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BEIJING REVIEW

VOL.59 NO.22 JUNE 2, 2016

WWW.BJREVIEW.COM



AN OPERA MAKEOVER

Traditional art form enters new stage



RMB6.00
USD1.70
AUD3.00
GBP1.20
CAD2.60
CHF2.60
JPY188

ISSN 1000-9140



22>

9 771000 914161

邮发代号2-922 • 国内统一刊号: CN11-1576/G2



The Ninth Kangba Art Festival, the Seventh Kangding International Love Song Festival and the Garze Mountain Tourism Festival

Garze Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan, China, 2016



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Cover Design: Wang Yajuan

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Beijing Review (ISSN 1000-9140) is published weekly for US\$61.00 per year by Cypress Books, 360 Swift Avenue, Suite 48, South San Francisco, CA 94080. Periodical Postage Paid at South San Francisco, CA 94080. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Beijing Review, Cypress Books, 360 Swift Avenue, Suite 48, South San Francisco, CA 94080



北京周报

BEIJING REVIEW

A News Weekly Magazine
Published Since 1958

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Legal Counsel: Yue Cheng

North America Bureau
Deputy Chief: Ding Ying
Tel/Fax: 1-201-792-0334
E-mail: dingying@bjreview.com

Africa Bureau
Chief: Li Jianguo
Africa Managing Editor: Francisco Little
Tel: 27-71-6132053
E-mail: casa201208@hotmail.com

General Editorial Office
Tel: 86-10-68996252
Fax: 86-10-68326628
English Edition
Tel: 86-10-68996250
Advertising Department
Tel: 86-10-68995807
E-mail: ad@bjreview.com.cn
Distribution Department
Tel: 86-10-68310644
E-mail: circulation@bjreview.com.cn

Published every Thursday by
BEIJING REVIEW, 24 Baiwanzhuang Lu,
Beijing 100037, China.
Overseas Distributor: China International Book Trading
Corporation (Guojij Shudian), P.O. BOX 399,
Beijing 100044, China
Tel: 86-10-68413849, 1-416-497-8096 (Canada)
Fax: 86-10-68412166
E-mail: fp@mail.cibtc.com.cn
Website: http://www.cibtc.com
General Distributor for Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan:
Peace Book Co. Ltd.
17/FI, Paramount Bldg, 12 Ka Yip St, Chai Wan, HK
Tel: 852-28046687 **Fax:** 852-28046409

Beijing Review (ISSN 1000-9140 USPS 2812) is published weekly in the
United States for US\$61.00 per year by Cypress Books,
360 Swift Avenue, Suite 48, South San Francisco, CA 94080
News Postage Paid at South San Francisco, CA 94080
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Beijing Review*,
Cypress Books, 360 Swift Avenue, Suite 48,
South San Francisco, CA 94080

EDITOR'S DESK

Embracing Traditional Operas

Traditional Chinese operas are an important part of China's intangible cultural heritage, including well-known genres such as Peking Opera, Kunqu Opera and Cantonese Opera. Among them, Peking Opera has greatly outperformed others in terms of recognition abroad. Some foreigners not only travel to China to watch it, but also to pick up some of the opera's performance techniques.

However, as today's audiences are evolving to consume different forms of entertainment, traditional operas face challenges regarding the maintenance of their cultural legacy whilst innovating to keep up with contemporary needs.

In terms of retaining its popularity, the industry is obstructed by a lack of master performers—and Peking Opera is no exception. Compared with older generations of heavyweights, even today's best young performers lag far behind in terms of ability and repertoire. In the past, Peking Opera actors and actresses were able to perform more than 100 plays each, while today, being able to do a dozen is seen as laudable.

Generating innovation poses an even greater challenge. Most of the excellent plays on show are inherited from previous generations. There are few newly written plays and even then, "excellent" new plays are rare.

Due to the increasingly diverse entertainment landscape—in particular the thriving industries of pop music, TV series

and movies, as well as games—young people's interest in traditional operas is waning, as is its market. This adds pressure to opera troupes as they struggle for survival, often resulting in the extinction of a number of opera genres.

Can traditional operas be protected and once again prosper by going through the process of innovation? The Chinese Government has taken many measures to achieve that goal. Last July, the State Council issued a document stressing the development of traditional operas. The document proposed that in the coming five years, there will be a well-established support system, and also a scheme for training performers that combines schools and opera troupes.

On the basis of creating a nationwide census, the Ministry of Culture has embarked on the establishment of a thorough database of the varieties of local operas and also an online platform for information sharing. The platform is expected to take shape by June 2017. Besides, China has also started a revitalization project for local operas. Local governments have been encouraged to set up special funds to contribute to the operas' development as well.

Crafting a promising future for traditional operas is a common concern for all, as every kind of art form is a type of wealth that belongs to the whole human race. It is something worth handing down from one generation to another.

WRITE TO US



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JAPAN.....JPY188 EUROPE.....EURO1.90 TURKEY.....YTL5.00 HK.....HKD9.30 NEPAL.....RS40

主管单位：中国外文出版发行事业局

主办单位：北京周报社

地址：北京市西城区百万庄大街24号 邮编：100037

编委会：李雅芳 李建国 黄卫 王燕娟 丁志涛 李振雷 曾文卉

社长：李雅芳

总编室电话：(010) 68996252 发行部电话：(010) 68310644

印刷：北京华联印刷有限公司

北京周报 英文版2016年 第22期 ISSN 1000-9140 国内统一刊号：CN11-1576/G2 邮发代号：2-922

广告许可证0171号 北京市期刊登记证第733号

国内零售价：人民币6.00元



WELL PREPARED

A journalist films a video in Hangzhou, capital of east China's Zhejiang Province, ahead of the 100-day countdown to the Group of 20 (G20) Summit on May 27.

In order to host the summit of the world's major economies on September 4-5, Hangzhou has made efforts to improve the local environment as well as to accomplish other preparatory tasks.

The G20 was formed in 1999 to give developing countries a more powerful voice in forming the global economy.



Come on!

Students at a senior high school in Hengfeng County, Jiangxi Province, play a game for relaxation during their preparation for this year's college entrance exam. The exam will take place on June 7-9.

Education Subsidy

The Chinese Government has allocated 134.5 billion yuan (\$20.5 billion) to subsidize compulsory education this year, the Ministry of Finance said on May 24.

The funds, taken from the central coffer, increased by 3 percent from the spending in 2015, said the ministry.

China requires children to receive nine years of compulsory education, normally from the ages of 6 to 15.

The subsidy should be used to balance education resources between urban and rural areas.

More funds should go to boarding schools, small schools or those with inadequate resources, and those with a large number of students from rural migrant families, said the

ministry

Part of the subsidy will also be spent on improving rural students' nutrition and the livelihood of rural teachers in poverty-stricken areas.

Health Investigation

A nationwide health investigation of poverty-stricken people is under way, and the results are expected to lead to new policies to aid the country's sickest and poorest citizens.

Official statistics show that there were 12.56 million households living in poverty directly due to unaffordable medical bills as of 2013, accounting for 42.4 percent of the total poor on record.

Starting in mid-April, the National Health and Family Planning Commission asked local health staff to collect information on

these people, including their names, addresses, illnesses and medical costs.

A report will be written up by the end of July for the commission, which will decide how to best help them.

"Sickness is one of the most formidable obstacles standing in the way of the poorest population in China," said Hu Meiyang, a doctor at the Children's Hospital of Jiangxi Province.

China's health budget for 2016 is 1.24 trillion yuan (\$189 billion), and aiding the poor is a key priority.

Cybersecurity Cases

A non-profit institution said on May 25 that more than 120,000 cybersecurity cases were reported in China last year.

There were 126,916 cases in 2015,

up 125.9 percent year on year, with 99.6 percent of complaints coming from domestic users, according to a report released by the National Computer Network Emergency Response Technical Team and Coordination Center of China on May 25.

Around 60 percent of these cases were related to fake Web pages, while backdoors and hacking accounted for about 20 percent and 10 percent, respectively.

About 99 percent of the cases had been solved, the report showed.

Wu Yunkun, President of the cybersecurity company 360.com, attributed the growing problems with Internet security to increased personal information sharing due to popular online-to-offline services and companies' lack of R&D and investment in cybersecurity protection.

Legislative efforts on a cybersecurity law were stepped up in 2015, when a draft cybersecurity law was submitted to the top legislature for the first reading in June.

Nuclear Emergency

The 320-person China Nuclear Emergency Rescue Team was officially founded on May 24. The team will be responsible for nuclear radiation protection and medical rescue.

In accordance with the framework of China's national nuclear emergency system, the team was established on the basis of existing military and nuclear industry emergency resources. It will lead rescue work for serious accidents, including international nuclear emergency rescues.

China has long prioritized the maintenance of a nuclear emergency system, ever since the Chernobyl accident in the former Soviet Union in 1986. The country first established a national nuclear accident emergency committee in 1995.

Manuscript Protection

The Chinese Government has added

899 valuable ancient manuscripts to a catalog that is under state protection.

They include oracles, manuscripts on bamboo strips and silk scrolls, ancient paper copies of tablet inscriptions, rare manuscripts in ethnic minority languages and in foreign languages such as Latin and English, said Zhang Zhiqing, Deputy Chief of the National Library of China, at a press conference in Beijing on May 24.

The catalog of valuable manuscripts under state protection now totals 12,274. This is the fourth time the government has updated its contents.

Although the number of manuscripts in this round is smaller than previous rounds, the quality is higher, said Li Zhizhong, head of an expert committee that reviews the candidates.

Among them, 59 ancient manuscripts are from Tibet. Tibetan temples, libraries and museums have been very active in applying for state protection and many of their collections are valuable and well-preserved, Li said.

There are also eight manuscripts owned by the Chinese University of Hong Kong, the first time the list has included collections from Hong Kong.

The government also selected 14 institutions as major guardians of rare ancient manuscripts, raising the total number to 180.

The Ministry of Culture said that it is working on a five-year plan for the conservation of ancient

manuscripts (2016-20), with priorities given to legislation, establishing the institutions and a mechanism for the survey and registration, repair and digitalization of rare manuscripts.

Teacher Recruitment

Authorities in northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region plan to recruit more than 11,000 teachers from around the country this year to ease its teacher shortage.

Of those, 60 percent will work in four prefectures in the southern part of Xinjiang, where a dearth of bilingual teachers poses a challenge for education. The recruits in these areas should be able to speak Mandarin as well as a language of the local minorities.

Xinjiang has hired 72,600 teachers in the past five years, with about 62,400 of them being bilingual.

Document Inscription

The family documents of Confucius have been listed as documentary heritage by the seventh general meeting of the Memory of the World Committee for Asia and the Pacific (MOWCAP), which took place in Hue, Viet Nam, from May 18 to 21.

The archives, running to over 9,000 volumes, are records from 1534 to 1948, one year before the founding of the People's Republic of China and contain details of the family's history during feudal times.

The documents are important for research into China's feudal patriarchal system, said Li Yuchun,



Rapid Response

Emergency workers take part in a drill that simulated a workplace accident involving dangerous chemicals in Cangzhou, Hebei Province, on May 25.

Deputy Director of the Cultural Relics Management Committee of Qufu, Shandong Province. Qufu is the hometown of the ancient sage, Confucius (551-479 B.C.).

Qufu plans to apply for the inscription of the documents into the Memory of the World register, Li added.

Established in 1998, MOWCAP is the regional forum for UNESCO's global Memory of the World (MOW) Program to protect and allow access to documentary heritage, especially that which is rare or endangered.

The Confucius family is regarded as the world's biggest recorded family in terms of the number of generations it contains. The 2009 version of the Confucius family tree records 83 generations, more than 2 million people.

China has 10 inscriptions in the MOW, including documents on the Nanjing Massacre, the Compendium of Materia Medica, a classic of Chinese medicine, and The Yellow Emperor's Canon of Internal Medicine, China's earliest medical text.



Her Voice

Lakshmi Puri, Assistant Secretary General of the UN and Deputy Executive Director of UN Women, addresses the Women-20 Meeting in Xi'an, Shaanxi Province, on May 25. The two-day meeting was part of activities in the lead up to the Group of 20 Summit to be held in China this September.

Boosting Private Investment

The National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) announced its next round of local-level inspections on May 20, putting the implementation of policies related to private investment under scrutiny.

Six teams will be sent to 12 provincial-level regions, the NDRC said on its website.

In the previous round, nine teams were dispatched by the State Council to 18 provinces and autonomous regions.

"We aim to improve pro-private investment policies, which respect and maintain enterprises' principal position in the market and advocate entrepreneurship," according to a statement released after a State

Council executive meeting earlier this month.

The growth of private investment, which is considered an important supporting power for stabilizing growth, adjusting structure and boosting employment, has decreased recently.

Poverty Reduction

Vice Premier Wang Yang said on May 23 that China aims to lift more than 30 million rural residents out of poverty from 2016-20 through industrial development.

In a national poverty reduction teleconference, Wang asked officials to develop industries according to local conditions and engage poor people in these industries so that they can share the benefits.

Local governments should

spend more on poverty relief-related industrial development, improve financial support, and create a favorable market environment for these industries.

At the end of 2014, China had 70 million people living below the nation's poverty line of 2,300 yuan (\$350) in annual income, almost all of whom live in the countryside. China aims to eliminate poverty by 2020, when its 13th Five-Year Plan (2016-20) is completed.

Artificial Intelligence

China will boost growth of the artificial intelligence (AI) sector in the next three years, said a statement issued by the NDRC on May 23.

By 2018, China shall build platforms for fundamental AI resources and innovation and make break-

throughs on basic core technology, said the three-year implementation program for "Internet Plus" AI.

The country shall be in line with global AI technology and industries by 2018, it said.

The program will involve key projects such as intelligent home appliances, smart automobiles, intelligent wearable devices and robots.

Government departments shall map out supportive fiscal policies for the sector and boost international cooperation, it said.

China has been promoting the robotics industry as it strives to upgrade its manufacturing sector and address its labor shortage.

Cargo Train Deal

A subsidiary of the China Railway Rolling Stock Corp. (CRRC) has won a deal to make 800 freight cars for Pakistan, the company said on May 19.

The deal, with expected sales revenue of over 200 million yuan (\$30 million), is the largest overseas order for CRRC Jinan Co., said a manager with the company.

The trains will include 780 coal hopper cars and 20 cabooses, said the manager.

Founded in 1910, CRRC Jinan Co. is one of the oldest train makers in China. Its products, including cargo trains, wind power equipment and intelligent machines, have been exported to more than 40 countries and regions.

The CRRC, formed from the merger of CNR Corp. and CSR Corp., has been actively bidding for contracts in overseas markets in recent years and has sold equipment to more than 100 countries and regions.

New Smartphone Factory

Foxconn Technology Group, the world's largest computer manufacturer and supplier to Apple Inc., is reportedly building a new factory for Huawei Technologies in southwest



Joy Ride

A permanent magnet straddle-type monorail train comes into use in Qingdao, Shandong Province, on May 19.

It can carry 1,448 passengers, reach a top speed of 80 km per hour and has a service life of roughly 30 years. It can also save 10 percent of energy costs.



Flower Power

Farmers are pruning hydrangeas at a solar greenhouse belonging to the Yiren Flower Specialized Cooperative in Xingqing District of Yinchuan, capital of Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, on May 23.

To support the development and upgrading of its local flower industry and help solve financing problems for enterprises, the local government, enterprises and cooperatives jointly set up a flower industry development fund.

China's Guizhou Province.

Foxconn has been bolstering its operations in Guizhou over the past few years as a result of cheaper operating costs in the region. It has also been building and expanding its low heat emission data centers in the province since 2014.

Industry experts believe Huawei will become an important client for Foxconn in the years ahead, with Apple growth slowing down, and Huawei enjoying robust growth.

Huawei is a major Chinese client for Foxconn's subsidiary FIH Mobile, which also manufactures phones for Huawei's competitors Xiaomi and Oppo.

Experts also say Foxconn is looking to shift its business from reliance on contract electronics manufacturing to developing its own hi-tech products and marketing them to a wider audience.

Mining Acquisitions

China Molybdenum Co. Ltd. has announced a bid to buy two metal mines, as it accelerates overseas acquisitions to increase its share in global metal mineral reserves.

The company plans to raise up to 18 billion yuan (\$2.77 billion) through a non-public offering to purchase a niobium-phosphate mine in Brazil and a copper-cobalt mine in the Democratic Republic of Congo, according to a document filed with the Shanghai Stock Exchange on May 21.

It has already announced a number of other similar bids worth \$4.15 billion for mines in the two countries this year.

"It is a golden opportunity to buy these high-quality assets at such a low price, and it is also in line with our strategy," China Molybdenum's Board Chairman Li Chaohun said.

The mining company will become one of the world's biggest rare

metal producers if the purchases are completed.

Overseas Alumina Production

China Hongqiao Group, the world's largest aluminium producer by capacity, formally commenced its 1-million-ton-per-annum alumina production line in Indonesia's city of Borneo on May 21, in a bid to boost the production capacity cooperation between China and Indonesia.

The production line is part of a 2-million-ton-per-year smelting plant with a total investment of \$1 billion-1.5 billion, which is operated by the PT Well Harvest Winning Alumina Refinery, a joint venture in which Hongqiao holds a 56-percent stake. The factory processes locally sourced bauxite into alumina, a key material for the production of aluminium.

Zhang Shiping, President of Hongqiao, said at the opening ceremony that the plant is both Hongqiao and China's first overseas

investment in alumina refining as well as the first alumina factory in Indonesia.

