

**THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA
AS A WATCHDOG FOR CORRUPTION AND PROMOTER OF
'CLEAN' PRIVATE SECTOR DEVELOPMENT:
CHINA'S EXPERIENCE**

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Abstract

Corruption has become a major phenomenon of the China and the focus of attention since 1978. This essay will examine the history of China's corruption and anti-corruption; explore the role of the media as a watchdog for corruption and promoter of 'clean' private sector development (or the supervisory function of media) in China.

Key words:

corruption, anti-corruption, the supervisory function of media

I. Introduction

Corruption has become a major phenomenon of the China and the focus of attention since the reform and open door policy was carried out in the late 1970's. So rife and rampant as it grows, corruption has become a pressing social and political issue, stinging every nerve of the society. As the late leader Deng Xiaoping put it: "we must face up to the serious nature of corruption within the party. Things have become so serious and pernicious that they are not only disturbing and undermining the party's central tasks, but also threatening party leadership. If we do not gear up to fight corruption and eradicate it, the party will probably lose people's support and its foundation will deteriorate and go under. This is entirely possible." As thus, anti-corruption has become the urgent and important task of the Communist Party of China and the government.

Power, especially political power is corrupting in itself, encouraging those who possess it to subjugate and exploit those who do not. This was well expressed in Lord Acton's famous warning: "Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely" (Heywood Andrew, 1998:40). In another version, abuse of power is the basic of corruption. As a result the best measure to avoid corruption is to establish limited, transparent government, to create the network of checks and balances among powers.

The idea of the multifunctional government and centralized democracy formed in the pre-reform age has been changing to establish limited government, but China is a society that is reallocating social resources through social gambling, its institutions per se are variable and social structure is also undertaking drastic shifts, all of these variables, to some extent, have contributed to abuse of power, and in particular, of government power, and proliferation of varieties of corruption within the process of the shifts. Thus, the phenomenon of the corruption becomes so complicated that it varies regarding its scale, form and characteristics according to the time and the place. In Chinese political terminology,

corruption means the cases occurred both in public and private sector and often links with negative phenomenon and unhealthy tendency within party, government departments and private sector in current China. On one hand, the state-ownership is the dominant form of enterprise, while the private sector is relatively weak. The negative and unhealthy phenomenon occurred in the private sector is correspondingly less. On the other hand, many participants in corruption hold both public and private roles (or roles that do not fit neatly into either sphere), and operate in economic gray areas where clear-cut rules and expectations do not exist. However we do find it is useful to think of three major categories of corruption in China:

(1) Abusing power solely for personal benefits, such as embezzlement, blackmail, bribery, excessive housing, swindling, smuggling, extravagant banquets with public funds, and engaging in private business activities with public money.

(2) Abusing power for the benefits of one's institution or work unit, such as raising commodity prices without approval, giving unauthorized promotions or bonuses to employees, imitating trademarks and production, sale of defective or counterfeit goods, gift-giving to the bureaucracies and functionaries to lubricate market processes, indiscriminate collection of fees.

(3) Abuse of power for both personal and institutional benefits, such as giving gifts to higher-level organs and individuals to cultivate connections, buying luxurious cars with public funds for showing off, illegally buying and selling materials and dividing the profits among employees, using illicit profits for bonuses, and establishing illegal businesses for work units' welfare (Hao Yufan, 1995:5).

