

[Ancient gigantic Buddha statue with puzzling background](#)

After Taliban blew up the world's two largest Buddha statues in Bamyān, Afghanistan, 16 years ago, the 32-meter-high standing statue of Buddha in Sichuan became the largest on Earth.



The world's tallest standing Buddha statue in Sichuan Province in Southwest China. [Photo:scol.com.cn]

However, despite its splendid view on Mt. Baxian, 891 meters high above the sea level, the origin of the statue remains elusive.

Its builders and dynasties have yet to be identified, and its hairstyle, earlobes and dressings are different from conventional Buddha statues. For example, Buddhas don't usually wear bracelets. Moreover, this Buddha statue looks like it's wearing an apron, which distinguishes its clothing from others.

Although the ambiguous elements of the statue perplexes historians, experts still believe the Buddha statue has distinctive historic value.

[Ministry issues penalties for nuclear safety](#)

The Chinese Ministry of Environmental Protection (MEP) issued two administrative penalties on Feb. 14 for compromises in nuclear security.



Members of the IAEA-led Integrated Regulatory Review Service (IRRS) and staff from the Chinese National Nuclear Safety Authority visit the Fuqing Nuclear Power Plant to review safety upgrades carried out as part of work to improve safety following the 2011 Fukushima accident in Japan. The September 2016 visit was part of an IRRS review of China's regulatory framework for nuclear and radiation safety. [Photo: NNSA/MEP]

Dalian Teikoku Canned Motor Pump Co., Ltd., a Japanese-funded company and the biggest canned motor pump manufacturer in China, was deemed by the MEP to have violated operating protocols in the welding of nuclear power units of Yangjiang Nuclear Power Station in Guangdong Province, and failed to register the design of the canned motor pump to be used in Hongyanhe Nuclear Power Station in Liaoning Province.

Dalian Teikoku also received another penalty for its welder Zhou Shundong for violating protocol in repair welding, which has led to severe quality risks.

The MEP demand Dalian Teikoku immediately halt unauthorized activities and pay a fine of 200,000 yuan (US\$29,093). The MEP also revoked Zhou's qualification licence.

The devices involved in the penalties were still in the manufacturing stage and did not compromise the actual safety or construction of the aforementioned nuclear facilities, according to MEP statements.

Nuclear safety has been given greater attention in the wake of Japan's Fukushima incident, which was triggered by a major earthquake and the subsequent tsunami.

Minister of Environmental Protection, Chen Jining, has cautioned against nuclear risks now that China is rapidly developing its nuclear energy and nuclear technologies, posing increasing pressure on safety supervision. He urged that precautions must be in place right from the very source, in order to maintain security capabilities and reliability.

Chen said that there must be bottom lines in terms of the safety for nuclear

power generation in order to implement all possible measures to lower the risk of accidents. He also called for the enhancing of emergency response responsibilities.

MEP's statement shows that the operational nuclear power-generating units and the nuclear reactors for civil researches have maintained a sound safety record. None of the nuclear power plants nationwide have had any incident or accident above the second degree category. The accident rate involving radioactive sources has dropped to under one case in 10,000 sources each year, from above 2.5 cases in the period 2006-2010.

Liu Hua, the vice minister of Environmental Protection and director of National Nuclear Safety Administration said that there was no "absolute safety" in the nuclear industry, only "relative safety." He said a country's nuclear safety could only be guaranteed as long as the industry keeps improving its technology and the national regulator keeps enhancing its supervision capabilities, in addition to drawing lessons from previous nuclear accidents and incidents.

Dead worker not allowed in elevator

A dead house painter, killed in a new residential building in Wuhan, Hubei Province, was forbidden from being carried down through the stairs or elevators, as property owners believed it could have ominous implications.



The building where the house painter fell down [Photo: Chutian Metropolis Daily]

The worker, around 50 years old, was killed after accidentally falling down from the 16th floor to a 3rd floor platform on Feb. 20.

As staff from the local funeral parlor came to carry down the body, several property owners in nearby apartments demanded that it shouldn't go through the stairs, elevators or the main part of the building, citing superstitious beliefs.

The body was lowered on the outside of the building on a stretcher with the help of a firefighting team.

[Nobel laureate, Turing Award winner enlisted by top academy](#)



Nobel laureate C.N. Yang (left) and Turing Award winner Yao Qizhi. [Photo: China Daily]

Nobel laureate Chen Ning Yang and Turing Award winner Yao Qizhi have become Chinese citizens and officially joined the Chinese Academy of Sciences as academicians—the highest academic title in China, the academy’s faculty office said on Tuesday.

