

## Chinese mainland allows Taiwan lawyers to handle more cases

The Chinese mainland will offer more professional opportunities for Taiwan lawyers by allowing them to handle a wider range of civil cases starting Nov. 1.

Taiwan residents who have been awarded professional qualifications will be permitted to handle Taiwan-related civil cases on contract and intellectual property disputes as well as cases related to corporations, securities, insurance and negotiable instruments such as bills of exchange or cheques, Ma Xiaoguang, spokesman for the Taiwan Affairs Office of the State Council, said Monday.

Since 2008, Taiwan lawyers have been allowed to handle Taiwan-related marriage and inheritance cases.

The new policies will bring more opportunities for the island's legal profession, and to young professionals in particular, and better safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of people on both sides of the Strait, Ma said.

Starting in 2008, the Chinese mainland permitted Taiwan residents to take the National Judicial Examination, the only professional exam for lawyers, judges, prosecutors and similar legal professions. Since then, 308 have been awarded professional qualifications.

In May, the Ministry of Justice made it easier for Taiwan residents to practice law on the mainland by allowing Taiwan law firms to set up representative offices in Fujian, Guangdong, Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Shanghai.

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## World's smallest paleolithic ornamental beads unearthed in China

Chinese archaeologists have unearthed the world's smallest paleolithic ornamental beads, in northwest China's Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region.

The bead, made of a kind of eggshell and 1.26 millimeters in diameter, was discovered in an ancient site from the late Pleistocene dating between 8,000 and 12,000 years ago in Qingtongxia city.

Three similar beads, all smaller than 2 millimeters in diameter, were discovered at the same time, archeologists said Monday.

The excavation was jointly conducted by Ningxia Institute of Cultural Relics and Archeology, the Institute of Vertebrate Paleontology and Paleoanthropology and the cultural relics administration of Qingtongxia from May to August.

“It is incredible that it can be so well processed with such a small diameter. It is rare among similar ornaments unearthed in other sites around the world,” said Wang Huimin, a researcher with the Ningxia Institute of Cultural Relics and Archeology.

Archeologists said the beads showed excellent craftsmanship and the aesthetic tastes of ancient humans. They said further research is needed to determine the exact purpose or meaning of the beads.

It took the archeologists five years to sift and wash thousands of cubic meters of dirt to find the beads. As many as eight sets of steel sieves were worn out in the process.

In 2016, three beads all smaller than 2 millimeters in diameter, were found at the site, among which the smallest was 1.42 millimeters in diameter.

The excavation of the site in Qingtongxia is one of China’s top 10 archaeological finds of 2016, which unveiled more than 10,000 items, including stoneware, ornaments and plant seeds.

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## [Symposium on 100th anniversary of the Russian Revolution](#)



Peking University hosted an international symposium on the history, reality and future of socialism in Beijing on October 21-22, 2017. [Photo courtesy of Heiko Khoo]

Peking University hosted an international symposium on the history, reality and future of socialism in Beijing on October 21-22, 2017, when Chinese Marxist scholars were joined by colleagues from Europe, Russia, North America and India.

The event considered socialism in the light of the 100th anniversary of the Russian Revolution. And it took place at the same time as the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC).

Speakers covered a very wide range of topics, as socialist ideas and practice have had vast impact on the modern world. Many of the contributions from China focused on contemporary interpretations of socialist ideas within China.

Chinese President Xi Jinping's sweeping overview of modern socialism presented at the 19th CPC National Congress located the origin of socialism in Thomas More's book Utopia.

This provided a valuable backdrop for several Chinese scholars to elaborate a framework for categorizing phases in the history of concepts of socialism. These were related to the development of contemporary interpretations of "socialism with Chinese characteristics."

The Chinese Marxist scholars devoted considerable attention to the main contradiction, which dominated the fate of the Soviet Union in its early

years. According to Karl Marx's theory, socialism was to begin only after capitalism had been fully developed.

However, Lenin's revolution established a socialist government in a backward society dominated by individual production and pre-capitalist economic formations. All the trials and tribulations which shaped the fate of socialist governments after 1917 were determined by this contradiction.

