

in the Post-American Era” gives a brief overview of China’s China Dream approach to international relations by examining Liu Mingfu’s *On China* (2011), which sets up what Liu thinks will be China’s “martial rise” to be more powerful than the United States, which he thinks gained power through a “cheap rise,” “coming late to both world wars, but concluding those wars with the victor’s share of the spoils,” (146). Most importantly Rhode says that Liu advocates for China to practice “democracy abroad and hegemony at home,” (146).

In his two articles, “The Chinese Dream: Concept and Context,” and “Not Rising, But Rejuvenating: The ‘Chinese Dream’” Zheng Wang argues that the use of the word “rejuvenation” is key to understanding the true nature of the China Dream. He makes it clear that neither the Chinese government nor people consider this to be China’s “rise” to power, but a return to a previously attained and inherently deserved place as a global superpower. He states that “the Chinese feel a strong sense of chosenness,” and that by using the rhetoric of national humiliation in conjunction with the goal of rejuvenation Xi will “mobilize the Chinese populace to support their... reform,” (1, 2). Finally, for literature relating to China’s politics, Zheng Shiping concludes in his article, “Rising Confidence Behind the ‘Chinese Dream,’” that China’s current international confidence stems from how well it’s “been performing in absolute terms,” and “relative to its neighboring countries,” despite scoring poorly on various key indicators of well being (1).

Michael X.Y. Feng discusses the domestic influence of the campaign’s policies and how, through them, the Chinese government is attempting to influence its citizens to adhere to a

“civility, harmony, freedom,” and their place in China’s attempt to “gain high economic efficiency [and] sustainable productivity,” (163).

From an economic standpoint, David A. Owen discusses the impact of China’s rapid development on domestic political interest within China in his article, “The Impact of Economic Development on Political Interest Across Social Classes in China: Turning the Chinese Dream into a Chinese Reality?” By examining modernization theory in regards to China’s current economic situation Owen investigates the link between China’s working class and the “regime

History of the China Dream:

Following in the footsteps of China's modern leaders, Chinese General Secretary of the Communist Party of China, President of the People's Republic of China, and the Chairman of China's Central Military Commission Xi Jinping announced at the beginning of his first five year term his national slogan— "China Dream 中国梦." Starting with Chairman Mao's movement to implement and realize the success of a socialist and communist state, through Deng Xiaoping's opening and reform 改革开放 movement in 1978, Jiang Zemin's Three Represents 三个代表, to Hu Jintao's "Harmonious Society 和谐社会," China's leaders have utilized the language of rejuvenation to motivate their people and provide a source of legitimacy for the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) one-party rule. As Zheng Wang posits in his article, "The Chinese Dream: Concept And Context," by juxtaposing the trauma of national humiliation at the hands of Western powers and the Japanese with China's long, glorious history, its age-old belief of its country's rightful place at the top of the global hierarchy, and the rhetoric of rejuvenation, Xi Jinping and his party create for themselves a source of legitimacy. It was Mao and the formation of the Communist Party that drew China from the depths of the "century of humiliation," and therefore it is the Communist Party that has the legitimacy to rejuvenate China to her former glory.

"Xi's China Dream narrative is like old wine in a new bottle with the dream's name replacing Jiang [Zemin] and Hu's [Jintao] national rejuvenation, Deng's invigoration of China, and Mao's realization of socialism and communism," Wang explains in "The Chinese Dream: Concept And Context"(7). However, unlike his predecessors, Xi is trying to convince the

Chinese public not just to follow the CCP and sacrifice for the realization of the “Dream” for the

Methodology:

Data was gathered from sixteen participants through in-person interviews in Shanghai, China. The demographics range from age twenty one to eighty one, and include a roughly equal number of male and female participants.

I entered each interview keeping in mind that I did not want to lead the subject's answers, and tried my best to allow the subject to speak with as little of my guidance as possible. I began always with the question, "have you heard of the China Dream," and then requested that they define it. While my questions varied from interview to interview as our conversations developed, the questions I always made sure to ask were these previous two, as well as, "Do you think the campaign will afble(de) 0.2 q2 (bl)llhio, alrielo yo 0.2(10.2 (e) 0.(o you (s)go0 0 12 0s) -0.2 (e) 0.

counter this situation, China, following in the footsteps of Soviet Russia, merged “fine arts with mass culture,” by using “mass-reproduction of paintings and sculptures in films, posters, postcards, advertisements, and magazines,” which “confer a sense of common ownership over the image,” (60-61). “Communism is said to provide an objective and scientific understanding of the world,” Clark says, and therefore the word “propaganda” has, theoretically, in China, avoided the negative connotation it’s accrued in the West, as, under Communist rule, “little distinction is made between propaganda and education,” (74.)

