgery, she said: "There's nothing to fear, it's no big deal. It's just like having double-eyelid surgery."

According to Professor Francesco Rubino, chair of metabolic and bariatric surgery at King's College London, bariatric surgery should never be used for cosmetic reasons. He emphasised to *ChinaReport* that it is intended to cure morbid obesity, not for general dieting or weight reduction.

Fights with Food

In China, where bariatric surgery is becoming increasingly popular for cosmetic reasons, the BMI rule is often broken. As in Yang's case, some surgeons tell patients to binge eat to meet the requirements for surgery.

The hospital did not agree to do the gastrectomy for Yang until she repeatedly promised that she knew the risks and would bear the consequences. The hospital even agreed to do an additional duodenal-jejunal exclusion, a procedure that shortens the route between the stomach and the intestine to reduce absorption of food.

"Compared to obese people and big eaters, a sleeve gastrectomy's effect on slight people and light eaters like me is limited, so I added the [duodenal-jejunal exclusion] surgery to reduce absorption as well," she said.

Undergoing a bariatric procedure does not mean one no longer needs to diet. They must completely change their former eating habits. They have to go on a liquid diet and meal replacements for at least two months post-surgery. Since they can only eat such small amounts, they feel hungry more quickly and have to eat often, about 4-5 meals per day.

"They can't gulp down food or drink after surgery. They have to chew carefully and swallow very slowly like it's a [traditional] tea ceremony," Zhang Nengwei, a member of the Endocrinology Committee of the Chinese Medical Association, told *ChinaReport*.

Some hospitals suggest chewing each mouthful up to 30 times and taking 30 minutes to finish a meal, or they could suffer heart palpitations or nausea. This is one of the main side effects of the gastrectomy, as a narrowed stomach causes food to enter the intestines more quickly and thus changes the environment of the gut.

Many interviewed patients told *ChinaReport* that they often vomit and have diarrhea even a year after the surgery and they have to take breaks during meals.

Snacks and other foods high in fat, oil, sugar and spice are hard to digest, as well as foods that are too chewy, hot or cold. Post-surgery, patients must take vitamin supplements and protein powder for at least a year to prevent malnutrition.

Li Xinran, who had a sleeve gastrectomy and weighed 100 kilos pre-surgery, said she began to eat hotpot a week after the surgery. She

largely ignored the recommended dietary instructions, eating whatever she fancied. It did not always go her way. She vomited straight away after eating a few noodles, and she realised she could not tolerate anything glutinous or hard to chew and digest, such as beef, mutton and fibrous vegetables like celery.

"I'd just throw up these soft and glutinous foods as soon as they went down my throat," she told *ChinaReport*.

A sleeve gastrectomy reduces the stomach by about 75 percent. Patients differ in how their appetite changes, so they each must find their own ways to adapt. Li said that soon after the surgery, there was a delay in her brain telling her she was full. She often felt like the "food was piling up in her throat."

"It's like if you hiccup, you'll throw up right away," she said.

Liu Fei, who weighed 85 kilos before having the same surgery as Li, strictly followed the dietary recommendations, but her body did not adapt to her new stomach well even one year later. "I could only eat tiny amounts of food at a time for five months after the surgery, like just one dumpling, but I had to spit the skin out... I had to gradually increase the amount bite by bite," she said. "Later, I could eat four dumplings, two to three strands of noodles and four to five pork ribs," she said.

In theory, people should no longer feel hungry post-surgery, since the procedure cuts off the upper part of the stomach that secretes ghrelin, commonly referred to as the "hunger hormone." Ghrelin levels in the blood increase before eating and lower after meals. But Liu said that she never felt satiated after the surgery.

"It's a very weird feeling. You feel stuffed after several bites, but in your mind you feel like you haven't eaten enough," she said.

Li said the same. She craved certain foods, but she never felt satisfied as her stomach was full after just a few mouthfuls.

The Ick Factor

Liu often vomits after she eats. Sometimes it makes her dizzy. "I throw up if I eat even a little too much, so severely that I see stars," she said. This is another common complication of sleeve gastrectomies: Patients become over-sensitive and expel food if they feel too full or eat anything that is hard to digest. Doctors advise that the sensations stop a few weeks after the surgery when the brain has adapted to the new stomach. However, Liu said that she suffered for an entire year, especially the six months when she struggled to eat.

Liu often feels hungry. She found she is able to tolerate chocolate, which melts in the mouth and slips into the stomach without causing her to vomit. "I felt I could eat as much as I liked," she said. Besides chocolate, she found she can digest bread, potato chips and sunflower seeds. She also keeps oat cookies in her office.

Sugary snacks are not recommended for bariatric patients, but many interviewed told *ChinaReport* that snack foods, although not so

healthy, gave them comfort during their seemingly endless recovery.

Li's doctor said that vomiting is a common side effect, and if it continues, she may be diagnosed with gastric esophageal reflux disease (GERD, or acid reflux).

According to a 2014 survey published in *JAMA Surgery*, an American medical journal, among 4,832 patients that received gastrectomy between 2007 and 2010, 84.1 percent suffered continuous GERD, 15.9 percent of whom reported eased symptoms, while another 9 percent reported worsened symptoms.

Michel Gagner, a surgeon who helped to popularise sleeve gastrectomy and a clinical professor at Florida International University, told *ChinaReport* that GERD is the biggest side effect of a sleeve gastrectomy. The stomach acid causes other side effects like heartburn and erosion of the parietal cells of the esophagus, which in rare cases causes cancer.

Hidden Influence

The surgery has totally changed Liu's life. "The vomiting has ruined my social life, because I often vomit during meals. I want neither to displease my friends nor see others enjoy rich foods," she told *ChinaReport*.

The gastrectomy also deprived her of the pleasure of eating. After losing that way of reducing her work stress, Liu has suffered serious depression and has been on long-term medication for insomnia.

"The real side effects, I find, are hidden from the patients, and they differ according to physique and personal experience. A doctor could judge whether one is suitable for the gastrectomy medically, but still no domestic hospital conducts psychological evaluations before a patient undergoes the surgery," she said. "I don't think the complications are limited to just the obvious physical ones," she added.

Anita Berg, an associate professor of nursing and health sciences at the Nord University in Norway where weight-reduction surgeries are a proven intervention, interviewed and tracked down seven patients who had bariatric surgery from 2008 to 2016. She published her results in 2019 in a paper titled "Untold stories of living with a bariatric body: long-term experiences of weight-loss surgery" in the journal *Sociology of Health & Illness*.

She found that patients seemed more physically fragile after the surgery, since they had to deal with many challenges brought about by their new bodies.

Berg's survey showed that the patients' physical changes were closely related to food. Many patients could not work out their diets even eight years after the surgery. Some have totally abandoned their social lives. Others suffered from stress and even neurosis – if they felt ill or uncomfortable, they immediately jumped to the conclusion that it was another complication from the gastrectomy. Regret over the surgery led many patients to indulge in self-hatred.

Liu Fei lost 20 kilos post-surgery, 5 kilos short of her objective. During checkups, her doctor advised her to exercise to drop the remainder, but she told *ChinaReport* that she was “too hungry to have the energy to exercise.”

Liu said she thinks she was happier before she had the surgery. Although she is slimmer now, she is more obsessed with her appearance and feels anxious most of the time.

She recommended that only those who are suffering from complications of obesity should have bariatric surgery, and emphasised that you still have to keep to a strict diet afterward or risk regaining the weight.

Yang Yang agreed. Since she purposefully gained weight pre-surgery, she had more to lose afterward. She lost 11 kilos in the three months after the surgery, 4 kilos less than her objective. She is still trying hard to reach her goal weight, which means losing 22.5 kilos in six months. She now likes to watch livestreams about eating and she still often stays up late, but she no longer has a strong desire to eat at midnight.

Yang said she would also no longer recommend for any healthy person to have the surgery, since it is very hard to stick to the post-surgery diet. “I know a girl who’s gone back to 90 kilos a year after the surgery. She is depressed and caught in a dilemma – she doubts if the surgery does any good but wants to do another one to lose the weight again,” she said.

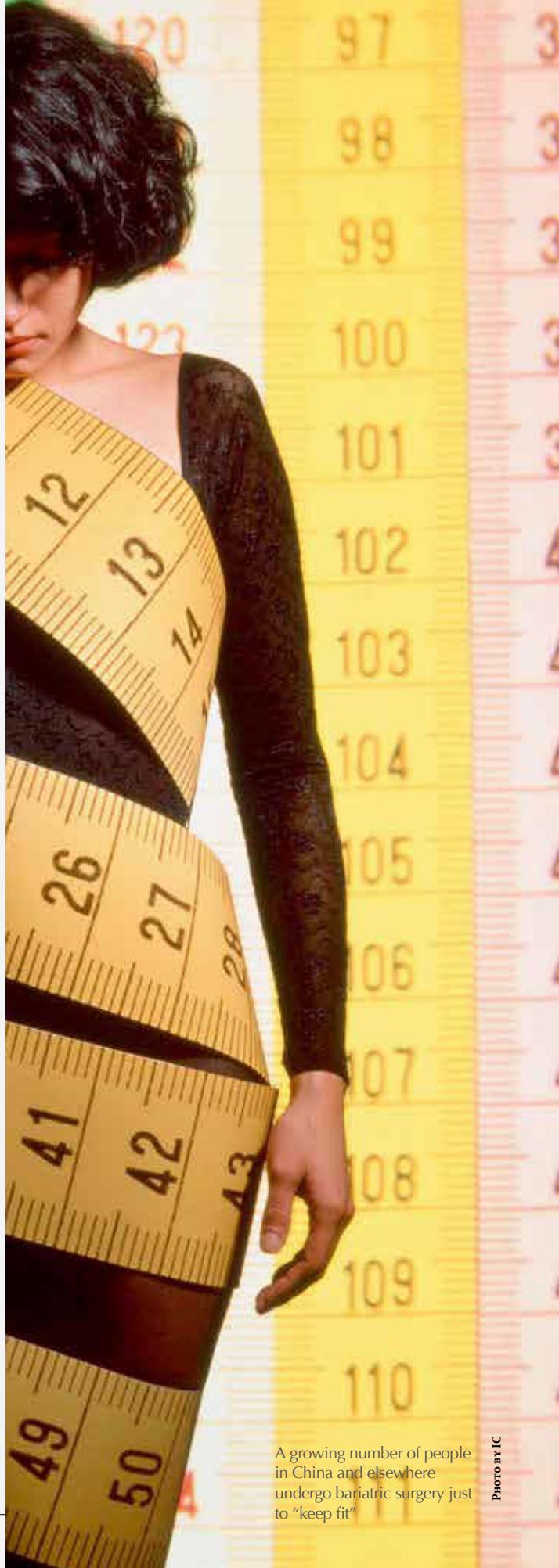
“A sleeve gastrectomy is not a one-time solution. People who regain the weight after the surgery will face an even tougher struggle,” she added.

In an interview with *ChinaReport*, Scott Kahan, chairman of the US National Centre for Weight and Wellness in Washington, DC, said that psychological conditions could push those below the BMI threshold to want bariatric surgery, such as being too strict about their weight or suffering from an eating disorder. But Kahan warned that mental issues could surface post-surgery, such as more extreme views about appearance or worsened eating disorders.

His concern was shared by other interviewed experts who pointed out that social attitudes towards women’s appearance imposed too much pressure, and if patients find they still do not meet the standards they set for after the surgery, they may still reject themselves.

“If you have no medical reasons for having that operation, even if you do the operation without complications, that’s already a complication to me,” Rubino said. “There are risks involved. It could be because they will be dependent on supplements for the rest of their lives. Or because they could risk bleeding and maybe having other more serious or life-threatening complications. Even if they are rare, there are potential complications. So if you’re healthy as a patient, you don’t want to take those risks. They make no sense for you to take those risks only for cosmetic reasons,” he added.★

Yang Yang and Li Xinran are pseudonyms



A growing number of people in China and elsewhere undergo bariatric surgery just to “keep fit”

Crime

Notes from the Underground

The bust of a multimillion yuan counterfeiting ring in Dao County, Hunan spurred a provincial-led crackdown that aims to uproot forgery from the region once and for all

By Xu Dawei

In January, police in Yongzhou, Hunan Province raided a counterfeiting hideout in Dao County, seizing 8.58 million yuan (US\$1.3m) in fake bank notes and equipment including printers, inks and paper.

Dubbed “China’s second central bank,” Dao County is notorious for counterfeiting. County authorities have confiscated 23.52 million yuan (US\$3.5m) in fake notes since 2018, 80 percent of the total for Hunan Province, with 174 arrests for forging notes, or 8 percent of the province’s total.

Che Lihua, director of Yongzhou public security bureau, told *ChinaReport* that Dao County is one of several hotspots in China for banknote forgery. “In Dao County, especially the town of Shouyan, you can find every link in the counterfeiting chain,” he said.

In response, authorities rolled out a crackdown in 2020. According to Hunan Television, the campaign has so far handled 24 cases, raided 12 hideouts, arrested 109 suspects and seized 19.82 million yuan (US\$3.07m) in fake currency.

While police hope the campaign can uproot such criminal activity in Dao County, Che said that the solution lies in governance at the most local levels.

Buzzing Printers

According to Li Wei, a police officer with the Dao County anti-counterfeiting task force, the Yongzhou case began by tracking Chen Ping, a farmer who made numerous suspicious purchases of rag paper, the fibrous paper commonly used in print currency.

Chen led Li’s team to Guangdong Province, the largest producer of raw materials used in banknote forgery. There they learned that Chen’s group was preparing to print vast quantities of fake notes.

After a months-long investigation, police arrested four of Chen’s

associates. “When we broke into one of the hideouts, the printers were still buzzing,” Li said.

According to Che, the Dao County suspects used to purchase fake notes from Guangdong counterfeiters and continued processing them back home. But as computer printers became more accessible, counterfeiters could make forgeries from scratch using digital printing plate files, all without leaving Dao County.

“In Guangdong, counterfeiters mostly use big machines, but Dao County forgers prefer low-cost home printers,” Li told *ChinaReport*, adding that since 2014, when there were dozens of counterfeiting rings using computer printers, now there are hundreds.

According to Dong Yongxian, director of the anti-counterfeiting lab of China’s Ministry of Public Security (MPS), while printing plate files and instructions are readily available online, the art of counterfeiting is still difficult to master.

“[Counterfeiters] have to overlay colours and do multiple pressings to give them the right feel... It involves very complicated and sophisticated techniques that directly determine the success of a fake note, so [skilled] technicians are valuable to any criminal operation and they are very well compensated,” Dong told the Xinhua News Agency in a 2019 interview. “Some experienced technicians are even able to mix colours very close to those of a real note,” he said.

Because technicians cut off all connections to the outside once they enter a counterfeiting base, locating them is a major challenge.

Li said the organisations have clear divisions of labour. “Printers never deal with processing and processors never get involved in sales,” he told *ChinaReport*. “They are structured like a pyramid, and the higher the suspect is in rank, the more difficult it is for police to find them.”

However, Li said forgeries from Dao County are easy to distinguish

because counterfeiters there opt for quantity over quality. “Super real notes mean very high overhead and low profit... As most county counterfeiters think it’s easier to forge notes than work jobs in the cities, they prefer higher output [at lower quality],” Li said. “Forging a 100 yuan note costs 3-4 yuan (US\$0.4-0.6) and sells for 10 yuan (US\$1.5). That’s a huge profit margin.

“A group [in Dao County] usually prints millions of yuan at a time,” he added.

Dao County counterfeiters prefer smaller denominations, according to Li, as they promise quick returns and are more likely to circulate undetected. This February, Dao County police busted another forgery plant where they found 3.64 million yuan (US\$0.5m) in 20 yuan notes.

Weak Arms of the Law

Counterfeiting in Dao County first caught on in the 1990s after a wave of Hong Kong printshops moved their operations to Guangdong Province, where labour was cheaper. The result was a lot of trained technicians. Because of its strategic location, Dao County also serves as a hub between Guangdong Province and Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region to the south, which borders Vietnam.

In early 2009, the MPS launched a national anti-counterfeiting campaign in 10 provinces and municipalities. The Guangdong cities of Lufeng and Huilai and Hunan’s Dao County were identified as counterfeiting centres.

“Dao County’s operations involve buying raw materials from one place, counterfeiting locally and then selling to another place,” reads a paper published on the website of Dao County People’s Court.

“This makes it harder for us to crack down on the crime,” said Qin Xuejun, director of the Public Security Bureau of Dao County.

Qin said that investigations require extensive coordination between public security and departments across regions, which takes up resources.

Che blames governments at the town and village level. “Dao County’s rampant forgery problem is a reflection of poor local governance,” he told *ChinaReport*.

Covering 27 towns and 585 villages, Dao County is largely agricultural. County data shows the majority of residents do not have a college degree, and more than 90 percent of people aged 40 and above in the county’s more remote villages did not attend high school.

