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Radio, Television And Film In
The People's Republic Of China

By

Li Jingchun
Radio, Television and Film in The People's Republic of China

Radio, Home Service

In the early 1920s, radio was introduced into China.

The first group of radio stations in China was set up by foreigners.

The first Chinese-owned radio station, the Harbin Radio Station, was established in 1926.

In August 1928, the Central Radio Station run by the Chinese Kuomintang Government debuted from Nanjing.

On December 30, 1940, the Yanan Xinhua Radio Station was inaugurated by the Chinese Communist Party in Yanan, the then Revolutionary Base. It was moved to Beijing on March 25, 1949. After the founding of the People's Republic of China, it was renamed the Central People's Broadcasting Station (CPBS) which is the only national radio station in China at present.

Now CPBS broadcasts on six channels for 107 hours everyday. Two channels carry comprehensive programmes which are broadcast to the whole country in Putonghua (Standard Chinese) for 40 hours and 30 minutes a day; two are beamed to Taiwan province, broadcasting in Putonghua and two local dialects, Amoy and Hakka, for 37 hours and 50 minutes daily; one is beamed to ethnic minority regions in the Mongolian, Tibetan, Uygur, Kazak and Korean languages for 10 hours daily; and there is also a FM stereo channel which broadcasts 18 hours daily. It broadcasts mainly music programmes and can be heard in the Beijing area as well as in more than other 20 cities with the help of microwave links.

The composition of the programmes of CPBS is as follows: News accounts for 21 percent of total broadcasting time. Its main news programmes are Nationwide Hook-up, News and Press Summaries. Altogether the six channels of CPBS broadcast 85 news programmes a day.
Educational programmes account for 23 percent of the total broadcasting time which include target programmes and radio teaching programmes, etc. Entertainment programmes account for 49 percent of total broadcasting time. Service programmes constitute about 7 percent of total broadcasting time which include Mailbag, Weather-Forecast and Advertisements.

There is no commercial radio station in China and all radio stations are owned by the state. Since 1979, radio stations have been allowed to carry advertisements in order to transmit messages and information. By doing so, radio stations can also increase some of their revenue to make up the inadequacy out of government's allocated funds.

CPBS has established 34 correspondent bureaus throughout the country.

Besides the Central People's Broadcasting Station, there were 461 regional and local radio stations by the end of 1988. They are distributed in all provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions and in some of other large cities. These stations broadcast 4,968 hours a day. And there are 642 transmitting and relay stations in the whole country. Radio programmes can cover 70.6 percent of the total population in China. Rediffusion networks have been set up in more than 2,500 counties, cities and banners to relay news programmes from CPBS, regional and local radio stations.

CPBS has established cooperative relationship with radio stations in more than 40 countries.
OVERSEAS SERVICE (RADIO)

China’s International Radio Station, its call sign is Radio Beijing, is the only state-run radio station in China transmitting programmes worldwide. Radio Beijing aims at serving the people of the world and tries to enhance the friendship and mutual understanding between the Chinese people and the people of other countries in the world and promoting the cause of peace and progress.

Radio Beijing has gone through more than 40 years of evolution since it inaugurated its English-language service on September 11, 1947.

At present Radio Beijing broadcasts worldwide every day in 38 foreign languages and in Putonghua (Standard Chinese) and four local Chinese dialects—Guangzhou (Cantonese), Hakka, Amoy and Chaozhou dialects. Its total broadcasting time of the 43 language services is 140 hours daily.

On New Year’s Day, 1984, Radio Beijing launched the Capital Service which inaugurated its English-language service for foreigners in the Beijing area first. Broadcasting 11 hours of programmes a day, the service is currently relayed in Shanghai, Guangzhou, Tianjin, Shenyang, Nanjing and Xi’an. Since 1986, Radio Beijing’s Capital Service has launched Spanish, French, German and Japanese language services for the capital area one after another.

The different language services of Radio Beijing present comprehensive programmes with news as the major component. Generally speaking, each transmission includes home and world news, commentaries on international affairs, features about China and music. As the various language services have specific audiences and operate independently, there are some differences in their programming.

Organizationally, Radio Beijing has three divisions: the central newsroom and editorial departments, the various language departments and the administrative departments.

