



# 中國制度

研 究 中 心

Research Hub on Institutions of China  
Faculty of Social Sciences, HKU

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- *April 2019 - April 2020*

## Mr. Ma Qiang and Mr. Ma Tianyi of Pizu Group (HK.8053) Donate \$2.1 Million Hong Kong Dollars to RHIC

Mr. Ma Tianyi: "I believe it is necessary, at this crucial moment of fundamental transformation of China, to produce high-quality, innovative, and interdisciplinary research in that field."



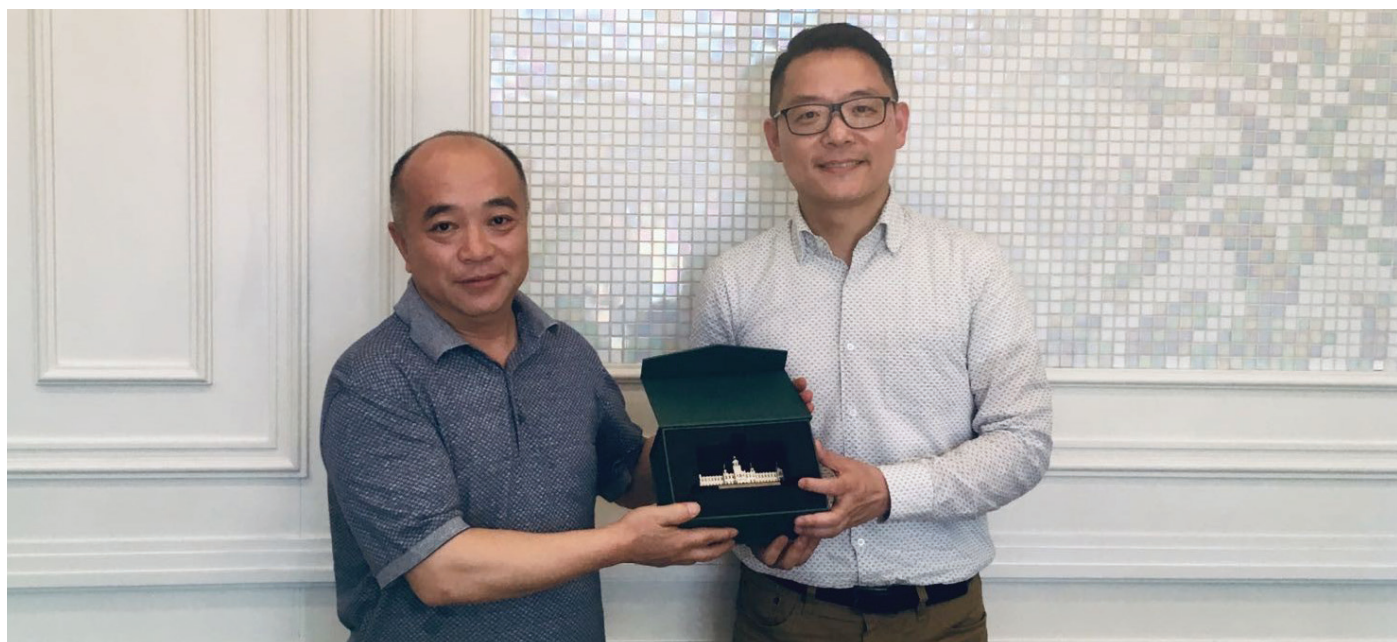
From left: Mr. Ma Tianyi, Dean William Hayward, Dr. Yan Xiaojun

In May 2019, Mr. Ma Qiang, Shareholder of the Hong Kong Pizu Group (HK.8053), and Mr. Ma Tianyi, Executive Director and Vice President of the company's Board of Directors, made a donation in the amount of Two Million Hong Kong dollars to the Research Hub on Institutions of China (RHIC) to support its research on the institutions of contemporary China.

The Ma Family also donated HK\$147,240 for the renovation of a conference room within the Jockey Club Tower on the Centennial Campus for RHIC to hold academic events and research activities.