They are the first overseas scientists to relinquish their US citizenship to join the official faculty of China’s highest scientific research organization. Yang, 94, will join the mathematical physics department, while Yao, 70, will enter the information technology and science department.

“They are both world renowned scholars,” the office said in a statement. “Their entry into the academy’s faculty will increase the influence of China’s scientific circles worldwide.”

Yang and Tsung-dao Lee received the 1957 Nobel Prize in physics for their work on parity nonconservation of weak interaction, becoming the first people of Chinese origin to win a Nobel Prize.

Yao became in 2000 the first person of Chinese origin to receive the Turing Award, the most prestigious award in computer science. He won for his fundamental contributions to the theory of computation such as cryptography and communication complexity.

In late 2016, both scientists had relinquished their foreign nationality and submitted their request to join the academy. The faculty office said it had to adopt new procedures to accept the two scientists, who were both foreign academicians at the time.

In order to become a foreign academician, one has to be an accomplished scientist who contributed greatly to China’s science and technology. After

being recommended by more than five Chinese members, the foreign scientist enters a biennial election and must win a two-thirds majority of academicians' votes to join their ranks, according to the academy's charter.

A foreign academician, though lacking voting rights, can advise on Chinese scientific developments and the workings of the faculty office, as well as receive academic publications and invitations to seminars held by the office. Foreign academicians can join the ranks of Chinese members once they receive Chinese citizenship.

A Chinese member can make suggestions on major Chinese scientific projects and vote on prospective new members of the academy.

There are now 754 Chinese and 78 foreign scientists in the academy. In recent years, the faculty office has worked to build a "big academician family", connecting renowned scholars from around the world to give advice and contribute to China's scientific development.

"As China's science, economy and society develop, the influence of the faculties will increase domestically and abroad," the office said.

[CPC meeting discusses draft government work report](#)

Xi Jinping, general secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee, on Tuesday chaired a meeting on the draft government work report.

The meeting, attended by members of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee, discussed the draft report, which is scheduled to be submitted to the upcoming fifth session of the 12th National People's Congress (NPC).

Tuesday's meeting also reviewed a special report on inspections of central Party and governmental authorities, and another document on a Party education campaign.

At the meeting, China's top leadership pledged to stick to the basic tone of "seeking progress while maintaining stability" in 2017, aiming for more progress from supply-side structural reform.

The meeting highlighted the significance of 2017 as the 19th CPC National Congress will convene.

Acknowledging that China has scored a strong start for the 2016-2020 period, the meeting called for further efforts to balance multiple economic tasks in 2017, including stabilizing growth, advancing reforms, pushing restructuring, improving people's livelihood and preventing risks.

At the macro level, China will continue to implement proactive fiscal policies and prudent monetary policies, according to a document released after the meeting.

Reforms in key areas will be deepened, while the role of innovation will be boosted to facilitate economic upgrading, said the document.

China will also intensify efforts to tap the potential of domestic demand and strengthen internal growth momentum.

Other tasks include pushing supply-side structural reform in the agriculture sector, widening opening-up, promoting green development and improving government services for people's well-being.

The meeting came ahead of China's annual two sessions in March, during which lawmakers and political advisors will gather in Beijing to discuss the social and economic policies for the year.

Since the CPC's 18th National Congress, anti-graft teams have carried out 11 rounds of inspections across all provincial-level governments, central authorities, key state-owned enterprises and central financial institutions, according to the document.

The inspections, which focused on the adherence to the Party's leadership, comprehensive and strict governance of the Party and observation of the Party's Constitution and rules, have been effective political "microscopes" and "searchlights," the document stated.

The document said that central Party and governmental authorities play an important role in the Party and the state and they must uphold the authority of the CPC Central Committee and its centralized and unified leadership.

It stressed that all problems detected in the inspections should be properly addressed.

The document said that the Party education campaign – which focuses on the study of the Party Constitution and rules, as well as the speeches made by Xi, and calls for being qualified Party members – plays an important role in Party building and governance.

Deeming it an effective tool in Party building, the document said the education campaign had helped shape the approach to governance of the Party under a new situation.

It said the education campaign should be regular and institutionalized, as this would help members understand the essence of Xi's speeches, ensure Party members unite closer around the CPC Central Committee with Comrade Xi Jinping as the core, and scoring new achievements in socialism with Chinese characteristics.

The document called on Party organizations at all levels to make the education campaign a strategic and basic project.

It stressed that ideological education must be prioritized and efforts should be made to educate and guide Party members, especially leading officials.

Leading officials should set a good example in the campaign, the document said, adding that evaluations of the education campaign should be carried out annually.