

# BEIJING REVIEW

VOL.66 NO.45 NOVEMBER 9, 2023

北方周報 WWW.BJREVIEW.COM

## A BRAVE NÜ WORLD

The changing roles of women in Chinese society



RMB6.00  
 USD1.70  
 AUD3.00  
 GBP1.20  
 CAD2.60  
 CHF2.60  
 JPY188

ISSN 1000-9140



9 771000 914239

邮发代号2-922·国内统一连续号: CN11-1576/G2

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Published every Thursday by  
CICG Center for Americas, 24 Baiwanzhuang Lu,  
Beijing 100037, China

**Overseas Distributor:** China International Book Trading  
Corporation (Guoji Shudian), P. O. BOX 399,  
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**General Distributor for Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan:**  
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17/FI, Paramount Bldg, 12 Ka Yip St, Chai Wan, HK  
**Tel:** 852-28046687 **Fax:** 852-28046409

*Beijing Review* (ISSN 1000-9140 USPS 2812) is published weekly  
in the United States for US\$64.00 per year by Cypress Books,  
360 Swift Avenue, Suite 48, South San Francisco, CA 94080  
News Postage Paid at South San Francisco, CA 94080  
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Beijing Review*,  
Cypress Books, 360 Swift Avenue, Suite 48,  
South San Francisco, CA 94080

## Gender Dynamics

Gender equality is one of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals that the UN has vowed to accomplish by 2030. In China, it has long been a much valued concept, as evidenced by Chairman Mao Zedong's famous statement, "Women hold up half the sky."

The role of women has recently come into the spotlight again with the convening of the 13th National Women's Congress on October 23-26. The congress, held every five years, is the highest leading body of women's federations together with the All-China Women's Federation (ACWF) Executive Committee, which is elected by it.

During a talk with the newly elected ACWF leadership following the congress, President Xi Jinping said promoting gender equality and the all-round development of women and children, and protecting their legitimate rights and interests are important components of Chinese modernization.

Women account for more than 40 percent of China's total workforce, and 45.8 percent of science and technology workers. They now make up 26.5 percent of the deputies to the National People's Congress, the top legislature, and 22.4 percent of the members of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) National Committee, the national political advisory

body, both currently at a record high.

The average life expectancy of Chinese women now exceeds 80 years, four years higher than the world average for women. The gender gap in compulsory education—first-ninth grades—has been eliminated, and there are now more women than men engaged in tertiary and postgraduate education.

However, women's development is still an ongoing process. The UN has cautioned slow progress means the world is not currently on track to achieve its gender equality goal. In China, too, challenges remain. But its commitment to dismantling systemic barriers to the empowerment of women is unwavering.

The National Program for Women's Development (2021-30) says the proportion of female delegates to any Communist Party of China congress should not be lower than the proportion of female Party members in the area served by it. The program also pledges to increase female representation in people's congresses and CPPCC committees at local and national levels.

In a nutshell, China will continue to advance the cause of women, with the aim of providing equal opportunities on all fronts, including education, career development and political participation. **BR**



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JAPAN.....JPY188 EUROPE.....EUR1.90  
TÜRKIYE.....YTL5.00 HK.....HKD9.30 NEPAL.....RS40

主管单位：中国外文出版发行事业局

主办单位：中国外文局美洲传播中心（北京周报社）

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印刷：北京华联印刷有限公司

北京周报 英文版2023年 第45期 ISSN 1000-9140

国内统一连续出版物号：CN11-1576/G2 邮发代号：2-922

广告许可证0171号 北京市期刊登记证733号

国内零售价：人民币6.00元



# ALL ABOARD FOR ANTARCTICA

Members of China's 40th Antarctic scientific expedition team board research icebreaker *Xuelong* at a base dock in Shanghai on November 1. The team set sail that same day, embarking on a mission expected to last over five months.

This is the first time China's Antarctic scientific research mission will be carried out by three ships, including two research icebreakers and a cargo vessel.

The team, consisting of over 460 people, will investigate the impact of climate change on the Antarctic ecosystem, as well as Antarctica's role in climate change. They will collaborate with Norwegian and Australian counterparts on cutting-edge research projects.



