PROGRAM 1 – POWER & THE PEOPLE

ANNOUNCER
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NARRATOR
In 2004, workmen began turning a field in Beijing into the main site for the 2008 Olympics. Small start. Huge goal.

Professor KANG XIAOGUANG, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences
Only one of the world’s ancient cultures has any real vitality today, is in the ascendant, and might come to dominate the world: China. Lots of foreigners say, “You Chinese, are you all insane? Your country’s so lousy – what makes you think you should be - will be - Number One?” But that’s what the Chinese have in mind.

NARRATOR
China is changing. Growing richer. Growing stronger. This may be China’s century. Much has been made of her extraordinary economic growth – but that’s only part of her compelling, complex story. Communist China seems to present herself as a country which thinks with one mind. Speaks with one voice. But that’s an illusion. This television series has had exceptional access to China, her institutions and people. We’ve filmed temples in Tibet. A women’s labour camp, outside Beijing. The tensions of a country wedding. A village election. Rivers and skies thick with pollution. Above all, we’ve talked to people – with a wide variety of perspectives. The gap between rich and poor, between the weak and the powerful is widening.

Professor WANG XIXIN, Beijing University Law School
There’s no way for people at the base of society to get their voices heard. No way to vent their discontent. A kind of pressure is slowly building up there.

NARRATOR
The call for justice in this one-party state is getting louder. Sometimes how people talk – and that they are talking at all – is revealing in itself. This complex, developing country defies easy analysis – and the stakes couldn’t be higher.

WU QING, Deputy, Beijing People’s Congress
If things change too fast in China, it’d be like a storm. Huge raindrops don’t irrigate the land. On the contrary, they might wash away fertile topsoil. I hope for drizzles. For gradual change. Drizzles seep into the ground, helping seeds take root and sprout. I think change should be very slow. And it must be a combination of people at the grassroots working up and people from high up working down. This is the only way to find our own path.
NARRATOR
It isn’t easy, running a country the size of China. 1.3 billion people; fifty-six officially recognised ethnic nationalities. A heady mix of language, living standards, belief and custom. Xinjiang Autonomous Region in North-West China is bigger than Alaska. One of Asia’s greatest markets is in Kashgar, where Marco Polo paused on the Silk Route – 750 years ago.

ISMAIYL TILIWALDI, Governor, Xinjiang
I’m from Kashgar. I was a school kid, but from an early age I went to the market with my father to buy cows, buy goats, buy donkeys. It’s special there.

NARRATOR
Turkic Muslims are in the majority in Kashgar, but barely in Xinjiang. In recent years millions have been settled here from the rest of China, to spur the economy and reduce Muslim predominance. This has added to local tensions. Nowhere on its mainland is China’s unity and sovereignty more vulnerable than in Xinjiang, which borders eight countries, including Russia, Pakistan. And, here, Kazakhstan. The Chinese worry about links between pro-independence groups in Xinjiang and the outside world.

Lieutenant Colonel, Xinjiang Frontier Guard
Xinjiang is our motherland’s western gate. The main menace in Xinjiang is East Turkestan Separatists. They’ve committed over two hundred terrorist acts, including bombings, assassinations and poisonings. They’ve injured many people from different ethnic groups. We ensure even tighter control at important mountain crossing points. We’re determined to stop terrorists escaping across the border.

NARRATOR
The patrol finds a broken wire. It could be normal wear and tear – or more worrying.

ISMAIYL TILIWALDI, Governor, Xinjiang
In recent years, there’s been a small number of people who want to break away, but all ethnic nationalities in Xinjiang are firmly opposed to them. We want to increase development and improve the living standard of all nationalities and oppose any form of independence and separatist activities.

NARRATOR
The Chinese don’t want political Islam to get a foothold in Xinjiang.

ISMAIYL TILIWALDI
If anyone uses religion to affect national security – we’ll crack down on them in accordance with the law.

NARRATOR
Religion is controlled in China – it’s officially an atheist state. You’re not meant to be a believer and a Party member.

ISMAIYL TILIWALDI
My family believes in Islam, and so do all the people around. And I learned some Koran at school. But gradually, when I grew up and joined the Communist Party, I stopped believing in Islam. It’s not just me but all the ethnic minority people who have joined the Communist Party. We’re like all Communist Party members in the country. We believe in communism.