“Most people leave to work in cities when they are young... After they come home, those who made a fortune by forging notes show off their wealth, which attracts more people to follow them... Many younger people see counterfeiting as a way to make easy money,” another Dao County police officer who served in counterfeit crackdowns told *ChinaReport* on condition of anonymity.

Che agreed, saying: “Those wealth flaunters attract more people to this industry.”

In contrast, law enforcement suffers from personnel shortages.



COURTESY OF YONGZHOU POLICE

Police in Dao County, Hunan Province, arrest suspected banknote counterfeiters



COURTESY OF YONGZHOU POLICE

Dao County police inspect ink seized during raids of suspected currency counterfeiters

For example, the town of Shouyan, which employs the most police officers in Dao County, has only nine officers for a population of 70,000.

Worse still, the town’s two law firms and four public counsel offices do not have enough employees to service outlying villages, while the county only has four courts with 16 employees, including judges.



A police officer in Dao County inspects seized fake bank notes

COURTESY OF YONGZHOU POLICE

"Big profits, greed and lax local governance have let counterfeiting spread like a virus and form a regional crime network," Che said. "Improving governance at the lowest levels is more important than crackdowns," he added.

Corrupt Morals

While visiting farmers' markets in Dao County, many stall owners told our reporter that forgery is so common in the area that even they often receive fake notes.

Li Wei told *ChinaReport* that forgery has become a family business. "Some cases in recent years were crimes involving young and old members of the same family or clan," he said.

"Chen Ping's group, for example, consists of family members, friends and neighbours who work together based on joint interests and mutual trust, and those members generally do very well in guarding their business," he added.

According to Li, counterfeit rings in Dao County often are based in remote villages where they have strong family or clan connections. They often have multiple lookouts in the area, making police stakeouts even more difficult.

"Counterfeiting has seriously corrupted people's morals, tarnished the county's name and shaken the county's foundation of development," Li Tianming, mayor of Dao County, said at a local govern-

ment meeting in December 2020, declaring the forgery crackdowns as among the county's top priorities.

In March, Hunan provincial law enforcement issued a document instructing the Dao County government on the fight against counterfeiting. A provincial public security official who declined to give his name told *ChinaReport* that the document aims to prevent Dao County from becoming passive in its efforts once the MPS sends personnel to guide and supervise.

Dao County has kicked off a three-year anti-counterfeiting campaign. According to a county government document, every town and village official and police officer must participate in screening potential suspects and those with a criminal history of forgery. The government has even assigned an official or police officer to supervise each key suspect.

According to the document, the government aims to increase the amount of confiscated fake notes by 30 percent and reduce the number of suspects to below 3 percent of the provincial total by 2023 in the hopes it will finally remove the county from the list of key forgery regions.

"We hope that this intensive and sweeping campaign will prevent the crime from becoming regional," Che said.★

Chen Ping and Li Wei are pseudonyms

MONKEY WRENCH

As pre-clinical trials of Covid-19 vaccines require a large number of lab monkeys, they have become expensive and in short supply since the outbreak of the pandemic

By Li Mingzi

“They’ve all sold out, absolutely none left,” said Zhang Wen, president of Johnsen International Biotechnology in Jiangsu Province, in answer to a potential buyer who had called seeking lab animals. Since last year, according to Zhang, new orders surged for monkeys or beagles for experimental purposes. His clients have already placed orders for next year.

Zhao Shengli, Party secretary of the China Laboratory Primate Breeding and Development Association, told *ChinaReport* that the price for one lab monkey soared from 15,000 yuan (US\$2,308) in the second half of 2016 to 62,000 yuan (US\$9,542). “It’s really hard to find a lab monkey no matter the price,” Zhao said.

With Covid-19 raging around the world for more than a year, international competition for vaccine development is fierce, and primates for testing vaccines and medications are scarce.

Non-human primates are the ideal lab animal for research in life sciences. Other common lab animals include mice, rabbits, dogs, ferrets, hamsters, ravens, or even fruit flies. Primates are the most pricey and complex species for lab experiments, and are used for research in the fields of viruses, diseases, developmental biology and neuroscience.

More importantly, those animals are vital in the development of new drugs for pre-clinical trials – those that take place before drugs move on to human trials.

A challenge for scientists everywhere is the urgent need to develop new vaccines and drugs, but lab monkeys are a scarce resource.

Specimen Shortage

Each lab monkey sold in China has an ID number assigned by the breeding farm. Among all lab primates, the long-tailed macaque and the rhesus monkey are most-used in research. According to regulations, each monkey must have detailed genetic and health files. They can be used in research if they test negative for pathogenic microorganisms and they are at least a second-generation artificial (not wild) breeding monkey.

The strict requirements for experimental animals not only ensure the quality of research, but also prolong the supply cycle of experimental monkeys. However, lab monkeys are not available on demand. Monkeys usually take five years to mature, and it may take up to eight years before the first offspring of the breeding monkeys can be sold. “This is the main reason why we have a lab monkey shortage now, and the one that we’ll get three to five years from now,” Zhao said.

Zhang Yuchao, secretary-general of the Primate Breeding Association, told our reporter there is a reserve of some 240,000 lab monkeys in China. Excluding underage monkeys and breeding monkeys, there are around 100,000 in the reserve.

Pre-clinical trials of new drugs make up the greatest domestic demand for lab monkeys, using some 25,000 monkeys a year, mainly long-tailed macaques. Wang Jufeng, senior vice-president of Pharmaron Pharmaceutical in Beijing, told *ChinaReport* that 70 to 80 percent of new drugs need monkeys for pre-clinical trials, while 20 to 30 percent of small molecular drugs, or chemical synthetic drugs, use monkeys for pre-clinical trials.

In general, pre-clinical trials use two species to determine which animal is more sensitive to the drug. Common choices are rodents, such as rats or mice, and animals like monkeys, dogs or piglets. “If both dogs and monkeys meet the test conditions, clinical trials will definitely choose dogs because they are cheaper,” Wang said. “Although the price for lab beagles is also rising to around 3,000 to 4,000 yuan (US\$461-615), it’s still only 7 percent of the price for a lab monkey.”

The number of monkeys used in drug pre-clinical trials varies. On average, 40 monkeys are needed for 28 days of repeated dosages,



A worker checks the health of a laboratory monkey before it is exported

Zhao Shengli said supply of lab monkeys became a problem in 2018, when the price increased to a level beyond what most scientific research groups could afford. The Primate Breeding Association receives many complaints from researchers over the shortage of lab monkeys and the high prices.

High Cost

In the Chenggong campus of Kunming University of Science and Technology (KUST), there is a "Sky Monkey Park" on the roof of a six-storey building. More than 700 long-tailed macaques and some 300 rhesus monkeys are housed at the facility. As a National Key Laboratory of Primate Biomedicine supported by the provincial and State governments, the lab conducts primate gene editing, multiple nervous system disease models and metabolic system disease modeling, animal samples, primate brain MRI image data and other services.

"We've had to adjust or cut down research projects according to our existing animal stocks to minimise the use of lab animals," said Niu Yuyu, vice president of the Laboratory of Primate Biomedical Research (LPBR), Institute of Primate Translational Medicine at KUST. Niu told *ChinaReport* that demand for monkeys increased significantly after 2015.

From January 26 to June 29, 2020, the Primate Breeding Association has helped provide 3,551 lab monkeys from member organisations for research relating to Covid-19. "Each major scientific research institute has a limited number of lab monkeys, and sales of monkeys were forbidden during the pandemic. So a research group can only buy lab monkeys from farms after it obtains approval from the Ministry of Science and Technology indicating its research is related to Covid-19," Zhang Yuchao said.

Apart from the upsurge in domestic demand for lab monkeys, global research of stem cells and gene editing also requires experimentation on primates. Applications to use monkeys are much more complex than

and about 20 more are needed if drug metabolism tests are required. The rapid development of the biomedical industry is undoubtedly driving demand. According to official statistics, the number of new drug clinical trial applications processed by the Centre for Drug Evaluation of National Medical Products Administration (NMPA) increased from 494 in 2014 to 983 in 2019.

According to Li Qin, chief scientist of the Primate Breeding Association, lab monkey use increased from 7,000 in 2013 to nearly 30,000 in 2019. Since 2017, the number of lab monkeys grew by some 10,000 per year, most of which were used in drug development and safety assessments.

There are other reasons for the shortage. Xiong Wanhua, founder of the Primate Breeding Association, told *ChinaReport* that the long-tailed macaque, although accounting for up to 80 to 85 percent of total lab monkey use in China, is a non-native species imported from Southeast Asia. After the 2008 global financial crisis, the export industry for lab monkeys was affected. The

stock of lab monkeys in China grew steadily and reached nearly 300,000 in 2013, a record high. This led to the suspension of monkey imports that year.

In 2015, drug supervision reforms that sped up approval processes and trial result evaluations resulted in explosive growth of domestic drug research and development. Lab monkey use also soared, which quickly depleted stocks. In addition, because of the import ban, monkey farms faced ageing stocks and dropping fertility rates. In late 2018, the State approved some imports to monkey farms, but these were halted by the outbreak of Covid-19.

On January 26, 2020, China's State Administration of Market Supervision along with other departments issued the "Notification on Prohibiting Wildlife Transactions," requiring that "all places where wild animals are kept shall be isolated and all wild animals shall be strictly prohibited from sales or movements [of live animals]." Both imports and exports of lab monkeys were stopped too.

for other lab animals such as dogs or rodents, and require approval from ethics committees.

Before conducting experiments, monkeys are kept in specialised institutions with professional care. According to Wang Xiaohua, an anesthesiologist from Xuanwu Hospital of Capital Medical University in Beijing, apart from the costs of labour, utilities and care services, the average pre-pandemic cost for one lab monkey ranged from 50,000 yuan (US\$7,695) to 100,000 yuan (US\$15,390), including purchase price and feeding.

"The high cost of lab monkeys is mainly due to the high costs of the professionals who care for them. The veterinarian is the interpreter for a lab animal, translating the animal's behaviour to ensure research quality and animal welfare," Li Qin said. For example, mouse movements mean different things. If its whiskers are back, it feels cold, erect ears signal excitement and flat whiskers signify pain. During an experiment, a veterinarian makes observations many times a day, and each time it costs from hundreds of yuan up to thousands.

Breeding Industry

China has four families, eight genera, 24 species and 45 subspecies of monkeys in the wild, accounting for about 10 percent of primate species in the world. Long-tailed macaques, weighing on average 4-5 kilograms, and rhesus monkeys, weighing around 7 kg, are the main lab monkeys, with small numbers of marmosets and green monkeys.

While the long-tailed macaque is not indigenous to China, it came to dominate the research market because it is smaller, and thus eats less and uses up less materials in safety assessments, which reduces costs, Li Qin said.

Globally, the US is the world's largest lab monkey user. According to statistics from the US Department of Agriculture, more than 74,000 monkeys were used in 2017, a record year for lab monkey use. In the past, the US relied on India to supply long-tailed macaques, but India stopped exporting monkeys in 1978 due to religious objections, animal



A lab monkey is used in an organ transplant experiment at a hospital in Shaanxi Province, June 2020

PHOTO BY XINHUA

protection and other reasons. As a result, the US looked to Southeast Asia for its supply. Soon afterwards, the Chinese monkey farming industry replaced Southeast Asia, making China the world's largest supplier of primates for lab experiments. Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region is a key area for lab monkey supply.

There are 48 lab monkey farms in China, located in Guangdong, Guangxi, Yunnan, Sichuan, Hubei, Jiangsu and Beijing. In the current market, according to Zhang Wen, a monkey farm can make up to 1 billion yuan (US\$154 million) on average a year, although he did not give precise figures on the number of monkeys sold.

Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou, where universities and hospitals are concentrated, use the most lab monkeys in China.

"The Yangtze River Delta region has the most intact industrial chain for the lab monkey farming industry," Zhang Wen said.

An insider with 17 years in the monkey farming industry who spoke under condition of anonymity said that the current suspension

of exports has forced international buyers to turn to Southeast Asia, which may trigger development of the region's monkey breeding industry. Once companies in Southeast Asia and other countries receive capital and mature technology, lab monkey production is likely to catch up in a few years and challenge China's monkey breeding industry.

Also, no one knows whether countries where the long-tailed macaque originates will restrict exports to China and constrain the industry's continued boom in China. "That's why we're now calling on authorities to lift the lab monkey import ban," Zhang Yuchao said.

"Lifting the import ban is the fastest way we can think of to address the shortage of lab monkeys," said Li Qin, adding that allowing imports of lab monkeys that domestic companies paid for in 2019 but were halted by the pandemic is another urgent issue.

"Otherwise, foreign suppliers will charge far more for looking after the monkey than the price of the lab monkey itself. It will be a net loss for the monkey farms."★

Tiger Conservation

Man vs Wild

After a wild tiger was trapped in a village as it searched for food, authorities and conservationists have opposing views on what is best for the big cat's welfare, and how to proceed in future as humans encroach on more wild habitat

By Hu Kefei



Tigers roughhouse at a breeding centre in Mudanjiang, Heilongjiang Province, July 29, 2020

PHOTO BY IC

Conservationists and authorities are in disagreement about what to do with a wild Amur tiger, who after finding himself in a village on April 23, pounced on a car with two occupants, who were shaken up, but not injured, and then attacked a farm worker, who suffered minor injuries. The juvenile male, apparently in just as much panic as the residents of Linhu Village, Mishan City in the northeastern Heilongjiang Province, tried to flee, as did the villagers. A video clip online shows a man and a woman in the car shouting "run, run" as they tried to drive away. The livestreamed tiger incident caused a sensation.

A drone was used to find the endangered tiger as workers from local forestry departments attempted to trap it. Cornered near a farmhouse, the tiger became more and more agitated. He was finally darted with three tranquiliser pellets, and transferred to Heilongjiang Amur Tiger Park in Mudanjiang for assessment and examination.

ChinaReport learned from authorities in Heilongjiang Province that the big cat is a 2 to 3-year-old male, weighing 225 kilograms. They said the Amur tiger, also known as a Siberian tiger, will be quarantined for 45 days before being returned to the wild. On April 26, Heilongjiang Provincial Forestry and Grassland Bureau said at a press conference that "the appearance of the tiger fully shows that the ecological environment of Heilongjiang Province is improving and is more suitable for the Amur tiger and Amur leopard to inhabit and reproduce here."

Improved Environment?

Song Dazhao, founder of the Chinese Felid Conservation Alliance (CFCA), a non-profit NGO, told *ChinaReport* in late April that the presence of wild Amur tigers near areas of human habitation does not mean the environment is getting better. In fact, it might indicate the opposite, as increasingly constrained by human exploitation of the

wilderness, they are forced to enter human habitats.

Tigers, Song said, are vigilant and good at hiding. As human encroachment advances, the number of wild tigers globally declined to around 3,000. There are thought to be around 500 Amur tigers in the wild, and under 30 in China, due to poaching, Chinese media reported. A normal, healthy wild tiger will naturally avoid conflict, unless it is forced into proximity with people due to dwindling habitat.

In Russia, a female Amur tiger's range is about 224 to 414 square kilometres, while a male tiger needs about 800 to 1,000 square kilometres. Even if an adult tiger has an established range, the size of the territory means it is hard to avoid human contact.

Zhou Haixiang, a member of the Chinese National Committee for the Man and the Biosphere Programme, told *ChinaReport* that it was likely the tiger entered northeastern China from Russia along the west side of Xingkai Lake, where the border with Russia is only a barbed wire fence. There have been sightings of tigers in that area, so Zhou guessed it was following prey.

"The tiger came over and found that there was not a lot of food available, and there were villages, people and cars, which it finds terrifying. If it tried to go north to the Wanda Mountains, it would be blocked by the highway. In northeastern China, the mountains have been fragmented by highway networks with no consideration of building passages for wildlife movement," Zhou said. "On many occasions, as highways were built, wild Amur tigers were trapped or died alone because they could not mate. Therefore, we can hardly conclude [this tiger sighting] is a sign of improving ecology."

Song agrees with Zhou. "It's unlikely the tiger has already established a territory because it would normally stop in areas where there are human activities." Song believes the tiger might have been looking for an appropriate habitat. The animal is still young and is able to support itself in the wild, but it may have been attracted to the village by the livestock.

'Arrogant' Humans

Shen Zhipun, director of Hongshan Zoo in Nanjing, Jiangsu Province, feels disheartened over the tiger incident. "It was a mistake, all a mistake, from the very moment people spotted the tiger, people took the wrong actions. We human beings should not be so arrogant."

The live media reports, drone activity and people running around surely combined to stress the tiger even more, he said.

"The appearance of a wild tiger is a good sign of a wild population whether the environment has improved or not, but the media stirred up a sensation among the public, who felt the tiger should not invade human territory, or not even exist at all," Shen said. "The idea of peaceful coexistence between humans and wildlife was shattered in a moment."