Mr. Ma Tianyi said, "[t]his donation is made in the name of my father, Mr. Ma Qiang, and myself. I have long paid particular attention to the development of research on the politics of China. I believe it is necessary, at this crucial moment of fundamental transformation of China, to produce high-quality, innovative, and interdisciplinary research in that field."

Mr. Ma emphasized, "I trust that with the support of the Faculty of Social Sciences of HKU, the team of Research Hub on Institutions of China will be able to produce research of significant academic and policy impact with this new funding availability. I am deeply honoured to have this opportunity to contribute to the development of China Studies at your Faculty and your prominent University."



*Mr. Ma Qiang (left) and Dr. Yan Xiaojun (right)*

A donation ceremony was held at Jockey Club Tower on June 10, 2019. Mr. Ma Tianyi delivered the donation on behalf of the Ma family. Professor William Hayward, Dean of Social Sciences, attended the ceremony and officially accepted the donation on behalf of the University.

Ms. Ma Ye and Mr. Ma Suocheng, representatives of the Ma family, attended the ceremony.

Mr. Ma Qiang was unable to attend the ceremony due to other commitments. On June 2, 2019, Dr. Yan Xiaojun, Director of RHIC, visited Mr. Ma Qiang in Beijing and conveyed the University's appreciation of Mr. Ma's generous support to research on contemporary China at HKU.

## In Memoriam: Roderick MacFarquhar

Professor Zhang Xiang, President and Vice-Chancellor of HKU, sends condolences



*Professor Roderick MacFarquhar (1930-2019)*

Roderick MacFarquhar, Emeritus Professor of History and Political Science at Harvard University and Sin Wai-Kin Distinguished Visiting Professor in the Humanities at HKU, passed away on February 10, 2019.

Professor Zhang Xiang, President and Vice-Chancellor of HKU, conveyed condolences in a letter to Professor Lawrence Bacow, President of Harvard University, on February 12, 2019.

President Zhang Xiang said, "It was with deep sorrow and shock that I learnt about the passing of our esteemed colleague, Professor Roderick MacFarquhar. I write to express my greatest condolence on behalf of the University of Hong Kong."

"Professor MacFarquhar was the Sin Wai-Kin Distinguished Visiting Professor in the Humanities at the University of Hong Kong in 2015. He was known among members of the HKU community as a magnificent scholar, ardent humanist, and good friend. Through his writing and teaching on Modern China, Professor MacFarquhar inspired generations of scholars and humanists all over the world. His passing is a heart-breaking loss of not only our universities, but the entire academia," the President said.

The President added, "I firmly believe that Professor MacFarquhar will always be remembered for his insightful wisdom and good character. Knowing that his scholarship will continue to inspire and influence scholars for generations to come is some comfort at this time of great difficulty."

A memorial service in honour of Professor MacFarquhar was held at Harvard Memorial Church in Cambridge, MA on September 5, 2019. Dr. Yan Xiaojun, Director of RHIC, attended the memorial service at the invitation of Harvard University.

Born in Lahore, Pakistan in 1930, Professor Roderick MacFarquhar was a renowned expert on post-1949 Chinese history and politics. Professor MacFarquhar obtained his Bachelor's degree from Keble College, Oxford in 1953, master's degree from Harvard University in 1955, and doctorate degree from the London School of Economics in 1981. He was Leroy B. Williams Professor of History and Political Science at Harvard University and served as Director of the Fairbank Center for Chinese Studies of Harvard University from 1986-1992 and 2005-2006. Some of Professor MacFarquhar's publications and scholarly contributions include; *The Origins of the Cultural Revolution trilogy* and *Mao's Last Revolution*. Professor MacFarquhar also edited *The Cambridge History of China: The People's Republic* and was the founding editor of *The China Quarterly*.



In 2015, Professor MacFarquhar delivered a keynote speech entitled "China in Transition: The Significance of Xi Jinping's Era" at HKU. The speech was highly influential in the academic community and beyond.

Professor MacFarquhar is survived by his wife, Dalena Wright; a son, Rory MacFarquhar, director of global economic policy at Google; a daughter, Larissa MacFarquhar, a staff writer for *The New Yorker Magazine*; and two granddaughters.