NARRATOR
The Party has a shrine in the capital Urumqi to ‘revolutionary martyrs’ including the younger brother of Chairman Mao Zedong, founder of the Chinese communist state. It’s an ideal place for new Party members to take their vows.

OFFICIAL READS OATH TO RECRUITS (Subtitles)
It is my will to join the Chinese Communist Party. To uphold the Party’s directives. To fight all my life for Communism. To be ready always to sacrifice my all for the Party and the people. And never betray the Party.

NARRATOR
The Party has over sixty million members. Around one person in twenty-two. Cynics say you join the Party to get along. The initiates describe it spiritually.

PULATI ABUDUCAIMI, New Party member
I shall never forget today. Joining the Party marks the beginning of my struggle for the cause of Communism. The Party is like a mother to all the people of the country. It’s nurtured the growth of the younger generation.

GULNUR SULAIMAN, New Party member
It’s the goal of all progressive, healthy and optimistic young people to achieve communism. Our current aim is to become a prosperous society.

NARRATOR
Alongside providing stability, here is the Party’s second claim to legitimacy – as the creators of the conditions for prosperity. Xiamen, on the south-east coast, makes computers for the world. It was declared a special economic zone in 1979 by leader Deng Xiaoping who told the people to enrich themselves. Xiamen now produces more than Bahrain. Guiding the city’s passionate embrace of the market economy is the Communist Party, led by Party Secretary Zheng Lizhong.

ZHENG LIZHONG, Party Secretary, Xiamen
The party’s ultimate objective is to achieve communism. It’s such a long process, we must divide it into stages. We’re now in the early stage of socialism. We work for the interests of the people. The Communist Party doesn’t have its own interests. It pursues the interests of all the people in China.

NARRATOR
The Party Secretary is attending the annual award ceremony for Xiamen’s model workers. It helps ensure that the city’s economic triumph is owned by the Communist Party. In his speech Zheng Lizhong applies Marxist rhetoric to the capitalist reward system.

ZHENG LIZHONG, Party Secretary, Xiamen
Model workers represent the working class in this new era. You set examples for Party workers and staff. The laboring masses must ride the tide of material civilization...and build success on the battlefield of the city's economic construction.

NARRATOR
But for whose benefit are events like this? Which group is more important to the continuing authority of the Party? Is it the prize-winners? Or the power-holders on stage? Or the millions of people who didn’t get invited?

Professor KANG XIAOGUANG, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences
The hundreds of millions of workers and peasants, don’t count, you can ignore them. You can also rob and exploit them. It’s not a problem. The most important thing is to get the powerful on your side. As long as the tens of millions of Party bureaucrats, capitalists, top managers and intellectuals all agree with your policy and get on board, the ship won’t sink. No problem.

NARRATOR
The event ends with the Communist anthem, the Internationale. But there are few other signs here of the Party's revolutionary past - when it persecuted capitalists. The Party's aim now is to create not just a prosperous, but what it calls a 'harmonious society'.

ZHENG LIZHONG & SOLDIER (Subtitles)
That’s a very nice suit,
Yes, it’s okay.
The fit’s important when you buy clothes.

Did you have it made?
No, it’s off the rack.

That cut really suits you.

Minister ZHAO QIZHENG, State Council Information Office
The meaning of a harmonious society is, quite simply, that every single one of us feels very happy and comfortable, feels our environment suits us. If everyone can say this, we will have created a 'harmonious society'. Society is very complicated, especially in China with 1.3 billion people. In the course of development, imbalances have appeared. One is the imbalance between the East and West of China. Another is between the North and South. There are differences in income between people from different levels of society; differences between big cities and countryside. This has caused some problems and contradictions.

NARRATOR
So how does the Communist Party cope with these ‘problems and contradictions’?