Sun Xiushun, President of the Winning International Group, the shipping arm and shareholder of the joint venture, said that the alumina will be mainly used to supply the raw material needs of Indonesian local smelters, while the remainder will be exported to China, the Middle East and other regions.

Indonesia, the world's main nickel ore exporter and supplier of bauxite, banned raw ore exports in early 2014 to encourage the development of smelters and to shift exports from raw materials to higher-value products.

The Hong Kong-listed Hongqiao aims to produce 6 million tons of aluminium by the end of 2016, up from 5.19 million tons last year. Hongqiao enjoys much lower production costs than its rivals as it has its own power plants, in-house upstream materials and other production facilities.



Connecting Up

Two sections of the Yachi River Bridge in Guizhou Province are linked together on May 20.

The 1,450-meter-long and 800-meter-wide bridge is the longest steel truss girder cable-stayed bridge in the province.



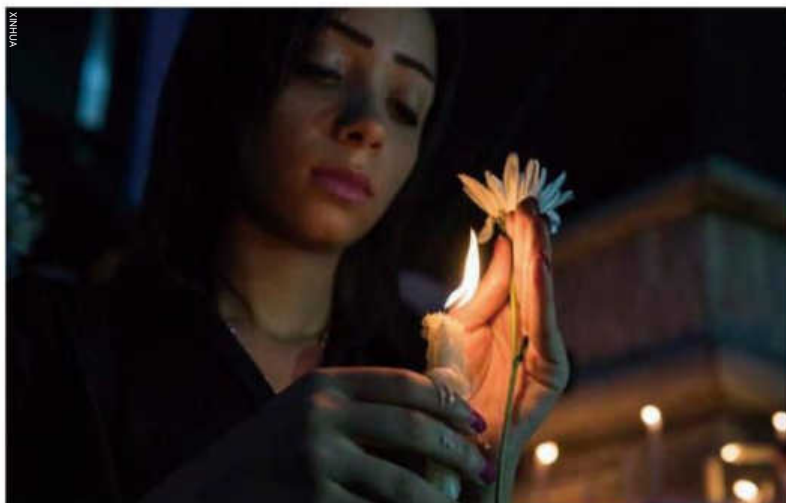
VIET NAM

Visiting U.S. President Barack Obama and his Vietnamese presidential counterpart witness the inking of cooperation deals between the two governments in Hanoi on May 23. Obama announced the lifting of an embargo on arm sales to Viet Nam during his visit to Hanoi



EGYPT

A woman participates in a candlelight vigil in Cairo on May 24 in memory of the 66 victims on EgyptAir Flight MS804 which crashed on May 19 into the Mediterranean



TURKEY

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan attend a press conference prior to the closing ceremony of the World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul on May 24



AUSTRIA

Green Party-backed independent candidate Alexander Van der Bellen gives a speech to the media after winning the presidential election on May 23



SYRIA

A helicopter flies over the site of an attack in the coastal city of Jableh on May 23, after several bomb blasts had rocked Jableh and Tartous that day



MYANMAR

People gather near the site of a collapsed jade mine in Hpakan on May 24. A total of 13 people were killed and 20 were injured, while 100 others were reported missing on the night of May 23



↓ RENOWNED SCHOLAR DIES

Yang Jiang, a well-known Chinese writer, translator and foreign literature scholar, passed away in Beijing on May 25 at the age of 105.

Proficient in English, French and Spanish, Yang made a name for herself in the field of translation. Her translation of *Don Quixote* into Chinese from its original Spanish has been generally regarded as the best version to date.

As a writer, Yang is known for her plain but resonant style. Her essay collection *We Three* and her novel *Baptism* have been a hit both at home and abroad.

Yang enrolled in Tsinghua University to study foreign literature in 1932, where she later met her husband Qian Zhongshu (1910-98). Qian was a renowned writer and literary critic.

After their marriage in 1935, the couple went overseas to study at the University of Oxford and the University of Paris.

After returning to China in 1938, she worked as a Spanish professor at Tsinghua University. In 1953, she became a research fellow at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.



Easy Access to Information

Changjiang Daily
May 17

"Over 80 percent of information and data are held in the hands of all levels of government. It's a huge waste," Premier Li Keqiang said recently.

Information possessed by the government is essentially a kind of public resource. It should have been freely accessible to market entities. A government monopoly will lead to obstacles in market transactions and reduce efficiency in resource allocation.

The lack of transparency of authoritative information is one important reason for the

industrial overcapacity which China is facing. Prices alone are inefficient and insufficient signals for resource allocation. Information provided by the government can narrow the gap between supply and demand.

Some officials' lack of sense of service has also contributed to the problem. Although their organizations are in possession of a large amount of information, they don't regard it as part of their responsibility to share it with the public.

As a matter of fact, the ability to efficiently handle and publicize information is a fundamental requirement for government departments.

Relevant laws and regulations should be put in place in order to clarify the responsibilities of officials regarding the sharing of information, and such statutes should penalize those who refuse to do so.

Developing the Flower Industry

Oriental Outlook
May 19

Appreciating flowers in spring is a tradition in China and has driven the development of tourism as well as the economy in various locations. For example, revenue generated by rapeseed flower-focused tourism programs exceeds 1 billion yuan (\$153 million) a year in Wuyuan County, east China's Jiangxi Province.

The flower industry's huge profits have prompted many locations to plant vast areas of flowers to draw tourists.

However, in many places, supporting infrastructure such as parking lots and toilets is lacking. Moreover, the value of flowers has not been sufficiently exploited. For instance, Luoyang in central China's Henan Province is famous for its long history of peony cultivation. Unfortunately, the perennial has failed to generate any economic benefits except during the springtime blooming season, which only lasts one month. That is despite the fact that peonies are also a cash crop that can be consumed.

It's unsustainable to solely treat flowers as an object of appreciation. Their



"As long as a company is registered in China, no matter if it is funded by Chinese or foreigners, we will treat them as equals and provide a fair-play environment."

Premier **Li Keqiang**, when meeting with visiting Saudi Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Bin Abdulaziz Alsaud in Beijing on May 19

"India should work closely with China to collaborate and push forward the Belt and Road Initiative instead of being skeptical. This initiative should be taken as a new opportunity for the South Asia region."

Bishnu Hari Nepal, Nepal's former ambassador to Japan, at a seminar in Kathmandu, capital of Nepal, on May 22



Museums Going Creative

People's Daily
May 18

Many museums, galleries or libraries often see few visitors in China. However, exhibitions featuring a special theme or interactive cultural activities at museums often draw huge crowds, such as the ongoing exhibition at Beijing's Capital Museum of precious items from the tomb of the Marquis of Haihun dating back more than 2,000 years.

Long queues of people waiting outside such museum events underline the discrepancy between the growing demand for cultural activities and their inadequate supply. As a matter of fact, there is a treasure trove of precious items in all kinds of museums across the country, but the problem is that creativity is lacking in terms

of exhibition planning.

Improving the quality and diversity of cultural products has far-reaching implications. Although China boasts a long history and rich culture, there is still a lack of understanding regarding Chinese culture in the world. In contrast, South Korea has successfully promoted its history and culture through TV dramas, and Japanese anime has seized the hearts of numerous youths worldwide.

The experiences of other countries have shown that the cultural industry often grows rapidly even during an economic downturn. This is often referred to as the lipstick effect, which posits that, allegedly, the one thing women don't cut back on during a recession is lipstick.

Museums, galleries and libraries should tap their potential to develop products catering to the needs of the public. It's also worth noting that cultural institutions should not forget their primary function—serving the public—and should avoid becoming overly commercialized in the process.

↓ ENTREPRENEUR ESTABLISHES AN EDUCATIONAL AWARD

Charles Chen Yidan, a co-founder of Tencent, one of China's leading Internet companies, has donated HK\$2.5 billion (\$320 million) to set up the world's largest education prize in monetary terms in Hong Kong. This will be an award that aspires to recognize and support innovators in the education system. The accolade incorporates the Yidan Prize for Educational Research and the Yidan Prize for Education Development.

The winner of each award will receive a cash prize of HK\$15 million (\$1.9 million) and a project fund of the same amount, which will be paid in three installments over three years.

Chen, 45, resigned from his post as chief administrative officer of Tencent to become a full-time philanthropist in 2013.

He said he hopes more people will value education and help to innovate educational methods.



other values should be recognized in order to give full play to their economic potential.

Meanwhile, relevant infrastructure should be improved and more recreational activities and cultural products related to flowers should be developed in order to bolster the flower industry.

"Since 2004, China has provided a huge amount of humanitarian assistance with no political conditions attached, and helped 102 countries and their peoples overcome humanitarian crises."

Qian Keming, Vice Minister of Commerce, at the First World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul, Turkey, on May 24

"Solving the problem for migrant workers' children seeking further education is not only an educational issue but is also related to the equitable allocation of social resources."

Chen Xuejie, an official with the Guangdong Provincial Authority of Examinations and Enrollment, on Guangdong's new policy to allow nearly 10,000 students without local household registration to take the college entrance exam in the province in early June



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COVER STORY

KEEP THE SHOW ON

Traditional Chinese operas are regaining popularity By Tang Yuankai



Peking Opera educator Yu Shumin helps her students prepare for a performance before entering the stage on November 15, 2015

tradition, passed down from generation to generation.

Rejuvenation

Shen is relieved that a revival for traditional operas is currently underway. "The value of tradition and intangible cultural heritage has been rediscovered by society, and the government and opera troupes are attaching more and more importance to resurrecting traditional operas," he told *Beijing Review*.

According to the Beijing Expo Garden Park, during the three-day May Day holiday, 51,000 visitors toured the park, and many participated in the cultural week activities.

Shen was once depressed that traditional operas faced diminishing audiences, particularly after the late 1980s. He recalled a time about 10 years ago, where he went to the theater, only to find the performers onstage outnumbered the crowd offstage. He couldn't hold back his tears. Since then, he rarely attends the theater. Instead he quenches his thirst for operas by inviting a few pals to stage their own performances in local parks.

There is a plethora of diverse local operas in China with more than 360 types on record. Peking Opera, also regarded as the official one, is Shen's favorite.

Traditional Chinese operas are reputed as one of the world's three major ancient operas, alongside Greek tragedy and comedy and India's Sanskrit Opera. They are laden with the country's traditional culture and contain many art forms, including poetry, music, dancing, painting, fashion and martial arts.

Continuing a lifestyle

Shen became infatuated with opera as a child, having attended the theater with his grandmother, a native of east China's Zhejiang Province, the origin of Yueju Opera. After she got married and moved to Beijing, she fell in love with the Peking variant.

Traditionally, Chinese operas tend to have simple settings, such as a desk and two chairs. Despite the art form boring many other children, Shen was transfixed. He remembered secretly longing for power cuts as a child in his grandmother's home, for it was when his grandmother would bring out a hand-cranking phonograph to play operas sung by famous artists. "I relished such moments!" Shen exclaimed.

In the Internet era, it has been more straightforward for him to indulge in his hobby by downloading arias as well as visiting online portals featuring Peking Opera. "Traditional Chinese operas have given me much more than just singing," he said. Through them he has learned about history, ►►

Only once in a blue moon were traditional operas set against real scenery featuring ancient Chinese-style pavilions, terraces and tortuous corridors besides a lake, even to 56-year-old Shen Shouyuan, a staunch opera fan in Beijing.

Upon learning that the Beijing Opera Culture Week would be held in the Beijing Garden Expo Park from April 30 to May 8, Shen could hardly wait. The repertoire would

include more than 40 classical operas to be staged by troupes from across the country and the chance for visitors to try on colorful theater costumes and make-up.

One Saturday, Shen travelled across town to the celebration, accompanied by his wife and son. Listening to records, mimicking the tunes and attending performances constitute the lifestyle of many opera fans. Shen's love of opera has been a family



Children in Xiaopu Township in Changxing County of Zhejiang Province perform Peking Opera on May 6

philosophy and ancestral minds.

He agreed with remarks on Chinese operas made by famous writer and former Shanghai Theater Academy President Yu Qiuyu, who asserted that the charm of traditional operas lay in that they are the choice made by generations of common people, so they reflect the emotions of our ancestors and the moral and aesthetic standards of Chinese society.

Government incentives

The rapid development of the market economy and globalization have brought about drastic changes in social life and peoples' mentality, subjecting traditional operas to fresh challenges that threaten their authenticity and even survival.

"Some local operas are losing their uniqueness. Previously distinct genres have tended to blur into something more and more similar. Their vitality is dissipating and their audience shrinking, which severely threatens their survival," said Liu Jingliang, a famous opera critic and a research fellow at the Henan Culture and Art Research Institute.

According to Wang Kui, President of the Research Institute of Chinese Opera under the Chinese National Academy of Arts, traditional

operas have been on the decline since the 1980s, owing partially to modern trends and partially to the lack in government's support.

But in recent years, things have changed. On July 11 last year, the State Council released a document supporting the protection and transmission of traditional operas, including measures to support the development of opera troupes, improve training, boost publicity and retain talented opera artists.

"Many industry insiders claim that if measures are not taken in time, the decline will accelerate," wrote Liu Qibao, head of the Publicity Department of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, in an article in *People's Daily*. He asserted that rejuvenating traditional operas is "very important for passing down traditional culture from generation to generation."

Since the turn of the century and especially in recent years, there has been a growing social consensus to respect and cherish traditional culture, which has extended to action, claimed Fu Jin, President of the Chinese Literary Critics Association.

"Traditional arts and modern times are like two persons tangoing together. Sometimes, they are close, and sometimes distant, yet the tension is always there," he said. Fu added that we should make good use of the opportunities

that time affords us and explore new boundaries for traditional arts.

For decades Fu has been researching operas. He foresaw a bright future for the industry 10 years ago, going as far to claim there would be more than 100 theaters in Beijing alone. Colleagues disagreed and people laughed off his predictions, yet today there are indeed more than 100 theaters in the capital. According to him, the crisis in opera was not rooted in opera itself, but was a result of the wider environment.

"Nowadays, traditional Chinese operas can be broadly categorized into three types. Firstly, some of them such as Kunqu Opera, Peking Opera, Qinqiang Opera and Jinju Opera, are classified as cultural heritage with a long history and are protected by the government," explained Liu Wenfeng, a researcher at the Chinese National Academy of Arts. He suggested local governments should cover most of the expenditure, while national and provincial governments should foot the remainder of the bill.

"Secondly are operas with long traditions and artistic value, yet minimal repertoires and audience appeal such as Nuoxi Opera. These operas will soon fade away, owing to a lack of interest from modern generations; nonetheless they have some cultural value

worth preserving.”

Thirdly are developing or emerging opera genres such as Yueju Opera, Huangmei Opera and Yuju Opera. “The government should create conditions for them to enter the performing-art market and though such troupes should mainly be financed by performing income, the government can give them appropriate assistance,” said Liu Wenfeng.

Promoting the development and passing down of traditional operas has been listed in China’s 13th Five-Year Plan (2016-20). A plan to popularize 1,000 typical opera programs will be carried out and more social resources will be invested into opera development in an attempt to alleviate the necessity of government funding in the long-term. Private investment is expected to invigorate the market.

Many famous opera performers are now passing down their skills and expertise to the youth of today.

Ma Lan, one of the most celebrated Huangmei Opera performers, now teaches at the Shanghai Theater Academy. In her heyday she won numerous accolades, including a lifetime achievement award for the most outstanding Asian artist in 2008, granted jointly by the New York Department of Cultural Affairs, the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts and the Organization of Chinese Americans. Now, the 54-year-old has left the stage and dedicated herself to cultivating next-generation Huangmei Opera artists.

“Many people claim traditional Chinese operas are in fact musical dramas. The blend of traditional Chinese operas and musical dramas that were originally created in China is very promising, yet it requires a dedicated effort from various people,” said Ma.

Like Ma, Wang Jun’an, a famous Yueju Opera artist, is also driven to preserve and expand Chinese operas. She not only performs across China, but has also introduced the art form to other countries, with fans ranging from teenagers to octogenarians.

Among traditional Chinese variants, Yueju Opera’s popularity is second only to that of Peking Opera. Wang is one of the most popular performers in the country, with a fan base to rival that of a famous pop star. She won the coveted Plum Performance Award, the most prestigious accolade for traditional opera performers in China.

Wang is a native of Shengzhou City in Zhejiang Province, the birthplace of Yueju Opera. She joined a famous troupe in 1980 at the age of 11 and was assigned to play male roles because her facial features were deemed suitable for them. This is common in Yueju Opera, while the reverse is often true in Peking Opera.

During that time, Wang became a fa-



Yueju Opera actress Wang Jun’an meets fans in Fujian, Fuzhou Province, on December 6, 2014

vorite student of her mentor, Yin Guifang, a renowned opera master and then troupe leader, to whom she was very grateful.

Traditionally operas have usually been taught through one-to-one instruction in performing troupes, however students are now being admitted to art academies in greater numbers. Since 2008, Peking Opera has been part of the curriculum for primary

and middle school students in Beijing.

While practicing traditional operas, children will not only learn the tunes but also traditional values, said Chen Jingquan, an education expert with Fengtai District Commission of Education. ■

Copyedited by Dominic James Madar
Comments to liuyunyun@bjreview.com

Zhang Huoding
performs in the
play *The Jewelry
Purse*



COVER STORY

MODERN OPERA REVERBERATIONS

Exploring the contemporary existence of traditional Peking Opera By Yuan Yuan

Zhang Huoding! Zhang Huoding! Zhang Huoding!" Legions of young fans, waving and clapping hands, yelled out the name of their idol among crowds at the Chang'an Grand Theater in Beijing on May 24. This was not a pop concert, but a Peking Opera show—a traditional art form in China that has a history spanning over 200 years. It has nonetheless seen a recent decline in popularity as it continues to lose younger generations of followers—but not in some cases.