Clearly, the entire corruption history of the 20th century tells us it is necessary to avoid abuse of power by establishing internal and external constraints on power, especially government power, and by promoting

transparency and accountability. Since 1949, a variety of measures have been taken to limit power, and to combat corruption in China. During the process media have played an important role, no matter whether they are seen as tool, weapon or relatively independent power. Speaking of the role of media as watchdog for corruption and promoter of clean private sector in China, we often mean the supervisory function of media, which is often related to critical reports and negative news. Because Chinese government manage to maintain the media's function as the mouthpiece of the party, and to consolidate party administration of media, party administration of cadres, and to correct direction of public opinions (Guangchun Xu, 2003). However, the effectiveness of the media depends on access to information and freedom of expression, as well as a professional and ethical manner of investigative journalists. Furthermore, the media's access to information is critical. By providing the public with timely and accurate information on the affairs of government, business and marginal groups, the media can conduce to establish checks on power, shape the climate of democratic debate, promote transparent and accountable government and corporate behavior and help the establishment and maintenance of good governance. That is the basic role of media as a watchdog for corruption and promoter of clean private sector development, because compared with jurisdiction, the media is a kind of the soft powers. Freedom of press, including free access to information is fundamental to open, democratic society. It is widely appreciated today that the media must be able to access public information in order to play this role. This view has found its way into international legal norms and, in numerous countries, the media's rights are upheld and guaranteed in freedom of information legislation (Bettina Peters, 2003:12).

In this paper we will first explore the history of corruption and anti-corruption, then describe current situation, and finally examine the media's role in curbing corruption in China.

II.A Brief Analysis of the Pre-Reform Corruption and the Role of Media

From 1950's to the late 1970's, there were three distinctive kinds of corruption in China: defalcation (tanwu), bribe (shouhui) and privileged power (tequan). Defalcation cases involved state officials who misappropriated public property by embezzlement, theft or swindling. Bribe referred to an official's using his or her power to extort or to accept bribes. Privileged power covered widespread privilege-seeking activities by officials, including 'back-door' (houmen) practices. All of these cases focus on abuse of power for personal benefits.

Why did corruption take place shortly after the establishment of the P.R.C.? What were causes of corruption? First, there was a highly centralized power structure in which the communist party and state intervened at all levels. This structure granted officials to act at their discretion over a wide range of goods and services necessary for everyday life, made people emphasize the need for Chinese tradition—the networks of personal ties and patron-client relations and provided many opportunities for local officials to seek their own personal and institutional interests.

Second, after the land reallocation and conversion of private into public property in the 1950s, the state controlled over all significant economic activities, based on command planning and the public ownership of nearly all-important economic organizations. As a result, individual preferences were supplanted by centralized planning, and the state directly controlled relationships between consumption and production. This, plus a Leninist organizational structure, organized dependency, and a shortage economy, provided enormous opportunities for officials---practically a special class because of their decision-making power---to trade discretion and influence for money and other valuables (Yufan Hao, 1995:8). These accompanied by the incomplete legal system,

the bureaucratism, self-complacency of some officials, induced corruption.

It is too difficult to give the amount of corruption cases occurred in pre-inform period, but we can take some examples to locate the situation of corruption. There were 2042 corruption cases and 3317 criminals in the southwest area of china from January 1950 to July 1951(Guanxin Wang, Hui Chen, 2001:170). The most typical corruption case was Liu Qinshan and Zhang Zishan case, called the No.1 Corruption Case of the new China. Liu Qinshan was secretary of communist's party committee in Tianjin area, while Zhang Zhishan was vice secretary. They embezzled public funds, accepted bribes, and even used drugs. The money they took illegally amounted to 17,162,720 , 000 Yuan (old money ,equal to 171,627.2 current Chinese Yuan).They were caught and brought to trial in November 1951 and executed in public on February 10,1952.

The problem of corruption, however, was not serious before 1978,because of a strictly defined communist value system and the repeated political movements (the Three Antis Movement, the Five Antis Movement and the Four Cleans Campaign) orchestrated by Mao and his immediate followers to check corruption and bureaucratism. Periodic rectification campaigns and the "XiaFang "movement (sending cadres down to lower levels to remold bureaucrats' attitudes) afforded the party center considerable control over local officials' behavior. This was the period of anti-corruption by political movements in the history of anti-corruption in China.

