



January 2025

Circle 19 newsletter

Issue n°1

Welcome to this monthly newsletter that presents Circle 19's latest productions and provides insights about the right to information in the People's Republic of China.

► WHAT'S NEW ON THE WEBSITE



Freedom of speech and expression, an unseen pillar of Confucianism

Andrew To

Contrary to widespread misconception, freedom of speech and expression does not go against Confucian's principles but is an essential condition for the realisation of ethical conduct and moral governance.

In Republican China (1912-1949), liberals and communists aligned on the vital role of freedom of speech and thought

Andrew To

In Republican China (1912-1949), both liberal and communist thinkers saw freedom of speech and thought as key elements of modernity, and though they faced significant practical resistance, their debates on this freedom continue to offer important insights for understanding the future of free expression in contemporary China.



INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

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"Toxin Fears Trigger School Running Track Furor," Caixin, by Zhou Chen, Zhao Han, Zhou Hang and Jin Ying (2016).

In June 2016, concerns over toxic school running tracks in Beijing, triggered by reports of children suffering health symptoms after the installation of hazardous polyurethane tracks, led to national outrage, media exposés, and subsequent regulatory reforms to improve safety standards and accountability in the construction of synthetic sports surfaces.



► CIRCLE 19 IN THE MEDIA



Expert Blog: Political awakening and a new cultural imaginary amongst the Chinese diaspora

Nottingham Trent University, Dr. Zhang Tao

The "White Paper" Movement, ignited by young Chinese students' protests against the Zero-Covid policy in 2022, has evolved into a powerful symbol of dissent, sparking a global wave of activism, intergenerational alliances, and cultural shifts within the Chinese diaspora that challenge China's autocratic regime and its control over information.

The government represses and does not support civil society - China's Fourth Estate continues to weaken (in Chinese)

Central News Agency (CNA), Yi Hsuan Hsieh

Two incidents in China this year, where state media reporters were obstructed while covering stories, highlight the growing crackdown on press freedom and the declining status of journalists, with local governments increasingly rejecting coverage from central media outlets, reflecting broader media restrictions and a hostile social atmosphere for reporters.



► CIRCLE 19 PARTICIPANTS' WORK

评论 | 中国
长平观察：人类命运共同体——可以去武汉调查病毒源头了吗？
长平 评论

2025年1月2日
人类命运共同体研究中心1月2日在北京成立。时事评论作家长平指出，这是中共宣传对于西方既有概念的扭曲和篡改，让它成了一个巨大的谎言。

长平观察：人类命运共同体——可以去武汉调查病毒源头了吗？

习近平2020年1月28日在北京会见世界卫生组织总干事谭德塞。中国至今没有允许世界卫生组织前往武汉进行有关新冠病毒溯源的独立调查。

(德国之声中文网) 人类命运共同体？中共的一个谎言。

首先，从命名观察，这是一个谎言。新年送大礼，人类命运共同体研究中心1月2日在北京成立。在揭牌仪式上，中国外长王毅说：“构建人类命运共同体是习近平的重大原创性思想，是习近平外交思想的核心概念。”

声称人类命运共同体是当今某人的原创思想，就预设化地预设是某人的专利和独门一绝。大同世界、空想社会主义、共产主义、联合国、地球村……这些从远古今半数智物种的观念和构想，不是在谈人类命运共同体吗？

"Changping's Observations: "Community with a shared future for mankind" - Can we go to Wuhan to investigate the source of the virus?" (in Chinese) **Deutsche Welle (DW), Chang Ping**

The "Community with a shared future for mankind" Research Centre was established in Beijing on 2 January 2025. In this article, I pointed out that the Chinese Communist Party's propaganda has long appropriated existing Western concepts and terminology, only to distort and twist them into slogans promoting authoritarian politics. Here, the concept of building a community with a shared future for mankind has been distorted to promote "Chinese-style modernisation." The so-called "Chinese-style modernisation" is nothing more than a propaganda tool, using the name of building a human community of shared destiny while, in fact, acting against it.



Translation: China Change started the translation of Beautiful China, from legal scholar Dr. Xu Zhiyong: Episode 20 - Constitutional China

China Change

NGO China Change is publishing a translation of Dr. Xu Zhiyong (许志永)'s essay collection A Beautiful China, reflecting his vision for a freer society, after he was sentenced to 14 years in prison for advocating political reform and defending rights in China. This is the 20th chapter, which focuses on citizens' fundamental rights, including the freedom and privacy of communication.

Report: Closely following Jimmy Lai's trial: Hong Kong media overseas' dossier on Lai's case for non-Chinese Media

Hong Kong Media Overseas (HKMO)

HKMO has issued a dossier titled "Hong Kong's war on Journalism: The persecution of Jimmy Lai and Apple Daily" to facilitate non-Chinese media reporting on this landmark trial, aiming to provide a reference source that details the unrelenting nature of the case and traces the speed of developments.



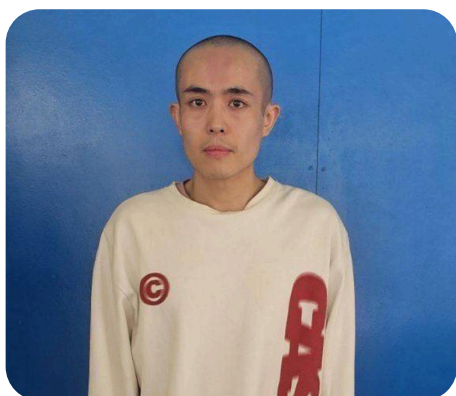
Hong Kong's War on Journalism
The Persecution of Jimmy Lai and Apple Daily

This dossier has been compiled by Hong Kong Media Overseas, an organisation of media workers from Hong Kong who are now resident abroad. The HKMO is fighting for the restoration of free speech in Hong Kong and working among the Hong Kong media diaspora to provide mutual support.

