



# GOVERNING CHINA IN THE NEW ERA

LI JUNRU

CHINESE WISDOM AND SOLUTIONS  
UNDERSTANDING CHINA



China International  
Publishing Group  
中国国际出版集团



FOREIGN LANGUAGES PRESS

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Where have we come from, and where are we going? In this day and age for China, I am always reminding myself to maintain this sense of history.

– Xi Jinping

From Xi's speech when meeting with foreign attendees of the Second Understanding China Conference in Beijing, *People's Daily*, January 5, 2016

# UNDERSTANDING CHINA

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## PREFACE TO THE “UNDERSTANDING CHINA” SERIES

Zheng Bijian

This series of books covers the topic: Understanding China.

But why is “Understanding China” an important question?

At present, the world around us is going through unprecedented changes and nowhere more so is that the case than in China.

Since the founding of the People’s Republic of China in the mid-20th century, and particularly over the past 40 years, a poor and backward country in East Asia with a population of over 1.3 billion has achieved incredible growth to become the world’s second largest economy.

It is therefore natural that people should ask: What exactly is going on in China, and what is the secret behind such rapid development?

It is also entirely natural for people to wonder: How can a rising China get along with the rest of the world?

As a result, misgivings about the country abound. All kinds of theories such as the “China threat”, the “Collapsing of China”, the “Thucydides’s Trap” and the “middle income trap” have been directed toward China.

There is no doubt that China should unflinchingly follow its own path and deal with its own matters well. That in itself means that in order to respond to people’s concerns, questions and misgivings, one thing must be done – Understand China.



It was precisely for this reason that the China Institute for Innovation & Development Strategy (CIIDS), which I co-founded, joined together with the Chinese People's Institute of Foreign Affairs (CPIFA) and the world-renowned 21st Century Council think tank to hold two Understanding China conferences in 2013 and 2015.

These two important international meetings received the close attention and support of the General Secretary of the CPC and President of China, Xi Jinping, who personally attended and held informal discussions with distinguished overseas participants; and Premier of the State Council Li Keqiang and Vice Premier Zhang Gaoli, who gave the opening speeches at the first and second conferences respectively. Top leaders of departments in the Central Committee of the CPC and State Council also participated alongside senior political figures, experts and scholars from all over the world to undertake face-to-face meetings and answer questions.

The main lesson from the conferences was that confronting questions head-on, being sincere, seeking the truth from facts, and telling the stories of China, the CPC and China's relations with the world, in lively and detailed ways, greatly helps those who care about China to gain new knowledge, and gradually allays the misgivings of those who are uncertain about China.

To achieve this goal we are moving the "Understanding China" international conference to books, videos and online, in order to respond to people's concerns, questions and misgivings on a bigger scale and in more lively forms.

This series has not only received the enthusiastic support of relevant government departments, China International Publishing Group and the Foreign Languages Press, but also the full backing of experienced practitioners, experts and scholars, as well as government leaders.

This is the first set of books in the series. Whilst these are concerned

mainly with the works of Chinese writers, future books will also feature writers from other countries.

This is also not simply a collection of books – it will be accompanied by television specials and online videos for people to enjoy.

In our opinion, “Understanding China”, including “Understanding the CPC” and “Understanding China’s Relations with the World” are all grand undertakings.

Let us passionately follow and participate in these undertakings together.

March 2018

## **Foreword**

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To better understand the past history of China, one also needs to understand China's modern day history, especially the modern China of President Xi Jinping's era.

I recall a time at the beginning of September 2016. I was a consultant for China International Culture Exchange Center (CICEC); I was leading a team of visitors to Kazakhstan and Turkey. My purpose during the visit was to research how to promote cultural exchanges and mutual understanding between China and other countries involved in the Belt and Road Initiative while building the Silk Road Economic Belt. During our interviews and discussions, we noted that most people, except for scholars in the related fields (such as orientalist scholars), had little knowledge about or interest in the history value of cultural exchanges between China and the Central and Western Asian regions. What they were interested in was today's China. "Today's China" refers to China since its reform and opening up in 1978, especially China under the leadership of Xi Jinping. Topics of interest included the differences between today's China and the China of Mao Zedong's era, especially what China's market economy is like, why China is developing so rapidly, whether China's polarization is as severe as Western media has reported, why corruption is breeding in China and whether Xi Jinping is capable of finding a solution.