Media however reported many corruption cases and made comments on anti-corruption in 1950's. For example, in incomplete statistics, the People's Daily published 23 reports on corruption from March 4, 1950 to March 6, 1952. The corruption case of Jingsui Railway Employee, reported by the People's Daily on March 4, 1950, might be the earliest report of the corruption cases after the establishment of the P.R.C. .

Zhangjiakou Railway Bureau inspected the case on January 15th, 1950. More than 40 employees, including the stationmaster of Jining Railway Station (Su Fuyi), embezzled commodities, smuggled drugs and taken of bribery (e.g. flour, moon cake, fruit).

As mentioned above, all significant economic organization was owned by the state. So all the private media were converted into public property in the early 1950's, becoming organizations of the government. The government funded media, thus, the fundamental role of media in the society was making propaganda for the Chinese Communist Party and the government. So the dominant policy of media was described as: "the media is the mouthpiece of the party, the government and the people". In fact some vested interests always took advantage of the policy, turned media into their mouthpiece. During the Culture Revolution (1966-1976), in particular, media became tools, and even weapons of the political movement. In favor of some vested interests, the flow of information was blocked, reduced and slowed down, and information on the affairs of government, business and marginal groups were relatively not open to the public.

III. Four Waves of Corruption and the Measures of Anti-Corruption in Reforming China

The extent of corruption has increased dramatically and sharply since 1978, and the situation was becoming even worse in the 1990s. The forms of corruption has reached the overall categories mentioned above, and the characteristic of corruptions has grown significantly complicated.

Since 1978, there are four waves of corruption occurred almost simultaneously with the establishment of four market systems:

- (1) The first wave of corruption reached its climax in the early 1980's. Since it first established the consumer goods market in the late 1970s and throughout the mid-1980s, the Chinese government began to allow a market system to exist in parallel

with the planned allocation of resource and the accompanying planned price system, though consumer goods, particularly certain high quality goods, were still in short supply. The major form of corruption, in this period, was that government officials working in economic planning and administrative departments received bribes from managers and staffs of non-state owned enterprises, who speculated and profited from the price difference and smuggled foreign consumer goods.

- (2) The second wave of corruption reached its peak in the mid-1980s. The establishment of the producer goods market was initiated in the mid-1980s and lasted until the early 1990s, and the price gap between supply and demand for producer goods increased with the ever rapidly growing of economy. Thus, the dual price system of producer goods and quotas became the major objects of corruption in this period. The children of the senior officials, some junior officials and some government institutions engaged in speculating and smuggling producer goods. Meantime, unhealthy tendency and running side companies by government officials individually or under the name of their work units was also rampant.
- (3) The third wave of corruption occurred around 1993 and reached its summit in mid-1990s. The government began to establish a market of the production factors, including stock market, real estate market and capital market in the early 1990's. The imperfect and incomplete market system and huge profits generated from the speculative activities attracted government institutions into these markets seeking profits by using the public powers and/or the public resources they controlled. Compared with two early waves, the size of the illicit gains is far bigger, the proportion of senior officials involved higher and the number of bang corruption more enormous as well. For

example, before 1992, there had been no embezzlement or bribery case with money reaching 100,000 Yuan (US\$12,081.7). While after 1992, among 37 cases in the statistical data, there were 27 cases exceeding 100,000 yuan, amongst which 12 cases accounted for over 1 million Yuan (US\$120,816.84) and four cases accounted for more than 10 million Yuan (US\$1,208,167.99). Five cases after 2000 were all above 1 million Yuan.

- (4) The fourth wave of corruption is developing around the current restructuring of state-owned enterprises and the reorganizing of state assets. The reform of state-owned enterprises will itself create new opportunities for corruption around state assets. Some senior officials and bosses of state-owned enterprises are playing the major role in this wave.

