



**Leverhulme Centre**  
for Research on Globalisation and Economic Policy



## GEP co-hosts major conference on the future of China

Conference report

Some of the world's foremost authorities on China discussed the country's likely future as a global superpower at a prestigious conference co-organised by GEP.

Delegates gathered for the second International Forum for Contemporary Chinese Studies (IFCCS) ahead of the 60th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China.

GEP co-hosted the conference – Beyond Revolution and Reforms: The People's Republic Looks Forward at 60 – with the University of Nottingham's School of Contemporary Chinese Studies.

With China looking back at six decades of Communist rule, during which it has transformed itself from "the sick man of Asia" to arguably the world's most important economic force, some 200 scholars from 20 nations assembled to weigh up the factors that will shape the country in the coming decades.

China is poised to overtake Japan as the world's second-largest economy and has been tipped to surpass the United States in 20 to 30 years.

Despite the global financial crisis, it posted a respectable economic growth rate of 7.1% in the first half of 2009 and looks set to meet its target of 8% for the whole year. Yet with its rise come huge challenges both for China itself and the rest of the world.

A series of parallel sessions held over the two-day forum, which took place on September 8 and 9, addressed 20 topics, including the sometimes fractious China-EU relationship, the unevenness of China's development and the Chinese government's energy and environment policies.

Professor Shujie Yao, Head of the School of Contemporary Chinese Studies and co-ordinator of GEP's China and the World Economy programme, said: "The aim of the forum was

to promote cutting-edge research on contemporary China, providing research institutions, established scholars, PhD students, policymakers and industry leaders worldwide with an important platform to exchange ideas."

Delegates at the event tackled questions including:

- What challenges does globalisation pose China?
- Does China have a democratic future?
- How will online public opinion influence the way China is governed?

Keynote speakers included:

- **Professor David Greenaway**  
GEP founding Director and now Vice-Chancellor of the University of Nottingham
- **Zhang Lirong**  
Minister Counsellor of the Chinese Embassy in London
- **Professor Keping Yu**  
Author of Democracy Is a Good Thing

Lectures included:

- **China's Globalisation Challenge**  
Professor Peter Nolan, University of Cambridge

- **China's Political Development Since the Reform**  
Professor Keping Yu, Central Translation Bureau of China
- **China: A Democratic Future?**  
Dr Kerry Brown, Chatham House
- **The Growing Influence of Online Public Opinion in China**  
Duncan Hewitt, veteran China correspondent and author of Getting Rich First

The conference reflected on China's "seemingly irreconcilable" images of economic success and gaping social disparities.

But Professor Yao, in his closing address, said he was confident in the country's ability to tackle the problems and challenges it faces.

He said: "The Chinese people are the miracle-makers. The success of China depends on the hardworking nature of its people."

This was the second year of the conference. Next year's will be held at Nankai University, Tianjin, following a memorandum of understanding to promote collaborative research between the University of Nottingham and the leading Chinese university.

### About GEP

GEP is based at the University of Nottingham and is substantially funded by grants from the Leverhulme Trust.

In January 2008 it opened GEP in Malaysia at the University of Nottingham's purpose-built Semenyih campus, 30km from Kuala Lumpur.

In November 2008 it launched GEP in China at the University of Nottingham, Ningbo, China.

GEP is keen to promote its research work and is committed to communicating its expertise through the media and to assisting journalists whenever able.

Website: [www.gep.org.uk](http://www.gep.org.uk)

### Professor Shujie Yao



Shujie Yao is a Professor of Economics and the co-ordinator of the Globalisation and Economic Policy Centre's China and the World Economy programme. He is also Head of School at the University of Nottingham's School of Contemporary Chinese Studies.

In an article published in the Journal of Asian Economic Literature he was ranked in the top 10 Chinese scholars specialising in the country's economy. He is chief editor of the Social Science Edition of the Xi'an Jiaotong University Journal and founder editor of the Journal of Chinese Economics and Business.

He has been a consultant to organisations including the World Bank, the EU and UNCDF.

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