# China Eye 變友

SACU: Promoting understanding and friendship between the peoples of China and the UK since 1965

Summer 2020 Number 66



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**China Eye** is published by the Society for Anglo-Chinese Understanding (SACU), a registered charity No 294651 and a company limited by guarantee No 00876179.

SACU was founded in 1965 to promote understanding and friendship between the peoples of China and Britain, to provide facts and analysis about China – not uncritically but always from a firm basis of friendship – and to help the British people understand the meaning of China, past and present.

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**Front cover:** Three Pagodas, Dali, Yunnan (WF) **Back cover:** Spice market, Dali, Yunnan (WF)

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ISSN 2513-8898 (print) ISSN 2633-240X (online)

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The Autumn issue (Number 67) of China Eye will be available in early September 2020. Please send news or articles for inclusion before 20 August 2020 to <a href="mailto:articles@sacu.org.uk">mailto:articles@sacu.org.uk</a>

#### Welcome

The occurrence of a pandemic was predicted by scientists and individuals; e.g. Bill Gates in 2015. The view was not 'if, but when'. Mankind has been subject to pandemics at regular intervals. Scientists have been recommending governments prepare for them along with 'the asteroid', super volcanos, environmental pollution and climate change. It is a fact that coronavirus was not the first, and unfortunately, will not be the last pandemic. The lockdown has affected my reports in this issue. I have stayed at home, seen few newspapers and the postal service for Beijing Review has been irregular. I have had to rely on the internet.

#### Coronavirus

China was the first country to be affected by the virus, a new disease that first had to be identified. Even now in the UK in June, scientists say that there is much we still don't understand and we are learning as we go along.

China posted the genome sequence of the coronavirus on the GenBank for the global international biomedical community as early as 13 January 2020. To control the virus in Wuhan and Hubei province, China locked down on January 23<sup>rd</sup> but by February 19 there were 74,280 cases and 2,005 deaths in China as well as significant cases on the cruise ship, *Diamond Princess* 

The I Newspaper on 20 February 2020, published an extract from the Guardian, which said that China's tough handling of the Corvid-19 outbreak has put the WHO and public health experts world wide in a dilemma, because to some extent, it seems to have worked. China acted with speediness and completeness that took everybody by surprise. It has bought the rest of the world time by confining the great majority of the epidemic in one province. (Sarah Bosely). The president of the US, himself, on January 24<sup>th</sup> said he appreciated China's efforts and transparency.

In addition, Devi Sridhar, professor of global public health at the University of Edinburgh, in the Observer on 15 March, stated that the Chinese response, the lockdown on 23 January, had the consequence of *buying other countries time*. Despite this, the UK did not fully lock down until 23<sup>rd</sup> March, over eight weeks after China and the US took action even later still.

Countries in South-east Asia, which took action much earlier, have had substantially fewer cases and far fewer deaths. Possibly they had learnt from SARS, but it shows how quick government action saved lives. Viet Nam, with 95 million inhabitants and which borders with China has had zero deaths, to date.

After the initial praise for China, some senior Tory politicians and some academics have been scathing about China's 'mishandling' with phrases such as, 'there will be a reckoning'. Some comments were offensive and intended to be; some even implied mischief. It is outrageous and sad that people in their high positions should make such statements. However, their credibility is dubious, because many already had a negative view of China. They seem constantly looking for excuses for 'China bashing'.

Racist abuse and physical attacks on Chinese people in the UK, and in other countries have significantly increased. No

doubt the perpetrators have been encouraged by remarks by people who should know better. Unfortunately, anti-China attitudes were with us even before this crisis. They are very deep-seated and will be with us for a long time and will be difficult to eliminate. In China Eye we try to draw attention to positive aspects of China and its achievements and hope to erode such attitudes.

The politicising of the virus pandemic distorts facts and diverts focus and effort away from conquering the disease. The objective seems to be to distract attention from the shortcomings of governments themselves and to blame and demonise China. In addition, a 'political virus' is being propagated designed to restrain China's growing economy. However, it is unlikely that this Corvid-19 crisis will have a lasting effect, if any, on relations between China and most nations of the world. A few Western countries are not the whole world.

China is resilient by nature and these actions certainly will not significantly hinder China's long-term future progress and development. During the pandemic, China has sent medical aid to more than 80 nations, many in Africa and also personal protective equipment to many more, including some advanced countries such as the UK and US.

Tom Harper, a SACU Council member, who was in China until very recently, writes on how we can learn from China and Jenny Clegg has also commented on the pandemic.

#### A 'collective sense of responsibility' in China

An interesting report in the I newspaper by Leo Cendrowicz (14 March) included the comment that some of China's success in lockdown is being credited more to a 'collective sense of responsibility' than to obedience to the authorities.

#### **New SACU Council member**

We are pleased to welcome Wang Fang as our latest SACU Council member. Fang obtained a Ph.D. degree in intercultural communication studies at Peking University in 2010. She has worked in education and training for 20 years in China and the UK. Currently she is a Governor of Kensington Wade School in London and is keen to contribute to Anglo-Chinese friendship and understanding.

## Building bridges, tackling ignorance, prejudice and Sinophobia.

This has become a priority for SACU. Effort is needed to overcome stigma and discrimination through media platforms and people-to-people contact. An experienced media consultant has offered to help SACU in media strategy. More of this in a later issue.

#### **Cooperation with China.**

Despite all the negativity about China, we are glad of announcements via Keith Bennett involving two joint projects; Huawei with Imperial College and the other, Oxford University with Sichuan University, see Sino File.

**Walter Fung** 

#### **SACU Events**

#### **Ros Wong**

SACU, like every other organisation, has suspended 'live' events because of the coronavirus crisis. We are conducting internal meetings in the virtual world, using Microsoft Teams for recent Executive and Council meetings. We are making increased use of our newsletter, social media and website to post articles and online events which inform and educate our readers about China and help counteract the many negative arguments currently appearing in the western media.

Our newly formed **Public Education Working Group** is currently planning an online discussion event so please do check our digital communications for details as they become available.

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**SACU AGM postponed to October**. Our AGM would usually be held in July but has been postponed until October this year. Preparations are being made to hold it using Zoom, a video conferencing service. Invitations will be sent out nearer the time to all members who would like to join.

Thursday 18 June: SACU/Peking University Essay Competition Online Awards. This year's Essay Competition on the theme of "Overcoming the cultural gap between China and the West" had to transfer online but is going ahead with an encouraging amount of interest and entries from several schools. The closing date is the end of May and details of the awards ceremony will be announced on our social media.

And a reminder... here are a few informative websites about China and events which SACU has promoted in the past and worth revisiting:

- <u>chinaexchange.uk</u> includes past events such as interviews with Xue Xinran, Yan Geling and Rana

  Mitter
- <u>chinaminutes.com</u> "sets out to make sense of China and Chinese culture"
- <u>chinachannel.org</u>The Los Angeles Review of Books with plenty of reviews of books both from and about China
- <u>teacup.media</u> Laszlo Montgomery's history podcast series
- <u>chinasage.info</u> "Your guide to all things Chinese" the website of SACU Vice President Rob Stallard.

#### China Eye Diary

This year is the Year of the Rat. Years are in a sequence of twelve animals: Rat, Ox, Tiger, Rabbit, Dragon, Snake, Horse, Goat, Monkey, Rooster, Dog and Pig.

2021; Year of the Ox

2022, Year of the Tiger

2023, Year of the Rabbit,

2024, Year of the Dragon.

#### **Chinese Festivals**

1 May is Labour Day, the start of a three -day national holiday (1 May to  $4^{th}$  May.)

 $1^{\text{st}}$  June is Children's Day in China and a national holiday.

25<sup>th</sup> June is the Dragon Boat Festival and the start of a three-day national holiday (25 June to 27<sup>th</sup> June)

1st August is Army Day, a national holiday in China.

25th August is Chinese Valentine Day.

