China's New Intelligentsia

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Abstract: Although people all around the world have interests in the rise of China, few care Chinese thoughts and intelligentsias who produce these thoughts. In fact, Chinese intelligentsias have surprising energy, and their views may challenge hegemony of western liberal thought.

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I will never forget my first visit, in 2003, to the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) in Beijing. I was welcomed by Wang Luolin, the academy's vice-president, whose grandfather had translated Marx's Das Kapital into Chinese, and Huang Ping, a former Red Guard. Sitting in oversized armchairs, we sipped ceremonial tea and introduced ourselves. Wang Luolin nodded politely and smiled, then told me that his academy had 50 research centres covering 260 disciplines with 4,000 full-time researchers.

As he said this, I could feel myself shrink into the seams of my vast chair: Britain's entire think tank community is numbered in the hundreds, Europe's in the low thousands; even the think-tank heaven of the US cannot have more than 10,000. But here in China, a single institution—and there are another dozen or so think tanks in Beijing alone—had 4,000 researchers. Admittedly, the people at CASS think that many of the researchers are not up to scratch, but the raw figures were enough.

At the beginning of that trip, I had hoped to get a quick introduction to China, learn the basics and go home. I had imagined that China's intellectual life consisted of a few unbending ideologues in the back rooms of the Communist party or the country's top universities. Instead, I stumbled on a hidden world of intellectuals, think-tankers and activists, all engaged in intense debate about the future of their country. I soon realised that it would take more than a few visits to Beijing and Shanghai to grasp the scale and ambition of China's internal debates. Even on that first trip my mind was made up—I wanted to devote the next few years of my life to understanding the living history that was unfolding before me. Over a three-year period, I have spoken with dozens of Chinese thinkers, watching their views develop in line

with the breathtaking changes in their country. Some were party members; others were outside the party and suffering from a more awkward relationship with the authorities. Yet to some degree, they are all insiders. They have chosen to live and work in mainland China, and thus to cope with the often capricious demands of the one-party state.

We are used to China's growing influence on the world economy—but could it also reshape our ideas about politics and power? This story of China's intellectual awakening is less well documented. We closely follow the twists and turns in America's intellectual life, but how many of us can name a contemporary Chinese writer or thinker? Inside China—in party forums, but also in universities, in semi-independent think tanks, in journals and on the internet—debate rages about the direction of the country: "new left" economists argue with the "new right" about inequality; political theorists argue about the relative importance of elections and the rule of law; and in the foreign policy realm, China's neocons argue with liberal internationalists about grand strategy. Chinese thinkers are trying to reconcile competing goals, exploring how they can enjoy the benefits of global markets while protecting China from the creative destruction they could unleash in its political and economic system. Some others are trying to challenge the flat world of US globalisation with a "walled world" Chinese version.

Paradoxically, the power of the Chinese intellectual is amplified by China's repressive political system, where there are no opposition parties, no independent trade unions, no public disagreements between politicians and a media that exists to underpin social control rather than promote political accountability. Intellectual debate in this world can become a surrogate for politics—if only because it is more personal, aggressive and emotive than anything that formal politics can muster. While it is true there is no free discussion about ending the Communist party's rule, independence for Tibet or the events of Tiananmen Square, there is a relatively open debate in leading newspapers and academic journals about China's economic model, how to clean up corruption or deal with foreign policy issues like Japan or North Korea. Although the internet is heavily policed, debate is freer here than in the printed word (although one of the most free-thinking bloggers, Hu Jia, was recently arrested). And behind closed doors, academics and thinkers will often talk freely about even the most sensitive topics, such as political reform. The Chinese like to argue about whether it is the intellectuals that influence decision-makers, or whether groups of decision-makers use pet intellectuals as informal mouthpieces to advance their own views. Either way, these debates have become part of the political process, and are used to put ideas in play and expand the options available to Chinese decision-makers. Intellectuals are, for example,

regularly asked to brief the politburo in "study sessions"; they prepare reports that feed into the party's five-year plans; and they advise on the government's white papers.

So is the Chinese intelligentsia becoming increasingly open and western? Many of the concepts it argues over—including, of course, communism itself—are western imports. And a more independent-minded, western style of discourse may be emerging as a result of the 1m students who have studied outside China—many in the west—since 1978; fewer than half have returned, but that number is rising. However, one should not forget that the formation of an "intellectual" in China remains very different from in the west. Education is still focused on practical contributions to national life, and despite a big expansion of higher education (around 20 per cent of 18-30 year olds now enrol at university), teaching methods rely heavily on rote learning. Moreover, all of these people will be closely monitored for political dissent, with "political education" classes still compulsory.