## Return to Earth

Astronaut Jing Haipeng salutes the crowd outside the return capsule of the *Shenzhou-16* manned spaceship at the Dongfeng landing site in Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region in north China on October 31. The spaceship's return capsule, carrying astronauts Jing Haipeng, Zhu Yangzhu and Gui Haichao, landed at the site earlier that day.

## Free Trade Zone

The State Council, China's cabinet, has issued a general plan for establishing the Xinjiang Pilot Free Trade Zone (FTZ), marking a significant strategic move in the promotion of reform and opening up in the new era, Xinhua News Agency reported on October 31.

The country will make efforts to turn the FTZ into a model for promoting high-quality development in its central and western regions and a pivotal hub for Xinjiang to integrate into the "dual circulation" of the domestic and international markets, according to the plan.

China's "dual circulation" economic development pattern

is a development paradigm in which the domestic and overseas markets reinforce each other, with the domestic market being the mainstay.

The FTZ will serve the construction of the core area of the Belt and Road Initiative, help the building of a "golden channel" between Asia and Europe and a bridgehead for China's westward opening up, and actively contribute to the China-Central Asia community with a shared future. The Belt and Road Initiative is a China-proposed initiative to boost global connectivity along the ancient Silk Road routes.

The plan will grant the FTZ greater autonomy in reform, allowing it to explore ways different from other FTZs, and cultivate

and expand industries unique to Xinjiang or in which Xinjiang has advantages.

## Creative Cities

Chaozhou in Guangdong Province in south China and Chongqing Municipality in southwest China have been selected by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to join the organization's Creative Cities Network (UCCN).

The two Chinese cities, along with 53 others around the world, were selected to join the UCCN network on October 31, also known as World Cities Day, UNESCO said in a press release issued the same day.

"New cities were acknowledged for their strong commitment to harnessing culture and creativity as part of their development strategies, and displaying innovative practices in human-centered urban planning," UNESCO added.

Chaozhou and Chongqing have been granted the status of Creative City of Gastronomy and of Design, respectively.

"The cities in our Creative Cities Network are leading the way when it comes to enhancing access to culture and galvanizing the power of creativity for urban resilience and development," UNESCO Director General Audrey Azoulay said.

## Relics Survey

China will launch its fourth survey on immovable national cultural relics in November, Xinhua News Agency reported on October 27. The survey is scheduled to take place from November this year to June 2026.

A circular released by the State Council noted that the survey aims to gather information on all immovable cultural relics above ground, underground and underwater in China, including their names, dates, and state of preservation. Previously identified cultural relics will be reviewed, while newly discovered ones will be studied and catalogued.

Through the survey, the country will establish a comprehensive catalogue of its fixed cultural relics and a database containing their information, said the circular.

## Health Service Capacity

The health service capacity of medical institutions in China has seen significant improvement

this year, Chinese health officials said on November 1.

From January to September, medical institutions in China saw a total of 5.11 billion medical visits, statistics from the National Health Commission (NHC) showed. The commission also recorded 220 million hospital discharges of recovered patients in that period.

According to Lei Haichao, Vice Minister of the NHC, the statistics indicate that the people's demand for health services has been effectively met, and these services were delivered with greater efficiency.

Basic public health services provided at the primary level have been bolstered as well. NHC official Wang Bin said that in the first half of 2023, nearly 90 million people aged 65 and above enjoyed health management through such services, increasing by 40 percent compared with the same period last year.

## Money Laundering Charges

Chinese procuratorial organs have maintained their tough stance on money laundering, with 1,718 individuals indicted for such crimes from January to

September, up 14.8 percent year on year, the Supreme People's Procuratorate (SPP) said on October 26.

The SPP attributed the increase to the high incidence of crimes such as telecom fraud and cross-border gambling.

With the application of online payment, blockchain and other information technologies, money laundering crimes have taken advantage of new methods such as virtual currency transactions, making it more difficult to crack down on these crimes, the SPP said.

The SPP will strengthen its cooperation with other organizations and pledge more efforts to prosecute money laundering cases, it said.

## Tourism Promotion

Iconic tourist destinations in Tibet Autonomous Region in southwest China, such as the Potala Palace, will be open to the public free of charge from November 1 to March 15, 2024, as part of the region's winter tourism promotion.