1st October is the Mid-Autumn Festival in China and the start of a Golden Week National Holiday (1st to 8th)

25th October is Chong Yang (Double Ninth)



**Dragon boat racing at Salford Quays** 

#### The Hakkas

#### **Walter Fung**

You seem to hear the name Hakka more recently. Possibly this is due to the Hakkasan Restaurants in London which claim to specialise in Hakka cuisine. But people familiar with the Chinese communities around the world are certain to know about the name. This short article summarises some of the major aspects of the Hakkas, who worldwide number about 80 million people; some scholars estimate many more. They are not one of the 55 ethnic minorities in China. They are mainstream Han but they do have their own customs, cuisine, traditions and a separate dialect. The Hakkas are believed to have originated in north-central China, but migrated at various times to different parts, notably Guangdong, Hainan, Guizhou, Fujian and Sichuan provinces. After many upheavals in history, some Hakkas left mainland China for south-east Asia, notably Singapore, Malaysia, Taiwan and the Philippines, and eventually the rest of the world, including the US and Europe.

The name Hakka means 'guest'; in Mandarin it is 'Kejia' (客家). They kept a separate identity wherever they went, not integrating with the local populations. In old China, Hakka women did not bind their feet and worked in the fields with their menfolk. Because of their separate identity, clannishness, culture and language, the Hakkas have suffered discrimination throughout their history.

In Guangdong, they arrived after most of the most fertile land was already taken and this led to tensions and eventually open warfare between them and the local born Cantonese (referred to as Punti). In the 1855 matters came to a head leading to conflict lasting 12 years, which led to the death of about a million people, over 200,000 people in Taishan county alone. The effects of this war, was undoubtedly a contributary factor to the large-scale migration of people from this part of China.

Hakka people have a reputation for energy, enterprise and leadership. A significant number of notable historic figures had Hakka origins. They include the leader of the Taiping rebels, Hong Xuiquan, who recruited his Hakka associates as the core of his first armies in Guizhou and Guangdong, and Sun Yatsen, the founder of Modern China, who was born in Cuihong village, Guangdong. Deng Xiaoping, the leader of 'opening up' China had Hakka ancestors who migrated to Sichuan from Guangdong. Other notable leaders of south-east Asian countries had Hakka roots; Lee Teng hui of Taiwan, the Sinawatras of Thailand (Thaksin and his sister Yingluk), Corazon Aquino of the Philippines and Lee Kuan Yew of Singapore.

The areas which have high Hakka populations in China are Hong Kong, Taiwan, Guangdong, Fujian and Hainan. Many overseas Chinese communities in the US and Europe have Hakkas amongst their numbers. One of the most successful Chinese businessmen in England, Mr Wing Yip is a Hakka. Mr Yip arrived in England with hardy any money and went

to Liverpool, where there was a Hakka society, which helped him. Now he has four large Chinese supermarkets in Birmingham, Manchester and two in London.

The present main centre of Hakka culture is around Meizhou county in eastern Guangdong. In next door Fujian province, Hakka people, in old China, built round houses, Toulou, for extended families to live together under one roof and also for security and protection.



#### Toulou depicted on a Chinese postage stamp

At the present time, some senior Hakkas are afraid that their language, a dialect of Chinese is in danger of extinction. Younger Hakkas are integrating into modern life more and are speaking Mandarin and Cantonese. One of my sisters-in-law was of Hakka descent in Hong Kong. I once asked her about the dialect; her understanding was that there were, 'Cantonese Hakka and Mandarin Hakka'. So maybe the pure Hakka dialect has been eroded over the years?





Dr Sun Yatsen, the Father of Modern China. A Hakka lady on the Hong Kong/ China border who invited us to photograph her (for a small fee)

#### Further Reading.

L. Larry Liu, *Hakkas in Power*, Self-published, CreateSpace, Charleston, SC., USA, 2015.

Nicole Constable (editor), Guest People, Hakka Identity in China and Aboard, University of Washington Press, 2013.

Wikipedia has a good account of Hakkas

Laszlo'(CHP-150). (http://chinapodcast.libsyn.com)

Han Suyin, *The Crippled Tree*, Panther Books, London 1972

# Seeking the Truth from Facts The so-called Chinese 'debt-trap' and the case of Sri Lanka's Hambantota port

#### Analysis by SACU VP Dr Jenny Clegg

Over the past year or two various allegations about China's behaviour in the world have been spread by the mainstream press and social media in the West, which have shaped negative perceptions of the country in a manner akin to earlier moral panics of a 'Yellow Peril'. One prominent example is the notion of the Chinese 'debt trap'. China is accused of creating a systematic 'debt dependency' across the developing world, taking over assets for its own strategic gain when countries find themselves unable to repay the huge loans they have been persuaded to borrow. Actually, the Trump administration has done much to promote this idea: both former US National Security advisor, John Bolton, and vice President, Mike Pence, have warned countries not to compromise their sovereignty for Chinese cash, in an effort to scare them away from involvement in the Belt and Road Initiative.<sup>1</sup>

The problem of developing country debt became a widespread concern in 2018 with global interest rates rising as the United States withdrew from quantitative easing. An IMF report found that some 40 percent of low income developing countries were facing significant debt challenges. According to the report, the problems were complex, to do with falling commodity prices, endemic corruption and economic mismanagement. Meanwhile, there has been an influx of private funding from pension funds, hedge funds and private commercial banks.

As closer study reveals, in case after case debt crises result at least as much if not more from Western as from Chinese lending.<sup>3</sup> This was in fact the case with Sri Lanka where China's acquisition of the port of Hambantota on a 99 year lease has been widely touted by the Western media as a prime example of deliberate entrapment through debt. Suspicions were raised that the Hambantota deal was part of underhanded Chinese scheme to create a 'string of pearls' to establish military control of Asia's sea lanes.

The reality was very different. In 2016 when the Hambantota sale was negotiated, only 10 per cent of Sri Lanka's \$46.5bn external debt was owed to China. Over one-third of the borrowing came from private banks charging high interest, and what ultimately forced the government to exchange the port for FDI were soaring repayments, with loans reaching maturation. This meant a

large amount of foreign currency was required at a time when the economy was in fact running into difficulties. The root, then, of Sri Lanka's debt crisis lay in its choice to borrow from international capital markets, mainly in the US and Europe, at higher commercial rates, at a time of economic uncertainty when FDI and revenue from exports were low. Chinese loans, it should be noted, tend to offer lower interest and can more easily be restructured given more flexible terms.<sup>4</sup>

Nor did the deal with China compromise Sri Lanka's sovereignty: the port remains under Sri Lankan ownership, with a 70 per cent stake leased to China Merchants Port Holdings Company (CMPort) Limited for 99 years, and the remaining 30 percent of the stake owned by the Sri Lanka Ports Authority (SLPA). 99 years is normal for a commercial lease and the arrangement is completely different from the British government's 99 lease of Hong Kong which was an act of colonialism not a commercial arrangement. The port is managed by the two companies together as a joint venture with revenues shared.

The allegation that Hambantota would be used as a military base by China is also disingenuous. The port's security remains in the hands of the Sri Lankan navy and whilst Sri Lanka has military relations with many countries, its military links with the US are far more advanced than those with China. As for the suggestion that the port was a white elephant - two feasibility studies, one by a Danish and one by a Canadian firm, both supported the proposal. It is however true that the port has struggled to generate enough funds to match the debt repayments. However, this situation has improved since Hambantota was leased to CM Port, but whether it will earn enough to cover the debt servicing, or support Sri Lanka's overall balance of payment is yet to be proven.

The point here is that there was no Chinese debt trap: the loans were not defaulted and still need to be paid off; there was no cancellation of debt in exchange for control of the port - the money obtained from the lease went not to China but to the Sri Lankan government to strengthen its foreign reserves; and China did not take over ownership of the port - the government of Sri Lanka remains the owner.