There was a short period of suffocating silence just as Zhang was about to come out on the stage. Unlike the audiences' frenzied behavior, the opera actress walked out at a leisurely pace. After several graceful movements, she made a pose in time with the final tone of the background music. The applause swelled with continuous exclamations of "excellent!"

The fans had good reason to be excited. When the show's tickets were released online on May 13, they were sold out within two minutes. Some fans, knowing the chance to attain tickets online was slim, formed long overnight queues at the ticket office of the Chang'an Grand Theater.

"This is no surprise at all," said Wei Qun, a 38-year-old Beijing banker who has followed Zhang for 10 years. In an interview with *Beijing Review*, he said that when he started to follow her in 2006, she was already very popular. "Now, it is just getting crazier. Today it is almost impossible for me to get a ticket for her performances."

The Zhang fans in the audience went wild repeatedly during the show. At the conclusion, scores of young people wielding cellphones rushed the stage from all corners of the house, snapping photos and cheering.

The art of diligence

In contrast to a typical celebrity's reaction to success, Zhang maintains an aversion to publicity. She rarely grants interviews and often avoids public appearances outside of her work on stage. Her inaccessibility to the public seems to only burnish her appeal to fans. Those obsessed by Zhang's performances include opera traditionalists and youngsters.

Born in 1971, Zhang fell in love with Peking Opera at 9 but failed to gain admission to a regional training academy three

times. At the age of 15, relatively late for an opera student, she was finally able to enroll in a school in Tianjin. In 1989, she was invited to join a Peking Opera military troupe, based in Beijing, and began training with one of most accomplished Peking Opera performers, Zhao Rongchen. There, Zhao taught her the Cheng School style, one of the four major Opera styles for female roles, which emerged in the early 20th century.

Stardom came some years later, in the mid-1990s when she was performing with the country's leading Peking Opera Troupe. The opera world then began raving about her for her unique and excellent performance.

"When I saw her performance for the first time in 2006, I was totally soaked in the opera world she created for the audience," Wei said. "It was so thrilling that I couldn't stop following her since then."

For Wei, everything she saw about Zhang, from the motion of her eyes and face—every physical movement—was just beautiful. "The accuracy of movements is not what performers pursue, as Peking Opera is more about the meaning or feeling that the actors create," Wei said. "She was born for Peking



Tan Zhengyan performs a role in the play *Dingjun Mountain*

Opera, especially the Cheng style, which features low-pitched, deep, subtle tones which complement her personality.”

As a comprehensive performing art that combines music, singing, dialogue, pantomime, acrobatics and martial arts, an actor or actress in Peking Opera has to meet more requirements than other forms of performing art. All of these skills are expected to be performed effortlessly. The old saying that a “One minute performance on stage takes 10 years of relentless practice behind the scenes” is apt for the rigors necessary to perform Peking Opera plays.

“She’s always been very diligent,” said Li Jinping, who has worked with Zhang for more than 20 years. “She dedicates most of her energy to her craft and teaching students at the National Academy of Chinese Theater Arts,” Li said.

After giving birth to her daughter, Zhang declared in 2010 that she would leave the stage for a while. She went back on stage in 2014. The four years of absence only seems to have added to her audiences’ hunger. Her first show on April 26, 2014, at the Chang’an Grand Theater caused a sensation—a rare sight for modern day Peking Opera performances.

In September 2015, Zhang went to the United States and gave two performances—*The Legend of the White Snake* and *The Jewelry Purse*, at the David H. Koch Theater at the Lincoln Center, both of which were widely covered by the local media.

Despite of all this, Zhang still remains somewhat distant from the public. She has only given terse replies to questions during interviews which she could not avoid.

“I don’t have much to say,” Zhang told Xinhua News Agency. “I love Peking Opera as

part of my life. That is it. I hope more people can understand how beautiful the opera is and love this art.”

The opera family

Zhang is an exception to the overall declining Peking Opera market.

As an integral part of Chinese culture for over 200 years, Peking Opera originated from humble beginnings in east China’s Anhui and Hubei provinces. It was brought to Beijing by Emperor Qianlong of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), who discovered and fell in love with the vibrancy and life in the performances he witnessed during his periodic inspections of the southern regions. As an 80th birthday gift to himself, he ordered local troupes to perform for him and had the Anhui and Hubei groups incorporated into

Four Major Roles of Peking Opera

Peking Opera roles fall into four categories: *sheng*, *dan*, *jing* and *chou*, based on the gender, age, evil or kind-heartedness, and the handsomeness of the characters being played, and are artificially exaggerated by makeup, costumes and gestures.

Sheng is the male role in Peking Opera. This role has several subtypes according to the character’s age, personality and status, which are *laosheng* (senior role), *hongsheng* (middle-age role), *xiaosheng* (handsome young role specializing in song and recitation), *wusheng* (acrobatic role, extremely agile and physically skilled), and *wawasheng* (a child role).

Dan is the term for female roles in Peking Opera. The roles can be divided into six subtypes based on the characters played. *Zhengdan* or *qingyi*, is the most important role in Peking Opera and is used for dignified, serious, and decent characters, which are mostly wives or mothers. *Guimendan* refers to the role of an unmarried and young girl. *Wudan* is the female acrobatic role, and *laodan*, the role of an old and clever woman. *Huadan* takes up the role of the vivacious and unmarried woman, while the *daomadan* is the female warrior role.

In the early days of Peking Opera, male actors played female roles. Gradually, the *dan* role was formed with four schools comprising distinctive features. The founders of the four schools, Mei Lanfang, Cheng Yanqiu, Shang Xiaoyun and Xun Huisheng, are renowned as the four famous *dans* of Peking Opera.

Jing is a painted male face role with a robust, gruff, bass voice, and a grotesquely painted face. The role’s character can be shown with his face colored: red for good, black for brave, upright or reckless, white for treacherous and cunning, yellow for brutal, blue for wild.

Chou is a comedic role with the character being dim-witted, amusing, mischievous, and occasionally slightly wicked. It can be divided into two types: *wenchou*, a civilian role such as a merchant or jailer; and *wuchou*, a military role, skilled in acrobatics. These roles are usually featured with their faces painted with a small patch of white chalk around the nose.



(Compiled by Beijing Review, designed by Pamela Tobey)



The classic play of *Long Feng Cheng Xiang* is staged by the Peking Opera Troupe of Beijing

the palace opera.

Gradually, several performing masters set out to establish their own schools, preferring to hand down their skills solely to their offspring.

Tan Zhengan, born in 1979, is the only child in the seventh generation originating from Tan Xinpei, the founder of the Tan school—which focuses only on the performance of the senior male role.

“Peking Opera has been my family’s only profession for seven generations,” said Tan. Blessed with a good voice and being the only son in his family, he grew up under great expectations to maintain the family’s tradition. But he admitted that he hesitated to undergo the grueling training, considering Peking Opera’s shrinking market.

He is not alone in the younger generation of opera families. Mei Wei, the great-grandson of Mei Lanfang, the founder of the Mei school, devotes most of his time to rock music. Meanwhile, Qiu Yun, the daughter of Qiu school founder Qiu Shengrong, has never received professional Peking Opera training because “it is too hard to be a successful Peking Opera actor now.”

“I have learned Peking Opera since the age of 10 and done my best to practice and perform, but there are still many flaws in my shows,” Tan said. Tan revealed that he had faced sharp criticism from the audience, since he is from a famed opera house and should therefore perform flawlessly, according to them. Tan feels that he isn’t able to surpass his forefathers at all.

Despite the complaints, Tan has chosen to continue performing Peking Operas. Apart from practicing in a traditional way, Tan has his own innovative ideas on how to develop them. He once performed with a top Japanese jazz band in 2003, and his shows at the traditional Dongyuan Peking Opera Theater in Changpuhe Park have attracted many young fans.

Now, as a leading actor of the Peking Opera Troupe of Beijing, Tan has won wide recognition. “The Tan family is regarded as legendary for handing down their style through seven generations,” said Cui Wei, Deputy Secretary General of China Theater Association. “But it also shows that the passing down of this art within a family is quite passive and limited. To spread it and give it a

longer life, it is better to jump the fence and expand it to a larger scale.”

Yu Shumin, a student of Mei Baojiu, the son of Mei Lanfang, said she has never worried about the future of Peking Opera. Guided by Mei, Yu started to teach Peking Opera in primary and middle schools in Beijing since 2008.

“The students don’t have to be professional actors or develop it into a career,” the 66-year-old Yu told Xinhua News Agency. “We just want them to know more of this art. Peking Opera stories mostly come from our folk tales.”

Yu is very happy to see that some of her students have fallen in love with Peking Opera and that some have even organized Peking Opera amateur groups after they entered college.

In 2013, the Ministry of Education said that operas such as Peking Opera would be added to the primary school curricula as an extracurricular choice in some municipalities and provinces, allowing students the option of enriching their spare time while gaining an appreciation for the vanishing art.

On November 18, 2015, after giving a show in the United States, Zhang Huoding set up a training center at the National Academy of Chinese Theater Arts to tutor students attempting to master the Cheng School of Peking Opera.

“It is our responsibility to pass down Peking Opera, which is renowned as a national Chinese treasure,” said Zhang at a press conference after the center’s inauguration. Zhang claimed that she owed her popularity to her diligent training.

Unlike Yu’s teachings, Zhang’s center is mainly for professional learners with serious career goals. “Young people today aren’t always willing to put up with the rigors, discipline and sacrifice needed to become a great performer,” Zhang said, adding that she wanted to inspire the next generation.

“Long before [they went on stage], they’d pour water on the ground on a freezing day and create a sheet of ice and force students to practice their movements on the slippery ice,” Zhang said. “If you could move gracefully on the ice, you would be able to do well on stage. Now, if there aren’t carpets in the studios, apprentices would just fall down. This makes it a lot harder to have grandmasters.”

Li Li, one of Zhang’s students, was about to quit Peking Opera until she met Zhang. “I saw her glory on stage and I also saw her practice hard every day, both of which I thought were stunningly impressive,” Li said. “I decided to stay and practice hard.” ■

Copyedited by Bryan Michael Galvan
Comments to yuan yuan@bjreview.com

COVER STORY

PEKING OPERA MEETS WESTERN CLASSICS

Avant-garde director seeks to interpret Western plays from a traditional Chinese perspective By Ji Jing

A scene from *Waiting for Godot*, directed by Wu Hsing-kuo



In a desolate wasteland, sits a small mound overhung with boughs. The stage is set for a Chinese version of *Waiting for Godot*, presented by the Contemporary Legend Theater from Taiwan at the Tianqiao Performing Arts Center in Beijing on May 15.

Waiting for Godot is a two-act absurdist play by Irish playwright Samuel Beckett that premiered in 1953. Originally written in French and translated into English by Beckett himself, it features two characters, Vladimir and Estragon, also called Didi and Gogo, who wait endlessly for the mysterious Godot, who never shows up.

The uniqueness of the Chinese version lies in its incorporation of Peking Opera elements into the Western classic. Didi and Gogo adopt Peking Opera performances, while the other three characters use modern performing styles. This innovative revamp amazed the audience.

Cui Hao, an undergraduate at Peking University who watched the performance, told *Beijing Review* that the play simultaneously took the form of Peking Opera while remaining loyal to the original plot. Cui is an avid fan of many genres of theater, from traditional Chinese operas to Western dramas. He saw *King Lear* staged by same troupe last year and was impressed by the intriguing fusion of Peking Opera with the Shakespearean play. This time around, innovations in *Waiting for Godot* excited him again.

The adaptation was created in 2005 by experimental actor, director and playwright Wu Hsing-kuo based in Taiwan. Wu said that he read at least six Chinese versions of the play to fully understand what it is about. "*Waiting for Godot* has inspired us to live life right here and now rather than waiting," he told *Beijing Review*. Wu dedicated the performance to his mother, who moved to Taiwan from the Chinese mainland in 1949.

COURTESY OF TIANQIAO PERFORMING ARTS CENTER



COURTESY OF WU HSING-KUO

↓ Profile

Wu Hsing-kuo, born in 1953, is an experimental actor, director and playwright based in Taiwan. He has adapted a number of Western and Chinese classic dramas into Peking Opera shows and performed in them. In addition, he has played leading roles in multiple movies such as the 1993 *Temptation of a Monk* and the 1991 *God of Gamblers II*.

(Compiled by Beijing Review)

"In her later years, my mother would sit in the yard at dusk looking into the distance. She waited in vain to get back to her home on the mainland," Wu told *Beijing Review*.

Waiting for Godot is one of the many Western classics Wu has transformed into Peking Opera. "Since there is no real plot development in the original play, I had less constraint in making adaptations and created some Chinese lyrics absent in the original version," he explained.

Wu's version of Greek tragedies such as *Medea*, Shakespearean plays such as *Macbeth*, *King Lear*, *The Tempest* and *Hamlet*, as well as *The Metamorphosis* by Franz Kafka, have won accolades worldwide. His purpose behind the adaptations is to revive Peking Opera, which has been in decline on both sides of the Taiwan Straits.

Reviving tradition

In 1964, Wu was sent to the Taipei-based Fu Hsing Opera School (the predecessor of the Taiwan College of Performing Arts) to study Peking Opera at the age of 11. After eight years of study at the school, he enrolled at the Chinese Culture University, which exposed him to a number of Western plays vastly different from Peking Opera.

At 21, he joined the Cloud Gate Dance Theater in Taipei as a dancer. He was impressed by Western audiences' enthusiasm for Chinese culture during the theater's tour of Europe and

North America, which inspired him to embrace the concept of cross-culture art.

Concerned about the declining popularity of Peking Opera in Taiwan, Wu founded the Contemporary Legend Theater in 1986 and recruited over 20 young performers. "The Peking Opera community was idle and obsolete and lacked aspirations back then. I wanted to energize the atmosphere," he said.

The first work produced by Wu's theater was *Kingdom of Desire*, an adaptation of *Othello* combining elements of Peking Opera, hip hop, film, and modern dance. The rejigged play was set in Ji, a fictional ancient Chinese kingdom, instead of Venice. The blockbuster has been performed in more than 20 countries over the past 30 years and has won Wu international acclaim.

However, running a theater troupe was not easy, owing to the limited revenue generated from ticket sales. Wu had to use his own income from film acting to keep the theater afloat.

In 2001, another modern interpretation of a Shakespearean play, *King Lear*, was produced by Wu's theater. He turned the performance into a mono act, playing a scarcely believable 10 roles all by himself, including Lear, his three daughters and the Fool. The roles were cast in four different types of Peking Opera characters—*sheng* (male), *dan* (female), *jing* (face-painted male) and *chou* (comic male).

"It was difficult for a mono act to present conflicts. From your performance, I saw your artistry as a performer," said Eugenio Barba,

artistic director and founder of Odin Teatret Denmark, in 2004. "Through this performance you overturned the tradition of Peking Opera, which also overturned the understanding of Shakespeare."

This form was continued in the Peking Opera version of *The Metamorphosis* staged as the opening of the Edinburgh Art Festival in Britain in 2013, in which Wu played a marginally less demanding seven roles.

Controversies

However, Wu's modernization of Peking Opera has sparked criticism from some. Critics say that he has tarnished the traditional Chinese art in a bid to appeal to Westerners through a clumsy fudge of Peking Opera and Western plays and doubt the sustainability of his work.

Nevertheless, Wu has not given up his quest to revitalize Peking Opera. "Traditional opera can survive only by evolving with the times," said Wu, who remains dedicated to expanding theater. He added, "I want to build a bridge between the East and the West, and I wish Peking Opera could have a greater influence in the world, with its theories studied and discussed globally like we do with famous drama theorists Jerzy Grotowski and Constantin Stanislavski." ■

Copiedited by Dominic James Madar
Comments to jjing@bjreview.com

No to U.S. Meddling in the South China Sea

Editor's Note: In an article published on May 19 in the Singaporean newspaper *The Straits Times* entitled "U.S.'s Rebalancing Is Fishing in South China Sea's Troubled Waters," **Xu Bu**, Chinese Ambassador to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), analyses the role the United States has played in the region after President Barack Obama's administration adopted the Asia-Pacific rebalancing strategy. The shift of the U.S. strategic focus has led to regional instability and caused an immediate rift among nations in the South China Sea area. Edited excerpts from his article follow:



Since 2009, the United States has played a driving role in increasing tensions between China and Southeast Asian countries, turning the South China Sea into a regional hotspot. No one benefits.

On several recent occasions, Admiral Harry B. Harris, Commander of the United States Pacific Command, and Daniel Russell, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, have made comments on the South China Sea issue, accusing China of threatening neighboring countries and undermining regional stability.

China and some littoral countries of the South China Sea have had disputes over territorial and maritime interests for more than three decades, but China and relevant claimant countries have managed to address differences and control risks, not letting the issue hinder the sustained growth of bilateral ties among them and China-ASEAN relations at large. In November 2002, China and ASEAN countries signed the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC), stipulating that signatories will resolve their territorial and jurisdictional disputes by peaceful means through friendly consultations and negotiations. They were also committed to maritime cooperation.

However, since the United States adopted

the so-called rebalancing strategy in the Asia-Pacific region, the South China Sea issue has become increasingly prominent. Since 2009, some senior U.S. officials have repeatedly made irresponsible remarks about China's policy, rendered support to the countries that have disputes with China, and gone even further to drive wedges between China and Southeast Asian countries. I would argue that 2009 marked the watershed of the South China Sea issue and that the United States has acted as the main driving force behind the tensions in the South China Sea. This conclusion is based on the following foundations.

