

Experiments for Democracy during the Culture Revolution in China

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Abstract: The democratic system based on political consultation and the people's congress in PRC belongs to the category of indirect democracy, in which the key is to guarantee those in power represent the public's interests. The Cultural Revolution was an attempt for this purpose and gave Chinese people a chance to experience some practices of mass democracy, including the democratic supervision in the form of mass criticism, the democratic governance in the form of rebellion and usurping, and the democratic participation in the form of Trinity. However, the Culture Revolution became a national disaster. With lessons learned, the Chinese leadership recognized the importance of the rule of law.

Keywords: democracy, culture revolution, rule of law

Introduction

The People's Republic of China (PRC) established a democratic system based on political consultation and the people's congress when it was founded in 1949. The first plenary session of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) was held in Beijing in September 1949. The first general election took place in China in 1953. The top-down election created local people's congresses at each level, including township level, county level, municipal level, and provincial level. In 1954, as a result of indirect election, the first National People's Congress (NPC) had its maiden session in Beijing, marking the country-wide rollout of the people's congress system.²

According to the constitution of the PRC, China is a people-centered country. Article 2 of the Constitution clearly stipulates: "All power in the People's Republic of China belongs to the people."³ The Chinese people are familiar with such statements that the

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2 Yu Keping (Editor in Chief), *China: Modernizing State Governance*, 2018, p.8-17

3 *The Constitution of the People's Republic of China*, 2012, p.77.

people are masters of the country, while the officials are public servants. In other words, the people are masters of government officials.

China is a country with a vast territory and a large population, and significant regional imbalances and differences make it difficult to apply a direct democracy model throughout. A political system with people's congresses at its core, supported by multi-party cooperation and political consultation under the leadership of the CPC, falls under the indirect democracy category. The key and also the challenge of realizing democracy lies in appropriate representation; that is, how to make sure those in power represent the public's interests. Generally speaking, there are two guarantees for this purpose. The first is ex-ante guarantee; that is, a democratic election that is run to select deputies who are trusted by the people to decide on state affairs. The second is ex-post guarantee, or democratic supervision that enables the people to check whether the decisions made by the deputies are in the people's best interests.

The leadership of the Communist Party of China (CPC) has attached great importance to democratic supervision by the people. Article 3 of the Constitution reads "All administrative, judicial, and procuratorial organs of the state are created by the people's congresses to which they are responsible and under whose supervision they operate."⁴ For this purpose, several channels of democratic supervision have been put in place in China, including supervision by democratic parties⁵(democratic supervision in a narrow sense), supervision by social groups, supervision by individual citizens, and supervision by the media and the press. However, these channels of supervision do not always work properly owing to the absence of an effective supporting system. As such, democratic supervision somehow belies its name.

Following the founding of the PRC, the top leadership group led by Mao Zedong kept their promise that "the people are masters of the country" and requested all officials at every level of government to be down-to-earth, to do research and investigation, to widely listen to and base decisions on public opinions, and to stick to the route of "coming from and going into the mass." Mao Zedong also emphasized ideological education and requested that all officials keep in mind that they are "public servants" and must "serve the people heart and soul." However, the check of the power and the control of the officials has long-standing challenges to human society. Faced with resurging bureaucracy and other growing evils, Mao Zedong tried to tighten public

4 *Constitution of the People's Republic of China*, 2012, p.7.

5 Besides CPC, there are eight political parties, considered as democratic parties, in China.

supervision by means of mass movements, and finally launched “the unprecedented Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution” in 1966.

At that time, Mao Zedong believed that revisionism was rising in the central organ of the Party, and that the Party and the country were threatened by the restoration of capitalism. He believed that unswerving actions must be taken to mobilize the masses in an open, widespread, and bottom-up manner to uncover the ugly fact of life of the party and the country and recapture the power usurped by capitalists. An enlarged session of the Political Bureau held in May 1966 and the Eleventh Plenary Session of the Eighth CPC Central Committee held in August of the same year kickstarted the full-scale Cultural Revolution. *Notice from the CPC Central Committee* (or The May 16th Notice) was issued at the former session, and *Decision of the CPC Central Committee on the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution* (or the Sixteen Rules) at the latter. And the central governing body was revamped.⁶ In a sense, the Cultural Revolution was an attempt at achieving socialist democracy and gave Chinese people a chance to experience some practices of mass democracy.