Sri Lanka's debt problem was not made in China. The government's leasing out Hambantota port is more of a reflection of the external crisis Sri Lanka is facing. Neither the claims of land-grabbing nor the notion of the Chinese 'debt trap' are found to be supported by the facts: the latter in particular is more a myth of the US New Cold War

https://www.straitstimes.com/world/united-states/beware-chinas-debt-diplomacy\_https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-vice-president-pence-2018-apec-ceo-summit-port-moresby-papua-new-guinea/

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-national-security-advisor-ambassador-john-r-bolton-trump-administrations-new-africa-strategy/;

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> James Politi 'The geopolitical stakes of projects grow day by day', *Financial Times*, Nov 23, 2018

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Deborah Brautigam, 'Is China the World's Loan Shark?' *New York Times* 26 Apr 2019

https://www.nytimes.com/2019/04/26/opinion/china-belt-road-initiative.html

 $<sup>^4\</sup> https://www.eastasia forum.org/2019/02/28/sri-lankas-debt-problem-isnt-made-in-china/$ 

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> https://www.scmp.com/comment/insightopinion/article/3008799/truth-about-sri-lankas-hambantota-portchinese-debt-traps

against China, spread to whip up anti-China sentiment to undermine South-South cooperation.<sup>6</sup>

#### **Coronavirus postscript**

The coronavirus crisis has brought the problem of debt in poorer countries into sharp relief: will the crisis trigger a debt crisis in the developing world similar in impact to the debt crisis of the 1980s? In April, along with other G20 members, China signed up to an agreement to freeze bilateral loan repayments for low income countries for a limited period. The move is intended to free up scarce resources for less-well-off countries to use in fighting the virus

China's participation is important since it is a major lender to some of the poorest and most at-risk countries. Private creditors however are resisting participating in the initiative which means that any debt relief that is given may well end up in private coffers and not in health care at all. Meanwhile, since the G20 agreement stopped short of cancelling debt altogether, social justice campaigners, with support of some states, are now calling for lenders to go further. However, although nearly a quarter of Chinese loans over recent years have gone to the poorest countries on preferential terms, even at zero interest, and have often been forgiven, China itself is a developing country and expects most of the debts to be repaid. It will certainly not agree to sacrifice its own interests for the benefit of the hedge funds and private banks. Controversies over the debts of the poorest countries will surely grow in the coming months and China's role will no doubt called into question. It will become all the more important then that the facts about the so-called 'debt trap' be much more widely known.

#### Jude Woodward



At the BRICS Symposium

Jude Woodward passed away on April 26 this year. She was a member of SACU and chaired a section of the SACU symposium on 'China and the BRICS Nations' held at the Lau Institute, Nash lecture theatre, KCL on 21 May 2016.

Jude was an activist for the causes of anti-racism, antiimperialism, feminism and the liberation of humanity for 40 years. She taught at various universities and was a former advisor of international cultural exchange to Ken Livingstone, when mayor of London. She oversaw the Beijing Olympic Torch relay in 2008. Jude was also a

<sup>6</sup> Pakistan provides another case of debt crisis made largely in the West, with 42 percent of its debt owed to multilateral lenders and only about 10 percent to China.

convinced and sincere friend of China, especially in the UK, Belgium and the Netherlands. Her book, *The US versus China*, was published in the UK in 2017 and was translated into Dutch under the title *Amerika tegen China* and published by EPO. The book was reviewed by SACU Vicepresident Jenny Clegg, see the Autumn 2017, No 55 of China Eye. In the book are discussions on China's alleged aggressive expansionism, questions of internal stability and China's position on Korea and the South China Sea issue.

#### Chinese Wildlife

#### **Rob Stallard**

Rob is a SACU Vice-president. He has served on Council as treasurer, membership secretary, secretary and webmaster.

As the third largest country by land area you might expect China to be rich in wildlife, and it certainly does not disappoint, it has 30,000 species of plants (including over 7,000 tree species) and 2,000 vertebrate species (10% of the world) of which 1,198 are birds; 500 animals; 210 amphibians and 320 reptiles. This makes it the most diverse flora and fauna of any country in the temperate zone.

The distribution is far from uniform. China's varied geography provides many different environments for wildlife – from the cold mountains of Heilongjiang, the deserts of Inner Mongolia to the tropical valleys of Yunnan there is a wide range of habitats for plants and animals. The heavily populated areas close to the Eastern coast have been cultivated extensively for so long that there is little space for wildlife, however China still has many mountains and forested areas that teem with wildlife.

Looking at the regions in more detail, the warmest and moistest are the true tropical forests on Hainan island and some valleys of southern Yunnan. In the tropical waters of Hainan the rare Hawksbill turtle can be seen. Jianfeng Nature Reserve, Hainan has a great range of plants and tropical butterflies. In Yunnan you can still see elephants that used to be widespread in China. There are also rhododendron and bamboo forests. The Xishuangbanna Nature Reserve harbours black bears, palm civets and Asian golden cats and the diminutive mouse deer. There is a huge range of plants including banyans, olives, and longan trees.

The situation in neighbouring Tibet is very different, with harsh winters and low rainfall there are limited opportunities for wildlife; notable species include the blue poppy, yaks, Himalayan blue sheep, Thorold's deer and Snow leopards.

https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/2189336/china-says-multinational-lenders-are-blame-debts-belt-and-road



It is from this Himalayan region that tea bushes and all citrus fruit trees are believed to originate. The Tibetan area continues east into Sichuan where there is a richer range. It is most famous as the home of giant pandas. Mount Emei and the surrounding area boasts 3,200 plant species including Gingko, Nanmu (timber), Handkerchief tree and tree ferns. Wanglang reserve in Sichuan not only has pandas but also the rare Takin, musk deer, Serow as well as many birds. Further north is the dry and mainly desolate province of Qinghai named after the largest mountain lake in Asia. Qinghai lake is a magnet for rare birds on their migrations; within the lake is Bird Island which can attract up to 100,000 birds.

Further north Gansu and Inner Mongolia experience long droughts and cold winters that only allow for extensive grasslands. Sheep, goats, yaks, saiga antelopes, goitered gazelles, rare Bactrian camels and horses wander to find limited pasture. In the desert areas you can also find the native habitat of gerbils. Rare carnivores include the steppe cat and for plants there is wormwood and the goji berry.

In the far north-east, in Heilongjiang, bitterly cold winters limit possibilities for nature. The Siberian tiger still roams and vast coniferous forests cover the mountains but it has important marshy areas too. Zhalong Reserve has reed-beds that support 300 species of birds including the rare Marsh grassbird as well as the Asiatic Black bear and Azure winged magpie. Cranes are very popular in China, they symbolise long life and fidelity because the birds mate for life and have an elaborate courtship display. There are fifteen species of crane many of which are endangered. Up in the north the Red-crowned, White-napped and Siberian cranes can be seen on their migratory travels as well as the rare Swan goose.

Moving to look at central China one of the most notable Nature Reserves is Wulingyuan in Hunan. Among the spectacular forested mountains are 500 species of tree, including the Dawn Redwood tree (metasequoia) which is a 'living fossil' that was for a long time considered extinct. It is also home to the Giant salamander, Rhesus monkey and many birds but is probably most famous as the setting for the epic film 'Avator'. In Shennonjia, Hubei there are also forests with associated rare plants and the Golden monkey. It is here that the 'Chinese Wild Man' was believed to have

lived. Further east, near the Yangzi river delta in Zhejiang and Anhui, there are conservation efforts to maintain the endangered Chinese alligator.

In the far south the Hong Kong botanical garden and the nearby managed marshlands at Mai Po are definitely worth a mention – herons, egrets, black-faced spoonbills can be seen.

Many species from China have found their way into the UK. The Muntjac and Chinese water deer have flourished after escaping from parks and zoos. The colourful Mandarin duck is now widespread and the pheasant, of which there are several species, is another bird originating from Asia. It is, however, for the many beautiful garden plants we owe the heaviest debt to China. Europe not only copied Chinese garden design but also imported plants. In the late nineteenth century plant hunters brought back many beautiful plants from China which now grace our gardens including: azaleas; rhododendrons; peonies; kolkwitzias; weigelas; peaches; ornamental roses; jasmines; daphnes and lilies.