The regional tourism development department announced on October 31 that during the winter promotion period, all scenic spots in Tibet, except temple



## In and Out

Street view outside the Sixth China International Import Expo (CIIE) venue in Shanghai on October 31. The Sixth CIIE takes place in Shanghai from November 5 to 10.

sites, that are rated at or above 1A will be open to the public free of charge. China rates tourist attractions from 1A to 5A based on their overall quality.

During the winter months, hotels, restaurants and passenger transportation services will offer off-season prices.

Local authorities are planning to provide incentives or subsidies to travel agencies, tourism and transportation

companies, as well as airlines, to serve travel routes to and from Tibet.

Tibet received 49.67 million domestic and overseas visitors in the first three quarters of this year, up 67.4 percent year on year. The region's tourism revenue surged 46.2 percent year on year to about 59.4 billion yuan (\$8.1 billion) during this period, according to the regional tourism bureau.



## Stamp of Approval!

A child poses for photos on Duyou Street in Chongqing Municipality, southwest China, on October 29. The street, named after a postal administration in the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), has been transformed into a popular tourist destination featuring postal culture.

## Business Environment

The majority of foreign-funded companies operating in China are satisfied with the country's favorable business environment, according to a recent survey.

Conducted by the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade (CCPIT) during the third quarter of this year, the survey showed the business environment in the country in terms of tax payments, market access and dispute resolution is widely praised by the 700 foreign-funded enterprises surveyed.

Nearly 90 percent of the companies are satisfied with the aforementioned business environment, Zhang Xin, a spokesperson for the CCPIT, told a press conference on October 31.

Foreign companies are optimistic about their development in China, with over 80 percent of respondents expecting their return

on investment to remain flat or increase this year, Zhang said.

## Manufacturing PMI

The purchasing managers' index (PMI) for China's manufacturing sector came in at 49.5 in October, down from 50.2 in the previous month, data from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) showed on October 31.

A reading above 50 indicates expansion and below that mark, contraction.

The sub-index for large enterprises remained in the expansion zone at 50.7 in October, down from 51.6 in the previous month. The sub-index for production came in at 50.9, a drop from 52.7 a month earlier, affected by factors such as a high comparative basis in September and fewer working days in October due to the Mid-Autumn Festival and National Day holiday, according to NBS statistician Zhao Qinghe.

Enterprises anticipate manufacturing activities to pick up in

the near term, with the sub-index for production and business expectations at 55.6, up from 55.5 in September and above 55 for four consecutive months.

Commenting on manufacturing PMI data, which dipped in October after climbing above 50 for the first time in half a year last month, Zhao said the country needs to further consolidate the foundation for a sustainable economic recovery as the level of the country's economic climate is moderating.

NBS data also revealed that non-manufacturing activity remained in expansion territory in October, with the PMI for this sector reaching 50.6, down from 51.7 in September.

## Cross-Border RMB Use

Cross-border renminbi (RMB) payments and receipts expanded 24 percent year on year to 38.9 trillion yuan (\$5.3 trillion) in the first nine months of this year,

playing an improved role in serving the real economy, the People's Bank of China (PBC), the country's central bank, said.

Of the total, RMB-settled trade accounted for 24.4 percent of total cross-border goods trade settled in both domestic and foreign currencies, up 7 percentage points year on year and the highest level seen in recent years, according to a PBC report.

The function of the RMB as a financing currency continues to improve. Policies related to practices such as overseas lending by domestic banks and domestic bond issuance by overseas institutions have been introduced, and the RMB investment and financing environment has continued to improve, the report said.

