

**NATION**

## New IRS Revenue Will Come From Businesses Earning Less Than \$200K: Tax Experts

By **Todd Crawford**  
*Vision Times*

According to the Joint Committee on Taxation, a nonpartisan tax watchdog, a key provision in the recently passed Inflation Reduction Act, which earmarks \$80 billion in new funding for the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) — reportedly to improve the agency’s collection of under-reported income — will most likely end up targeting small business owners as a way to fund the new legislation.

The group is estimating that between 70 and 90 percent of the estimated \$200 billion the IRS expects to collect will come from businesses earning less than \$200,000 and just four to nine percent will come from businesses earning above \$500,000.

This stands in stark contrast to the Biden administration’s repeated messaging that it would not raise taxes on anyone earning less than \$400,000.

According to the NY Post, Joe Hinchman, the executive vice president at National Taxpayers Union Foundation, believes small and medium sized businesses are being targeted because they lack the resources to fight back.

“The IRS will have to target small and medium businesses because they won’t fight back.”

*Joe Hinchman, National Taxpayers Union Foundation*

“The IRS will have to target small and medium businesses because they won’t fight back. We’ve seen this play out before ... the IRS says ‘We’re going after the rich’ but when you’re trying to raise that much money, the rich can only get you so far,” he told the NY Post.

Hinchman believes that targeting the lower and middle class is much more lucrative for the IRS than targeting the wealthy telling the NY Post, “The rich have their lawyers and fight it — that’s why the poor are easier to go after.”

Experts are saying that the looming IRS audits will be both painful and costly for small business owners, even for those who think they have filed their taxes correctly.

*Continued on A2*



Speaker of the U.S. House Of Representatives Nancy Pelosi (D-CA), center left, meets Taiwan's President Tsai Ing-wen, center right, at the president's office on August 03, 2022 in Taipei, Taiwan.

## Pelosi’s Taiwan Visit Sharpens Tensions at a Bad Time for Beijing

### Broken ‘red line’ by senior congresswoman throws Xi and the CCP an unwelcome dilemma ahead of the 20th Party Congress

**News Analysis**

By **Larry Ong and Leo Timm**  
*Vision Times*

The People’s Republic of China (PRC) reacted angrily to the recent high-profile visit to Taiwan by U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, issuing warnings and launching a series of military exercises around the island that Beijing claims as its sovereign territory.

Mainland Chinese forces launched 11 ballistic missiles into the waters near Taiwan, five of which landed in Japan’s exclusive economic zone. Live-fire drills by the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) went on for days before concluding on Wednesday, Aug. 10, according to the PLA’s Eastern Theater Command.

During the unscheduled 19-hour trip, which ran from late Aug. 2 to Aug. 3, Pelosi and her entourage met with Taiwan president Tsai Ing-wen, local legislators, and human rights activists. The 82-year-old congresswoman made statements of support for the island and its government, urging Washington and other countries to back Taipei against Communist China’s ambitions.

“In the face of the Chinese Communist Party’s (CCP) accelerating aggression, our congressional delegation’s visit should be seen as an unequivocal statement that America stands with Taiwan, our democratic partner, as it defends itself and its freedom,” Pelosi wrote in an Aug. 2 op-ed published in the Washington Post.

Her visit adds to the long list of troubles facing the CCP

Her visit adds to the long list of troubles facing the CCP leadership.

leadership under Xi Jinping. The senior Democrat’s high-profile outreach to Taipei notably comes as the CCP prepares to hold its 20th Party Congress, where Xi hopes to secure a norm-breaking third term as General Secretary.

Pelosi’s crossing of the Party’s “red line” on Taiwan leaves Beijing with little room

for flexibility in dealing with the U.S., in part given the Xi leadership’s heavy promotion of hawkish “great power diplomacy” and the “great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.” Xi and the CCP must continue acting tough and become more bellicose to retain support at home, despite the consequences of escalating bilateral, regional, and even global tensions.

Conciliatory moves by Beijing to lessen tensions — even in the short term — risk a significant loss of face and political prestige for Xi at a time when domestic pressure over the CCP’s “zero-COVID” policy, bubbling crises in the property and banking sectors, and rapid economic deterioration all threaten the regime’s legitimacy.

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**CHINA**

## 80,000 Vacationers in China’s Tropical Hainan Stranded by New ‘Zero-COVID’ Lockdown

By **Alina Wang**  
*Vision Times*

China’s southern island province of Hainan has been placed under lockdown after a cluster of new COVID-19 infections was detected. The city of Sanya, which is heavily dependent on tourism, saw over 80,000 people stranded after authorities imposed a citywide lockdown on Monday, Aug. 8.

State media reported that the city’s transportation — including all train stations and airports — would be shut down until further notice. Frustrated tourists reported skyrocketing accommodation costs as they waited to hear from authorities when they’ll be allowed to leave the city and return home.

Frustrated tourists reported skyrocketing accommodation costs.

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## Bulk of Funding Slated for ‘Small Businesses’ Actually Went to Big Corporations and Other Countries: Watchdog Report

By **Alina Wang**  
*Vision Times*

According to a July report by government watchdog Open The Books, over 75 percent of funding from the U.S.

Export-Import Bank (EX-IM) meant for small businesses were actually sent to larger corporations and organizations with ties to China and Russia.

Although small businesses seeking to expand their international markets are

supposed to be the main recipients of government funding and loan guarantees, the majority of the cash is not going to them, the agency’s report said.

“Small businesses, supposedly the intended beneficiary of the Export-Import Bank, received

only \$54.8 billion of the over \$234 billion in total assistance since 2007, or about 23 percent” Open The Books (OTB), the Chicago-based nonprofit agency that monitors and tracks government funding, said.

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# US Cattle Herd Hits 6-Year Low as Breeding Stock Sent for Slaughter

By Neil Campbell  
Vision Times

The size of the nation's cattle herd has contracted to levels not seen since 2016 and 2012 amid a number of coinciding crises, such as spiraling feed costs, water shortages, and unprecedented temperatures.

But most concerning about the statistic is that farmers are sending large amounts of their breeding stock to feedlots where they will be prepared for slaughter.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture released their national Cattle Report on July 22, comprising data current as of July 1. While overall, data shows that the national herd is down only 2 percent compared to 2021, this number composes more than 2 million cows.

The total count of all cattle and calves as of July 1 was 98.8 million, down from 101 million year over year.

Cows and heifers who have calved amount to 39.8 million head, beef cows 30.4 million head, and milk cows 9.45 million, the data showed.

In statements made during an agency radio report on July 26, USDA livestock analyst Shayle

Shagam revealed a key trend in the data that does not appear in the USDA report when he said, "We are seeing large numbers of female stock have been placed in feedlots."

According to the Alberta Cattle Feeders' Association website, a feedlot is a penned area where cattle are held and fed for the purpose of focusing "on efficient growth and weight gain," while "reducing the need for cattle to forage for food."

The detail is notable, as the USDA data states that the number of cattle on feedlots totals 13.4 million, but is unchanged since 2021.

Additionally, the report stated that the 2022 calf crop is expected to be down 1 percent from 2021 at 34.6 million head.

Shagam added that the combination of females being sent to feedlots to be primed for slaughter in addition to a declining calf crop obviously means "supplies of cattle going to feedlots is going to be declining."

The implication being that 2023 will face "progressively tighter supplies of all fed cattle available for slaughter."

CEO of the National Cattleman's Beef Association, Colin Woodall, told Fox Business that the problem

is rooted in drought.

"There's no place to go because everybody is struggling to find the forage they need to feed their cattle," he said.

Woodall added that although consumers can expect food prices to continue to rise as a result of the crisis, "Everybody has to remember that it's not cattle producers setting that price."

"It's all about costs. When you look at those who make a decision to send their cattle to market to either thin down their herd or completely eliminate their herd, it is always going to be attributed to the increase of their input costs."

The CEO elaborated, "And that is everything from the cost of feed, cost of hay and cost of diesel for tractors, diesel for the truck, fertilizer costs. And there's so many things that go into producing cattle that the producers just don't have any control over."

California, for example, is facing an unprecedented and prolonged drought in its Central Valley area, which is responsible for a quarter of U.S. food production.

Because of the lack of water, some 800,000 acres of farmland, amounting to roughly 1,250 square miles, stands unused this year, according to a



The Harris Cattle Ranch feedlot on May 31, 2021 in California. The U.S. cattle herd hit a 6 year low, declining by more than two million head year over year. The most alarming component of the statistic is that breeding stock are being sent to feedlots in preparation for slaughter as farmers struggle to feed and water their animals.

Colin Woodall, CEO of National Cattleman's Beef Association, told Fox Business that the problem is rooted in drought.

California Department of Food and Agriculture-funded study conducted by University of California Merced researcher Josue Medellin-Azuara.

The figure is up at least double from 2021's idled farmland.

Local dairy farmers in the area

have stated that a lack of available water to keep their cattle both hydrated and cool means they face the difficult prospect of sending their herd to slaughter.

Ryan Junio, owner of Central Valley dairy farm Four J Jerseys, told the publication Daily Herd Management on July 19 that water shortages were the erstwhile problem facing area farmers, much more so than the rising cost of feed.

Owner of a Missouri breeding operation, John Kleiboeker, explained the reality of the significance of breeding stock being sent to feedlots in preparation for slaughter for Fox viewers, "A heifer is two years old before she produces her first baby."

"That calf is another 18 months after that. So you're talking about close to 40 months from the time

that little baby heifer is born until she has produced a pound of beef."