"After it attacked the people and the car, it didn't continue, but in-



PHOTO BY XINHUA

An animal protection worker tracks wild tigers in an animal conservation zone in Heilongjiang Province, July 8, 2020

stead retreated. This proves it's wild and not an [escaped] captive one, since it panicked, an apparent stress response due to fear. The tiger showed far more fear than the villagers," Zhou said.

In Shen's view, people should have been evacuated when the tiger appeared to prevent conflict. Then it could either peacefully leave or be humanely captured if there was no other option. The livestream coverage showed the situation was chaotic. Some netizens who viewed the footage commented that because it had attacked people, it should be killed. The responses to the cornered tiger saddened Shen.

After it was shot by the first tranquiliser dart, the tiger roared and jumped out from its hiding place behind the house. Then it hid again.

"A tiger doesn't manifest fear by shaking or running out of control. When he was trying to escape and hide, it meant he wanted to leave, but the people on site didn't give him the chance," Song Dazhao said.

"Having missed the initial opportunity to deal with him properly, capture becomes the least-worst solution, or at least better than shooting and killing it," Song added.

But the media circus and close-up filming with no consideration for what was a safe distance indicates the lack of professionalism.

Quarantine vs Release

After capture, the tiger was named Wanda Mountain No.1 and sent to quarantine for 45 days at Heilongjiang Amur Tiger Park. The forestry bureau said its health and behaviour would be observed, and assured media they would release it.



A video clip of the captured wild Amur tiger that was named Wanda Mountain No.1, Linhu Village, Heilongjiang Province, April 23, 2021

"I just don't understand why it has to wait 45 days before release," Shen Zhijun said. "The purpose of the rescue is to return it to the wild after a full checkup. It should be released as quickly as possible. As the tiger has no health problems, the longer it is in captivity, the harder it will be to survive in the wild in the future."

Liu Dan, chief engineer with Heilongjiang Amur Tiger Park, told media that the quarantine was intended to ensure the tiger was not suffering from highly pathogenic avian influenza, rabies, cat plague, parasites or other diseases.

"Forty-five days is too long and wild animals would generate trust or hatred that they should never have, which then will lead to behavioural changes. They will be more daring in approaching humans," Shen said.

"Every living individual has a special ecological value to the environment, not to mention the tiger at the top of the food chain, which belongs only to nature. At present, against the backdrop of Earth's dwindling species and fragile ecological chain, saving and releasing these wild animals are ways to repair the fragile ecosystem," he said.

"If we rescue a night heron or a turtledove, we will release them. Just recently, our zoo released some raptors such as the black eagle and Eurasian eagle-owl, although we know we can attract more visitors if we display such endangered species. After we assessed they could survive in the wild, we released them immediately. Why does the tiger need 45 days?" Shen said.

Chen Yuelong, a technician at a wildlife rescue centre with Hong-

shan Zoo in Nanjing, told *ChinaReport* that based on his extensive experience, the process for wildlife rescue is "physical examination, observation, treatment, rehabilitation, physical examination, evaluation and release."

The principle is that release should happen as soon as possible if it is safe to do so and the wildlife meets the requirements, said Chen.

Addressing concerns over whether the tiger would attack people again, Song Dazhao said that except in some rare cases, most tigers do not develop the habit of attacking people. "The tiger's attack on people in Mishan was not for hunting, but it could attack again if people disturb it like they did this time."

"But these 45 days could increase the likelihood of it attacking people again as it will become habituated to humans providing food. So it may have a different reaction to meeting humans in the wild," Zhou said.

"As long as the rescue and feeding measures are scientific, even if the tiger is in captivity for 45 days, it can still be released without becoming dependent on humans. But the process for rescue and feeding should proceed with caution. They should keep the tiger in isolation and prevent it from seeing humans when given food," Chen Yuelong said.

"It was taken from the wild and it's not accustomed to these living conditions and isolation. So the park must ensure it doesn't become too stressed and remains psychologically stable," Bao Weidong, Associate Professor of Zoology, School of Bioscience and Technology at Beijing Forestry University, told China Central Television (CCTV). He emphasised the need to keep the tiger isolated to allow it to return to the wild and not be affected by human interaction.

Although authorities had not confirmed as of press time when they will release the tiger or where, Song Dazhao believes he should be released in a reserve or forest where there is no competition from another male tiger.

The Amur Tiger Park must also provide an open evaluation of the tiger's condition and make its conclusion in accord with current best practice.

As China continues to increase protection for animals like tigers, there are sure to be more incidents as their numbers increase. Co-existing with tigers will become a vital issue that residents of wild tiger habitats must address. Experts interviewed by *ChinaReport* indicated that a combined system of early warning, rescue and preventive mechanisms should be established to prevent other incidents like these. ★



Architecture

URBAN NATURE

Ma Yansong

One of China's most prominent architects, Beijing-born Ma Yansong talks about the 'shan-shui city,' his design philosophy that blends urban construction and environment to bring people closer to nature – and each other

By Li Jing



Absolute World, Mississauga, Ontario, Canada. Ma Yansong was the first Chinese architect to win a prestige project overseas

“Rejection is also meaningful,” architect Ma Yansong said.

His architecture firm MAD Architects lost the 2017 tender bidding for Zhuhai Jinwan Civic Arts Centre, now under construction in the coastal city of Zhuhai, Guangdong Province.

Ma was beaten by the firm of his late mentor, Zaha Hadid Architects.

But compared with the other 11 competing projects, Ma’s design, titled “A Village Under the Dome,” was the only one that preserved the original site of the centuries-old Yinkeng Village, which dates back to the Northern Song Dynasty (960-1127).

In 2018, Zhuhai municipal government began demolition work and relocated villagers to make room for the new centre.

Ma’s design maintained the village’s original layout, including the public square, narrow lanes, green space and ponds, and protects its ancient banyan tree. He attempted to encapsulate the daily life and community atmosphere of the old village by crowning it with a huge dome.

Unfortunately, the village was demolished beyond recognition before Ma’s plan was completed.

Born in Beijing in 1975, Ma is among China’s most internationally acclaimed architects, known for his futuristic works that blend architecture with nature. Over the past 16 years, Ma and his Beijing-based firm MAD Architects has worked in the Americas, Europe and Asia.

His Absolute World complex in Mississauga, Ontario, Canada was named Best Tall Building in the Americas by the Council on Tall Buildings and Urban Habitat, a non-profit based in Chicago. In 2014, he won the contract for the Lucas Museum of Narrative Art in Los Angeles.

Throughout his career, Ma has adhered to his concept of the “*shan-shui* city,” which integrates architecture and nature while emphasising livability. The concept is Ma’s critical response to the monotonous box-like buildings that shape modern urban spaces.

“It always takes time to change ideas,” Ma told *ChinaReport*.

“Someone has to stand up and voice some-

thing different so there can be more discussions and negotiations, otherwise nothing changes.”

Shan-shui City

MAD is based out of an eight-storey building on Beijing’s Dongsi North Street, surrounded by historic alleys and courtyard homes.

When tired, Ma retreats to the rooftop, which offers sweeping views of grey tiled courtyards, the White Pagoda of Beihai Park and the central hill of Jingshan Park. On a clear day, the Western Hills are visible. This is the Beijing of Ma’s childhood memories.

Courtyards are a huge part of his life. Ma grew up in one in Xidan, now a shopping district in central Beijing. His grandmother lived in a courtyard near another shopping district, Wangfujing. His childhood was spent playing in the world between these two courtyards. Both areas are within the city’s Second Ring Road, where there are still many visible traces of old Beijing.

In the centre of his grandmother’s courtyard was a tall ginkgo tree. Every day, his family and neighbours chatted and played chess under the tree. In autumn, its leaves turn gold. “The tree was my first teacher that taught me about the shifting nature of the seasons,” Ma told *ChinaReport*.

“My architectural ideas are closely related to my childhood experiences,” Ma said. His training as an architect has helped him further appreciate the beauty of old Beijing, where human activity, nature, architecture and urban space merge organically.

Shan shui, which translates to “mountains and waters,” is a defining concept of Chinese art. It usually refers to a style of traditional ink-wash painting of natural landscapes. In classical Chinese art or poetry, *shan shui* is akin to transcendentalism – an ideal state of spirituality and nature.

Ma codified his architectural philosophy in his 2014 book *Shan-shui City*. For the architect, *shan shui* goes beyond nature to include an individual’s emotional response to the surrounding world. The concept envisions future cities that tightly integrate architecture, the natural landscape and human social



COURTESY OF INTERVIEWEE

interaction in an urban context.

“Architects are supposed to be sensitive to the times and society and be forward-looking. It’d be better if they can think ahead of the times,” Ma said.

MAD’s latest project, “Train Station in the Forest,” is an example of this mindset.

Slated for completion in July, the new train station for Jiaxing, East China’s Zhejiang Province, breaks from China’s typical train station designs, which often involve a giant structure set behind a large, open square.

The main train platforms are underground. Natural light comes through skylights and glass walls. The ground floor is an open park with abundant greenery, providing a space for locals and travellers to find some peace and quiet.

This idea, Ma said, “makes the architecture disappear and brings the city back to its people.”

His approach is central to other recent projects. Harbin Opera House, completed in 2015 near the Songhua River in Harbin, Heilongjiang Province, sinuously stretches like snow-capped mountains sloping into the wintry northern city. Quzhou Sports Campus, one of Ma’s projects set for completion

in 2021, is designed to be hidden in an enormous sports park with hills and a lake. The sports venues are embedded into the park, their greenery-covered facades disappearing into the park. The buildings are part of the landscape.

“I have no intention to build something magnificent, something exclusive to urban elites and educated people with refined tastes. What I want to create is space that allows the most common person who struggles to live in the city’s rat race be able to have a break,” Ma told *ChinaReport*.

Monumental Maverick

After graduating from the Beijing University of Civil Engineering and Architecture in 1999, Ma enrolled at Yale University where he was taught by Canadian American architect Frank Gehry and Iraqi born-British architect Zaha Hadid (1950-2016), the first woman to be awarded the Pritzker Architecture Prize and a major figure in late 20th and early 21st century architecture.

Hadid had a reputation for being short tempered, but was very patient with her students. She encouraged them to think freely and create independently.

"She was an artist who always stayed true to herself," Ma told *ChinaReport*, stressing that the independent spirit he gained from his mentor influenced his entire creative career.

In 2002, Ma proposed his ambitious "Floating Island" design for the former site of the World Trade Centre in New York City. The project imagined a massive green space suspended above lower Manhattan, allowing people to work, dine, shop and have a break "in a cloud."

In stark contrast from other proposals for Ground Zero, most of which featured conventional monuments, Ma's bold futuristic scheme cast away the lingering sorrow and encouraged people to look forward. The design was not chosen but earned him widespread recognition in New York's architecture circles.

Though not intentional, the design embodied the architect's *shan-shui* city concept.

"Nature, freehand style and artistic conception – it seems that the ideas I keep talking about today can all be found in my earliest projects," Ma told *ChinaReport*.

Ma returned to China and founded MAD Architects in 2004. The name MAD is not only short for Ma Design, but also manifests the spirit of independence, rebellion and unconventionality.

Ma and his team participated in many open tenders over the years, proposing roughly 200 projects that were ultimately not chosen. In China, clients or juries called his designs "too new," "too horrible" or "too costly." He decided to take his designs abroad.

In 2006, then 30-year-old Ma won a competition to design Absolute World, a twin-tower condominium complex in Mississauga, Canada, making him the first Chinese architect to win a landmark project overseas. Ma's design outshone 92 other proposals from 70 countries.

Absolute World consists of two curved

high-rises, 56- and 50-storeys tall. Their twisting exteriors express the fluidity that defines the natural world. Central to the city's skyline, the two tower's graceful lines make them appear as if they are dancing together. Residents fondly call the tallest building "Marilyn Monroe Tower" for its curvaceous figure.

Absolute World is Ma's answer to the listless, boxy modern urban buildings that are void of any human emotion.

"The concept of the tower at the beginning was very simple. We just wanted to make something organic but different, more natural and more soft and not something too strong that would remind people of money or power," Ma said.

Built for Independence

Ma's international reputation earned him many offers for projects at home. However, his *shan-shui* city philosophy often ran against conservative views in China. Critics said his work was detached from its surroundings, calling it "too avant-garde" and "too Western."

A stark example is the black glass twin towers of Chaoyang Park Plaza in Beijing. Completed in 2017 after six years of construction, the complex looms over nearby residential areas and has been largely panned for not fitting in with the cityscape.

Located on the southwestern edge of Chaoyang Park, the largest park in the city's central business district, the complex comprises of 10 jet-black buildings chock-full of curvy surfaces and sharp circular spires amid quite hard landscaping.

Against the lake and forests of the park, the buildings are supposed to recall the mountains and rocks of classical Chinese ink-wash paintings. But the complex has been derided for not conforming to the white, box-like commercial high-rises and residential buildings in the area. Netizens dubbed it



Concept art for the Lucas Museum of Narrative Art, Los Angeles

"Batman's lair" and the "Death Star" for its ominous look. Amid the controversy, architectural historian Wang Mingxian collaged a photo of Chaoyang Park Plaza into a classical landscape painting, showing how the buildings blend with the natural scenery.

"If they think this complex is at odds with its surroundings, that's not my fault. The fault lies in the surrounding environment itself. It is the ubiquitous lifeless matchbox-like buildings that have turned our cities into an emotionless and insensitive space severed from humanity and the city's own culture and history," Ma said.

But the architect said this was not an act of defiance. "It's constructive criticism," he told *ChinaReport*.

In MAD's 16 years, it has expanded from a



COURTESY OF INTERVIEWEE

few members to a team of over 150 designers from all over the world. But the firm does not have a marketing department, which means that anyone seeking to collaborate with Ma needs to fully accept his design ideas.

In 2014, MAD won the international design competition for Lucas Museum of Narrative Art commissioned by Star Wars creator George Lucas. This time, Ma defeated his master Zaha Hadid.

Under construction in Exposition Park, Los Angeles, the museum will house the filmmaker's private collection of paintings, illustrations, photography, digital art and movie memorabilia. Its futuristic exterior resembles a flying saucer hovering over the landscape. The ground floor and roof are designed as green spaces for visitors to relax.

"I once asked Mr Lucas why he chose MAD, and he said 'Because other architects thought too much about how to display Star Wars imagery,'" Ma told *ChinaReport*.

"So the thing is that, when given a chance, architects should first and foremost consider how to express their own independent values and attitudes," he added.

Every two or three years, Ma makes an architectural pilgrimage to the Salk Institute for Biological Studies in San Diego, California, the masterwork of his favourite architect, Louis Kahn, the American master builder and one of most prominent modernist architects of the 20th century.

Completed in 1965, Kahn's work combines functionality with striking aesthetics. The laboratories of the Salk Institute were

designed as a pair of symmetrical towers mirroring each other across a paved open plaza. Down its centre, a westward path seems to vanish into the Pacific.

Ma is impressed by how this work evokes feelings and emotions. More than once, he found visitors standing there meditating or moved to tears.

"Standing in that space, time and reality seems to disappear and people hear their inner voices clearly," Ma said.

"I hope one day I can also design such a powerful and timeless building that not only strikes a chord with my contemporaries but also with future generations. I hope that a century on, people will still feel touched by the emotions preserved in my architecture," he added. ★



Music

STEPS OF THE DEVIL

Pang Mingtao, whose quirky song “My Skateboard Shoes” shot him to internet stardom in 2014, was recently admitted to a psychiatric hospital in a dramatic entrance then exit from the limelight that intertwines online bullying, Michael Jackson and an obsession with shaking his rural origins

By Qiu Guangyu

Pang Mingtao, the eccentric singer-songwriter who is both loved and loathed in China for his apparent unmusicality, was admitted to a psychiatric facility near his home in rural Shanxi Province.

Pang’s long-time manager Bai Xiao announced in March that the 37-year-old had been diagnosed with schizophrenia, and had increasingly been exhibiting violent behaviour towards his parents, who he lived with on the family farm.

Bai said police were called on March 1 when Pang attacked his father with a chair. Five officers came to Pang’s home to escort him

to hospital. The episode is the latest in Pang’s long bout with mental health issues, Bai said.

Pang’s unusual journey in the public eye began in the summer of 2014. His viral hit “My Skateboard Shoes,” which chronicled his search for his dream pair of kicks, garnered immediate attention with its quirky lyrics and signature off-key performance.

However, Pang remained secretive about his past. Going by the stage names Pang Mailang and Joseeh Pummanlon, he lied in interviews about his upbringing in Ningqiang County, a rural area within the city limits of Hanzhong, Northwest China’s Shaanxi Province.

Perhaps his fears were justified. With his fame came ridicule online, where people not only mocked his voice and lack of conventional musical talent but also his heavy rural accent.

As short video platforms and livestreaming began dominating the internet space and new celebrities surfaced, Pang was sidelined as a one-hit wonder. While he would go on to release more music, interest in him faded. The online bullying, however, continued.