Abetting regional countries

After Hillary Clinton's first visit as U.S. secretary of state to Asia in February 2009, some Southeast Asian countries made considerable changes to their policies on the South China Sea issue. Shortly after, in March, the Philippines passed a new baseline law to claim sovereignty over Huangyan Island and some of the Nansha Islands that belong to China. In May, Viet Nam completed its submissions on the outer limits of the continental shelf beyond 200 nautical miles from its "territorial waters" to the Commission on the Limits of

the Continental Shelf, claiming sovereignty over China's Xisha and Nansha islands.

Thanks to the abetting by senior U.S. officials, the South China Sea issue gradually evolved into a disturbing regional hotspot. In May 2012, at a hearing of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Clinton said that China's claims in the South China Sea exceeded what was permitted by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). During her July visit, she reaffirmed U.S. support for Viet Nam in Hanoi.

The U.S. Navy's guided-missile destroyer, *USS William P. Lawrence*, started a routine patrol in international waters in the South China Sea on May 2. On May 10, the vessel was reported to have conducted a "routine freedom of navigation operation," sailing near China's Yongshu Reef.

The United States also made efforts to encourage the leaders of some Southeast Asian countries to discuss the South China Sea issue at ASEAN meetings, trying to rally the whole of ASEAN against China. As a result, differences inside ASEAN have accumulated due to the yawning gaps among the positions of its member states on the South China Sea issue.

With support from the United States, the Philippines made up its mind to go back on its bilateral agreements with China to resolve the South China Sea issue through negotiations and instead initiated an arbitration case against China over the maritime disputes at an international tribunal in The Hague in early 2013 under the UNCLOS. With the so-called arbitration award being just around the corner, the United States claimed in a warning tone that China would pay a great price if it refused to comply with the award.

This well indicated that the United States has supported certain claimant countries not to address the disputes through bilateral consultations but rather has encouraged them to seek confrontation with China. This is not unexpected if we connect the dots, because the United States has been staying behind the arbitration case as the manipulator and doing whatever it can to ensure that the Philippines wins the case. It is also highly odd, to say the least, to see the United States, which is not even a signatory to the UNCLOS, keep asking the countries, China

included, that already accede to the convention to respect international law.

Creating and playing up an issue

For a long time, there has never been an issue concerning the freedom of navigation in and overflight above the South China Sea. These rights have never been affected. The so-called issue of navigation and overflight freedom was totally fabricated and kept being played up by the United States.

Since 2015, under the name of safeguarding freedom of navigation and overflight, the United States has become a frontrunner, rather than a backstage manipulator, on the South China Sea issue. The U.S. version of navigation and overflight freedom, in essence, means U.S. warships freely going anywhere all around the world.

The risk of militarization does exist in our region, but it merits careful study on who should be held accountable for that.

As early as 2011, the United States claimed to deploy 60 percent of its military resources in the Asia-Pacific region. In recent years, with its rebalancing strategy put into practice, the United States has tightened its military ties with allies in the region, expanded the arms build-up and flexed its muscle through military exercises, thus generating tension in the South China Sea.

To cite just a few examples out of many: the United States beefed up its military aid to the Philippines and Viet Nam and signed the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement with the Philippines, regaining a right lost over two decades ago to station troops and weapons in the Philippines' military bases. The United States has also repeatedly dispatched naval vessels to approach the 12-nautical-mile waters of, and military aircraft to fly over, relevant islands and reefs of China's Nansha Islands.

Furthermore, the United States always practices double standards when it comes to the South China Sea issue. While pointing fingers at China and criticizing China's construction activities on its own islands and reefs, the United States chose to ignore the facts that the Philippines and Viet Nam had illegally occupied, all in all, 42 islands and reefs in the South China Sea and carried out land reclamation on relevant islands and reefs starting from as early as the 1980s.

Blinded by illusions

The United States' rebalancing strategy has blinded some claimant countries with illusions. They are wishfully thinking that, with the United States' backing increasing, they can deal with the South China Sea issue through confrontation instead of consultation.

The United States has become used to acting as a policeman or judge on global issues



U.S. and Philippine soldiers during a joint military drill in the South China Sea in June 2013

and indulges itself in making rules and dictating ways to execute them. It cannot tolerate others challenging its global hegemony and believes that all issues should be dealt with as it pleases. It does not always practise democracy in international relations but is dictatorial and overbearing. What the United States has been doing has been often criticized, which is quite well known to some American political figures. However, bad habits die hard.

It is no coincidence that the changes in U.S. policy have been followed by some Southeast Asian countries making changes to their policies on the South China Sea issue. The tensions in the South China Sea were intentionally churned and hyped. What the United States has been and is now doing will end up in a more split ASEAN.

China is a strong supporter of a rules-based international order. However, the international rule of law is what the entire international community follows, it is not a tool to be exploited by a handful of countries to pursue their political agenda. All regional countries should work together to safeguard the regional peace and

stability and prevent our region from gradually sliding into the "South China Sea Trap."

China and the ASEAN should stick to the dual-track approach in addressing the South China Sea issue, which highlights that the disputes should be addressed properly through friendly negotiations and consultations among countries directly concerned, and the peace and stability in the South China Sea should be safeguarded by China and ASEAN countries.

Nowadays, the South China Sea issue has become a hot topic, disturbing ASEAN leaders' meetings and the East Asia Summit, and has been hyped as a security issue affecting peace and stability in East Asia.

From this perspective, it seems that the United States might have succeeded in fishing in troubled waters. But in the longer run, no-one will ever gain from increasing the tension in the South China Sea. ■

Copyedited by Dominic James Madar
Comments to liuyunyun@bjreview.com

Fabricated Claims In the Sea



In a recent article entitled “South China Sea: How We Got to This Stage,” published in the U.S.-based *National Interest* on May 9, veteran diplomat **Fu Ying** and senior researcher **Wu Shicun** examined the evolution of the maritime disputes in the South China Sea

between China and some neighboring countries. They called for efforts to avoid further misunderstandings in order to prevent escalation of tensions amongst all parties concerned. The first part of the article was published in Issue No.21 of *Beijing Review*.

Fu is chairwoman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of China's National People's Congress, chairwoman of the Academic Committee of China's Institute of International Strategy under the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, and specially-invited vice chairwoman of the China Center for International Economic Exchanges. Wu is a PhD senior research fellow and president of the National Institute of South China Sea Studies.

Edited excerpts of the second and last part of the article follow:

Tensions under the surface

For nearly 10 years after the introduction of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC), China was the only keen abider of the document. It refrained from taking actions that might escalate the dispute in the South China Sea and kept pushing for peace, cooperation and joint development in the dis-

puted areas. By contrast, Viet Nam, Malaysia, the Philippines and some other ASEAN countries were half-hearted about the DOC. They kept on transforming and expanding occupied islands, reinforcing their administrative management of them, and they accelerated the development of oil and gas in surrounding waters. They also made occasional arrests of Chinese fishermen working in these waters. One common effort of

these countries has been to solidify their illegal occupations and extend the territorial disputes to the maritime sphere. What they were trying to do was more like denying the existence of the disputes than shelving them. This enraged the Chinese media and public and elicited sustained attention.

Viet Nam has been the most active violator of the DOC. In April 2003, for example, it held a commemoration to celebrate the 28th anniversary of the “Liberation of the Nansha Islands.” In June that year, it signed a secret pact with Indonesia on the delimitation of the continental shelf in the South China Sea. In April 2004, it organized the first commercial tour to the Nansha Islands. In early 2005, it published a revised map of Viet Nam, which included China's Xisha and Nansha Islands in its Khanh Hoa Province. In early 2006, Viet Nam and Malaysia set up a navy hotline to coordinate resource development and settlement of their disputes concerning the Chinese islands. In April, Viet Nam started another bidding round for oil blocks in surrounding waters and announced cooperation with a third party to construct natural gas transmission pipelines in the Nansha Islands. In May 2007, it conducted an extensive geological survey in surrounding waters using a foreign, chartered survey ship. And, one month later, it held elections of “National Assembly representatives” on some of the Chinese Nansha Islands.

In April 2003, Malaysia sent four flotillas with 11 survey vessels to the waters around Nantong Reef to conduct prospecting operations. In May of the same year, it organized an international maritime challenge in waters around Danwan Reef and approved for the first time commercial tours to Yuya Shoal organized by travel agencies. In November 2004, it published stamps showing a Malaysian map with newly included Nansha islands. In August 2008, Malaysia's defense minister landed on Danwan Reef with some 80 journalists to declare “sovereignty.”

In April 2003, the Philippines celebrated the “25th anniversary of the establishment of Kalayaan Municipality” on Zhongye Island. In June 2006, it started to renovate and upgrade the airstrip and other facilities on the island. In March 2008, it set up satellite communications facilities on some of the occupied islands and shoals.

But, it must be admitted that, despite a continuing tug-of-war in the South China Sea, the general situation was under control before 2009. Soon thereafter, things became more complicated, mostly due to an official deadline set by the UN Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS), according to which relevant states should submit by May 15, 2009 claims over continental shelves extending beyond 200 nautical miles from their territorial seas. An even greater factor is the introduction





China's *Haixun 01* search and rescue vessel carries out a life-saving and fire drill in the South China Sea on April 4

of the United States' Asia-Pacific rebalancing strategy.

Shortly after coming to power in January 2009, the Barack Obama administration signaled that it would correct the George W. Bush administration's misplaced foreign policy by shifting the United States' strategic priority to the Asia-Pacific region, which obviously contributed to the confidence of the other claimants in the South China Sea in challenging China.

Between January and February 2009, the Philippines' House of Representatives and Senate adopted the Territorial Sea Baselines Bill, which claims China's Huangyan Island and some islands and reefs in the Nansha Islands as Philippine territory. On May 6, choosing to ignore the outstanding territorial and maritime delimitation disputes in these waters, Viet Nam and Malaysia jointly submitted to the CLCS information on the outer limits of the continental shelf in the South China Sea beyond 200 nautical miles from their claimed "territorial seas." On May 7, Viet Nam separately submitted to the CLCS information on the outer limits of the continental shelf beyond 200 nautical miles from its "territorial seas," claiming sovereignty over China's Xisha and Nansha Islands. Under

such circumstances, China had no choice but to submit to the CLCS preliminary survey findings on the outer limits of the continental shelf beyond 200 nautical miles in order to prevent its interests from being further undermined.

The United States, meanwhile, started to have friction with China in the South China Sea. The year 2009 alone saw at least five confrontations between U.S. and Chinese ships, with the *USNS Impeccable* incident being the most conspicuous.

The year 2010 witnessed a faster shift in the U.S. policy on the South China Sea, which showed an inclination to "take sides." At the ministerial meeting of the ASEAN Regional Forum held in Hanoi, Viet Nam on July 23, 2010, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton spoke on the South China Sea issue, stating that the United States "has a national interest in freedom of navigation, open access to Asia's maritime commons, and respect for international law in the South China Sea," and emphasizing that claimants should pursue their territorial claims and accompanying rights to maritime space in accordance with international laws. Later, Clinton wrote in her memoir: "That was a carefully chosen phrase, answering

the earlier Chinese assertion that its [China's] expansive territorial claims in the area constituted a 'core interest'." Clinton went on to make a series of remarks on the Obama administration's Asia-Pacific policy and the South China Sea issue on subsequent occasions. The United States, meanwhile, has beefed up its presence and enhanced military exercises in the region.

The Chinese side, by contrast, continued its diplomatic efforts in order to maintain stability in the South China Sea and defuse tensions with ASEAN countries. China achieved some progress by its painstaking efforts to resolve disputes via peaceful talks. At the ASEAN-China Ministerial Meeting (10+1) held in Bali, Indonesia, in July 2011, the Guidelines to Implement the DOC were adopted by China and the members of ASEAN. China reached some understanding with the Philippines and Viet Nam through bilateral negotiations. Yet these efforts were not enough to offset the United States' Asia-Pacific rebalance strategy, and claimants like the Philippines and Viet Nam, in turn, didn't display much restraint.

They began to step up their reclamation efforts on the encroached islands and reefs and to frequently conduct military exercises with the ►►

United States near the South China Sea. Some countries even sought to gang up against China, taking a series of provocative actions. In March 2011, the Philippine military disclosed plans to invest \$230 million in the renovation of barracks and airports on South China Sea islands. In June and July, the Philippines and Viet Nam conducted a series of joint exercises with other foreign powers in the disputed waters. Looking to strengthen the Philippines' territorial and maritime claims in this region, President Aquino III ordered the official use of "West Philippines Sea" to replace the internationally standardized geographical name of "South China Sea," a move which to some extent gained official recognition from the United States. In March 2012, the Philippines and Viet Nam reached an agreement on joint military exercises and maritime border patrols in the South China Sea. In April of the same year, Viet Nam dispatched several monks to temples on South China Sea islands.

These provocative activities by some ASEAN member countries and the U.S. intervention have been closely watched and widely reported in China, evoking strong reactions among the public. China's policy of restraint is approaching breaking point as it struggles to maintain a balance between its policies and public opinion.

Wrestling among multiple players

In April 2012, the Philippine Navy provocatively arrested Chinese fishermen working in Huangyan Island waters in what was later known as the Huangyan Island Incident. Arguably, this became the "last straw on the camel's back" in the fragile stability in the South China Sea, and tested the bottom line of China's policy and patience.

On April 10, 2012, Philippine warships launched a surprise raid on 12 Chinese fishing vessels working in the lagoon, disturbing and harassing their operations and even forcibly boarding one vessel and arresting the fishermen. Almost instantly, images of the arrested Chinese fishermen stripped to the waist and exposed to the scorching sun on the deck made headlines in print and digital media in China, triggering an outcry among the Chinese general public. Thus forced into taking countermeasures, China made urgent diplomatic representations to the Philippines and sent sur-

veillance ships and fishing administrative ships to the waters around Huangyan Island. Both sides engaged in a tense standoff until June 3, by which time all the Philippine ships had left the lagoon. To prevent further moves by the Philippines, China stationed a surveillance ship in the waters surrounding Huangyan Island, putting the island under its control.

As if the Huangyan Island Incident was not bad enough for tensions, Viet Nam adopted its domestic Maritime Law on June 21, 2012, in an attempt to legalize its territorial claims in the South China Sea. On the day of its adoption, China's then Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, Zhang Zhijun, summoned the Vietnamese Ambassador in China, Nguyen Van Tho, to protest against the move. On the same day, China announced its long-planned establishment of Sansha, a prefecture-level city, on Yongxing Island in the Xisha Islands. The city's jurisdiction covers Xisha, Zhongsha and Nansha Islands and surrounding waters. Relevant administrative, jurisdictional and military arrangements were made in the following months.

On January 22, 2013, the Philippines initiated an arbitral proceeding against China at the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea. Shortly after this announcement, China's Foreign Ministry made multiple official responses: "The Philippines and the arbitral tribunal have abused relevant procedures and forced ahead with the arbitration, disregarding the fact that the subject matter of the arbitration involves territorial sovereignty and maritime delimitation and related matters, [and] deliberately evading the declaration on optional exceptions made by China in 2006 under Article 298 of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea." "China does not accept the arbitration initiated by the Philippines" and, therefore, "will not participate in the proceedings."

Obviously, China disagrees with the Philippines, which applied for arbitration on account of its consultations and negotiations with China reaching an impasse. The fact is that ever since the Huangyan Island Incident, the Philippines has refused to engage in any serious dialogue let alone negotiations with China, and neither has it consulted the other DOC parties. As far as arbitration is concerned, China had already made a declaration on optional exceptions in 2006 under Article 298 of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea. Since

the arbitration court's jurisdiction covers sovereignty, historic rights and entitlement, China is exempt from the arbitration. No provision in the convention provides for the enforcement of an adverse ruling on China.

The subsequent Ren'ai Shoal Incident and *Drilling Platform 981* Standoff further aggravated the situation. As the vessel it ran aground on Ren'ai Shoal disintegrated, the Philippines continued looking for opportunities to start construction projects to get the shoal under its control. China has kept a watchful eye on these activities. In March 2014, China discovered that Philippine warships were transporting supplies to Ren'ai Shoal and immediately intercepted them, which led to a standoff between the two sides. The Philippines incited a storm of media coverage of the incident, trying to elicit global attention and U.S. intervention.

In May 2014, a drilling operation by the *HYSY 981* rig was completed near China's Xisha Islands. The drilling was performed 17 nautical miles from the south of Zhongjian Island between May 2 and August 15. During this time hundreds of vessels sent by the Vietnamese Government harassed the operation, resulting in heightened tensions and multiple chases and even collisions between a China Coast Guard flotilla and Vietnamese law enforcement vessels.

In 2013, in view of the changing situation in the South China Sea, to meet the civil and defense needs on the islands and to defend its sovereignty, China launched reclamation projects on those of the Nansha islands that it controlled. As all of the islands are far from international navigation routes, there was no question of the projects having any impact on freedom of navigation. But the United States and the Philippines kept accusing China and hyping the issue.

In response to the concerns, China's Foreign Ministry spokeswoman, Hua Chunying, gave a detailed explanation at a press briefing on April 9, 2015: The Chinese Government has been carrying out maintenance and construction work on some of the garrisoned Nansha islands and reefs with the main purposes of optimizing their functions, improving the living and working conditions of personnel stationed there, better safeguarding territorial sovereignty and maritime rights and interests, as well as better performing China's international responsibility and obligation in maritime search and rescue, disaster prevention and mitigation, marine science and research, meteorological observation, environmental protection, navigation safety, fishery production services and other areas. The relevant construction, which is well within China's sovereign responsibility, does not impact or target any country. It has recently been reported that a series of projects are underway to construct facilities that can provide

The fact is that ever since the Huangyan Island Incident, the Philippines has refused to engage in any serious dialogue let alone negotiations with China, and neither has it consulted the other DOC parties.