Professor WANG XIXIN, Beijing University Law School
The government assumes it has a very important mission, which is to manage. It uses the word “manage”, but in Chinese the word “manage” has complex implications. To manage can mean, I’m going to take care of things for you, but it can also mean I’m going to control you.
NARRATOR
It's winter in Tibet. Since the Chinese arrived in 1950, Party members have come here to serve. They talk of 'braving the thin air', the 'harsh climate'. Tours of duty in Tibet are seen as sacrifice – a way to express one's idealism and devotion. Dai Fengxia is a Party official and Deputy Township Head with five Tibetan villages under her. She sleeps in the local school, only seeing her husband in Lhasa at weekends. Her six year old son lives with his grandparents fourteen hundred miles away. She sees him just once a year. She can't speak Tibetan so her driver interprets for her. Much of Dai Fengxia's work is giving practical help to farmers. But she's also responsible for making sure Tibetan women follow the Party's family planning policies and ideological messages.

DAI FENGXIA, Deputy Township Head
Each village has a Women's Head. They're mainly responsible for arranging study of things like the new Marriage Law, the policies of the Party, and organising propaganda and study.

NARRATOR
First, she must find Migmar - her Women's Head in Jiaru district. But Tibet's a big place - bigger than Texas and California combined.

GATE OPENS & OLD WOMAN APPROACHES

DRIVER (Subtitle)
Sister Migmar!

DRIVER & WOMAN (Subtitles)
Is Sister Migmar here?
No she's not

Where is she?
She's measuring the fields.

OLD WOMAN
Will she be back for lunch?
No she won't.

We'll go and look for her.
Okay – you won't catch her here today.

DAI FENGXIA (Subtitle)
So where is she? We don't know.

Still, we're used to not finding people.
It happens all the time.

DAI FENGXIA & DRIVER (Subtitles)
Call her. Call Sister Migmar
Sister Migmar!

Shout louder!
Sister Migmar! Come here!
NARRATOR
Dai Fengxia has targets to meet, and she imposes targets on those below her.

DAI FENGXIA & MIGMAR (Subtitles)
Have you studied the Women’s Federation assignments for this year?

Yes, we have.

How many times have you studied it?

Twice.
Twice a month?
Twice for the whole year.
Twice a year. What did you study?
Mainly family planning and some marriage problems.

Have you got any notes for the year?
The notes are at home.

Use your spare time to organize a study of the rest. And take notes – not on
scraps of paper, but in a book. You must organize and strengthen political
study.

There’s not much farm work now, so run more study sessions.

NYIMA TSERING, Deputy Governor, Tibet
If every time we go to the countryside, we solve just one problem for the people
there, then they’ll say how good the Communist Party is and they’ll give us the
thumbs up. That’s how simple and honest they are. They don’t ask for much. Also,
the people appreciate the benefits they’ve got, the peaceful lives they have now.

NARRATOR
Tibet has long been seen by Government and Party as a volatile place, needing
vigilance against radical nationalists seeking independence, often under the cloak of
religion. It’s a place to be controlled.

NYIMA TSERING
For almost ten years, we’ve maintained stability in Tibet. Public security here, I
assure you, is the best in the country, and the crime rate’s the lowest. Our society,
I’m proud to say, is as harmonious and peaceful as other cities and provinces, and
may be even better.

NARRATOR
The army keeps a strong presence in Tibet, but subtler, softer ways have evolved to
achieve stability. The ethnic Tibetan population, as in Xinjiang, has been balanced
out by a massive influx of business people from the rest of China. In the late 1980s
there were protestors on the streets of Lhasa. Now there are shoppers. Lhasa looks
more like any modern Chinese city, and less like the ancient Tibetan capital.
Billboards advertise everything from sneakers to abortion clinics. Lu Xiaofei
returned to Lhasa after six years away.
LU XIAOFEI, Chief Editor, China Women’s News
Changes were enormous, but some made me feel uncomfortable. Building in Lhasa did not take ethnic development into account. They just blindly stuck things up. This made me feel quite sad, as I felt that it wasn’t in harmony with Tibetan culture.

NARRATOR
Much business in Lhasa is dominated by non-Tibetan entrepreneurs. These sisters have come from North East China to run clothes stores. Do the Tibetans resent their presence?

QIAO YULIAN
Once or twice someone’ll say you’ve come into our land and taken our jobs. Maybe they’re drunk and become unreasonable. It has happened. Tibetans are very conscious of their nationality.