Apparently, there have been many forms of corruption with the occurrence of four waves of corruption. First, Some traditional forms of corruption, such as defalcation, bribe and privileged power are still very widespread. But some traditional forms have incorporated new contents, commercialization characterizes those forms, for an example, the networks of personal ties with senior officials have been commercialized as a way of obtaining personal gain. Second, some modern forms of corruption have emerged and developed with the linkage of the modern economy and political system, such as "Gong Hui"(a bribe to a government official by government officials for public benefits, the second category as mentioned in the introduction), speculative and profiteering activity, commission, kickbacks in the procurement of government contracts, bribing voters or deputies at the village and township level, etc.

It is complicated and difficult to explore the causes of corruption in reforming China, because there are so many factors contributing to the

development and spread of it and furthermore, the transition is still ongoing. Regardless of the complication, we'll manage to examine some common basis relevant to the growth of corruption.

First, incompatibility between traditional political ideology and market economy has offered a seedbed for corruption. The reform strategy of Deng was to foster the market economy on the basis of established political power structure (Qinglian He, 2002), whereas the survival environment for market economy was to put the emphasis on limited government and democratic liberalism. This would inevitably conflict with the ideology of multifunctional government and centralized democracy. This conflict, accompanied by the continually deepening of the reform of market economy, would be basis of dual economic system and corruption. At the same time, the path dependence of the traditional political ideology has brought about the incompleteness of political reform and the weakness of the current political system, has undermined anti-corruption efforts which, in turn, has promoted the further proliferation of corruption. Furthermore, The conflict reduced the moral costs of corruption and stimulated its further spread.

Second, the long-term co-existence of dual economic systems of planned and market economies during the entire transition period provide plenty of incentives and opportunities for corruption.

Third, the breakdown of the prior distribution of national income among different social strata, i.e. the relative reduction of officials' income, drives many government officials to illicitly seek additional income, and many work units and government institutions to illegally seek extra income by abusing their institutional power and resources to improve their staff's welfare (Zengke He, :12).

Fourth, there are some factors contribute to the growth of corruption, they are the loopholes in and weakness of regulatory policies and institutions, certain policy failures, and a lack of experience and

approaches in the anti-corruption agencies tackling new forms of corruption.

Finally, certain traditional and international factors also contribute to the growth of corruption, such as, the culture heritage of hierarchical rule, the increasingly integration of China's economy into the global economy and etc.

Successful strategy to tackle corruption is to reduce an official's monopoly power (e.g. by market-oriented reforms), his/her discretionary power (e.g. by administrative reforms) and enhance his/her accountability (e.g., through watchdog agencies).

Since 1978, the Chinese government has tried many measures against corruption. (1) The deepening of economic reform: The rising wave corruption in contemporary China is, to a large extent, by-products of the dual economic systems. The dual price system and co-existence of resource-allocation by market and state plan is the major source of huge rents among economic activities. With the reduction of the scope of official price system and the resources allocated by the state plan, rent-seeking activities in some spheres rapidly decreased. The final establishment of a consumer goods market and cancellation of the official price system for consumer goods in the mid-1980s greatly reduced the speculation, profiteering and smuggling in consumer goods. The establishment and subsequent strengthening of regulation of the stock and real estate markets in the mid-1990s had a vital role in reducing the relevant economic crimes. Speeding up the market-oriented reform and the restructuring of state-owned enterprises play and will further play a critical role in reducing corruption and relevant economic crimes.

(2) Chinese government has made some progressive political reform toward democracy. For instant, collective leadership and the division of duties and responsibilities within party committees (Strengthening collective leadership is an important institutional constraint within the

party organizations on the abuse of power by party leaders); establishing and improving the relevant institutions responsible for democratic supervision (i.e., National and local People's Congress, the People's Political Consultative Conferences at various levels); making new experiments with systematic reform in Shenzhen during 2002–03, which intend to create a transparent, accountable and law-abiding government.

(3) Chinese government has made extensive administrative reform. For example, a law on administrative licensing taking effect in July 2004, which streamlines and introduces transparency into the system of administrative permits. With the establishment of the market system, many government departments have lost their power to allocate resources and have had to transform their functions while other departments were merged or abolished. With the loosening of the control over state-owned enterprises, many government departments have lost their power to directly control the relevant state firms and have had to find new functions.