Kleiboeker also illustrated the feed shortage issue, explaining that over the last five years his operation has purchased as many as 120 large round hay bales from a local farmer's first cut.

This year, not only did the first cut only yield 57 bales in total, but the price doubled to \$75 each.

Because of drought, there was no second cut. And while local farmers are hopeful there will be a third cut, in reality, they're looking for alternative options to keep their animals alive.

The alternative options he explained, however, involve trucking in hay from 250 miles south. The added cost from contracting a trucker, Kleiboeker stated, was in the range of \$1,200 to deliver only 30 bales.

# Bulk of Funding Slated for 'Small Businesses' Actually Went to Big Corporations and Other Countries: Watchdog Report

Continued from FRONT

By filing over 45,000 federal Freedom of Information Act requests totaling more than \$6 trillion in public spending, and posting the checkbooks of 49 state governments, the watchdog aims to "post every dime in real-time."

According to OTB's findings, established corporations such as Boeing, Bechtel Corp., and General Electric Co., have been receiving the largest cash influxes when it comes to domestic funding — with the aerospace and aircraft manufacturing industry leading the pack — cashing in over \$67 billion.

"Boeing subsidiary Boeing Satellite Systems International reaped \$1.4 billion in assistance from 2007 to 2001. Major international airline companies like Ryanair, Emirates Airlines, and Air Canada have all received assistance for Boeing purchases. Boeing employs a small army

of 18 lobbyists to advocate for the Export-Import Bank," according to the report.

**American industry winning big**

Viewed as one of the most successful aerospace companies in the world, Boeing was by far the biggest beneficiary — receiving over 33 percent of Ex-Im's funding — totaling over \$66.4 billion.

Based out of Reston, Virginia, Bechtel Corp. is the second largest aviation and engineering corporation behind Boeing. The company, which also oversees government-backed construction projects, received over \$5 billion in funding for "petroleum engineering in wealthy countries like the United States, Australia, and India, as well as with governments like Serbia and Kenya," the report noted.

Coming in third place was electronics and commercial aircraft manufacturer General



A generic photo of the building that houses the Export-Import Bank, Veterans Affairs Office of Construction, Board of Veterans Appeals, and the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts in Washington D.C.

Electric Co., (GEC) receiving over \$4.7 billion in assistance through 265 transactions since 2007. The report added that GEC's funding was split between its subsidiaries: General Electric International Operations Co. and General Electric Energy Parts.

**International funding**

Internationally, enterprises in Turkey, China, Russia and Nigeria were also big recipients of U.S. funding. "While the United States sent billions of aid to some of the most corrupt countries and repressive regimes in the world, equally disturbing is the amount that went to

Small businesses, ... the intended beneficiary of the Export-Import Bank, received only \$54.8 billion.

Open The Books

scale from least to most corrupt by Transparency International in 2020. "Importers in Nigeria received over \$570 million from the Export-Import Bank. It would be a miracle if any of those dollars actually reached their intended recipient," the report said.

The world's second largest economy, China, was also a top beneficiary of Ex-Im resources — racking over \$6.4 billion in funding since 2007. The report noted that Russian oligarchs, who control the majority of the country's commerce, were also top contenders — receiving over \$1.9 billion.

"Second to only the United States in GDP [gross domestic product], businesses in China nonetheless received more than \$6.4 billion in U.S. Export-Import Bank assistance. Even amidst former U.S. President Donald Trump's trade war with China, \$128,062,638.20 flowed to China from 2017 to 2020," the report noted.

wealthy countries that don't need our aid," the report said.

According to the report, the largest beneficiary of Ex-Im loans went to Nigeria — ranked in 149th place on a

# New IRS Revenue Will Come From Businesses Earning Less Than \$200K: Tax Experts

Continued from FRONT

According to the NY Post, Daniel Bunn, the executive vice president at the Tax Foundation, says that most small businesses aren't doing anything wrong and that the United States does not "make the tax code simple and the complicated tax code makes it difficult for small business owners to comply with all the requirements."

Former secretary of state Mike Pompeo tweeted about the IRS

expansion saying, "You think those 87,000 new IRS agents are just for show? Look at what the DOJ did last night to President Trump, while it slow-rolls and looks the other way on Hunter Biden. If they will go after a former President, they will go after you."

https://twitter.com/mikepompeo/status/1556995413932122113

According to Bunn, the painful truth is that even if small and medium sized businesses do

everything right they will still have to contend with the IRS expansion that will most likely involve sending out more notices and inquiries to businesses stating they owe money, a scenario that will put many businesses in the red.

"Anytime you get an IRS letter, it could take months or years to get it settled — we're talking many thousands of dollars to address," Bunn told the NY Post adding that, "Large companies have constant reviews and lawyers

going through everything ... small business doesn't have the resources to fight back."

The Biden administration has dismissed claims that the new legislation will hurt small and medium sized businesses saying that the Joint Committee on Taxation's estimates don't take into account how much the bill will offset other costs for average Americans, citing an expected decrease in the cost of prescription drugs as an example.



The Internal Revenue Service Building, located in the center of the Federal Triangle complex in Washington, D.C.

However, tax experts argue that giving the IRS more resources and a mandate to find more money will inevitably have a negative financial impact on small businesses.

"The approach here is to double the IRS workforce, take the leash off, and see how much they can collect. I think they'll collect it but it will be quite painful," Hinchman told the NY Post.

# Pelosi's Taiwan Visit Sharpens Tensions at a Bad Time for Beijing

Continued from FRONT

## 'Strong and resolute'

In recent years, the CCP has stepped up propaganda and bellicosity over Taiwan, with Xi Jinping having delivered multiple speeches and remarks commenting on the need to bring the island and its 24 million inhabitants into the fold. A new white paper released Aug. 10 a week after Pelosi's visit repeats Beijing's objectives for Taiwan under the CCP's "one China principle."

The CCP sees the "reunification" of Taiwan with the PRC as a key political aim. The island is officially governed as the Republic of China (ROC), which retreated to Taiwan in 1949 after losing control of the mainland to communist forces in the Chinese civil war — a conflict that has technically never ended.

Starting in mid-July, when media outlets began reporting that Pelosi was planning a stop in Taiwan during her Asia tour, Beijing's diplomats and state media warned the U.S. against allowing the visit to take place, promising "strong and resolute measures." Former Global Times editor-in-chief Hu Xijin even floated the idea that People's Liberation Army (PLA) jets should shoot down the Speaker's plane if it traveled to Taiwan with fighter escorts.

Pelosi's trip to Taiwan and the aggressive rhetoric of prominent propaganda workers like Hu Xijin received close attention from the Chinese public. A Weibo hashtag about Pelosi's arrival on Aug. 2 drew nearly 1.3 billion views and the popular Chinese social media platform later briefly malfunctioned for many users.

Videos of "little pinks" and other jingoistic hyper-nationalists sprouting expletives and engaging in various forms of performative self-abuse in anguish upon hearing that Pelosi's plane had landed safely — instead of being shot down as Hu Xijin boasted it would — made the rounds on the Chinese internet.

In lieu of a direct confrontation, PLA military maneuvers and live-fire drills covered six regions around Taiwan. Numerous PLA jets and warships crossed the median line in the Taiwan Strait, and the Taiwan defense ministry reported the presence of unidentified aircraft — likely drones — in the skies over Kinmen island. The landing of Dongfeng

A U.S. government plane carrying Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) takes off from Taipei Songshan Airport on August 03, 2022 in Taipei, Taiwan.



ANNABELLE CHIH/GETTY IMAGES

ballistic missiles in the Japanese EEZ near Taiwan, as reported by Tokyo's defense ministry, elicited mocking comparisons to North Korea.

Meanwhile, the PRC announced eight countermeasures against the United States over Pelosi's trip, including canceling bilateral defense communications and the suspension of cooperation on transnational crimes, counternarcotics, and climate change. The PRC foreign ministry further imposed sanctions on Pelosi and her immediate family members for her "egregious provocation," but did not offer details about the nature of the sanctions.

## Gathering storm

The CCP's response to Pelosi's Taiwan trip has many observers concerned about rising tensions in the region.

"Around us, a storm is gathering. U.S.-China relations are worsening, with intractable issues, deep suspicions, and limited engagement," said Singapore prime minister Lee Hsien Loong in a televised address ahead of the country's national day on Aug. 9. He continued, "This is unlikely to improve anytime soon. Furthermore, miscalculations or mishaps can easily make things much worse."

The worries of Singapore's leader are not unfounded. Whatever her motives of traveling to Taiwan, Nancy Pelosi effectively crystallized the "new cold war" between the U.S. and the PRC by making the trip. Mainland propaganda outlets and commentators argue that Pelosi's visit is extremely provocative because she is second in the line of succession to the U.S.

“Around us, a storm is gathering. U.S.-China relations are worsening.”

Lee Hsien Loong, Prime Minister of Singapore

presidency and her presence in Taipei is tantamount to backing "Taiwan independence."

Despite Washington's assurances that it does not support Taiwanese independence or officially recognize the ROC, and continues to follow the "One China policy," the CCP is ideologically bound to trump up Pelosi's recent Taiwan trip as "evidence" that the U.S. is bent on undermining China's sovereignty.

Four decades of mostly friendly "engagement" notwithstanding, Communist China has long viewed America as its chief geopolitical rival and is actively working on displacing the latter as global hegemon. Beijing regards the U.S. as an incorrigibly "imperialist" power bent on carrying out regime change and bringing Western-style democracy to China.

