



February 2025

Circle 19 newsletter

Issue n°2

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



"Two killers in one case, who is the real killer?," Henan Business Daily, by Ma Yunlong (2005).

In 2005, an investigative report by Henan Business Daily reignited the case of Nie Shubin, who had been wrongfully executed for rape and murder in 1995, after another man, Wang Shujin, confessed to the crime. The media attention from the report led Nie's family to pursue justice, culminating in his exoneration by the Supreme Court in 2016 after a decade-long legal battle.

► CIRCLE 19 IN EVENTS



The Hong Kong Media Overseas (HKMO) just held a Lunar New Year Gathering in London on 6 February 2025.

Around 80 participants attended the event, including the honourable guest Chris Patten, the last Hong Kong Governor. The speeches have been recorded: [Part 1](#), [Part 2](#)). One of the key discussions during the event was the ongoing trial of Jimmy Lai, the founder of Next Digital Media and Apple Daily. Both the participants, Lord Patten, and HKMO's directors sent a clear message to the public that the international community and the UK government should make greater efforts to save Jimmy Lai from imprisonment and defend press freedom and freedom of speech in Hong Kong.



► CIRCLE 19 PARTICIPANTS' WORK



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

[Episode 21 - Beautiful Politics](#)

[Episode 22 - A Beautiful China](#)

China Change, Elizabeth Lindlet and Leo Timm

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. The 21st chapter explores the moral and professional responsibilities of judges, soldiers, and politicians, emphasising the importance of integrity, transparency, and dedication to public service in building a just and democratic society. The 22nd and last chapter envisions a democratic, just, and free China, where citizens enjoy equal opportunities, freedom of expression and access to information, while the nation leads with integrity and global cooperation.

Article: “Changping’s Observations: Will DeepSeek become the dictator of the planet?” (in Chinese)

Deutsche Welle (DW), Chang Ping

“High-tech [tool] for the national movement”

DeepSeek has become the new pride of the Chinese people. In this article, Changping analyses the implications of DeepSeek as a powerful tool for political censorship and propaganda. If totalitarian regimes manipulate AI, and algorithms cannot be used to criticise governments and establish self-correcting mechanisms in democracies, then AI robots will take direct control of these regimes. The future of AI robots like DeepSeek could also be the replacement of humans as dictators of the planet, as feared by Yuval Noah Harari, author of the global bestseller A Brief History of Humankind.





Article: "Canadian foreign interference agency says it detected a 'malicious activity' targeting candidate"

The Associated Press

The Canadian government has detected a coordinated foreign interference campaign, linked to the Chinese government, targeting Liberal Party leadership candidate Chrystia Freeland, who has vowed not to be intimidated.

Article: Questioning the inevitable suckiness of Chinese generic drugs? (in Chinese)

Hotstone

This article critiques the quality and oversight of Chinese generic drugs, highlighting issues with inconsistent data in bioequivalence evaluations and urging professionals to speak out, while emphasising the public's right to question and supervise the National Medical Products Administration.



Investigation: "Changes and mobility of Guangzhou garment workers: Surviving urban village renovation and e-commerce giant caught in the crossfire" (in Chinese)

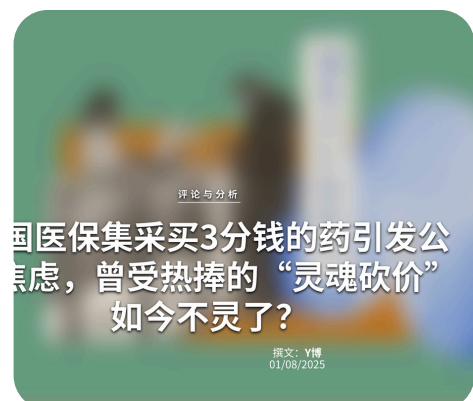
WhyNot, Wai

This in-depth investigation explores the changes and mobility of garment workers in Guangzhou's urban villages, highlighting their survival amidst urban redevelopment and pressure from e-commerce giants, with a focus on their evolving working conditions and the impact of companies like SHEIN on their livelihoods.

Analysis: China's health insurance collection for 3 cents worth of drugs has sparked public anxiety. Is the once-popular 'Soul Bargaining' no longer working? (in Chinese)

WhyNot, Y Bo

This article discusses public concerns and trust issues regarding China's healthcare price negotiations, where aggressive price cuts for drugs in the national medical insurance procurement process, such as aspirin costing just three cents per tablet, have raised fears about drug quality and the government's approach to controlling healthcare costs.





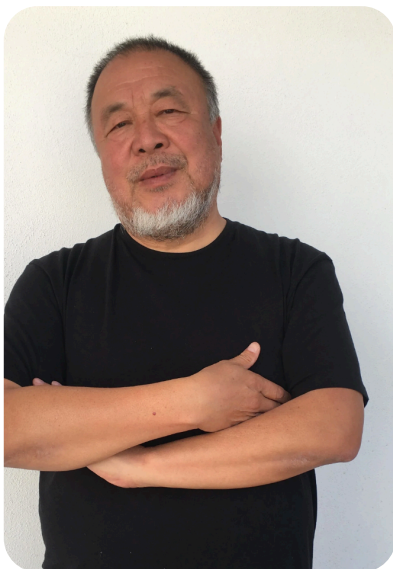
► RETROSPECTIVE: CHINA CHANGE INTERVIEWS



"Freedom in a Cage: An Interview With Chang Ping, Former News Director of Southern Weekend", [Part 1](#), [Part 2](#), [Part 3](#), [Part 4](#), [Part 5](#) (23-28.02.21)

Cao Yaxue

The series of interviews with Chang Ping, conducted by China Change founder Cao Yaxue, explores his journalistic career in China from the early 1990s, paralleling the country's Reform and Opening Up period, with his work at Southern Weekend (南方周末) marking a pivotal time of hope and vibrancy in Chinese society. Chang Ping's personal experiences, including his involvement in the Tiananmen student movement and his witness to the 1989 crackdown, reflect both his individual journey and the broader societal changes of the era.



"An Interview With Ai Weiwei,"

[Part 1: The Year 2008 \(29.06.23\)](#)

[Part 2: Ruins. Rebars. Water Lilies \(30.06.23\)](#)

[Part 3: China, the World, and Freedom of Expression \(06.07.23\)](#)

Cao Yaxue

Ai Weiwei's conversation with China Change founder Cao Yaxue explores the profound disconnection he feels with China, shaped by his personal history of exile, censorship, and the oppressive political environment, while underscoring his commitment to freedom of expression as the fundamental right that sustains life itself. Through his large-scale art and activism, Ai confronts global issues like refugee crises and human rights, challenging the commodification of art and advocating for personal and societal self-perfection through the guarantee of free speech.



PORTRAIT OF THE MONTH



My name is **Kris Cheng**, I am a UK-based freelance journalist for various news outlets covering politics and diplomacy mainly in regards to Hong Kong, and I conduct research on Hong Kong and China issues.

I have written for **Hong Kong news outlets** such as the Hong Kong Free Press, Apple Daily, Stand News and the Hong Kong Economic Times. I also contributed to a host of international news outlets including the Washington Post, Foreign Policy, Public Radio International, ITV and Die Zeit.

As the political situation worsened in Hong Kong, I moved to the UK in 2021 to continue my work, mainly writing for Voice of America. I predominately report on the **Hong Kong diaspora and UK-China relations**. Some of the topics that I specialise in are the national security police, the prisons and transnational repression.

Recently, I wrote an afterword for the updated version of the book **Vigil: The Struggle for Hong Kong** discussing the city's change in the past few years.