## Elizabeth J. Perry of Harvard University Talks about the Sinicizing of a Soviet Practice in Governance of China at RHIC

“Regardless of the positives or negatives of the various initiatives they are asked to advance, work teams can deliver a significant political dividend in terms of central-local relations,” says Professor Perry



*From left: Dean William Hayward, Professor Elizabeth J. Perry, and Dr. Yan Xiaojun*

On June 10, 2019, Professor Elizabeth J. Perry, Director of the Harvard-Yenching Institute and Henry Rosovsky Professor of Government at Harvard University, delivered a public talk in the Distinguished Lecture Series of RHIC. This public talk is entitled “Making Communism Work: Sinicizing a Soviet Practice.”

In her talk, Professor Perry discussed the Chinese practice of “work teams”—ad-hoc units dispatched by the Chinese Communist Party to carry out campaigns via mass mobilization and implement policy. This special political tactic originated from the Soviet Union, yet received remarkable adaptation and localization in China. It exists in various forms such as “supervision team,” “inspection group,” and “propaganda team”, etc. Despite its significance, work teams—a political instrument between formal and informal institutions—have long been understudied.

Professor Perry began with an overview of work teams in the pre-revolutionary era. In the early 1920s, trained Party members were sent to their places of origin or other target sites where they had personal connections to organize peasants. Professor Perry noted that while this rural mobilization system was reminiscent of imperial Chinese practices of sending commissioners to rural areas, it has more kinship to the agitation and propaganda teams of the Soviet Union. In the Chinese Communist Party, the work team is localized and adapted to the Chinese political context.

From the 1930s onwards, work teams were deployed for a range of mass movements, including the Land Reform movement, agricultural collectivization, and the Four Cleans (Socialist Education Movement). In addition, work teams also helped implement public health, farming, and literacy campaigns through a flexible deployment of resources.

Professor Perry notes that this circumventing of formal bureaucracy by enlisting ordinary people in the service of the Party's agenda continues to be a popular practice amongst ordinary Chinese, contributing towards the Party's continued legitimacy and longevity. Today, the work team is still a crucial policy instrument in local governance, serving political functions such as central-local coordination, governance reform, local personnel management, political participation, etc.

Elizabeth J. Perry is Henry Rosovsky Professor of Government at Harvard University and Director of the Harvard-Yenching Institute. She holds a PhD from the University of Michigan and is a former President of the Association for Asian Studies and former Director of Harvard's Fairbank Center for Chinese Studies. Her research focuses on the history of the Chinese revolution and its implications for contemporary Chinese politics. A fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and a corresponding fellow of the British Academy, Professor Perry is the author or editor of more than 20 books. Her book, *Shanghai on Strike: The Politics of Chinese Labor* (Stanford, 1993) received the John King Fairbank Prize of the American Historical Association; her article, "Chinese Conceptions of 'Rights': From Mencius to Mao – and Now" (*Perspectives on Politics*, 2008) received the Heinz I. Eulau Prize of the American Political Science Association.





## Victor Shih of UC San Diego Talks about the Link between Economic Shocks and Authoritarian Stability

“Regimes with confident control over financial institutions and strong ruling parties very likely will survive short economic shocks,” says Dr. Shih



*Dr. Victor Shih (right) and Dr. Zhu Jiangnan (left)*

On May 30, 2019, Dr. Victor Shih, Associate Professor of China-Pacific Relations at the School of Global Policy and Strategy at the University of California, San Diego, gave a public seminar at HKU entitled “Economic Shocks and Authoritarian Stability: Russia, Iraq and China.” The seminar was co-organized by RHIC and Department of Politics and Public Administration, HKU.

Dr. Zhu Jiangnan, Associate Professor at Department of Politics and Public Administration, chaired the event.

Dr. Shih noted that the current research on the stability of authoritarian regimes focuses predominantly on static institutional characteristics. Scholars generally believe that economic crises threaten the stability of authoritarian regimes as they harm the interests of ruling elites and thus diminish their loyalty to the regime. Conventionally, it is believed that democratization is the only cure to the regime instability caused by economic shocks.