(4) Chinese government has re-established (or established) and improved various anti-corruption agencies and institutions (see Table 1).

Table 1: Major Chinese anti-corruption agencies and institutions

| Name | Time of re-establishment (establishment) | Main function | Leadership system |
|--|--|--|---|
| The Central and local Commissions for Discipline Inspection of CPC | 1978 | Supervising party members and leaders in various political organizations on the basis of the party's disciplinary regulation | The Central Commission for Discipline Inspection works under the Party Central Committee. The local discipline inspection |

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|--|------------------------------|---|--|
| | | | commissions work under the dual leadership of the Party committees at the same level and discipline inspection commissions at the next higher level. |
| The Supreme People's Procuratorate and local Procuratorates | 1978 | Supervising law-enforcement and investigate and prosecute economic crime | To be responsible to the NPC and its Standing Committee |
| The Ministry of Supervision and its local branches | 1978 | Supervising government officials and punish those who violate administrative discipline | Under the direct leadership of the Premier of the State Council |
| The National Audit Office of the People's Republic of China (CNAO) | September 1983 (established) | Take charge of auditing revenues and expenditures of public finance of departments of the State Council and local governments at various levels, revenues and expenditures of state | Under the direct leadership of the Premier of the State Council |

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|---------------------------------------|---|--|---|
| | | banking institutions, state enterprises and undertakings | |
| The Anti-Corruption Work Bureau | At the beginning of 1990's (established) | The major anti-corruption agency | Under the command of the Procuratorates |

In order to strengthen the anti-corruption organs and enhance their independence in law and discipline enforcement, Chinese government has taken several measures to improve the leadership system of these agencies. The Central Commission for Discipline Inspection and its local branches and the Ministry of Supervision and its local branches were merged into one body, and began to work jointly in 1992. The government also strengthens vertical leadership within the system of anti-corruption agencies, although such leaders must still simultaneously accept the party committee's leadership at the same level. Finally, the central and local Commissions for Discipline Inspection of CPC have begun to exercise its right as a coordinator in anti-corruption work among various anti-corruption agencies.

There are also other efforts against corruption, such as, anti-corruption campaigns, moral education and etc. All in all, the government let the various measures act together against corruption in current China. In fact, the government plays a leading role or major role in utilizing these measures against corruption, because it plays the most important role in the political, economic and cultural life (Zhengrong Hu, 2003:21).

IV. The Role of Media Against Corruption in Today's

China

1. The transition of government regulations and the independence of media

As mentioned above, in order to combat corruption effectively, it is necessary that media should be able to access to information. Chinese government has undertaken tremendous changes on media regulation and policy since 1978, which have promoted the independence of media.

Throughout the world, government regulations - ranging from constitutional freedom of expression provisions to tax and business laws - affect media enterprises; also determine the media's access to information. Many of them aim to balance freedom of speech and protection of public interest, whereas the transition of government regulations in China, characterized by the dual objectives of the regulation, aims to balance the efforts to ensure, on one hand, the party's ideological control, the monopoly of the state-owned media and speaking for the party-state, and the other, the acceleration of the autonomy in economic practice of media, the expansion in the scope of economic development of entire media industry, and the protection of public interest. So media regulations evolve along with two paths: strengthening political regulation and deregulating the economy. Deregulation is initially applied to relatively weak media, such as printing media, then to stronger media such as TV, but the state always gets control of news propaganda. The transition of the government regulations has however promoted the independence of media, especially financial independence.