Democratic Supervision in the Form of Mass Criticism

The Cultural Revolution started with mass criticism, and mass criticism prevailed with the use of big-character posters. By big-character posters, we mean wall posters written in big characters. Anyone could write such a poster and put it up on any wall in a public space. That was one way the public could express themselves. It had existed back in the 1950s but did not last long. On 25 May 1966, Nie Yuanzi, General Secretary of the CPC Committee of the Department of Philosophy, Peking University, together with six other faculty members, wrote a poster criticizing heads of the university. The poster, titled “*What have Song Shuo, Lu Ping and Peng Peiyun done during the Cultural Revolution?*”, was put up in the university canteen and caused a stir. Mao Zedong admired their move and called it “the country’s first Marxist-Leninist poster.” On 1 June, China National Radio aired the full text of the poster to audiences across the country. On 2 June, Kang Sheng, then advisor to the Central Taskforce for Cultural Revolution, visited Peking University, giving support to Nie Yuanzi and praising the poster, saying it was “a declaration comparable to that by the Paris Commune.” After that, many teachers and students at universities and middle schools produced posters condemning their leaders. The Cultural Revolution spread unchecked. Then in charge of the front line of the work of the central government, Liu Shaoqi convened a central

⁶ ‘Cultural Revolution’ entry at Baidu Encyclopedia, <https://baike.baidu.com/item/%E6%96%87%E5%8C%96%E5%A4%A7%E9%9D%A9%E5%91%BD/117740?fr=aladdin> [visited on January 7, 2018].

meeting and decided to dispatch task forces to universities and middle schools that were taking leadership of the Cultural Revolution in an effort to rein in the mass revolutionary fever catalyzed by the big-character posters. According to statistics from 24 universities and colleges in Beijing, these task forces accused 10,211 students of being righty, and 2,591 teachers of being counter-revolutionary. Mao Zedong was upset by these task forces and ordered them to be dismissed. In fact, he wrote a poster in person during the Eleventh Plenary Session of the Eighth CPC Central Committee, which was published on *The People's Daily* dated 5 August 1966 under the title “*Bomb the Headquarters (A Poster by Me)*.” The full text is shown below:

Bomb the Headquarters (A Poster by Me)

The country's first Marxist-Leninist poster and the review by the commentator at *The People's Daily* were very well written! Please read the poster and the review again. However, over more than 50 days, some comrades, from the central to local levels, did exactly the opposite, took the capitalist side, practiced dictatorship of bourgeoisie trying to suppress the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. They actually confounded right and wrong, turned things upside down, encircled and annihilated revolutionists, suppressed different voices, and created a white terror. And they are complacent about doing this, boosting up the capitalist class and demoralizing the proletariat. How evil they are! It reminds me of the right-wing inclination in 1962 and the seemingly left-wing but actually right-wing inclination in 1964. Isn't it thought-provoking?

By Mao Zedong

On 5 August 1966.⁷

The mass criticism movement in the form of big-character posters could have served as democratic supervision of the officials. Those posters were composed mainly for two purposes: disclosing and criticizing. The former could satisfy the public's need to know, while the latter satisfied the need to speak. The action was indeed instrumental in public supervision of the officials. In that social environment, abuse of power and corruption were rarely seen among officials. That said, there was no control over how those posters were written and where they were placed. As a result, some people could easily use this tool for rumor-mongering, disgracing, and frame-up purposes, while others could deliberately misinterpret the text and lodge groundless and exaggerated charges. During

⁷ ‘*Bomb the Headquarters (A Poster By Me)*’ entry at Baidu Encyclopedia, <https://baike.baidu.com/item/炮打司令部——我的一张大字报> [visited on March 2, 2018].

the Cultural Revolution, the abuse of posters created numerous wrong and unjust cases and stirred up social turmoil.

Democratic Governance in the Form of Rebellion and Usurping

On 1 June 1966, The People's Daily published an editorial titled "*Wipe out all monsters and demons,*" blowing the horn for the Cultural Revolution. Then, some college and middle school students in Beijing spontaneously formed Red Guard groups and attacked "capitalists in power" in all organizations and entities in a violent revolution. On 18 August, Mao Zedong met representatives of the Red Guards at Tiananmen and gave an affirmative nod to their act of violent revolution. Henceforth, campus violence escalated quickly and spread on a mass scale. Red Guards went to the streets and stormed into neighborhoods, claiming to mop up "landowners, rich peasants, counter-revolutionists, bad elements and righties." A horrible Red August ensued. Suddenly, bloody violence became the keynote of the Cultural Revolution.