QIAO SHUANGLIAN
If you sell them some clothes, and they then ask for a refund, you give it to them. They’re quite savage. Not like us from the mainland.

QIAO YULIAN
Some people here are sensible and some aren’t. Some just don’t understand reason and hit you. The other day we sold a leather jacket; the buyer wanted to exchange it. She didn’t understand what we were saying and just started hitting us. We couldn’t do a thing. You want to talk reason with them but they don’t get it. Some people understand and some don’t.

QIAO SHUANGLIAN
Very honest! Some Tibetans are very honest!

QIAO YULIAN
Lots of good people. Many more good than bad.

QIAO SHUANGLIAN
It’s just they’re a bit uneducated.

NARRATOR
The Party has decided that Tibet needs to be more accessible. By 2007 Lhasa will be linked to the rest of China by a railway line built across some of the toughest terrain on the planet. It’s an extraordinary engineering feat which will bring in more business, more tourism. The railway will make Tibet richer, but will it make it less Tibetan?

NYIMA TSERING, Deputy Governor, Tibet
I’m not worried about it, because when the railway’s finished it’ll enhance Tibet’s development and economy, and expand its communications. This is great.

NARRATOR
The Party is intensely proud of the railway. It’s put up a huge poster proclaiming it as a pioneering project of the Communist Party. But it’s written in Chinese, not in Tibetan.

INTERVIEWER
Do you understand it?

YESHI CHODON, Tibetan villager
No. I can’t read, sir.

INTERVIEWER
You don’t know Chinese?

YESHI CHODON
No.

INTERVIEWER
You don’t know what it means?

YESHI CHODON
No, I don’t.

NARRATOR
The Communist Party is trying to ensure new generations of Chinese officials and teachers in Tibet know the language. But the Party also recruits Tibetan members who work at the grassroots they know best. Near the Potala Palace - the Dalai Lama’s traditional home - live the eighteen hundred people of Shoel Community. Not much around here escapes the eye of Tibetan Party official Lobsang Yangnyi.

LOBSANG YANGNYI
Bring out the birds!

Okay, good.

And water the juniper.

That’ll make it more pleasant.

LOBSANG YANGNYI
Don’t leave all this outside your door, okay?

Tidy up these boxes.

You’ve dumped stuff by the juniper. Don’t do that, okay?

That tree cost a lot. If it dries out, you’ll be in trouble.

LOBSANG YANGNYI & SHOPKEEPER
Where’s your husband?
He’s gone shopping.

What’s your daily turnover?
Six to eight hundred.
Well, don’t just sit around.  
There’s lots to do.

Keep it clean and tidy.

Yes.

LOBSANG YANGNYI & MAN IN GATEWAY  
Does Chophel Norbu live here?  
Yes.

Is he at home?  
No.

LOBSANG YANGNYI  
She’s one of our poorer residents,  
but she can still afford to eat.

Her living standard is lower than most,  
but we help a lot.

WOMAN  
Yes.

LOBSANG YANGNYI & WOMAN  
You ask her if we help or not.  
They do help, really.

I used to be bedridden and helpless.

LOBSANG YANGNYI  
Show them your leg.

Should I roll it up?  
Yes, you’ll be okay.

They said it needed amputating,  
but the government helped.

We took her to hospital and  
now she can walk again.  
I still can’t carry things,  
but I’m getting better.

Without them, I’d be in bad shape.

MS LOBSANG POINTS TO TREE & SPEAKS TO MAN TRIMMING IT  
LOBSANG YANGNYI (Subtitles)  
They’re trimming the eucalyptus.

LOBSANG YANGNYI & TREE SURGEON (Subtitles)  
Don’t fall down. Seriously, be careful.  
Okay.

Where’s your saw?  
I don’t need it for small branches.
Okay. Well, don’t fall down.

NYIMA TSERING, Deputy Governor, Tibet
Working for the people is what our Party stresses. We often say we've got to focus all our efforts on governing purely for the people.

NARRATOR
So who decides what’s best for the people? The National People’s Congress in Beijing is the highest governmental body in China, but it’s the Party that calls the shots.