For Pang, music was way to escape his past and chase a dream for international fame. “*Time, time will tell*,” he sings in “My Skateboard Shoes.” But so far, the answer that time gave him has been a cruel one.

Cosmopolitan Dreams

Pang renames places in his world. In his diaries, he calls his Ningqiang County home “Gulag” and the city of Hanzhong “Gashbeak,” where he declared himself president. In total, Pang gave 292 cities in China a kaleidoscope of exotic sounding names to make them sound more “cosmopolitan.”

That also goes for himself. Before starting his career, he took the name Joseeh Punmanlon, which he says is short for “Banglastew Gashbeak Shniyack Joseeh Punmanlon.”

Initially Pang told media he was born in Keelung, Taiwan in 1990. But Pang’s strong rural Shaanxi accent betrayed him. In reality, Pang was born six years earlier in a scenic but impoverished village in Ningqiang County near the border of Sichuan Province.

Pang was insecure about his origins. “I tried to convince him to be more honest about himself with the public, but he said ‘If I tell people I’m a peasant from a village, would people listen to my music and come to my shows?’” Bai told *ChinaReport*.

The second son in his family, Pang was a quiet boy who was fond of literature. “He loved modern fiction,” his father told *ChinaReport*.

In 2008, Pang left his village after high school to look for work. Over the next four years, he found work in nearby Hanzhong, then the giant cities of Guangzhou and Shanghai, mostly at karaoke bars.

In a 2015 interview, Pang told Chinese magazine *People* he first heard Michael Jackson’s music while working at a Hanzhong karaoke bar in 2008. Jackson’s work was “so trendy and cosmopolitan,” he said. When a coworker told him that Jackson earned millions from his songs, Pang not only decided he would write music, but set his sights on becoming “China’s most cosmopolitan singer.”

Sudden Fame

With dozens of songs written in an old notebook, Pang moved to Beijing in February 2013. There he spent his savings – 6,000 yuan (US\$918) – on what turned out to be a subpar demo. Without much money left, Pang slept in 24-hour internet bars and on park benches for months.

His big break came in September 2013 when he took part in a talent contest held by Beijing-based record company Warsu.

Pang immediately stood out among the contestants. Despite not having any musical training or apparent vocal talent, the company reps were impressed by Pang’s ambition and unconventional songs.

Warsu paired Pang with experienced producers for “My Skateboard Shoes.” A combo of cheesy pop synths and autotuned R&B, the song borders on novelty. At the centre is Pang’s robotic sing-speak melody with its off-kilter rhythm, giving it an unrehearsed feel. In other words, it sounds like a guy singing karaoke.

The lyrics tell of Pang’s long-running search for a perfect pair of skate shoes. He looks for them in every city he works. When he finally finds them, he celebrates while shuffling down the moonlit pavement – a nod to Michael Jackson’s moonwalk.

“*Rubbing on the smooth ground / like the steps of the devil*,” Pang repeats.

Released on May 27, 2014, the song was an instant hit. It got more than 500,000 views on Weibo in just three days, and soon was topping mainstream music platforms. On the now defunct Xiami Music, it got 8.18 million views. “My Skateboard Shoes” made Pang a star.

But with its popularity came parody, taunts and criticism, particularly over his out-of-tune singing and heavy regional accent. Many dismissed the song as an internet meme.

But the sum of “My Skateboard Shoes” is greater than its parts. Some critics and artists recognised its value, interpreting the song as an ode to the *diaozi* (self-deprecating loser) who struggles to chase his dreams in neon-splashed cities, no matter how small those dreams may be.

Even Chinese film director Jia Zhangke came to Pang’s defence. “My Skateboard Shoes moved me to tears,” he posted on Weibo in January 2015. “[The line] ‘time, time will tell’ is a precise portrayal of loneliness,” he wrote, adding: “Don’t mock a person for their origins, accent or dandruff. You have them too.”

In 2016, Hua Chenyu, a respected art-pop vocalist known for his eccentric catalogue, covered “My Skateboard Shoes” on an episode of music variety show *The Next*. Hua’s stirring performance reacquainted the song’s themes to audiences nationwide.

Today “My Skateboard Shoes” has an 8.4/10 rating on Douban, China’s leading media review website. The song’s critics have fallen silent as more express their appreciation and empathy for its creator.

“Having played it 30 times on repeat, I feel that [Pang] is persistent, and a great musician. He is much more honest and lovable than most people,” posted Douban user “RD.”

“The song delivers a touch of sadness and gritty reality in a seemingly clumsy but actually cosmopolitan way,” RD wrote.

Forgotten Overnight

Bai Xiao first met Pang in a recording studio in the autumn of 2015. A singer and published poet, Bai loves folk, particularly the work of Leonard Cohen and Bob Dylan. Bai told *ChinaReport* that it



PHOTO BY QIU GUANGTU

Pang Mailang's home in Ningqiang County, Hanzhong, Northwest China's Shaanxi Province

was Pang's humour and lyrics that first resonated with him, and soon they began collaborating.

In 2016, Bai helped Pang book a 24-show tour of small venues in major cities across China. A poster from the tour shows Pang in a fedora and white shoes doing Jackson's signature toe stand.

The first show in Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province saw more than 240 people. But as the tour continued, audiences shrank.

The low point came in March 2017 at a show in Anyang, Henan Province, where only seven people showed up. The next day, media outlets ran a scathing story with the headline "Seven concertgoers, 14 security guards."

Pang had no choice but to face a bleak reality: His fame disappeared as quickly as it came.

He returned to Ningqiang County, living in a small house next to his family. When not performing, Pang helped his parents on the farm.

In 2020, Taiwanese singer-songwriter Kenji Wu made a documentary about Pang's life titled *Have You Said Thank You with Tears*. In one segment, Wu captures the singer working in his room, writing

lyrics in an old notebook with a short pencil. On his desk are a laptop, empty beverage bottles and books. Among them is *The Manuscripts of Vincent van Gogh*.

Pang admits he has plenty of new songs but no money to produce them – he spent all his earnings on making recordings. "It took me 50,000-60,000 yuan (US\$ 7,657-9189) to produce a single song," Pang said in the documentary.

The musician also opens up to Wu about his inferiority complex. "To be honest, we [rural people] are underprivileged. We seem so rough and less refined compared with urban people. I'd be content if I was accepted as one of them," Pang said.

Although Pang tried to conceal his origins, he was starkly honest in his songs. Since 2014, he has released an eight-track album *Old Metal* and four singles.

In them Pang reveals his own struggle of living and working in cities as a migrant worker. In "The Drifting Motorcycle," Pang sings about how he gets injured in a motorcycle race with fellow workers at a construction site, "Spanish Bull" tells of his dream to become a Spanish matador and "Beggars Sleeping on the Street" recounts his bitter feelings of seeing child beggars in the cities.

None struck a chord like "The Skateboard Shoes."

Like most artists around the world, Covid-19 put the brakes on Pang's performance schedule. To make ends meet, he and Bai tried promoting a skate shoe brand through livestreaming. After several sessions, however, the two only managed to sell three pairs.

"Some of the comments were really cruel," Bai told *ChinaReport*. "One time Pang tried to sing a song during the livestream, when a comment popped up: 'Forget about your music dreams. Go find some job in a factory.'"

Bai said the disappointment towards his music career, combined with his sudden fall from fame and merciless mockery, were ultimately too much for Pang. As his mental health deteriorated, Pang became increasingly aggressive and paranoid.

In the winter of 2019, he attacked Bai by trying to gouge his eyes out. Pang carried a knife on him at all times, in fear his friends and family were trying to murder him.

Pang was first hospitalised briefly in late 2020, where doctors diagnosed him with schizophrenia. He checked himself out after three days, saying he had a performance soon. Of course it was an excuse. There were no more shows to play.

Bai compares Pang to another tortured soul, Vincent van Gogh. "He is innocent, if not naïve. His biggest strength is that he is stubborn, but to a fault – sometimes he is too stubborn," Bai said. ★



Electric Vehicles

PHOTO BY IC

Tesla's Trials and Errors

A Tesla owner's protest over a crash reflects loopholes in data management as experts call out new energy vehicle firms for risking customer safety

By Yang Zhijie and Xu Ming

It was not the normal display at the Auto Shanghai car show. A disgruntled Tesla owner, wearing a white T-shirt emblazoned with the characters “Brakes don’t work,” literally mounted a protest, jumping atop a Tesla Model 3 and refusing to climb down on April 19. Shouting “the brakes malfunction” for several minutes, the woman, identified by police by her surname Zhang, was eventually dragged away by security.

For her troubles, she received five days in police detention for disturbing public order and was released on April 25.

Tesla initially dismissed her as a troublemaker, but Zhang found support among other Tesla drivers in China who claim they have experienced issues such as brake failure and cars suddenly accelerating. Chinese media branded the automaker as arrogant, and the firm’s PR woes mounted.

The US automaker, which boasted a record car delivery of 184,800 worldwide and a rise in both revenue and net income in the first quarter of 2021 from global sales, remains stuck in a maelstrom of controversy. About 40 percent of global sales in the first quarter, over 69,000 vehicles, were in the Chinese mainland, shows data from the China Passenger Car Association (CPCA). The media storm and bad publicity may throw a wrench in Tesla’s grand plans for China expansion. Its China sales in April dropped by 27 percent from March, though the drop is not regarded by industry insiders as necessarily connected to the negative news.

Zhang was not the only protester at the auto show that day. Her action came two months after her car collided with two other vehicles and a concrete barrier. She claimed the brakes had failed, but Tesla insisted that the driver, Zhang’s father, was speeding. Zhang claimed

Tesla was refusing to disclose vital logs, while Tesla claimed it had been trying to communicate with Zhang, but she had refused to allow third-party investigators access. The miscommunication piled up until the day of the auto show when Zhang's frustration boiled over. Although they had initially battened down the hatches, amid Zhang's persistence and growing societal pressure, Tesla released the vehicle's data log, which included speed and braking information. According to Tesla, the brakes were fully functional prior to the crash.

Despite this, Zhang is dogged in her pursuit of the company and continues to question the data, claiming it is inaccurate and that Tesla is withholding information. She alleged the raw data was not from her vehicle and wanted the firm to reveal its source and how they had filtered it. Media reported in early May that Zhang is suing Tesla for mental distress, alleging the company led the public to believe Zhang was lying and acting up. It is still hard to untangle the truth, with both parties claiming to be in the right.

Questioned Data

Tesla claimed Zhang's father did not apply the brake forcibly enough to prevent the crash, and the data it provided shows the car was travelling well over the speed limit at 118.5 kilometres per hour, a far cry from Zhang's claim that it was going 70 km/h, indicating the accident was caused by speeding instead of brake failure.

But Zhang, who was sitting in the back at the time of the crash, questioned the authenticity of the data, saying her father had applied pressure on the brake pedal several times but the car failed to slow in time. The police accident report Zhang provided to media did not say the car was speeding. Zhang also questioned the lack of some key data including the time taken to activate the electronic stability control, a programme which improves traction when it detects skidding, as well as the driver's brake force request.

"Even if the car was going 118.5 km/h, theoretically it could brake in five seconds. But the crash happened at a speed of 48 km/h, showing the brake force was not sufficient," said Wang Xudong, CEO of Zhongchejian Company, a third-party testing agency.

"To clarify who was responsible for the accident, the key is to understand if the driver had adequately made a brake request when they pressed the brake pedal," said Qiu Bin, an associate research fellow at the School of Vehicle and Mobility, Tsinghua University. He said that if the driver had fully applied the brake but the system failed to respond sufficiently, it would be Tesla's problem, but if the driver had not fully applied the brake, it would be the driver's fault.

But in the data Tesla released, there was no mention of the physical movement signal to the brake pedal, which is necessary to show the driver's brake request. "It requires information about vehicle speed, the positions of the accelerator and brake pedals, and crucially, to judge how the driver was operating the car at that time," Qiu told *ChinaReport*.

Two days after releasing the data, Tesla responded that it was recorded with encryption technologies so it could not be directly

collected, revised or deleted. But this failed to dispel the public doubts. Several interviewed industry insiders told *ChinaReport* that since the source code is proprietary to the automakers, it is possible to revise or delete the data. But deletions leave trails that could be traced if ordered by a court. The EDR (event data recorder, similar to a plane's black box) is seen as the last way to get to the truth.

"Under the current management system, there is no mechanism to ensure the data of intelligent connected vehicles (ICVs) provided by carmakers is genuine and immutable," Wang Yao from the China Association of Automobile Manufacturers (CAAM) told *The Beijing News* in late April when asked about the case. Wang said that CAAM, carmakers, third-party testing agencies and ICT companies have worked out a solution to this dilemma: adopting blockchain-based multi-centered administration of vehicle data by multiple parties, which would ensure the authenticity of the data and help carmakers prove their innocence if necessary. The new system is to be piloted soon.

Absent Supervision

For the time being, Tesla is aggressive about vehicle owners' driving data. Following Zhang's protest, a number of Tesla owners posted on social media that they had requested data from the company after accidents but Tesla refused them all. Zhang's request for data was rejected too at first, until her protest gained media traction and the company started to feel the heat.

He Shanshan, an expert in ICV-related law and policy, said that driving data belongs to individual car owners. "Currently when an accident requires evaluation, both the owner and carmaker can withdraw data from the automobile data recorder or other platforms and take it for authentication," He said.

But now it is common to see differences between both sides in interpreting ICV data. "Some third-party agencies are not good enough at testing or they misinterpret the analysis. So carmakers refuse to authorise the data for [accident] testing," He noted.

This is a new challenge specific to the new energy vehicle sector, because combustion vehicles do not involve such complex data. Responding to the case, Wang Yao told the *Security Times* in late April that the issues around ICV data are very complicated. It includes the external environment, vehicle data, driving behaviour of users and privacy. There is no clear law or regulation yet as to who owns the data and no set procedure for carmakers to follow when they need to release data after an incident.

In 2017, the Chinese government asked new energy vehicle makers to upload real-time running data to a State platform for dynamic supervision and better data sharing. But the volume and types of data captured by the platform are not enough to analyze autonomous vehicle accidents, Wang Yao said.

CAAM suggested the government and carmakers cooperate in building a complete supervision system for ICVs. But Qiu said it is not appropriate to allow the government to collect car producers'

data, nor will the latter be willing to do so, as it involves technical secrets.

Some insiders believe it is reasonable to classify the data. Wang Xudong said data involving public security such as brakes and system controls should be supervised by the government. CAAM suggested that relevant departments have reliable access to data involving national security and public security.

Meanwhile, there are not enough third-party testing agencies, which Wang Xudong said are important for collecting data and evaluating incidents due to their objectivity and neutrality.

In August 2020, a Tesla owned by Chen Ming from Wenzhou, Zhejiang Province bumped into dozens of cars in a parking lot after it allegedly sped up and suffered brake failure. Tesla responded that its backend data showed nothing was wrong with the vehicle, claiming the accident was caused by the driver, who mistook the accelerator for the brake. Chen himself could not find a testing agency that was able to properly evaluate the data from the vehicle's software.

It is a headache for many Tesla owners in China. An employee of a third-party testing agency told *The Beijing News* that Tesla gets data directly from its internal sensors and monitoring equipment before sending it back to headquarters so it is difficult for anyone outside to "get even a general idea" of the data.

The majority of new energy vehicle producers set firewalls to prevent third-party testing agencies from reading the data, said Wang Xudong. "Now only a few agencies [in China] can test new energy vehicle data," he said. This has caused a much-criticised situation in which carmakers always have the final say in judging an accident, making them both player and referee.

"Testing agencies need to develop their capabilities. We also need more regulation and clarity on what data is used in evaluating responsibility in vehicle accidents to dispel the concerns of carmakers," He Shanshan said.

Regulation Urgency

Wherever Zhang's protest leads, it is seen by many as a reminder of the urgency to strengthen regulation of the fast-growing new energy vehicle (NEV) sector. China's NEV ownership reached 4.92 million by the end of 2020, an increase of 29.18 percent from 2019, among which electric vehicles made up 81.32 percent.

Since 2020, there have been reports of incidents involving "out-of-control" Teslas from across China. In a March report, the Shanghai-based news portal IT Times wrote that it interviewed 20 Tesla owners involved in accidents in different regions and found most had one thing in common: The vehicles sped up all of a sudden and the brakes failed. In the accidents, either the vehicles were damaged, or worse, the owners were injured and the vehicles ignited, leading to huge losses.

In the US, Tesla's current biggest market, there have also been complaints about the brake systems. In 2018, *Consumer Reports*, a US magazine, tested Tesla's Model 3 and found it had a longer braking distance than any modern car they had tested. After the report, Tesla

CEO Elon Musk acknowledged the car had a brake problem, promising to roll out a solution in a few days. In the US, Tesla has been involved in hundreds of accidents involving sudden acceleration and brake failure.