People living outside China want to have a clearer picture of what changes China is going through, to know whether China's development will bring them tangible benefits. People living inside China, who are experiencing first-hand changes on their wellbeing, also want to understand in-depth why these changes are occurring in China.

Domestic and international interest in contemporary China concentrates on two issues. The first one is the question "what": what changes have taken place in today's China and how to evaluate these changes. The second one is the question of "why": why tremendous changes have occurred in today's China, what experience has been gained, what the problems are facing China, and what the cause of these problems is. These former questions touch on the history of China, and they relate to comprehensive issues in today's China including economy, politics, culture, technology, education, society, environment, and national defense. The latter questions focus on the leadership of the Communist Party of China (CPC), the ruling political party in China, to be more specific today, the leadership of the CPC Central Committee with Xi Jinping as its core.

Overseas publications have already delivered research and elaborations on China of Xi Jinping's era. For example, Yuri Tavrovsky, a professor of the People's Friendship University of Russia and political commentator, is frequently asked "Who is Xi Jinping?" when giving lectures or being interviewed by the media. Consequently, he published articles in several major Russian newspapers and magazines to introduce Xi's life and his thought on state governance. In May 2015, as a token of appreciation for President Xi Jinping's attending the Commemoration of 70th Anniversary of Victory of World Anti-Fascist War held in Russia, Tavrovsky published *Xi Jinping: Step Forward Along with the Chinese Dream* with Eksmo in Moscow. For the first time, the book systematically introduced to the Russian people Xi's life while growing up, his family environment, and the historical background of his introduction of the Chinese Dream,

and highly valued his policies for realizing the Chinese Dream. And the readers have warmly received the book.

In August 2015, *The Xi Jinping Era: His Comprehensive Strategy Toward the China Dream* published by CN Times Books Inc. was well received by American readers. Its English edition has reached a sales volume of more than 100,000 copies. The book topped the Amazon Bestsellers Rank on Chinese history and ranked second among the bestsellers on global leadership and third among those on Asian politics. The book is the best-selling Chinese copyrighted book in the US in recent years. The editor-in-chief of the book is James C. Hsiung, a professor of New York University, and an expert on international politics and international law. The book covers Xi Jinping's political experiences and his governing philosophy, including the Chinese Dream and the Four-pronged Strategy<sup>1</sup>. Additionally, the book gives direct responses to the China Threat Theory and the China Collapse Theory.

During the G20 Hangzhou Summit in September 2016, the *New York Times* published a full-page colored advertisement, congratulating the convening of the G20 Hangzhou Summit and the ninth Xi-Obama Summit. The advertisement also promoted two English books: *Xi Jinping's China Renaissance: Historical Mission and Great Power Strategy* and *Great Power Leader Xi Jinping: International Perspectives on China's Leader* published by CN Times Books Inc.. The editor-in-chief of the two books is Ross Terrill, a research associate at Fairbank Center for Chinese Studies of Harvard University, a scholar of public policies at Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, and the writer of *Mao: A Biography*. The books were co-written by experts from China and the US. Using historical vision and global perspectives, the two books, for the first time, introduced and analyzed in detail Xi Jinping's historical missions and strategic

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<sup>1</sup> Four-pronged Strategy: make comprehensive moves to complete a moderately prosperous society in all respects, further reform, advance the rule of law, and strengthen Party discipline.

plan, namely: improving the governance of the CPC, the governance of China and global governance; avoiding the Middle Income Trap and the Thucydides Trap; and hence, revitalizing the Chinese nation, a great leap from a developing country to a developed country. At the same time, the book analyzed in depth two big topics – China’s developmental trends in the next 30 years under the leadership of President Xi Jinping and how China is going to interact with the world.

In March 2016, CITIC Publishing Group published the following books: *When China Rules the World: The End of the Western World and the Birth of a New Global Order* by Martin Jacques, a visiting senior research associate at London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE). The book highly values Xi Jinping’s historical contribution, which is re-awakening Chinese people’s power of dreams, empowering a sense of future for the whole nation, and providing greater clarity of the future shape of China.

So, what is China’s domestic situation? A concept has been frequently appearing in the Chinese mainstream media and the CPC’s documents – governance of China, to be specific, new ideas, new thinking, and new strategies on governance since the CPC’s 18th National Congress in 2012.