Contrary to this received wisdom, Dr. Shih pointed out that economic crises do not necessarily lead to the collapse of authoritarian regimes. During economic crises, authoritarian regimes have three potential options: to maintain the status quo, to change the regime, or to reorganize the ruling coalition. Dr. Shih argued that authoritarian rulers are more inclined to respond to the crises through a deft deployment of coercion and propaganda rather than democratization.



Through the case study of Russia, Iraq, and China, Dr. Shih argued that three variables—namely the duration of the crisis, the strength of financial control and the expectation of future interests—explain the different outcomes of various authoritarian regimes experiencing economic crises.

Dr. Shih particularly zoomed in the regime stability of China. In China, the resilience of the Communist regime is maintained by the strong ruling party, authoritative political leaders, and the ever-strengthening state control over society. Still, looming dangers may be caused by the high level of debt and outflow of foreign exchange, declining identification of the elites with the regime, and the waning cohesion of the ruling circle due to anti-corruption and power centralization.

Finally, Dr. Shih highlighted information asymmetry as the major deficit innate in authoritarian regimes. Still, the flexibility in coalition formation ameliorates this deficit by allowing the rulers to take extraordinary measures to patch the crisis, thus to remain in power despite the lost political promises. However, this may weaken the initiative and support of the elites for the regime, potentially causing political instability.

After the lecture, Dr. Shih answered questions from the audience.

Dr. Victor Shih is an expert on the politics of Chinese banking policies, fiscal policies, and exchange rate, as well as the elite politics of China. He earned his PhD in Government from Harvard University in 2003.

## Zhang Qiong of Renmin University of China Discusses Influence Activities and Bureaucratic Performance in China

Performance of government staff can be improved by introducing uncertainty into the identity of performance evaluators, argues Dr. Zhang



From left: Dr. Zhang Qiong, Dr. Yan Xiaojun, Mr. Larry Li

On August 27, 2019, Dr. Zhang Qiong, Associate Professor from the School of Public Administration and Policy at Renmin University of China, delivered a lecture entitled “Influence Activities and Bureaucratic Performance: Experimental Evidence from China.”

The lecture concerns the system of state employee performance evaluation in China. Particularly, it sheds light on the conundrum of evaluation and workplace productivity known as “influence activities”—that is, instead of focusing on work tasks, the employee may divert their energy to influence and appease the evaluators.

Dr. Zhang conducted a large-scale random field experiment among Chinese grassroots state employees to study their influence activities. She found that while grassroots state employees performed specific influence activities that affected their evaluation results, their co-workers are often able to successfully identify such activities. Dr. Zhang also pointed out that introducing uncertainty to the identity of the evaluators could significantly reduce the influence activities.

Dr. Zhang’s articles appear in *Population Research* (English) and the *Economic Research Journal* (Chinese). In 2017, she received the 17th Sun Yefang Economic Science Award, a biennial award that recognizes outstanding scholarly contributions to the field of economics.

## Yan Xiaojun Delivers a Keynote Speech on the 70th Anniversary of the Founding of the People's Republic of China at the Foreign Correspondents' Club, Hong Kong

When we are reflecting on the past seventy years of the PRC, "we need to see this as an on-going process, a process of transformation and a process of trial and error," Dr. Yan says



*From Left: Dr. Yan Xiaojun, Ms. Jody Schneider*



*From left to right: Mr. Larry Li, Dr. Yan Xiaojun, Mr. Kin Ming Liu, Ms. Jody Schneider, Ms. Hilda Wang*

On October 3, 2019, Dr. Yan Xiaojun, Director of RHIC, delivered a keynote speech entitled "Reflections on China's Transformation: The People's Republic at Seventy" at the Foreign Correspondents' Club, Hong Kong (FCCHK). The year 2019 marks the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the People's Republic of China (PRC), which is founded on October 1, 1949.

Ms. Jody Schneider, FCCHK President and Senior International Editor at Bloomberg News, moderated the lecture and the subsequent discussion.

A welcome reception was held by Ms. Schneider at the FCC prior to Dr. Yan's talk.

