

---

## **China Today Updates: June 2010. 15 updates**

---

**South China Morning Post**

**Party membership grows to 78 million**

**Associated Press in Beijing**

**1:57pm, Jun 28, 2010**

China's Communist Party, the world's largest political party, grew even bigger last year as more people sought membership seen as a ticket to the ruling class elite and a means for getting ahead.

Party membership last year swelled to nearly 78 million people – an increase of more than 2 million people or nearly 3 per cent from 2008, said Wang Qinfeng, the party's deputy minister, according to a transcript posted on the website of the party's flagship People's Daily newspaper.

The number of members is almost equal to Germany's total population.

More than just an ideology, membership in the elite Communist Party also means access to a large networking opportunity with China's ruling class – including health care perks, retirement benefits and heightened career opportunities.

Wang said 20 million people applied to join last year, but only 10 per cent were accepted.

Applicants for party membership need recommendations from current members and his or her company or work unit leader showing a strong degree of party loyalty, plus "good behaviour." They also have to submit essays expressing support for the party.

Wang said more than 20 per cent of party members are women and nearly a quarter of the members are younger than 35.

---

**Panchen Lama offers blessings to Buddhist believers in Tibet**

---

**Source:Xinhua**

**08:43, June 28, 2010**

The Panchen Lama, Bainqen Erdini Qoigyijabu, offered head-touching blessings to more than 10,000 Tibetan Buddhist believers from Friday to Sunday in Xigaze Prefecture of southwest China's Tibet Autonomous Region.

The 20-year-old Panchen Lama, one of the two most senior living Buddhas in Tibetan Buddhism, performed the ritual, the most important part of his annual Buddhist activities in Tibet, as part of afternoon prayers during the past three days.

Head touching is a religious ceremony in which a living Buddha or eminent monk blesses fellow monks and followers who believe the touching will rid them of suffering and prevent disaster.

"I want to live longer so that I can see the living Buddha and get his blessing again," said Pulag, a 76-year-old resident from Sagya County,Xigaze.

The Panchen Lama arrived at Xigaze's Zhaxi Lhunbo Lamasery Friday to mark the annual Buddha Festival.

The lamasery, built in 1447, was the traditional residence of Panchen Lamas. It is one of the six major monasteries of Tibetan Buddhism and a major place for Tibetan Buddhists to perform their observances.

Each morning from Friday to Sunday, the Panchen Lama paid his respect to the Buddhas, along with crowds of monks and pilgrims, in front of the huge thangka displaying portraits of Buddha Dipamkara, Sakyamuni and Maitreya outside the lamasery.

The Panchen Lama, who currently spends most of his days in Beijing studying Buddhism, arrived in Tibet three weeks ago for a series of Buddhist events, which have become his annual routine in recent years.

In more than 20 days, he offered head-touching blessings to a record high of more than 40,000 Buddhist believers in Tibet, according to the regional united front work department.

---

**The Arizona Republic**

**Opinions - June 28, 2010**

**U.S., China should build cultural, personal ties, in addition to economic**

---

**by Jay Rhodes III - Jun. 27, 2010 08:24 PM**

The headlines about the United States and China are full of controversy and conflict, from disputes over Iran to questions about product safety.

But the news stories leave a gap. They fail to tell the entire story of this strong, vital and thriving - yet still fragile - relationship.

As president of the U.S. Association of Former Members of Congress and a former Representative of Arizona's 1st District, I have had the opportunity to see China's rapidly evolving role in the world over the last three decades and am frankly astonished at the positive changes.

Here are three insights Americans need to understand:

- The U.S.-China trade relationship is a fundamental pillar of both of our economies - in fact, China is Arizona's largest trading partner outside of North America - but it is a cold, money-driven relationship. We need to build on it, developing a relationship based on genuine friendship, shared passions and common humanity. Our differences on key policy issues will not disappear, but they do not have to define or dominate our relationship. Personal and cultural relations will add strength and resiliency to the world's most important bilateral relationship.
- Americans need to understand more fully the complexity of the many regions and personalities of China. Earlier this year, I led a delegation on a political and cultural tour of China. What I heard from the Chinese was the same thing one might expect to hear in Arizona: "Shanghai (New York City) is not China (America)." The Chinese, I've found, know far more about our nation than we do about theirs. American understanding of China is sadly facile and will become a significant handicap in the future.
- America's soft power is our greatest asset. We sometimes underestimate the diverse influence of "Brand America" in China. During my trip, I found that Steve Nash and the Phoenix Suns were hugely popular, Jack Bauer had convinced the Chinese that special agents live glamorous lives, and Kentucky Fried Chicken was the favorite restaurant of many.

Many Chinese held very positive impressions of American culture and politics, even if they also were prone to ask sharp-edged questions about everything from our health-care system to the chaotic masterpiece that is our democracy.

---

**Our soft power is an unruly force that is largely untamed and uncontrolled, but which connects us with 1.3 billion Chinese at a personal level. It needs to become a two-way street. I firmly believe that if more Americans are introduced to the amazing scope of Chinese history and culture, they will be similarly drawn to the country that lived a dozen lifetimes before our young nation was established.**

**Our relationship with China is complex, and not without many stumbling blocks. While it is important for Americans to understand certain Chinese sensitivities, it is equally important for the Chinese to understand our deep commitment to human rights and the freedoms of speech, the press and religion.**

**If there is one recommendation I could provide to every Arizonan, it is this: Get to know China through study or travel. I would offer the exact same advice to the Chinese: Take advantage of all that our nation has to offer. Our greatest enemy is ignorance.**

**I am optimistic for the future of the U.S.-China relationship. But for that relationship to become strong enough to survive inevitable confrontations and challenges in the coming years, we need to develop connections that are broader and deeper than economic self-interest alone.**

**\* Jay Rhodes III, a Mesa native, was an Arizona congressman from 1987 to 1993.**

---

**AsiaNews - [www.asianews.it](http://www.asianews.it)**

**06/25/2010 14:25**

**CHINA – TAIWAN**

## **Beijing and Taipei conclude the most important trade deal since 1949**

**The two parties will cut or eliminate import tariffs on more than 800 items. For Taiwan, the deal will be a big step towards economic recovery. Taiwan's opposition is against it and will take to the streets to protest the island's progressive economic subordination to the mainland.**

**Taipei (AsiaNews/Agencies) – China and Taiwan have agreed to an Economic Co-operation Framework Agreement (ECFA). The trade pact, which will be signed on 29 June in Chongqing, should increase trade between the two countries. Experts view it as the most important deal between the sides since they split in 1949.**

**Under its terms, 539 Taiwanese products—including auto parts, petrochemicals and fruit—worth US \$13.8 billion will enter the Chinese market with reduced tariffs**

immediately and no tariffs within three years. Taiwan will slash its tariffs on 267 items worth US\$ 2.86 billion for the mainland.