A year ago, Brian Sparks, an independent investor who was impressed with the unusual high rate of complaints against Tesla for sudden unintended acceleration, filed a petition to the US National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, requesting an investigation over 232 incidents involving Teslas. But the result, which came out in January, showed the sudden acceleration and subsequent crashes were all attributed to drivers who mistook the accelerators for brakes. Despite this, some safety advocates warned that Tesla has "put technology into the hands of consumers who don't properly understand it and incorrectly believe their cars are capable of safely driving themselves," *The Washington Post* wrote in a January report.

In response to similar accidents in China, Tesla always cited reasons like "wet ground" or the drivers "mistaking the accelerator for the brakes," claiming its braking system worked normally.

According to Wang Xudong, with safety lapse allegations mounting, if any problems are found with the car or if the iBooster (a system that builds up brake pressure autonomously in an emergency) does not work on Tesla vehicles, the producer should suspend sales and shoulder some responsibility.

Besides Tesla, some Chinese NEV brands have racked up complaints for problems including brake failures. Wang noted that NEVs are fast to adopt new technologies, but how these technologies work in coordination is a question that requires carmakers to collect sufficient data for testing and verification.

"A car requires a long period of testing, from design to production. Even newly designed combustion vehicles need to go through constant road tests in different climate and ground conditions, like in the Tibet Autonomous Region, Northeast China, the seaside or wetlands, so they can collect tons of data to test the performance of the car, before putting it on the market. But at present there is far from enough data collection on NEVs," Wang Xudong said.

The majority of the data collection on new vehicles should be finished in the testing phase before they launch, but in the fast pace of NEV development, some makers let consumers do the testing first, then their technicians obtain the data from background databases, Wang Xudong said.

"In this process, if something goes wrong with the program, customers' lives and safety are at risk," he added.

"For ICVs, their technology, product design and business model remain in an exploratory phase. A big challenge the industry faces is the testing and verification of their products," Wang Yao said.

According to Wang Xudong, the protest involving Tesla has exposed wider issues and loopholes in the management of new energy vehicles at large, including data management and pre-launch testing. "It's time to carry out comprehensive standardised regulation of the industry," he said. ★



Cryptocurrency

More Sides to the Coin

Billions of yuan in cryptocurrency was laundered across China's borders last year amid a regulation vacuum, prompting calls for strengthened supervision and international cooperation

By Xu Tian

As efforts to fight traditional money laundering strengthen in China, cryptocurrency offers a new conduit for laundering crime across borders.

In one of six cases involving money laundering released by the Supreme People's Procuratorate of China and People's Bank

of China (PBoC) on March 19, Chen Li (pseudonym) was accused of transferring more than 900,000 yuan (US\$139,140) in illicit funds to her husband, who had fled to Australia in 2018 to escape charges of fraudulent fundraising.

When Chen was arrested, police were still

uncertain how she did it. Chen confessed she had purchased Bitcoin from two cryptocurrency miners who sent Chen a digital key which her husband accessed abroad.

Yu Jianing, current rotating chairman of the Blockchain Professional Committee of China Communications Industry



PHOTO BY VCG

Association and president of Huobi University, a blockchain educational institute in China operated by the Hong Kong listed Huobi Group, told *ChinaReport* that since 2020, activities such as fraud, extortion, gambling, money laundering and loansharking have increasingly involved cryptocurrency for its high degree of anonymity and convenience in cross-border transactions.

Although Chinese authorities prohibit the purchase and sale of cryptocurrencies, policies vary by country and region, which enable the anonymous exchange of legal tender for crypto in China to continue.

According to a cryptocurrency laundering report published by PeckShield, a blockchain security company in China, in January 2020, the value of virtual currency flowing across Chinese borders totalled US\$17.5 billion, an increase of 51 percent on 2019. The trend

continues to surge, creating a big challenge for China's anti-laundering mechanisms, experts say.

Providing a Cover

In late November 2020, authorities broke up a digital currency exchange in Yancheng, Jiangsu Province. Police called it a Ponzi scheme that used digital currencies like Bitcoin to lure investors. The platform, called PlusToken, boasted 2.69 million registered accounts and 40 billion yuan (US\$6.2b) in cryptocurrency assets.

PeckShield told *ChinaReport* that as blockchain technology attracts public attention, more investment scams have emerged. According to statistics from PeckShield, the number of fraud cases involving cryptocurrency increased rapidly between 2017 and 2020. In 2017 there were only three cases,

but in 2019 there were 20. In 2020, there were 151 cases involving total losses of 3.13 billion yuan (US\$484m).

"The increase is directly related to the surging value of Bitcoin," said Yu Zhixiang, head of the technology department at OKLink, a blockchain technology provider. He said that as the value of Bitcoin rises, more people want to jump on the bandwagon, and casual traders without sufficient knowledge make for easy prey.

Yu Jianing noted that criminals turned to virtual currency for its anonymity, ease of global transfer and untraceability.

This has made virtual currency a haven for money laundering. In Chen Li's case, she and her husband chose virtual currency to avoid foreign exchange controls. Chen's husband, who was accused of embezzling funds through a money management platform

using virtual currency, escaped to Australia with a debit card to an account containing 3 million yuan (US\$463,800). However, there were yearly withdrawal limits on the account. So he asked Chen to buy Bitcoin that he could exchange for Australian dollars, said Zhu Qijia, a public prosecutor in Shanghai's Pudong New Area who is handling the case.

Liu Juanjuan, chief justice hearing the case, told *ChinaReport* that despite the new technologies involved, prosecutors build cases the same way as with traditional money laundering – by focusing on the processes used. But she said that crypto makes it more difficult to trace the flow of money and transfers are more likely to happen beyond Chinese jurisdiction.

When monitoring for money laundering, it is routine to follow the flow of capital on bank statements. But in this case, Chen sent the money from her account to the Bitcoin miners. Their financial records have no direct link to Chen's husband.

There are third-party platforms that specialise in laundering money through cryptocurrency. In a February 2020 case handled by Peng Qijin, a police officer in Baiyun District, Guangzhou, Guangdong Province, the suspect bought 1 million yuan (US\$154,600) in USDT, a type of cryptocurrency, from a trader surnamed Zhang on a crypto platform. Zhang transferred the money to dozens of financial and payment accounts to avoid having the assets frozen by police. The process took just six minutes. Peng said that if they only tracked traditional bank accounts, they would have never discovered that Zhang had sent the sum to designated accounts after laundering it with USDT.

The designated accounts in this case, as police later discovered, did not belong to the suspect, but to registered agents from third-party payment platforms that facilitate illegal or semi-legal financial activities. These agents fence the money using their personal accounts, on which they earn commissions.

Yan Lixin, executive director of the anti-money laundering research centre at Fudan

University in Shanghai, said cryptocurrency, which is independent of financial institutions, makes it harder to trace the flow of capital than centralised currencies. Real-time crypto transactions mean that laundering can happen within a matter of seconds anywhere in the world. Regulatory authorities barely have enough time to respond or prevent the consequent losses or adverse impacts over time, Yan said.

"Cryptocurrency is a vector for illicit money. Platforms that provide illegal payment services are a fast track, while overseas messaging apps serve as a safety buffer. Illicit money circulates quickly this way," said Peng, adding that police are far from being able to promptly identify those involved. Peng suggested that time and energy is devoted to studying these new means of laundering and figuring out ways to combat it.

Closing Loopholes

After China began cracking down on the black market for debit and phone cards used in online fraud and other criminal activities including money laundering in October 2020, money launderers increasingly turned to cryptocurrency. Statistics from PeckShield show that from January to October 2020, between 89,400 and 166,900 Bitcoins were transferred from China a month. In November and December 2020, the number increased to 231,700 and 254,100.

Crypto trading platforms that play a core part in this process are caught in the middle. Yu Zhixiang told *ChinaReport* that exchange platforms have since adopted "know your customer" (KYC) policies that involve strict user verification measures, a cornerstone of security for traditional financial institutions.

Some platforms require users they deem high risk to wait an extra 24 hours to receive a payment. This increases difficulty for those desperate to make transfers and launder capital. For large sums, some platforms also have added manual reviews.

A tracking system for digital currency on blockchain has been proposed by exchange

platforms and blockchain security firms over the past two years. Sky Eye on The Chain, an on-chain data analysis tool released by OK-Link in September 2020, can detect virtual currency addresses connected to fraud and other crimes and monitor their activity. It can also be used to track the capital flow in a particular industry and all address involved. Police already use similar tracking tools in working fraud and laundering cases.

Yu Zhixiang said that police can easily track suspects as long as the exchange platform has adhered to KYC requirements. But if capital moves to a new account with little transaction history, it is hard to trace its owner because of the anonymity blockchain provides.

For cross-border crimes, the situation is even more complicated. In the fraud case handled by Peng Qijin and his colleagues in February 2020, seven agents were arrested. However, police could not pursue the platform's employees that facilitated the laundering because they were in the Philippines.

Yu Jianing told *ChinaReport* that criminals can rent server space in semi-regulated or unregulated countries to run crypto trading websites, provide crypto wallet services or carry out criminal activities online. In these situations, anti-money laundering efforts, financial supervision and international judicial assistance have no effect.

Shi Yan'an, director of the Research Centre for Criminal Justice at the Renmin University of China, told *ChinaReport* that a mechanism for international cooperation targeting cross-border money laundering is necessary. At present, international legal bodies such as the UN Convention against Corruption and the UN Convention against Transnational Organised Crime have regulations on international cooperation to fight money laundering.

"China should make the most of multilateral cooperation and enhance information exchange, particularly with law enforcement and financial departments in other countries, and strengthen cooperation in overseas asset

CHINA BY NUMBERS

75.8%

recovery,” Shi said.

Tightening regulations on virtual currency and exchange platforms is essential to combat money laundering, interviewed experts said. Many suggested that virtual currency platforms construct anti-laundering mechanisms and cooperate with supervision authorities. However, there is no clear regulation in China as to what kind of rules these platforms should follow, Shi said.

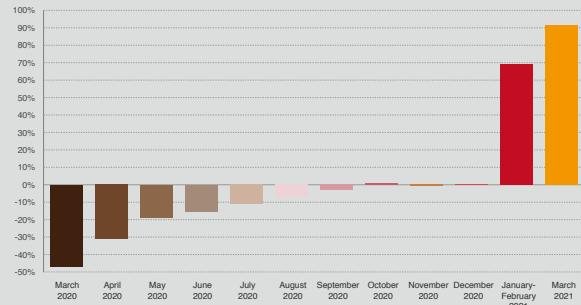
In some ways, digital currency exchanges are beyond the supervision system. In 2017, China shut down all digital currency exchanges within its borders. But as overseas digital currency exchanges (with servers located abroad) remain available to Chinese users, limiting domestic exchange has not stopped the market.

Zhao Binghao, an associate professor of economic law at Renmin University, said that authorities need new regulatory policies suited for China. He added that the current supervision of virtual currencies led by the PBoC has failed to keep pace with financial innovations using blockchain, the core technology of cryptocurrency. The anti-laundering bureau under the PBoC only supervises institutions with payment licences and is not in a position to coordinate with police, customs and other authorities.

Shi suggested that a money laundering PBoC spin-off could serve as an independent department under the State Council, which would empower it to include virtual currency exchange platforms under its supervision. “There is a lack of legal grounds and means to prevent, monitor or stop virtual currency laundering,” Yan said.

More challenges are on the way. Zhao said that since last year, some virtual currency platforms have decentralised with P2P exchanges and avoid KYC authentication. “This augers challenges for which supervisory bodies worldwide are far from being prepared for,” Zhao said. ★

Year-on-year change in catering sector income by month

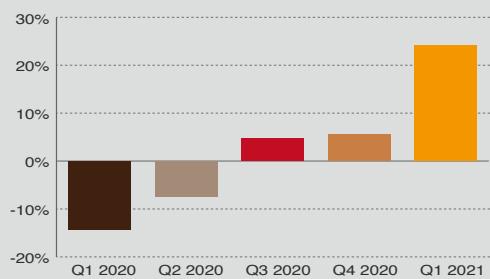


24.2%

Year-on-year growth in China's public budget revenue in the first quarter of 2021

Source: Ministry of Finance of China

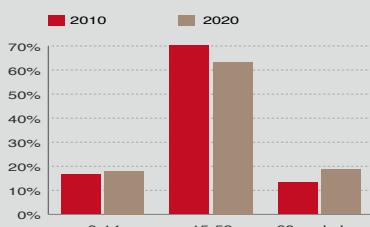
Year-on-year change in China's public budget revenue by quarter



0.53%

Average annual growth rate of China's population between 2011 and 2020, 0.04 percent lower than the growth rate of 0.57 percent between 2000 and 2010

Proportion of Chinese population in different age groups in 2010 and 2020



Source: National Energy Administration of China

251.7%

Year-on-year increase in China's new shipbuilding order in the first quarter of 2021, totalling 17.2 million deadweight tons



Source: Ministry of Industry and Information Technology of China

8.1%

Decrease in energy consumption per unit of added value of industrial enterprises above designated size (with annual revenue over US\$3.1 million) in the first quarter of 2021

Source: Ministry of Industry and Information Technology of China

Ancient Global Supply Chain

Trade Winds

The global supply chain for China-produced luxury goods in the 18th and 19th centuries was similar to today's flows of products. But it was tea, a cheap Chinese product, that had a lasting impact on trade and relations with the West

By Song Yimin

Teen carved balls in descending size, one inside the other, nestle inside a larger ivory ball, rather like an intricate Russian doll. A fan depicts scenes of European courting couples. On another fan, Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) officials are pictured in a travelling caravan with a large entourage. There are porcelain tea sets with a Chinese floral design but with European-style gilt trim. All are delicate. All feature both Chinese and European tastes. These are some of the displays at a recent exhibition on Chinese exports to Europe through the Maritime Silk Road during the 18th and 19th century. The exhibition was held by University College London's Centre for Applied Archaeology, Art Exhibitions China and Liaoning Provincial Public Cultural Service Centre at Liaoning Provincial Museum in Shenyang.

Major exports from China to Europe along the Maritime Silk Road in the 18th and 19th centuries included porcelain, tea, silk, paintings, fans, ivory carving, lacquerware and silverware. Many of the exhibits come from European collections, and they reflect the style of products European collectors valued most. It is a sign of the ancient global supply chain for luxury products going from East to West, and that China's role in this chain was similar to today. But ultimately, it was a cheap Chinese product that finally had the biggest influence on China and the West.

Skilled Artisans

For rich Europeans at that time, ivory carvings were the most popular made-in-China decorative items. During the Age of Discovery when Europeans set out to explore and colonise the world from the 15th to the 18th century, spices, slaves and ivory objects dominated trade between Europe and their colonies. Ivory was imported from European colonies in Africa and South Asia. The best ivory was shipped to Guangzhou in southern China where the best ivory carvers in the world worked. Skilled at carving all sorts of objects, some could carve up to 30 ivory nesting balls from one piece of

ivory, one inside the other. The sophisticated, elegant ivory carving resonated with the refined, ornamental patterns that were popular in Europe. China processed materials from other parts of the world and sold the manufactured goods to Europe. It was not much different to the dominant international supply chain of today where China is known as the world's factory.

These precious materials were also used to produce smaller luxury items. For example, wealthy Europeans widely used name cards. The best cards were made of ivory or giant clam shells, and Guangzhou was the manufacturing centre. But the materials were not from China, and the main market was Europe.

The trade developed only in Guangzhou and not elsewhere in China. In 1685, Emperor Kangxi of the Qing Dynasty relaxed the maritime trade ban put in place more than 300 years earlier by Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) founder Zhu Yuanzhang. He allowed customs bureaus to be set up in four coastal provinces – Guangdong, Fujian, Jiangsu and Zhejiang. Guangdong customs bureau in Guangzhou dealt with most of the foreign trade. Seventy-two years later, Kangxi's grandson Emperor Qianlong (1735-1796) closed the other three customs bureaus, leaving Guangzhou as the only port open to foreign trade. There was a certain area in Guangzhou where Chinese and Europeans dealers did business and were settled.

No matter where the materials were from, China's exports to Europe combined both Chinese and European design elements. Europeans were eager to learn about the lifestyle of Chinese people, so artists in Guangzhou drew pictures on a piece of paper slightly larger than a postcard. These depicted the life of ordinary Chinese people, such as street vendors, pupils going to school, performers in variety shows and Taoist rituals. The paintings adopted the Western technique of linear perspective. They were not expensive, and were sold to Europeans as souvenirs and gifts, like China-made Christmas decorations and gifts are exported to Europe and the US today. Liu Haishu, a famous Chinese artist, praised the Guangzhou painters as



Left: A fan made of gold, silver and silk with Qing Dynasty imagery, a Chinese export to Europe in the 18th and 19th century, is exhibited at Liaoning Provincial Museum in Shenyang, February 12, 2021
Right: A delicate ivory ball is exhibited at Liaoning Provincial Museum in Shenyang, February 12, 2021

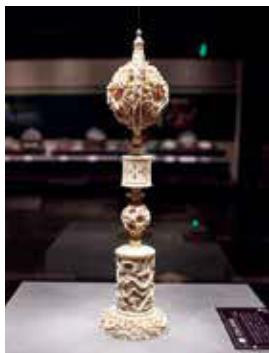


PHOTO BY XINHUA

pioneers who introduced Western fine art to China. In 1912, Liu set up China's first fine art school which admitted both male and female students.

