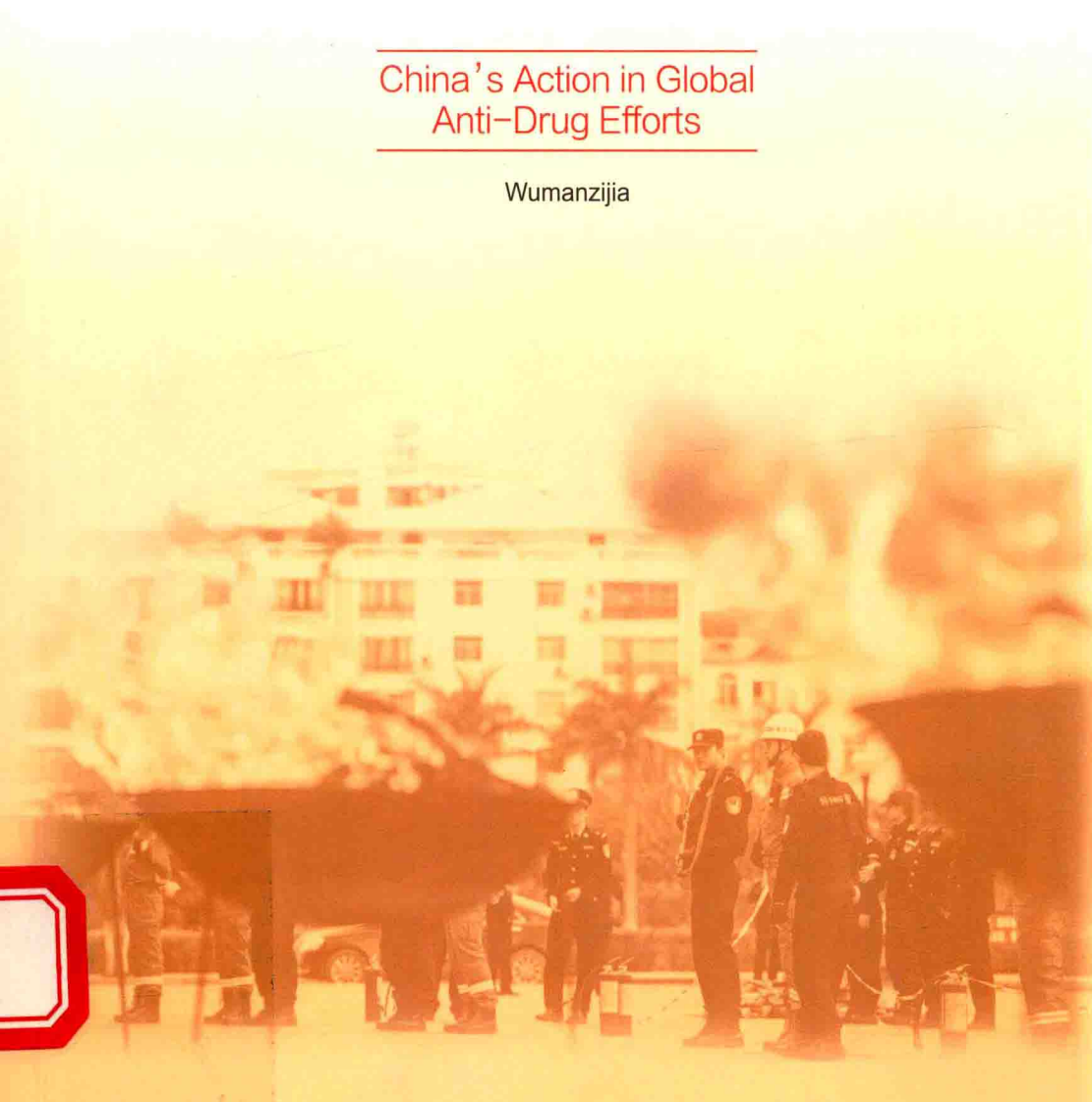


UPROOTING POPPY FLOWERS

China's Action in Global
Anti-Drug Efforts

Wumanzija



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by Wumanzijia



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Introduction





• Poppy flowers in early puberty

Many people believed this legend of the past: When someone grew poppy flowers, he would tie a young couple in love together. As the two reached orgasm, he would pierce their hearts with a blade, so that drops of blood could pour over the poppy flowers. When the flowers were in blossom, the fragrant smell drifted through the sky, and the juice of poppy seeds slowly flowed like water to intoxicate the world.