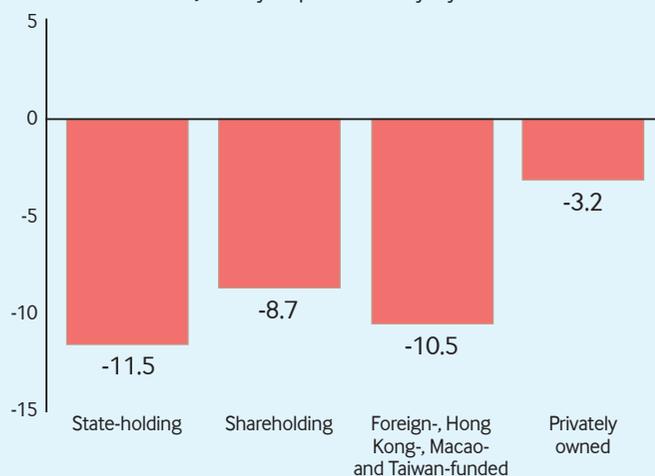
Trading on the offshore RMB markets has become more active. The balance of RMB deposits on the main offshore markets was about 1.5 trillion yuan (\$205 billion) by the end of last year,

## NUMBERS

**Industrial Enterprise Profit by Business Type**  
January-September (bln yuan)



**Industrial Enterprise Growth by Business Type**  
January-September (% y.o.y.)



returning to a historical high, the report said.

## Carbon Market

China's national carbon market, the largest of its kind in the world, has significantly enhanced the awareness and ability of enterprises to reduce emissions since it was launched over two years ago, the Ministry of Ecology and Environment said on October 27.

Carbon markets are trading systems where carbon credits are bought and sold. Companies or individuals can use carbon markets to offset their greenhouse gas emissions by purchasing carbon credits from entities that remove or reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

From the market's launch date of July 16, 2021 to October 25 this year, its total transaction volume of carbon emission allowances was 365 million tons, with a total transaction value of about 19.44 billion yuan (\$2.7 billion), Xia Yingxian,

Director of the ministry's Climate Change Department, said at a press conference.

A total of 2,257 power companies were included on the national carbon market in 2021 and 2022, covering annual carbon emissions of over 5 billion tons, Xia added.

As a next step, China will include more qualified industries in the national carbon market.

China has announced that it will peak carbon dioxide emissions before 2030 and achieve carbon neutrality before 2060.

## Air Freighters

The Commercial Aircraft Corp. of China (COMAC) delivered the first batch of two air freighters converted from ARJ21 passenger aircraft on October 30, a milestone in the conversion program for China's homegrown regional jetliner.

The converted aircraft has a designed maximum payload of 10 tons and a flight range of 2,778 km. It is primarily intended

for transporting cargo, mail and express shipments on domestic routes and short-haul international routes, according to the COMAC.

The ARJ21 freighter conversion program was officially initiated in May 2020. After going through phases of initial and detailed design, as well as conversion, the aircraft received its airworthiness approval from the Civil Aviation Administration of China in January of this year.

China is the largest air cargo market in Asia, with its booming e-commerce and express delivery industries driving increased demand for cargo transportation.

Industry insiders believe the ARJ21 freighter could be a new option to explore low-capacity and specialized cargo markets, as well as high-altitude regions.

## Non-Financial ODI

China's non-financial outbound direct investment (ODI) increased 18.7 percent year on year to

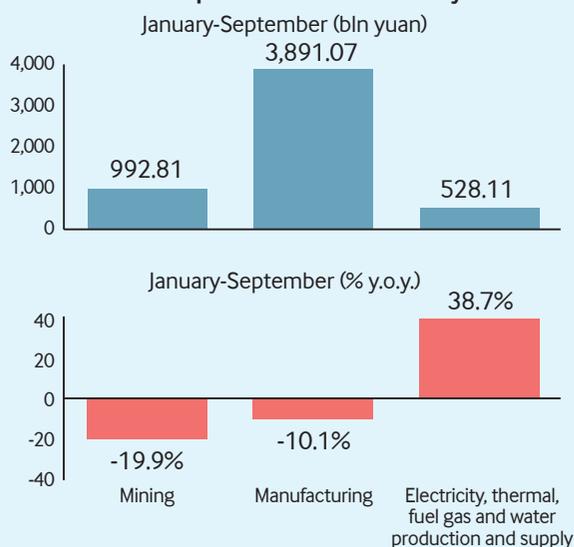
673.14 billion yuan (\$92 billion) in the first nine months of this year, official data showed on October 26. In short, ODI is a business strategy in which a domestic company expands its operations into a foreign country.