Many domestic newspapers in 2016 included columns focusing especially on the practice of and new philosophy on the governance of China. Since the CPC’s 18th National Congress in 2012, relevant departments of the CPC Central Committee have organized study sessions of General Secretary Xi Jinping’s speeches. On February 28, 2016, the General Office of the CPC Central Committee issued an education campaign plan, requiring all Party members to have a solid understanding of the Party Constitution, Party regulations, and related major policy addresses and to meet Party standards. According to the plan, the study of Xi’s speeches focuses on his new philosophy of governing China. As the study plan proposed, “CPC members should be armed with theories

so as to unite them in their ideology and actions; should study General Secretary Xi Jinping's thoughts on reform, development, and stability, domestic and foreign affairs, national defense, and the governance of the CPC, the country, and the military; should study the new ideas, new thinking, and new strategies on governing China initiated by the CPC Central Committee led by Xi Jinping; and should understand the underlying principles, Marxist standpoint, viewpoints, and approaches in Xi's speeches."<sup>2</sup>

In the Speech at the Celebration of the 95th Anniversary of the Founding of the Communist Party of China, Xi Jinping said, "The entire Party must thoroughly study Marxism-Leninism, Mao Zedong Thought, Deng Xiaoping Theory, the Three Represents, and the Scientific Outlook on Development. It must also study the new ideas, thoughts, and strategies in state governance introduced by the CPC Central Committee since the CPC's 18th National Congress, in order to raise its awareness and understanding of Marxist theories and maintain its clear perception and dedicated pursuit of our great ideals and goals."<sup>3</sup>

The Communiqué of the Sixth Plenary Session of the 18th CPC Central Committee, adopted on October 27, 2016, assessed the annual work of the Political Bureau of the 18th CPC Central Committee, saying: "The Political Bureau has continued to hold high the great banner of socialism with Chinese characteristics; take Marxism-Leninism, Mao Zedong Thought, Deng Xiaoping Theory, the Theory of Three Represents, and the Scientific Outlook on Development as its guide; and fully implement the guiding principles of both the 18th National Congress and the third, fourth, and fifth plenary sessions of the 18th Central Committee,

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<sup>2</sup> *China Daily*, February 28, 2016.

<sup>3</sup> Xi Jinping: "Speech at a Ceremony Marking the 95th Anniversary of the Founding of the Communist Party of China", accessed September 14, 2017, [http://english.qstheory.cn/2016-12/20/c\\_1120042032.htm](http://english.qstheory.cn/2016-12/20/c_1120042032.htm)

as well as the guiding principles from General Secretary Xi Jinping's policy addresses and his new concepts, thoughts, and strategies for governing the country. In line with the trend of the times and the demands of practice, the Political Bureau has united and led all Party members and all the people of China in a joint effort to work hard and in a practical manner."

From all these examples, we have noticed that domestic attention on the CPC Central Committee led by Xi Jinping has shifted from practice to ideology, focusing more and more on the new philosophy of governing China.

In November 2017, shortly after the CPC's 19th National Congress, *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China* (Vol. II), co-edited by the Publicity Department of the CPC Central Committee, Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee, and China International Publishing Group (CIPG), was published by Foreign Languages Press (FLP). The second volume of this book epitomizes Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era and its development, following the publication the first volume in October 2014.

Notice on Organizing the Study of *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China* (Vol. II), issued by the Publicity Department and Organizational Department of the CPC Central Committee, pointed out: "Since the CPC's 18th National Congress in 2012, the CPC Central Committee led by Xi Jinping has united the Chinese people of all ethnic groups and led them to promote historical reform and achieve historical achievements. Socialism with Chinese characteristics has entered a new era. In the new practice of governing China, the CPC members, with Xi Jinping as the most important representative, have followed the trend of times, and answered systematically the questions – what is socialism with Chinese characteristics and how to uphold and develop Chinese socialism in the current era – by combining theory and practice, and established Xi Jin-



ping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era.”<sup>4</sup> From this we can see that his thought originates from the new practice of governing China.

So, what are the creations of the governance in Xi Jinping’s era? This book is the answer to this question.

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<sup>4</sup> *People’s Daily*, November 23, 2017.