Minister ZHAO QIZHENG, State Council Information Office
There are debates in China. And sometimes they’re very fierce debates. There are several levels to these debates. One is inside the Chinese Communist Party, within the Central Party Committee. There’s full discussion of Party policies. During these discussions, if opinions differ, then debates arise. But ultimately decisions are made on the principle of the minority obeying the majority. This kind of debate is not visible to the outside world.

NARRATOR
The National People’s Congress turns policy – devised by the Party behind closed doors – into laws and practise. Its nearly three thousand deputies are drawn from categories like the Army, the Party, intellectuals, workers, peasants and ethnic minorities. Yuan Jinghua runs a school for deaf and mute children. Like her fellow deputies, she was elected to the NPC not by the public but by her regional People’s Congress. Given that all deputies are Party members or Party approved, how much can happen in this hall that the Party does not bless?

YUAN JINGHUA, Deputy, National People’s Congress
I don’t feel any pressure, because this is an expression of democracy. But you need to maintain the correct direction, you can’t just decide willy-nilly, yes or no, because you have to have sufficient understanding of the issue. There’s no one putting any pressure on you, it’s just you have to understand, then it’s okay. It’s totally democratic. If, based on your own ideas, you agree, then you just press “agree”. If you have doubts about it, then you don’t press it showing you disagree. It’s all very democratic.

NARRATOR
The 10th Congress in 2005 voted on a law to stop Taiwan seceding from the People’s Republic of China, and to permit the use of force as a last resort. 2,896 voted in favour with none against, but Taiwan is an emotional issue and unanimity was the exception that day. Hundreds of dissenting votes were cast.

SCREEN ANNOUNCING RESULT OF VOTE, CAPTION:
241 Against
87 Abstentions

NARRATOR
One of the first deputies ever to vote ‘no’ in a People’s Congress, was Wu Qing.

WU QING, Deputy, Beijing People’s Congress
I twice voted no. I remember a man behind me who said in a very loud voice ‘That’s the woman who cast dissenting votes. I didn’t look round. I thought he was a rat. Many people shook my hand when I left, saying ‘Wu Qing, you really made me feel democracy in China. ‘So why didn’t you vote against?’ I asked. ‘Well,’ they said, ‘it’s a long story.’

NARRATOR
The NPC has yet to overturn Party decisions, but it’s not the only place where politics may be replacing orders from above. And the participants in this process are not educated city-dwellers. Nearly two-thirds of China’s people live in the country – 780 million in all. 1800 live in Liuqian village, Shandong Province. They grow food, raise animals, make bricks. They go to school. They look after the young. That’s on a normal day. But tomorrow won’t be normal. Liuqian village is going to the polls. Voting is voluntary, but the turn-out on a chilly morning in December is an impressive ninety-four percent. It takes place at the school, so the children have the day off. The election is tightly supervised by a raft of Party and government officials.

JIANG RUIHE, Bureau of Civil Affairs
The election of the Village Committee is extremely significant. It’s ground-breaking in the Party’s promotion of democracy. Ground-breaking in that it’s a chance for our peasants, who for hundreds of years have had their backs to the sun and their faces to the earth, to have the right to make decisions for themselves.

NARRATOR
But does the village see today’s vote as important or a formality?

LIU KUAN, Villager
Absolutely important. Because we want to elect a good secretary - a good villager - from the bottom of our hearts. We can definitely do this. The people know what’s what. We’re going do it.

NARRATOR
Six men – no women are standing - compete for three year terms of office. Up for re-election as village head is Zheng Jifu.

ZHENG JIFU (Subtitles)
I’ll strive harder to keep up with the times... and work with everyone to complete village construction... so as to increase wealth and create a prosperous village.

NARRATOR
But is this democracy? Are the choices being offered to the people of Liuqian political?

Professor WANG XIXIN, Beijing University Law School
In direct village elections in China, there is no opposition. If someone wants to be elected as village head he can’t put forward his own political beliefs. He can’t represent a particular interest. They all stand as individuals; the only choice is between a good or bad person – or a relatively good person.
NARRATOR
All but one of the candidates on the ballot today are members of the Communist Party. The exception is Liu Baotian and he's careful to acknowledge the Party in his speech.

LIU BAOTIAN (Subtitles)
Leaders and villagers, old and young – hello!