Delving into the symbolism of the seventieth anniversary of the establishment of the PRC, Dr. Yan noted that while it was good cause for celebration, the number also reminded the Party of the "vulnerability of a regime in a turbulent domestic and international environment."

Dr. Yan then discussed different global perceptions of the PRC, arguing that examining China's multiple transformations over the course of the past seventy years is key to understanding the country today. China's economic growth and improvement in standard of living, transition to a market economy, and shift from a traditional to a modern society are amongst some of the transformations that are crucial to understanding the body politic of China in the 21st century.

Looking to the future, Dr. Yan highlighted the Chinese Communist Party's role as a "learning regime" by examining its three key faces. Commenting on the PRC's economic transformation, Dr. Yan noted that the Party is "learning by doing." In terms of its political face, the Party's concerns over maintaining leadership stability and political order inform its approaches. Finally, the Party's approach to managing an increasingly pluralist society and solving "social disagreements and conflicts without using outright force" are examples of its commitment to "change, reform, and improve[ment]."

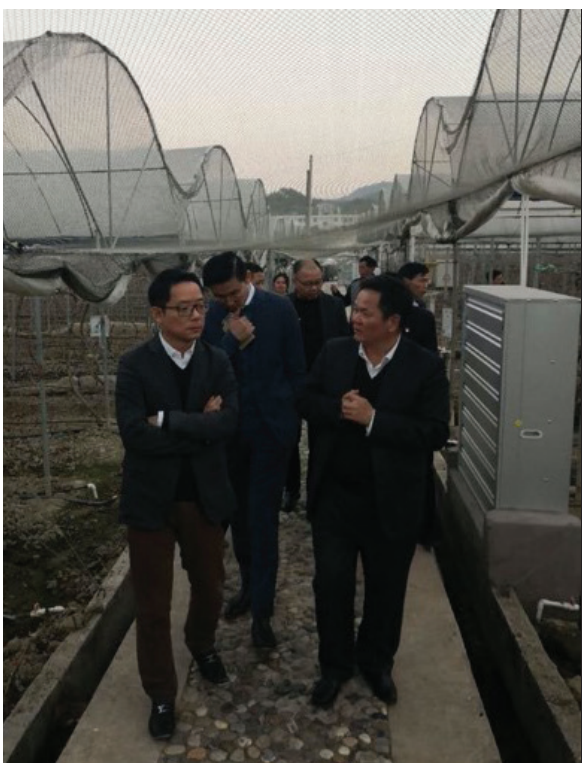
These three faces and the Party's governance are legitimised by four basic discursive lines. The PRC's commitment to economic development as a cornerstone of national self-determination is rooted in its conviction that "lagging behind leaves one vulnerable to attacks." Situating the Party's concentration of political power in the context of modern state-building, Dr. Yan noted that the Party saw "order and stability" as a prerequisite for good governance. In terms of external relations, the Party has relied on its discourse of "peaceful rise" to inform its future-oriented involvement in global affairs. Finally, the discourse of "seeking truth from facts" has enabled the Party's success in governance over the past seventy years.

Drawing on the role of the Party as a "learning regime," Dr. Yan discussed the practice of "One Country, Two Systems" in Hong Kong as an opportunity for the Party to learn how to respond to future issues in the PRC.

After the talk, Dr. Yan answered questions from the public.

## RHIC Establishes a Permanent Fieldwork Site in Longyan City, Fujian Province

Mr. Xu Weize, Secretary of the Longyan Municipal Party Committee, and others meet with the RHIC delegation



From January 8-11, 2020, the RHIC delegation travelled to Longyan City, Fujian Province for the opening ceremony of the new Gutian Permanent Fieldwork Site established by the Hub.

This is the first permanent fieldwork site established by RHIC to extend its field research in grassroots Chinese state. In the future, this site will serve as a base for scholars and students from HKU and international academia to conduct fieldwork, undertake survey investigation and hold academic events. This permanent fieldwork site is expected to play an essential role in bridging the Chinese society with the global China Studies field, facilitating academic research on the institutions of China undertaken by scholars from Hong Kong and beyond.