Zhang Weiying has a thing about Cuban cigars. When I went to see him in his office in Beijing University, I saw half a dozen boxes of Cohiba piled high on his desk. The cigar boxes—worth several times a Chinese peasant's annual income—are fragments of western freedom (albeit products of a communist nation), symbols of the dynamism he hopes will gradually eclipse and replace the last vestiges of Maoism. Like other economic liberals—or members of the "new right" as their opponents call them—he thinks China will not be free until the public sector is dismantled and the state has shrivelled into a residual body designed mainly to protect property rights.

The new right was at the heart of China's economic reforms in the 1980s and 1990s. Zhang Weiying has a favourite allegory to explain these reforms. He tells a story about a village that relied on horses to conduct its chores. Over time, the village elders realised that the neighbouring village, which relied on zebras, was doing better. So after years of hailing the virtues of the horse, they decided to embrace the zebra. The only obstacle was converting the villagers who had been brainwashed over decades into worshipping the horse. The elders developed an ingenious plan. Every night, while the villagers slept, they painted black stripes on the white horses. When the villagers awoke the leaders reassured them that the animals were not really zebras, just the same old horses adorned with a few harmless stripes. After a long interval the village leaders began to replace the painted horses with real zebras. These prodigious animals transformed the village's fortunes, increasing productivity and creating wealth all around. Only many years later—long after all the horses had been replaced with zebras and the village had benefited

from many years of prosperity—did the elders summon the citizenry to proclaim that their community was a village of zebras, and that zebras were good and horses bad.

Zhang Weiying's story is one way of understanding his theory of "dual-track pricing," first put forward in 1984. He argued that "dual-track pricing" would allow the government to move from an economy where prices were set by officials to one where they were set by the market, without having to publicly abandon its commitment to socialism or run into the opposition of all those with a vested interest in central planning. Under this approach, some goods and services continued to be sold at state-controlled prices while others were sold at market prices. Over time, the proportion of goods sold at market prices was steadily increased until by the early 1990s, almost all products were sold at market prices. The "dual-track" approach embodies the combination of pragmatism and incrementalism that has allowed China's reformers to work around obstacles rather than confront them.

The most famous village of zebras was Shenzhen. At the end of the 1970s, Shenzhen was an unremarkable fishing village, providing a meagre living for its few thousand inhabitants. But over the next three decades, it became an emblem of the Chinese capitalism that Zhang Weiying and his colleagues were building. Because of its proximity to Hong Kong, Deng Xiaoping chose Shenzhen in 1979 as the first "special economic zone," offering its leaders tax breaks, freedom from regulation and a licence to pioneer new market ideas. The architects of reform in Shenzhen wanted to build high-tech plants that could mass-produce value-added goods for sale in the west. Such experimental zones were financed by drawing on the country's huge savings and the revenues from exports. The coastal regions sucked in a vast number of workers from the countryside, which held down urban wages. And the whole system was laissez-faire—allowing wealth to trickle down from the rich to the poor organically rather than consciously redistributing it. Deng Xiaoping pointedly declared that "some must get rich first," arguing that the different regions should "eat in separate kitchens" rather than putting their resources into a "common pot." As a result, the reformers of the eastern provinces were allowed to cut free from the impoverished inland areas and steam ahead.

But life today is getting tougher for the economists behind this system, like Zhang Weiying. After 30 years of having the best of the argument with ideas imported from the west, China has turned against the new right. Opinion polls show that they are the least popular group in China. Public disquiet is growing over the costs of reform, with protests by laid-off workers and concern over illegal demolitions and unpaid wages. And the ideas of the market are being challenged by a new left, which advocates a gentler form of

capitalism. A battle of ideas pits the state against market; coasts against inland provinces; towns against countryside; rich against poor.