Both sides insist that it is a first step towards opening markets for some non-financial services, with the mainland opening up accounting, auditing, hospitals and aircraft maintenance and repair, and Taiwan removing restrictions on research and development, conferences and exhibitions, and computer bookings for air transport services.

Taiwan appears to be getting the better of the deal. Taipei insisted that the deal will increase trade, favour economic growth and maintain Taiwanese goods internationally competitive.

The mainland's senior negotiator, Zheng Lizhong, vice-chairman of the Association for Relations across the Taiwan Strait, said Beijing had agreed to the concessions "for the sake of promoting the status and economic competitiveness of the Chinese race".

In Taiwan, critics fear the pact could unleash a flood of cheaper Chinese goods, undermine local manufacturing and make the island too dependent on China. For the mainland, the island remains a rebel province and has more than 1,000 missiles pointed at it to stop any formal declaration of independence

Taiwan's opposition parties are opposed to the deal and have announced a public demonstration against the agreement for tomorrow.

The mainland will not export any agricultural products or workers to Taiwan, and will offer zero tariffs on 18 farm products from Taiwan, an arrangement made to reduce the strong opposition from the pro-independence camp.

---

## **China says terrorist group broken up in Xinjiang**

**By CHRISTOPHER BODEEN (AP) – 24 June 2010**

BEIJING — China said Thursday it had broken up a gang of "hardcore terrorists" who plotted attacks in the western region of Xinjiang, where scores were killed in ethnic violence last year.

Public Security Ministry spokesman Wu Heping said the attacks were planned for last year, after long-simmering tensions between Turkic Muslim Uighurs and majority Han Chinese migrants turned deadly in the regional capital Urumqi last July 5.

---

Nearly 200 people died in the violence that Beijing claims was plotted by overseas Uighur activists.

Wu said authorities had arrested more than 10 members of a gang of "hardcore terrorists" linked to the East Turkestan Islamic Movement, a banned terrorist organization advocating independence for Xinjiang. Among those detained were the group's co-ringleaders, who Wu said had carried out attacks around the time of the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games and subsequently traveled through China preaching religious extremism, recruiting members, raising cash, and rehearsing attacks.

"The uncovering of this major terrorist group again proves that the ETIM and other terrorist organizations constitute the gravest terrorist threat that our nation faces at this present time and in the future," Wu said at a media briefing.

Wu said the gang had assembled bombs, pipe bombs and gasoline bombs, knives and other weapons and had planned attacks in southern Xinjiang cities between July and October 2009. The plot was discovered, and the gang members fled to different parts of China and overseas, he said.

Though Wu did not identify what countries they fled to, he said three were among a group deported to China in December. That same month, Cambodia repatriated 20 Uighurs it said had illegally entered the country, touching off an international outcry.

During the briefing, several slides were displayed showing knives and what appeared to be pipe bombs made from black powder and ball-bearings. Another showed a minivan and four-wheel drive vehicles allegedly used by the gang, while a third showed a kitchen-like room described as a bomb factory in Xinjiang.

The seizures "firmly frustrated the terrorists' sabotage plot and eliminated a potential threat to public security in a timely manner," Wu said.

No dates were given for the arrests and no reason was given why the announcement was made now, although it comes just before the first anniversary of the unrest.

Last July's rioting was the worst communal violence to hit Xinjiang in more than a decade, but authorities have for decades battled a simmering rebellion against Chinese rule. Uighurs' resentment has been fueled by what many see as Beijing's heavy-handed controls on religion and policies that favor the Han Chinese migrants flooding into their traditional homeland.

---

Overseas Uighur activist Dilxat Raxit said the announcement was deliberately timed to associate the Uighur cause with terrorism among international audiences. Beijing has made a "unilateral accusations" and its lack of transparency raises questions about the investigation and purported evidence, including the possibility that suspects were tortured into giving testimony, he said.

"China associates all Uighur causes with the ETIM, although no one seems to know what this group is or where they are located," Raxit said.

Reverend Marcus Ramsey, director of the Macau Interfaith Network that collaborated with other missionary groups to help the Uighurs escape to Cambodia, also said greater transparency was needed to give the accusations credibility.

"There's no press freedom, there's no independent verification of these things so I think they have the luxury of being able to make these claims," Ramsey said in a phone interview.

"Of course these things reinforce the claims of the Chinese government, but if they don't open these things up for proper scrutiny by the international community then it's very difficult to say, isn't it?"

\* Associated Press writer Gillian Wong contributed to this report.

---

AsiaNews - [www.asianews.it](http://www.asianews.it)

06/17/2010 12:50

TIBET

## **Tibetans call for worldwide action to free Tenzin Delek Rinpoche**

**by Nirmala Carvalho**

About 40,000 signatures have been collected around the world to demand the Chinese government to release immediately the Tibetan monk. A "defender of Tibetan culture, religion and freedom, he was sentenced to death in 2002 on the basis of false charges. The sentence was eventually commuted to life in prison.

Dharamsala (AsiaNews/RFA) – Tibetans and their supporters joined a global day of action today for the release of Tenzin Delek Rinpoche, a highly revered religious leader and community organiser from eastern Tibet who is currently serving a life sentence in a Chinese prison.

---

In cities around the world, demonstrators delivered a 40,000-signature petition to Chinese embassies and consulates denouncing China's unjust imprisonment of the Tibetan monk.

In Dharamshala, more than 10,000 signatures were sent by fax and courier to Chinese authorities in Beijing and to the Chinese embassy in New Delhi.

The petition text mirrored a similar petition signed by 40,000 Tibetans in Tenzin Delek Rinpoche's home region of Lighthang in Kham, eastern Tibet (Chinese: Sichuan Province). Members of Tenzin Delek's family attempted to deliver the petition to the Chinese government in December 2009 but they were stopped en route to Beijing.

"Like all Tibetan prisoners of conscience, Tenzin Delek Rinpoche did not receive a fair trial under Chinese law. Now is the time for his case to be re-opened and a new trial to be granted in accordance with international legal standards, especially given his deteriorating health condition," said Ngawang Woebar, President of the Gu Chu Sum Movement of Tibet and a former political prisoner himself.

"We sent 40,000 signatures from around the world to the Chinese government today to press for the release of Tenzin Delek Rinpoche, who has served nine years of an unjust prison sentence. We are also standing in solidarity with Tibetans in Tibet who have risked their lives to appeal for Tenzin Delek Rinpoche's freedom, and call on the international community to join our appeal for this innocent Tibetan monk," Ngawang added.

In addition to his spiritual role, Tenzin Delek Rinpoche is a well-respected Tibetan community leader and a strong advocate for Tibetan culture and for environmental preservation.

He was sentenced to death in December 2002 on false charges of exploding bombs and distributing Tibetan independence leaflets. His death sentence was commuted to life imprisonment in January 2005 following an international campaign launched on his behalf.