Prof. An Qinian, from the philosophy department of the Renmin University of China, offered a broad overview of the consequences of the contradictions, through which the material backwardness of the Soviet Union generated attempts to leap over capitalism.

And therefore, despite Vladimir Lenin's initial post-revolutionary support for democratic structures of power, emulating the experience that Marx observed at the time of the Paris Commune in 1871 – such as all officials receiving the same wage as workers – material backwardness automatically produced cultural backwardness.

However, Yan Zhimin from the School of Marxism at Peking University pointed to a flaw in Marx's own thought on the question as revealed in an 1881 letter to Vera Zassulich in Russia. In this letter, Marx suggested that primitive communal forms of Russian agriculture might act as a springboard to jump from backwardness to communism, without any intermediate phases, provided a workers' revolution led the way.

Prof. Yu Liangzhao from the School of Marxism at Nanjing Normal University explained how Lenin approached the question after 1921, during the development of the New Economic Policy in the Soviet Union.

A transitional period, when communists "learn to trade," engage in competition and supervise the activity of capitalists, would be required, while maintaining proletarian power.

Lenin believed that the Soviet revolution would spread internationally. This question was addressed by Balwinder Singh Tiwana from India's Punjab University. He looked at the impact of the Russian Revolution on communists in the Indian independence movement from 1920 onwards.

David Laibmann from New York University, editor of the Marxist journal *Science and Society*, examined the question of systemic planning and economic coordination, and how the Soviet system established its internal economic equilibrium.

He recognized that the sense of urgency, haste and rush caused by material backwardness acted to severely restrict the degree of participation, and the necessary evaluation of planning and control procedures; and this produced many fundamental systemic contradictions.

However, the discussions were not restricted to historical analysis, important as these questions are to inform the present. For example, Josef Baum from Vienna University addressed the need to embed ecological questions in any contemporary vision of socialism.

And Alexander Buzgalin from Moscow State University, which houses one of the few Marxist study centers left in Russia, invited participants to look at the nature of revolution, above and beyond the question of a seizure of State power, and the development of the forces of production.

He suggested that revolution should be considered from the standpoint of overcoming human alienation and unleashing mass social creativity.

Unfortunately, the participants who presented papers restricted the scope for elaborating concepts and arguments in depth. However, the discussions will continue at the global Marxism seminar to be held on the 200th anniversary of Marx's birth in May 2018.

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## [A new way to save heritage houses](#)

Old houses in Huangshan, Anhui province, offer a unique insight into the centuries-old architecture of the Ming and Qing dynasties, but a lack of funding is making protection a challenge.



Traditional lanterns glow near centuries-old residences in Hongcun Village, near Mount Huangshan, Anhui province, in May. [Photo/China Daily]

There are more than 6,000 Ming and Qing houses in Huangshan, a UNESCO cultural and natural heritage site; but, because of limited government funding, fewer than one-fourth – 1,325 – are under State protection.

Yet, all of these old houses, many of which once belonged to important

people, are treasures in local residents' eyes. How to effectively protect these examples of cultural heritage has long been a challenge for inhabitants and authorities alike.

Many villagers work in cities as migrant workers, leaving their old houses behind, vulnerable to decay and collapse.

"There is a lack of money for the renovation of these houses, and it is a real shame to have to watch them collapse or fall into ruin. So we are encouraging people who are able to invest capital in repairing the old houses to make good use of them," said Hu Jianbin, Huangshan's culture bureau chief.

Urbanization is a significant factor. Increasing numbers of city dwellers, tired of the hustle and bustle of city life coupled with traffic congestion and air pollution, are turning to the countryside to escape. Preservation of old houses in Huangshan offers such people a glimmer of hope.

### **Clean air**

Huangshan has many advantages to attract people escaping city life. Apart from its natural scenic beauty, the city is one of the cleanest in China. Last year, the number of days that air quality reached the national standards of "excellent" and "fairly good" hit 355 in Huangshan. It is also the cradle of Hui culture, which has inspired unique residential building designs since the Song Dynasty (960-1279).