Radio Beijing receives a great number of letters every year from listeners in more than 150 countries and regions. Many listeners commend Radio Beijing as “an ambassador of the air” and “a bridge of friendship” linking the Chinese people and the people of other countries.
To give timely coverage of events across the world, Radio Beijing has local bureaus in the provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions all over China and overseas bureaus in Tokyo, Bangkok, Islamabad, Cairo, Harare, Mexico City, Buenos Aires, Paris, Moscow, Belgrade, Bonn, Brussels, Washington, New York, Sydney and Hong Kong. It exchanges programmes with radio stations in several dozen countries. In recent years, Radio Beijing has signed cooperation agreements with international radio stations of France, Spain, Switzerland and Canada on the mutual transmitting of each other's programmes.
TELEVISION

The first television station of the People's Republic of China, the China Central Television (CCTV - its former name is Beijing Television), began experimental operation on May 1 and officially began operating on September 2, 1958. By 1988 there were 422 television stations located all over China, broadcasting on 465 channels with a total of 18,622 hours of programming per week. There are 19,876 transmitting stations, relay stations and translators. In addition microwave trunk links, domestic and international satellites carry and transmit TV programmes to the whole country, thus a national radio and television transmitting network has been taken shape. By 1988, TV signal could reach 75.4 percent of the population.

CCTV broadcasts in full color on three channels. The first and second channels are broadcast nationwide. The third one is broadcast to the Beijing area.

The first channel offers comprehensive programming and news is the backbone. It is on the air from 8:30 a.m. to 11 p.m. every day.

The second channel offers comprehensive programming and specializes in economic news which begins its service at 8 a.m. for a total of 12 hours daily.

Since December 30, 1986, CCTV has launched its English Service on CCTV 2 which starts with news at 10 p.m. and then other programming.

In January 1986, a third channel began broadcasting in the Beijing area on experimental basis. It offers entertainment programmes and literary and art programmes constitute the main part of the programming. This channel is on the air from 8:30 p.m. for about 3 hours.

In 1988, the total broadcasting time of CCTV's three channels was 29 hours daily.

A breakdown of CCTV programming shows: News accounts for 10 percent of total broadcasting time, social educational programmes account for 40 percent; entertainment programme accounts for 45 percent and service programmes, 5 percent. CCTV's National Network Evening News is one of the most popular programmes.
In recent years there has been a marked increase in number of teledramas produced and aired in China. In 1979 CCTV aired only a dozen teledramas, but in 1988 the number climbed to 360 with a total of 1,155 episodes.

About 10 percent of CCTV’s programmes are imported from foreign countries including international news, features on science and technology, sports, culture, teledramas and feature films.

CCTV exchanges programmes with television organizations in more than 50 countries and co-produces programmes with some of them.

The new building of CCTV began to be constructed on May 31, 1983 with a total floor space of 85,000 square meters. The building is 110 meters high with 24 storeys. There are 12 studios. It has been in operation since March 31, 1988. Thanks to the new building and its facilities, the capability of programme production and transmission of CCTV has been greatly improved.
ADMINISTRATION AND OTHER SUBSIDIARY BODIES

At present, radio, film and television in China are all state-owned. The Ministry of Radio, Film and Television under the Chinese Government, the State Council, is a mass media organization and at the same time it is an organ in charge of the administration of radio, film and television services throughout China. It gives direct leadership to the Central People's Broadcasting Station (CPBS), Radio Beijing (overseas service), China Central Television (CCTV) and the Film Administrative Bureau.

The following organizations are also under the direct leadership of the Ministry of Radio, Film and TV. They are: China Record Company, the China Broadcasting Arts Troupe, the China Council for TV Art, the Design Institute of the Ministry of Radio, Film and TV, the Broadcasting Research Institute, Radio and Television Publishing House, the Beijing Broadcasting Institute and the Beijing Film Academy.

CHINA RECORD COMPANY is the state record publisher and distributor. Its head office in Beijing has departments of music, opera and publications, technical departments and administrative sections in charge of production planning, import and export business and distribution. With branch companies in Shanghai, Guangzhou and Chengdu and a record factory in Beijing, China Record Company produced 8,373,000 records, 21,380,000 recorded cassettes and 20,000 CD records in 1988. The company also manufactures record players, broadcasting and control facilities as well as compound for producing records. This company has established business contacts with many record companies in foreign countries and held record and recorded cassette exhibitions in the United States, Canada, Japan, the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria, Hong Kong and Macao.