He has maintained his innocence since the day he was detained and in 2009 from prison, Tenzin Delek stated, "I am not responsible for these explosions or any other illegal actions, they have pinned this on me . . . . If it is possible to appeal, there is hope that I may be cleared of all charges."

On 11 June 2010, Radio Free Asia (RFA) reported that two of Tenzin Delek's sisters were permitted to visit him in April 2010, apparently in response to promises made by local

Chinese authorities after Tibetans in the Lihang area attempted to deliver the petition to the Sichuan Provincial Government in December 2009.

According to a written statement received by RFA, the prison doctor confirmed that Tenzin Delek Rinpoche was suffering from "ailments related to bones, heart, and blood pressure." One source said that Tenzin Delek requested his sisters continue their efforts to secure his release, and that he had sent letters to 26 Chinese government departments.

"Tenzin Delek Rinpoche's was framed by the Chinese government for crimes he did not commit because he was an outspoken advocate for Tibetan culture, religion, and identity. We are deeply concerned for his well-being and demand his immediate release," said Tenzin Choeying, National Director of Students for a free Tibet India. "We call on global citizens of conscience to take action to help free Tenzin Delek Rinpoche. He devoted his life to improving the lives of his people, and for this China sentenced him to life imprisonment."

---

## **South China Morning Post**

### **Wen appeals for better treatment of migrant workers**

**Kristine Kwok in Beijing and Choi Chi-yuk in Zhongshan**  
**Jun 16, 2010**

In the first comments by a central government leader to touch on labour conditions following a wave of strikes across the mainland, Premier Wen Jiabao has called for better treatment of the nation's vast army of migrant workers and praised their contribution to the booming economy.

Meanwhile, workers at a factory in Guangdong that makes locks for Honda cars suspended a strike as management and worker representatives set a June 18 deadline to reach a wage agreement and end the Japanese carmaker's third labour dispute in a month.

In what appears to be a subtle government response to workers' discontent, Wen told a group of young migrant workers in Beijing that governments should put more effort into helping them better integrate into urban society.

"Rural migrant workers are the mainstay of China's industrial workforce," Xinhua quoted Wen as saying on Monday. "Our society's wealth and the skyscrapers are all distillations of

your hard work and sweat. Your labour is glorious and should be respected by society at large.

"The government and the public should be treating the young migrant workers like their own children."

Wen was speaking with some 50 young migrant workers from a construction site on Beijing's new No6 subway line ahead of today's Dragon Boat Festival.

One of the workers, Hubei native Zhang Lei, told Wen that despite having a stable job and having lived in Beijing for eight years, he still could not afford to buy a house and it was still a hassle to send his child to a proper school.

Wen acknowledged that Zhang's problems were common among China's young workers.

"All parts of China have to gradually let those migrant workers, with the right conditions, better assimilate into cities," Wen said.

Three decades into the process of economic reform and opening up, China has seen the largest migration in human history as millions of rural residents leave home for supposedly better-paid jobs in cities.

While they prop up China's reputation as the world's factory, their labour conditions - long working hours, meagre pay and almost non-existent social welfare - have long been a concern for rights groups.

While their fathers and mothers endured the low status and discrimination, today's young migrant workers, better educated and keen to taste the fruits of city life, are less willing to accept such conditions.

Over the past few months, this new generation of migrant workers has staged strikes across the mainland demanding better salaries and unions that can represent their interests. The mainland's labour unions are all controlled by the government-sponsored All-China Federation of Trade Unions.

At the Honda Lock factory, most workers went back into the plant in Zhongshan for yesterday's morning shift. Their return temporarily ended a work stoppage that began nearly a week ago when hundreds of the plant's 1,500 workers went on strike.

Huang Mingyun , a worker from Guangxi , said he was kept very busy yesterday because assignments had piled up during the strike.

---

"My bosses told me the company had suffered millions of yuan in losses since the strike began last Wednesday," Huang, in his 20s, said. "As far as I am concerned, I'm quite happy with the double pay they offered for working on holidays. I can earn more than 100 yuan today."

He said he would have a day off today for the Dragon Boat Festival holiday.

Some workers said they would go back on strike on Friday if management failed to make a new offer in response to their wage demands. Management had previously offered a pay rise of 100 yuan a month in wages and another 100 yuan in bonuses, but most workers rejected the offer as too low. "If it's a small increase, we'll probably go back on strike again," said one young woman.

Huang said he was expecting his monthly salary would be raised to 1,800 yuan. He's making a little over 1,000 yuan at the moment.

Wen's praise for young migrant workers was seen by critics as a gesture designed to pacify the discontented and recognise their value, without encouraging further strikes.

Hu Xingdou, from the Beijing Institute of Technology, said Wen's meeting with the young workers was prompted by Beijing's concern about the strikes spreading across the country.

"Wen's remarks are meant to calm the workers down. But of course he couldn't directly address the strike issue because it's too sensitive," Hu said.

Professor Chang Kai, director of the Institute of Labour Relations at Renmin University, said the strikes underscored the urgency of reforming the nation's trade union structure.

"If the All-China Federation of Trade Unions refuses to reform, it's inevitable the young migrant workers will abandon it," Chang said.

Geoffrey Crothall, director of communications with China Labour Bulletin, a Hong Kong-based workers' rights group, said the central government had long been pressing local authorities to improve migrant workers' conditions.

"Unfortunately it's taking a very long time for that message to get through," he said.

In March, Wen said in his annual work report that allowing workers to share in China's booming economy was a top priority for the government.

---

---

## **China Turns Its Focus To Africa**

**June 10, 2010 - 1:24 am**

**Ray Tsuchiyama | Forbes**

**Ray Tsuchiyama is a leader in Strategic Sales, Channels Management, and Business Operations.**

When I was with a U.S. semiconductor firm I once visited the French subsidiary's Paris office. An ethnically Chinese sales manager, who spoke English with a distinct French accent, greeted me. During our conversation the manager explained he was born and raised on the large island of Madagascar (where French, English and Malagasy languages are spoken), off the southeastern coast of Africa, and later attended a Paris university before joining the U.S. chip firm.

His parents had traveled from Guangdong Province in southern China and settled in the capital city Antananarivo (and eventually owned several restaurants). The Chinese population in Madagascar is larger than 50,000; the Mauritius islands have a similar population. South Africa now has the largest Chinese community in Africa with approximately 300,000, with newly-developed Chinatowns in the eastern Johannesburg suburbs.

That country, which boasts the strongest economy in Africa, had a surge of Chinese immigration after apartheid's end in the early 1990s. There are three South African Parliament members of Chinese descent, including two with the African National Congress (identified with former President Nelson Mandela, an isiXhosa-speaker) and one with the Nathan Freedom Party. It is not uncommon that South Africans with Chinese ancestry speak English, isiZulu, isiXhosa or Afrikaans with neighbors and friends, plus possibly Cantonese/Mandarin. (See my note on language in South Africa at the bottom of this post.)