Through my interviews I have concluded that, whether due to organic and local thought or Western, capitalist influences, the word “propaganda” has gained a negative connotation among Chinese citizens, at the very least in Shanghai. Many of my interviewees expressed an inherent distrust or disinterest in the campaign simply because it was a government run propaganda campaign. They seem to have cynically accepted that any change in Chinese society will find genesis in government action and policy, not among the people. Therefore, propaganda can only be meant to steer the people along the party line.

Propaganda:

I observed four common types of China Dream propaganda during my time in Shanghai: signs shaped like Chinese fans, signs shaped like bamboo scrolls, banners hanging off street posts, and the occasional sign off to the side of the road touting a public service announcement. Each type displayed its main message, an image, and a smaller line stating the city district that had sponsored the propaganda.

I found many more fan signs than any other type of propaganda. The signs displayed virtues such as justice 8 : , honesty . , patriotism ž \$, and rule of law D , in addition to a

smaller saying placed underneath. For example, honesty came attached to the famous idiom

“一诺千金 = 4 N One word worth nine sacred tripods (words of enormous weight)

heavier than Mt. Tai (extremely serious matter).” The tripod mentioned is a tripod cauldron, or

“ding e ,” which by the Shang Dynasty had come to symbolize the authority and power of the

ruling dynasty. Another sign, touting the virtue amity - was adjoined by “9 * !

O Put oneself in the place of another, benevolence and good actions.” Photo 2 is an example of

this type of propoganda. I found these fans in both Hunan and Jing’an districts.

The bamboo scroll signs displayed longer sayings, such as “七 夕 乞 巧 乞 巧 乞 巧 The Chinese

I only ever observed the posters hanging from street poles within Jing'an district, and while I saw them more than once there were only two that seemed to be repeated. The left side of each pole was the same each time: “七 \$ L " ' + 6 O , Beautiful Shanghai, cultivate

basic strands of the campaign and form their own opinion, as well as fit themselves and their individual dream into the greater tapestry of the campaign.

1. Cynics

The interviewees who remained cynical of the campaign were Meng Yao, Li Ling, and Huang. Meng Yao was by far the most cynical, and the most contradictory as he made nationalistic statements followed by claims that, should he and other be financially able, they'd leave China in a heartbeat. He railed against the campaign, saying that anyone who believed in it must be "poor and uneducated," and refused to categorize his own dream as belonging to the larger patchwork of the China Dream. Li Ling, at the beginning simply wasn't interested in

applied. He thinks that this is the reason the people are “forced” to stay in China. “If you’re not an expert” in one’s field, Meng Yao says, “then you can’t go to a western country.” He thinks that most people “like him,” meaning successful business people, achieve a “middle class level” of economic success in China, but he also thinks that the middle class in Western countries are happier, whereas the Chinese aren’t satisfied. He himself is not satisfied with his current position and opportunities, which is why he wishes so strongly to move to America, despite admitting that things are always getting better in China. “The Chinese dream makes them stay,” he said, “but it’s not Xi’s dream.”

Li Ling:

I interview Li Ling along with Li Fen, Hui Zhong, De Lun, and Chang Ying in a small two bedroom apartment. She seemed slightly disinterested, and mostly to be allowing herself to be interviewed for the sake of my connection to Li Fen. However, during the interview she expressed an increased interest, as many of my interview subjects have. She declined to be recorded.

Li Ling had heard of it, but gave only a vague description of what she thought the campaign could be. She stated that it was a, “vision described by the government to reach prosperity, to make the country more prosperous,” and added of her own accord that she’d forgotten the complete definition. When asked what the government’s stance on what the campaign is supposed to embody and achieve, she thought that the government considers China to be a third world country. Despite this, Li Ling said that in the thirty years since Deng Xiaoping instituted his economic opening and reform policies, China has been steadily evolving from a third world country to a developed nation-state. “This has helped some Chinese people become

emphasis the government and campaign has put on the shared nature of individual and national “dreams.” Her personal dream includes having a happy family, a big house to share with them, and her own career, including a “team working with her.” Finally, and she cited her religion for this wish, she wanted to help those in need.