THE CHINA BROADCASTING ARTS TROUPE serves both radio and television and offers a variety of popular entertainment to the audience. It has five divisions: a traditional instruments orchestra, a ballad singing troupe, a western instruments symphony orchestra, a chorus and an electronic music troupe. They record concerts and ballad singings for radio and background music, songs and incidental music for television. They also give public performances in society at large and offer entertainment to radio and TV audience directly.

China Broadcasting Arts Troupe, particularly its traditional instruments orchestra, has visited more than twenty countries and regions in Asia, Africa, America, Oceania and Europe.
THE CHINA COUNCIL FOR TV ART produces TV plays in league with other organizations. The Council also involves itself in art criticism and theoretical research, plus editing *Chinese and Foreign TV* (a monthly magazine) and other publications.

THE DESIGN INSTITUTE OF THE MINISTRY OF RADIO, FILM AND TV is responsible for designing radio and TV centers, large, medium and small sized MW, SW, TV FM transmitters and re-inforced concrete TV towers as well as cinemas, opera houses, simultaneous interpretation system, public address system, closed-circuit television system, microwave relaying, micro-computer controlled automation and other civil constructions.

BEIJING BROADCASTING INSTITUTE is an institution of higher learning which trains radio and TV staff for news, literary and art programmes, radio and television technology, management as well as foreign language broadcasts. It has eight departments, including those of news, television, art editing, foreign languages, management, microwave engineering and radio engineering. At present, this institute has a student body of more than 1,700 and another 3,000 correspondence students. Most of its graduates are professional core members in radio and TV stations all over the country.

By the end of 1988, there were more than 260,000,000 radio sets, more than 80,000,000 rediffusion speakers in the countryside and 140,000,000 TV sets owned by individuals or units.
China's film production has a history of more than 80 years. The country's first film, named "Jin Jun Mountain" (a stage documentary), was produced in 1905. In 1930, China produced its first talkie called "Red Peony." Eight years later, during the war against Japanese Aggression, the Yanan Film Group was founded in the liberated area of northern China under Communist control. The group was reorganized under the title of Yanan Film Studio in March, 1946. In October of the same year, the first large-scale film house — "Northeast Film Studio" was founded in the liberated areas of northeastern China. Gradually developed year by year, there are now 16 feature film studios, 2 science and educational film studios, one newsreel and documentaries film studio, one animation film studio, one film dubbing studio and one copy processing studio. Now all these film studios can produce more than one hundred films a year. In 1988, a total of 158 feature films were made. In recent years, China has produced a number of popular films, among them "Xian Incident," "Happiness Knocks at the Door," "My Memories of Old Beijing," "Red Peony," "Old Well," "Red Sunflower," "Eating Bell," "Woman-Demon-Human." Meanwhile, Chinese film studios have cooperated with film studios of other countries and Hongkong in producing films like "Mao Tse Tung," "Tian Ping Zhi Meng," "A Game Unfinished," "Shaoxi Temple" and "Baring Teaflower." Some Chinese-made feature films, animated cartoons, science and educational films and documentaries have won prizes at international film festivals. These include "Old Well," "Red Sunflower," "Woman-Demon-Human," "Haven in the Heaven," "Nebia Stir up the Sea," "Insect World," "the Grey Magpie" and "Fifth Games."

The Chinese film industry is under the supervision and administration of the Film Administrative Bureau of the Ministry of Radio, Film and TV.

The Film Bureau is in charge of the creation and production of films, the planning and construction of film studios, the examination and approval of films made by various film studios and imported from foreign countries as well as from Hongkong and Taiwan, co-ordination of technology and production as well as arrangement of film exchanges with foreign countries. Through its various subordinate bodies, the Bureau oversees film development, printing and copy-making and the collection and storage of film data. It also handles distribution, projection and imports and exports.

The China Film Distribution and Exhibition Corporation is responsible for releasing various kinds of Chinese and foreign films in China.
The China Film Import and Export Corporation is the country's sole organization dealing with film imports and exports. It has now established business relationship with more than 400 film enterprises and organizations of more than 100 countries and regions.