Wang Hui is one of the leaders of the new left, a loose grouping of intellectuals who are increasingly capturing the public mood and setting the tone for political debate through their articles in journals such as Dushu. Wang Hui was a student of literature rather than politics, but he was politicised through his role in the student demonstrations of 1989 that congregated on Tiananmen Square. Like most young intellectuals at the time, he was a strong believer in the potential of the market. But after the Tiananmen massacre, Wang Hui took off to the mountains and spent two years in hiding, getting to know peasants and workers. His experiences there made him doubt the justice of unregulated free markets, and convinced him that the state must play a role in preventing inequality. Wang Hui's ideas were developed further during his exile in the US in the 1990s, but like many other new left thinkers he has returned to mainland China—in his case to teach at the prestigious Qinghua University. I met him last year in "Thinker's Café" in Beijing, a bright and airy retreat with comfy sofas and fresh espressos. He looks like an archetypal public intellectual: cropped hair, a brown jacket and black polo-neck sweater. But Wang Hui does not live in an ivory tower. He writes reports exposing local corruption and helps workers organise themselves against illegal privatisations. His grouping is "new" because, unlike the "old left," it supports market reforms. It is left because, unlike the "new right," it worries about inequality: "China is caught between the two extremes of misguided socialism and crony capitalism, and suffering from the worst elements of both… I am in favour of orienting the country toward market reforms, but China's development must be more balanced. We must not give total priority to GDP growth to the exclusion of workers' rights and the environment."

The new left's philosophy is a product of China's relative affluence. Now that the market is driving economic growth, they ask what should be done with the wealth. Should it continue accumulating in the hands of an elite, or can China foster a model of development that benefits all citizens? They want to develop a Chinese variant of social democracy. As Wang Hui says: "We cannot count on a state on the German or Nordic model. We have such a large country that the state would have to be vast to provide that kind of welfare. That is why we need institutional innovation. Wang Shaoguang [a political economist] is talking about low-price healthcare. Cui Zhiyuan [a political theorist] is talking about reforming property rights to give workers a say over the companies where they work. Hu Angang [an economist] is talking about green development."

The balance of power in Beijing is subtly shifting towards the left. At the end of 2005, Hu Jintao and Wen Jiabao published the "11th five-year plan," their blueprint for a "harmonious society." For the first time since the reform era began in 1978, economic growth was not described as the overriding goal for the Chinese state. They talked instead about introducing a welfare state with promises of a 20 per cent year-on-year increase in the funds available for pensions, unemployment benefit, health insurance and maternity leave. For rural China, they promised an end to arbitrary taxes and improved health and education. They also pledged to reduce energy consumption by 20 per cent.

The 11th five-year plan is a template for a new Chinese model. From the new right, it keeps the idea of permanent experimentation—a gradualist reform process rather than shock therapy. And it accepts that the market will drive economic growth. From the new left, it draws a concern about inequality and the environment and a quest for new institutions that can marry co-operation with competition.

In February 2007, Hu Jintao proudly announced the creation of a new special economic zone complete with the usual combination of export subsidies, tax breaks and investments in roads, railways and shipping. However, this special economic zone was in the heart of Africa—in the copper-mining belt of Zambia. China is transplanting its growth model into the African continent by building a series of industrial hubs linked by rail, road and shipping lanes to the rest of the world. Zambia will be home to China's "metals hub," providing the People's Republic with copper, cobalt, diamonds, tin and uranium. The second zone will be in Mauritius, providing China with a "trading hub" that will give 40 Chinese businesses preferential access to the 20-member state common market of east and southern Africa stretching from Libya to Zimbabwe, as well as access to the Indian ocean and south Asian markets. The third zone—a "shipping hub"—will probably be in the Tanzanian capital, Dar es Salaam. Nigeria, Liberia and the Cape Verde islands are competing for two other slots. In the same way that eastern Europe was changed by a competition to join the EU, we could see Africa transformed by the competition to attract Chinese investment.

As it creates these zones, Beijing is embarking on a building spree, criss-crossing the African continent with new roads and railways—investing far more than the old colonial powers ever did. Moreover, China's presence is changing the rules of economic development. The IMF and the World Bank used to drive the fear of God into government officials and elected leaders, but today they struggle to be listened to even by the poorest countries of Africa. The IMF spent years negotiating a transparency agreement with the Angolan government only to be told hours before the deal was due to be signed, in

March 2004, that the authorities in Luanda were no longer interested in the money: they had secured a $2bn soft loan from China. This tale has been repeated across the continent—from Chad to Nigeria, Sudan to Algeria, Ethiopia and Uganda to Zimbabwe.

But the spread of the Chinese model goes far beyond the regions that have been targeted by Chinese investors. Research teams from middle-income and poor countries from Iran to Egypt, Angola to Zambia, Kazakhstan to Russia, India to Vietnam and Brazil to Venezuela have been crawling around the Chinese cities and countryside in search of lessons from Beijing's experience. Intellectuals such as Zhang Weiying and Hu Angang have been asked to provide training for them. Scores of countries are copying Beijing's state-driven development using public money and foreign investment to build capital-intensive industries. A rash of copycat special economic zones have been set up all over the world—the World Bank estimates that over 3,000 projects are taking place in 120 countries. Globalisation was supposed to mean the worldwide triumph of the market economy, but China is showing that state capitalism is one of its biggest beneficiaries.