Bamboo orchid flower



Handkerchief plant

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Snow leopard photograph attributed to licence

https://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Snow\_leopard\_portrait-2010-07-09.jpg

#### Bamboo Orchid flower

https://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bamboo Orchid (Arundi na graminifolia) 2.jpg

#### Handkerchief tree

https://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Handkerchief tree (9058 063346).jpg

#### Lu Xun and the Chinese Woodblock Print Movement

#### **Michael Sherringham**

Michael is a regular contributor to China Eye. He taught at Chinese universities in the 1970s and 1980s and has had a long association with SACU. He is currently assisting in the compilation of the SACU monthly newsletter

The pioneer of modern Chinese literature, Lu Xun (1881-1936) is not so well known for his promotion of the modern Chinese woodblock print movement, although his own short stories were often published and illustrated with many vivid examples of this artistic form. He was inspired by this art by foreign artists as well as Chinese predecessors such as Li Shutong, who promoted and exhibited European woodblock prints (simply called woodcuts) as early as 1912.

Lu Xun was searching for new cultural media to speak directly to a broader audience than the traditionally sophisticated literary elite in order to rouse them into national and social consciousness. He was himself inspired by such Western woodcut artists as the progressive German Käthe Kollwitz (1867-1945), the Russian Vladimir A Favorsky (1886-1964) and the Flemish Frans Masereel (1889-1972). Lu Xun regarded the woodcut art as an ideal form of popular education to promote social change and justice. His first collection of short stories *Call to Arms*, illustrated with woodblock prints, and published in the magazine *New Youth* in 1916, encapsulated his aim of reviving the spirit of the Chinese nation, especially its youth.

Apart from the bold images that woodcuts could evoke, they had the advantage of being easily reproduced and transmitted widely as a means of propaganda. Whereas the traditional process of producing prints used to involve the three stages of one artist drawing, another carving the woodcut and finally a third printing with ink or paint, modern artists began to combine all these stages and skills themselves.



Lu Xun with young woodcut artists

After 1927, which was a turning-point in Chinese politics when the Nationalists under Chiang Kai-shek turned on the

Communists and left-wing sympathisers, Lu Xun was angered and inspired to take action. He founded the Morning Flower Society in Shanghai (1928) and organised exhibitions and lectures where he and his friends expounded their views on woodcut art and progressive modern literature. This society published five volumes of foreign woodcut prints, including Soviet artists. One of his closest collaborators in this endeavour was his Japanese friend, Uchiyama Kanzo, who owned a bookshop in Shanghai which was a haven for left-wing writers and artists.

Not surprisingly, the KMT (Guomindang) regarded this as suspicious and subversive activity, so these artists had to adopt 'guerilla tactics' such as changing their names and meeting in secret to avoid arrest and imprisonment. The society was closed down in January 1931when Nationalist police discovered their secret meetings and arrested many of the members. Twenty-three of them were shot, including three of the five founding members, Hu Yebin, Yin Fu and Rou Shi. The latter was a favourite student of Lu Xun, who published a woodblock print by Käthe Kollwitz to commemorate his death in the first issue of a new literary journal *Beidou (Pole Star)*. Defiant as ever, Lu Xun wrote an article in April of that year 'Written in the Deep of Night: On Käthe Kollwitz', in which he expressed Rou Shi's admiration for her works:

"There are other injured and insulted like us in many places on the earth..."



Käthe Kollwitz, *The Sacrifice* from *The War Series*, 1922-1923

After this persecution of artists and writers, Lu Xun lived in 'retreat' in the Japanese Concession area in Shanghai, continuing to write and promote the modern woodcut movement. With Uchiyama's younger brother, Kakechi, he conducted a woodcut training course at a Japanese school in August 1931. Lu Xun lectured to 13 students on the history of woodcuts in his collection and gave them hands-on practical training. This was depicted in the famous woodcut print by Li Hua (1907-1994), Lu Xun and Uchiyama Kakechi Conduct a Woodcut Class in Shanghai.

Following this pioneering course, Lu Xun continued to organise study sessions and classes on woodcut prints and printing for young artists, including many students who came to Shanghai to study at university. When these students graduated and returned to their native towns in

Guangdong, Sichuan and Zhejiang, they promoted many printmaking centres. Clubs were formed in Shanghai and elsewhere, such as the Eighteen Art Society, founded by Lu Xun's students Chen Tiegeng and Jiang Feng.



Li Hua. Lu Xun and Uchiyama Kakechi Conduct a Woodcut Class in Shanghai (1931)



Jiang Feng. Japanese invasion of Shenyang (1931)

In 1932, two of his students, Chen Yanqiao and He Baitao, created the Wild Grain Woodcut Society at the New China Art Academy in Shanghai. Jiang Feng's woodcut print, *Kill the Resisters* was exhibited, portraying the Nationalists persecuting those who advocated resistance against Japanese aggression:



Jiang Feng. Kill the Resisters (1931)

When the Eighteen Art Society was closed down, Jiang Feng and other students of Lu Xun established the Spring Earth Painting Research Centre, which in 1932 organised an exhibition of prominent woodcut artists, such as Hu Yichuan who was an activist in the woodcut movement. His work *To the Front* was typical of the prints by the anti-Japanese

woodcut artists, who directed their artistic fire against the Japanese invaders, especially after their attack on Shanghai in 1932.



Hu Yichuan. To the Front (1932)

After this exhibition Jiang Feng was arrested with other members of the above-mentioned Centre. Lu Xun wrote to them to keep up their morale and continued giving lectures and corresponding with other printmakers, advising and supporting such artists as Chen Yangqiao and Zheng Yefu.



Zheng Yefu. Fight (1933)

A succession of printmaking organisations and clubs came into existence and disappeared, as they and their artists were suppressed and arrested during the following years. In spite of this persecution by the Nationalist authorities, the artists continued to produce and exhibit their works, such as Chen Tiegeng's *Mother and Child*, which depicts the poverty-stricken family of a rickshaw puller.



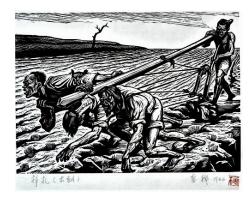
Chen Tiegeng. Mother and Child (1933)

At his own peril, Lu Xun visited these exhibitions and praised their work. The Uchiyama Bookstore also remained active, publishing a catalogue of Paris-style postimpressionist paintings and woodblock prints in 1934. In this year, Lu Xun published his anthology Woodcut Progress with 24 socially-critical prints, also distributed by the Uchiyama Bookstore. Also, in 1934, in spite of official banning of other woodcut societies in Shanghai, the Modern Woodcut Society was established in Guangzhou (Canton) by the aforementioned woodcut artist and teacher Li Hua, who himself was a student of Lu Xun. The following year, the Pingjin Woodcut Research Society organised the first national woodcut exhibition, displaying the works of many well-known artists such as Jiang Feng, Hu Yichuan and Li Hua. This exhibition travelled from Beijing to many other cities. Lu Xun went to see the second exhibition organised by this Society in Shanghai in October 1936, eleven days before he died of tuberculosis.

After the full-scale occupation of China by the Japanese forces in 1937, the War of Resistance was depicted and promoted by woodcut print artists such as Li Hua who took on the mantle of leading the woodcut movement after the death of his mentor, Lu Xun. His bold work China Roars exemplifies how the left-wing artists regarded the Japanese aggressors and the Nationalist government which was relatively passive in resisting the Japanese occupation. The Communists persuaded the Nationalists to join them in a United Front until the Japanese were defeated. When civil war broke out in 1945, the left-wing artists turned their focus on the corrupt and inept Kuomindang government and their armed forces. Li Hua produced many prints during this period, including Take Him In, and Arise, Suffering Slaves and Struggle in his series of woodblock prints Tide of Anger. After the founding of the People's Republic in 1949, Li Hua became professor and head of the Chinese Woodcut department in the Central Academy of Fine Art in Beijing.