The above could be a tale made up by drug addicts, without whom such a tale would not go down to the later generations.

Today, however, Chinese people are aware of the blossoming poppy flowers

• A sea of poppy flowers





• A drug control exhibition held in Beijing in June–July 1998

beyond their nation's borders. They are extremely reluctant to have their country taken over by drugs. According to data released by the National Narcotics Control Commission (NNCC) in early 2002, there had been 860,000 drug addicts on record, of whom 80 percent were youths. By the end of 2014, the number had skyrocketed to 2.96 million, in addition to a great number of hidden users. The NNCC said the actual total number is far higher than the given figure.

Since the 1980s, drug abuse has been increasingly rampant across the world, which has brought not only direct damage to the body and mind of the people, but has also threatened economic and social development. Indeed, the use of drugs is seen as a global catastrophe, as no country or region in the world can get rid of its afflictions. Hence, drug control has become an important task facing humanity.

From June to July, 1998, the NNCC held in Beijing an exhibition entitled "Cherish Your Life, Stay Away From Drugs". Top Chinese leaders Jiang Zemin, Li Peng, Zhu Rongji, Li Ruihuan, Hu Jintao, Wei Jianxing, and Li Lanqing, visited the exhibition, along with over 1.66 million viewers. The Chinese leaders spoke highly of the exhibition. Jiang Zemin, then Chinese President, wrote an inscription, "Banning drugs calls for painstaking effort at the moment, but brings benefits to future generations." Then Vice President Hu Jintao said, "This exhibition boasts both profound historical



• Nansan Town of Yunan Province

and far-reaching practical significance, for it's not just an exhibition, but more like a lesson in life." The Vice-President also had a group photo taken with me, one of the major exhibition planners, and my colleagues.

The exhibition has set six records: the longest in history in terms of duration (two months), boasting the most number of visitors (over 1.66 million), with the greatest educational significance, the greatest artistic value, the most comprehensive and informative exhibition ever in the field, and having been viewed by the nation's top leaders. During those two months, my colleagues and I spent every minute in excitement. Even today, recalling it makes me feel the greatest strength in myself. So, when I returned to Yunan from Beijing at the close of the exhibition, I volunteered to be the acting head of the Nansan Entry Port in Xikang County, Yunan Province, bordering the "Golden Triangle" of northern Myanmar. There, we waged life-and-death struggles with my men and officers, and by the year end, we had solved altogether 21 drug trafficking cases, capturing 47 traffickers and nearly 1 ton of drugs. Three of our men received second-class merit citations, nine got third-class citations, and 28 others gained commendation honors. Seeing them wearing flashing medals, I felt so happy and proud.

On December 5, 2010, International Volunteers Day, I wrote a poem, *Cherish Your Life, Stay away from Drugs*, which was then composed into a song by noted music producer, Qingshan, grandson of Nie Er (1912-35), a well-known Chinese composer, and was sung by Han Xiao, an anti-drug volunteer, at his solo concert in Beijing. The song soon became a hit across the nation.

During the business hours of public recreational outlets, such as dance halls, KTV clubs and bars, this song will always be played as recommended by the NNCC if no customer selects any particular song to listen to. Listening to the song, I'd feel as if I had gone back to those major drug rehabilitation centers that I had visited, where drug rehabilitators marched in ranks and sang it in unison. Amid the warm, hopeful and appealing melody reverberating under the blue sky and white clouds, I'd feel as if they had all displayed in their eyes a resolute farewell to the past and also an earnest longing for a bright future. I'd feel as if regretful tears had welled out from their eyes to clean up their minds...I'd feel as if I had clearly heard the singing of community residents and volunteers in choruses, all exhibiting a firm determination to face up to any difficulties and make a full responsible commitment. I'd feel as if an iron chain had been forged by so many clenched, strong hands to guard against drugs. And amid the same melody, I'd feel as if I also had seen numerous anti-drug enforcement officers fight hardships, make sacrifices, and endeavor to fulfill their mission with a silent oath and blood.

In June, 2000, the Information Office of China's State Council, the nation's

• The entry port of Nansan, Yunan Province



cabinet, published a whitepaper, *The Narcotic Control in China*, stating “The Chinese government held that drug abuse is the global hazard faced by all mankind and that drug control is the most urgent responsibility of the international community as drugs not only threaten people's health and cause crime and corruption, but also disrupt sustainable development and jeopardize state security and world peace. Hence all activities related to drugs must be strictly banned.” Now, 14 years after the government statement, China, as the world's most populous nation, still makes major contributions to the anti-drug cause by carrying out its enforcement at home in cooperation with the international community.