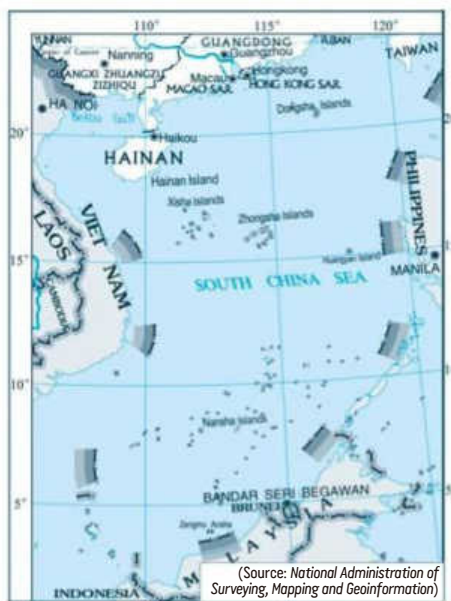
public services, such as lighthouses, automatic weather stations, marine observation centers and marine research institutes. Five lighthouses for navigation safety have been built, and four of them have been put into use.

China's actions have not been fully understood by those of its neighbors who have expressed concerns. The United States has also stepped up its intervention, buzzing over China's island reclamation projects, using rhetoric like "reaching too far and too fast" and "islands militarization" to pile pressure on China, and even sending ships to sail near the Nansha and Xisha Islands. All these were perceived in China as serious security challenges.

From the perspective of many Chinese people, the United States is the invisible hand behind the rising tension in the South China Sea. First, it is increasingly targeting China as it steps up its Asia-Pacific rebalance strategy. In 2013, the United States announced it would reinforce its military presence in the Asia-Pacific region by deploying 60 percent of its fleet and 60 percent of its overseas air force to the region by 2020. Also, the U.S. military has claimed it is threatened by "China's anti-access and area denial efforts" and has actively promoted operational concepts like Air-Sea Battle with China as a main target. These moves have undoubtedly further complicated and intensified the situation in the South China Sea and in the Asia-Pacific region as a whole. Many Chinese scholars have begun to suspect that the United States may be creating illusory threats and crises in the region that could turn into a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Since 2014, the United States has responded more clearly to China over the South China Sea issue in the shape of direct intervention in the disputes, which is often in favor of other claimants, especially its own allies.

On February 5, 2014, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Daniel Russel said at a congressional hearing that China's "lack of clarity with regard to its South China Sea claims has created uncertainty, insecurity and instability in the region." He also urged China to clarify its nine-dash line claim. This was the first explicit and official comment made by the United States to challenge China on the South China Sea issue. Obviously, the United States was well aware that as the Nansha Islands dispute was still unsettled, any attempt to clarify the dash line or maritime claims would only lead to an escalation of tensions. In the same month, U.S. Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) Admiral Jonathan Greenert announced U.S. support for the Philippines in the event of a China-Philippines conflict. This is the toughest stance expressed by the United States in the China-Philippine dispute. At the Post Ministerial Conference of the ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Naypyidaw



in August 2014, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry directly called for a moratorium on land reclamation, building on disputed islands, and actions that might further escalate disputes.

With the intent of making it more costly for China to take action in the South China Sea, the United States has opted for a cost-imposing strategy against China by resorting to political, diplomatic, public opinion and military means so as to force China to pull back without inciting armed confrontation. In 2015, the United States released three strategic security documents—"Forward, Engaged and Ready: A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower," "National Security Strategy" and "National Military Strategy and Asia-Pacific Maritime Security Strategy"—all of which talked about the South China Sea issue at fairly great length and asserted that the United States would make China pay a price.

From the Chinese perspective, as well as undermining its credibility as a potential mediator, the United States' dramatically altered policy on the South China Sea has heightened China's concerns that its interests will be further undermined and, thus, has inspired its determination and measures to defend them.

Echoing its policy readjustments, the United States has accelerated provocative and coercive actions that are clearly targeted at China. For example, U.S. surveillance at the Nansha Islands and its surrounding waters has intensified. The number of sorties by U.S. planes to carry out close-up reconnaissance of the South China Sea Islands increased from about 260 in 2009 to over 1,200 in 2014. Also, as a way to flex its muscle and assert freedom of navigation, it keeps sending ships to sail within 12 nautical miles of the Nansha Islands or even the non-

disputed Xisha Islands. On October 27, 2015, the *USS Lassen* navigated within 12 nautical miles of Zhubi Reef. On January 30, 2016, the *USS Curtis Wilbur* trespassed on China's territorial waters near Zhongjian Island. Quite different from its usual practice, the U.S. media began to buzz over these events. U.S. Pacific Command Commander Harry Harris even openly declared more sophisticated and wide-ranging activities in the future including sending warships to the South China Sea about twice a quarter.

Other deterrent actions taken by the United States include the following: In July 2015, the new commander of the U.S. Pacific Fleet, Admiral Scott Swift, joined a surveillance mission on board the *ASW P-8A Poseidon* to conduct close-up reconnaissance in the South China Sea; on November 5, U.S. Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter cruised on the *USS Roosevelt*, and while he delivered a speech on board, the carrier churned through disputed waters about 150-200 nautical miles south of the Nansha Islands and about 70 nautical miles north of Malaysia; on November 8 and 9, two U.S. B-52 strategic bombers flew near the Chinese islands under construction; and during his visit to the Philippines on April 15, 2016, Carter landed on the aircraft carrier, *USS John C. Stennis*, and joined a patrol in the South China Sea. U.S. warships and planes also frequently conduct "innocent passage" through China's territorial waters and airspace.

The United States has also sought to strengthen its alliance and forces surrounding the South China Sea. Since the implementation of the Asia-Pacific rebalance strategy, it has been stepping up deployment of its forces around the perimeter of the South China Sea including at the Australian port of Darwin, the Changi Naval Base in Singapore, and in the Philippines and Malaysia. The United States is also strengthening cooperation with Malaysia, Indonesia and Viet Nam for the purpose of conducting intelligence gathering and enhancing maritime domain awareness capabilities in the region. Furthermore, it is expanding military support to some claimants in the disputes, such as the Philippines and Viet Nam, to help improve their reconnaissance, patrol and anti-access capacities. In March 2016, the United States and the Philippines announced at their sixth annual Bilateral Security Dialogue that U.S. forces would be allowed to use five Philippine military bases. In April 2016, the United States and the Philippines conducted their Shoulder-to-Shoulder exercises in the South China Sea again with more targeted activities, such as retaking control of islands and oil rig defense, obviously related to the South China Sea disputes.

The U.S.'s military deployment in the South China Sea has further aggravated tensions in the region, giving the disputes in the South China Sea a larger-than-life role on the inter-►►

national strategic chessboard. The apparent China-U.S. rivalry seems to be superseding other disputes in the region and has started to take center stage. Looking back at the post-Cold War era, we can see that nearly all the contentions and conflicts involved or were even engineered by the United States, some with complications that have lingered till today. The Chinese are thus prompted to ask the question, what is the United States playing at this time in the South China Sea?

Conclusion

As the above narrative shows, the situation in the South China Sea reached its present state as a result of the entangling effects of actions and reactions along multiple lines. There is also the influence of the changes in the international and regional security environments. The elements that pushed the spiraling twists and turns include not only sovereignty, resources and strategic security considerations but also tangible interests. There are also the problems of missing information and historical and institutional memory loss. Moreover, the guessing game about each other's strategic intentions and policy objectives also plays a role. As a power from outside the region, the United States has played a major role since 2009 by coming into the issue and adjusting its policies toward the region. So now, what's next? What will happen in the South China Sea? The United States is trying to find out what China's next move will be. In China, meanwhile, suspicion is rising about U.S. intentions. Obviously, there is a risk of escalation of tension and a danger of strategic miscalculations.

China's pursuit of its objectives in the South China Sea—safeguarding its national territorial integrity and maintaining regional peace and tranquility—has consistently continued. To observe China, one should never lose sight of historical dimensions. Though China is growing into a strong nation, the painful memory of history has not been forgotten. The Chinese people have not forgotten that the country stumbled into the 20th century with its capital occupied by imperialists' armies and that for over a century China suffered the humiliation of foreign invasion and aggression. This is why the Chinese people and government are very sensitive about anything related to territorial integrity and would never allow the recurrence of such events, even if it is just an inch of land. This is something the outside world needs to keep in mind when looking at China and trying to understand China's behavior. Admittedly, there is no major external threat that can endanger China's survival or development in today's world. China adheres to the path of peaceful

development and is dedicated to promoting world peace, development and cooperation. China's belief and commitment are firm and unchanged.

In his speech at the opening ceremony of the Fifth Meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) on April 28, 2016, Chinese President Xi Jinping stated, "Let me stress that China is committed to maintaining peace and stability in the South China Sea. We firmly stand by our sovereignty and rights and interests in the South China Sea and remain committed to resolving disputes peacefully through friendly consultation and negotiation with countries directly concerned." From the consultations Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi held in recent months with counterparts from ASEAN countries, one can also see that China's proposition of a "dual-track" approach—resolving disputes peacefully through negotiation between the parties directly concerned, and China and ASEAN countries working together to maintain peace and stability in the South China Sea—has been well received and supported. ASEAN has started to realize the importance of keeping the situation under control and returning to dialogue.

So, to be specific, China's policy objectives in the South China Sea could be read from the following angles.

First, China's fundamental policy objective for the South China Sea is to protect the security of its sovereignty and maritime rights. Tactically, China has been coping with all motions by refraining from proactive motions, which means acting with restraint and taking countermeasures only when provoked. The Chinese people will not allow any further infringement of the country's sovereignty and rights concerning land features in the South China Sea and, therefore, hold high expectations of the government to protect China's national interests. As for the current status quo of the Nansha islands and reefs occupied by other countries, China will not give up its sovereignty stance. Considering that China has significantly increased its capacity to control the situation and prevent any further loss, however, it is highly advisable that as long as no new major threat looms large, China should continue to uphold the policy of "shelving the disputes and seeking joint development" and take into account the reality on the ground. The outcome of the arbitration initiated by the Philippines should not shake China's fundamental policy lines.

Second, China's policy on the South China Sea also concerns the freedom and safety of navigation. Being an international pathway of strategic importance, the South China Sea has

the busiest commercial shipping routes in the world, carrying 40 percent of the world's ocean freight. The freedom and safety of navigation in the area are indispensable to all major economies, including China's. As the biggest benefactor of the pathway, China relies on the routes for 70 to 80 percent of its trade and energy supplies. The pathway also serves as an important passage through which the Chinese Navy can reach the wider sea.

Third, the common denominator of China and its neighbors in the South China Sea is regional peace and stability. China does not have an agenda or motive to seek hegemony in the region. The reason that China exercises restraint and keeps the disputes and differences under control is precisely for the sake of maintaining peace in the general environment. In this regard, China should continue to make efforts in the following aspects: provide and share more information with others for better understanding; offer more public goods for the well-being and safety of all; complete the code of conduct with ASEAN members for a rules-based regional order. From a long-term perspective, as the largest coastal country on the South China Sea, China should keep up its abilities to defend itself and maintain peace in the South China Sea to secure a good position from which to seek a negotiated settlement.

Fourth, China and the United States share the common strategic interests of maintaining the freedom and safety of navigation and promoting stability and prosperity in the South China Sea area. China and the United States are not parties in dispute with each other. The two countries, therefore, should avoid the predicament of security and misunderstandings by engaging in dialogue and clarifying each other's intentions. They need and should be able to work toward cooperation. As China is growing into a maritime power, the world's seas and oceans are increasingly important to its development and its endeavor to carry out global cooperation. China's vision will surely go beyond the South China Sea. Therefore, any speculation about its intentions based on conventional land-power mentality may not be accurate.

The future trend very much depends on the perceptions and choices of the parties involved. If they choose to cooperate, they may all win. If they choose to confront one other, they may only head for an impasse or even conflict, and no one will benefit. ■

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The "Chinese Classics" series published by Foreign Languages Press is a collection of ancient Chinese classics and great works of modern Chinese authors. The first set comprises nine ancient classic works including *Selected Elegies of the State of Chu*, *Selections from Records of the Historian*, *Tao Yuanming Selected Poems*, *Du Fu Selected Poems*, and *Selected Tang Dynasty Stories*, and five works by Lu Xun (1881-1936), a leading figure of modern Chinese literature, which include *Dawn Blossoms Plucked at Dusk*, *Wild Grass*, *Lu Xun Selected Poems* and *The True Story of Ah Q*. The translators are all internationally-recognized leaders in the field, including Yang Xianyi (1915-2009), Gladys Yang (1919-1999), Rewi Alley (1897-1987), W. J. F. Jenner (1940-), and Fang Chong (1902-1991), among others.

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A refugee family from Syria enjoy their meal in the Spree Hotel in Bautzen, a city of east Germany, on March 22. The hotel has become a provisional home for 240 refugees from Syria

A Diversifying Landscape

The election of Britain's first Muslim mayor has profound implications **By Ma Xiaolin**



The author is a professor at Beijing Foreign Studies University

British-Pakistani Sadiq Khan, the Labour Party candidate, was elected as the new Mayor of London on May 8. Khan's victory has set two records in Britain and Western Europe. He has become London's first mayor to come from an ethnic minority background, and he is also the first Muslim mayor to head a famous European metropolis.

The election result has divided the British public. Some speak highly of Britain's racial equality and social progress, as demonstrated by Khan's win, while some more conservatively minded people voice their concern over the increasing influence of Muslims and other minority groups on mainstream European societies. These views reflect the complex feelings among Europeans today. Will Khan's success usher in a new era of ethnic integration in Europe?

A celebrated success

London has a population of 8.6 million, while its Muslim residents account for approximately 1 million. If ethnic background

was a big concern for a mayoral candidate, Khan would have been unlikely to attain the Labour nomination, let alone win the election. Voters appeared more interested in a candidate's policy proposals and capabilities rather than his family's background or ethnic group, displaying the high level of social inclusiveness and openness in British society.

In a poll conducted by YouGov six months before the election, some 55 percent of respondents said they had no problems with a mayor from an ethnic minority. To some extent this is promising, though it implies many are still uncomfortable over electing a minority representative.

Born to an immigrant family, Khan became a lawyer and rose up the Labour Party to become a member of the shadow cabinet. Khan's Muslim faith does not prevent him from supporting gay marriage. In fact, his progressive political beliefs cast him as a left-wing British politician, committed to humanitarianism and Western values, completely at odds with Muslims immersed in extremism. Perhaps Khan is not well-received by local xenophobic groups or radical Muslims, but he has won the support of millions of Londoners. The new mayor might signify the new hope of a multi-cultural European civilization.



↓ Profile

Sadiq Khan was born to a Pakistani immigrant family in southwest London in 1970. His father was a bus driver, and his mother was a seamstress. Khan was the fifth of their eight children—seven sons and a daughter. He gained a degree in Law from the University of North London and subsequently worked as human rights solicitor and chaired Liberty for three years. Before becoming the mayor of London, he worked as a key ally of Labour leader Ed Miliband, serving in his shadow cabinet as Shadow Secretary of State for Justice, Shadow Lord Chancellor, and Shadow Minister for London.

(Compiled by Beijing Review)

On the other hand, there has been a resurgence of far-right groups in recent years in many countries across Europe, e.g. the National Front in France and Austria's Freedom Party. They call for reductions on immigration and Islamic influence, appealing to many Europeans who perceive their culture and traditions are under threat.

Against such a backdrop, Khan's success carries historic significance. In a globalized world, people from different ethnicities, religions and cultures live more closely together than ever before; harmonious coexistence has become an international issue. Khan's victory is groundbreaking in a similar way to Barack Obama's election in 2008 as the first black American president, albeit on a smaller scale.

Racial estrangement

A clash of civilizations, centered on a struggle for ideology, values and lifestyles between the East and West has been ongoing from ancient times till the present day on the Eurasian continent.

In Western history, the Greco-Persian Wars that took place in the 5th century B.C. were labeled as a confrontation between democracy and autocracy; a fight of freedom against slavery. Since the rise of the Arab Empire and Islam in the 7th century A.D., there have been numerous wars between Western Christians and Eastern Muslims, including the Crusades which lasted two centuries beginning in the 11th century.

In the 15th and 16th centuries,

European navigators discovered new sea routes to the East as well as first setting foot in the New World (North and South America). In the following five centuries, much of the globe was occupied by Western colonialists, and world affairs were dominated by the West. Meanwhile, many Islamic civilizations were dismantled by mighty Western powers and state boundaries were redrawn to suit their interests, sowing the seeds for future unrest in the Middle East, North Africa and South Asia.

After World War II, many colonies achieved national independence, while there was a strong labor demand across much of Europe for the post-war reconstruction effort. Consequently, many Muslim migrants settled on the continent, gradually forming their own communities and societies. This has unsettled some natives.

According to demographic statistics by the Pew Research Center, Europe's Muslim population reached 44 million in 2010, accounting for 6 percent of the total population. Nearly half of them live in EU countries, approximately 3.8 percent of EU population. Some have projected that the Muslim share in Europe will reach 25 percent in 80 years.