Africa and China--seemingly entirely different worlds--are not easily linked. True, July 11 is celebrated as a holiday in the People's Republic of China, in honor of the first voyage of Admiral Zhen. He, an extraordinary 15th-century Imperial fleet commander who completed seven long ocean voyages, including beyond the Indian subcontinent, reached the Horn of Africa and what is now Tanzania and Kenya. His expeditions returned with giraffes and other exotic creatures to the astonishment of the Imperial Court. (The Ming Dynasty was rather an open society; high-ranking Admiral He was both a Muslim and a eunuch.)

Even now Chinese porcelain pieces are uncovered during excavations in ancient trading cities like Zanzibar and Mombasa. However, after these fantastic voyages, Chinese interest

in “blue ocean” exploration waned and it was not until the early 1990s that Chinese re-engagement with Africa began anew and continues unabated today in many ways.

Now Africa is hot--in a political-economic sense. Africa used to be known for civil strife and famine; unfortunately, both continue in parts of the continent. Other regions are experiencing intense competition in trade and natural resources, including oil and minerals, by firms from Europe, U.S., Japan, Korea and China. Also, the World Cup in South Africa this month loudly heralds the arrival of Africa onto the world sports stage.

Many citizens in the U.S., Europe and Japan are unaware of the great emphasis China is placing on the African continent and its undeveloped market of 900 million people. Over the past two decades thousands of Chinese government and state enterprise officials have fanned out throughout Africa for diplomatic recognition, educational and arts programs, FDI and business loans, giant construction projects, and business and trade deals.

By 2007, according to the New York Times, 750,000 mainland Chinese nationals were estimated to be living and working throughout Africa. Chinese financial assistance and engineering prowess completed the Lagos-Kano railway in Nigeria (a \$8 billion project), the Bequile railway line in Angola with access from the Lobito seaport to interior copper mines, a freeway in Algeria and oil pipelines in Sudan.

A 2008 U.S. Council on Foreign Relations paper entitled “China, Africa, and Oil” by Stephanie Hansen paper pointed out that “Africa registered 5.8% economic growth in 2007, its highest level ever, in part because of Chinese investment. Experts say the roads, bridges, and dams built by Chinese firms are low cost, good quality and completed in a fraction of the time such projects usually take in Africa.”

From the African perspective, it is hard to build anything--bridges, roads, schools and hospitals--without money. To do business, to sell palm oil or flowers or coffee, African small firms need money to buy seeds, fertilizer, tractors and trucks. To an African government official trying to complete a paved road to an airport or a struggling farmer in need for a loan to expand his overseas coffee sales, Chinese assistance is probably a godsend.

At the highest government level, the official multi-lateral organization between African states and the People’s Republic of China is the Forum on China–Africa Cooperation (FOCAC). Over the past decade there have been four meetings. In 2006 in Beijing, Chinese President Hu Jintao convened with top representatives from 35 African countries. Acting more like a developed, mature economic power, he signed \$5 billion worth of low-cost loans to African countries.

---

Three years later, at the 2009 meeting at the resort town of Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, the number of African states' attendees increased to over 50. The list included 35 African heads of state, 6 heads of government, 1 vice president, 6 senior officials and the African Union Chairman. It was a rare instance because so many top Chinese leaders were out of China at the same time; Premier Wen Jiabao, Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi and Commerce Minister Chen Deming all attended.

At the overflowing 2009 FOCAC session China committed to \$10 billion in low-cost loans, plus an additional \$1 billion in loans for African SME firms. The total loan figure was not all: Wen, a geologist by training, also committed funding for 30 hospitals and 30 malaria centers, training for 3,000 doctors and nurses and 1,500 teachers, 50 China–Africa friendship schools (including Confucius Institutes in 16 African countries--since Confucian teachings revere elders for wisdom, there is synergy with traditional African culture), 20,000 health and technical professionals--and, startlingly, increased the number of Chinese government scholarships for African students to 5,500 by 2012 and a new plan to bring 100 African post-doctoral fellows to do research in China.

These latter African student figures are of high significance, since the programs would dramatically increase the number of Mandarin-speaking Africans. It is challenging to find other well-funded, multi-sector African assistance programs undertaken by other developed countries, like, say, Japan, the world's second-ranked economy, where fewer African students study at Japanese universities even though it too is a superpower. In other words, in poker terms, China was all in for future China-Africa relations.

According to the "China, Africa, and Oil" report, from 2002 to 2003, trade between China and Africa doubled to \$18.5 billion; by 2007, it had reached \$73 billion. Furthermore, the paper continues: "Much of the growth was due to increased Chinese imports of oil from Sudan and other African nations, but Chinese firms also import a significant amount of non-oil commodities such as timber, copper, and diamonds. China recently began to import some African-manufactured value-added goods, such as processed foods and household consumer goods. Eighty-five percent of Africa's exports to China come from five oil-rich countries (Angola, Equatorial Guinea, Nigeria, the Republic of Congo, and Sudan), according to the World Bank...But Chinese interest in Africa extends beyond oil. China now ranks as the continent's second-highest trading partner, behind the United States, and ahead of France and Britain."

If China-Africa engagement continues into the future in such an explosive fashion, there will be large communities of newly arrived Chinese traders, engineers and manufacturing professionals from Cairo to Addis Ababa, from Lagos to Luanda, from Harare to Maputo to Capetown.

---

New Chinese enterprises will launch plants for “local products,” including clothes, pots and pans, plastic buckets, watches, shoes, soft drinks, packaged convenience foods, soap and cosmetics and low-end mobile phones. They could also make and sell consumer electronics, like localized versions of MIT Media Lab OLPC laptops and PCs, and white goods, like televisions, air-conditioners, fans, rice cookers and refrigerators. There will be factories for cement and steel beams for new apartment and office buildings, for furniture and solar power panels. Employing thousands of new plant workers, a line of Tata’s Nano-like inexpensive car and utility truck/SUVs could be produced in South Africa for export throughout the continent.

Simultaneously, these new Chinese-funded projects would require IT support, specialized oil drilling expertise, design services, project management skills and factory floor manufacturing equipment--in short, a new Chinese-led African business and technological eco-system with an appetite for a wide range of products and services.

What should be the future strategy for multinational firms trying to take in this Chinese wave of raw materials imports and low-cost manufacturing and sourcing in Africa?

The answer lies in the thousands of African students arriving at mainland China technical schools and universities via the aforementioned multi-year FOCAC China-Africa assistance programs. Foreign firms should establish long-term interaction with leading Chinese faculty at Chinese universities, from top-rated Beijing University to Tsinghua to Fudan (in Shanghai) to other colleges in Tianjin, Dalian, Nanjing, Wuhan, Xiamen and Guangdong.