Li Ling doesn't think that the China Dream campaign is something farmers or other less economically involved occupations think about, but “smart business people, company leaders, financial experts, they will all pay close attention to the direction of government policy. Because

meaning, and that everyone has their own goals in life to achieve. Despite further prompting and rephrasing of the question, I couldn't pull anything more of a definition from him until later.

He was the first interviewee to believe that this campaign has nothing to do with “K ,” or rejuvenation. He thinks that this campaign is just President's Xi's personal dream, and that every president has had a dream. The campaign's use of “China Dream” is not, in his opinion, related to the people's use of “China Dream.”

I finally managed to pull a definition other than “everyone has different goals and dreams” from Huang when I asked him what he thought President Xi's personal dream was. He responded that he thought it was to make the country better, stronger, in all aspects. He believes that yes, the campaign will have any affect, and maybe one year will be better than another.

Personally, at the age of 81, Huang's dream is have good health and a happy retirement. For the country, he echoed his sentiments about President's Xi's dream for China: better and stronger. He added on, “@ fl @ l ,” or “the more, the better.”

After I had completed the interview, he called his grandson over to tell him that in China you can't write anything negative. When my friend imparted this to me, I wasn't sure what meaning was meant to be imparted to me, though it was clear by the gentleman's pointed look that I was supposed to glean something. Whether it was a warning not to write anything negative, or trying to tell me that he'd held back from saying something negative, I'm not sure I'll ever figure out.

2. Realists

The interviewees in this group expressed a balance approach between a newfound appreciation and understanding of the campaign and a prominent lack of belief in their own

political agency. The same phenomenon that was observed in the vast majority of the interview

When prompted to explain her understanding of the campaign in a more general sense, Chang Ying thought that the purpose of it was to make the country stronger, more internationally renowned, and more important, as well as to increase living standards within China itself. Chang Ying's dream for the country is quite extensive. She cited to me her desire for young people to be able to afford a house, for elderly people to be able to enjoy life after retirement, for everyone to have access to good medical services without having to worry about the expense, as well as improved food safety regulations, air quality, and employment rate. Even in addition to this, she mentioned an “adjustment in education,” which I believe means education reform, an emphasis on teaching children traditional Chinese values, for China to avoid “blindly imitating foreign countries,” but staying open minded, and the Chinese people gaining a deeper understanding of their considerable history so that they may learn from it. All in all, Chang Ying’s dream for herself and her country is expansive.

She thinks that the China Dream campaign has everything to do with the economic and social rejuvenation of China, and that this rejuvenation has already taken a large affect. “Look at our lives,” she said with a slightly awestruck expression, “already so much better than the past, especially in the past ten years.” Looking to the future, she believes that by the time China reaches Xi’s chosen date of 2049 many things will have changed. However, one aspect she fears will have only grown worse is the air pollution rampant in China. Chang Ying explained to me

and rates of cancer have sky rocketed. Changing the subject, she conceded that education had gotten much better in her village and the villages surrounding it. Chang Ying believes that the China Dream campaign has the potential to unify China, and to motivate the people towards a common goal of internal economic rejuvenation.

cautious, especially since her husband has warned her not to share her real name, and has asked her many times to ask me about what sort of personal information will be included in the interview and paper.

The first question I asked Li Fen, unsurprisingly, was if she had heard of the campaign. She replied, “of course, yes. Of course.” She harkened back to Hu Jintao’s “harmonious society” slogan by saying, “I’m not quite sure what it is about, but I guess it’s about building a harmonious society... stepping towards the next phase of communism... But now our society is still in the first phase of the ‘elementary’ stage of the communism ideal.... So I have never paid attention to what the Chinese Dream is about, but I can kind of guess what it is about.”

Li Fen’s Christian faith is integral in her dream for China. “Because I’m a Christian, and I’m very compassionate about the development of Christian energy in China. So you can say a big part of my China Dream is to see the day when Christian believers as well as Catholic, believers of other religions, can freely chose what they want to believe, and they can form churches, form fellowships, form religious groups legally. Because now in China only the three self-churches are legal. Only the big churches recognized by the government are legal. While those much smaller ones, those family scale groups, are actually illegal. Because you are not allowed to participate, or to organize any religious practice, service, outside of an official church building. So my dream for my people is mainly about that religious aspect. More religious freedom. And less brainwashing from the school education.”

Li Fen thinks that China is experiencing both social and economic rejuvenation, and that the campaign is very much focused on encouraging this rejuvenation. “Because we have been developing very rapidly in the past 30 years. No war. And everyone is focused on economic

“good goal.” This leads to the assumption that, should the China Dream ideology be presented by an institutional other than the government, people might be more receptive, and spend more time and effort consciously working towards the goals.