Anti-drug enforcement is a glorious and sacred cause that calls for painstaking endeavor right now, but benefits people in the future. Thus it's the shared responsibility of the public at large. Under the firm leadership of the Chinese central government, the country's anti-drug departments have in recent years made notable accomplishments on the basis of a dedicated people's war against drug abuse and trafficking.

During the past few years, I have taken a lengthy and hard road along the borders holding a gun in one hand and a pen in the other hand. I was not alone, but

* Han Xiao sings the song, *Cherish Your Life, Stay away from Drugs*, in Beijing





• A senior official meeting for the signing of the MOU on drug control in the East Asian sub-region in Beijing in 2014

with my fellow colleagues in the public security frontier troops. While on patrol over the mountains and by the rough sea, we together sang an ode to our lofty mission. In the meantime, I also listened to their touching enforcement stories and wrote down their successful reports, one after another, on the frontlines.

The author

June 2014

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The deteriorating drug issue has become a global disaster. Drug trafficking and drug taking have induced various crimes, including theft, robbery, prostitution and violent offenses, which have severely disrupted social order. According to statistics from the Narcotics Control Bureau of the Ministry of Public Security (MPS), by the end of 2014, there had been 2.96 million registered drug addicts in China with a large number of drug users still unconfirmed.



Chapter 1 Drugs Going Rampant

A conversation between a father and his son heard by the author in a border city in Yunnan go as follows.

Looking at his son's awful transcript, the father angrily asked, "Why so lame?"

Surprisingly, the son argued in a bold tone, "Don't be mad on me! I've already made good showing for you! I couldn't score high in the exams, but I haven't taken in any 'No.4'."

The father then said nothing.

The locals called heroin "No.4."

Heroin is classified as "No.2," "No.3" and "No.4" by degrees of purity. In some border areas in Yunnan, southwest China, local people generally refer to heroin as "No.4" and those taking heroin as "No.4-guests." Most of the "No.4-guests" are adolescents, especially boys. When a baby was born, friends and relatives all came to congratulate the young parents and asked whether they had a boy or a girl. Seemingly unhappy, the father said, "a little 'No.4-guest'." He intended to tell people he had mixed feelings—both happiness and worries—to have a baby son, for a boy it is possible he might become a "No.4-guest" when he becomes an adult. It would be regretful to have given birth to him then.

In such circumstances, many parents managed to send their young children to live with relatives in inland China. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, parents did this

• Summertime in Kunming, Yunnan Province





• Heroin weighing 7,681.24 grams is seized in a major drug-trafficking case in Yunnan Province on March 16, 2014

to offer their children quality education; while after the 1980s, it was to keep them away from drug addiction.

As a native of Yunnan, the author has endured misery and pain about the harm drugs can cause, having seen numerous children afflicted by drug use and parents running out of tears. In the small village called Baishui in west Yunnan, almost all the 30 households have some family members who have been imprisoned or sentenced to death due to drug-related crimes. Therefore, the village has been nicknamed a “widow village.”

It is no surprise to see people look frightened when talking about drugs, which could cause horrifying misery.

A 27-year-old man surnamed Wu once lived in Beimen Street, Kunming, capital of Yunnan. A few years ago, he asked for unpaid leave and started a furniture business. Later he made a fortune, owning a 60,000 to 70,000-yuan (\$11,475) bank deposit, 20,000-yuan (\$3,279) cash in hand, as well as two imported Suruki motorcycles and home appliances such as a color TV set, video camera, radio cassette and wash machine. Unfortunately, one year after he became a drug addict, Wu lost everything. His wife had to divorce him since she failed to dissuade him from using drugs even though she tried very hard. Since Wu was insistent on keeping their daughter with him, his wife left him 3,200 yuan (\$525) for her allowance. But before long Wu spent the money on drugs and became broke.

Once his daughter was ill, his mother gave him 10 yuan (\$1.64) for medical expenses. But instead of going to hospital, Wu took the girl to a drug dealer and bought heroin with the 10 yuan. Worse still, he later sold his daughter for 500 yuan (\$82)



▲ Statistics show 151,000 drug-related cases were cracked and 44 tons of drugs were seized in China in 2013

▼ A drug-taking retreat is eliminated in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region