In the 1980s, Chinese media such as radio & TV stations were operated mainly on the financial support from the state, and began to earn its own living since 1990s. In 1998, the First Session of the 9th National People's Congress produced the timetable of reducing financial subsidies from the state, which meant to reduce 1/3 the amount annually since 1998. after three years media would be completely self-supplied financially. In fact, the cut-off of "milk supply" was initially conceptualized early in the end of 1970's, which could be found in some relevant Papers. In 1978, the approval by the Ministry of Finance allowing several newspaper bodies like *People's Daily* to exercise enterprise management, announced

the reform of new operation pattern which was applied to newspapers, which was known as *"administrated as government unit, managed as firm unit"*. In 1979, some relevant Papers issued by the Ministry of Propaganda justified media to carry advertisements; No.37 Paper (1983) allowed exercising business management on subordinated organizations, collecting funds extensively, therefore increasing the revenue. In 1993, the Third Session of 14th National People's Congress proposed to set up socialist market economy system. Accordingly, *"speeding up the tertiary industry"* promulgated in 1992 by the Central Party and the State Council officially included media into tertiary industry, thereafter the revenue of advertising of radio, TV, newspapers and magazines increased steadily, and the publishing houses were commercialized.

The newest government regulation, which marked the reform of China's media industry had entered a new era, has implemented this year. In July, 2003, *"Proposal about Experiment on Cultural Industry Institutional Reforms"* (No.21 Paper) issued jointly by the Ministry of Propaganda of Communist Party of China, the Ministry of Culture, the State Administration of Radio, Film & TV (SARFT), and the State Administration of Press and Publication was transmitted by the Office of the Central Party and the Office of State Council. Then, accordingly the State Administration of Radio, Film & TV and the State Administration of Press & Publication initiated active measures. Its central part was that media industry was divided into non-profit public sector and profitable business sector. Obviously seen is the trend of China's media reform---diversified, market-driven and capital-oriented.

The state financial support provides incentives for favorable coverage of the incumbent government and reduces the watchdog role of the media. Thus, the deregulation of the economy has built independent sources of finance through advertising, paid subscriptions has reduced reliance on state support and improved relative editorial independence. Furthermore the deregulation of the economy has promoted the

competition among media and helps prevent one firm from distorting information too heavily it supplied.

2. The Communist Party of China considers more of the supervisory function of the media

Since 1978, the CPC has paid more attention to the supervisory function of media in the anti-corruption. From the 13th National Congress (October, 1987), the 14th National Congress (October, 1992) to the 16th National Congress (October, 2002), the CPC had emphasized the need of the supervisory function of the media in the political reports. But the Party manages to maintain the media's function as the mouthpiece of the party, and to consolidate administration of media, and correct direction of public opinions. Thus, media are considered as the part of the relatively external constraint on the government and party, and a tool against corruption.

3. The supervisory function of media in today's China

Media have a dual way to perform the supervisory function. It not only reports (and investigates) incidences of corruption aiding other anti-corruption agencies and institutions but also raises public awareness about corruption, its causes, consequences and possible remedies.

First, media in China, in most cases, just report about the cases of the corruption that have been publicized by the government. It rarely happens in China that media discover case of corruption independently and expose them to the public, thus the main supervisory function of media is aiding other anti-corruption agencies and institutions, including pushing forward investigations of official bodies, reinforcing the effectiveness of public bodies, helping shape public opinion on corrupt activities, imposing pressure for changes to laws and regulations that create a climate favorable to corruption, and so forth.

Many hard-hitting reporting has provided the initial seed that pushes official bodies to launch formal investigations of their own. Take "*Focus*

Report ”of CCTV as example, soon after it reported counterfeit cotton case called “trace the counterfeit cotton” in 2000, the National Economic and Trade Committee and other government department launched the anti- counterfeit cotton campaigns around the country. On March 27,2002,after the program exposed the workers were died of benzene toxicosis due to the wrong operation in some village companies of the HeBei Province, the former-Prime Minister Zhu Rongji pointed out that the case might be rife around the country, then the inspecting movements cross the country were followed, and “the Labor Protect from Toxicant Act ” was enacted.