The PRC's continued saber-rattling and propaganda aimed at the U.S. over the past two years indicate that the Biden

administration's efforts to "compete" with China without tense ideological or military confrontation have done little to sway the Marxist-Leninist CCP from its convictions.

For the Party, engagement with any non-communist state ultimately serves the aim of either rebuilding the regime's strength following a setback, or helping the Party expand its dominance to regions or countries not yet under its control. The CCP's totalitarian roots and organization pit it directly against the U.S. and its system of constitutional government.

Further, the CCP will see as disingenuous the Biden administration's suggestion that the White House cannot interfere in the legislative branch's business and hence will not stop Pelosi from traveling to Taiwan. Despite the actual differences between the PRC and U.S. political systems, the CCP tends to consider the de facto operation of power in the U.S. as being similar to its one-party dictatorship.

With the "true intentions" of Washington finally "exposed" by Pelosi's Taiwan visit, Beijing has little choice but to become more openly antagonistic towards the U.S. in both word and deed instead of pretending to go along with "engagement."

## Wolf warriors

With the "hostile" moves taken by Washington, failure on Beijing's part to get tough on Taiwan and the U.S., or at least keep up the pretense of doing so, threatens to erode Xi Jinping's *quan wei* (权威, a Chinese term referring to a leader's political authority and prestige) within the Party.

More broadly, a disappointing

response to the "Taiwan Question" — as termed in the CCP's recent white paper — could alienate nationalistic Chinese citizens who support the CCP for making China the "great power" it boasts of in its propaganda. Loss of public confidence in the Party's ability to deliver results, be it economic prosperity or national strength, would further weaken the regime's legitimacy in the eyes of the public.

However, Beijing's insistence on looking tough for public consumption will only exacerbate the negative backlash PRC officials have already received for their "wolf warrior"-style diplomacy. As the regime proceeds to "defend national sovereignty" in accordance with Communist Party culture, the PRC risks further rifts with the international community, including countries that might otherwise be willing to work with Beijing.

CCP officials are known for going to embarrassing — and often revealing — extremes in promoting policies as they strive to be more "politically correct" than their peers and hopefully shore up career security.

On Aug. 3, PRC ambassador to France Lu Shaye told French television channel BFMTV that the CCP will "re-educate" the Taiwanese people after "reunification" to restore their sense of "patriotism" to the regime. Lu's comment shocked observers because it was akin to a public confession that the CCP would subject the island's residents to brainwashing and other human rights abuses after a successful invasion in the same horrific way that it treats political dissidents and ethnic minority populations in the mainland.

Another example is PRC foreign ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying's attempt to justify the CCP's "reunification" of Taiwan from the large presence of Chinese restaurants in Taipei. "Baidu Maps show that there are 38 Shandong dumpling restaurants and 67 Shanxi noodle restaurants in Taipei. Palates don't cheat. Taiwan has always been a part of China. The long lost child will eventually return home," she tweeted on Aug. 7. Hua's tweet was roundly ridiculed by Chinese netizens for its shoddy logic.

## Pressures on Xi

Xi Jinping is looking to take a norm-breaking third term and appoint trusted officials to key positions at the 20th Party Congress near the end of the year. To secure his political agenda this close to the Party Congress, Xi would prefer to keep things as stable as possible and maintain his present *quan wei* through propaganda. Unnecessary

adventurism at home and abroad that could court trouble for himself and the regime would be avoided.

Nancy Pelosi's Taiwan trip, however, has forced Xi to take added risks to preserve his "quan wei." Stepping up military maneuvers around Taiwan may intimidate the Taiwanese populace and get other countries to think twice before taking a leaf out of Pelosi's book in supporting the ROC. But those maneuvers will also impose a strain on the PRC's dwindling finances, heighten conflict risks, and could achieve the opposite effect of what was intended. Already, legislators in the United Kingdom and Germany are planning to visit Taiwan later this year.

Strong international follow-up to Pelosi's trip would heap pressure on Xi Jinping ahead of the 20th Party Congress and create fertile ground for internal contradictions in the Party elite to fester. Xi's rivals have been goading him into taking Taiwan as soon as possible to prove his worthiness to lead the Party beyond two terms.

Xi has thus far resisted the temptation to invade Taiwan and has instead shut down dissenters. Overseas Chinese-language media reported in late 2021 that former People's Liberation Army Air Force general Liu Yazhou was detained for questioning Xi's ability to lead the CCP to victory in a "decisive battle" over Taiwan and requested "a change of commander-in-chief."

On the flipside, weak or inconsistent responses to Beijing's provocations in the Taiwan Strait on the part of the U.S. and its allies will give Xi breathing room to "spin tragedy into victory" for the communist regime and regain his political footing. For instance, the Biden administration's postponing of a routine test launch of an Air Force Minuteman III intercontinental ballistic missile after Pelosi's Taiwan trip to avoid heightening tensions with mainland China would be viewed by Beijing as a sign of weakness. The Xi leadership could also cite the delayed test as a sign that its pressure campaign against Taiwan is yielding results and further prop up its "the East is Rising, the West is in Decline" propaganda. More shows of weakness could embolden the PRC to undertake greater transgressions against Taiwan and in the surrounding region.

Larry Ong is a senior analyst with New York-based political risk consultancy SinolInsider. He was part of the SinolInsider team that forecasted the 19th Party Congress and 2018 Two Sessions personnel reshuffles with a high degree of accuracy.

## Beijing Releases White Paper on 'Taiwan Question'

Though the policy document aims to achieve 'reunification' by peaceful means, it does not rule out the use of military force

Vision Times News

Mainland China withdrew promises to not send troops to Taiwan if it took control of the island, according to a Chinese Communist Party (CCP) white paper released on Aug. 10 titled "The Taiwan Question and China's Reunification in the New Era." The paper was possibly rushed out after the high-profile visit to Taiwan by U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi. It also reduces the concept of 'One country two systems' to something similar to what Beijing currently allows for Hong Kong under the National Security Law since 2020.

The document is otherwise similar to two previous white papers, published in 1993 and 2000. In the newest version, the



STR/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

This picture taken on an undisclosed date in December 2016 shows a Chinese J-15 fighter jet landing on the deck of the Liaoning aircraft carrier during military drills in the Bohai Sea, off China's northeast coast.

CCP omits a vow that it would "not send troops or administrative personnel to be based in Taiwan."

Instead it reads: "We will not renounce the use of force, and

we reserve the option of taking all necessary measures." Also, "We will always be ready to respond with the use of force or other necessary means to interference

by external forces or radical action by separatist elements."

The continued focus on "radical separatists" and guarantees to "leave no room for separatist activities in any form" in Taiwan is notable, given that CCP propaganda describes the president of Taiwan as a radical separatist.

The CCP claims that Taiwan is a rogue province of its People's Republic of China that must be united under Beijing's rule, by force if necessary. However, democratic Taiwan has been self-governing since 1949 and has never been controlled by the CCP. It is formally known as the Republic of China (ROC), which retreated to the island after its defeat on the mainland in the Chinese civil war with the communists.

CCP authorities have

generally proposed that Taiwan be compelled into annexation through a "one country, two systems" model, similar to when Hong Kong came into Chinese rule in 1997. However, the new Paper states: "Taiwan may continue its current social system and enjoy a high degree of autonomy in accordance with the law", omitting verbiage about governance. But at any rate, every mainstream Taiwanese political party has rejected the "one country, two systems" concept after what has happened to Hong Kong.

The publication of the white paper comes just a week after

U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) visited Taiwan. The CCP used that visit to justify its largest ever military exercises around Taiwan, which effectively blockaded the island from some international shipping and saw Chinese missiles fired into Japanese waters.

The ROC Mainland Affairs Council condemned the paper, saying that it's "full of lies" and that Taiwan is a sovereign nation. "Only Taiwan's 23 million people have the right to decide on the future of Taiwan," the council stated. "They will never accept an outcome set by an autocratic regime."

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# 10,000 Millionaires Expected to Leave China This Year—And Take \$48 Billion With Them: Report

Experts predict that the growing exodus will only serve to accelerate China's worsening social and economic crisis

## Vision Times News

According to a consulting firm specializing in foreign investments, over 10,000 of China's wealthiest are looking to immigrate to other countries this year.

A report by London-based firm Henley & Partners, found that the average millionaire looking to leave China has a net worth of about \$4.8 million — which would result in a total of \$48 billion in approximate withdrawals. Experts have warned that the growing exodus of people and money leaving the country will only serve to accelerate and compound China's worsening social and economic crisis.

The agency also found that approximately 3,000 millionaires in Hong Kong are also looking to leave the city this year. After being returned to the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) rule in 1997, the previous British colony has experienced an increased erosion of civil rights and censorship of its media outlets at the hands of Chinese police.

The report added that with the growing number of Hong Kong's elite opting to leave, China would become the second country in the world to experience the largest numbers of capital flight — second only to Russia.

## Systemic roots

Tang Jingyuan, an expert on China's economy based in the U.S., told The Epoch Times that a major driving force behind the exodus has been the Chinese regime's efforts to strengthen its economic power at the expense of private enterprises.

This has also been coupled with greater regulatory scrutiny

of Chinese tech companies — leading to hefty fines in many cases.

"In order to strengthen the security of the regime, the CCP began to implement a robbery-style supervision storm on self-operated giants, such as Alibaba and Didi. In fact, it completely destroyed [that] market's economy."

Tang also emphasized that the CCP's "wolf warrior diplomacy" has led to the country's increased isolation; politically, it has become like North Korea. Economically, it has returned to the planned economy model — which has resulted in its wealthiest groups deciding to cut their losses and move their businesses away from China.