Mr. Xu Weize, Secretary of the Longyan Municipal Party Committee, welcomed the delegation on January 8 and expressed firm support to this new initiative on the part of the local state.

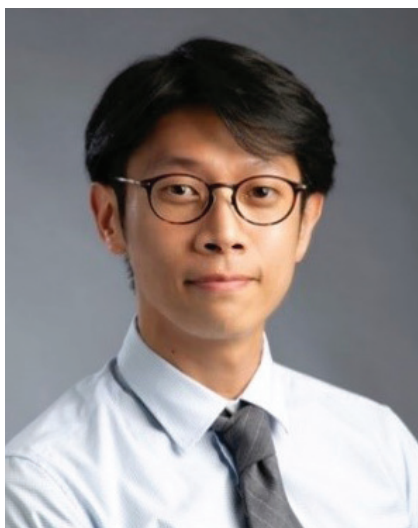
Ms. Deng Jufang, Member of the Standing Committee of the Longyan Municipal Party Committee, attended the opening ceremony of the RHIC permanent fieldwork site on January 9.

Mr. Zeng Hanhui, President of the Gutian Cadre Institute, met the delegation.

After the opening ceremony, the delegation also undertook a fieldtrip to Caixi Town and Huyang Town of Shanghang County.

Principal officials from the Gutian Cadre Institute, Shanghang County and Gutian Town participated in the opening ceremony.

## Our New RHC Deputy Director - Dr. Chan Kwan Nok



Dr. Chan Kwan Nok, Assistant Professor at Department of Politics and Public Administration of HKU, has taken up the role as the Deputy Director of the RHC in Fall 2019.

In recent years, important debates have emerged among scholars and commentators about the institutions of China. From the entrenchment of party control to the growth of digital surveillance, China offers alternative models of governance unanticipated by traditional prescriptions. Although how these models will hold up against the new challenges the country currently faces remains to be seen, one thing is clear: common challenges confronted by governments across the world may be addressed with the kind of unusual and innovative institutional choices that China has made, and systematic research focusing on these institutions can offer fresh insights into how policymakers can design customized responses where one-size-fits-all solutions to problems may be impracticable, if not counterproductive, when taken out of the political context in which they were originally conceived.

Dr. Chan will serve the new Research Hub as a scholar of institutions that govern the use of information in government bureaucracies. All governments process vast amounts of information to learn about changing public demands and plan policy change effectively. While such information is often available from public discussions and media reports, extensive restrictions on how information should be shared and understood can substantially limit the government's exposure to it and its ability to process it even after it has been acquired. How is information supplied when people react to the restrictions by concealing their true preferences and opinions? Will bureaucrats identify emerging problems efficiently when views incongruent with the policy status quo are censored? As these restrictions are periodically intensified and relaxed, is information dealt with differently by the bureaucrats in response? These questions set the general scope of his research, which he hopes will address broader theoretical debates about government bureaucracies as well as the real-world concerns of practitioners.

Dr. Chan is a graduate of the PhD programme in Public Policy at the O'Neill School of Public and Environmental Affairs and the Department of Political Science, Indiana University Bloomington. His peer-reviewed research has appeared in *Governance*, *Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis*, *Policy Studies Journal*, *Regulation & Governance*, and *The Journal of Politics*.

## RHIC Welcomes First Cohort of Visiting Graduate Students

The Research Hub on Institutions of China (RHIC) is committed to becoming a world-class interdisciplinary research hub on China by providing professional training for the next generation of researchers. In Fall 2019, RHIC accepted the first cohort of visiting graduate students from the United States, Japan, and Mainland China.



**Miss Guan Qing** is a doctoral student in Political Science at Northwestern University and the founder of Strait Talk Hong Kong. Her research focuses on democratization and authoritarianism in the developing world, particularly communist regimes. She received a master's degree in East Asian studies from Harvard University and a master's degree in Political Science from Taiwan University.



**Mr. Chen Jie** is an assistant researcher at the Research Centre of Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Macao Affairs at Renmin University of China. He received a master's degree in Laws from the History Department of the Communist Party of China at Renmin University of China in 2017. He is currently a doctoral student studying modern history at Renmin University of China.



