



Shang-Jin Wei

BUSINESS SCHOOL PROFESSOR · ECONOMIST

Boards now have to take positions on China, tariffs and currency exposure without a settled framework for how the next decade plays out. The official numbers, the political signalling and the operating reality have stopped lining up. Capital allocation decisions are being made on intuition rather than on a clear read of what is actually moving in the world's second largest economy.

Shang-Jin Wei is a Columbia economist and former Chief Economist of the Asian Development Bank who helps boards and investors decode China, trade flows and emerging-market capital risk.

Shang-Jin Wei's 2026 Biography

Why organisations work with Shang-Jin Wei

- He has sat in the seat where these questions are actually answered, as Chief Economist of the Asian Development Bank and a senior research economist at the IMF, not just analysed them from a faculty office.
- His chair at Columbia Business School is specifically the N.T. Wang Professorship of Chinese Business and Economy, giving boards a single, named source on US-China economic integration with academic standing behind it.
- He publishes in the journals that regulators and central banks read, including American Economic Review, Journal of Political Economy and Quarterly Journal of Economics, so his views on capital flows and currency carry weight in policy rooms as well as boardrooms.
- His Project Syndicate columns track the live arguments around the renminbi, Chinese trade surpluses, Ant Group, Trump-era tariffs and India, which means clients get a current macro read, not a recycled lecture.

Biography highlights

- N.T. Wang Professor of Chinese Business and Economy and Professor of Finance and Economics, Columbia Business School and Columbia SIPA.
- Chief Economist of the Asian Development Bank and Director General, Economic Research and Regional Cooperation Department, 2014 to 2016.
- Former Assistant Director and Chief of the Trade and Investment Division at the IMF Research Department; IMF Chief of Mission to Myanmar in 2004.
- Former New Century Chair in Trade and International Economics at the Brookings Institution; former Associate Professor of Public Policy at Harvard Kennedy School.

AVAILABLE FOR

- After Dinner Engagement
- Speaking

SHANG-JIN'S SPEAKING THEMES

- Economic Forecasting
- Economic Trends & Global Markets
- Geopolitics
- Political Risk & Policy
- Risk Management

LANGUAGES: English

- Research Associate at NBER and Research Fellow at CEPR; published in American Economic Review, Journal of Political Economy, Quarterly Journal of Economics and Journal of Finance.
- Regular Project Syndicate columnist on China, the renminbi, trade and emerging markets; co-author of China's Growing Role in World Trade (NBER, with Robert Feenstra).

Biography

The hard question on China is no longer whether it matters. It is which numbers to trust, which signals to read, and where the operating reality is diverging from the official line. That gap is where capital is mispriced.

Shang-Jin Wei has worked on both sides of that gap. As Chief Economist of the Asian Development Bank from 2014 to 2016, he led the analytical work behind regional fora such as ASEAN+3 and APEC, and advised the ADB President on growth diagnostics across developing Asia. Before that, he was Assistant Director and Chief of the Trade and Investment Division at the IMF Research Department, and the Fund's Chief of Mission to Myanmar.

At Columbia, he holds the N.T. Wang Chair in Chinese Business and Economy, with a joint appointment between the Business School and the School of International and Public Affairs. His research, published in the American Economic Review, Journal of Political Economy and Journal of Finance, sits at the meeting point of trade, international finance and the institutional architecture of the Chinese economy. He is a Research Associate at NBER, a Research Fellow at CEPR, and a frequent Project Syndicate contributor on the renminbi, Chinese trade surpluses, Ant Group and the structural reforms China still has to make.

For boards and investors, the value is concrete. He reads China the way someone who has had to sign off on a regional growth forecast reads it. He treats trade and currency as live operating variables, not slogans. Buyers leave a session with a clearer view of where the real risk in their China exposure sits, and what to watch over the next two cycles.

Key speaking topics

- US-China economic integration
- Chinese growth, structural reform and policy outlook
- The renminbi, capital flows and currency risk
- Trade, tariffs and the future of globalisation
- Emerging-market macro and developing Asia
- International finance and cross-border investment
- Geopolitical risk for global investors

Ideal for

- Boards and investment committees with material China or wider Asia exposure
- CFOs, treasurers and CIOs setting capital allocation under tariff and currency uncertainty
- Strategy and corporate development leaders reviewing supply chain and market exposure to China
- Financial services and asset management firms briefing institutional clients on emerging-market risk

Audience outcomes

- A clearer read on which Chinese economic indicators are meaningful and which are not.
- A working view on where US-China trade and tariff dynamics are heading and what that does to operating models.
- A grounded position on the renminbi, capital controls and the limits of RMB internationalisation.
- A sharper sense of where emerging-market risk concentrates beyond the headline narrative.

Shang-Jin Wei's Videos