Fanning Success

Ivory and other precious materials including gold, silver, jade, polished tortoise shells, silk, sandalwood and giant clams were used to make frames for silk fans, another popular made-in-China luxury in Europe.

Complicated techniques were developed to produce the fans. The designs featured bright colours, flowery curves and Chinese and European scenes. Some fan designs showed noble European men courting women. Some showed Qing officials escorted by guards and servants as they travelled. For European aristocracy and the middle classes, a fan from China represented their social status. By contrast, fans for Chinese were usually made of bamboo and paper, decorated with light colours and simple designs. Typically, Chinese calligraphy and ink wash paintings of rivers and mountains decorated these fans. They were valued by how famous the calligraphers and painters were, not by the materials the fans were made of. Ancient Chinese literati liked to

exchange fans as gifts, representing their scholarly tastes, not social status.

A language of "fan gestures" developed among European women. For example, when a lady repeatedly opens and closes her fan, she is telling a man "I miss you." If she pulls her fan near her heart, she is saying "you have my love." If she keeps flapping her fan, it is a warning to stay away. These fan signals were more effective and reserved than any oral expression.

To show off their wares, artists and manufacturers produced a sample fan for exporters and importers which contained many colours and designs. It was too expensive to prepare a sample for every colour and material. Customers could see what choices of colours and materials they could have from one sample.

In the 18th and 19th centuries, most chinaware in Europe came from China, with Japan a minor supplier. The chinaware was put in the lowest hold on a cargo ship as ballast on the long journey to Europe. Silk and tea were stored in upper holds to keep them dry. These goods were a perfect mix for the long journey.

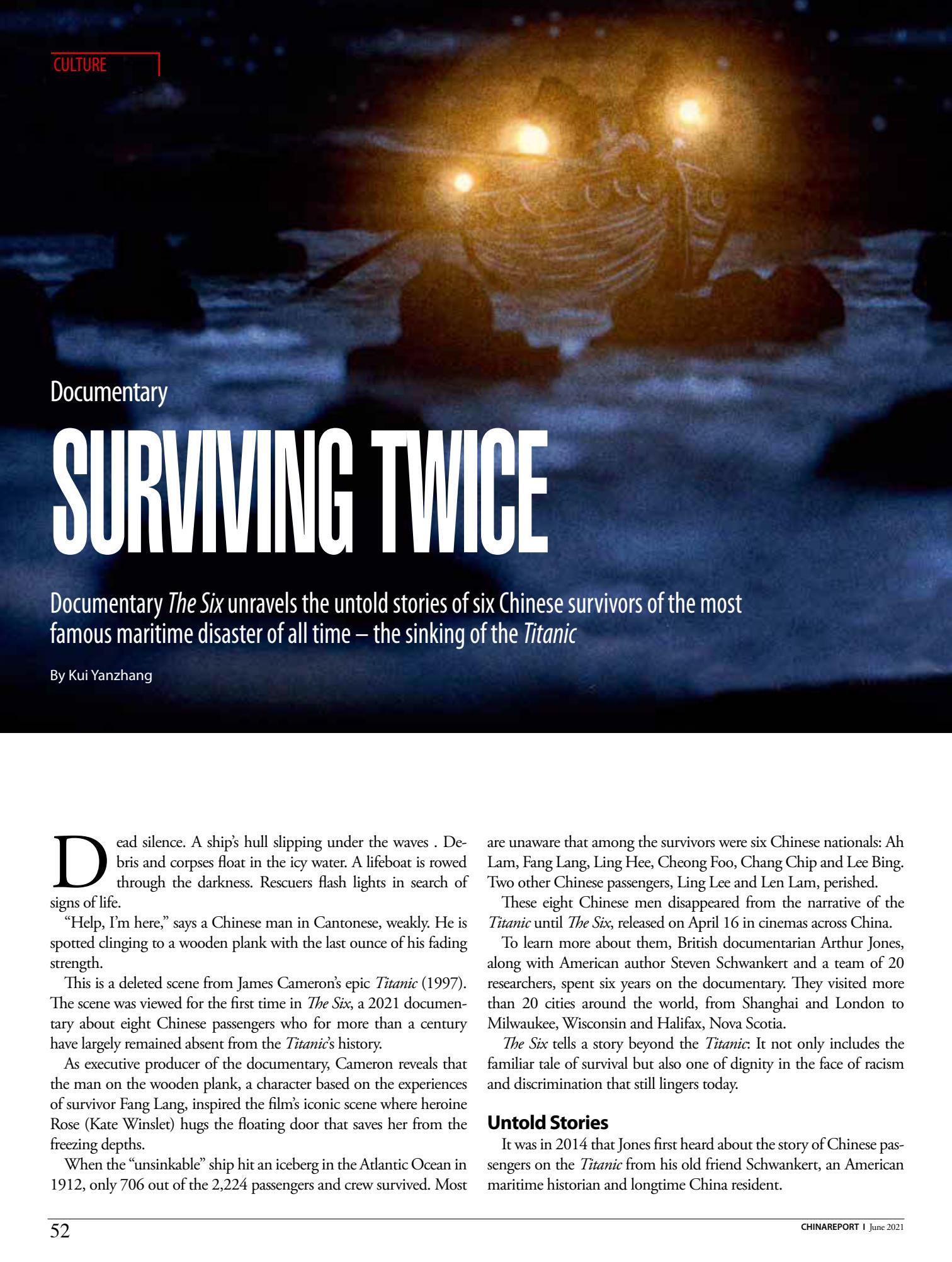
The chinaware was mainly tea sets. In the late Qing Dynasty, Chinese tea dominated the global tea market. Porcelain tea sets had become part of popular tea culture in daily life and social networking for Europeans at that time. The British, in particular, loved tea. After Britain became the global trade leader, the tea trade boomed. Chinese tea was popular among the aristocracy and the wealthy, and later it became affordable and popular for ordinary families. Given this, tea found a much larger market in Europe and the US than the limited market for luxuries like ivory balls and fans for the aristocracy or the wealthy. By contrast, there were few goods China wanted to buy from Europe. Chiming clocks were one of the very few things that found a market, but demand was low. Later, the clocks were made in Guangzhou. As a result, China's massive tea exports to Europe gave the country a huge trade surplus.

European powers were frustrated by their trade deficit and China's dominance in both luxuries and daily supplies like tea. Opium was exported to China. A real war was triggered later between China and Britain. Gunships replaced cargo ships between China and Europe. Guangzhou, the major trade centre, became the main battlefield. ★



This article is a transcript of an episode of NewsChina's Podcast **The Context**.

Find us on Spotify, Google Podcasts, Amazon Music, Stitcher, iHeart Radio and RSS Feed.

A dramatic scene from the movie *Titanic* showing a lifeboat with several people in the dark, choppy water.

Documentary

SURVIVING TWICE

Documentary *The Six* unravels the untold stories of six Chinese survivors of the most famous maritime disaster of all time – the sinking of the *Titanic*

By Kui Yanzhang

Dead silence. A ship's hull slipping under the waves. Debris and corpses float in the icy water. A lifeboat is rowed through the darkness. Rescuers flash lights in search of signs of life.

"Help, I'm here," says a Chinese man in Cantonese, weakly. He is spotted clinging to a wooden plank with the last ounce of his fading strength.

This is a deleted scene from James Cameron's epic *Titanic* (1997). The scene was viewed for the first time in *The Six*, a 2021 documentary about eight Chinese passengers who for more than a century have largely remained absent from the *Titanic*'s history.

As executive producer of the documentary, Cameron reveals that the man on the wooden plank, a character based on the experiences of survivor Fang Lang, inspired the film's iconic scene where heroine Rose (Kate Winslet) hugs the floating door that saves her from the freezing depths.

When the "unsinkable" ship hit an iceberg in the Atlantic Ocean in 1912, only 706 out of the 2,224 passengers and crew survived. Most

are unaware that among the survivors were six Chinese nationals: Ah Lam, Fang Lang, Ling Hee, Cheong Foo, Chang Chip and Lee Bing. Two other Chinese passengers, Ling Lee and Len Lam, perished.

These eight Chinese men disappeared from the narrative of the *Titanic* until *The Six*, released on April 16 in cinemas across China.

To learn more about them, British documentarian Arthur Jones, along with American author Steven Schwankert and a team of 20 researchers, spent six years on the documentary. They visited more than 20 cities around the world, from Shanghai and London to Milwaukee, Wisconsin and Halifax, Nova Scotia.

The Six tells a story beyond the *Titanic*: It not only includes the familiar tale of survival but also one of dignity in the face of racism and discrimination that still lingers today.

Untold Stories

It was in 2014 that Jones first heard about the story of Chinese passengers on the *Titanic* from his old friend Schwankert, an American maritime historian and longtime China resident.



A still from documentary *The Six*

"About 700 of *Titanic*'s 2,200 passengers survived. We have records on the identity of almost all of the survivors. We know their names, nationalities and family relations. But as for these six Chinese survivors, it seemed that no one had a clue about them," Jones told *ChinaReport*.

Born in Yorkshire, England, Jones has lived in China for 25 years. He initially worked as a China-based reporter for *Variety* magazine, mainly covering the Chinese film industry. For the past 15 years, Jones has worked as a documentary director based out of Shanghai, shooting projects for the BBC, National Geographic and the Discovery Channel. In 2013, Jones, his brother Luther and Schwankert co-directed *The Poseidon Project*, a documentary about the search for a British submarine that sank after a collision off China's coast in 1931.

"Since I've already made a maritime disaster documentary, it seemed a bit repetitive for me if I did another one. And the story of the *Titanic* was so well known that I wasn't sure whether I could do something new with it," Jones said.

Jones bounced the idea off his Chinese friends. Most were not only curious about the topic but also unaware that Chinese were on the *Titanic*. Their enthusiasm rekindled the director's interest. "Maybe it was really a good topic. I could also explore more issues through a new *Titanic* story, such as racism, human nature and father-son relationships," Jones said.

The project posed major challenges. No survivors were alive at the time of production, the last being a British woman who died in 2009 at the age of 97. Since overseas Chinese labourers of the early 1900s often lived in extreme poverty and did not settle down, it was likely they did not have descendants.

Jones gave his research team three to six months to investigate whether the project was feasible. At the time, all they had to go on were two yellowing documents: One was a ticket listing the eight Chinese passengers' names and ages, and the other listed the six who survived.

One name on the ticket drew the team's attention. At first glance, the name handwritten in cursive appears to read "Ali Lam." However, Jones and his researchers posited it was more likely "Ah Lam," suggesting he came from southern China. In Cantonese, Hakka, Chaozhou and other southern dialects, adding the syllable "Ah" to a given name is a common way to create a nickname.

"We all found this extremely interesting. It gave us a glimpse of hope that we really could do something new beyond what we had on hand," Jones said.

Then came another breakthrough. On a *Titanic*-related online forum, the team found that years ago a user named "Tom K Fong" claimed that he was the son of the Chinese survivor Fang Lang. But the account had been deleted. Jones and his team were determined to find him. Their strategy: sending emails addressed to "Tom K Fong" at a slew of different domains in the hope that one would hit. They got a reply two weeks later from a Tom Fong, a Chinese American living in Janesville, Wisconsin.

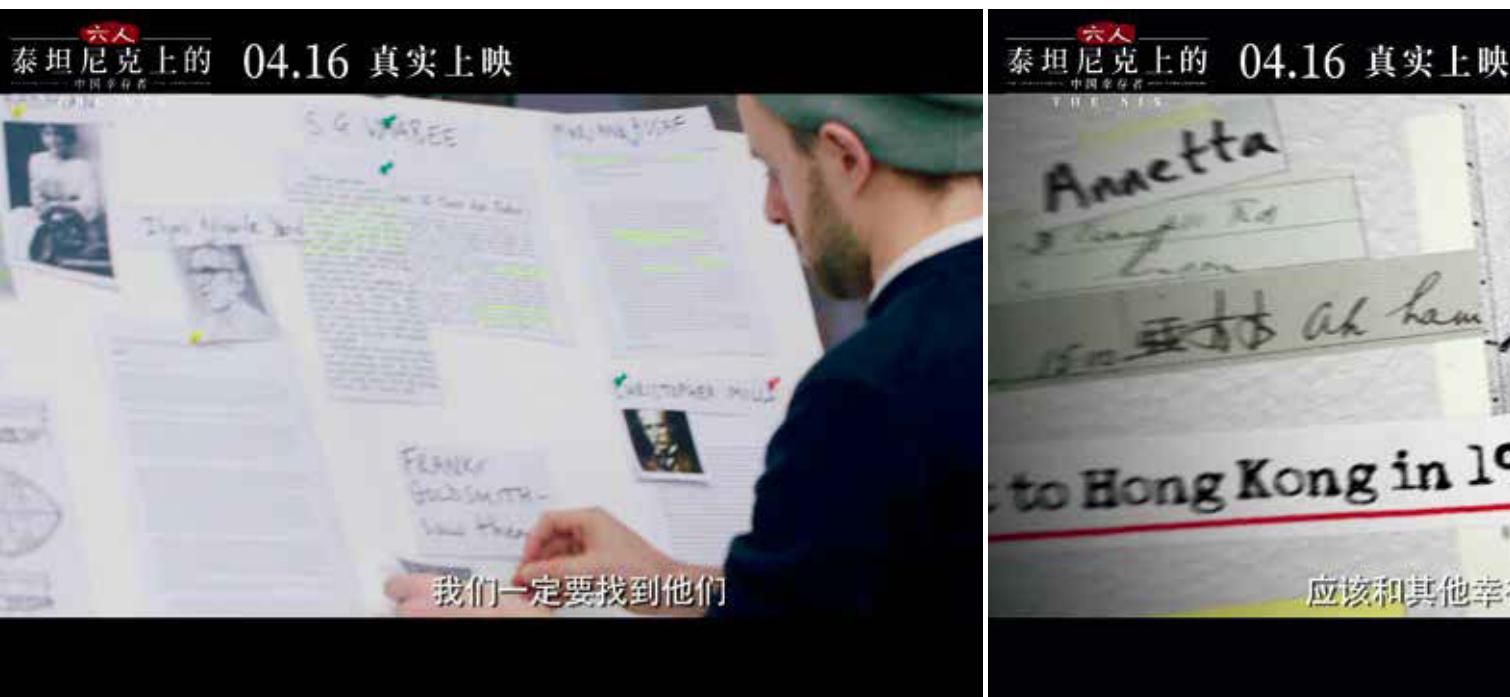
After meeting with Fong and collecting more information, Jones and his team confirmed that Fong was Fang Lang's son. Jones decided to shoot the documentary.

The Reenactment

On the morning of April 10, 1912, the port of Southampton was bustling with passengers and people seeing them off.

On third-class group ticket No.1601, 17-year-old Fang Lang and seven other Chinese paid 56 pounds and 9 shillings to board the RMS *Titanic*, the world's largest ship at the time.

According to Jones' research, the eight men, aged between 17 to 37, were professional mariners and not stowaways as was widely reported in newspapers at the time. They had been contracted to work on the *Annetta*, a freighter that was scheduled to set sail from New York, the



Three stills from documentary *The Six*

Titanic's destination.

On April 14 at 11:40pm, four days after leaving Southampton, the *Titanic* hit an iceberg.

Among the eight Chinese passengers, Cheong Foo was the first aware of the danger and escaped on lifeboat No.13. Records showed that there was an Asian man on the No.13 who was unable to speak English. "This matched Cheong Foo. He could neither speak English nor write Chinese," Jones said.

Fang Lang, Ling Lee and Len Lam plunged into the water. The latter two drowned. The other four Chinese passengers survived as they boarded the *Titanic's* collapsible lifeboat C.

News articles from the time on the *Titanic's* sinking accused the four Chinese survivors of sneaking onto the lifeboat by dressing in women's clothing and hiding under the seats. This anti-Chinese narrative corresponded with the racism against overseas Chinese labourers in the West at the time. Over a century later, the accusations lingered.

"In most of the reports, some passengers only heard that the Chinese men dressed as women but didn't see it themselves. An Irish boy on the lifeboat who witnessed the scene said 'Chinese men dressed in black,' not women's clothing," Jones told *ChinaReport*. Jones suggested that the rumour may have stemmed from a misunderstanding: Chinese men at the time wore long queues that could pass for women's braids.

