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Links, Links, and More Links

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October 4, 2010 in [The Five-List Plan](#) by [The China Beat](#) | [Permalink](#)

- The *Economic Observer* has started a new column that provides a roundup of the commentary and op-ed pieces contained in each week's newspaper and also a few of the opinion pieces that appear on the *EO*'s website. The most recent column can be found [here](#). The *EO* has also begun providing abstracts of its monthly Book Review; check out September's lineup [here](#).

- At the Huffington Post, Zachary Karabell discusses "[The China Blame Game](#)":

The idea is that there is direct line between China, its currency, its exports of lower-cost goods to the United States, and the erosion of middle-class life and now soaring unemployment. But U.S. manufacturing has been bleeding jobs for decades, since the early 1970s, when the Rust Belt began to decay faced with competition from the likes of Japan and Germany. That continued almost unbroken for the next decades, as countries ranging from Taiwan to Mexico became the low-cost producers (remember Ross Perot's famous warning about NAFTA in 1992 and "the giant sucking sound" of jobs heading south-of-the-border?). California and the state of Washington were hit hard by cuts in defense spending in the early 1990s, and industry throughout the country shed jobs as technology and robotics allowed fewer workers to do more. China is simply the latest example of these trends and hardly a cause.

- We've previously linked to Howard French's [New York Times article](#) concerning the increasing visibility of gay couples in Shanghai, but for a more pessimistic take on gay culture in the same city, see [this report](#) from June by Bill Marcus of PRI's *The World*.

- In "[Lies, Damn Lies and Chinese Science](#)," Sam Geall takes a look at the problems of plagiarism and data fabrication within Chinese academia:

In his speech to Peking University graduates professor Wang [Jisi] bravely ventured that "International rankings, such as which country is number one, are not important." But it's a message that hasn't reached China's bureaucrats leading the push for achievement in science. This publish-or-perish culture has led to unrealistic targets at Chinese universities – and as a predictable consequence, rampant plagiarism. In January, the peer-reviewed international journal *Acta Crystallographica Section E* announced the retraction of more than 70 papers by Chinese scientists who had falsified data. Three months later, the same publication announced the removal of another 39 articles "as a result of problems with the data sets or incorrect atom assignments", 37 of which were entirely produced in Chinese universities. The New Jersey-based Centenary College closed its affiliated Chinese business school programme in July after a review "revealed evidence of widespread plagiarism, among other issues, at a level that ordinarily would have resulted in students' immediate dismissal from the college." A government study, cited by *Nature*, found that about one-third of over 6,000 scientists surveyed at six top Chinese institutions had practised "plagiarism, falsification or fabrication".

But it's not only the emphasis on quantity that damages scientific quality in China. Publication bias – the tendency to privilege the results of studies that show a significant finding, rather than inconclusive results – is notoriously pervasive. One systematic review of acupuncture studies from 1998, published in *Controlled Clinical Trials*, found that every single clinical trial originating in China was positive – in other words, no trial published in China had found a treatment to be ineffective. Moreover, a nationalistic and defensive approach to discredited methods keeps superstition alive in the academies and government.

- Tired of seeing dragons and pandas, tigers and elephants on the cover of what seems to be every book dealing with China or India? So are Christina Larson and Adam Minter, and they write of their frustration with these clichés in a story at *Foreign Policy*, "[It's Time to Retire the Tiger and the Dragon](#)." Don't miss the accompanying [slideshow](#). For more on China/India, see two recent stories by *China Beat* editor Maura Cunningham: [this one](#) (on roads and education) at the Forbes China Tracker blog, and [this one](#) (on the Commonwealth Games) at History News Network.

- At Zócalo Public Square, [Angilee Shah reviews](#) Rebecca Karl's new book, *Mao Zedong and China in the Twentieth Century World*. From Shah's review:

The greatest conundrum surrounding Mao Zedong, however, is the legacy he left to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). This is the complex thread that runs implicitly through Rebecca E. Karl's history of Mao Zedong's life, which she situates in China's politics from the Opium War to the 2008 Beijing Olympics. Even though we know how the story ends, the suspense and drama of how the People's Republic of China evolved is palpable. Mao, who brought the CCP to power, was an advocate of mass politics and protracted struggle: "Revolution is not a dinner party," he famously said. Today, a far cry from Maoist dedication to the struggling peasant and proletariat, the middle-class dinner-party-going aspirations of "Harmonious Society" dominate the Party's political rhetoric. It's what Karl describes as a "reduction of Mao's dream of socialist modernization to a crass fulfillment of national pride" and the only way for the CCP to maintain the power that Mao gained for it.

- "Has China Outgrown the One-Child Policy?" asks Mara Hvistendahl in the September 17 issue of *Science* magazine. Find her article [here](#); if you prefer to get your news via podcast, listen to Hvistendahl speak [here](#).
- Where will the main ceremony commemorating the centennial of China's 1911 revolution be held next year? Good question. As [Peh Shing Huei reports](#) in the *Straits Times*, Wuhan, Guangzhou, Zhongshan, and Nanjing are all bidding for the honor—and each has a reasonable case to make for its claim on the anniversary.
- We've recently seen the bylines of a couple of China Beatniks in other venues. Pierre Fuller had an op-ed in the *International Herald Tribune* concerning "[China's Charitable Past](#)" leading up to last week's Warren Buffett-Bill Gates dinner in Beijing. And Alec Ash, though he's not writing about China, has two new pieces worth reading: [one](#) on his work as an intern at the *Financial Times* and the [second](#) on the world's first anti-smoking campaign . . . launched by the Nazis.