**Mr. Liu Dongshu** is a doctoral student in the Department of Political Science, Maxwell School of Public Administration, Syracuse University. His research focuses on Chinese politics, authoritarian rules, political economy, and political behaviour in authoritarian systems. Mr. Liu received a master's degree in Comparative Politics from the London School of Economics in 2013 and a bachelor's degree in Management from the Hong Kong Polytechnic University in 2012.



**Mr. Ye Liuyi** received a master's degree in Economics from Kyoto University, Japan. He is currently a first-year doctoral student in Economics at Kyoto University. His research areas of interest are development economics and applied microeconomics.



## April 2019 - April 2020

On April 16, 2019, a delegation of experts on Sino-US relationship from both the People's Republic of China and the United States led by Professor Wang Jisi, Dean of the Institute of International Strategy at Peking University, visited the University of Hong Kong. Dr. Yan Xiaojun, Director of RHIC, briefed the guests on the Research Hub's establishment and its latest development.

On May 2, 2019, Dr. Yu Zhan, Director of the Sasagawa Japan-China Friendship Fund, visited the RHIC. Dean William Hayward of Faculty of Social Sciences met and extended welcome to Dr. Yu on behalf of the University.

On May 20, 2019, Dr. Yan Xiaojun attended the preparatory meeting for the founding of a "Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao Regional Governance and Public Policy Research Alliance" at the invitation of Sun Yat-sen University.

On June 6, 2019, Ms. Leah Yeak, Consul of Political Section at the Australian Consulate General in Hong Kong, paid a courtesy call on Dr. Yan Xiaojun, Director of RHIC.

On June 27, 2019, RHIC organized a one-day conference on the current situation and future governance of Hong Kong. Experts from Mainland China and Hong Kong attended the conference.

On July 24, 2019, Mr. William D. Spooner, Vice Consul of the Political Section of the Consulate General of the United States in Hong Kong & Macau, paid a courtesy call on Dr. Yan Xiaojun, Director of RHIC.

On October 21-23, 2019, Dr. Yan Xiaojun visited the Seoul National University Asia Centre, Republic of Korea and delivered a lecture entitled "Maintaining Stability: Preventive Authoritarianism and Stability in a County".

On November 2019, an RHIC delegation visited Sun Yat-sen University. Professor Ma Jun, Executive Deputy Secretary and Vice-President of Sun Yat-Sen University Party Committee, and Professor Tan Ankui, Dean of the School of Government at Sun Yat-sen University, met with the delegation.

On November 12, 2019, an RHIC delegation visited the Guangzhou Academy of Social Sciences. Dr. Yan Xiaojun, Director of RHIC, gave a talk. Mr. Yang Zaigao, Vice President of Guangzhou Academy of Social Sciences, moderated the discussion.

On November 21, 2019, an RHIC delegation visited the Institute for Public Policy at Fudan University in Shanghai. Dr. Yan Xiaojun delivered a lecture entitled "Patrolling Harmony: How Does the Local State Keep Social and Political Stability in W County?"

On December 20, 2019, an RHIC delegation visited Yuelu Academy of Hunan University. Professor Chen Yuxiang, Secretary of the Party Committee of Yuelu Academy at Hunan University, accompanied the delegation for a visit to the historical site of the Yuelu Academy. Yuelu Academy is one of the four most prestigious academies over the last 1000 years in China. It has been a famous institution of higher learning as well as a centre of academic activities and cultures since it was formally set up during the Northern Song dynasty.

On April 6-9, 2020, coincided with the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the promulgation of the Hong Kong Basic Law, *Ming Pao* published consecutively four oral history interviews conducted by RHIC with former members of the Hong Kong Basic Law Drafting Committee, Ms. Tam Wai-chu, Mr. Leung Chun-ying, Mr. Lee Chu-ming, and Mr. Tam Yiu-chung. The interviews are part of the RHIC's "One Country, Two Systems" oral history research project, funded by a Strategic Public Policy Research Funding Scheme of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

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