With the encouragement or tacit consent of the state leaders, college and middle school students across the country put together numerous Red Guard groups and workers formed rebellious gangs. These mass groups that were formed spontaneously soon took over the leadership of their organizations. The struggle for power escalated, even to the provincial government level. On 6 January 1967, 32 rebellious gangs in Shanghai aligned and seized the power of the party and the government, whipping up the so-called January Storm. Numerous rebellious gangs in other provinces, municipalities, and autonomous regions followed suit and formed "Revolutionary Committees" to take power by force.⁸ That seemed to be the democratic model of ruling by the masses.

Meanwhile, different Red Guard groups and rebellious gangs fought against each other for power and even resorted to violence. After Jiang Qing, among others, put forward the slogan, "Attack verbally but defend by force," violence among mass groups continued to spread and escalate. Large-scale violence and armed confrontation happened in some regions. In an environment full of violence, it was not uncommon to see youngsters engaging in gang fights and robbery. Citizens in many places felt unsafe.⁹ With "the Red Glory sweeping the country," many government organs were shut

8 'Cultural Revolution' entry at Baidu Encyclopedia, <https://baike.baidu.com/item/%E6%96%87%E5%8C%96%E5%A4%A7%E9%9D%A9%E5%91%BD/117740?fr=aladdin> [visited on January 7, 2018].

9 I was a timid middle school student and stayed out of fight, but once my waist was stabbed and my cap was taken away.

down totally or partially; society was in turmoil, and mass democracy degraded into a country-wide unrest.

Democratic Participation in the Form of Trinity

The cabinet decided to have military officers suppress the social turmoil created by the rebellious gangs. On 23 January 1967, the CPC Central Committee, the State Council, the Central Military Commission, and the Central Taskforce for Cultural Revolution released the Decision on Unswerving Support to the Left-wing People from the People's Liberation Army, requesting the People's Liberation Army (PLA) to send officers to "support the fight of the mass left-wing people for power locally." Thus, the pro-left-wing officers of the PLA became members of local Revolutionary Committees. This contingency measure led to the Trinity model of democratic participation in politics.

On 25 January, The People's Daily carried an editorial titled, "*The Victory of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in Shanxi Province.*" It said: "The revolution community in Shanxi has created new experience for the country-wide fight for power among proletarian revolutionists. The leaders of the CPC Committee of Shanxi have set a good example for revolution leaders across the country. The PLA in Shanxi military region has erected a red flag for all PLA commandants in the country." The editorial applauded this new state organizational structure; that is, a governing body made up of heads of mass revolution groups, heads of local military forces, and pro-revolution officials of the government and the party.

On 2 February, The People's Daily published another editorial, titled "*New Dawn in Northeast China.*" It summarized the experience in Heilongjiang as a Trinitarian provisional governing body made up of heads of mass revolution groups, heads of local military forces, and pro-revolution officials of the government and the party. This editorial brought the Trinity concept forward explicitly for the first time. Then another editorial on The People's Daily titled "*A Good Example of The Fight for Power Among Proletarian Revolutionists*" praised the experience of the Heilongjiang Revolutionary Committee in the implementation of the Trinity and suggested it be rolled out countrywide.

The People's Daily published another editorial, "*Defend the Correct Trinity Approach Unswervingly*" on 17 February, and another one, "*The Trinity of Revolution Can Assure Victory in the Fight for Power*" on 21 March. In 1967, *On the Trinity of Revolution* was published on Hongqi, Issue 5. It conveyed Mao Zedong's latest instructions: "In

those locations and organizations where a fight for power is mandatory, the trinity of revolution approach must be followed and a revolutionary provisional governing body that represents and asserts the power of the proletariat must be established. This governing body is called Revolutionary Committee.”¹⁰ The Trinity leadership bringing representatives of the people on board was a product of mass movements under special historical conditions, but it was after all an expedient byproduct of the fight for power and might not be institutionalized as a pattern of democracy.

The Cultural Revolution once inspired the world because it was a revolution launched by the top leader of a state against the government under his leadership. This was indeed unprecedented! The Cultural Revolution was an attempt to socialize a special form of mass democracy, one that encouraged the general public to fulfill their right to speak, to participate, and to supervise by uttering and venting their thoughts and feelings, writing big-character posters, and engaging in open debates. However, this model of mass democracy went unchecked and unfettered and ultimately devastated the whole society. In a word, the Culture Revolution became a national disaster.