Li Hua. China Roar! (1935)



Li Hua, Struggle (1946)



Li Hua, Arise, Suffering Slaves (1947)

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#### Acknowledgements

I wish particularly to acknowledge the article of Caroline Corbin, cited above, together with her reproduction of woodcuts in the article. In addition, the conference 'Knifework' - Traces on the Artist's Block: Modern and Contemporary Woodblock Prints from China and Japan, organised by the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford in October 2019, provided an inspiring source for my article.

The presentations by Mary Ginsberg and the woodcut artist He Weimin have especially informed my own article. I am also grateful to Dr Clare Pollard, Ashmolean Museum Curator of Japanese Art, who kindly provided me with some comparative material on the modern Japanese woodblock print movement.

# The Art of Kingfisher Feather Decoration Part 1

Costume and Dress Accessories

#### **David Rosier**

#### Introduction

The addition of bird plumage to decorative items has been employed by numerous cultures globally over the centuries. Nowhere, however, did this art form, utilising the feather of the Kingfisher Bird, reach such a level of aesthetic creativity and mass popularity than in China, particularly during the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911).

Part 1 focuses on the use of kingfisher feather for costume and dress accessories, particularly in the late Qing Dynasty (1850 onwards). Part II will then consider how this art form was used not only in creating items of jewellery but how this technique extended to large decorative objects for the domestic and export markets.

Whilst kingfisher feather embellishment reached a peak in



terms of artistic excellence, variety of items, and quantity produced, in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century the actual usage of the feather for decorative purposes stretches back until at least the Tang Dynasty (618-907).However, given the perishable nature of the feather, few examples have survived which

pre-date the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911). Our knowledge, however, of this exquisite art form remains surprisingly limited despite Emperors patronizing Imperial Workshops and there being numerous commercial manufactories. Our understanding of this art form in the West has been greatly enhanced through the enterprise of collector and researcher,



This article would not have been possible without her excellent book – 'Kingfisher Blue' published in 2001 which featured items from her personal collection plus some of the finest examples from collectors and museums globally. The use

Beverley Jackson.

of animal products, such as ivory, tortoise shell, coral and feather, for decorative purposes has, quite correctly, become a wildlife conservation issue in recent years. More specifically the farming of kingfishers for their feathers has been rightly prohibited. The market for antique pieces remains unrestricted and genuine items provide evidence of the skills of the artist and the opulence of the Imperial Court.

This article will focus on the Qing Dynasty where the art form was termed 'tian-tsui' which literally translates as 'dotting with kingfisher'. From the outset of the dynasty the Imperial Court were employing artisans, in a dedicated Imperial Workshop, to produce this artform and that the Imperial Treasury collected and stored the feather for future usage. The 'Kuang ch'u szu chuan' provides a detailed record of the mechanics of producing this decorative artform.

#### Origins and evolution

For centuries Chinese writers and poets had immortalized the beauty of the kingfisher with its iridescent blue plumage. The earliest references in classical literature date to the late Han Dynasty (206BCE-220CE) and provides evidence that the feather was 'farmed' and then deployed on wall hangings rather than creating the items of jewellery typical of the Ming and Qing Dynasties.

The first reference to this form of decoration being used in court costume dates to Taizu (960-976), the first emperor of the Song Dynasty (960-1279). Records indicate that robes created with gold brocade, and trimmed with kingfisher feather, were presented by Taizu to senior officials as a form



of tribute. These robes were then further embellished by the officials' wives with pearls and gold-plated ornaments. The Song portrait illustrates the forerunner of the hugely popular 19th century 'costume jewellery'. The dynasty saw complimentary objects, incorporating the

feather, such as the headdress illustrated, being created for wear by the ladies of the court.

It is clear from the wealth of references to the usage of the kingfisher plumage, not just by the imperial court, but for an ever-expanding private market, that a vast quantity of feathers was required.

By the start of the Ming Dynasty (1368) kingfisher feather decorated costume accessories had become commonplace at court for ladies of noble birth, including the empress.

The oldest surviving item was extracted from the tomb of the *Wanli* Emperor (1573-1620) and would have been worn by Empress *Xiaoduan*.

The headdress weighs 2 kilos and stands 50cm high. The base is constructed with lacquered bamboo strips and is decorated with gold filigree dragons. The 6 ornamental flaps to the rear and body of the crown are decorated with gold dragons, pearls, jewels plus extensive kingfisher feather inlay. This treasure is now on display in *The National Museum of China* in Tiananmen Square, Beijing.

By the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) these spectacular items were also being commissioned by China's social elite, for use at special family celebrations, from an ever-increasing number of commercial workshops. A peak in demand, in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, resulted in a surge in the choice of specialist workshops selling generally smaller items such as diadems, hair pins, brooches and earrings. These shops entertained clients in luxurious surroundings or would visit the homes of their most important customers.

Finally, by the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, there were even street vendors offering items created in small private workshops. Demand increased with wealthy families giving a range of items decorated with kingfisher feather, pearls, and jade, as gifts for the Lunar New Year.



With the growing number of Westerners in China in the second half of 19<sup>th</sup> Century there developed an additional market for decorative items that included kingfisher feather. Canton (Guangdong) was a centre for foreign trade and the number of workshops producing these works of art increased significantly. The city even established a specialist street, Great New Street (*Tai San-Kai*) to cater for both domestic and foreign demand.

The painting is of a 19<sup>th</sup> Century Canton Kingfisher Feather workshop. A young boy is seen arriving with a kingfisher bird.

#### **Production Mechanics**

From the Song Dynasty onward the demand for kingfisher feather increased rapidly and this natural material proved increasingly challenging to source. Whilst the kingfisher was native to China, and so the most obvious source, initially the most prized feather came from Cambodia.

The trade fell within what was known as 'Tribute'. Most countries that surrounded the Chinese Empire pledged their political and economic allegiance to the Chinese Emperor and were known as Tribute or Vassal States. The system reached its peak of effectiveness in the Ming and Qing Dynasties. Tribute, products or raw materials required by China, were 'gifted' on a periodic basis and in return China sent manufactured products such as textiles and metalwork.

Records indicate that kingfisher feather was shipped from Cambodia to Canton from the Yuan Dynasty (1279-1368) onwards. Whilst Cambodian feather was the most prized, there were also imports from India and Borneo. By the mid 19th century the supply of Cambodian feather had waned and was replaced with sources from Java, Sumatra, Borneo, Vietnam, and Hainan Island (China).

Birds were netted in vast numbers with male birds being lured by female birds tethered to the nets. The captured male birds had their back feathers plucked before they were released. It is unclear if these released birds could regrow their feathers. As demand grew birds were 'farmed' and killed in order to access the plumage.

Decorative items were created on a metal framework. The feather would be laid on an adhesive that had been applied to the shaped metal design. The work was demanding and intricate with the finest pieces being created on a gold or silver frame which was cut, hammered, and pierced. Particularly fine gallery wire was then soldered to the edges and surfaces of the shapes to create partitions that outlined the motif. The individual shapes were then soldered into a three-dimensional form and on some pieces coiled wires were added so elements moved with the movements of the wearer.

The feather was known as the 'vane' and had been stripped from the quill. It would be glued into position using a specially made adhesive. It was vital that the glue left no trace on the visible feather. Chemical analysis indicates the adhesive was a mix of animal hide and seaweed extract that was reduced to produce a gelatine. In addition, it appears that powdered jade, or glass, was embedded in the gum. Further analysis of the finest items shows that the bladders and intestines of specific fish were preferred to hide.

Dress Accessories of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) This form of decorative wear reached its peak of popularity in the last 60 years of the Qing Dynasty (1850-1910). This was largely due to The Dowager Empress Cixi (1835-1908) who, amongst other achievements, was the indisputable 'fashion guru' of the period. Cixi's passion for this form of adornment influenced not just the Manchu ladies of the court but extended to Han Chinese High Society.