Shu Qing is one of the people attracted to Huangshan.

Born in Yixian county of Huangshan, Shu worked as a journalist in Beijing for eight years before returning to her hometown.

"I liked strolling around the Lama Temple in Beijing, and loved all the small restaurants nearby. I dreamed of opening one in my hometown," she said.

In 2009, Shu, left the big city and returned to Yixian where she opened her own restaurant – The Hui House – in an old building near the former residence of Sai Jinhua, a woman of note in the late Qing Dynasty (1644-1911). The building is located near the townships of Xidi and Hongcun, two UNESCO cultural heritage sites.

### **Dream property**

"The house had been left empty and had decayed wood that had been destroyed by termites," she said, recalling the first time she saw her dream property.

Five months of reconstruction and interior decoration have turned The Hui House into a cozy and elegant restaurant known for delicious food and attentive service. Only eight groups of diners are served each day.

"We carefully keep the old building in good condition according to government requirements, frequently repairing it," Shu said.

A lover of old architecture, she started searching for a suitable ancient



house to live in with her husband. In 2012, she bought two adjoining Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) houses in a precarious state of disrepair. It took her three years to rebuild and decorate them.

“The project’s plan and blueprint must be approved by the government first to prevent workers destroying any of the original structure. The Hui style of a house must be maintained, including the use of black tiles, high white walls and wall tops shaped like horse heads,” she said.

The restored houses, which were completed in 2016, have eight tastefully designed rooms, equipped with modern amenities such as central air conditioning and heated floors.

“Since 2016, we have lived in the houses. In March this year, we began providing accommodations for travelers,” she said.

### **Personal investment**

Shu spent 1.5 million yuan (\$225,520) buying the two old houses, and another 2.6 million yuan rebuilding and decorating them.

“Buying old houses is costly, and reconstructing them is not only costly but also time-and energy-consuming. If you are not really fond of them, you will destroy the houses,” said Yu Biao, director of the cultural heritage protection office in Yixian.

“So we must supervise buyers’ credit and their economic power, no matter what kind of old houses they want to purchase.”

Fascinated with Hui culture, Huang Hua, president of Beijing Hua Sheng Hang International Cultural Development Co, specializes in Ming and Qing Dynasty furniture. Since 2003, he has made a living trading nanmu, a rare wood often used by Qing royal families.

In 2013, he came across an ancestral hall in Yixian.

“It was almost collapsing and was classified as dangerous. It would have been a shame to allow it to disappear,” he said.

### **Win-win scenario**

Because the hall is listed as a cultural relic, the Yixian government only leased it for 40 years. Huang rebuilt it over a period of two years, spending 3 million yuan. Now it is a museum for Ming and Qing furniture. Huang also exhibits his company’s products.

In recent years, local governments have taken a series of steps to attract private investors like Shu and Huang to renovate the old houses in Huangshan. If the plan goes well, it will prove to be a win-win, sustainable way to preserve cultural heritage.

“We have a set of meticulous rules to ensure that only capable investors can rent the houses. Ownership stays in the hands of the government,” said Hu,

the culture bureau chief.

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## US team wins Chinese language contest

A team from the United States has won the “Chinese Bridge” language proficiency competition for secondary school students held in Kunming, capital of southwest China’s Yunnan Province.



Contestants take part in the final of the 10th Chinese Bridge the Chinese Proficiency Competition for Foreign Secondary School Students in Kunming, southwest China’s Yunnan Province, Oct. 28, 2017. [Photo: Xinhua]

The final round was held on Saturday evening, with the winning team from each continent, Russia, Kyrgyzstan, the United States, Mozambique and Australia, taking part.

A number of participants from countries such as Canada and Austria also won individual awards.

The series of contests, which focuses on spoken Chinese, Chinese culture and art performances, attracted 320 teachers and students from 96 countries and regions.

During their stay in Kunming, the participants visited local families and



communities to experience folk arts and traditions.

Since 2002, the headquarters of the Confucius Institute in Beijing has organized a series of Chinese Bridge language competitions.