As free market ideas have spread across the world, liberal democracy has often travelled in its wake. But for the authorities in Beijing there is nothing inexorable about liberal democracy. One of the most surprising features of Chinese intellectual life is the way that "democracy" intellectuals who demanded elections in the 1980s and 1990s have changed their positions on political reform.

Yu Keping is like the Zhang Weiying of political reform. He is a rising star and an informal adviser to President Hu Jintao. He runs an institute that is part university, part think tank, part management consultancy for government reform. When he talks about the country's political future, he often draws a direct analogy with the economic realm. When I last met him in Beijing, he told me that overnight political reform would be as damaging to China as economic "shock therapy." Instead, he has promoted the idea of democracy gradually working its way up from successful grassroots experiments. He hopes that by promoting democracy first within the Communist party, it will then spread to the rest of society. Just as the coastal regions were allowed to "get rich first," Yu Keping thinks that party members should "get democracy first" by having internal party elections.

Where the coastal regions benefited from natural economic advantages such as proximity to Hong Kong, the Cantonese language and transport links, Yu Keping sees advantages for party members—such as their high levels of education and articulacy—which make them into a natural democratic vanguard. What is more, he can point to examples of this happening. At his suggestion, in

2006 I visited a county in Sichuan province called Pinchang that has allowed party members to vote for the bosses of township parties. In the long run, democracy could be extended to the upper echelons of the party, including competitive elections for the most senior posts. The logical conclusion of his ideas on inner party democracy would be for the Communist party to split into different factions that competed on ideological slates for support. It is possible to imagine informal new left and new right groupings one day even becoming formal parties within the party. If the Communist party were a country, its 70m members would make it bigger than Britain. And yet it is hard to imagine the remote, impoverished county of Pinchang becoming a model for the gleaming metropolises of Shanghai, Beijing or Shenzhen. So far, none of the other 2,860 counties of China has followed its lead.

Many intellectuals in China are starting to question the utility of elections. Pan Wei, a rising star at Beijing University, castigated me at our first meeting for paying too much attention to the experiments in grassroots democracy. "The Sichuan experiment will go nowhere," he said. "The local leaders have their personal political goal: they want to make their names known. But the experiment has not succeeded. In fact, Sichuan is the place with the highest number of mass protests. Very few other places want to emulate it."

Chinese thinkers argue that all developed democracies are facing a political crisis: turnout in elections is falling, faith in political leaders has declined, parties are losing members and populism is on the rise. They study the ways that western leaders are going over the heads of political parties and pioneering new techniques to reach the people such as referendums, opinion surveys or "citizens' juries." The west still has multi-party elections as a central part of the political process, but has supplemented them with new types of deliberation. China, according to the new political thinkers, will do things the other way around: using elections in the margins but making public consultations, expert meetings and surveys a central part of decision-making. This idea was described pithily by Fang Ning, a political scientist at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. He compared democracy in the west to a fixed-menu restaurant where customers can select the identity of their chef, but have no say in what dishes he chooses to cook for them. Chinese democracy, on the other hand, always involves the same chef—the Communist party—but the policy dishes which are served up can be chosen "à la carte."

Chongqing is a municipality of 30m that few people in the west have heard of. It nestles in the hills at the confluence of the Yangtze and Jialin Jiang rivers and it is trying to become a living laboratory for the ideas of intellectuals like Pan Wei and Fang Ning. The city's government has made all significant

rulings subject to public hearings—in person, on television and on the internet. The authorities are proudest of the hearings on ticket prices for the light railway, which saw fares reduced from 15 to just 2 yuan (about 14p). This experiment is being emulated in other cities around China. But an even more interesting experiment was carried out in the small township of Zeguo in Wenling City—it used a novel technique of "deliberative polling" to decide on major spending decisions. The brainchild of a Stanford political scientist called James Fishkin, it harks back to an Athenian ideal of democracy (see "The thinking voter," Prospect May 2004). It involves randomly selecting a sample of the population and involving them in a consultation process with experts, before asking them to vote on issues. Zeguo used this technique to decide how to spend its 40m yuan (£2.87m) public works budget. So far the experiment has been a one-off but Fishkin and the Chinese political scientist He Baogang believe that "deliberative democracy" could be a template for political reform.