The Great Revolution originating in the cultural circle caused particularly serious damage to and had far-reaching impact on Chinese culture. Culture dislocation, science and technology dislocation, and talent dislocation occurred as a result. Society’s cultural heritages were wrecked; schools and institutes were abused; and cultural retrogression resulted. More than 230 million persons, or one-fourth of the total population, were illiterate or semi-illiterate, according to a census conducted in 1982.¹¹ Moreover, as a result of the Cultural Revolution, the Chinese nation lost faith, was ideologically confused, and became morally corrupt. As a matter of fact, after the founding of the RC, good morals and rightful conduct had dominated, and mutual help and benefit were valued. But the bloody Cultural Revolution distorted the Chinese people’s behavior. Many people developed habits of cheating and hurting each other amidst merciless and heartless fights. Even now, its negative impact lingers.

December 1978 witnessed the convening of the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh CPC Central Committee, a milestone in its history. According to the Communiqué of the session, its agenda contained the topics of democracy and rule of law, and both were

10 *‘Trinity’* entry at Baidu Encyclopedia, <https://baike.baidu.com/item/%E4%B8%89%E7%B%B%93%E5%90%88/3743523?fr=aladdin> [visited on January 7, 2018].

11 *‘Cultural Revolution’* entry at Baidu Encyclopedia, <https://baike.baidu.com/item/%E6%96%87%E5%8C%96%E5%A4%A7%E9%9D%A9%E5%91%BD/117740?fr=aladdin> [visited on January 7, 2018].

given serious consideration. “Over the past period of time, the principle of democratic centralism was not put into effect. Centralism was all being talked about, while democracy was undervalued or ignored. At the moment, it is particularly important to underscore democracy, and highlight the dialectical relationship between democracy and centralism, so that central leadership by the party and effective command of all production organizations could be built on the mass line.” It was emphasized that “To protect democracy, the rule of law must be enforced, and democracy must be institutionalized and legislated to deliver stability, continuity and supreme authority of the institution and law and make sure the law is available and strictly observed and enforced and lawbreakers are punished.”¹² Following this session, the party and the government began to shift their focus from class warfare to economic development and resumed their pursuit of modernization. In the political vocabulary of China, *Reform* replaced *Revolution* as a buzz word. Unlike revolution, reform is intended to optimize the existing system rather than destroy it.

In March 1980, *Several Principles Governing the Political Life in the Party* was passed at the Fifth Plenary Session of the Eleventh CPC Central Committee to reinforce democracy combining collective leadership with individual accountability in the party. In June 1981, the *Resolution on Several Historical Issues of the Party Since the Founding of the PRC*, adopted at the Sixth Plenary Session of the Eleventh CPC Central Committee, pointed out: “During the Cultural Revolution that took place between May 1966 and October 1976, the party, the country and the people suffered the worst setback and loss ever since the founding of the PRC. The Cultural Revolution was a civil riot started by the top leader by mistake and taken advantage of by the counter-revolutionary gang, a major catastrophe suffered by the party, the country and the people of all ethnic groups.” Deng Xiaoping stated: “We are totally negative about the Cultural Revolution, but it did make one single positive contribution, teaching us a lesson. But for the lesson learned from the Cultural Revolution, we could not have possibly mapped out the ideological, political and organization routes and a series of policies after the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh CPC Central Committee.”¹³

The lesson learned from the Cultural Revolution made the Chinese keenly aware of the importance of democracy. Democracy is the surest way to revive the great Chinese nation and is a responsibility the CPC has for the Chinese nation. The level of

12 Zhuo Zeyuan, *Rule of Law in China*, 2018, p.70.

13 Cited from ‘*Cultural Revolution*’ entry at Baidu Encyclopedia, July 25, 2016, <https://baike.baidu.com/item/%E6%96%87%E5%8C%96%E5%A4%A7%E9%9D%A9%E5%91%B-D/117740?fr=aladdin> [Visited January 7, 2018].

democracy is closely related to the level of economic and cultural development of the society. Democracy should neither lag behind advancement of the economy and the culture, nor be divorced from real-world economic and cultural conditions. Therefore, to drive democracy in China, it is necessary to draw upon other countries' successful experiences and to take the reality in China into consideration; that is, it should be a progressive process. China must not engage in democratic reform as if it were shock treatment; rather, it should make breakthroughs and improvements in the existing democracy so as to keep it growing.