"The CCP also promotes this concept of 'shared prosperity,' which means manipulating laws and other financial methods to help the rich find tax breaks — but that results in a panicked middle and lower class — who feel like their financial futures are not guaranteed," he said, adding that China's capital exodus was caused by an archaic institutional system.

"Unless China's societal system changes dramatically as a whole, many of these issues cannot be resolved at all."

## Rippling effects of 'Zero-COVID'

Tang added that the CCP's heavy-handed COVID measures that have resulted in widespread lockdowns, mass testing, censorship, and forced quarantine, has also sped up the desire of many people wanting to leave.

"There is serious anxiety and distrust of the CCP's future governance. In order to find better living conditions and basic rights,

The growing exodus ... will only serve to accelerate and compound China's worsening social and economic crisis.

many have decided to emigrate overseas," he said.

Professor Xie Tian, who works at the Aiken School of Business affiliated with the University of South Carolina, told The Epoch Times that netizens in mainland China have estimated that at least 3 to 5,000 people have fled Shanghai during the city's unrelenting lockdowns that lasted from March to mid-June.

"As soon as Shanghai's 'zero-policy' ended, the airport was filled with people trying to leave the city," Xie said. Shanghai, known as China's most pivotal commercial and financial hub, is home to nearly 26 million, and endured some of the toughest lockdowns ever seen in the world.

"Because people now realize how fragile their assets are in the face of power, the CCP can deprive them of their personal freedom, basic livelihood and human rights with a simple epidemic prevention policy. Many people will indeed flee China because of these controls alone," he said.

Xie added that the Chinese regime's "zero-COVID" policies

have also caused many companies to close down — halting industrial output, and severely cutting consumer spending.

"When companies found out that they could restart production, they were elated. But they soon discovered, to much dismay, that many of the orders could no longer be filled as customers found other manufacturers with faster turnaround times."

"Some factory owners left China because of this," Xie added.

## Making off with the loot

As more of China's wealthiest opt to leave the country in search of better professional and social opportunities, the number of professionals transferring their assets to offshore accounts through investments, real estate, or offshore trusts, has also increased exponentially, the report noted.

Furthermore, according to an annual report by China's National Association of Realtors, buyers from mainland China held the No. 1 spot when it came to purchased properties in other countries. In the U.S. alone, Chinese buyers accounted for \$6.1 billion in residential sales — with nearly 60 percent of them making all-cash purchases for homes worth at least \$1 million.

The report also noted that the majority of the properties were located in California and New York state, and that the trend was holding steady since 2013.

According to Xie, the source of income for many of China's elite stem from "gray earnings" such as kickbacks, bribes or embezzlement from corrupt officials. "The disappearance of deposits from rural and small-town banks in Henan Province is actually a conspiracy between



A Chinese flag is seen outside a residential compound in Beijing on April 30, 2017.

senior managers and the local government," he said.

"They are taking advantage of weak banking supervision, and absconding with the money," Xie added.

Citing insider knowledge, Xie described how a village bank holding deposits of up to 40 billion yuan (around US\$5.93 billion) used 20 billion yuan to bribe high-ranking CCP officials, all of whom were members of the Politburo Standing Committee or their families, and more than 10 billion yuan was used to bribe local government officials.

In the end, there were only a few billion left in the bank's coffers, with absolutely no way to repay the depositors to whom the 40 billion yuan belonged.

Another situation in Shenzhen involved a bank run in the sprawling southern Chinese metropolis. That institution's "deposits were stolen or turned into wealth management products. The depositors are from central government-owned enterprises, and can't take out the money now," Xie said. The money is likely "no longer in China," as is the case with much of the funds acquired through dubious or fraudulent investment schemes.

## Social repercussions

According to the experts, the concentrated migration of wealthy

groups leaving China will take sizable amounts of capital away in a "very short period of time." However, the rapid transfer of assets into offshore accounts will directly impact the CCP's foreign exchange system in the short term — threatening "the very foundation on which the system was built on," Tang said.

Tang also added that as the "outflow of living water" (liquid assets) continues pouring out, the base of social wealth that people rely on will also continue to drop.

"With the massive transfer of assets, investment and employment opportunities for enterprises in mainland China will also decrease rapidly, and the inevitable result of that is a widening gap between the country's rich and poor," he warned.

In the long run, Tang predicts that as China's backbone continues evaporating, more educated people and young professionals will be forced to find labor-intensive jobs just to get by — resulting in a society that will "lack innovation and intellectual resources."

"If a society's intellectual and wealthy elite decide to leave, it means that there must be a serious crisis in that society. The departure of China's backbone will only accelerate its social demise," he said.

## 80,000 Vacationers in China's Tropical Hainan Stranded by New 'Zero-COVID' Lockdown

Continued from FRONT

Strict pandemic control measures have been a perennial occurrence all across China, where the communist authorities are obsessed with maintaining "zero-COVID."

According to statistics released by Hainan's Health Commission, as of Aug. 7, there were 504 confirmed infections in the province — out of which 413 were traced back to Sanya. On Aug. 8, an additional 77 cases were reported in the cities of Danzhou, Wanning, Haikou, Qionghai, as well as in Lingshui, Ledong, Chengmai, and Lingao counties. Authorities added that Sanya's total COVID tally now stands at 1,243 — prompting stricter lockdown measures as cases continue to climb.

The city's epidemic control measures also announced on Aug. 6 that any travelers who had arrived in Sanya after July 23 would have to undergo nucleic acid testing for several consecutive days before being cleared, and given the green light to leave the city.

## Exorbitant hotel prices

According to mainland Chinese outlet Zhengguan News, some travelers said they were forced to pay a lot more to stay at "government-approved" hotels.

And although authorities had promised "free accommodation and transportation arrangements" for those stuck in Sanya, the reality was much different.

"The current 'half price' [for a hotel room] is more expensive than the original price we initially booked," one traveler said.

Another tourist from Kunming, a city located in southwest China, told the outlet that she had been forced to extend her stay, and had to pay for everything out of her own pocket.

"Now no one can leave and we are forced to extend our stays here. But contrary to what the government said, the hotels are all charging more than what we initially paid to come here," she said, adding that, "Everyone says that the local Sanya government will have us covered, that we'll eat and stay here for free, but that's not what's happening!"

"What we're paying now is the most expensive peak season rate," she said.

Widely circulated videos on social media also showed angry travelers demanding that hotel rates be lowered. "Who will be responsible for us missing work, and pay our bills while we're stuck here," one person could be heard saying. While another said: "We have to pay a high price for this mess!"

A businesswoman named Yang



Travelers are seen in Sanya's Phoenix International Airport as thousands try to leave the popular vacation spot — located in China's island province of Hainan on August 9, 2022.

Jing told Reuters that since the lockdown in Sanya was imposed, she has been staying in a four-star hotel with her husband and children — paying out-of-pocket for all the expenses.

"It has been the worst holiday of my life," Yang, who resides in China's Jiangxi Province said, adding that the family was eating cups of instant noodles everyday to avoid spending more money on food.

## COVID situation turns into an inter-province media spat

On Saturday, Aug. 6, state mouthpiece China Central Television (CCTV) announced the suspension of all train tickets, and said that over 80 percent of outgoing flights from Sanya's airport would be canceled. No other information was made immediately available.

"We just hope this doesn't become another Shanghai," one

of the travelers could be heard saying.

According to Chinese state-backed outlet, The Paper, many people in Sanya were afraid of facing the same fate as that of Shanghai's. The largest city in China saw some of the strictest lockdown and movement curbs in the world, with Shanghai's 26 million residents forced to stay inside their homes for over three months from March to mid-June.

The Paper's coverage, which ran for several articles, even poked fun at the government's chaotic response to quelling new COVID-19 outbreaks. "The [government] is disregarding the overall situation, opting instead to close down an entire city because of a single outbreak," it said, adding that vacationers stuck in Sanya can be seen "agonized in the city's streets," desperate to return home.

The media attention on Sanya didn't sit well with local state-run outlet Hainan Daily, which ran a piece chiding The Paper — a Shanghai-based publication — for "trying to mooch off the media attention generated by human suffering."

The Hainan Daily accused The Paper of basing "all the relevant articles on negative incidents [during the outbreak] that are biased and [often] even hearsay." It questioned The Paper's motives, asking "what do they have against Sanya that they ... try so hard to create this gloomy media narrative?"

In a roundabout reference to public annoyance over the Communist Party's strict "zero-COVID" policies, the provincial media further noted Shanghai had recently had its own lengthy and ruinous lockdown, after which many Shanghaiers had "hurried over" to enjoy the tropical vacation spot.

"Did we not treat you well when you came to Sanya one after another after the pandemic restrictions were lifted? ... or are you jealous of Hainan's 10-percent GDP growth this year?"

# Dutch Farmers Flex Muscle, but Can't Make Fist After Government Talks

By Victor Westerkamp  
Vision Times

Dutch farmer organizations held talks with the government called “constructive” as they looked to seek a way out of the nitrogen emissions crisis, but some growers were not convinced and have announced tougher actions.

It already took a lot of effort to get the warring parties to the negotiations table as Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte chose to only engage with the farmers through his pick as a mediator, former Deputy Prime Minister, and fellow Liberal Party (VVD) comrade Johan Remkes.

However, multiple agriculturalist protest organizations, especially the most militant group, the Farmers Defense Force (FDF), opted out of talks with Remkes as a mediator, given his reputation as a ruthless crusher of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) mandate protests in his former capacity as Mayor of The Hague.