In recent years, parts of the European press, affected by Euro-centrism and a sense of cultural superiority as well as the inherent problems of Muslim immigrants, have formed a negative view on the Muslim population. Some media outlets criticize them for rejecting the opportunity to integrate into European culture and for inciting

violence. The recent terror attacks in France and Belgium and refugee crisis solidified this impression, with some fearing the future Islamification of Europe. However, such concerns are often exaggerated.

Europe has held a world leading position in many areas in the modern period. Today, some European leaders are still interested in promoting Western values to every corner of the world, despite Europe having its own social problems. For example, women, ethnic minorities and other underprivileged groups remain underrepresented as business heads and in political fields.

A parallel can be drawn between the situations in the UK and in the United States. Obama's election as U.S. president is the ultimate real life example of the American dream, but it by no means represents an end to outstanding racial frictions and problems within American society. The cases of the unarmed Michael Brown in Ferguson and Trayvon Martin of Sanford being shot to death by white police officers in recent years have shown such disparity.

Khan's success can be retold as a political fairy tale for the children of immigrants—recognition is attainable if you work hard and assimilate into local culture. However, there is a long way to go for both the new mayor of London and European society as a whole to dispel the estrangement between mainstream society and its minorities. Maybe Khan's victory can be a springboard toward this goal. ■

Copied by Dominic James Madar
Comments to liuyunyun@bjreview.com

Held under the banner of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, the China Africa Industrial Forum (CAIF) is committed to promoting development and cooperation between China and African countries. It aims to encourage rapid and sound economic development in China as well as African countries and boost exchanges and cooperation in politics, the economy, culture, science and technology, and tourism.



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Cheng Zhigang, Secretary General of CAIF, was interviewed by Xinhua News Agency.





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Increasing Uncertainty

Cross-Straits relations is a critical issue that Taiwan's new leader needs to be clear on

By Yin Cunyi



The author is deputy dean of the Institute of Taiwan Studies, Tsinghua University

Taiwan's new leader Tsai Ing-wen took office in Taipei on May 20. Following the change of leadership in Taiwan, the most important question now is whether the ruling Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) will acknowledge the 1992 Consensus and its core implications, because the question involves the political foundation for peaceful development of cross-Straits relations. It also matters for the benefit of Chinese people on both sides of the Taiwan Straits as well as for regional stability and peace.

To most people's disappointment, Tsai posed an ambiguous stance on the 1992 Consensus in her inaugural address, not showing responsibility for history. Tsai's equivocation casts a huge shadow over the future of cross-Straits relations.

The 1992 Consensus, the common political foundation reached by the Chinese mainland and Taiwan, states that both sides of the Taiwan Straits uphold the one-China principle.

Tsai's political trick

Tsai had years ago expressed her secessionist views while she worked as a high-ranking official in cross-Straits affairs in both the administrations of Lee Teng-hui (1996-2000) and Chen Shui-bian (2000-08).

Tsai participated in research work for Lee's cross-Straits policy, in which Lee claimed that relations between the mainland and Taiwan are special relations between states.

In 2000, Chen and the DPP for the first time beat the Kuomintang and took over the leadership of Taiwan. Tsai was appointed the first DPP chairperson of the mainland affairs authority. At a press conference, Tsai publicly denied that the DPP acknowledged the 1992 Consensus.

In 2011, Tsai tried to replace the 1992 Consensus with the so-called "Taiwan consensus" in her 10-year political program that she prepared for the election campaign the next year as the DPP candidate. However, Tsai could not deny the existence of the 1992 talks but still denied the 1992 Consensus during a televised debate between candidates.

In 2015, Tsai participated in the election campaign for the second time. She learned from the past experiences and took an ambiguous stance on cross-Straits relations. In her campaign remarks, Tsai acknowledged that both sides of the Taiwan Straits reached some consensus and mutual understanding at a meeting in 1992. But she stressed that the cross-Straits relations should "maintain the present status" under the conditions of respecting the "current constitutional framework," "democratic principles" and "the will of the people in Taiwan."

In this way, Tsai deliberately avoided mentioning the core meaning of the 1992 Consensus—that both the mainland and Taiwan are part of China.

Tsai's equivocation is not only a trick of words. In fact, the DPP still insists on the proposition of separating Taiwan from China, according to the party's constitution. Moreover, the DPP has not established a relationship of mutual trust with the mainland. Therefore, it is reasonable for the mainland to urge Tsai to make clear her attitude toward the 1992 Consensus.

In her inaugural remarks, Tsai said both sides of the Taiwan Straits should "seek common points while putting aside differences."

According to her, the two sides should suspend the argument over the 1992 Consensus and maintain the progress they have achieved in the last eight years. That is to say, Tsai wants to maintain the relationship with the mainland without acknowledging the 1992 Consensus.

The mainland stresses that both sides of the Taiwan Straits must abide strictly by the principle that both the mainland and Taiwan belong to China, which is a political premise for developing cross-Straits relations. This is also a common point for people across the straits. In whatever terms, either historical or according to present circumstances, cross-Straits relations are not a relationship between two states. The 1992 Consensus is not only the political cornerstone of cross-Straits relations but also an indispensable condition for the mainland and Taiwan to put aside their differences. It is the bottom line for developing cross-Straits relations.

Without acknowledging the 1992 Consensus, Tsai's attempt to maintain the current breakaway status of Taiwan and legitimize the party's separation proposition is totally wishful thinking.

Blocked relations

Based on the 1992 Consensus, the Chinese mainland and Taiwan have since 2008 normalized ordinary communication and exchanges in various areas. And, talks between the mainland-based Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Straits (ARATS) and Taiwan's Straits Exchange Foundation (SEF) have resumed.

Cross-Straits affairs authorities have reached as many as 23 cooperation deals, establishing communication mechanisms in various fields. During the period of Ma Ying-jeou's administration, cross-Straits relations reached their apogee for the last half century.

Last November, the leaders of the mainland and Taiwan, Xi Jinping and Ma Ying-jeou respectively, historically shook hands at an epoch-making meeting in Singapore. Meanwhile, exchanges between people across the Straits are also going unprecedentedly well.

However, the smooth development of cross-Straits relations might be affected by Tsai's negative attitude toward the 1992 Consensus.

Without the political cornerstone, current work mechanisms between the mainland and Taiwan will be the first to be spoiled. Consultation and talks between cross-Straits affairs authorities, including contact between ARATS and SEF, will grind to a halt. Cooperation deals between the mainland and Taiwan, most of which center around economic cooperation, will not be able to continue due to the suspension of talks be-

Ma Xiaoguang, spokesman of the Taiwan Affairs Office of the State Council, speaks at a press conference in Beijing on May 25

tween the two sides. The efforts exerted by both sides over recent years will be wasted.

The economic cooperation mechanisms across the Straits are closely connected with other regional economies. If the economic ties between the mainland and Taiwan are disturbed by Taiwanese politics, then Taiwan will face more difficulty participating in regional economic integration efforts.

In 2010, the mainland and Taiwan reached the Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement (ECFA). With the mainland's support, Taiwan subsequently signed economic cooperation deals with Singapore and New Zealand. But now, new economic deals will not come about if Tsai denies the 1992 Consensus. In particular, the DPP by itself can't have Taiwan participate in the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) or the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP).

Taiwan's economy will suffer greater hardship due to the decline of forces driving economic ties between the mainland and Taiwan. As is widely known, Taiwan has an open economy that relies greatly on exports. Exports accounts for over 60 percent of the region's GDP. In the 2008 financial crisis, Taiwan's economy suffered a recession, with an economic growth of minus 1.94 percent. However, after Taiwan signed the ECFA with the mainland in 2010, its annual economic growth rate reached 10.88 percent.

The DPP lost power in 2008 due to its bad management of Taiwan's economy. Under Chen Shui-bian's administration, from 2000 to 2008, Taiwan did not actively participate in regional or bilateral economic cooperation. During that period, the global economy entered into a period of adjustment with insufficient demand and changes in market impetus. Under such circumstances, Taiwan's export trade shrank markedly. Many enterprises experienced hardship. Without the great surplus created by closer economic ties between the mainland and Taiwan, Taiwan could not have achieved the economic recovery it has seen in recent years.

Currently, global trade demand remains weak, and world economic recovery is unstable. Both sides of the Taiwan Straits face a series of challenges in adjusting their economic structures and developing their emerging industries. If the two sides cannot expand their economic and trade cooperation further, Taiwan's economy will feel the impact of other competitive economies in the Asia-Pacific region. Taiwan will not be



able to make use of its geographically advantageous position—being close to the mainland—and will lose opportunities to upgrade its economic structure. In short, the mainland is important for Taiwan to overcome its current economic difficulties and drive future growth.

However, the DPP has in the past refused any proposal of economic cooperation between the mainland and Taiwan. The pro-separation party always incites local ethnic groups to oppose the one-China principle. Tsai's negative stance on the 1992 Consensus will definitely harm Taiwan's economy and intensify the fragmentation of society. Consequently, the interests of the people in Taiwan will be damaged.

Mainland's unchanged policy

Because of the political environment in Taiwan, it is hard to avoid periodic fluctuations in cross-Straits relations. But, the mainland won't change its policy on Taiwan. As General Secretary of the Communist Party of China Xi Jinping said during the Fourth session of the 12th National People's Congress in Beijing this March, "The mainland's policy on Taiwan is always explicit and consistent, and the policy won't change even if the political situation in Taiwan changes."

"We will adhere to the 1992 Consensus as the political cornerstone for continuing to promote peaceful development of cross-Straits relations," Xi said.

The 1992 Consensus clarified the nature

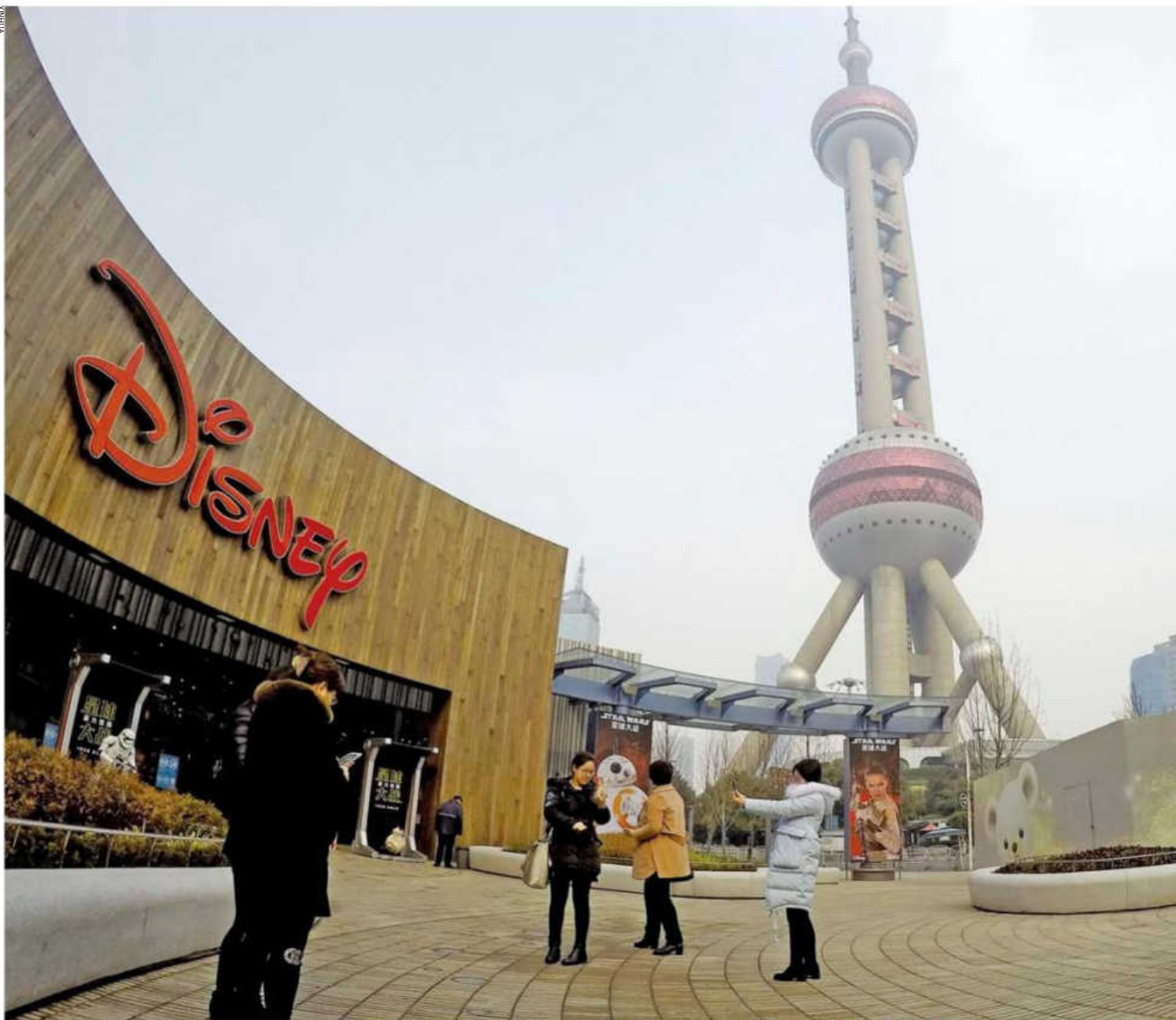
of cross-Straits relations. It is the key to ensuring peace and stability across the Taiwan Straits. As long as Taiwan's authorities acknowledge the historical fact of the 1992 Consensus and its core meaning, the two sides have a common political base and can maintain sound interactions.

If Taiwan's new authorities deny the consensus or spoil the political base, the mainland will uncompromisingly fight against the separatist force.

Tsai's failure to acknowledge the 1992 Consensus in her inauguration implies that the political cornerstone of cross-Straits relations might be abandoned. If so, mutual political trust and regular communication mechanisms are likely to be damaged. Tsai and her DPP must bear the responsibility for the losses Taiwan will sustain as a result of the ensuing chain reaction.

The people in Taiwan are compatriots of the people on the mainland. For this reason, the mainland will work hard to cope with the changes in cross-Straits relations through enhancing connections across the Straits and promoting a common understanding of the one-China principle. Together with Taiwan compatriots, the mainland will fight against any form of attempt to seek "Taiwan independence," never letting the tragedy of national separation happen again. ■

Copyedited by Chris Surtees
Comments to zanjifang@bjreview.com



The Pudong New Area in Shanghai

Opening Up Further

Experimental reforms aim to open wider to the outside world By Ji Jing



The site of the 2016 Tangshan International Horticultural Exposition on May 23

Following the establishment of free trade zones (FTZs), China has selected 12 cities and areas to try out a new open-economy system which is more open to foreign collaboration, Shen Danyang, spokesman of the Ministry of Commerce, announced on May 17 at a press briefing.

The overall goal of this experiment is to create new models of market-dominated resource allocation, new forms of economic management, new patterns for all round opening up and new advantages in international cooperation and competition. The experiment,

scheduled to be completed in two years, is expected to accumulate experiences that can be replicated and expanded across the country.

The pilot will operate in six cities—Jinan, Nanchang, Tangshan, Zhangzhou, Dongguan, and Fangchenggang—as well as six areas including the Pudong New Area of Shanghai, the Liangjiang New Area of Chongqing, the Xixian New Area of Shaanxi Province, the Jinpu New Area of Dalian, the city cluster surrounding Wuhan, and the Suzhou Industrial Park.

In Shen's view, a new open-economy sys-

tem is not only about opening up, but is actually geared to reform.

A complement to FTZs

Currently, the four FTZs established in Shanghai, Tianjin, Guangdong and Fujian serve as important platforms to push forward China's opening-up process.

So, why does China want to build pilot zones for a new open-economy system when it already has four FTZs set up?

Shen told the *Economic Information Daily* that the pilot zones and the FTZs are both aim- ►►

Pilot Cities and Areas of New Open-Economy System

Jinan, capital of Shandong Province

Area: 7,998 square km

Population: more than 7 million

GDP (2015): 610 billion yuan (\$93 billion), up 8.1 percent year on year

Pillar industries: shifting from heavy industrial sectors including iron and steel, automobile, machinery, chemicals and cement to emerging industry such as modern logistics

Nanchang, capital of Jiangxi Province

Area: 7,402 square km

Population: more than 5 million

GDP (2015): 400 billion yuan (\$61 billion), up 9.6 percent year on year

Pillar industries: automobile, metallurgy, textile, chemicals, pharmaceuticals, bioengineering, electronic information, new materials, software

Tangshan, a heavy industry base in Hebei Province

Area: 13,472 square km

Population: 7.8 million

GDP (2015): 610 billion yuan (\$93 billion), up 5.6 percent year on year

Pillar industries: iron and steel, cement, equipment manufacturing, oil

Zhangzhou, a coastal city in Fujian Province

Area: 12,600 square km

Population: 5 million

GDP (2015): 277 billion yuan (\$42 billion), up 11 percent year on year

Pillar industries: equipment manufacturing, special iron and steel, food and petrochemical industries

Dongguan, a manufacturing and foreign trade hub in Guangdong Province

Area: 2,512 square km

Population: more than 8 million

GDP (2015): 628 billion yuan (\$96 billion), up 8 percent year on year

Pillar industries: electronic information; electrical machinery and equipment; textile, apparels and shoes, food and beverage; papermaking; toys, stationery and sports goods; furniture, chemicals; packaging and printing

Fangchenggang, a coastal city bordering Viet Nam in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region

Area: 6,173 square km

Population: 918,400

GDP (2015): 62 billion yuan (\$9 billion), up 10.2 percent year on year

Pillar industries: steel, energy, chemical engineering, food, edible oil and logistics

Pudong New Area of Shanghai

Established in January 1993 and covering an area of 1,430 square km, it is the largest district in Shanghai and specializes in shipping, financial and tourism industries as well as law services.