In U.S. dollar terms, the ODI went up 11.8 percent from a year earlier, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

The non-financial ODI in countries participating in the Belt and Road Initiative, a China-proposed initiative to boost connectivity along and beyond the ancient Silk Road routes, came in at \$164.71 billion during the January-September period, up 27.7 percent year on year.

The turnover of contracted projects overseas grew 8.2 percent year on year to 764.82 billion yuan (\$104.5 billion), while the contract value of newly signed projects amounted to 986.28 billion yuan (\$134.8 billion), up 1.5 percent from a year earlier, the ministry said.

### Industrial Enterprise Profit and Growth by Sector



### Profit Changes for Major Sectors



(Source: National Bureau of Statistics)

# THIS WEEK **WORLD**



## MYANMAR

Momo, a well-known Asian elephant at the Yangon Zoological Gardens, celebrates her 70th birthday in Yangon on October 29



## MEXICO

Hurricane Otis leaves a trail of destruction in an area of Acapulco, Guerrero State, on October 25. As of November 1, the storm had killed more than 40 people, causing economic losses exceeding \$10 billion



## HUNGARY

Local residents consult with traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) experts during the 2023 World TCM Day Free Consultation event in Budapest on October 28



## TÜRKIYE

People participate in celebrations marking the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the country in Ankara on October 29



YINHAI

YINHAI



## BELARUS

The high-level conference Eurasian Security: Reality and Prospects in a Transforming World takes place in Minsk on October 26



## PALESTINE

Rescue workers pull a person out of the rubble of a building that was destroyed in an Israeli air strike in the city of Khan Younis in the southern Gaza Strip on November 1



YINHAI

## ↓ SCI-FI WRITER WINS TOP AWARD

Chinese author **Hai Ya** took home the Best Novelette award of the 2023 Hugo Awards, the world's top prize for science fiction literature, at the 81st World Science Fiction Convention in Chengdu, Sichuan Province, on October 21.

Hai won the award for *The Space-Time Painter*, inspired by Song Dynasty (960-1279) landscape painting masterpiece *A Panorama of Rivers and Mountains* by Wang Ximeng. Hai wove the story of Wang's life into a thriller that combines elements of traditional Chinese culture and history with sci-fi and detective genres.

Beginning his career in the financial industry, Hai started writing sci-fi stories in 2016 and published his first work in 2019. He is the third Chinese writer to win a Hugo Award after Liu Cixin in 2015 and Hao Jingfang in 2016.



## Blast From the Past

**Rednet.cn**  
**October 27**

Recently, a batch of middle-aged and senior pop icons have returned to the big time, as many young Chinese are turning away from young celebrities toward these “uncle” and “auntie” stars.

The rise of social media has powered their comeback. One example is Fei Xiang, a 62-year-old Chinese-American pop singer who recently starred in *Creation of the Gods I: Kingdom of Storms*, a massive box office hit. The singer was back in the spotlight after his unique style of speaking Chinese went viral on social media.

Another factor that has figured prominently in the rise of icons like Fei is that people are becoming increasingly disillusioned with young celebrities, some of whom have fallen because of drug addiction, tax fraud and sex scandals. These inappropriate behaviors aside, many young artists have long been criticized for their lack of acting skills. In comparison, older celebrities, who rose to fame before the digital age arrived, often excel in their crafts.

The reemergence of older icons reflects a larger trend in the Chinese entertainment circle, which is becoming less centered on looks and more focused on discipline, hard work and abilities.



## Craft Beer Boom

**Lifeweek**  
**October 23**

When it comes to the beer drinking culture in Beijing, one cannot leave out craft beer, small-batch, innovative brews often produced by independent breweries. The local craft beer scene has drastically expanded over the past decade and is now thriving with a mixture of microbreweries, bars and bistros. Now, Beijing is not only the city with the highest number of craft beer bars in China; it also boasts an extremely wide range of beer styles.

“Only by pursuing common security can there be sustainable security.”

Foreign Ministry spokesperson **Wang Wenbin**, commenting on Israel's rejection of a UN resolution calling for a truce in the Gaza Strip at a press briefing on October 31

“The development path of the global gas market will now be determined absolutely exclusively by the new centers of world economic development: the countries of the Global South and those of the Asia-Pacific region.”