The authorities certainly seem willing to experiment with all kinds of political innovations. In Zeguo, they have even introduced a form of government by focus group. But the main criterion guiding political reform seems to be that it must not threaten the Communist party's monopoly on power. Can a more responsive form of authoritarianism evolve into a legitimate and stable form of government?

In the long term, China's one-party state may well collapse. However, in the medium term, the regime seems to be developing increasingly sophisticated techniques to prolong its survival and pre-empt discontent. China has already changed the terms of the debate about globalisation by proving that authoritarian regimes can deliver economic growth. In the future, its model of deliberative dictatorship could prove that one-party states can deliver a degree of popular legitimacy as well. And if China's experiments with public consultation work, dictatorships around the world will take heart from a model that allows one-party states to survive in an era of globalisation and mass communications.

China scholars in the west argue over whether the country is actively promoting autocracy, or whether it is just single-mindedly pursuing its national interest. Either way, China has emerged as the biggest global champion of authoritarianism. The pressure group Human Rights Watch complains that "China's growing foreign aid programme creates new options for dictators who were previously dependent on those who insisted on human rights progress."

China's foray into international politics should not, however, be reduced to its support for African dictators. It is trying to redefine the meaning of power on the world stage. Indeed, measuring "CNP"—comprehensive national power—has become a national hobby-horse. Each of the major foreign

policy think tanks has devised its own index to give a numerical value to every nation's power—economic, political, military and cultural. And in this era of globalisation and universal norms, the most striking thing about Chinese strategists is their unashamed focus on "national" power. The idea of recapturing sovereignty from global economic forces, companies and even individuals is central to the Chinese worldview.

Yang Yi is a military man, a rear admiral in the navy and the head of China's leading military think tank. He is one of the tough guys of the Chinese foreign policy establishment, but his ideas on power go far beyond assessments of the latest weapons systems. He argues that the US has created a "strategic siege" around China by assuming the "moral height" in international relations. Every time the People's Republic tries to assert itself in diplomatic terms, to modernise its military or to open relationships with other countries, the US presents it as a threat. And the rest of the world, Yang Yi complains, all too often takes its lead from the hyperpower: "The US has the final say on the making and revising of the international rules of the game. They have dominated international discourse… the US says, 'Only we can do this; you can't do this.'"

One of the buzzwords in Chinese foreign policy circles is ruan quanli—the Chinese term for "soft power." This idea was invented by the American political scientist Joseph Nye in 1990, but it is being promoted with far more zeal in Beijing than in Washington DC. In April 2006, a conference was organised in Beijing to launch the "China dream"—China's answer to the American dream. It was an attempt to associate the People's Republic with three powerful ideas: economic development, political sovereignty and international law. Whereas American diplomats talk about regime change, their Chinese counterparts talk about respect for sovereignty and the diversity of civilisations. Whereas US foreign policy uses sanctions and isolation to back up its political objectives, the Chinese offer aid and trade with no strings. Whereas America imposes its preferences on reluctant allies, China makes a virtue of at least appearing to listen to other countries.

But while all Chinese thinkers want to strengthen national power, they disagree on their country's long-term goals. On the one hand, liberal internationalists like Zheng Bijian like to talk about China's "peaceful rise" and how it has rejoined the world; adapting to global norms and learning to make a positive contribution to global order. In recent years, Beijing has been working through the six-party talks to solve the North Korean nuclear problem; working with the EU, Russia and the US on Iran; adopting a conciliatory position on climate change at an international conference in Montreal in 2005; and sending

4,000 peacekeepers to take part in UN missions. Even on issues where China is at odds with the west—such as humanitarian intervention—the Chinese position is becoming more nuanced. When the west intervened over Kosovo, China opposed it on the grounds that it contravened the "principle of non-intervention." On Iraq, it abstained. And on Darfur, in 2006 it finally voted for a UN mandate for peacekeepers—although Beijing is still under fire for its close ties to the Sudanese government.