The main focus was headwear and, in particular, items used to create the hairstyles of the period. For Manchu ladies, the height and volume of the hair was very important, and this would require a large number of decorative hair pins, plus other ornaments, to create the desired effect. Illustrated is a small selection of hair pins that would have been used to hold hair in position.

In contrast, Han ladies, after they had married, would have worn their hair in a simple coil or 2 braided buns. Whilst the hair style was less elaborate the hair would often have been decorated with pearls and kingfisher feather items.

This example displays exquisite feather surrounding a delicate flower made of glass.

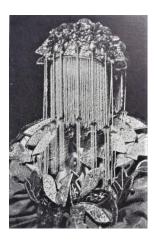




Once the practicalities of hair management had been addressed, it was commonplace for crowns, headbands or tiaras to be worn and, as with the hair pins, there arises an almost limitless range of designs.

The most important form of headwear in Han Chinese culture was the Wedding Headdress. These were a clear statement that the girl came from a wealthy family. However, due to the high cost of production these items were often carefully stored and past down the generations. Their survival was enhanced due to infrequent usage which meant the delicate feather did not have prolonged exposure to the elements, particularly sunlight.

These headdresses were known as *shang tou hua* and as shown in the illustration the piece would also incorporate pearls and semi-precious stones. In addition, many would have a detachable fringe of small pearls that would obscure the face of the bride.





Crowns and headdresses were also worn on a more regular basis but were of a less extravagant design. The most popular designs were known as *tien tzu* or *feng tien*. As seen from the items illustrated each form of crown is created on a latticework armature of iron wire and rattan covered in black silk and foliated strips of satin.



These crowns were worn as informal headwear at the court although the Dowager Empress Cixi has been photographed wearing a crown with a semi-formal Dragon Robe (*jufu*).

One of the most distinctive forms of headwear, worn by Manchu ladies, was known as the *Liang Patou*.

As can be seen from the example illustrated these were challenging hats to wear. They were tall with flat wings created with black satin stretched over a frame. The upper section would have a decorative metal bar added which would stiffen the frame and assist with the stability of the hat.



The base of the hat was formed as a hoop and hair would often be used to" anchor" the hat. A chinstrap also assisted with keeping the hat in place. As can be seen the custom would be to acquire a set of decorative items, incorporating kingfisher feather, pearls and semi-precious stones and attach these to the black satin ground.

Whist dress accessories were decorative they normally served some practical function. In Part II we will consider the purely decorative objects from small items of jewellery through to massive multi-sectional screens. All share a common decorative element in that they incorporate the feather of the kingfisher bird.

For an important news item about Wendy and David's collection of Imperial textiles, please see page 20.

# What we can learn from China and why we need to learn from it more than ever

#### **Tom Harper**

As the Ground Zero of the Covid-19 outbreak, China's battles with the virus should have been the focus of the media's attention as other states now face their own battles with the virus. Instead, coverage has alternated between condemnation of China's draconian response as being 'authoritarian' to ignoring it while praising the responses of nations such as South Korea and New Zealand. Over the past few weeks there has also been an escalation of the wider blame game as governments, such as the Trump administration, seek to divert attention away from their incompetent handling of the outbreak, which has seen their cases exceed those of China, which can partially explain the lack of attention given to China's response.

The blame game was further underlined by the leaked memo advising senior Republicans not to defend Trump's handling of Covid-19 but to instead criticise China, a hint that the press has been all too keen to follow. It is this statement that is the closest thing to an admission of failure, one that could have been avoided if more attention had been given to the lessons from China's response to the outbreak. While these developments bode ill for the future after Covid-19, it has provided a further imperative to learn from China as it becomes an increasingly prominent feature of everyday life.

#### Why didn't We Learn from China?

There are several reasons for our seemingly contemptuous reaction to the prospect that we might learn something from China. One of these is located in the comparative dominance enjoyed by the Western world as explored by Ian Morris' 2010 book, *Why the West Rules for Now*, which explored the factors behind how Western nations enjoyed such prominence. As a result, many cannot conceive of a world where a major Eastern power, such as China, can play an equally prominent role.

In relation to this has been the assumption that the dominant orthodoxy is inherently correct and that all others should strive to emulate it. Alongside the five centuries of Western dominance, this was also seemingly reinforced by the triumph of the capitalist system at the end of the Cold War. These experiences have led to a tendency to perceive China, in the words of former Singaporean diplomat, Kishore Mahbubani, as a society that is run by a rigid, sclerotic communist party destined for the ash heap of history occupied by the Soviet Union.

It is due to these preconceptions that despite the progress made by China in its economic development and technological innovation, that many feel that they have nothing to learn from China, but rather they feel that China should learn from them. Ironically, it was an attitude similar to this that characterised the Qing dynasty's perceptions of the wider world in its twilight years, as symbolised by the Qianlong emperor telling the British envoy, Lord

Macartney, that China had no interest in Western innovations or ways. These attitudes would come to haunt China throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, which reinforces the dangers of treating other major states with condescension.

#### What can We Learn from China?

In the short term, the most obvious things that we can learn from China is its response to Covid-19. As the first nation to experience the outbreak, it is only logical that we should examine it further to improve our own responses to it. In addition, it can also provide further lessons in how to prepare for future pandemics by studying what China got right as well as what it got wrong.

China's response has also had a particular resonance for me during the end of my tenure in Sichuan back in the closing days of January. As I prepared to return to the UK, I walked through the ominously empty and quiet streets of Chengdu, its grey, closed shop fronts now a familiar sight at home and flinching every time someone coughed. One of the key differences between there and at home was that for many places, temperature checks were mandatory for entry into many shops and restaurants. This also extended to the airport, with throngs of worried looking passengers awaiting a process that could earn them fourteen days in quarantine. Upon my return, I was greeted by a very different welcome. Despite the pandemic making headlines globally, little or no precautions were taken at Heathrow.

This was further reinforced when I visited Brighton not long after my return from China. At one of the Asian supermarkets in the city's multicultural Preston Street, I was greeted by a line of Chinese students, all wearing facemasks, queuing to buy essentials in a scene that has become all too familiar in supermarkets around the country today. At the time, I felt that they were overreacting, but now it seems like they knew from what had been happening back home. From these experiences, there have been several elements in China's response to Covid-19 that are necessary to observe. Firstly, the make-up and strong community spirit of Chinese society has enabled it to mobilise on a grand scale in a comparatively shorter period of time as well as through communication via apps such as WeChat.

This has been demonstrated by Chinese communities throughout Europe as well, most notably in the Tuscan town of Prato, where the self-imposed isolation of the town's Chinese community resulted in no cases of Covid-19 among them. The necessity to learn from China was emphasised by the Italian economist, Michele Geraci, who claimed that Europe had the opportunity to learn from China, but the 'ingrained thinking that whatever China does is wrong' has cost it dearly, which is a damning indictment of the contemptuous attitude towards China.

In contrast, the UK's response has been slow, even complacent, with the lockdown only being initiated long after the virus was reported. The government has also been too reliant on scaremongering to ensure people stay at home, which has meant that people have become too scared to seek treatment for other ailments, as testified by the increasingly empty hospitals throughout the nation. As a result, the

lockdown may end up harming those it was intended to protect.

It is from China's experiences with Covid-19 that we can learn from. However, rather than studying this, politicians have instead devoted their energies into blaming China for the outbreak to score cheap political points as well as to deflect public attention away from their incompetence in handling the pandemic. It is this aspect that highlights the importance of Geraci's call to learn from China and to avoid assuming that everything China does is wrong.

#### **Learning from China's Future**

China's course has provided important lessons for our future as well, which has been linked to how it has challenged many of the assumptions that we have taken for granted. While many have seen this as a threat, it nevertheless provides a greater opportunity to learn what we otherwise would not have noticed. Presently, while many students from China still flock to the UK to pursue their university education, it is possible that the course of China's advancement can lead to a future where scholars from all over the world come to China to study its secrets. It is through such a future that will demonstrate whether we have truly learned the lessons from China.