Jones found a team to build a replica of collapsible lifeboat C according to its original design and invited volunteers to recreate the scene. The experiment showed it would have been impossible for the four adult men to hide unseen.

Colder than the Water

To some extent, what awaited the six Chinese survivors was crueler than the shipwreck. They faced strong anti-Chinese sentiment in the West in the early 20th century, which brought tumultuous changes to their lives.

Due to the Chinese Exclusion Act (1882-1943), a controversial law that banned Chinese from immigrating to the US, the six men were not welcomed and praised as other survivors were. Instead, five were deported within 24 hours of their arrival on Ellis Island, New York City, a major port of immigration. They were forced to board the *Annetta*, a freighter chartered by the Atlantic Fruit Company, and departed for Cuba the next day.

Chang Chip, who became extremely ill after the shipwreck, was only allowed to enter the US to receive treatment. Later, Chang was transferred to a hospital in London and eventually died from pneumonia in 1914.

Four Chinese survivors – Lee Bing, Ah Lam, Cheong Foo and Ling Hee – returned to the UK to work on merchant ships. After World War I broke out, there was a shortage of commercial sailors as British men enlisted to fight. The four worked as seamen until they were forced to leave the country in 1920.

As Britain languished in a post-war recession, competition for jobs increased, as did anti-immigrant sentiments.

In response, the UK government issued the Aliens Restriction Act in 1919, which limited employment of foreign residents in Britain and particularly prohibited foreign seamen from working on British ships. The subsequent 1920 Aliens Order made passports obligatory and required all foreigners seeking employment or residence to regis-



ter with the police or face deportation.

The policies forced many Chinese men to separate from their wives and children, as many of them had married and started families with British women.

Father and Son

Among the survivors, Fang Lang's story is the most complete.

After he was deported to Cuba, Fang worked on the *Annetta* for eight years. From there, Fang illegally entered the US and changed his name to Fong Wing Sun. He ran a restaurant and then a tailor shop before working as a waiter at a Chinese restaurant in Wisconsin. He retired at 80 years old.

Fong became a US citizen in his 60s, which enabled him to not only sponsor the immigration of relatives but also legally marry. He wed a woman 40 years his junior from Taizhou, Zhejiang Province, securing her a green card. The couple had a troubled relationship and eventually divorced when their only son, Tom Fong, was five years old.

Tom Fong said he witnessed his father deal with racism and discrimination. In the documentary, he recalled that his father had punched a man in the face after he called them derogatory names.

For his entire life, Fong senior kept his near-death experience aboard the *Titanic* from his wife and son. He only alluded to it to his nephew and a few friends, but did not mention the ship's name. Fong died in 1985 at the age of 90. It was not until nearly two decades after his death that Tom Fong learned about his father's story and his previous name from a cousin.

Jones suggested that Fong senior's reluctance to share his story may

have stemmed from concerns over his immigration history. "Perhaps he feared that his past would bring some trouble to his family if he told the truth," the director told *ChinaReport*.

Jones and his team were unsure whether Fong Wing Sun was the same Fang Lang until they visited Fong's hometown of Taishan, a coastal city in southern China's Guangdong Province. Jones and researchers met with Fong's relatives there. Over the years, Fong exchanged letters with his relatives and often sent money.

One of Fong's letters yielded a significant find – a poem he wrote about surviving a shipwreck – "*The sky was high and the ocean wide / I was in the water and a piece of wood saved my life / There were three or four friends on the lifeboat / We wiped the tears away as we laughed.*"

The poem was the final puzzle piece to Fang Lang's story.

Jones and Schwankert also pursued information about the two Chinese passengers who perished – Ling Lee and Len Lam. They learned that after the wreck, four Canadian vessels had been dispatched to retrieve bodies. More than 100 of the victims are buried at Fairview Lawn Cemetery in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Records showed that among them was a Japanese.

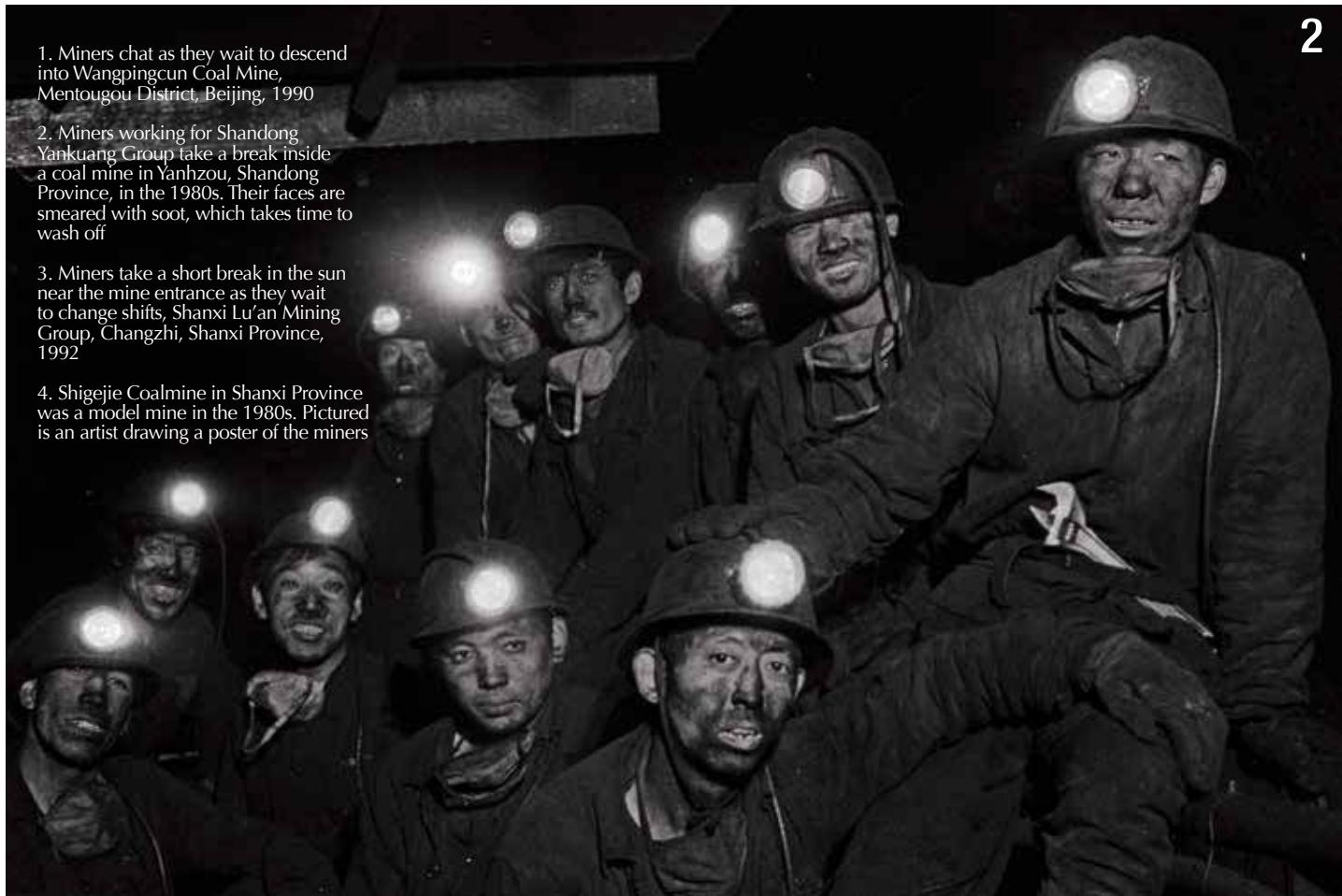
Jones and Schwankert visited the cemetery. "There was only one Japanese passenger on the *Titanic* and he survived. So if it was really an East Asian man who was buried there, then he would have been one of our two Chinese victims," Jones told *ChinaReport*.

For Jones, shooting *The Six* was a starkly different experience from his usual productions. The production team needed to unravel mysteries by conducting experiments and simulations. "I've always said that this time our model was not a historical documentary but rather a suspense story," Jones said. ★



1

SEEING IN THE DARK



2

1. Miners chat as they wait to descend into Wangpingcun Coal Mine, Mentougou District, Beijing, 1990

2. Miners working for Shandong Yankuang Group take a break inside a coal mine in Yanhzou, Shandong Province, in the 1980s. Their faces are smeared with soot, which takes time to wash off

3. Miners take a short break in the sun near the mine entrance as they wait to change shifts, Shanxi Lu'an Mining Group, Changzhi, Shanxi Province, 1992

4. Shigejie Coalmine in Shanxi Province was a model mine in the 1980s. Pictured is an artist drawing a poster of the miners

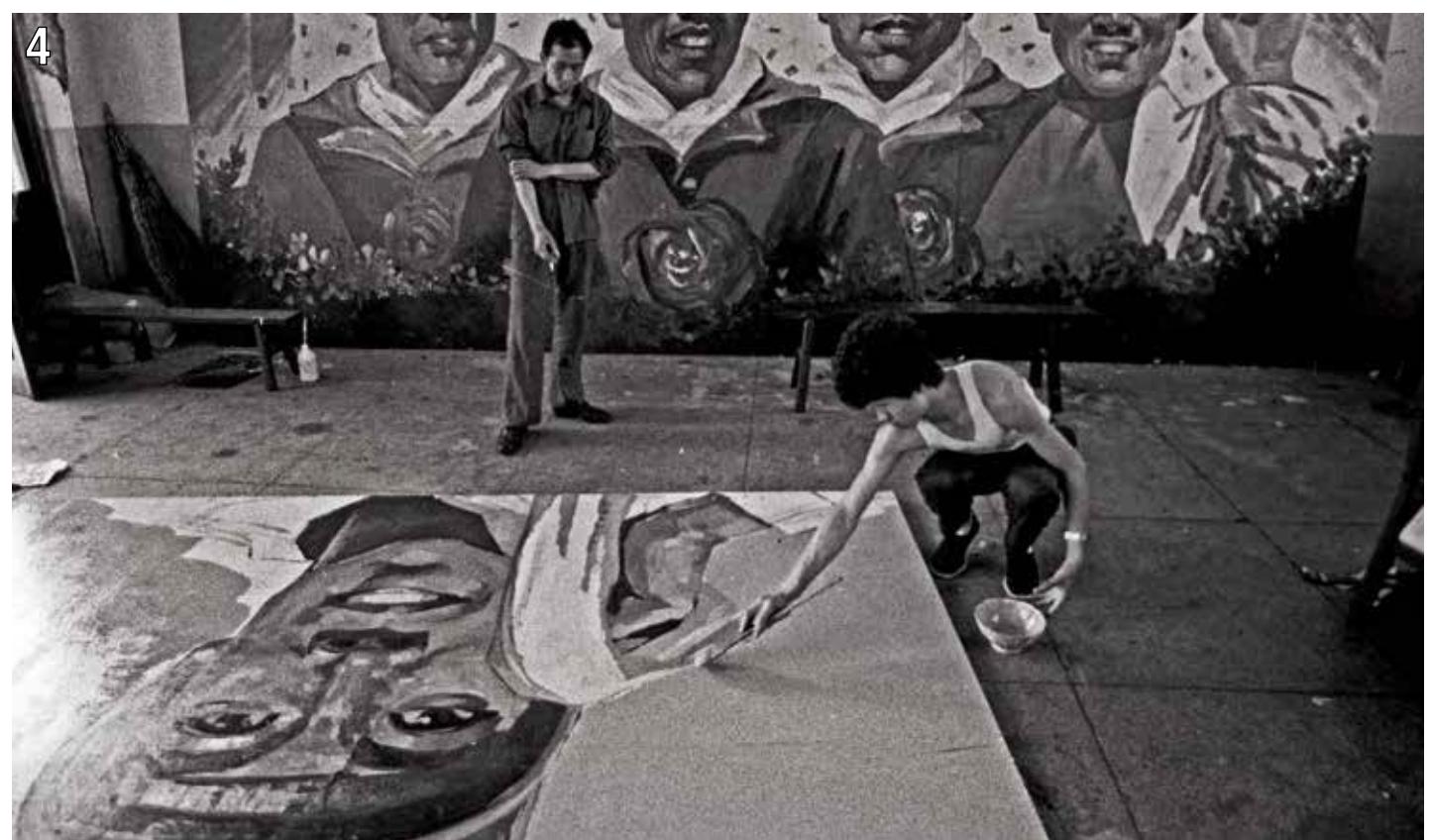


3

Once considered "the food of industry" in China, coal mining was the backbone of the country's industrialisation. Over the decades, Chinese miners descended into the Earth's depths countless times to reach the fossil fuel on which the country's economic growth was based.

Born in 1957 in Beijing, Zhang Zhaozeng started working as a photographer at *China Coal News* in 1988. With his lens, Zhang captured the blood, sweat and tears behind China's coal mining industry over the past 30 years. In his photo collection *Chinese Miners*, Zhang presents China's coal workers from the 1980s until the present day, showing how their lives changed with the rise and fall of the industry. In another collection, *Ice and Fire: Thirty Years of China's Coal Mining*, the photographer recorded how the country's coal mining industry reached its peak in 1996, before experiencing a decade-long golden age before its decline in 2016.

Ice and Fire won Zhang the 11th Golden Statue Award for China Photography in 2016, the most prestigious photography award in China.



4



1





Nanjing

Ruling Legacy

Get your fill of Chinese history from the ancient to the modern in Jiangsu's bustling capital, before feasting on all things duck

By Joshua Dummer

If I had to use one word to sum up the Nanjing travel experience, it would have to be "legacy." The Jiangsu provincial capital was once one of China's most important cities, hosting the governments of both the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) and the Republican government of the early 20th century. Though it has lost some of its stature in the decades since the national government left, the city, whose name means Southern Capital, has proudly preserved what remains.

While the city is replete with historical locations to visit, including a sprawling Ming-era palace complex and a sobering memorial to the victims of the massacre carried out in the city by Japanese forces in 1937, there's no better place to get a sense of the centuries of Nanjing's history all at once than the leafy Purple Mountain scenic spot. The area, a short subway ride from the city centre, is home to several sites that can take more than a day to fully explore, but if queues are light and you're a quick walker you can probably fit the main ones into a single day.

Starting chronologically, the first stop is the Ming Xiaoling tomb complex. Built to house the remains of the dynasty's founder, Emperor Hongwu, 100,000 workers started

to build this UNESCO world heritage site in 1381 and finished 24 years later. A visitor is met at the entrance by a huge stone tortoise, one of the most famous of its kind, then follows a path to the magnificent "Ming Lou" main tomb that's lined by statues of animals and warrior guardians. Atop the Ming Lou is a small exhibit explaining Emperor Hongwu's rise to power and the influence of the tomb complex on later tomb architecture, but if you're pushed for time it's easily skippable.

Before you leave the area set aside for the tomb complex, I highly recommend a walk around a garden funded by charitable contributions from Japan. A visit in spring finds it awash in purple and pink blossoms of cherry and plum trees, along with several Japanese-style pavilions and gates. During our visit on a national holiday, when every tourist spot was rammed full, it was still an oasis of calm.

A short stroll away is the former residence of Song Meiling, wife of Chiang Kai-Shek and member of the influential and powerful Song family. Set among maple trees, the large villa and its beautiful period furniture give a glimpse into the elegance with which we typically associate the Republican-era elite.

You can finish your day on Purple Mountain by visiting its most famous attraction, the mausoleum of Sun Yat-Sen, the man often called the father of modern China. While the monumental building and its setting are pretty awe-inspiring, even following the Ming tomb complex, I couldn't help but feel that some of the solemnity one would associate with a mausoleum was lost on the path to its entrance, which is stuffed with fried chicken, potato-spiral-on-a-stick and milk tea stands. Still, it's hard to say you've really visited Nanjing without a visit. And climbing the 392 steps gives a panoramic view of the area, and a virtuous feeling.

If an afternoon on Purple Mountain isn't enough history for you, I'd also recommend a visit to the former Presidential Palace. Home to China's government from the late 1920s – with a break due to Japanese invasion – it offers an intriguing mix of Western and Chinese architecture. The complex was previously the residence of various Qing officials, and was home to one of Chinese history's most interesting characters, the self-proclaimed brother of Jesus Christ and leader of the Taiping Rebellion, Hong Xiuquan.