VILLAGERS LISTENING/WAITING TO VOTE
THEY APPLAUD
I'll bring wealth to Liuqian and repay the support of the Party and masses.
If I'm not elected, I'll stay a simple villager. Thank you.

LIU WEIQIN, Villager
It doesn't matter if he’s a Party member, as long as he benefits the people.

LIU KUAN, Villager
Even he's not a Party member he'll become one if he has lot to contribute. Anyone good would be in the Party.

MAN TRYING TO MARSHALL VOTERS INTO A QUEUE
2ND WOMAN (Subtitles)
Hey, get your Dad over here!
MAN (Subtitles)
Get in line!
Line up properly!

2ND WOMAN (Subtitles)
There he is.
Come and give your fingerprint!

LIU HUAIYIN, Villager
The village election is so important to every family. If we can elect a good team, they'll lead all the villagers to increased prosperity, to achieve a better life.

NARRATOR
No one seems to know how many villages in China have had elections. And though some follow the rules, others are hijacked by powerful local families, or corrupt Party officials.

Professor WANG XIXIN, Beijing University Law School
Sometimes candidates openly bribe villagers. ‘Vote for me and I'll give you 100 yuan.’ Another candidate may be richer: ‘Don’t vote for him, vote for me and I’ll give you 200 yuan.’ This kind of vote-buying has happened in many places during elections.

NARRATOR
According to Chinese sources, local Party officials have rigged elections, or annulled them when the ‘wrong’ person got in. Villagers have denounced these illegalities, often in vain.

LIU KUAN, Villager
I want to elect somebody who is capable, who can contribute to Liuqian Village, and won’t embezzle money.

NARRATOR
Zheng Jifu nervously watches his vote trickle in. For the villagers it makes sense to choose their immediate leaders. For the Party, village elections have longer term advantages - if they can be controlled.

Professor KANG XIAOGUANG, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences
The success of village elections doesn’t mean China’s going to become a democracy. On the contrary, it means there’s no need for China to become a democracy, because the election process is making the Communist Party more secure – so they don’t have the impetus. They’re in no hurry. It’s not like their eyebrows are on fire.

NARRATOR
The result really seems to matter to some villagers. Others take a practical view.

HUANG MAOYING, Villager
They’re all the same. Whoever we elect, we’ll have to follow. If only they’d give us enough to eat, and look after the old people, that’d be fine. Give us money, and fruit at New Year. And take better care of the elderly. They’re still not doing enough. We want more money but they won’t give it to us.
NARRATOR
So Zheng Jifu did win another term - but with a reduced majority.

ZHENG JIFU (Subtitles)
Thank you for your belief, trust and support. Don’t worry – just as we said in our speeches... we’ll deal properly with the issues and have you supervise our work

NARRATOR
Elections may consolidate party power in the villages, but at a risk. Voting could create its own momentum. More people could get a stronger taste for making bigger decisions.

Professor WANG XIXIN, Beijing University Law School
The process may be very, very long - the development of democracy is step by step. But the continuous progress of an increasingly effective democracy may in the end succeed in restricting the power of the party.

Anti-Corruption Exhibition, Beijing

NARRATOR
The biggest threat to the Party is the loss of people’s trust. Absolute power presiding over economic boom has bred rampant corruption.

NARRATOR
Many see officials not as public servants, but as profiteers. Chinese press reports say that between 2004 and 2005, nearly 300,000 Party members were punished for corruption, including Party Secretaries and nearly 500 judges. Some were executed. Thousands have fled abroad with around 50 billion dollars of the public’s money.

Professor KANG XIAOGUANG, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences
So many problems and what’s the reason? It’s that against the background of the market economy there’s an alliance between authoritarian politics and the elites. It’s maintained China’s stability and prosperity but also created a string of problems. And amongst these, we can see a dangerous trend. It’s that power, money and knowledge are colluding to serve a bandit society - this gang of elites who are robbing the masses.

NARRATOR
The Party has told its members that Communist rule cannot now be taken for granted, that this is a life and death struggle.