#### A Chinese Sees the World by CS See

some aspects by Walter Fung



The Chinese author was in fact Malay Chinese from Kuala Lumpur. He had previously never been out of Malaya but went on a trip around the world visiting many countries. He does not say how he funded his epic journey and does not mention any travelling companion. However, the Rotary Club is mentioned frequently; perhaps this organisation may have facilitated his lengthy trip and possibly helped with accommodation. He visits the World HQ of World Rotary in Chicago and the book is dedicated to Rotarians of all nations.

He visits the Chinese quarters of several places saying that he was anxious to see how the Chinese lived in Europe and America. The book was published in 1937 in Singapore by the Malaya Publishing House Ltd. There are numerous illustrations and photographs amongst the 216 pages.

This short article relates his impressions of his time in Britain. At that time, Chinese students are living in many parts of the country, but mainly in London, Oxford, Cambridge, Manchester and Birmingham. They are studying textiles and engineering whilst some in Edinburgh and Ireland are studying medicine. Quite a large proportion of

the Chinese students are funded by the Chinese government of the time, others have wealthy parents.

Interestingly Mr See tells of 'exaggerated Limehouse'. 'Imaginative reporters and authors' have written about Limehouse and as a result it is famous all over the world for 'weird stories and horrid murders.' However, when you go there, you see more Jewish and Greek people, but there are enough Chinese children to have Chinese schools. The Chinese are mainly to be seen in eating houses which are not very well furnished or clean. There is a combined restaurant, bar and museum called Charlie Brown's owned by the son of a Chinese father and English mother.

Advertisements all over London display 'untruthful propaganda' to encourage the tourist. Mr See states that in reality, there is nothing of real interest in Limehouse except a few poorly furnished eating shops and a small number of Anglo-Chinese children shabbily dressed.

Mr See's account of London, then moves to fashionable Chinese restaurants in New Compton Road, Charing Cross, Greek Street, Gerrard Street and Piccadilly Circus. Interestingly, although Mr See is writing in the mid-1930s, this is the area of the present-day, 2020 London Chinatown. The restaurants Mr See visits here are 'high class', clean and run in a Westernised manner with a Chinese décor - a contrast to those in Limehouse. The best Chinese restaurant in the West-end, at this time, is Maxim's with English speaking, well-mannered Chinese waiters dressed in stiff collars and evening dresses. The menu includes both English and Chinese dishes, water chestnuts, bean sprouts and egg foo-yung. It seems to take a while for English diners to decide what to order and they are fascinated by the waiters writing down their order in Chinese with a few deft strokes of their writing brush. Fortune cookies are available at the end of the meal and there is a dance floor which can be used for a fee of sixpence.

This book was published in 1937 and it is interesting in that, at this time, there were already Chinese restaurants in the West-end of London. In addition, the dishes quoted in these presumably up-market West-end restaurants of the time include; egg foo yung, water chestnuts and bean sprouts. These are familiar as items in Chinese restaurant's menus of the 1950s and 60s. Today more sophisticated dishes are offered in all Chinese restaurants and even in takeaway food shops.

His journey also took him to Ceylon, Cairo, Milan, Germany, Switzerland, Czechoslovakia before Britain. He then went on to New York, the Grand Canyon, San Francisco, and Los Angeles. He then crossed the Pacific to Hawaii, Japan and on to China to visit Shanghai, Soochow, Peking and Nanjing, the capital of China at that time. From there he went to Canton and Hong Kong and back to Malaya. On arrival in New York's Chinatown, he remarks that after spending six months in a European environment, he first felt strange but happy to see so many people of his own nationality living in typically Chinese surroundings.

In his book Mr See makes a perceptive comment on Western parenting compared to Chinese parenting. The Western parent explains what behaviour is needed, whilst the Chinese parent teaches his offspring by chiding.

#### A Yangzi Journey During 1998

#### **John Gittings**

John was a journalist for many years for the Guardian. He is the author of several books on China and has been associated with SACU for many years. Here he introduces his latest article for China Eye. 'These are notes taken on a journey with my wife Aelfthryth down the Yangzi, from Chongqing and on to Fuzhou, in May 1998, shortly before completion of first stage of the Three Gorges Dam'

#### 1 May; Chongqing

May Day in the great square outside Chongqing People's Hall has been sponsored by the Pearly Gold Real Estate Development Company. They are promoting, they say, not just a new residential and commercial project but a new way of life for Chongqing's bright future. The principal means chosen today are a troupe of very young girls in red dancing costumes who can twirl a cloth disc by their toe while lying down, or even while rolling over. The girls are the final attraction in an open-air programme which began with lion dance and acrobatics. A junior army band provides the music.



#### 'Bangbang' men (porters) at Chongqing riverside

Outside the new Carrefour supermarket, there are row on row of booths selling cheap scratch-cards: two RMB, in a nation-wide Mayday sale, for the chance of winning a Santana as top prize. Evening in Peoples Square: synchronised fountains with music, little children leap and dance with delight. Large families, affectionate girlfriends, pose for pictures. This is the real May Day spirit of China today.

#### 2 MAY; Chongqing-Fengjie.

Leaving Chongqing no longer requires a descent of 220 steps, but the last few metres are still precipitous. Faced with a competing crowd of coolies with bamboo poles, we hoist our packs and set off down the approach -- more a muddy track -- to Pier No. 8. Pier means a set of shaky pontoons: the previous day from above we had seen one collapse. This one seems stable but the only approach is down a final steep flight of steps, mostly obscured by a scree of mud, we follow as best as we can.

The *Baidi*, *White Emperor*, is ten years old and has been intensively used, but our cabin has a large window facing the port side and a gentle air-conditioner which just held its own (though it might be harder in full summer). We slip away soon after eight am in the usual Chongqing soup of mist and pollution. Within 20 minutes a swallow-tail

butterfly has flapped on board and it begins to feel like a real journey: As the mist clears, the features which will dominate this journey came into sight:

- 1. The boat's own course: this after all is the guarantee for all else. It looks so easy and the engines hardly need to strive with a following current, but therein lies the danger. Where rocks or shoals narrow the channel, the water becomes an anxious criss-cross of choppiness, between zones of suspicious oily swirling calm. At such times the boat must slow as much as it is able. The main channel may also swing from one side of the half-kilometre wide river to the other in the same forward distance, bringing the boat disconcertingly close to walls of rock.
- 2. The other river traffic: an upriver coal barge blasts at an intrusive hydrofoil; working ferries pass with washing hung out of shared cabin windows, faded pale blue and rusty deck railings; glimpses of lower-deck crowding. The occasional much smarter tourist boat than ours: one ahead with the superstructure of a battle-fort to match its name: *The Three (warring) Kingdoms [San Guo]*. Fishing boats with vast nets pivoted against a bamboo pole; even rustier local ferries; emphatic hooting to establish who goes to starboard or to port.
- 3. The land: always of interest, already mostly beautiful long before the Three Gorges. There is a short gorge near Chongqing and rocky headlands further on which have had great cake slices cut into them to remove the stone. Coal tips are frequent too: stockpiles 40 or so metres up near a track or road which can reach them, and a long chute supported by tall bamboo trestles to convey the coal into barges. There are reaches of cultivated hillside with taller hills ranged behind, neat rows of maize and vegetables descending the alluvial slopes. One smart signal station opposite an ugly looking bank of shingle has its own neat vegetable plot.

Sharp wooded peaks and, closer to the Sichuan-Hubei border, a glimpse of distant peaks; pleasant homesteads with black-tiled roofs and first-floor verandahs, set among bamboo and banana, with their stripes of field rising up the hill behind; conical haystacks; children bundling reeds or pasturing cattle by the water's edge. Most of this must go, when the water level rises after the Three Gorges Dam is completed, as must the much less attractive towns. A hilltop proclaims *an yi min kai fa qu* [Transfer the People and Develop]. Changshou and Fengjie have their new blocks with empty windows already.