## Horse trade

The breakthrough came when Sjaak van der Tak, Chairman of the largest agricultural umbrella organization, LTO, announced he would sit in with Rutte and Remkes after the Prime Minister personally called him.

Not surprisingly, Remes called the atmosphere during the discussions “constructive.”

“There was, and there still is a crisis of confidence, which ran deeper than the nitrogen discussion,” Remkes said after the talks, according to Dutch newspaper Algemeen Dagblad (AD). “That is because of the accumulation of regulations, the misguided policy on nitrogen, and the failure to recognize that farmers have already done a lot to reduce emissions” Remkes added.

“There is movement, but for our gardeners and ranchers, it is too little at the moment,” van der Tak said sternly, according to AD. “The ball is really in the cabinet’s court, and we expect that the cabinet will pick up that ball and do everything they can to come to a solution.”



Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte after a meeting with farmer protesters on Aug. 5, 2022. The government does not appear to be willing to give an inch on plans to cut nitrogen emissions, regardless of how farmers are affected.

But many Dutch commenters didn't buy into the Remkes-van der Tak love story, pointing out that van der Tak is also part of the old-boys network with Rutte. They feel the pair might well be steering the movement toward a horse trade.

“Don't fall for it #Farmers!” one commenter on Twitter remarked. “Sjaak van der Tak will sell out your soul and salvation to his friend Mark Rutte for his own

interests,” he said. “Those cons all know each other far too well.”

## Flexing muscles

Farmers Defence Force (FDF) frontman Mark van den Oever didn't have a good word to say about the outcome of the talks either, “When I assess the mood a little bit, I think you can brace for the toughest actions FDF has taken so far,” he said, Hart van Nederland reported.

It was a fine flexing by van den Oever, who represents the more hardline factions of the demonstrating growers. But the quintessence of their argument, however, that there is no nitrogen crisis to begin with, has not yet been brought up by the FDF.

Furthermore, the reputation of the genuine protesters with the public is already on the wane because of ruthless actions some elements took, such as dumping vast amounts of waste and toxins like asbestos on the motorways.

## A sinister plan

Some identify these more radical elements as false flag operatives, such as the so-called “Romeos,” notorious for disturbing otherwise peaceful anti-COVID-19 measure demonstrations.

“Those farmers themselves know very well what they can and cannot do. Nobody is in favor of throwing asbestos on the highway,” he said, according to the outlet.

“I think we all agree on that,” van den Oever, who is increasingly finding himself

on a sticky wicket about whom to side with: the brassbound demonstrators or the more moderate elements, added.

“But look, it's also our constituency, of course, so we're not going to attack them,” van den Oever continued, which some pundits felt created the perfect excuse to have him fall from grace in the eyes of the general public by not vehemently denouncing the asbestos dumping.

It seems Rutte and Remkes have managed to successfully drive a wedge between different factions of the farmers' resistance movement.

It seems Rutte and Remkes have managed to successfully drive a wedge between different factions of the farmers' resistance movement, and thus some feel the pair are on schedule with their nitrogen reform plans.

# Greece Moves Towards Social Credit as Digital ID App Replaces Drivers Licenses and ID Cards

By Neil Campbell  
Vision Times

Greece has taken the next step forward in transitioning its society to a social credit system with the recent launch of a new digital wallet app set to replace drivers licenses and conventional ID cards.

Announced on August 2 on the Government of Greece website, the Gov.gr Wallet was launched for both the Apple App Store and Google Play. A translation of the release states, “Digital copies have exactly the same validity as paper certificates within the country, with the only exception being international travel.

“In this way, you can now use your mobile phone for any transaction within Greece, just as you used your police ID and driver's license until now.”

Authentication for the application involves syncing one's mobile phone with the National Register of

Communications, in addition to one's online personal banking accounts and the national tax system.

According to Greek City Times, Greece has a “Digital Governance Minister,” Kyriakos Pierrakakis, who lauded the app before attendees of a press conference, framing conventional ID as something that has “been a burden to provide in physical form.”

A July 28 article by Greek Travel Pages (GTP) said that the app is to replace all domestic usages of conventional ID, including for inter-Greece travel.

The article also stated that the app's glut is set to expand to “vehicle registration, vehicle tax payments, Technical Vehicle Inspection (KTEO) findings, insurance details and more.”

“In its next phase, the app can be used to open a bank account, access eGovernment services and other online activities,” GTP added.

Prime Minister Kyriakos

Mitsotakis was quoted in the article as lauding “the digital transformation of the State” as more than “a shallow modernism.” The PM called it, “A major breakthrough, a social modernization focusing on citizens and their life; a transition into a dynamic economy and a fair society.”

In its next phase, the app can be used to open a bank account, [and] access eGovernment

Pierrakakis was also quoted by the article as shading the digital ID system as advantageous over conventional ID for the government because a “digital trail will be created instead of

ID copies.” “So now it will be possible to carry out transactions digitally,” he added.

## Viral developments

The global transition to digital ID systems is well underway. Iran, likely experiencing a significant famine, implemented a digital QR code social credit system required for citizens who need to purchase bread at government-subsidized prices in late May.

In Sri Lanka, an island nation of 22 million people off the southern coast of India that recently suffered total economic collapse, has begun rationing purchases of petrol and liquified propane, via a QR code system — which households rely on for heating, transportation and cooking.

The trend is not limited to niche countries far away. In Canada, provinces such as Alberta and Ontario have already implemented Digital ID.

The system appears to simply function as a digital version of government ID for the purposes of allowing one to verify their

identity with entities such as the Canada Revenue Agency more easily.

## Already in China

Living a digitally authenticated life has been the norm for the 1.5 billion citizens of mainland China for years, who all rely entirely on centralized pseudo-private apps such as Alipay, Wepay, and WeChat connected to one's national identity and digital bank account to process daily transactions.

Twitter user @Songpinganq, who regularly reposts videos from Chinese-language social media outlets for the English speaking world to see, has countless videos of what life is truly like under a QR code regime.

Worse than the vaccine passport schema found in western society during the peak of our government's COVID measures, almost every day the user posts a new video of hundreds or thousands of Chinese citizens standing in long lines in the streets, wearing masks, sometimes

in pouring rain and falling snow, in order to take their mandatory PCR test.

If they don't, their QR code will turn red, they won't be able to get through Communist Party transport checkpoints or spend their money, and will be sent to a quarantine camp at their own expense.

One westerner living in Shanghai, Frederik van Ewijk, lamented in a July 25 video published on Twitter about what his daily life just to go to work is like.

“Shanghai, back to normal: this is the line into my office every day. We need to scan a QR code to register location (linked to passport and phone for contact tracing), and show 48hr PCR test QR code, scan and take temperature,” he stated.

In a second same day tweet, van Ewijk complained about the realities of the regime's disastrous Zero-COVID policy, “Lockdown month 5. Last weekend we succeeded to leave Shanghai for the first time. But when taking the highway exit the police stopped us and we all had to register and do additional mandatory covid testing.”

“At 3am in the morning hotel kicked us out, no license for foreigners,” he added.

# India Contemplates Blocking Sales of Cheap Chinese Phones

By Darren Maung  
Vision Times

According to a recent Bloomberg report, India is considering restricting the sale of smartphone devices, in the sub-\$150 range, manufactured and sold by Chinese smartphone makers. The move would negatively affect Chinese phone makers like Xiaomi and is intended to give local Indian manufacturers the opportunity to prosper in the market.

## Market crackdown

Bloomberg's report revealed that India — the second largest mobile market in the world — is thinking about pushing away devices made by Chinese manufacturers, especially Xiaomi, amidst growing fears that Chinese brands, like

Realme and Transsion, could overshadow the country's local smartphone makers.

The report said that India's restrictions would hinder Chinese manufacturers, which have depended on India for profit. It remains unknown if the Indian government will implement formal policies or utilize informal channels to act on their blockage.



The level of distrust is so high between India and China...

Ashutosh Sharma,  
research director at  
market researcher  
Forrester



Customers inspect smartphones made by Xiaomi at a Mi (my home) store in Gurugram, India on August 20, 2019.

According to market tracker Counterpoint, smartphones that are sold under \$150 took up “a third of India's sales volume for the quarter through June 2022,” Bloomberg reported. Chinese firms supplied 80 percent of the devices sold in that period.

Local Indian companies like Lava and MicroMax found success after their launch in the past decade, but Chinese firms drove a stake into the market and have beaten the competition with their cheap yet expansive devices.

Chinese smartphone makers now sell the “vast majority” of devices in India. However,

according to India's junior tech minister, who spoke to the Business Standard, their rule over the market was not “on the basis of free and fair competition.”

However, following the border clashes between China and India in 2020 — where more than a dozen Indian soldiers died in a dispute at the Himalayan border — the latter pushed to pressure Chinese firms.

“The level of distrust is so high between India and China, I don't think there's any likelihood that these companies are not closely watched by the government,” Ashutosh Sharma, research

director at market researcher Forrester, told the Financial Times.

In one instance, the Indian government banned more than 300 apps, including WeChat and TikTok — both of which are owned by Chinese state-run companies Tencent and ByteDance respectively — on the grounds of security concerns.

Following the news on Aug 8, Xiaomi's shares dropped 3.6 percent in the final minutes of trading in Hong Kong, adding to a more than 35 percent drop in share value so far in 2022.

Steven Tseng and Sean Chen, analysts at Bloomberg, predict that Xiaomi shipments may decrease by 11 to 14 percent a year (20 to 25 million units), potentially seeing a four to five percent fall in sales should India crack down on Chinese-made devices.