After the Presidential Palace, you could

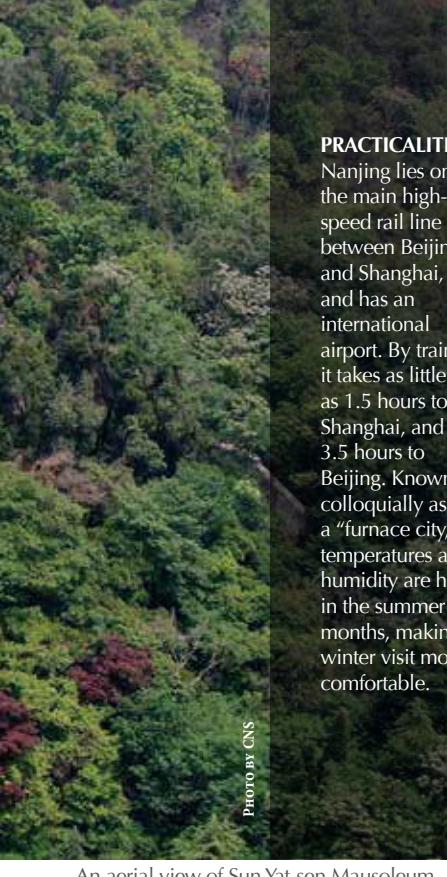


PHOTO BY CNS

An aerial view of Sun Yat-sen Mausoleum, Nanjing, Jiangsu Province, May 2020



PHOTO BY CNS

Colourful autumn leaves line the central 600-metre corridor of the Ming Tomb complex in Nanjing, Jiangsu Province, October 2020



learn more about Hong and the bloody swath he cut through China by visiting the city's Taiping Rebellion museum. But I'd recommend taking a break from history at the nearby Y2COFFE, a tiny café that will do you a delicious flat white or provide you with a bottled craft beer.

If you still want more hits of history, Nanjing Museum, one of the biggest in China, is full of relics – including a full jade burial suit, and a huge collection of Ming and Qing porcelain, housed in a 1930s building, with additions built in the 1990s.

Duckiest City

If I was asked to use two words to sum up the Nanjing travel experience, I'd probably add "duck" to "legacy." Nanjing seems to run largely on the meat, fat and blood of the water fowl. While Beijing's roast duck is the country's most famous duck dish, it's really a mutton town. Nanjing, however, is easily the duckiest city I've ever been to. Indeed, at least one version of the story of Beijing duck traces its origins to Nanjing, with the dish brought to the new northern capital by Nanjing chefs accompanying the court on its move.

A good place to explore the city's obsession

with the quacking bird is the Fuzimiao area. The lively neighbourhood centres around the Confucius Temple, rebuilt many times over the years, at which wannabe imperial officials would take the all-important examinations. Now, it's a major commercial area packed with shops, bars and restaurants.

The most ubiquitous dish is duck blood soup with vermicelli noodles, in which the lively, peppery soup offsets the rich silkiness of the cubes of coagulated blood. It's much more appetising than the word "coagulated" makes it sound. Get it from one of the literally hundreds of restaurants specialising in it. There are at least three in Nanjing Railway Station alone.

Also not to be missed by fans of the bird with the proverbial hydrophobic back is Nanjing salt duck. The long-marinated and gently cooked bird has soft, pink flavourful flesh, that's served cold to emphasise its tenderness. Enjoy it with a glass of *baijiu* (a strong Chinese liquor), if you're a fan.

The duck treat that has proven the most memorable for me is one of the city's less flashy specialities though. "Duck fat pancake" is, as advertised, an oval of pastry, topped with sesame seeds and shot through with duck fat. This typical breakfast snack is salty, rich, flaky and my mouth is watering just thinking about it. Buy them early, as they tend to sell out for obvious reasons.

Nanjing, as a major city in China's east, is easy to get to. You can fly in from just about every decent-sized city in China, as well as take high-speed trains. There may even be cruises, as the main part of the city sits on the southern bank of the Yangtze River as it wends its way to the sea. A major modern-era sight is the original Yangtze River Bridge, opened in 1968, and proudly proclaimed as the first bridge to span the waterway built using Chinese technology. It has a viewing platform, and a huge statue of Mao Zedong to greet visitors.

The city has plenty of international-brand hotels. I was impressed by both the service and price of the recently completed Kempinski branch in the city, which came in about 15 percent cheaper than its high-end competition earlier this year. ★

WeChat Warriors

By Leila Hashemi

I recently scrolled through my WeChat while taking a “phone break” at work and noticed how many group chats I am in. From my American expat group and the foreigner group for my compound to more than 10 bar and restaurant groups that send daily deals and happenings, it almost seems as if I have more groups than friends.

Like most people, I mute my groups, and the little red dot shows up to let me know I have unread messages left to the wayside. But in times like these where the need for cellular consumption is strong, I dive in, push the notification to scroll up the 138 or so unread messages and see what I have missed.

Usually it's just banter or fliers, but recently, and I don't know if it is due to unrest or boredom, things are getting heated. I have noticed more and more WeChat warriors starting, continuing and egging on fights in chat groups.

While some of these arguments are harmless, like which flavour of the American favourite treat Pop Tarts are the best and whether they should be eaten toasted, untoasted or toasted and buttered, others go a little further.

In one instance, a group was discussing their favourite pizza places in Beijing when one establishment was mentioned that had a seedy past and was generally boycotted by most in the group. However, when someone said, “Well if you want to boycott them for one wrongdoing, are you still going to eat at McDonald's which is notorious for underpaying their workers?” And that was just the tip of the iceberg. The conversation went back and forth for over 400 messages until an admin put a stop to it saying, “If this topic is mentioned again, whoever brings it up will be booted from the group.” Yikes! While I do agree that businesses should be held accountable for deviant behaviour, maybe a group of 500 people isn't the place to rock up and get on your soapbox.

I am also in a group that posts upcoming DJ shows, parties and drink deals at a local

While some of these arguments are harmless, like which flavour of the American favourite treat Pop Tarts are the best and whether they should be eaten toasted, untoasted or toasted and buttered, others go a little further



ILLUSTRATION BY XIAOZHENDUO

bar. I guess something went down between two of the group members because the group quickly became a clothesline airing out all their dirty laundry. “Someone saw you at the bar last night with someone else! Everyone who knows [***] should know she's a liar! She said she would never hook up with him, but she did!” Oh my! Hand me the popcorn!

While the subject matter here was less heavy, there was a lot of chiming in, and when the girl finally saw her business was out in the open in a 400+ group, she personally messaged the guy who had called her out. He

promptly posted the screenshots of their conversation. Is nothing sacred?

I do feel there is one saving grace for WeChat and that's how WeChat Moments controls who sees and can comment on a post. Obviously, if someone is not your friend, or if you have blocked them from seeing your Moments, there is no issue – they can't see or post on anything. But also, you cannot see comments on someone's post unless you are friends with the comment poster as well. I feel this function keeps countless keyboard warrior battles from breaking out on the platform.

There is a flipside to the eerie glow of the screen. I feel the anonymity of the internet or the ability to speak in groups online also helps people who might not be able to connect otherwise. I find that people going through problems with mental health or groups for women where they can talk freely about female medical issues really help people when the information or help can't be found within their own circle of friends.

I mentioned before the American expats group. There is a comfort in jumping in and talking with a group of people from my motherland living here and discussing things such as our favourite snacks, restaurants and long-forgotten television programmes from our childhoods. In addition, the virtual world blends into reality as the group puts on events a couple of times a year for people to meet and mingle. While I hope not to run into one of the non-toasted Pop Tart lovers, it is nice to put a face to a name.

So, I think a good lesson for the WeChat warriors out there is that Beijing and the virtual community are not as big as you think. You never know when you might meet your online arch-nemesis in person. That being said, I hope that admins and people in groups going forward could use online platforms in a positive way rather than hiding behind their screens to say mean and hurtful things they wouldn't dare say in public or to people's faces. ★

The Unmarrying Kind

By Adam Robbins

China has a problem with sex – specifically, the ratio of men to women. It's one of the worst in the world. For every 100 women, there's an extra five men who can't find a match. Scale that up and you have millions of men who won't marry, no matter how much their family harangues them. For most *guanggun*, the "bare branches" of the family tree, it's a source of stress. But for some, it's a liberation. Here are some I've met, with names changed for privacy.

Ray

This bold young man was raised in a tiny village, but he's shrugged that off like an old shirt out of fashion. Europe is now his home.

We met him poolside, working on his rich tan – a rare sight here – with a wide face, small eyes hidden by large bright sunglasses, and hair a fairy tale bramble of twisting curls. He struts and smiles with a confidence lacking in most, certain since boyhood how he wants to live life. He was frank with his mum early on, renouncing the old ball and chain to live and pledged to an unfettered life abroad. She's been supportive throughout, another rare wonder here.

He cares nothing for marriage or, it seems, his father. He's been waiting impatiently for them to divorce since he was 12.

It was only the pandemic that brought us together, as the first fatal wave of infections kept him from returning home to Italy. Flights were extortionate and the bureaucracy was even worse. But his one true love waited in a villa overlooking the sea: Pablo, a huge golden retriever. Ray would move heaven and earth to return to that beautiful, shaggy beast.

And so he did. After just two weeks in our guest room, he was flying off to Rome. He's now back with Pablo again and having the time of his life.

Cody

Cody lives in Shanghai now, far from parental concerns. It's terribly expensive, he sighs, with a cool puff of a slim cigarette, equal parts pride and chagrin.

This committed bachelor wears his hair shuttled forward, salon-curled and rolling in rococo swirls along fair skin ageing under the nicotine haze. He's up to a pack a day, but he wants to quit in three years. He'll be 30 then and he's heard the body just doesn't bounce back after that. He's right, of course



ILLUSTRATION BY XIAO ZHENDUO

This committed bachelor wears his hair shuttled forward, salon-curled and rolling in Rococo swirls along fair skin ageing under the nicotine haze. He's up to a pack a day, but he wants to quit in three years. He'll be 30 then and he's heard the body just doesn't bounce back after that. He's right, of course.

Cody's done PR long enough to find the networking dull. There's no longer the desire to know and be known. Now it's just free drinks. He finishes two ciders to my three beers, but empties half his pack. The smoke is gentle and sweet.

I was useful to him earlier, providing Beijing contacts in my magazine days, but by now he's just a drinking companion at unexpected times. I'll sip and smile, but I'll never have much to say.

Warren

There's a cocky energy to Warren and he's not shy to tell you where it comes from. But there's more than biology behind the half-smirk that animates his long northern face. Both parents are provincial officials, in and out of government, and he's been swaddled in that privilege since birth. One of his favourite anecdotes sees him sent off by Mother, chauffeured to a destination unknown. Upon arrival, the staff's makeup and clothing (or lack thereof) chased away all confusion. Whether the teen sat awkwardly with the older woman to wait out the hour – or instead revealed a virtuoso talent – varies depending on his audience.

What's clear is he wants to get away. Years ago his parents heard he's not the marrying kind, and they were clear: If it's true, he's cut off from everything. He denied it all, of course, but quickly started a business to support himself if the hammer falls. It's been a scramble for cash since then, even liquidating a property he was set to inherit. That too came with parental strings, since Mother was then getting a promotion and the sale had to be quiet. Transactions like that invite scrutiny and he'd already been interviewed as they vetted her. "It was not pleasant," he reports.

But now he's calling it quits. "I need a way out," he told me. "You wouldn't imagine the lengths my parents go to get me married. Recently they've been cranking it up since I'll be turning 36 this year. They even got the mayor to corner me so I'd agree to go on blind dates they've set up."

So the plan is to sell the business to anyone with cash, grab a flight to the US, and get a company there. It seems impossible this year, with visa services and air travel strangled by the pandemic. But if anyone has the chutzpah to pull it off, it's this guy. ★

Eating Pigeon is Super Coo

By Mina Yan

When I talk about Chinese cuisine with my Western friends back home, they tend to ask me about the crazy and weird stuff that I've eaten here in China, everything from snakes to scorpions to pigeons.

To be honest, not everything is as strange as it sounds – especially if you're not from North America, where pigeons are sometimes called “rats with wings.” But here, they're called “delicious.”

The first time I had pigeon wasn't even in China. It was in Paris, France. Somehow that wasn't strange to people. Maybe it has something to do with the bird not being presented with its head still attached. But not here in China. Here, locals believe you should know what you're eating. So when you order a pigeon, it's served whole: head, feet and all.

China has a rich culture when it comes to pigeons. In the Beijing area, raising pigeons dates back more than 3,000 years. It's an old tradition that is still alive in the city's hutongs. Old Beijingers take their caged pigeons on walks and chit chat with other bird lovers. The city also hosts pigeon races for large purses. Needless to say, pigeons are both beloved

here as pets and on dinner plates.

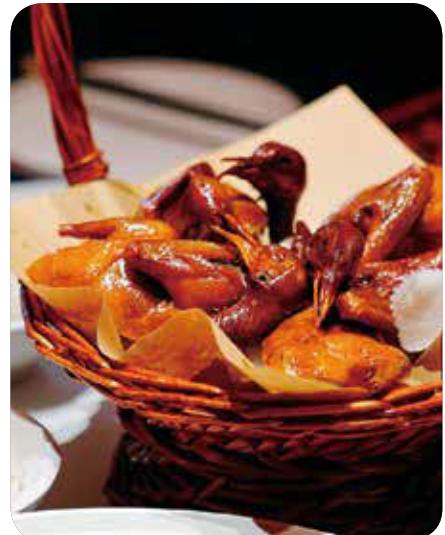
Although pigeons can be cooked in multiple ways, the most popular is roast squab from Hong Kong and Guangzhou. A squab is essentially a farmed young pigeon that has a very sweet and tender meat. Since they're relatively small, it's one squab per serving, so the bill can add up fairly quickly.

For those going out for a casual meal, a roast pigeon shared at the table will do just fine.

My personal favourite is roast pigeon. They're cooked so that the meat is still succulent but the skin is flavourful and crispy thin. Sprinkled with a dash of China's five spice seasoning and you've got an irresistible dish that's basically an explosion of flavours and textures in your mouth.

So where does pigeon rank in the poultry list? Disregarding its eggs for a second, chicken can be found almost everywhere in the country. Duck can be found everywhere as well, especially as snacks, but whole cooked duck is a Beijing speciality.

Pigeon is a southern Chinese delicacy. Since pigeon farmers are less common, prices



are much higher than for chicken or duck.

But, what if you're not going down south and want an authentic taste? Dim sum restaurants are a safe bet, and every major Chinese city has pigeon speciality restaurants. While most will offer a wide variety, they are likely to favour northern Chinese tastes. But like Peking duck restaurants in Beijing, these pigeon restaurants specialise in the prized bird. If you find one that's been around for years and is packed with locals, you've likely wandered into a culinary gold mine.

So put your prejudice for “bizarre” foods aside and explore the lesser-known side of Chinese cuisine for a taste of the seriously good stuff. ★

real chinese

gongjuren

Tool, dupe of another

US President Joe Biden recently proposed an employment programme that includes US\$2 trillion in funds to boost infrastructure and manufacturing over the next eight years. In his speech delivered on May 6, Biden said “the Chinese are eating our lunch” and that the US has to compete. Chinese netizens said that US presidents have mentioned China in so many speeches that it has become a *gongjuren*, or a tool to rally public support.

Literally meaning “tool man,” *gongjuren* was first used in gaming circles. Among the

first credited for popularising it is a gaming livestreamer called Wanglaoju who streams on video platform Bilibili. In one video, Wanglaoju purchased non-player characters (NPCs) for the sole purpose of building structures in the game Kenshi, a single player role-playing game. Because the NPCs only engage in building and not in combating, he called them *gongjuren*. Since then, this term has been used to describe people who are used by others as tools.

Gongjuren is also used to describe one-sided romantic relationships when one person puts

gōng jù rén



in all the effort. In the workplace, a *gongjuren* is an employee who is diligent and willing to bear hardships without complaining, while the boss never recognises their hard work and only calls on them for jobs that no one else wants to do.

Passiveness is the *gongjuren*'s trademark. They tend to avoid the spotlight and have poor social skills. Reluctant to say no to others, they are very easily pushed around. There are many online tips for young people on how to prevent from becoming *gongjuren* and avoid being taken advantage of. ★



CHINA HOUR

presents



SKY TV Channel 191

SPONSORED BY

Pinestone

Nature's freshness in a cup

www.pinestonetea.co.uk

T·
E·
A· 茶



Subscription

Never Miss an Issue of ChinaReport Again!

First issue
FREE

CHINA
REPORT



To subscribe the digital edition, search for *China Report* app on [pocketmags.com](#); To subscribe both print and app editions, follow instructions on [Fm4media.com](#); Or fill in the form below and return it to:

ChinaReport Subscriptions
83-87 Crawford Street
London W1H 2HB
UK

OR send an email to sbs@foremost4media.com, stating the period of subscription, your mailing address and contact details, and bank payment reference (format: CRsub12(6)+your initials)

- 6 Month (£16.00) 12 Months (£30.00)
 Print+App (£18.50) Print+App (£35.00)

Bank details:

A/c name: Foremost 4 Media Ltd
Branch: Bank of China (UK) Ltd.
Sort Code: 40-50-37
Account No: 33089150
IBAN: GB47BKCH40503733089150
SWIFT: BKCHGB2U

You can also pay by cheque, made payable to : Foremost 4 Media Ltd.

For the App



For Print & App



For Print & App



For Print & App



Name: _____	Tel: _____
Postal Address: _____	Email: _____
Postcode: _____	_____