Li Fen brought up without prompting her idea that the government should control housing prices. Her argument was that, as stability was her core tenet of the China Dream, and she believed this was the same for other citizens of Shanghai, the government should control housing prices to promote stability. Currently, housing prices in Shanghai are inordinately high. Li Fen was very concerned with the idea that people shouldn't have to work so hard to just to own an apartment. She emphasized how difficult and stressful it was for the citizens of Shanghai to pay rent for even a small apartment, let alone own a home.

Li Fen thinks that the “Dream” of the common Shanghainese is the ability “to pay for a house, a car, their children’s education, and still be able to save money, “to do fun things,” and “things they want to do,” such as travel. This is what Li Fen refers to as, “a healthy life.” She made a point of emphasizing that this accumulation of wealth should be used to “improve themselves.” She believes that people should invest in themselves, not in the stock market. This sort of stability is what Li Fen believes is the common dream within China’s family based society, and owning a house is the concrete base for this stability.

However, Li Fen’s personal China Dream is not that of home-ownership, or centered

wants to do this largely through spreading her religion and encouraging “spiritual wisdom”, in which she finds great comfort, happiness, and strength, and also wants to continue “improving herself” through books, travel, and other personal experience. She believes that the smarter and more experienced she becomes, the more people she can help, and make happy. By knowing God more deeply, she explained, she could know the world more deeply, and help more people.

De Lun:

De Lun was anxious, and as the full-time pastor of a small family church, he has every reason to be worried about the local and provincial governments finding out about his church. While he agreed to be interviewed, and willingly signed the consent form, it seemed very much like he was allowing himself to be interviewed as a favor to his wife.

De Lun knows of the China Dream campaign, and thinks he’s seen the propaganda once or twice. I inquired as to the purpose of the campaign. He responded that people need a goal for themselves and the country, as a “life without purpose is empty.” People need hope. He considers Xi Jinping’s China Dream to be one of a prosperous China, a China with an improved standard of living, increased unity of the country, and the rejuvenation of the nation by becoming globally influential, specifically in international relations, and receiving respect from other countries—most specifically from America. Along this vein, De Lun thinks President Xi wants “to be able to say no to America,” as this would fortify the political status of the CCP.

De Lun’s own dream for China was expressed in a plethora of vague platitudes, such as “liberty, freedom, democracy, freedom of speech,” which echoes the virtues listed on the propaganda.

with a few “contents of the Chinese Dream,” meaning the traditional virtues, but couldn’t remember the specific words. She did remember that, at the time, it had seemed “kind of dumb” to her. She explained that China has long had a tradition of writing key words the government wants people to keep in mind on the wall for every passerby to see. She considers this practice old fashioned, and it reminds her of twenty years ago when, “we were not so developed.”

She professes to not really understand what the China Dream is, or what the government says it is, and laughed before saying that she doesn’t think the government knows either. When asked what she would say it was if she had to guess, she replied that it would be to achieve sustained and better economic development, to improve on the environment and rampant pollution that plagues China, and to address some of the “serious social problems,” like improving medical care, the educational system, and poverty levels. She went on to say, when asked whether she believed that the China Dream campaign was a genuine effort on behalf of the government to improve the country, that is *was* a genuine effort, if a less than efficacious one, and that the goal for the China Dream was ultimately to improve the standard of living for everyone, “from all walks of life.” She concluded that the China Dream campaign would probably help the people of Shanghai to some degree, but can’t speak to the degree of this improvement.

Dai Yu stated that part of the China Dream includes the desire on the part of the government to increase individual freedom in order to increase personal potential, thus improving the efficiency and growth of China’s economy. As a college student, she says she’s already experienced a significant change in message from the government in this regard. The government and school officials have been encouraging students on her campus to create start-

ups, to be more creative. The value of creativity has become a common theme on campus.

However, it must be kept in mind that the call to be “creative” is a direct effort on behalf of the Party, which inherently undermines the idea of personal initiative. The call for creativity finds genesis in the government’s desire to spur economic initiative among citizens.

When asked about the effect of the “China Dream campaign on Shanghai specifically, Dai Yu stated that she believes Shanghai, out of all of China, will be most affected by the campaign. This is because Shanghai is the “most international city within China,” and so has the most opportunities of any city in China. She gave the example that, “all trendy things start here,” meaning fashion trends, electronic trends, and so forth.