Despite the considerations of a ban, CNN reported that the Indian people's attachment to Chinese smartphones shows that there is staying power for Chinese firms, due to affordable prices and access to more features

“If you compare the features, Chinese smartphones offer a lot

more, and cost only a little bit more,” Kiranjeet Kaur, associate research director at International Data Corporation (IDC), told CNN.

## Indian pressure on Xiaomi

Before their report surfaced, Bloomberg said the Indian government was already pressuring Chinese firms with close scrutiny of their finances, which resulted in “tax demands and money laundering.”

Xiaomi and rival company Vivo are being investigated by New Delhi's local financial crime fighting agency for illegal remittances and money laundering, with both companies denying any wrongdoing.

Xiaomi is accusing India of inciting “physical violence” and engaging in coercive practices following a probe launched to investigate the aforementioned claims.

India also previously enacted unofficial means to ban equipment by Huawei and ZTE Corp, prompting wireless carriers to consider alternatives. Currently India has no official policy banning Chinese networking gear.

# Chinese 'Tuidang' Movement Counts 400 Million People Who Have Renounced Communism

By Leo Timm  
Vision Times

Four hundred million people have cut off ties with the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) since the beginning of the peaceful movement to tui dang (退黨) — “to quit the Party.”

The Tuidang movement started in November 2004 with the publication of the Nine Commentaries on the Communist Party, an editorial series that examines the ideological foundations and misuse of the world's deadliest regime.



As we stand at this dramatic point in history, let us prepare to welcome a genuinely new China, free of the Communist Party.

— Yi Rong, president of the Global Tuidang Center

Yi Rong, president of the Global Tuidang Center based in Flushing, New York, delivered a speech at a local rally on Aug. 3, the day that the milestone was reached.

“At this moment, I am honored to offer these 400 million outstanding sons and daughters of the Chinese nation my heartfelt congratulations,” she said. “For 400 million people to stand out and withdraw from the CCP under its totalitarian dictatorship is a miracle, and it will surely inspire even more Chinese to follow suit.”

## Quitting the Party

Tuidang is driven in large part by adherents of Falun Gong, a traditional spiritual practice that gained immense popularity in China during the 1990s, but was banned and subject to horrific persecution in 1999. Despite the Party's efforts, which range from detention and labor camp sentences to execution by organ harvesting, a 2017 report by Freedom House estimates that 7 to 20 million people still practice Falun Gong in China.

Many Falun Gong practitioners and their supporters raise awareness not just about the CCP's campaign against the faith, but, drawing upon the facts and conclusions laid out in the Nine Commentaries, encourage ordinary Chinese to distance themselves from the regime and its ideology. Those who choose to “quit the Party” give volunteers a real or assumed name, which is then taken and compiled on an overseas website.

One renunciation statement, dated Aug. 2, reads:

*“With Pelosi's visit to Taiwan, the CCP's fragile feelings have been shattered again ... the laughable thing is that the Party is all bark*



People hold up placards with the words “The Heavens Will Destroy the Chinese Communist Party” at a vigil at Victoria Park, Hong Kong, on June 4, 2020.

*and no bite, it's been calling for the military reunification of Taiwan for 70 years ... it's really both an incompetent and evil organization. I hope Taiwan can remain steadfast in the defense of its democratic freedoms, don't believe in “one country, two systems” or you'll end up like Hong Kong.” — Guo Tianqi, from Wuhan, quits the Young Pioneers.*

In a statement dated July 11, Zheng Xiujuan, a doctor in Linyi city of Shandong Province, described how she came to renounce her Party membership:

*“While providing aid during the pandemic in Linyi, I personally witnessed the chaos in the hospital*

*system. We frontline medical staff lacked PPE, but weren't allowed to say anything about it even though it was clear that supplies were being misallocated. We're also human, but the CCP failed to afford us women doctors even the slightest respect. I joined the Party a year ago, and today unequivocally declare my withdrawal from the Chinese Communist Party.”*

A July 26 statement by Bo Shan, of Nanjing, expresses the author's intent to withdraw from the Communist Youth League.

*“I quit the League. There's no freedom of the press, no freedom of speech, no independent judiciary, no multiparty system. China*

*is not a normal country, it's an abomination.”*

Those promoting Tuidang use a variety of means, such as passing out fliers or copies of the Nine Commentaries and related literature, posting placards in public spaces, or directly talking to others. Falun Gong practitioners living outside China have also organized efforts to call people in China, sometimes even reaching out to Party officials or their staff.

## Renouncing communism

Because of the difficulty and practical repercussions of formally withdrawing one's membership in the CCP or its affiliated youth organizations — the Young

Pioneers and the Communist Youth League — the Tuidang movement aims primarily at acquiring statements declaring the participant's personal renunciation of the Party and its Marxist ideology.

While the CCP itself lists about 90 million members, nearly the entire school-age and adult populations are or have been members of the Pioneers or Youth League. All members of the Party, Pioneers, or League must make oaths dedicating themselves to the communist regime and its aims — a promise that those taking part in Tuidang annul.

The CCP was founded 101 years ago in Shanghai, and took power in China in 1949 after defeating the republican government following World War II. It's responsible for the deaths of an estimated 80 million Chinese and a massive demographic collapse brought about by the brutal one-child policy, making it the deadliest regime in history.

While the Party today advocates a nationalist stance along with “socialist core values,” its atheist Marxist-Leninist ideology rejects the spiritual and moral foundations of traditional Chinese civilization as “feudalist superstition.”

Yi Rong urged more Chinese around the world to take the opportunity to quit the Party and live up to their country's ancient heritage, rather than be “the descendants of Marx and Lenin.”

“As we stand at this dramatic point in history, let us prepare to welcome a genuinely new China, free of the Communist Party.”

# Comment: 'Deglobalization' Is Coming. Here's What We Should Expect

By Vision Times

Note: This piece is translated from a Chinese social media post for the benefit of our readers, but does not represent endorsement by Vision Times.

These days, the term “deglobalization” has become a mantra heard from all quarters. But how many people really understand what this means for us?

To explain this concept, one should start with its opposite, namely: “What is globalization?” Globalization is the world order that emerged after the Allied victory in World War II, and it has proven to be the largest technological-industrial leap in human history. Of course, this came with its costs — wars and infringements of sovereignty, economic exploitation and inequality. But these are not the focus here.

Globalization is essentially a deal made between the United States and the rest of the world: the unimpeded ability for anyone to trade with anyone else. Until the postwar era, only empires with strong fleets and colonial networks were capable of large-scale trade. The U.S. offered its naval strength to other nations as a guarantee of maritime security in exchange for a political alliance against the Soviet Union.

The deal was successful: it determined the outcome of the Cold War. The disintegration of the Soviet Union laid the groundwork for the new world order and offered a golden age of global capitalism.

## Deglobalization on the horizon

Given that things went so well, why the shift to deglobalization?

1) The Soviet Union doesn't exist anymore, so strictly speaking, the Cold War deal has already achieved its goal. It doesn't make sense for the U.S. to keep paying for an international order it doesn't need.

2) The massive industrial progress brought about by globalization has nourished global players, and today the U.S. Navy is no longer capable of single-handedly controlling the world's oceans. Certainly, it remains the most powerful fleet on earth and a potent arm of American power projection, but its supremacy is not uncontested. Moreover, the U.S. itself is one of the few nations that is completely self-sufficient, thus it is not fully reliant on globalization the way a country like Germany is.

3) But what is becoming of global progress? Globalized progress means worldwide

productivity growth via industrialization. This goes hand in hand with urbanization, which sees rural dwellers migrate to the cities. Instead of laboring in the fields, they take work in factories, become service workers, and eventually sit in an office job. But as a result, while children were much-needed labor on the farms, in the city they become expensive liabilities — something that is reflected in the declining fertility rates and rapid aging of all advanced societies.

On the flipside, these countries' “sources of raw materials,” that is, the developing world, have been slower to urbanize and thus their demographic decline is occurring at a reduced pace. For example, many African countries retain their high fertility rates simply because they have yet to industrialize. Yet the demographic decline and thus coming reduction in industriousness across the developed world threatens crisis for the fertile developing states, as they continue to rely on imports made possible by globalization.

## A future of negative growth?

It is at this point of historical stagnation that change is brewing. None of our current economic models, be they capitalism, socialism, fascism, or any other system were conceived of with a shrinking labor pool in mind; the idea that productivity might one day stop growing never occurred to them.

Thus, we are most likely headed to a future in which “negative growth” is the norm, a future for which there has not yet been an opportunity to formulate new economic paradigms. In any case,



The Central Business District is seen during a seasonal sandstorm on April 15, 2021 in Beijing, China. China's capital and the northern part of the country typically experience sandstorms that originate in the Gobi desert.

a future of global interconnectivity and endless progress is no longer possible. Without population growth, there can be no long-term increase in productivity, which in turn cannot be transformed into capital or surplus value [to invest elsewhere].

It may be predicted that a “deglobalized” world will be divided into a patchwork of regional trade zones built around

local leaders, without any one global hegemon or distinct international rules-based order. Simply put, it will be a multipolar world in competition for fertility and favorable geography, where billions of people will be made “superfluous” as they eke out an existence in slums and de-urbanized villages under the rule of regional authorities.

As we enter an era of

deglobalization and degrowth, there will be less of everything, and it will become more expensive. This is where we must begin to apply our imagination, for the things of the past are coming to an end and it's up to each of us to fill in the future.

Based on the Chinese-language original posted on Telegram channel iyoutport.



Government supporters and police confront each other outside the President's office in Sri Lanka.