During the Cultural Revolution, the Chinese also identified the peril associated with mass democracy. From this, they learned that elite democracy should be the fundamental approach and one that is best suited to China. The people are masters of the country, but if everyone is trying to hold the power, the country will be a mess. The only way to avoid this is to enable a few people to exercise power on behalf of the general public.

Conclusion

The CPC is a party that shares a common faith in communism. The ultimate aim of communism is to foster good morals predicated upon a superabundance of material wealth and to create an ideal society wherein all human beings are equal, are able to do what they can, and to take what they need. This is a beautiful dream and that faith is lofty. And beautiful dreams and lofty faith can raise men's moral standards. In this sense, the CPC is supposed to be a virtuous party. Every member of the party should be a moral paragon who values justice above material gains and acts for public interests rather than personal ones. Over the course of fighting for power, many members of the CPC were inspired and motivated by their aspirations and faith; they gave up their personal interests, joined the revolution, and even sacrificed their lives.

After coming to power, the CPC continued to uphold its aspiration and faith, demanding the highest moral standards from its officials. All officials were required to "serve the people heart and soul" and selfless behavior was promoted. For a period of time after the founding of the PRC, the moral standards based the aspiration and faith did succeed in making officials behave properly and foster good morals in the whole society. A person promoted to a leading role was usually a man of virtue who would continue to behave in line with high moral standards. Hence, elites with state power in their hands would act in the people's best interests, while the people could still feel they were masters. That is, to some extent, China realized democracy based on morals.

However, power is highly corruptive. The material interests attached to power are extremely appealing. They may undermine one's aspirations and faith and slacken men's moral constraints. The faith in communism has gradually faded away over time and become an illusionary slogan. Many people joined the CPC for a better career rather than to work for communism. It is true that there are selfless righteous men and men who pursue commonweal wholeheartedly, but such men are rare in any society. The effectiveness of moral constraints on the officials has weakened. "The people are masters of the officials" is a tongue-in-cheek comment. Many public servants forget the true meaning of the word *public*.¹⁴ In their eyes, the leaders are paramount, while the people are nothing. This is consistent with a truth in politics that says that you are responsible for those who delegate power to you. So, some officials unconsciously take a side opposite from the people, bullying and domineering them. Some officials talk about democracy but do not mean it. When talking about serving the people, they are thinking about ruling the people. Other officials claim that they represent the people and that they are ruling the country for the people.

Apparently, democracy must be built on law, not on morals. The CPC started legislation work after coming to power, but the progress has been slow and there have been headwinds. The reason is that they were not well prepared theoretically and they were inexperienced. And there some leaders' personal factors affected progress.

In 1956, at its Eighth National Congress, the CPC decided to refocus on socialist construction and made it clear that "one of our top priorities currently is to create a relatively complete legal system and improve the rule of law." However, the top leadership headed by Mao Zedong unexpectedly started a political campaign against the right-wing in the summer of 1957. This large-scale Anti-rightist Campaign not only wronged many intellectuals, but also led to a retrogression of legal system development in China. For example, the Ministry of Justice was dismissed, and the legal system was abolished.

On 21 August 1958, Mao Zedong said frankly in his address to a meeting at Beidaihe: "Law, well, we need it, but we will have our own way. The Civil Law and the Criminal

14 In contemporary China, Renmin (the people) is a widely used and very important word. All names beginning with the People are often the best or the most important ones, for example, the people's government, the Peoples' Court, the People's Procuratorate, the People's Liberation Army, the People's Bank, the Great Hall of the People, and Renminbi. All these names were designed to assert that the people are masters, but the result is not satisfactory. Frequently used words do not always strengthen the public's awareness. Particularly with semantic generalization, some familiar notional words may become ambiguous form words.

Law have so many clauses, but who can remember all of them? I was involved in making the Constitution, and I cannot remember it now. We seldom rely on the legal stuff, but mainly rely on resolutions and meetings which were held four times a year. We must not rely on the Civil Law and the Criminal Law to maintain order. Every resolution we made is a law, and every meeting we had is a law. ... We should rule by men, not by law. An editorial on the People's Daily is followed by the whole country. Why do we need the law?"¹⁵