Liangjiang New Area of Chongqing

Established in June 2010, it has a planned area of 1,200 square km. It is an important hinterland base for advanced manufacturing industries and the modern service industry. It is also an economic, financial and innovation hub in the upper reaches of the Yangtze River centered on the rail transportation, electric equipment,

new-energy vehicles, national defense and electronics industries.

Xixian New Area of Shaanxi Province

Located between Xi'an and Xi'an Yang of Shaanxi, it has a planned area of 882 square km. It concentrates on developing hi-tech industries and promoting environmental protection and preservation of cultural heritage. It is set to become an important hub on the Silk Road Economic Belt.

Jinpu New Area of Dalian

Established in August 2015, it includes the central and southern parts of Dalian City, Liaoning Province. It is focused on developing equipment manufacturing, bio-pharmaceuticals, new-energy vehicles, automobile, electronics, petrochemical, fine chemical engineering and logistics industries.

Wuhan and Neighboring Cities

Approved in 2007 and incorporating Wuhan and eight surrounding cities in Hubei Province, it is focused on developing hi-tech industries, agricultural products processing, machinery manufacturing, textile and environmental protection industries.

Suzhou Industrial Park

Established in February 1995 and located in the east of Suzhou, Jiangsu Province, it covers 278 square km and is focused on developing emerging industries such as bio-pharmaceuticals, nanotechnology application and cloud computing industries.

(Compiled by Beijing Review)

ing to experiment with a new system to bolster China's opening-up efforts. These experiments are set to provide the experience necessary for the results to be replicated nationwide. The two types of zones nonetheless differ in terms of function, location and size.

The FTZs, for example, are more advanced in terms of opening up because they comply with international trade and economic rules and standards by experimenting with key and sensitive opening-up issues such as the adoption of the negative-list approach. On the other hand, the new open-economy system works with cities and areas at various stages of development—unlike FTZs which are primarily located in developed areas—so as to facilitate the eventual spread of the system throughout the country.

The FTZs are focused on trade facilitation and the opening-up of the financial sector. Meanwhile, the new pilot zones are set to en-

courage local governments to form a public relations and public service system for opening up, including setting up trade associations and the establishment of a management system for state-owned enterprises' overseas investments.

Compared with FTZs, which are all located in coastal regions, the pilot zones are more widely dispersed. They are located both in coastal and hinterland areas and include both provincial capitals and second-tier cities. They also cover a larger area than FTZs, which cover an average area of over 100 square km, while some of the new pilot zones can exceed 10,000 square km.

As a consequence, the industries involved in the new pilot zones are also more varied, including modern agriculture, manufacture-related services, and high-end manufacturing industry.

Bai Ming, a researcher with the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic

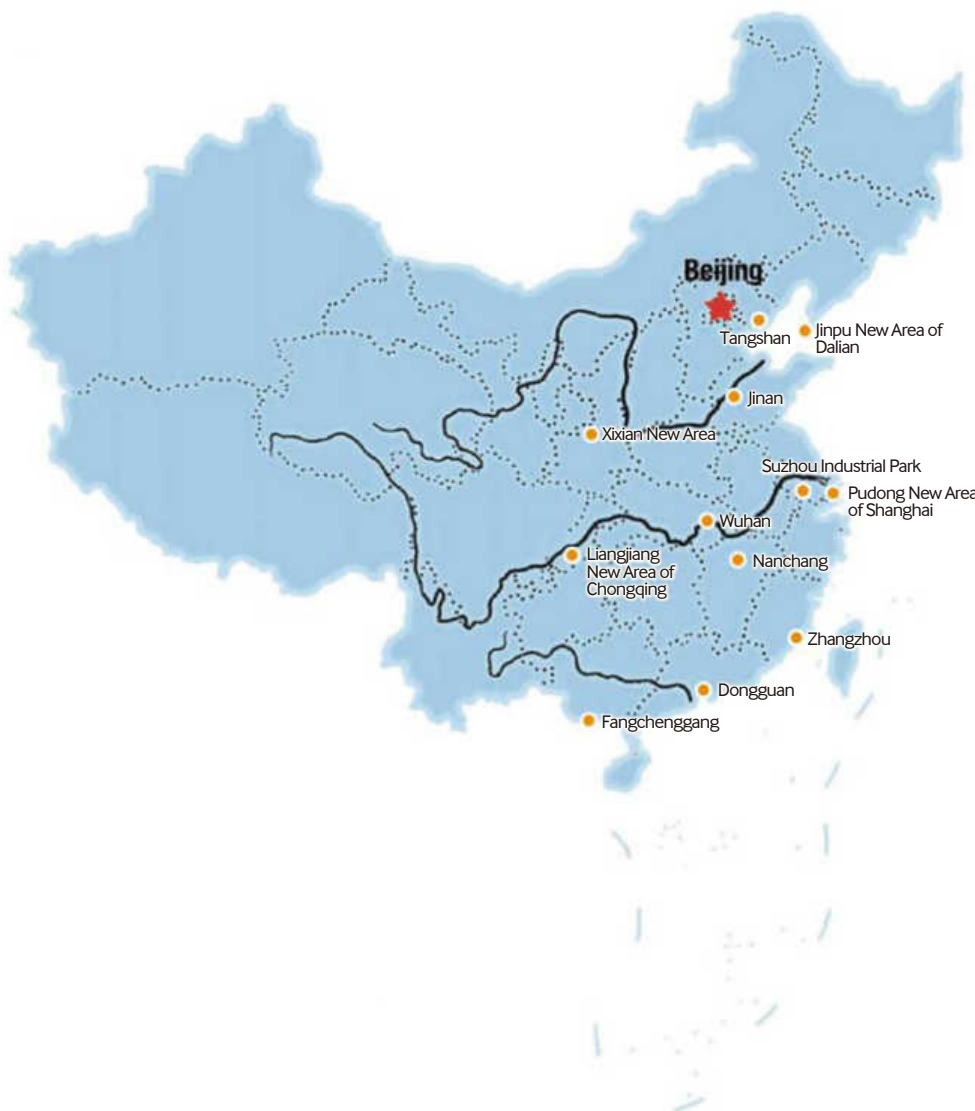
Cooperation, explained that these pilot zones are being set up because it's difficult to repeat the same process of high-level opening up undertaken by the FTZs throughout the country within a short period.

"The new experimental zones are more representative, as they are from a wider span of the country," Bai said.

"The pilot zones include cities such as Dongguan—a trade processing hub, the steel industry base Tangshan, as well as the industrial park in Suzhou. The variety will enable all kinds of cities in China to find a model to follow," Bai added.

Missions

According to Shen, this experiment will focus more on reforms related to opening up so as to form new systems and mechanisms that can adapt to an open economy. He specified the main tasks of the pilot zones:



First of all, the pilot zones are set up to observe a new model of open economic management. On one hand, the government should streamline administration—on the other hand, the role of non-governmental organizations and market entities should be given full play in order to ensure regulated and orderly economic operation and market competition. For instance, when transforming the foreign investment management system from an approval-based one to a registration-based one, how can local governments provide better services for foreign investors?

A new coordinated system for opening up among all kinds of industrial parks and demonstration zones should be formed. National-level industrial parks, FTZs, and innovation demonstration zones are important platforms for opening up. However, these parks or zones urgently require upgrading and repositioning.

The experiment is designed to find new

paths for international investment cooperation, including solving systematic problems in using foreign investment and carrying out overseas investments. For instance, problems such as how to attract high-end manufacturing and service industries to China and how intermediary organizations specializing in design consultation, asset evaluation, credit rating and legal services can globalize could be solved through experimentation.

A new foreign trade promotion system oriented at quality and efficiency is to be established. The focus should be to stabilize and improve foreign trade growth in order to enable China to gain an upper hand in the global industrial value chain. The system should boost both the trade of goods and services.

New ways to open up financial services are also to be explored. Focus should be placed on the globalization of financial services and the service industry in order to improve the influ-

ence of China's financial institutions around the world. The pilot zones can copy the financial industry practices that have been carried out in the Shanghai FTZ. Meanwhile, the weaknesses of financial institutions in serving the real economy, especially the open economy—such as mid- and long-term financing for equipment manufacturing enterprises and large projects—should be remedied.

"The highlight of the tasks is to create a new pattern of all-round opening up," said Shen. Local governments are invited to participate in national opening-up strategies so as to reinforce the overall process. For instance, they are encouraged to strengthen cooperation mechanisms with major cities of countries involved in the Belt and Road Initiative. The pilot zones can upgrade trade and economic cooperation with cities in other countries by setting up trade and economic agencies in other countries or by forging sister city relationships.

Application

Both central and local governments have a role to play in pushing for the formation of the new open-economy system.

"The Central Government should formulate policies to guide the establishment of the system, while local governments should experiment with the new open-economy system based on their own realities," said Shen.

"China is now deeply involved in the global economic system. Therefore, great importance should be attached to the relationship between opening up and national security. The trial will cope with unpredictable risks in opening up to ensure the smooth implementation of the new open-economy system nationwide," Shen added.

Many cities and areas involved in the new open-economy system experiment are highly anticipated candidates for the third batch of FTZs. Consequently, the question arises as to whether the approval of these pilot zones will delay the establishment of the third batch of FTZs.

Shen, however, didn't think that this would be the case. "The new open-economy system and FTZs are two separate developments," Shen added.

However, Lu Jinyong, a professor at the University of International Business and Economics in Beijing said, "The experiment for the new open-economy system is a test of the results achieved by FTZs ahead of their nationwide application. Therefore, their establishment may indeed put off the third group of FTZs." ■

OPINION

Sparing No Effort to Accelerate Private Investment Growth

The Chinese economy has bottomed out and is stabilizing as economic growth remained within the reasonable range during the first four months of this year, judging by figures published by the National Bureau of Statistics. It is nonetheless alarming that private investment only increased by 5.2 percent during the same period, continuing a downward trend which had lasted for a long time. More worryingly, private investment has also grown at a slower rate compared to that of total social investment since the beginning of this year.

Although private investment has constantly been in decline from 2013 to 2015, its growth rates had always remained higher than that of total social investment. However, the 5.2-percent growth of private investment during the first four months of this year was 5.3 percentage points lower than that of total social investment during the same period.

This trend is likely to affect and hinder the implementation of measures aimed at stabilizing growth, restructuring the economy and preventing risks.

As the private economy accounts for over a half of the national economy, the rapid deceleration in private investment will endanger stable growth of the national economy. Therefore, it is of particular importance to reverse this downward trend and bolster private investment.

The slump in private investment can be attributed to both the supply and demand sides. Structural problems in the supply side have resulted in a low return ratio for private investment, discouraging prospective investors.

Overcapacity is the principal reason for the decline of private investment. Private capital has primarily been invested in the traditional manufacturing industries and the housing sector. After more than two decades of runaway growth, traditional manufacturing industries are suffering from severe overcapacity and the housing sector is under great pressure to destock. In the January-April period, private investment in the manufacturing sector only grew at a record low of 5.4 percent.

State-backed investment is squeezing out private investment. The proportion of private to social investment declined from the historical high of 65.4 percent last May to 62.1 percent this April. This indicates that although state-dominated investment in infrastructure construction has played a key role in shoring up this year's economic growth, it has also squeezed out private in-



Employees of Hengtong Group, an optical fiber and cables producer in Suzhou, east China's Jiangsu Province, work on a production line on April 15

vestment instead of spurring it on.

On the other hand, inadequate overall demand is also one of the causes for the deceleration in private investment growth. China's potential output far outweighs its actual output. Although this year's economic outlook is better than expected, the 6.7-percent growth rate still marks the lowest in 28 consecutive quarters. Given the potential economic growth rate of 6.5 to 7 percent, the output gap will continue to expand, exacerbating the lack of the overall demand—subsequently disheartening private investors.

Therefore, the rapid decline in private investment growth this year can also be attributed to sluggish domestic demand, poor implementation of streamlining administration, difficulties in financing and the squeezing out of private funding by state capital. Meanwhile, the drop in the producer price index—a key gauge that measures prices of goods at the factory gate—for four consecutive years has led to shrinking corporate profits.

Private investment needs to go through

the crucible of structural adjustment. From a long-term perspective, the transformation and upgrading of private investment will contribute to the sustainable and healthy development of the private economy.

In the face of the continued deceleration in private investment growth, China should stick to its principle of promoting the non-public sector economy and pursue new development concepts featuring innovative, coordinated, green, open, and shared development.

The Chinese Government should pursue supply-side structural reform and cut overcapacity, destock, deleverage, reduce costs and improve weak economic links. Furthermore, it should create a market environment favorable for private investment by reducing costs and enhancing relevant fiscal and monetary support policies. ■

This is an edited excerpt of an article written by Zhang Qizuo, an economist, and published in *Economic Information Daily*
Copyedited by Bryan Michael Galvan
Comments to dengyaqing@bjreview.com

NUMBERS

(\$1=6.6 yuan)

\$200 mln

The amount of money that the city of Shenzhen will invest in a special economic zone in western Indonesia

\$740 mln

Trade between the Chinese mainland and Macao in the first quarter of 2016, a year-on-year decrease of 27.2 percent

\$64.32 bln

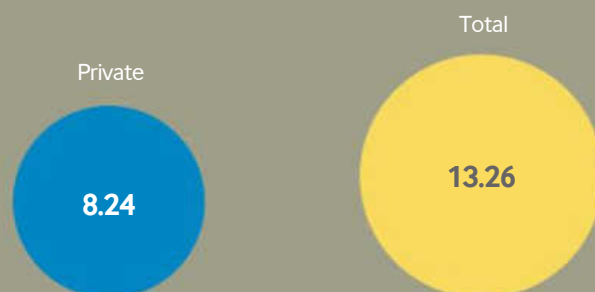
Trade between the Chinese mainland and Hong Kong in the first quarter of 2016, a year-on-year decrease of 3.6 percent

107.21 bln yuan

The amount of money that the National Development and Reform Commission has approved for investment in the construction of five urban rail lines in Qingdao, east China's Shandong Province

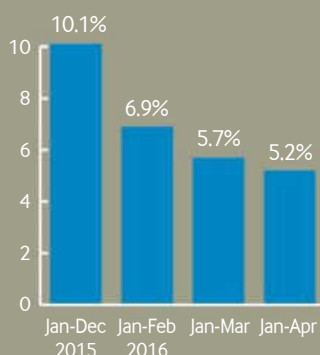
Fixed Assets Investment in China

Jan-Apr (tln yuan)



Growth of Private Fixed Assets Investment in China

(y.o.y.)



Private Fixed Assets Investment by Industry

Jan-Apr

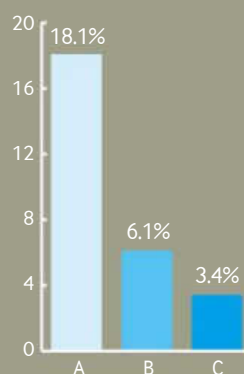
Amount (yuan)

A: 267.30 bln



- A Primary industry (Agriculture, forestry, animal husbandry and fishery)
- B Secondary industry (Mining, manufacturing, construction, and electricity, thermal, fuel gas and water production and supply)
- C Tertiary industry (Services)

Growth (y.o.y.)



(Source: National Bureau of Statistics)

3 tln yuan

The expected scale of China's spending in the tourism sector by 2020, according to the China National Tourism Administration

10 tln yuan

The worth of China's imports projected over the next five years, according to China Council for the Promotion of International Trade

260

The number of green field projects in Germany that China invested in during 2015, a 37-percent increase from 2014

3 tln yuan

Loans that the Agricultural Development Bank of China will issue to support the country's poverty relief efforts from now to 2020



China International Publishing Group and Sinomedia International Group jointly attend BEA 2016

Expo Highlights Opportunities

Authors, publishers and booklovers gather in Chicago to discuss the future of publishing By Corrie Dosh

North America's largest annual gathering of publishers and booksellers convened on May 11 in Chicago, drawing an estimated 18,000 attendees including large delegations from Chinese publishing houses. BookExpo America (BEA), typically held in New York City, hoped to draw new faces with its change of location. All 50 U.S. states were represented at the show along with more than 230 new international registrants.

"This is the industry's largest event and our move to Chicago has meant a different set of attendees, with a strong showing from the Midwest naturally. This means a completely different

business opportunity for booksellers and publishers and the chance to change the landscape of publishing efforts throughout this region of the country," said Brien McDonald, Event Director for BEA, in a press release.

The show has set the tone for what booklovers can expect from the U.S. publishing industry in 2016. It also broadened the reach and exposure for independent booksellers, publishers and authors as well as the introduction of foreign publishers to American readers.

China International Publishing Group (CIPG) and Sinomedia continued their strong presence at BEA, offering titles such as Chinese President

Xi Jinping's *The Governance of China*. CIPG's 13 publishing houses comprise seven in China and six overseas. Every year, the group publishes over 5,000 titles in nearly 20 languages.

"I'd be interested in reading more books from Chinese authors," said Betty Knowles, a first-time attendee at BEA, as she stopped by the CIPG booth. "I cannot say that I'm familiar with any of these authors, but I love reading new and interesting things."

Last year, China was the guest of honor at BEA, with 25,000 square feet of dedicated space and a host of exhibitions and cultural events.



Visitors rush into the BEA exhibition in Chicago on May 11

"I remember the large Chinese presence at BEA 2015," said Paul DeMarco, an independent bookseller from New York City. "Clearly, there is a huge interest from Chinese publishers to break into the American market—and, I think there is interest on our side as well. Many readers are interested in Chinese titles."