# Transcending Pain: Understand, Accept, and Become Comfortable With Discomfort

By Ila Bonczek  
Vision Times

As humans, we have both a natural and a learned aversion to pain. Be it physical or emotional, we go out of our way to avoid pain. Yet if we try to understand pain and its value, we may come to cherish it and even embrace it as a life-changing and spiritually-uplifting force. At this point, transcending pain becomes possible.

Although pain is subjective and medically undetectable, this sensation is very real to anyone experiencing it. Whether it stems from a physical or psychological blow, the discomfort causes an emotional response. This is where we can take the reins. By adjusting our perspective on pain, we can modify how we react emotionally.

## Understanding the value of pain

As haphazard or unfair as it may seem, pain has a purpose. The most elementary aspect of pain's importance is that it serves as a warning. Stepping into any number of dangerous situations — like exposure to fire, broken glass, or a fierce animal — causes an immediate painful sensation that tells you to step back from it, thereby preventing serious physical injury. But pain also serves a greater purpose, which is multifaceted.

Everyone experiences pain — it is natural and unavoidable. Various faiths hold that pain and suffering are key to spiritual growth; and it can be readily seen that suffering often causes people to do some soul searching and find a higher truth. But pain is not simply a catalyst.

The Buddha school teaches that one suffers due to karmic retribution for past wrongs, and that repaying these debts is one step towards returning to the original pure self. Christian religions hold that trials and tribulations test one's faith and strengthen one's character, bringing you closer to God.

Judaism looks at pain as a part of life in this world, which is intrinsically good. With strong faith, one can look at pain as a blessing in disguise, and gain balance and harmony by overcoming it.

A quote from the ancient Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu

sums up pain's great potential: "New Beginnings are often disguised as painful endings."

## How does pain promote spiritual growth?

Enduring pain and suffering increases wisdom. One who has gone through harsh trials will look at life differently, gain an awareness that goes far beyond oneself, and be less moved by trivial matters.

Not only does pain temper and mature a person, it also shows them that they are stronger than they realized. In facing difficulties, the mind and heart grow steady and sturdy, building a resilience that will help one face future ordeals with grace and dignity. At the same time, it makes one humble, reminding us that we are merely human and subject to all the trials of mortality.

As the opposite of pleasure, pain also gives one an appreciation for all the pleasant things in life. When one experiences gratitude, the heart expands to accept and nurture goodness.

Perhaps most importantly, pain fosters empathy. Personal suffering helps one understand the suffering of others, transforming the selfish ego into a compassionate being. Nearly all spiritual paths stress compassion as a state of consciousness one should aspire to. Feeling moved to serve others rather than oneself lifts one into the spiritual realm.

## Modifying our reaction to pain

Considering all these benefits, it seems one would readily accept and endure pain, if only it weren't so darned uncomfortable. A valuable lesson to remember is that pain's intensity is dependent on our attitude toward it. If we want pain to loosen its grip on our reality, we need to adjust our mentality about it.

When we look at pain with aversion, we have a desire to push it away. Yet the more we try to avoid it, the more intense the pain feels and the longer it lasts. Buddha Shakyamuni illustrated this principle to his disciples with an analogy:

Suppose you are shot with an arrow. Being shot with an arrow is painful enough, but it can be overcome like any other misfortune. The problem arises when we, with our negative thoughts and resistance to the pain, shoot ourselves with a



Man has long recognized that pain is universal. From birth until death, our entire existence is littered with uncomfortable experiences, but each has a reason and can help us grow spiritually.

second arrow.

It is our psychological reaction to pain that causes suffering. When we are governed by our emotions, pursuing the things we like and avoiding the things we don't, we are not in harmony with nature. This in itself can bring discomfort. If we can learn to accept pain as a necessary component of our spiritual growth, it becomes much more bearable.

*"Reversing the thought of the dislike of suffering is the foundation for turning suffering into the path of enlightenment."*

*Eighth-century teacher Shantideva*

## The Four Noble Truths

From the ancient wisdom of Buddhism, Four Noble Truths address suffering in detail.

The First Noble Truth recognizes dukkha (pain) as a fact of life. Our reaction to this pain is suffering, which is divided into three categories.

Dukkha dukkha, or ordinary suffering, is related to things such as aging, sickness and death. One should understand that this discomfort is inevitable and accept it without judgment, resistance, or denial. Viparinama-dukkha is the suffering resulting from change. Resistance to uncomfortable change prolongs the discomfort, while welcoming change opens up opportunities for relief. Sankhara-dukkha is the suffering caused by lack of fulfillment or dissatisfaction. When we learn to appreciate what we have, life naturally becomes more satisfying.

The Second Noble Truth samudaya (arising) addresses the cause of suffering as tanha (cravings or desire). Again, this is divided into three categories: kama-tanha, encompassing sensual and material cravings; bhava-tanha, a craving for permanence; and vibhava-tanha, the wish to avoid unpleasant realities. Greed, ignorance and hatred are named as the three poisons and recognized as the root of all suffering.

The Third Noble Truth nirodha



Addressing the cause of your pain will take you on a spiritual journey.

## Pain's intensity is dependent on our attitude toward it.

by fear, because we dread losing the thing we are attached to. The same holds true for our attachment to comfort. Our fear of discomfort adds significantly to our pain and suffering because it disturbs our peace of mind.

Learning to let go, and take lightly all human attachments is a common spiritual goal. One cannot be content while clinging to worldly concerns. The more we can detach ourselves from our desires and fears, the less pain can move us to suffering.

If you start to pay attention to what goes in your mind, you will find there are many, many attachments that play on your emotions, most of which revolve around wanting to control the outcome of things that are not within your control. Liberating yourself from these attachments is a big step in the spiritual journey, and one which will ultimately help you transcend pain.

Eliminating attachments does not mean giving up the

(cessation) concerns the solution to suffering. It suggests we do away with our cravings. By breaking away from our desires we become free.

The Fourth Noble Truth reveals the magga, (eightfold path) as the way to enlightenment and the elimination of suffering. On this path, one aspires to correct action, concentration, effort, intention, livelihood, mindfulness, speech, and views. By letting go of attachments, one can follow this path.

## Letting go of attachments

While we may think the things we are attached to are good, any strong attachment is accompanied

thing itself. It simply means you recognize that your happiness is not dependent on that thing, and neither does that thing define who you are. You can take it or leave it and you will still be whole and complete.

By letting go of the aversion to pain, pain loses its control over you and you can eventually transcend it.

## Transcending pain through mindfulness

You don't need to become a Buddhist monk to transcend pain, but you will need to exercise patience and fortitude in observing your mind to examine the motives behind your thinking. By practicing mindfulness, you can gradually learn to recognize the thoughts and attachments that don't serve us, and make a conscious choice to eliminate them.

So many of our everyday thoughts are fixed on the future or past. Mindfulness is the practice of living in the present moment — observing your thoughts objectively as they come. By becoming aware of your intentions, you can develop a mental clarity that will help you let go of the various attachments behind your discomfort.

Transcending pain takes time, and it requires a steady effort. To help you persevere, recall the benefits of pain and remember that — like everything else in life — pain is temporary. Through meditation and mindfulness, we can examine our pain and learn from it. This is also a good opportunity to discover all the aspects of your life that are good and find satisfaction in what is, rather than intentionally pursuing satisfaction from what isn't.

Try sitting quietly with your pain. Be it a nagging physical pain, or emotional pain like anger, fear, or sadness; tune into it without dwelling on it. Can you see its root cause? Ask for guidance and you may receive some insight into how to address it and bring yourself into balance.

While uncovering the attachments that cause you to suffer, try to accept and endure the natural discomfort of existence. Rather than looking at yourself as a victim, resisting change, and denying what you don't like, relax; let nature take its course and find harmony as you become one with the universe. Through deep spiritual work, one can achieve a state of harmony where all experiences are equally agreeable.



Our resistance to pain is like shooting a second arrow on top of the first. We can choose not to shoot the second arrow.

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—Richard Wolfe, former VP of technology at 20th Century Fox

# Should We Evaluate Animal Intelligence in Assessing the Value of Non-human Life?

As our understanding of animal intelligence and capabilities grows, a growing number of scientists have begun to rethink the way animal cognition is assessed, resulting in compelling findings about unique animal capabilities that surpass human abilities.

Findings on animal intelligence have, in turn, influenced the way we perceive and treat different species. After surveying more than 1,000 Americans, the non-profit Faunalytics found that people are more willing to support the conservation of a species if they believe it to be intelligent, and less likely to feel empathy for small-bodied animals used for food.

Have we always valued animals based on how their abilities compared with ours? If we take a look at how our ancestors perceived and treated animals in the past, we may find a set of rational and moral criteria to guide us in assessing animals' lives.

## The status of animals in the ancient world

### • Ancient Greece

As the prevalent view in the West for nearly two thousand years, Aristotle's position — which took rationality and moral equality as the main criteria — was the first to place animals far below humans in the categorization of beings. "Plants are created for the sake of animals," he claimed, "and animals for the sake of men." He believed that animals were irrational and had no interests of their own, which placed them in a different moral realm than humans.

One of his pupils dared to take a different opinion. Theophrastus, his successor in the Peripatetic

school, argued that animals can reason, sense and feel just as humans do, and that killing them for food was unjust. But he was not the first to defend the life of animals in ancient Greece.

Influenced by the animist school, the prominent philosopher Pythagoras had already urged respect for animals, which, according to him, had the same kind of soul as humans. He believed that humans and non-humans were one spirit and that souls were reincarnated from human to animal and vice versa.