With CNAO's continuous cooperation with the mass media, government auditing and the mass media in China are making joint efforts to become a powerful source of supervision. In December 1998, the CNAO successfully held its press conference. In June 1999, Mr. Li Jinhua, Auditor General of China, entrusted by the State Council, presented to the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress the CNAO's annual audit report. The report disclosed irregularities committed by some government departments and agencies, revealed problems existing in budget implementation and other revenues and expenditures, which resulted in stronger repercussions in the public than ever before. In 2003,the annual audit report exposed wrongdoings committed by the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Communications and other government departments or agencies, which afterwards were reported and published fully and widely by many media. Mr. Li Jinhua became a hero of anti-corruption in media and society. Without doubt, media are playing a critical role in reinforcing the effectiveness of public anti-corruption bodies.

Second, Most often media's effects as an impediment to corruption are probably less tangible and more indirect, however, they can check on corruption which arise from the broader social climate of enhanced political pluralism, enliven public debate and a heightened sense of

accountability among politicians, public bodies and institutions in long terms.

4. Some famous TV programs, newspapers and magazines concerning anti-corruption

First, “*Focus Report*” (Jiao Dian Fang Tan) of CCTV is the model of supervisory TV genre, was first launched on April 1st, 1994. The column is so successful that more than 60 mimic TV columns has followed it, and become a typical TV genre with Chinese characteristics. Chinese characteristics mean the news media cannot reveal corruption cases or scandals without the permission of the appropriate party organizations (mainly from the Propaganda Departments) and their reports are usually limited before the end of official investigating and dealing with them. In this way, we call it “constructive criticism” under Chinese news term. The audience rating reached 14%-15% at the beginning. In 1998, the audience rating reached its summit - 27.48%, which indicated that nearly three hundred million Chinese TV viewers watching its program everyday. Until now, the column has broadcasted more than 3500 programs. The proportion of supervisory contents in the program reached 47% in 1998, but declined to 17% in 2002, and the rating accordingly declined to 8% in Beijing area (around 30% in other cities and areas). There are many reasons the audience rating and the proportion of supervisory contents declined, such as political and economic limits, media rent seeking and so on.

The Weekly Report of Quality of Commodity Product is also famous TV column of CCTV, which exposes the counterfeit and adulterate product and the inside story of product's quality. Its preem reported on anti-SARS respirators, exposed some fake anti-SARS respirators on May 1st, 2003. Until now, the audience rating is coming up to the top in news channel of CCTV. It has launched more than 60 programs concerning nearly every aspect of the counterfeit and adulterate commodities.

Obviously, the program has helped promote the cleaning of the product, especially the foodstuff.

Second, *Southern Weekend* (Nanfang Zhoumou), the China's largest circulation weekly, has long left a deep impression on society by reporting in big headlines such stories as the investigation and solution of Shanxi counterfeit alcohol case, the Wuhan bus bombing case and Sun Zhigang case, and has become famous for its reports on sensitive social topics and on the avant-garde of the literary and artistic world since starting publication in 1984. Circulation now stands at about 1.3 million copies each weekend. Over the past few years, *Southern Weekend*, along with *Beijing Youth Daily* (Beijing Qingnian Bao) has become famous for reporting on negative news that stirred up a big reaction. Chinese people began calling them "the hot pepper of the North and the hot pepper of the South". Over the last two years *Beijing Youth Daily* became more cautious after having been criticized by the Propaganda Department of the Chinese Communist Party. But *Southern Weekend* did not change its reporting on spicy topics. *Southern Weekend* makes daring reports on news of great social importance, often going right up to the edge of what is permissible ("jing chang da yi xie cabianqiu" literally means "often hits balls right down the foul line") and so has been very much appreciated by Chinese readers. But issues bearing spicy topics were always banned before the paper was widely delivered all over China, and the Weekly are usually blamed by name from upper government officials for concentrating on reporting negative news. So the proportion of critical reports reported by the newspaper declined from 91.67%(1998) to 28.57%(2003)(see figure1).