On the other hand, China's "neocons"—or perhaps they should be called "neo-comms"—like Yang Yi and his colleague Yan Xuetong openly argue that they are using modern thinking to help China realise ancient dreams. Their long-term goal is to see China return to great-power status. Like many Chinese scholars, Yan Xuetong has been studying ancient thought. "Recently I read all these books by ancient Chinese scholars and discovered that these guys are smart—their ideas are much more relevant than most modern international relations theory," he said. The thing that interested him the most was the distinction that ancient Chinese scholars made between two kinds of order: the "Wang" (which literally means "king") and the "Ba" ("overlord"). The "Wang" system was centred on a dominant superpower, but its primacy was based on benign government rather than coercion or territorial expansion. The "Ba" system, on the other hand, was a classic hegemonic system, where the most powerful nation imposed order on its periphery. Yan explains how in ancient times the Chinese operated both systems: "Within Chinese Asia we had a 'Wang' system. Outside, when dealing with 'barbarians,' we had a hegemonic system. That is just like the US today, which adopts a 'Wang' system inside the western club, where it doesn't use military force or employ double standards. On a global scale, however, the US is hegemonic, using military power and employing double standards." According to Yan Xuetong, China will have two options as it becomes more powerful. "It could become part of the western 'Wang' system. But this will mean changing its political system to become a democracy. The other option is for China to build its own system."

The tension between the liberal internationalists and the neo-comms is a modern variant of the Mao-era split between bourgeois and revolutionary foreign policy. For the next few years, China will be decidedly bourgeois. It has decided—with some reservations—to join the global economy and its institutions. Its goal is to strengthen them in order to pin down the US and secure a peaceful environment for China's development. But in the long term, some Chinese hope to build a global order in China's image. The idea is to avoid confrontation while changing the facts on the ground. Just as they are doing

in domestic policy, they hope to build pockets of an alternative reality—as in Africa—where it is Chinese values and norms that increasingly determine the course of events rather than western ones.

The western creations of the EU and Nato—defined by the pooling rather than the protecting of sovereignty—may one day find their matches in the embryonic East Asian Community and the Shanghai Co-operation Organisation. Through these organisations, China is reassuring its neighbours of its peaceful intent and creating a new community of interest that excludes the US. The former US official Susan Shirk draws a parallel between China's multilateral diplomacy and her own country's after the second world war: "By binding itself to international rules and regimes, the US successfully established a hegemonic order."

The UN is also becoming an amplifier of the Chinese worldview. Unlike Russia, which comports itself with a swagger—enjoying its ability to overtly frustrate US and EU plans—China tends to opt for a conciliatory posture. In the run-up to the Iraq war, although China opposed military action, it allowed France, Germany and Russia to lead the opposition to it. In 2005 when there was a debate about enlarging the UN security council, China encouraged African countries to demand their own seat, which effectively killed off Japan's bid for a permanent seat. Equally, Beijing has been willing to allow the Organisation of Islamic States to take the lead in weakening the new UN human rights council. This diplomacy has been effective—contributing to a big fall in US influence: in 1995 the US won 50.6 per cent of the votes in the UN general assembly; by 2006, the figure had fallen to just 23.6 per cent. On human rights, the results are even more dramatic: China's win-rate has rocketed from 43 per cent to 82 per cent, while the US's has tumbled from 57 per cent to 22 per cent. "It's a truism that the security council can function only insofar as the US lets it," says James Traub, UN correspondent of the the New York Times. “The adage may soon be applied to China as well.”

The debate between Chinese intellectuals will continue to swirl within think tanks, journals and universities and—on more sensitive topics—on the internet. Chinese thinkers will continue to act as intellectual magpies, adapting western ideas to suit their purposes and plundering selectively from China’s own history. As China’s global footprint grows, we may find that we become as familiar with the ideas of Zhang Weiying and Wang Hui, Yu Keping and Pan Wei, Yan Xuetong and Zheng Bijan as we were with those of American thinkers in previous decades; from Reaganite economists in the 1980s to the neoconservative strategists of the 9/11 era.

China is not an intellectually open society. But the emergence of freer political debate, the throng of returning students from the west and huge international events like the Olympics are making it more so. And it is so big, so pragmatic and so desperate to succeed that its leaders are constantly experimenting with new ways of doing things. They used special economic zones to test out a market philosophy. Now they are testing a thousand other ideas—from deliberative democracy to regional alliances. From this laboratory of social experiments, a new world-view is emerging that may in time crystallise into a recognisable Chinese model—an alternative, non-western path for the rest of the world to follow.

中国新知识分子

马克·伦纳德

吴万伟 译

摘要：虽然全世界都对于中国的崛起感兴趣，但没有多少人关注中国的思想和产生这些思想的人。实际上，中国的知识分子阶层拥有让人吃惊的活力，他们的观点或许成为对西方自由思想霸权的严肃挑战。

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