This Greek thinker has been remembered through generations not only for his famous triangle theorem, but also for his spiritual insight and humane treatment of animals.

### • Early religions

In the East, respect for animals had already been advocated by the Jains in India. Being the first religious philosophy to promote total nonviolence toward animals of all forms, Jainism established "noninjury" or "non-harm" to any life as one of its fundamental principles.

As religions developed in the West, Judaism instructed people to show kindness and to respect animals, which, according to the Book of Genesis, were provided to humans to "Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth and conquer it." Thus, while killing animals for food was a common practice among Jews, inflicting unnecessary pain on animals was forbidden.

Although God had given humans dominion over animals, both beings were valuable and said to be — not have — a living soul. Since each of these souls was associated with the breath of humans given by YHWH, respect for animals was a moral imperative. Man was expected to feed his animals before himself, and to

Asian cultures have a long tradition of coexisting with animals based on spiritual beliefs.



SASINT VIA PIXABAY

alleviate suffering in animals.

### • An unexpected turn

Compassion for animals experienced a significant downfall in Roman times, during which animals were often cooked alive to improve the flavor, and fierce fights between chained animals were an essential source of entertainment.

Historian W.E.H. Lecky, described the Roman games first held in 366 BCE, "Four hundred bears were killed in a single day under Caligula [12–41] ... Nero [37–68], four hundred tigers fought with bulls and elephants. ... So intense was the craving for blood, that a prince was less unpopular if he neglected the distribution of corn than if he neglected the games."

But even amidst the generalized cruelty, there were those who manifested their empathy for animals. The Roman philosopher Porphyry wrote two treatises on the subject, *De Abstinence* (On Abstinence) and *De Non Necandis ad Epulandum Animantibus* (On the Impropriety of Killing Living Beings for Food), while Plutarch wrote some heartfelt lines in his manuscript *On the Eating of Flesh*:

"But for the sake of some little mouthful of flesh, we deprive a soul of the sun and light, and of that proportion of life and time it had been born into the world to enjoy. And then we fancy that the voices it utters and screams forth to us are nothing else but certain inarticulate sounds and noises..."

### • Eastern influence

As Western thought was being shaped by classical influences, the East saw the spread of Buddhism and its perception of animals as sentient beings. According to its teachings on rebirth and karmic retribution, human souls could be reborn as animals if they



ARTHOUSE STUDIO VIA PEXELS

Due to the extreme continental climate, the Mongolian diet consists mainly of dairy products, meat and animal fats. For thousands of years, nomads have passed on their wisdom of living in harmony with nature rather than fearing or destroying it.

misbehaved, which entailed much more suffering compared to that of a human life.

By this logic, Buddhists believe that any given animal could have been their mother, sibling, child or friend in a past life; thus, we should treat them with the same moral standards as we do humans. By regarding all souls as part of the Supreme being, Buddhism teaches that animals are part of our universal family.

## Animal intelligence influencing our perceptions

Frans de Waal, a primatologist at Emory University, has been studying animals for years. In his book *Are We Smart Enough to Know How Smart Animals Are?*, de Waal describes cases in which animals exhibit surprising cognitive abilities.

"We hear that rats may regret their own decisions, that crows manufacture tools, that octopuses recognise human faces, and that special neurons allow monkeys to learn from each other's mistakes," he wrote.

Along with a better public

understanding and appreciation of animals derived from these findings, numerous movements for animal rights have emerged, culminating in the idea of animal liberation, which advocates for an end to speciesism — the belief that humans possess moral rights unlike other species.

Some animal liberationists have employed moral shock as a method to raise awareness of animal suffering, with a number of activists resorting to property damage, animal releases, intimidation, and direct violence as a means to change society through force and fear. Others rely on nonviolent education and moral persuasion to promote veganism and the abolishment of animal agriculture.

Yet the question remains: "Where does one draw the line?" As de Waal told BBC, "I find it a very difficult topic to say that an elephant deserves certain rights or a chimpanzee deserves certain rights and a mouse doesn't or a dog doesn't."

As many animal rights advocates have resorted to eating

insects to avoid the killing of larger animals, the question arises as to whether all animals have moral standing. With fur coats having gone out of fashion and many conservationists targeting silk production next, we are left to wonder if such extreme postures will really do any good for humanity and our coexistence with the ecosystem.

## Alternative views

According to Diana Rodgers, a nutritionist and sustainability advocate, opting for a lifestyle that excludes all forms of animal use may not be the solution. She explains that measures such as eliminating animal agriculture and adopting a plant-based diet are not the main issue. The matter revolves around the way animals are treated and the way natural cycles are maintained or disrupted.

Dr. Joel Kahn, a Detroit cardiologist, explained that the method of mass production is applied to animals by confining them in cramped enclosures and denying them normal social interaction. These conditions, according to Kahn, lead to aggression, which farmers usually control by sedating the animals.

"The problem is, we've really gotten pretty far away from what nature is," said Rodgers. She explained that in a not-too-distant past, large herds lived in harmony with the environment, and that animals raised for meat enjoyed a lifestyle similar to that of their wild counterparts.

According to Rogers, raising meat may actually be good for the environment. "Animal poop is not waste, it's actually fertilizer, and it can be quite valuable to the ecosystem," she said. "We don't see it that way today because we store it in manure lagoons and we're overcrowding animals in factory farm settings."

## Returning to tradition

Rodgers refers to Mongolians as a good example of coexistence and dependence on animals: "Think of the Mongolians, they have grazing animals, not greenhouse tomatoes. They're living on animals because that's what does well on their land. And they're pretty healthy, too."

She explained that raising animals to provide nutritious foods has always been a traditional practice in many cultures around the world, just as meat, dairy, and eggs have been an integral component of their diets. The key, then, may be to return to traditional practices that respect the lives of animals and, at the same time, recognize their role in human survival. In this way, our harmonious coexistence with animals becomes possible.



UNKNOWN VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

15th c. depiction of Jewish ritual slaughter of animals for consumption. Jews must prepare and eat their food according to the laws set forth in the Torah

# Guan Hanqing—The Greatest Chinese Playwright

By *Vision Times*

The remarkable Guan Hanqing\* lived at a time when the Mongols had invaded China to include it in the vast Eurasian territories that comprised the Mongol Empire. The Yuan Dynasty, established by the conquerors, saw little use for the traditional civil service exams or learned bureaucrats. Instead, they introduced a system of social castes that placed Chinese scholars at nearly the lowest level — just above beggars.

This was a blow to the Chinese academic tradition, which had always prized education. However, it would also force the country's scholars to adapt and innovate.

Educated in the Confucianism of the defeated Chinese empire, Guan was one of those scholars determined to make the best of being relegated to the lower orders of society. His humor and wit

became a symbol of resistance and defiance to the social and political system of the time.

## A versatile and self-confident artist

The playwright, who often described himself as a copper ball that "could never be boiled, steamed, crushed, or fried," did not enjoy much fame or wealth during his lifetime. Making his modest character evident, he enjoyed spending time with ordinary people to understand and learn in detail about their ways of life. Rumor has it that Guan occasionally worked with acting societies and personally participated in performances.

Guan Hanqing wrote over 60 plays, and although only 14 of them have survived, many have been regarded by posterity as masterpieces. Aiming to reflect a wide range of social conditions, his plots often focused on human suffering due to injustice, as well as the wisdom and talents of



ILNAR KARIM/VISION TIMES

Guan Hanqing

ordinary people.

## Carefully crafted stories

Depicted with unusual elegance, Hanqing's plays were notable for their expressive and realistic portrayal of his characters. Making use of colloquial speech, each character brought color to the scene through pompous, sometimes cheerful, sometimes

arrogant and sometimes good-natured attitudes.

Although his plots described people of all social classes through contradictions, climaxes and narrations; women of lower social class frequently made their appearance, shining for their sincerity, kindness, rationality and witty character in their daily struggles. His plays, which have

been performed throughout history to the present day, have been translated into English, French, German and Japanese.

## A famous tale of divine justice

One of Hanqing's most memorable plays, which continues to be popular among Chinese today, is *The Injustice to Dou E* (竇娥冤). The exquisite tale tells the story of Dou E, a widowed child bride who was condemned for crimes committed by a rejected suitor.

Choosing to accept the blame to prevent her elderly stepmother from being tortured, Dou E was executed, but not before prophesizing three phenomena that would prove her innocence: blood would rain from the sky, snow would fall in the high of summer and a severe draught would hit the town for three years. And after the pious woman was beheaded on a midsummer day, a heavy snow began to fall as a sign from Heaven for the injustice that had been committed.

Since Guan Hanqing's time, the story of Dou E has been repeated and alluded to as a tale of caution for those who would imagine they

hold absolute power over others. The phrase "snowing in June" is widely used as a metaphor for a miscarriage of justice.

Today, some Chinese have continued to see real-life examples of what might be understood as heavenly warnings in an age when the totalitarian communist regime runs China with an iron fist.

In March 2006, the city of Zhuozhou, Hebei Province saw its skies turn yellow and gray when two female Falun Dafa practitioners, who had been subjected to rape in police custody, were arrested in Fengtai District. The arrest, which took place 10 days before Chun-fen — the middle of Spring season — was followed by a dense snowstorm unlike any seen all year.

Observers of the perplexing scene took it as a sign of grievance from the heavens for the persecution of Falun Gong, a spiritual practice centered on the moral principles of truthfulness, compassion and forbearance.

\* *The years of his life are not exactly known — he was born around 1229-1241 and died between 1297-1307.*