XIE JIAN, Public Prosecutor
Our country is now ruled by the Communist Party, and its image will be severely damaged if it doesn’t stop corruption. It shakes people’s faith in the Communist Party and their trust in the government. Eventually, if corruption can’t be stopped, the Party will die and the country will die.
NARRATOR
Xie Jian is one of the top young prosecutors in China, specialising in corruption and bribery cases. She’s on her way to Suzhou Prison in Jiangsu Province to see a man she put inside for embezzlement – a man sentenced to death. This was commuted to life imprisonment after he confessed and showed remorse. He may get an early release.

XIE JIAN
He wanted to study when he went to prison. He wanted to better himself. That’s why I sometimes visit him in prison. I feel he’s studying hard, so we’re helping him.

NARRATOR
Xie Jian tracked Tang Jun and his girlfriend across Asia, arresting him when he stepped off a plane in China after deportation from the Philippines.

TANG JUN & XIE JIAN (Subtitles)
How could you go on if you were depressed every day?

Staying hopeful relaxes you – helps you make a fresh start.

You’re quite optimistic.

You still have a future

I don’t know about that. But I won’t make another mistake. I won’t get caught by you again!

NARRATOR
He was twenty-six years old when he stole the equivalent of half a million dollars from the electronics firm where he worked as accountant.

TANG JUN, Convicted embezzler
It was a state-run company. They aren’t so strict with things like documents and authorisations. So they handed it to me on a plate. I was still very young and impulsive. I didn’t know what fear was. Plus, I didn’t know much about the law. I’d vaguely heard of the word ‘embezzlement’ and knew that – if caught – you could be sentenced to death. I think it’s driven by greed. And economic crimes in a developing society are inevitable, as the temptation of money is too great.

NARRATOR
Back in her office, Xie Jian’s team discuss a man believed to have cheated a finance company out of 50 million yuan – around six million dollars. Corrupt Party officials may have been involved, there’s no trace of the money – and the man isn’t talking.

INVESTIGATOR (Subtitles)
His thinking is, “a dead pig is not afraid of boiling water.” He thinks, “if you can find evidence to pin on me, I deserve to die... and if you fail, I’ll get away with it.”

XIE JIAN (Subtitles)
We've got to nail him. This man’s stolen so much state property. We can't let him get away.

WU QING, Deputy, Beijing People's Congress
Some people are really good. Some really bad. In the Chinese Communist Party are some of the best and some of the worst. That’s because it's where the power is located and fought over. Many are very good. There are also some very bad people. So I think we People’s Representatives and the ordinary folk should supervise the Party continuously. We need to encourage them and let them know the people are watching them.

NARRATOR
The Party’s on a drive to inspire moral leadership in its members. Mass tree-planting sessions remind them that they must serve China and her future, not themselves. They should be what the Party calls ‘advanced’. And that involves looking back. The Party today seems a world away from the men and women who dragged China into the modern age using revolutionary zeal and guts.

Ren Yangcheng led a team which cut the Red Flag Irrigation Canal through a mountain range in Henan Province. Forty years later he recalls taking one of the most dangerous jobs himself.

REN YANGCHENG, Team Leader, Red Flag Canal
We had to get rid of all the loose rocks up there so work could go on safely below. All we could do was swing – like on a child’s swing - and get in close to the cliffs so as to dislodge the rocks. We were all young. Eighty-one died. Young people these days need to learn the spirit of hardship from the past - for the revolution, for the people. They must always think of the people, care for them. We can't lose this old revolutionary tradition.

NARRATOR
These aren't tourists. They're Party members sent on pilgrimage to inspire them with the selfless vigour of revolutionary times. When the guide points out who the old man on the bridge is, some Party members can hardly believe their eyes or their luck.

LIURUI BESIDE REN YANGCHENG ON BRIDGE
PAN LIURUI
I really admire him. Extraordinary! Look at it. Really unbelievable!

PAN LIURUI, Party Official
They never had enough food in their bellies! You had just rags to wear.

REN YANGCHENG
In those days, there was no food, no clothes and no money.

PAN LIURUI
They got just 12 fen for a day’s work. Our generation must learn from them, and the next generation and so on forever. If all Communist officials today were like those who built this, the Communist Party would rule forever.

ANNOUNCER
China From the Inside is available on DVD. To order this four-part program call PBS Home Video at 1-800-PLAY-PBS.

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