Employing first Chinese graduates of these colleges as liaison staff (and later Mandarin-speaking African college graduates), multinationals should sponsor Chinese faculty research in key areas like petroleum engineering, manufacturing operations and international commerce, and seek out talented students from Angola, Zambia, Congo and Sudan.

Multinational firms can train these recruits, and pay for their visits home to establish contact with their communities for further tapping of local talent. Then these employees representing--say, Microsoft, Procter & Gamble, Bechtel or Ford--can visit Chinese-run offices in Brazzaville and converse in Mandarin about a RFQ. It's a scene that should become as familiar as a Chinese speaking Swahili or Yoruba or Malagasy-accented French, like the semiconductor sales manager I met in Paris years ago.

A complex China-Africa emerging-markets strategy of geography, products and commerce is not easy for a firm headquartered in Chicago to grasp all the pieces of the puzzle, but the first step is to identify the right talented staff who have in-depth knowledge about the two seemingly disparate worlds of Africa and China--peoples, cultures, languages and markets.

---

(Note: When I was working in Johannesburg, South Africa I was surprised by the ease the hotel reception staff pronounced my last name. Usually it is mangled by Americans and Europeans, as the opening “tsu” sound does not exist in Indo-European languages. The South Africans explained that the “tsu” sound, plus other syllables in my name, is used among Bantu family language [isiXhosa or isiZulu] speakers. I felt quite at home.)

---

**Los Angeles Times**

**latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-china-college-20100605,0,4546217.story**

**COLUMN ONE**

**For Chinese, getting into Harvard is a class act**

**The wealthy pay up to \$300,000 for classes aimed at getting their child into an Ivy League school. English skills and extracurricular activities that are nothing short of impressive are a must.**

**By Barbara Demick, Los Angeles Times**

**6:34 PM PDT, June 4, 2010**

**Reporting from Shanghai**

It was just a week after Chang Shui received her acceptance notice from Harvard that the first book offer came.

A publisher approached her father with a detailed outline for an inside guide to how a Shanghai couple prepared their daughter to compete successfully with the best students from America. Local newspapers weighed in with articles about how Chang's membership in a dance troupe surely helped. "Magical girl 'danced' her way into Harvard," the Shanghai Evening Post headlined its story.

Qibao High School, where Chang is a senior, trumpeted the news on a large electronic billboard at the front gate. The day that she received her acceptance notice — by e-mail at 5 a.m. April 2 — teachers at the high school crowded around to have their picture taken with her.

"She was a celebrity," boasted her homeroom teacher, Xiong Gongping.

---

"I'm not exactly a celebrity," Chang said, interjecting a note of modesty. "But it is true that more students are approaching me wanting to know how to go to college in the United States.

"And for the parents, it's their dream to send a kid to Harvard or Yale."

Charlotte Chang, as she'll call herself in the United States, is a skinny 17-year-old with hair pulled back into a perky pony tail and a broad, confident smile despite the braces that she hopes to get off her teeth before moving to Cambridge in August. Striding through her high school campus last month, she switched easily between Chinese and English, the word "cool" punctuating her speech, a product of spending her junior year of high school as an exchange student in Seattle.

She wears the Wedgewood-blue track suit jacket that is part of her school uniform, along with jeans and canvas sneakers that put a cheerful bounce in her step. The only book she carries is a paperback version of the novel, "The Time Traveler's Wife." She was reading it for fun.

Although she was at school that day to have her photograph taken with the rest of the senior class, she has stopped attending classes even as her classmates are preparing for the dreaded gaokao, or want to send their children to the United States to be educated, and when they do, they want them to go to the best universities," said Zhou Jun, the founder and head of the Leadership Academy, one of a dozen consulting firms that dispenses advice on how to get into foreign universities.

Based in Shanghai, his company targets a niche market of China's wealthiest families, people who will pay up to \$300,000 for up to five years of supplemental classes aimed at getting their child into an Ivy League school. "The parents all want Harvard, but we can't guarantee that. We're not God. We work with what we have got."

Zhou's firm helps students with their English, prepares them to take the SATs, which are given in Hong Kong or through an international school, and helps them single out universities, fill out their applications and edit their essays. The consulting firm also organizes extracurricular programs, most recently a four-day hiking excursion to Nepal, and volunteer work tutoring the poor — the sort of activities notably absent on the resumes of most children schooled in a system obsessed with grades.

The desire to go to top American universities is not just about the prestige conveyed by the name. Chinese students envy many aspects of U.S. higher education, such as the chance to explore different pursuits before choosing a major, interactions with professors and the more open intellectual debates.

---

"You really don't learn anything in Chinese universities, It is very difficult to get into college, but more relaxed once you get there," said Zhang Haosheng, an 18-year-old classmate of Chang's at Qibao High School. "I think many of us, if we had the money, would prefer to go to school in the U.S."

There are currently 36 Chinese undergraduates at Harvard (the number of graduate students is much larger), but of 2,110 students accepted for the upcoming freshman class, at least nine are from China.

"The Chinese high schools used to worry that if the top-flight students applied internationally they wouldn't study hard for the gaokao and that [students'] status in China would suffer, but now they are encouraging it," said Deborah Seligsohn, a Beijing-based Harvard alumni who often interviews Chinese applicants.

Seligsohn said the Chinese applicants to Harvard she meets are usually students who have rejected engineering or science and want the luxury of time afforded by U.S. universities to figure out their place in the world.

"What I've seen over and over again is that they are very socially committed. They're interested in broad questions of poverty and the environment."

Isabelle Krishana, an American expatriate who works for Kemeixin Consulting, a Beijing-based academic advisor, is more cynical.

"I think the parents want their kids to make a lot of money," said Krishana, a Princeton graduate.

For Chinese students, the obstacles to entry to an Ivy League school are daunting. Although many top universities, including Harvard, select applicants regardless of their ability to pay, successful matriculants need to speak perfect English, which they cannot generally do unless they spend a high school year abroad. And that requires a good deal of money.

"It takes a lot of work for them to put together an application that is going to stand up next to 20,000 kids applying to Yale. They don't know what a college admissions person wants to see and hear," said Krishana.

She recalled one high school student she was advising, who, when asked to write an essay about a person she admired, picked Adolf Hitler. "It was one of those 'Lost in Translation' moments. I had to explain to her, 'Listen, this is really not going to work.' "

---

For Chang, the path to Harvard began when she was in kindergarten and started dancing.

"We wanted her to have a special talent to develop her personality," Chang Zhitao, her businessman father said from the family's home in one of Shanghai's shiny new high-rise apartments.

He said the family took a contrarian approach to the education of their only child, rejecting the harsh methods of some other ambitious parents — for example, the author of "Harvard Girl" wrote that her parents began teaching her words when she was 15 days old and that as a 10-year-old she held a piece of ice in her hand to develop discipline.