Further information can be obtained from:

info@aohkmp.org.uk

March 2024



Explanation: The Mysterious Disappearance of Chinese Actor Wang Xing on the Myanmar-Thailand Border

Dasheng Media, Vivian Wu

In this video, Dasheng Media's CEO Vivian Wu (吴薇) explains the intricacies of the case and the media coverage of the case in China and abroad.

Analysis: The "Hong Kong 47" case for subversion of state power: What has Hong Kong been through? How has the National Security Law changed Hong Kong?

(in Chinese)

Dasheng Media, Vivian Wu

On 19 November 2024, Hong Kong's High Court sentenced 45 of the 47 defendants in the "subversion" case involving pro-democracy personalities. Key figures, including former Hong Kong University law professor Benny Tai and student leader Joshua Wong, were sentenced to lengthy prison terms.





► FOCUS: CHINA DIGITAL TIMES'S 2024 YEAR END ROUND-UP



As 2024 draws to a close, CDT editors are compiling a [series of the most notable content](#) (Chinese) from across the Chinese internet over the past year.

Article: [CDT Editors' Picks: The Best of 2024](#)

This article compiles CDT editors' selections of their favourite posts around the web over the course of 2024.

Article: [CDT 2024 Year-End Roundup: Sensitive Words](#)

CDT editors reviewed a range of sensitive topics censored from the Chinese internet in 2024, which included economic concerns, Xi Jinping's leadership, the Two Sessions, the national Internet ID system, the i-Soon data leak, and the growing trend of emigration from China, among others.

Article: [CDT 2024 Year-End Roundup: Quotes of the Year](#) ([Part 1](#); [Part 2](#))

CDT's "Quotes of the Year" reflect the national mood in China through ten comments that express dissatisfaction with forced optimism about the economy, despair over unacknowledged deaths, ongoing significance of Tiananmen memories, disillusionment with Xi's "Red" turn, and anger over the increase in the national retirement age.

Article: [2024's Most Notable Censored Articles and Essays](#) ([Part 1](#) and [Part 2](#))

CDT editors have compiled a summary of the most notable censored content from China in 2024, adding over 350 deletions to its "[404 Deleted Content Archive](#)," providing a vital resource for understanding the scope of state censorship. Censored essays and articles include widespread suppression of accident reports, "revenge against society" attacks, economic critiques, and other sensitive topics, with a month-by-month breakdown and examples of particularly notable or influential pieces.

Article: [People of the Year, 2024: Victims of Indiscriminate Attacks](#)

(available in [English](#) and in [Chinese](#))

CDT's People of the Year for 2024 were the "Victims of Indiscriminate Attacks." CDT Editors compiled stories of the victims of at least 25 indiscriminate attacks across China, which resulted in 86 deaths and 181 injuries, and highlighted the shock, disquiet, and widespread censorship surrounding these incidents.



► FOCUS: DASHENG MEDIA'S SERIES OF INTERVIEWS



Interview: with Ding Xueliang, on freedom of expression in China, and rampant academic fraud (Part 2) (in Chinese)

Dasheng Media, Vivian Wu

Ding Xueliang (丁学良), a Chinese political sociologist and former professor at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HUKST), discusses issues from archaeological fraud at Sanxingdui to the systemic issues in Chinese academic research, food safety, and more.



Interview: with Australian-Chinese Political Cartoonist Badiucan (Part 1; Part 2) (in Chinese)

Dasheng Media, Vivian Wu

Badiucan is a Chinese-born Australian artist, cartoonist, and human rights activist. In [Part 1](#), he discusses his creative journey, from Shanghai to Australia, and the challenges he has faced, including harassment by the Chinese government. In [Part 2](#), Badiucan shares his experiences, including transnational suppression, the self-censorship within the art world, and the creative processes behind his latest comic novel with Melissa Chan "You must take part in revolution!"



Interview: with Lüqiu Luwei, from Phoenix TV to the disappearance of journalists (in Chinese)

Dasheng Media, Vivian Wu

Lüqiu Luwei (闾丘露薇), one of China's most famous war correspondents, discusses her journey, the creation of Phoenix TV, the political interference behind it, her eventual silencing, as well as a variety of feminist topics.





PORTRAIT OF THE MONTH



My name is **Filip Noubel** and I currently have two hats: I am the Managing Editor at Global Voices (GV) and a Senior China Analyst at the Czech think-tank AMO.

Global Voices is a non-profit media covering Global South countries on issues of **freedom of expression, digital rights and human rights**, published for 20 years in over 30 languages, including Chinese. We cover [China](#), [Tibet](#), the [Uyghur region](#), [Hong Kong](#) and [Taiwan](#) on all those issues, but also the impact of China policies outside of China: Belt and Road, China in Africa. Besides writing, publishing and translating we also train, and pair sinophone and Global South journalists. [One of our latest projects](#) looks at the role of China in climate justice in Latin America, Africa and Central Asia that we will continue in 2025.

AMO-China looks mostly at **China's influence in Central and Eastern Europe**. I am doing a 6-month research on sinophone diasporas in Europe that will lead to a report and a mini-book.

We are also **looking for researchers** who want to write short pieces on China in the world, like this one on [Nepal's new negotiation strategy](#). **Feel free to contact me if interested**. We have a small budget for this. We also have a network of women working on China issues.