Hui Zhong:

I interviewed Hui Zhong in the same small apartment I interviewed Li Fen and the rest of the church group. He waited patiently as I interviewed Li Ling, and when his turn came he was eager to take a seat across from me and get the interview started. He was remarkably well informed, and seemed amused as he recited the party line. This is clearly a topic he'd considered before.

Hui Zhong assured quickly that he did know the China Dream campaign, and he's seen the propaganda posters around. When asked to define what the campaign was, he responded confidently that it was a "political vision proposed by President Xi Jin Ping at the eighteenth national conference," that is proposed to be achieved by the year 2049. Officially, the campaign is supposed to achieve national rejuvenation, but in reality, according to Hui Zhong, it's supposed to "surpass current living conditions," and that in a general sense, the campaign will be accomplished when all people in China enjoy a much richer life. However, as Hui Zhong went on to explain, China Dream means different things to different people. Every individual has a different explanation and understanding of the phrase, and as such, the phrase is continually expanding.

On the topic of national rejuvenation, Hui Zhong stated with what I quickly came to understand was his trademark clarity and intelligence, that the pre-condition of national rejuvenation is that the country is at a low point. He explained that China has suffered a lot in the time since World War II, and that as the last century was one of war, China had lost large swaths of territory, and a large section of the population to war, famine, and conflict. "We need to recover," he said as he finished explaining these pre-conditions. In an interestingly nationalistic

see the propaganda for the first time they view them, “from a national level,” and if they decide to consider the messages more deeply, they might “think about themselves, [and] make it very personal, very detailed.

On the topic of rejuvenation, Bo Hai began with stating that many Chinese people are nationalistic, and wish to return their country to the same level of power it had achieved in the past. “So when they think about China in the past, they will think that China is a powerful country, but for the past centuries it’s [more] like... [a] developing country? So I think, at this

educational system, medical care, the goals might be achieved. Bo Hai was clear that the people have been voicing concerns about these problem areas for years, but because of both the political and social systems, change cannot find genesis among the people. However, given that the people know of these problems, Bo Hai assumes rationally that the government must know too, and thus, the two can work towards common goals. “It seems to me like people, since people complain about some of the problems, and the government from the other way also advertise those points, seems like there’ll be, at some point they will achieve their common goals.” He elaborated, saying, “I think they definitely have some common purpose, because the government words are too abstract, as I said before. I think perhaps its how people interpret it. If people think all of China Dream is focusing on particular problems, they are kind of on the way to achieving it.” However, while he thinks it’s possible, Bo Hai isn’t as optimistic as this. Again, he brought up the educational system. “It’s not an easy problem to fix because the education system in China has been set that way for the past several decades. If just by advertising it can, if just by advertising it can improve it ,then it will not be a big problem. So I think that perhaps 50 years

what people expect from the government, and also what the government expects from the people. 'Cause most of the time when the government is advertising something about these, it means it wants people to be more civilized... but with a systematic problem only the government has the power to fix it. So that's how people expect the government to do something for them. To make it a better society."

Bo Hai's personal Dream isn't something he says he's often considered. He hopes for a better atmosphere for entrepreneurs in China, and for the environment to be cleaned up. He says that, "each time after I came back from the States back to China I will have some coughing, and that's mostly due to the air pollution. And, also, China doesn't have tap water which is as clean as other countries." As a native Shanghai citizen, he wishes for housing prices to lower, or

Chun Hua's own dream for both China and herself is not so much to be powerful, or to "dream so big," but to think of herself as a piece of the total China Dream. In this way, she wants to keep making progress, both economically and socially, and to bring about a greater balance spiritually and materially. This is because "this is how our ancient ancestors were." Chun Hua wants to influence the people surrounding her to bring greater balance to their lives. Much like Maslow's hierarchy of needs, Chun Hua stated that, in the past, Chinese people could only work for living, but now they can truly contribute and make progress by following their ancestors' wisdom to make a career. She thinks that once this sort of influence expands, and everyone thinks this way, then China can and will achieve soft power. In a gentle sort of form of Chinese exceptionalism, she also dreams for this wisdom to expand to the entire world, complete with the Chinese philosophy she holds so dear.

Lan:

Lan is a young working woman, recently broken up with an over-controlling boyfriend. She studied for a masters degree at Cambridge.