"We wanted to develop her own sense of responsibility, and with responsibility, she got freedom," Chang's father said.

"I grew up differently from my classmates. **I spent a significant amount of time in dancing and extracurricular activities. I put in more time studying English,"** Chang said.

**At Qibao High School, a public school for gifted students (like certain U.S. magnet schools), Chang was among the top 10 students but not the valedictorian. She spent many weekends performing traditional Chinese dance with a student troupe, sometimes traveling abroad to countries such as France, Australia and North Korea.**

**Chang did not use a consultant but had an advisor who helped her with the complicated applications while she was attending high school in Seattle. She said she was surprised that she got into Harvard, as she'd been rejected last year by Yale's early admissions program.**

**Last month, Chang met with some of her future classmates at an event organized by the Harvard Club of Shanghai. Like herself, she says, each has a special talent — one is an athlete, another a student government leader and a third a whiz at taking tests. "I met one boy with perfect 2400 SAT scores," said Chang.**

**"But we all had the same question: Why did Harvard pick me?"**

---

At least for now, Chang does not intend to commit the secrets of her success to paper.

"She says it is too soon," her father said. "She hasn't accomplished anything yet."

\* [barbara.demick@latimes.com](mailto:barbara.demick@latimes.com)

\* Copyright © 2010, The Los Angeles Times

high test, that determines placement in Chinese universities.

"My friends are so depressed. They study from 7 a.m. to midnight," said Chang.

At the very top of the wish list for many of them is Harvard, or Hafo, which the Chinese pronounce with reverence. Its namesakes are found all over China, the Harvard Kindergarten, the Harvard Graphic Arts School, the Harvard Beauty School. For those coveting the real thing, there are nearly a dozen books in Chinese, among them "You Too Can Go to Harvard: Secrets of Getting into Famous U.S. Universities," and the bestseller published in 2000, "Harvard Girl."

"More and more rich Chinese families

---

\_Story from BBC NEWS:

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/americas/8727647.stm>

Published: 2010/06/08 09:21:13 GMT

**China defends internet censorship**

**By Michael Bristow**

**BBC News, Beijing**

China has defended its right to censor the internet in a document laying out the government's attitude towards the web.

---

It says the country has the right to govern the internet according to its own rules inside its borders.

The white paper also reveals just how fast the internet has developed in China in the 16 years since it was first connected.

By the end of last year the country had 384m internet users.

'Freedom of speech'

The white paper, released on Tuesday, called the internet "a crystallisation of human wisdom".

But in the document the government lays out some of the reasons why its citizens cannot get access to all of that wisdom.

It says it wants to curb the harmful effects of illegal information on state security, public interests and children.

"Laws and regulations clearly prohibit the spread of information that contains content subverting state power, undermining national unity [or] infringing upon national honour and interests," it says.

Websites, blogs and information deemed sensitive by the Chinese government is routinely blocked using a range of technological tools, dubbed the Great Firewall of China.

The country's state secrets law has just been amended in a way that makes internet and telecommunications firms now responsible for helping the government police the web.

Despite that, China still maintains that its people have unfettered access to the internet. "Chinese citizens fully enjoy freedom of speech on the internet," says the white paper.

In another section, China reaffirms its determination to govern the internet within its borders according to its own rules.

"Within Chinese territory the internet is under the jurisdiction of Chinese sovereignty. The internet sovereignty of China should be respected and protected," it says.

It adds that foreign individuals and firms can use the internet in China, but they must abide by the country's laws.

---

Google recently pulled out of mainland China, saying it was no longer willing to accept government censorship. Its Chinese-language services are now based in Hong Kong.

The document also reveals just how fast the internet is developing in China. The government hopes that nearly half the population will have access to the internet within five years.

That figure is nearly 30% at the moment.

---

## **The Washington Post**

### **Labor unrest in China reflects changing demographics, more awareness of rights**

**By Keith B. Richburg**

**Monday, June 7, 2010; A10**

BEIJING -- China has been hit with a recent wave of labor unrest, including strikes and partial shutdowns of factories, underscoring what experts call one of the most dramatic effects of three decades of startling growth: A seemingly endless supply of cheap labor is drying up, and workers are no longer willing to endure sweatshop-like conditions.

China's export-driven growth has long been linked to its abundance of workers -- mostly migrants from the impoverished countryside who jumped at the chance to escape a hardscrabble rural life to toil long hours in factories for meager wages.

If they were unhappy, they rarely expressed it through action, and if they did, they were quickly fired and replaced from among the hundreds of others waiting outside the factory gates.

Now all of that has started to change.

Shifting demographics, including years of effective population control through the government's "one child" policy, have left China short of younger workers, particularly in the crucial 15-25 age group that many factories rely on most. These young workers don't have to travel far from home like their parents did to find work. They are more aware of their rights. And having grown up in a more prosperous China, they are demanding a fairer share.

---

"The first generation of migrant workers made a lot of money compared with their poor life before," said Cai He, dean of sociology at Sun Yat-sen University. "But right now the majority of migrant workers are in their 20s. They were born in the 1980s. Most of them have no farming experience" and "are more sensitive to the disparity between the wealth of the city and their own poverty."

Cai added: "The younger people received a better education. They surf the Internet, use mobile phones and watch TV. Their awareness of their rights is much stronger than the older migrant workers."

These young workers are asserting those rights in the form of work stoppages, slowdowns and demands for higher wages and shorter hours. The unrest was highlighted by a strike that began May 17 at Honda's transmission factory in the city of Foshan, where hundreds of workers walked off the job. The Japanese carmaker had to shut its four assembly plants in China.

Around the same time, the Taiwanese-owned Foxconn electronics plant in Shenzhen, which assembles Apple iPhones and iPads, was struck by 10 suicides among its workers and three suicide attempts, which labor activists blamed on the stress of long overtime hours.

Bus and taxi drivers also have staged strikes this year, affecting tens of thousands of passengers.

The recent cases -- particularly the Honda strike -- are also noteworthy for receiving extensive coverage in the Chinese media. While labor unrest has become increasingly common across China in the past two years, experts said, most incidents typically go unreported.

"We're having major problems with labor unrest right now," said Sunil Balani, a Hong Kong-based businessman who exports garments to Europe from Chinese factories. "Some of our factories are running 30, maybe 40 percent empty at times."

Although the Honda and Foxconn plants are in southern China, Balani said that most of the five plants he subcontracts are in the north and that "they're still facing the same problem," indicating widespread unrest .

In mid-2008, China introduced a labor law that allows workers with grievances to file complaints and opens a new mechanism for mediation. Publication of the law probably made workers more aware of their rights, experts said.