The Film Co-production Company is responsible for receiving foreign film-makers who want to film in China.

The China Film Archive is responsible for the collection, storage and preservation of film data, cataloguing and research of the film data, exchanges of film data with foreign countries and organizing projection of Chinese and foreign films.

The Beijing Film Academy is an institution of higher learning which trains film workers. It was founded in 1956. It has now six departments: Directing, Acting, Screen Literature, Sound Recording, Cinematography, Art Design (including art design and film animation specialties). Up to now, the Beijing Film Academy has trained about 3,000 filmmakers. Some of them have produced very outstanding films, such as: The Yellow Earth, Red Sorghum and Evening Bell which have won international awards.

The Beijing Film Academy has a Youth Film Studio which provides a base for the students and staff to make films. The studio produces full-length feature films for national distribution, such as Xiao Xiao – A Girl From Ivan. 
1. Management and Planning Strategy

The development program of radio and TV technology, including the development program of radio-TV science and technology and broadcasting-TV network technology, is the foundation of Chinese broadcasting and TV cause. According to the general objective of China's development strategy, by the end of this century, the technological development should, by adopting satellite transmission, microwave transmission and the technological achievements in other fields, establish a broadcasting and TV transmission and coverage network which is technologically-advanced, rationally-located, economically-efficient and modernized. Simultaneously, the techniques used in program production, transmission and communication should also be updated.

The technological planning of broadcasting and TV network is the basis of the overall development program. The undertaking program should be based on funding, and annual arrangements should be made to construct the radio and TV stations as planned in the technological development program and ultimately the objective of technological program will be reached.

All the managerial work should be scientific in line with planning strategy.

2. The Objectives Oriented Project Planning

All of our scientific and technological tasks and research projects are set in an effort to realize planning strategy. We extensively solicit opinions from experts before we set any specific projects so as to meet the requirements for our cause.
3. Project Management

The project management includes following steps:

(a) Once a project is determined, the scientific technological department should first choose a unit to undertake it;
(b) Examine it during the execution of the project;
(c) Make appraisal;
(d) According to the technical level and the value of use, make assessment and do extension work.

4. Organizational Structures and Development

At present, radio, film and television in China are all state-owned. The Ministry of Radio, Film and Television under the Chinese Government, the State Council, is a mass media organization and at the same time it is an organ in charge of the administration of radio, film and television services throughout China. It gives direct leadership to the Central People’s Broadcasting Station (CPBS), Radio Beijing (overseas service), China Central Television (CCTV) and the Film Administrative Bureau.

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The Ministry mainly consists of general office and departments in charge of engineering, planning and finance, foreign affairs and administration.
5. Qualitative and Quantitative Personnel Planning

The nature and task of Chinese Radio Film and TV make it necessary for the staff to have better quality, extensive professional knowledge and good working capability. The staff members who have graduated from universities and Beijing Broadcasting Institute are the backbones of the working force. The staff members who have been transferred from other units are chiefly professional and managerial cadres. They are selected and then examined. The qualified are recruited, then they are trained, and endure period of probation before they can become formal staff. Numbers of the staff is determined according to needs of the work.

7. Staff Assessment Techniques

We have several assessment methods of staff, which are mainly based on fulfillment of their duties.

9. Role of Training

To enhance the expertise of the cadre force, the Ministry systematically carries out special trainings. It has set up cadre schools. The Training Departments of the Beijing Broadcasting Institute is one example. It trains editors, technicians and managerial cadres for the whole country.

10. Leadership and Managerial Skill

As to the leading and managerial cadres, they are all professionals. They work hard, know actual conditions by making study and investigation and discuss extensively major issues and reach agreements and carry them out.
12. Computerisation in Radio

Computers are widely applied in broadcasting, film and TV fields. Management means office automation, program production, transmission and the automatic control of transmitting stand, automatic survey, are all computerized to certain extent.

13. Evaluation Techniques

The evaluation of every department and personnel is based on their performance. Each individual department or staff member has fixed duty. At the end of the year, assessments are made according to their performances. The good are honored and the inefficient are criticized. All this will have effect on salary and promotion.