DeMarco said that he had attended BEA for the past three years.

"It's a great show. Everybody is so passionate about books and publishing. I look forward to it every year," he said.

In addition to CIPG, other Chinese publishers attending the show included the Beijing Municipal Bureau of Press, Publication, Radio, Film and Television, Phoenix International Publications, and China Universal Press and Publication.

Tapping China's market

Publishers eager to expand their presence in China gained an overview of the rapidly evolving market. During a panel session titled "Understanding Book Sales in China—By the Numbers," attendees learned of a "readership hungry for both domestic and foreign language books." China OpenBook, which has tracked the major Chinese retail channels using point-of-sale data for 18 years and has recently partnered with Nielsen BookScan, reports that one in five books sold in China is written by an overseas author.

"For many, China is a black box," said

Ruediger Wischenbart, Director of International Affairs for BEA, as part of his introduction to the panel session.

Jiang Yangping, General Manager of OpenBook, noted that China's book market was valued at 62.4 billion yuan (\$9.6 billion) in 2015, up 12.8 percent from 2014, when sales were 55.3 billion yuan (\$8.5 billion). There are 1.68 million titles currently available in the market. Health and self-help books account for 39 percent of the offerings, while business and management weigh in with 37 percent and fiction makes up 10 percent.

While a bleak picture is sometimes painted for the traditional publishing industry, the Chinese market, with its highly literate population, continues to expand rapidly. Western publishers are "interested in getting access to the Chinese market, and the Chinese Government is interested in getting more authors known in the West," Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom, history professor at the University of California and author of *China in the 21st Century*, told *The New York Times*.

Publishers say that the Chinese appetite for Western books is "impressive" and China's \$8-billion publishing industry is second only to that of the United States. Chinese publishers released 444,000 titles in 2013, up from around 328,000 in 2010.

"I've been amazed and pleasantly surprised by how smooth and uncomplicated the process has been," said Niko Pfund, President of Oxford University Press, in the *Times*.

In 2013, Chinese publishers acquired the rights to nearly 16,000 foreign books, including 5,500 from the United States. HarperCollins and Penguin Random House both cite China as one of their fastest-growing markets.

"Chinese people are very curious about culture in other countries," Wu Xiaoping, President of China's Phoenix International Publishing Group, said at BEA 2015. "There will be more and better relationships between Chinese and U.S. publishers."

Translated titles and imports accounted for 21 percent of the Chinese market last year, with U.S. and British authors making up 57 percent of import sales. Children's books, meanwhile, topped translations and imports. A Disney book tie-in to the film *Big Hero 6* was the best-selling children's title, followed by books from Mattel's *Barbie* series. In the business category, Dale Carnegie's *How to Win Friends & Influence People* and Kelly McGonigal's *The Willpower Instinct* were popular. And, with some 300 million English language readers and learners in China today, English language learning books feature among the bestsellers, according to *Publishers Weekly*, a news magazine focused on the international book publishing business.

Price is often a key point with Chinese readers, Jim Bryant, CEO of Massachusetts-based

Trajectory, a global digital distribution and book discovery network, said during a BEA panel discussion. Publishers are encouraged to price books at the traditional rates of their home markets and then to offer discounts. Promotions drive some 70 percent of sales, Bryant said, as Chinese readers love a good deal. Most titles on the Chinese market sell for the equivalent of \$5-\$8.

E-books are unsurprisingly a competitive sector in China, as some 300 million of the nation's mobile phone users use their devices for reading, according to a recent survey. Cheng Xiangjun, CEO of iReader Beijing, revealed during this year's BEA that his company has 78 million active readers who purchase some 60 million e-books every month. Over 100 million customers purchased e-books from iReader's range in December 2015 alone, according to Cheng.

The road ahead

In conjunction with BEA, IDPF DigiCon, a conference organized by the International Digital Publishing Forum, took place in Chicago on May 10-11.

At the event, World Wide Web inventor Tim Berners-Lee outlined the future of electronic publishing in a keynote speech titled "Realizing the Vision of Publishing Technology Being Web Technology."

Berners-Lee, also founder and Director of the World Wide Web Consortium, described a future in which technology could turn the walls of a classroom or conference hall into screens displaying content stored on a smart watch.

"Print books will be here forever," he said in an interview with *Publishers Weekly*, but with Web technology, "people will be able to take them everywhere." "This is challenging and exciting," he added.

"Nobody could have expected today's world [of technology]. The Web allows you to do any crazy idea, and you're only limited by your own creativity," Berners-Lee said in the interview, adding that publishing and collaboration were part of his thinking when he invented the Web in 1989. "There is a universality on the Web. It can be used for any genre. You can browse. It's flexible. It unleashes the shackles put on publishing by paper."

In preparation for the future, China has already established itself as a leading developer of new technology. Guangzhou OET Technologies has released the world's first graphene electronic paper, the lightest and strongest material currently available that could revolutionize screen displays on gadgets like e-readers and smart watches. Graphene e-paper is said to be cheaper, sturdier, brighter and more flexible than the e-ink technology utilized by the Amazon Kindle and other such devices. ■

The New York-based author is a contributing writer to *Beijing Review*
 Copied by Chris Surtees
 Comments to yanwei@bjreview.com

How Can School Bullying Be Eradicated?

School violence has repeatedly made headlines in recent years. In March 2015, for example, a video clip showing a female student in east China's Jiangxi Province being beaten and slapped in the face by classmates because of conflicts between her and one of the attackers went viral on the Internet. Soon afterward, in May 2015, a junior middle school student was stripped naked and beaten by 10 peers in south China's Guangdong Province. Video and images of the incident were later posted online. In the first half of this year alone, media outlets across China reported at least 20 major campus bullying cases.

The Education Supervision Committee under the State Council, China's cabinet, has recently issued a document ordering primary and middle schools, as well as secondary vocational schools, to take effective measures to eradicate campus bullying, which may involve online harassment as well as any

form of physical or verbal abuse. Schools are required to work out preventive schemes and to conduct legal awareness education among students and teachers.

What are the reasons that drive these students toward violence against their peers? Traditionally, campus violence has been seen as a moral issue in China, and offenders have typically been let off easy for their wrongdoings. A popular view attributes the rise in such cases to a lack of relevant laws and accountability systems for indifferent school managers and parents.

Zhu Naijuan (21st Century Business Herald): School bullying has been around everywhere. One can easily find a lot of campus bullying-related videos on the Internet. In countries where such bullying is rarely seen, the law, rather than persuasion or teaching, plays a crucial role in curbing it. Besides, students who are bullied promptly receive psychological treatment and follow-up care so that they do not live under the shadow of the experience for long. According to the Law on the Protection of Minors, the family is chiefly responsible for the safety of children. But a family's protection cannot reach all places, and this makes it possible for campus bullying to happen. In many cases, schools try to cover up student bullying or to mediate solutions between the students involved. Seldom is the law employed to reach a settlement, and the perpetrators are often punished lightly. So, despite so-called penalties, those responsible are not effectively stopped from bullying other students.

This does not mean, however, that family education and protection does not matter. The family education of young people who insult others must be problematic in some aspect or another. And, victims who do not speak out or resist bullying deserve more attention from parents, education authorities and police departments, as their silence might result from lack of parental care and love.

Multiple measures should be taken to stop on-campus bullying and violence. Laws and administrative regulations must be worked out and revised in response

to new problems. Also, family education should follow to fill the gap. Rural children, whose parents work in cities, need particular care, and ensuring their safety both in and out of school appears to be more urgent. Families must impart fair-mindedness, love and respect to their children rather than violence.

Besides, teachers must pay attention not only to students' schoolwork but also to their psychological health and inner world. Social problems, in fact, lie behind campus bullying, and if these deep-rooted issues could be dug out, their symptoms would be more easily solved.

A worrisome fact is that nowadays, campus bullying is used by some students as a way of showing off their power. They even upload videos in which they beat and insult other students so that their "heroic deeds" will be seen by a large audience. The lack of relevant laws only encourages more youngsters to commit bullying, since they know they don't need to take legal responsibility for such cruelty.

Consequently, there has been a growing call in society for an anti-campus violence law to be enacted, so that juvenile offenders will be held accountable for their behavior.

Families and schools should play a role in curbing bullying, and targeted campaigns by the authorities are also necessary. But, effective law enforcement is what can really bring the problem under control.

Ye Zhusheng (The Beijing News): Families, schools and society should all take up the responsibility to curb bullying.

Children are vulnerable to misleading information. Suppose the overall social atmosphere were more pure and clean, young students would not be so frequently exposed to violent movies, TV programs and information on the Web. Everyone has to admit, however, that the situation will not change overnight.

Parents are children's first teachers. Research shows that those who commit violence and other crimes tend to come from families that pay little attention to childhood education. As a result, the role of such families in disciplining their children is com-

Dear Readers,

Forum is a column that provides a space for varying perspectives on contemporary Chinese society. We invite you to submit personal viewpoints on past and current topics (in either English or Chinese).



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paratively weak. If all parents could fulfill their responsibility to impart ethical behavior and morals to children, bullying would be a much easier problem to tackle.

Schools are by no means supposed to cover up or turn a blind eye to such behavior. Unfortunately, however, they usually lack effective methods to deal with the problem.

So far, no primary or middle school in China has a special department to deal with complaints of campus violence, and many teachers have received little or no training in coping with the problem. Future legislation must explicitly state the obligations of schools in this regard. Schools need to share more of the responsibility because their involvement will produce the most effective results in the short term.

Yin Yulin (*China Youth Daily*): School bullying is actually an issue plaguing education sites around the world, and up to now, we still lack effective methods to cope with it.

When I was a young student some 30 years ago, the ways of dealing with bully-

ing were limited, and the outcomes were also unsatisfactory. Either a bullied student silently endured all the pain and misery, or the student's parents would go to the school to accuse the bully in front of teachers, and the perpetrator would be criticized or their parents would be summoned to the school to address the issue. Later, however, the perpetrator might take revenge on the victim. Now, so many years have passed without this issue being solved, and the situation is deteriorating somewhat.

The education authorities' recent launch of a campaign to tackle campus violence reveals the severity of the issue. This is just the first step toward eradication, and tangible results will come only after severe punishments are enforced.

Yang Zheng (www.southern.com): The increasing number of campus bullying cases has highlighted current challenges in ensuring the safety of students. As these incidents involve minors, the ways to deal with them have focused on education and criticism. But

some believe that this is not enough to deter corrupt students and that tougher measures are needed.

Undeniably, severe punishment will provide an effective deterrent. Fundamentally eradicating bullying, however, requires raising moral standards among young students. We need a combination of laws and moral codes. Adolescents have yet to develop their outlook on life and the world. So, to deal at this stage with issues such as school bullying, moral education seems extremely important.

The current exam-oriented style of education, however, marginalizes moral education, and this, in turn, gives rise to bullying on school campuses.

Both schools and families need to prioritize the establishment of high moral standards among young people. Only when a high moral code has taken root in young students' minds can we expect bullying and violence to be eradicated. ■

Copyedited by Chris Surtees

A Robot Cooked My Goose!

By Sudeshna Sarkar

It's lunch hour on a weekday and a small restaurant in central Beijing is packed to the gills. Harried-looking waiters run from table to table to cope with the stream of orders, and the manager's fingers fly like lightning over the calculator as she tallies up bills.

In sharp contrast to the hectic activity, the little kitchen, visible through the long narrow glass window that partitions it from the dining hall, is a calm oasis. A lean but efficient army composed of three cooks is dishing out the orders, working in perfect coordination and harmony. One is setting out the food, another is briskly stirring a bubbling mass in a large cauldron, and the third is slicing a large ball of dough with clockwork precision, making a shower of uniformly sized noodles fall into the basket waiting at its foot.

But wait a minute. The slicer doesn't appear to have any feet! The busy hands are attached to a torso that abruptly ends on the table on which he has been placed. The head, which never looks up, even when people are taking his photograph by the dozen, appears as if it's permanently encased in a biker's helmet. You may think that there is something strange indeed about this chef's assistant. You are right. Meet Ultraman, the robo-cook.

For those who grew up on books and movies about intergalactic wars and robotic domination, China is one of the best places to see some of those wild tales come to fruition. The International Federation of Robotics has predicted that by next year China will have the largest number of robots working in its manufacturing sector in the world. It already has the largest market in the global robot trade, worth \$9.5 billion, and wherever you cast your eyes, there are the steely little men—or women—hard at work. Robots are farming fields in the countryside, running production lines, hoovering apartments and helping out in the kitchen. You can buy them from impressive showrooms, where there are demonstrations available, or simply purchase them at online retail sites such as Taobao.

At Beijing's Jinlaoxi restaurant, wherein we have strolled in for lunch, there's a robot diligently making noodles for *daoxiaomian*, Shanxi specialty noodles, which will be served to us in egg and tomato soup. Li Hei, the 34-year-old chef who has been with the restaurant for six years, said that the robot was bought in 2013 to assist him. It has been christened Ultraman after a robot in a Japanese TV series.

"He's a big help," Li said indulgently. "Before,



The noodle-making robo-cook in Beijing's Jinlaoxi restaurant

I had to do the slicing myself. Now with him taking care of that business, I can cook faster. Besides, his noodles are uniform, with the same length and breadth. I feel the food tastes a tad better." Dong Xiumei, the manager, said that Ultraman is a hit with diners, who transfixedly watch him at work. "They love to take his photo," she added.

The restaurant has two branches in Beijing and others in different cities. There are robots at work in both of the capital's diners. However, for the seasoned Beijinger, a robo-cook is nothing new. Wang Hongyuan, a young editor at the China Machine Press who has come to have lunch with his two pals, pointed out that robotic staff are old hat. "This is Beijing, not a village," Wang said derisively.

I remember then reading somewhere that a hotel in Shenzhen, south China's Guangdong Province—the Pengheng Space Capsule Hotel—had a bevy of robot staff. I also remem-

ber the excitement in our office last year when Chinese Internet service provider Tencent created a robot, Dreamwriter, who wrote an entire article about the consumer price index. Everyone said that it was far more lucid than analyses made by economists.

I am all agog at the thought of a brave new world with such wonderful helpmates. Where else can I find robots at work? What else can they do in China?

My friend and colleague Zheng Yang has the answer. "Some time ago, there was a discussion on Chinese social media and someone had posted a forlorn request: I want a boyfriend," Zheng said. "And in no time at all, someone had sent an answer. 'Have this one,' it said, adding a picture. It was the photo of a robot." ■

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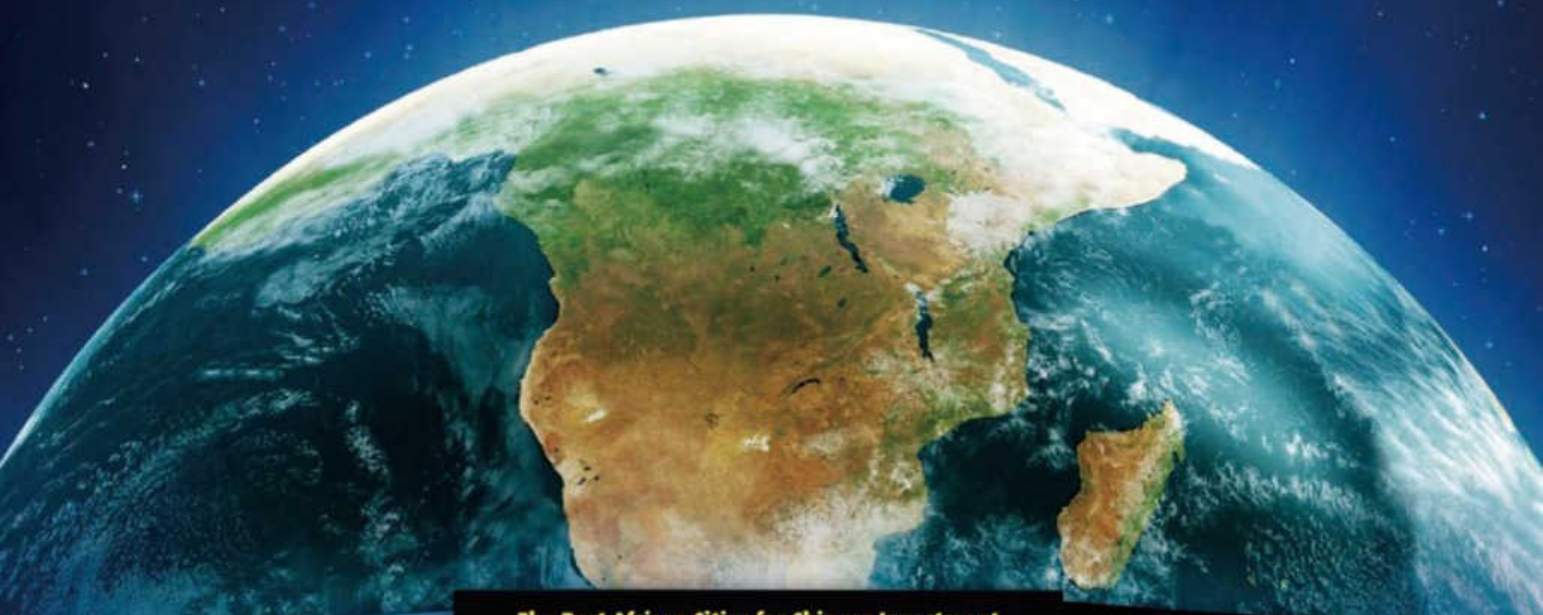
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(8610) 6831 0644, +27 (0)71 613 2053

Email: circulation@bjreview.com.cn

cas201208@hotmail.com