---

Since the law went into effect, the number of known complaints has doubled to about 700,000, and they "are going up even faster now," said Mary Gallagher of the University of Michigan, an expert on Chinese labor. Businessmen and academics predict that the wave of unrest would probably incre

ase, mainly because of China's shifting population trends.

"This is the thin end of a very long wedge," said Arthur Kroeber, managing director of GaveKal-Dragonomics, a research firm. He said the number of 15- to 24-year-olds in China is set to fall by one-third over the next dozen years, from 225 million today to 150 million in 2022.

Kroeber noted that as the number of young workers declines, the number of factories needing laborers has increased rapidly. "This is the beginning of a long process in which bargaining power is going to shift from the company to the workers," he said.

The labor unrest poses an acute challenge to China's ruling Communist Party and a dilemma for the All-China Federation of Trade Unions. That group, China's only officially sanctioned union, is supposed to represent workers but in practice has worked more as a partner with the government to enforce labor discipline and keep production high.

Zhang Jianguo, a top official with the federation, said the reason for the current unrest is the huge income disparity in China. He said the portion of the country's gross domestic product that has gone to wages has declined by almost 20 percent in the past two decades.

But some say China's official union is itself part of the problem. "The labor union should promote fairness in society instead of promoting economic development," said Lin Yanling, a professor at the China Institute of Industrial Relations. "But in China, the labor union doesn't do that."

\* Researcher Zhang Jie contributed to this report.

---

## **Security high for China's college entrance exams**

**© 2010 The Associated Press**

**June 6, 2010, 10:21PM**

---

BEIJING — Police, security guards and volunteers manned test venues Monday as high-stakes college entrance exams began across China following a string of deadly attacks on schoolchildren.

Seventeen youngsters were killed and more than 50 wounded in five major assaults in the last two months. They were unrelated and carried out by lone attackers, three of whom had histories of mental illness.

Tens of thousands of paramilitary police have been deployed across the country to enforce security during testing, China National Radio reported. At one middle school in Beijing, a half-dozen police guarded the front gate as hundreds of students and their parents milled outside waiting for the venue to open.

In southern China's Guangxi region, boarding school teachers will walk their students to the exam sites, the official Xinhua News Agency said. In Henan and Anhui provinces, emergency response teams were prepared for any disturbances, including those caused by bad weather, food poisoning or traffic accidents.

"All the relevant departments and local governments are fully prepared to respond to emergencies during the exam," Xinhua cited Liu Junyi, vice director of the exam center under the Ministry of Education, as saying.

The stepped-up security measures were in addition to routine restrictions put in place during the two-day exams, including rerouting traffic around test venues, ordering drivers not to blow their car horns and shutting down construction sites — all designed to minimize distractions to test-takers.

Each year, about 10 million high school seniors across China take the "gaokao," the exam that is the sole determinant for entry into university. About 68 percent of the test takers this year are expected get into a college.

---

**China's army launches media charm offensive**

**Agence France-Presse**

---

**First Posted 16:36:00 06/05/2010**

BEIJING—In his celebrated treatise "The Art of War", Chinese military strategist Sun Tzu warned against transparency.

Today, China's army is ignoring his advice and has launched a media charm offensive in the hope of calming fears over its growing power.

Western countries led by the United States and some of China's neighbors, including Japan, have regularly urged Beijing to show greater openness in defense matters, particularly in the light of its rapid military expansion.

The People's Liberation Army (PLA) -- which started as a communist rebel force, its ranks filled with barefoot peasants -- has invested heavily in weapons and equipment in recent years.

With almost 2.3 million people serving in the PLA's ranks, it is now almost certainly the world's largest employer.

In 2010 Beijing set its defense budget at 532 billion yuan (\$78 billion), but the figure is widely considered to be an under-estimation.

The Stockholm-based International Peace Research Institute said in a report released this week that China had likely spent 100 billion dollars on its military in 2009.

But the lack of clear data has cast doubt on China's aims and ambitions as it expands not only land, sea and air forces but also into space and cyberspace.

It has also shown a desire to develop a rapid reaction force to defend its economic interests and energy supply routes.

In an effort to convince the doubters of its good faith and wholly defensive intentions, the PLA -- more accustomed to unleashing its propaganda machine on the home front -- is now making a point of being open with foreigners.

In April the armed forces invited foreign journalists and military attaches to a presentation on its latest jet fighter, the J-10, at an airbase at Tianjin outside the capital Beijing.

---

Then in May, the army took French journalists on a press tour featuring talks with defence ministry officials, a presentation on China's anti-piracy mission off Somalia and a tour of select army units -- but no pictures allowed.

British reporters are next in line for an invitation.

Defence ministry spokesman Colonel Huang Xueping told the journalists that China was keen for its armed forces to have greater exchanges with troops from other countries.

"Based on the UN structure, we will participate more in peacekeeping forces and carry out more rescue and relief missions, we will provide more and more opportunities for the outside world to know the Chinese armed forces," he said.

At the sixth armored division in Beijing, soldiers could be seen simulating tank attacks -- some giving orders, others carrying them out on apparatuses similar to video game consoles.

Journalists were shown a dormitory with carefully arranged bunk beds and metal cupboards containing personal effects, but, apart from dozens of guides, there was not a soldier in sight.

Propaganda posters could be seen in the corridors.

During the tour, commanding officer Colonel Chen Xuewu brushed aside questions about equipment shortages.

"That's speculation, and I never comment on speculation," he said.

Analysts say the new charm offensive still falls far short of the kind of transparency sought by Western countries.

"There is some level of anxiety within the party leadership and foreign ministry that the PLA's building of a globally deployable military is being greeted with suspicion and fear," said Richard Fisher, a Chinese army expert at the International Assessment and Strategy Center, a US research institute.

Fisher said China needed to respond to key questions on its plans over the next 10 years for an aircraft carrier, amphibious assault ships, C-17 transport planes and nuclear warheads.

"They should be told that the world knows they are building all these things and that these questions will be asked by governments and press until they get answers," Fisher said.

---

Valerie Niquet, head of the Asia centre at the Foundation for Strategic Research in Paris, said: "The effectiveness of Beijing's communication strategy will always be greatly limited by the contradiction between the rhetoric, which is meant to be calming and responsible, and the action, which is much more aggressive."

---

**The New York Times**  
**May 31, 2010**

## **China Bans Court Evidence Gained Through Torture**

**By ANDREW JACOBS**

BEIJING — The top judicial and law enforcement bodies in China have issued new guidelines that seek to halt the use of torture in obtaining confessions or witness testimony, especially in death penalty cases.

The rules, announced Sunday, would nullify evidence gathered through violence or intimidation and give defendants the ability to challenge confessions presented during their trials.

The new regulations were issued weeks after the authorities conceded that the confession used to erroneously convict a farmer for a murder was based on torture. The case came to light only after the supposed victim turned up alive and the defendant had spent 10 years in prison. It has provoked national outrage.