**Alexey Miller**, CEO of Russian energy giant Gazprom, in a speech at the 12th St. Petersburg International Gas Forum on November 1

Breweries are not only producing classic wheat beer and India pale ale, the two most popular types among local people, but are also mixing traditional brewing with Chinese elements to create new varieties. One brewery engaged in this kind of creative work is Peiping Machine, a craft brewery hidden in a courtyard in a *hutong* alley. One of its signature drinks is Dragon Well Spring Tea, a brew that combines Longjing (dragon well) tea with wheat to produce a light yellow hue and fresh undertones.

Distinctly local flavors have been introduced into the city's craft beer scene. The Peiping Machine has invented a drink called Green Bean Paste Wheat Beer, the taste of which reminds one of mung bean popsicles, a much-loved delicacy among Beijing locals. YE Brewing, a brewery founded in Shijiazhuang, Hebei Province, created a drink that incorporates the Beijing *douzhi*, a fermented drink made from mung beans, for its store in Beijing.

Expats living in the city have also played a part. Founded by Alex Acker and Kris Li, both of whom are long-time Beijing residents from North America, Jing-A boasts a series of unexpected flavors created from its founders' experience. One of their signatures is Beijing Bikini Watermelon Wheat, a drink inspired by the fresh watermelon scent lingering in *hutongs* during the summer.

## Saving Small Museums

**Yangcheng Evening News**  
**October 27**

Museums have always been important repositories of cultural memories for Beijing, a city with a history that dates back over 3,000 years. The city not only houses a collection of massive national museums, but also plenty of small museums dedicated to specific areas of interest ranging from bee keeping and watermelons to tap water and *baijiu*, Chinese distilled alcohol.

However, many of these smaller museums have quietly shut down over the past few years due to their inability to sustain themselves. Some examples include a museum that

showcases the art of Chinese seal engraving and another dedicated to porcelain.

Running a museum is quite expensive, as its interior design, the constantly changing layout of collections and the conservation of exhibits all require a massive input of money. However, these museums often attract only small troupes of connoisseurs and therefore don't generate much revenue from ticket sales.

Although their closures are not entirely surprising, these museums do play a role in preserving China's multilayered culture and showcasing the quirky, lesser-known sides of Beijing. Therefore, more support should be provided to help keep them afloat.

## RENOWNED EPIDEMIOLOGIST DIES

**Wu Zunyou**, an epidemiologist who played a crucial role in China's fight against COVID-19, died in Beijing on October 27 at the age of 60.

As the chief epidemiologist at the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention, Wu, together with his team, was tasked with providing scientific reference for policymakers and communicating knowledge about the disease to the general public.

Wu, a native of Anhui Province, earned a Ph.D. in epidemiology from the University of California, Los Angeles. He had been battling pancreatic cancer, which was diagnosed in early 2021.

In 2022, he received the Nelson Mandela Award for Health Promotion from the World Health Organization for his pioneering achievements in HIV/AIDS prevention, an area on which he spent much of his early career. He also played a role in the campaign against the SARS outbreak in 2003.



**“Youth employment is absolutely an urgent issue currently.”**

**Susana Puerto Gonzalez**, Senior Youth Employment Specialist of the International Labor Organization, in an interview with Xinhua News Agency on the sidelines of the recent World Youth Development Forum in Beijing

**“Seeing is believing. We saw massive development in the form of highways, electricity, telecommunications, and an excellent airport in Lhasa.”**

**Khalil Hashmi**, Ambassador of Pakistan to China, in an interview with Xinhua on his recent trip to Tibet Autonomous Region



## COVER STORY

# SHE POWER

How women in China explore and choose to live life By Lu Yan

**O**nce upon a time... Let's just fast forward to the end: Snow White, poisoned by the evil queen, was finally saved by a handsome prince's kiss of true love and

they lived happily ever after.

Or: Cinderella was finally rescued by a handsome prince from the miserable life her wicked stepmother and stepsisters had made for her, and the duo lived happily ever after.

These were the stories Wu Sijia had listened to countless times as a child. She was once a fan of those

dreamy stories and longed to be like the young women in them: To be found by the "prince," and to live happily ever after.

But as she grew up, the stories began to lose their initial appeal. "The female image portrayed in the