In 1959, Liu Shaoqi was elected as President of PRC by the Second NPC, and Mao Zedong was elected as Chairman of the CPC by the Central Committee. In doing his job, Liu Shaoqi became aware of the importance of legal work, and reflected on the lessons learned from having the police, the procuratorate and the court work under the same roof since 1958. On 23 May 1962, Liu Shaoqi called heads of the central leadership group for legal work together and gave a speech. He, who once thought the court should be a tool tamed by the Party, stated clearly at that meeting: "It is right that the court should try and adjudicate cases independently. The Constitution requires that. Neither the Party nor the government shall intervene. We should never say that the legal organs should be absolutely obedient to leaders of the Party at all levels. If they go against the law, the legal organs must not submit themselves to them." In this respect, Mao Zedong did not have much expertise, but he wanted to hold the power to say and be the decision-maker, so he needed to draw the Party's and the country's attention to the issue of political struggles which he was better at. In August 1962, Mao Zedong reiterated the importance of class struggles in Beidaihe and emphasized that "it should be repeated every year, every month and every day." Four years later, the Cultural Revolution that devastated the legal system was started.¹⁶

With lessons learned from the Cultural Revolution, the leadership group of the CPC recognized the importance of the legal system. Then, at the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh CPC Central Committee, this proposal was made: "The rule of law must be enforced in order to protect democracy." Deng Xiaoping emphatically said: "Democracy must be institutionalized and legislated for, so that the institution and law will not change with leaders or with leaders' viewpoints and attention."¹⁷ Democracy should

15 Cui Min, *Redressing Political and Legal Malpractices during the Great Leap in 1962*, Teahouse for Jurists, Issue 4, 2012, p. 81.

16 Cui Min, *Redressing Political and Legal Malpractices during the Great Leap in 1962*, Teahouse for Jurists, Issue 4, 2012, pp. 84-87.

17 Liu Junjie, *A Study of Checks and Balances of Power in the Contemporary China*, 2012, p. 165.

be governed, protected, and realized by the legal system. This is the most important political heritage Deng Xiaoping left to the Chinese people and should be a guiding principle for the improvement and advancement of socialist democracy in China.

In 1979, seven laws were promulgated at the Second Session of the Fifth NPC in 1979,¹⁸ marking the restoration of legal system in China. In 1982, the revised Constitution was adopted at the Fifth Session of the Fifth NPC, Article 79 of which provided that the president of PRC shall serve for no more than two terms. In 1997, “Ruling the country by law and building a socialist country under the rule of law” was proposed as a general strategy for the country at the Fifteenth National Congress of the CPC, and, for the first time, the wording *Legal System* was replaced by *Rule of Law*. In 2002, at its Sixteenth National Congress, the CPC further elaborated on the requirements and specified the targets for building a country under the rule of law, and for the first time, a leadership transition was completed based on the Constitution. In 2007, at its Seventeenth National Congress, the CPC ordered an increase in pace for building a socialist country under the rule of law. In 2012, the CPC decided to comprehensively promote the rule of law at its Eighteenth National Congress. In 2014, the *Decision of the CPC Central Committee on Major Issues Pertaining to Comprehensively Promoting the Rule of Law* adopted at the Fourth Plenary Session of the Eighteenth CPC Central Committee made it clear that the overall goal of promoting the rule of law was to create a socialist legal system with Chinese characteristics and to build a socialist country under the rule of law.¹⁹

However, the most important yardstick by which we measure the level of rule of law in a country is not legislation or the completeness of available laws, but enforcement, or the implementation of the law in real life. Without the legislation, the rule of law is of course impossible. With the legislation, the rule of law is still not necessarily in place. Now the key problem facing China is not that there are not enough laws, but that they do not work. This means that all efforts on the rule of law should refocus on enforcement instead of on legislation. And a key objective of the rule of law is to govern the officials and to rein the power. In another word, without the rule of law as the cornerstone, democracy will remain castles in the air.

18 The Criminal Law, The Code of Criminal Procedure, The Organization Law for Local People’s Congresses at All Levels and Local People’s Governments at All Levels, The Election Law for the National People’s Congress and Local People’s Congresses at All Levels, The Organization law of the People’s Court, The Organization law of the People’s Procuratorate, and The Law on Sino-Foreign Equity Joint Ventures.

19 Zhuo Zeyuan, *Rule of Law in China*, 2018, pp. 108, 116, 143, 156.

In conclusion, political democratization should be the main goal for China's development. Over the 40 years of reform and opening up, Chinese people have gained experience and learned lessons in exploring the road to democracy. Some achievements have been made, but there is still a lot of work we need to do. We have to face the current challenges with a positive attitude and explore the road to a "Chinese democracy", in an effort to create a better social system for future Chinese generations.

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