"Judicial practice in recent years shows that slack and improper methods have been used to gather, examine and exclude evidence in various cases, especially those involving the death penalty," said a statement released by the central government.

Although such provisions are a basic feature of modern criminal codes, legal experts said it was the first time Chinese law has explicitly spelled out rules for the admissibility of prosecutorial evidence.

Confessions gained through torture are thought to be common in China, though rights advocates and defense lawyers say such mistreatment gains public notice only when a defendant dies in custody. In some recent cases, jailhouse deaths have spurred protests and alarmed the authorities, who are eager to maintain social stability.

In a rare admission of the problem, the Supreme People's Procuratorate, which carries out investigations and prosecutions, issued a report in 2003 acknowledging that what it characterized as forced confessions had led to the deaths of 460 people and serious injuries for 117 others.

The stakes are high in China, which puts to death more people than all other countries combined. The government does not release figures on executions, but Amnesty International estimates more than 1,700 last year.

Lawyers and legal scholars praised the new regulations, which are part of a larger package of legal reforms that have been in the works for years, but have been stalled by powerful interests within the country's public security apparatus.

"They have come just in time because the necessity is so great," said Zhang Xingshui, a defense lawyer. "It is a good cure for loopholes, because legal workers are often under so much pressure to get cases closed no matter what it takes."

Several lawyers said that they were curious to see the extent to which the regulations would be carried out, pointing out that China often fails to abide by its own rules and regulations.

The larger problem, legal experts say, is the disconnect between China's stated desire for the rule of law and the Communist Party's insistence that the judicial system serve the party.

When it comes to criminal justice, the Ministry of Public Security and Supreme People's Procuratorate are often averse to measures that might limit their powers. After a previous round of legal revisions in 2007, for example, prosecutors refused to allow lawyers to meet with clients accused of violating state-secrets laws, a hazy designation that is often used against dissidents.

Nicholas Bequelin, a researcher with Human Rights Watch in Hong Kong, called the new guidelines a welcome step, but said that they were weak medicine for an ailing criminal justice system.

"I think the government has abandoned any ambition of carrying out systemic reform and instead has adopted an approach where it aims at marginal procedural improvements," he said.

Cui Min, a professor at Chinese People's Public Security University, was somewhat more optimistic. One important element of the regulations, he noted, requires the police to testify in court if they are accused of using torture to extract a confession.

"This may be common practice for police in the West or in Hong Kong, but it is a new thing for Chinese policemen to testify in court," he said. "We have to cultivate a new mindset, one that accepts the idea of possibly setting free a criminal over wrongfully convicting an innocent man."

\* Zhang Jing contributed research.

---

**The Telegraph, UK**

**Chinese hiding three million babies a year**

**As many as three million Chinese babies are hidden by their parents every year in order to get around the country's one-child policy, a researcher has discovered.**

**By Malcolm Moore in Xiamen**

**Published: 11:59PM BST 30 May 2010**

"I am the biggest offender against the one-child policy in China!" laughed Fu Yang, a wiry and energetic 47-year-old man, as he fidgeted and poured tea. "I had seven daughters in just ten years."

Mr Fu and his rather more reserved wife are among the millions of Chinese parents who risk threats, fines and even imprisonment in order to defy the country's one-child policy. The couple, who now live a prosperous life in a small village outside the southern city of Xiamen, have had to flee across three provinces and hide their children with friends in the past.

"There were some difficult times," Mr Fu conceded. "We were chased around and we had to live like beggars. But I never thought about doing otherwise. I'm aware that many people do not want their daughters, but we have a decent respect for life. In China, we think that when you have a child it is like dropping a piece of your own body from you, and we never considered the other options," he said.

Since 1978, China's government has limited each couple to one child in a bid to stem the growth of the world's largest population. To police the law, neighbourhood committees keep a close eye out for any pregnancies, and Family Planning officials have the power to force women to have abortions and sterilisations, as well as to monitor their contraception.

The policy does not apply to everyone. In the countryside, parents are allowed to try for a second child if their first is a girl. Couples who are both single children themselves are also allowed to have two children. A growing number of rich Chinese also pay fines in order to have a second child.

But for parents who do not comply with the law, the penalties can be harsh. Workers in state-owned companies can lose their jobs. Others face huge fines, the possible demolition of their homes, or even a prison term.

"When they eventually found out I had seven daughters, they tried to tear down our house, but fortunately I have good connections: my uncle is the head of the village," said Mr Fu. "They also wanted to fine me 600,000 yuan (£60,000). But I refused to pay them. Eventually they knocked down just a small part of my old house and I paid them 2,000 yuan," he added.

Mr Fu said that he knew several other people in his village who also had more than one child and that he had already encouraged his eldest daughter, who has recently born him a grandson, to continue to procreate. "I told her: no matter what the cost, she should have more kids," he said.

In millions of other cases, families are also prepared to take the risk and break the law, according to research by Liang Zhongtang, a demographer and former member of the expert committee of China's National Population and Family Planning Commission.

Examining China's census figures, Mr Liang came across discrepancies that proved the subterfuge. "In 1990, the national census recorded 23 million births. But by the 2000 census, there were 26 million ten-year-old children, an increase of three million," he said. "Normally, you would expect there to be fewer ten-year-olds than newborns, because of infant mortality," he added.

His findings suggest that the one-child policy may not have the grim consequences that have been widely predicted. According to China's own figures, the traditional desire among Chinese families to have a boy, coupled with the one-child regime, should produce a surfeit of 30 million men by 2020, with many parents allegedly using ultrasound to guarantee the sex of their child.

Policymakers have warned that these millions of frustrated men, who would be unable to find wives, could wreak havoc on Chinese society, leading to a steep rise in prostitution and violence.

However, Mr Liang said the imbalance was "definitely not as severe as the statistics suggest". Instead of aborting female foetuses, Mr Liang's research suggests that the families have the girls, but do not declare them.

"What happens is that the unplanned baby girls usually do not get registered with the authorities when they are born. The families wait until they are six or seven and by then, the local governments tend not to care as much," he added.

"As soon as each of our daughters had finished breast-feeding, we sent her out to live with a friend or a relative," said Mr Fu. "They went to school, but without the proper papers," he added. "At the time, the family planning authorities were being very strict and they were arresting people if they went over the limit," he said.

"But in Guangdong, I had a friend who was a gangster. We went together to the hospital and forced a doctor to issue my wife a certificate saying she had been sterilised. That way, when the authorities came around, we could show them our documents. They had to be real though, because the officials often cross-checked to make sure."

Existing in a grey area of Chinese law does not seem to have damaged the prospects for Mr Fu's children. Three of his eldest five daughters are even Communist party members, while the other two remain in school. One daughter is studying a postgraduate law degree in Beijing while another is likely to take over from him as the head of the family business.

---

End