She said that China Dream is a phrase that Xi Jinping uses to encourage Chinese people to unify and make the country better. She can already see the affect of the campaign within Shanghai. The example she provided was the free trade zone in Puxi, Shanghai, and said that this was a huge example of the financial aspect of the Chinese Dream. I asked her about any social influence the campaign might or might not hold, and she thought that, through the campaign, the "power of spirit" is something that the Chinese are deeply in need of. The "spirit" she referenced is the Chinese word "lǐ kǎi," or jǐngshén, meaning "vigor, vitality, drive," or jǐngshén. It's hard to explain the exact meaning of "lǐ kǎi," but it's generally a mixture of spirit, energy, and vitality of

Hua Feng:

Hua Feng is a student at one of Shanghai's universities, about twenty years old, from Wuhan, China.

Hua Feng had most definitely heard of the campaign, and she defined it as "when Xi Jinping became president," he created China Dream to achieve the target of increasing the average wealth within China. As Li Fen mentioned, Hua Feng also thinks that socialism is the primary stage of development, and that the government and people of China wanted to achieve a higher level of development within the next several decades.

When I interviewed Hua Feng, her home province, Wuhan, had just been hit by a series of deadly and destructive floods. This very much influenced her responses to the the goals of continued economic development in China in relation to the campaign. She thinks that China needs to continue the same rate of economic development for the sake of being able to face disasters, like the Sichuan earthquake in 2008, and the current 2016 floods in Wuhan, safely and with full preparation.

In regards to President Xi's 2049 end date, Hua Feng thinks that the goals will be achieved. She feels safe in China, far away from all the wars and attacks terrorizing the world at large these days, and she feels like China's "special economic system" functions well. Going back to her concern for her home province and town, she stated that she's always thought when China is faced with a disaster the Chinese army can get to the affected area quickly, and can prevent casualties. She stated that, with a remarkable positivity and nationalism, the Chinese are united and brave, as a people.

Hua Feng also believes that Chinese society is becoming more democratic. She heard through her roommate that her local government had even put potential bills to be passed up online for the citizenry to review. As for the potential unifying effects of the campaign, Hua Feng believes that China may find a modicum of unity, but she doesn't know in which ways. She did employ a key word of both past and present political campaigns when she said she believes that the campaign will make Chinese society more harmonious.

Her personal dream is to finish her studies successfully, and find a good job. For China she wishes that the country could be much stronger and "hold a peaceful situation." She also wishes that her country would unify more successfully, because currently the different cultures and nationalities within China frequently clash.

Mei Xiu:

I interviewed Mei Xiu along with Huang and Lan, and she seemed rather bashful, claiming she didn't know anything about it. She is a sharply dressed woman in her sixties, quiet, but very friendly. Once again her daughter translated. I didn't bother recording because it was going to be translated anyways, and the restaurant was noisy. At first, Mei Xiu denied that she knew anything about the China Dream campaign, and hadn't heard of it, but after a few questions, and a picture of one of the propaganda posters, she revised to say that she had, "of course," heard the phrase mentioned almost everyday on television news, but only knew that it was related to President Xi. She then even amended that to say that they mention the phrase constantly in the news, and in songs.

Her personal dream is to "exercise and travel abroad," in her retirement. For the country she dreams that it will become, "bigger, stronger," and stated, "a better country, better people."

She thinks the government feels the same, and that if the country is stable, then the people are also stable. As for the topic of rejuvenation, she found it hard to describe. She thinks that the China Dream can make the country better, and can make individual families better both morally, and in relation to living standards. She thinks that the campaign has already had a positive affect on Shanghai, through the free trade zone in Puxi, and the massive amounts of development.

Cui Fen:

I met Cui Fen for lunch at a delicious Sichuan restaurant, and it became apparent at the first question that it would be a quick interview.

When I asked Cui Fen if she had heard of the China Dream campaign, she responded, “is that a program or something?” With that, I was immediately certain that this interview wasn’t going to last long. Still, I wanted to find out everything she had heard, even if she hadn’t realized it was connected to the campaign. Cui Fen told me that she doesn’t watch television, and doesn’t follow many public movements, because she finds it all silly. She even said she had only ever heard the phrase from me— not in relation to the campaign, or by itself. Given the ubiquitous nature of the propaganda within Shanghai, this is to be taken with a grain of salt.

On the topic of the dreams of the people of China, Cui Fen spoke from her position as a successful businesswoman. She considers the dream of businesspeople in China to be respected by other Asian countries. She feels that currently she, and people like her, are not respected simply due to their Chinese nationality. For both herself, her colleagues, and her country, she wants more international respect.

Cui Fen believes that China needs a focal point— A shared goal, a connection that bonds people, like a religion does. She thinks that people are too selfish “about their own little dreams.”

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