#### 3 MAY; Fengjie

"Such scenery it is impossible properly to appreciate, if it has to be rushed through with steam, leaving no time to study the details or to fix any one picture firmly in the mind before it is obliterated by the next' -- Archibald Little, writing a century ago, was absolutely right, It was he who brought the twin screw Leechuen upstream to Chongqing to demonstrate that the Three Gorges could be navigated by steam .

Little forecast a great future for Fengjie if its coal could be exploited by steam navigation. Now its left bank is lined with coal dumps, chutes and jetties; the stuff is loaded on to lighters by all means, tipper truck, conveyer belt or shovel and chute. New Fengjie is taking shape above the 'old' town of 50s and 60s grey buildings; at the top of two flights of waterfront steps, the city gates can still be seen but the wall around on which Little took his promenade to escape the gapers and the filth has been destroyed or built over. This will soon be of no importance.

#### The First Gorge

The first gorge is passed in what seems like a moment. Fortunately we had early in the morning walked from Baidicheng temple to overlook the entrance to it. A new bridge across the tributary -- the usual *xiaohe* -- leads to a path temptingly winding away on the left bank of the gorge. It passed below a signal station: This one -- unlike one I noticed later in the second gorge -- does not carry a faded slogan: "make signals for the revolution".

Seen on the way down the gorge: peasants farming with mattock in patches that will be submerged; rounded hills of sand; higher peaks begin to loom; small workings with a lighter beached to take sand or stone; the trackers' path winding on a contour above.

#### The Second Gorge

Vegetation clinging like a spiders' web to a huge rock-face of cracked basalt. A series of classic views as in Isabella Bird [19<sup>th</sup> century traveller] or Little, spoilt only by the monstrous shape of the superior *President* (*San Guo* is its Chinese name) tourist boat, like a huge castle junk always ahead of us. The old path built up in places carries telephone poles to small settlements. These have begun to be cleared: a house which is evacuated has its roof and ends knocked down no doubt to discourage resettlement.



Entering the second gorge of the Yangzi River

There is an unannounced change of plan. By chance I notice that in tomorrow's schedule we shall no longer visit Qu Yuan's temple at Zigui before entering the last Xiling Gorge, and shall only be woken on reaching the new dam works half way down.

We are told evasively this is because of the "captain's log". The plan changes again later, we do visit the temple, and will all be put ashore at Yichang below the dam, to be bussed onwards to Wuhan where the boat should have terminated — in our case to Shashi which I have already arranged to re-visit. The captain brazens it out: "If I were not a responsible person, I would just leave you on the quayside like other captains would do!"



The Qu Yuan Temple at Zigui. It has been dismantled and reconstructed elsewhere.

#### 4 MAY; The Third Gorge

We wake ourselves at four in the morning to be up on deck in the cold dawn and enter the last, Xiling, gorge. All is still except for a rising chorus of bird song. A new road, already built, indicates the level to which the water will rise when the Dam is completed. Glimpses of distant peaks at the far end of small tributaries. The spoil of the new road had been spilled carelessly down the side of the gorge. After the oxbow turning there is a long stretch with more destroyed houses. We can begin to calculate the new shape: it will be a shallower, a broader basin with islands, till the dam. Through the diversion channel, past the Huangling Temple, cypresses clinging to the concave line of the peaks; kites swirling in the wind; the final stretch, power lines and a viewpoint, Gezhouba just round the corner; looking back: a sampan laden with rusty bicycles.

#### 5 MAY; Shashi

The pedicabs have gone since my visit here four years ago. A new road is being driven along below the river dyke: there are prostitutes in the old section of town; Zhongshanlu is more or less unchanged, except for overhead pedestrian crossings and some new shops – lamps and clothes. The General Manager of Shashi CITS explains that he has a plan, that our half day tour of the Jingzhou ancient city [twinned with Shashi] should consist of just two items: the East Gate with its gift shops and the Museum. Fortunately having been to Jingzhou before I have my own plan. This includes a small temple run by nuns in one of the few remaining old streets. We are told it has been "destroyed", and that a walk along part of the city wall would take too long. I lead the way to the temple where we meet some tiny nuns, and then to the city wall, asking our guide to wait at the end of the unbroken stretch. Walking peacefully along it, we find that it overlooks a prison.

#### 6 MAY; Wuhan

The Jianghan Hotel in the old French concession has been restored since I stayed there four years ago. Then I moved out because of rats in the ceiling. Now it boasts to be a "classic example of continental deco style." A quartet plays Beethoven carefully in the lobby; there is a drinks trolley with French and Australian wines though they still serve powdered coffee.



#### Wuhan ferry pier

On the Bund, a joint venture multi-screen Cine City is showing *Titanic*, currently the most popular film in China. The Smile Fast Food outlet in the foyer is also doing well. Also showing: *Daylight with Sylvester Stallone*. Next door in a red brick castle-like building is the Wuhan Talent Market, with its attached Elderly Talents Market. And close by an estate agent offers numerous properties for rent. Jobs and housing are the main preoccupations in Wuhan. Across the Han River in Wuhan's second city of Hanyang, less has changed in the past four years. Beyond the Qingchuan Pavilion which overlooks the great Yangzi river bridge, old Hanyang curves in narrow lanes on the promontory where the Han and Yangzi rivers meet.

This is still a community which lives and works in tight proximity, half in the open and sharing the same communal sink. Just inside open doors, there are whirring sewing machines, hand printing presses, tailors, cobblers and hairdressers. Teeth are brushed and water spat out over the dusty alley. Bicycles and pedicabs peal their way through those on foot. Food is eaten, and mah-jong played, on wooden tables outside the small and dark one or two-storey dwellings. Dust catches in the throat with the odd whiff of sewage. It must be much better than 'before Liberation', but the heat, noise and smells will soon be oppressive in the furnace heat of the summer.

Also unchanged in downtown Hankou are the uneven pavements, the missing or broken manhole covers which are particularly treacherous in the dim street lighting at night. So are the unlit buses which nose down the streets, circumnavigated by impatient taxis.

#### 7 MAY; Downstream to Jiujiang

On Passenger Boat no. 50: In the haze downstream of Wuhan, a procession of sand barges heading up river as far as the dam from 50-60 kilometres down. At Erzhou where an old reddish fort has survived just offshore, we tie up against a dismal former ferryboat now used as a jetty. We pass a long island with poplars and pasture. Then on the right bank of the river, a few small hillocks with wheat some already harvested. Further down, on the left bank, sloping sand as if on the seashore. And in a river now a mile wide, fishing boats with nets: in the mist, they too could be out at sea. Huangshi has a modern jetty: food vendors

conduct the transaction with small fishing nets. There is a long search in the water when one banknote floats down. We pass some reddish hills after a single surprising slab of cliff; a reed boat piled high, two barges lashed together (see Little's account of the same) with a contraption of bamboo to steer from on top. Then entire hillsides cut away for stone and groups of dredgers. It is a new Turner scene with the pale setting sun, the first time we have seen it: "Mist, Sun and Pollution".

#### 8 MAY; Jiujiang

A misty morning over the Nanmen lake. We walk under the sycamore trees, past the high-level guesthouse and the club for retired cadres, to the Nengren Temple. On the corner just before, a handsome catholic church, founded by French missionaries we are told in the 1860s. Its tall Victorian gothic columns in the nave, fanning gracefully to support the roof, had been hacked down in the Cultural Revolution when it was converted into a warehouse. It was reopened in 1984, restored with voluntary contributions. I ask how many believers there were: one of the church workers replies excitedly "a million". "She means in the whole of Jiujiang", her embarrassed colleague explains, "and it's not a million anyway".

The monastery is a working one with 40-50 monks, young and old. I inspect their summer timetable pasted to a pillar. Rise at 3.30, first lesson at 4, breakfast at 5.30, and so on to lights out at 9. In the first half of each month, rising time and the first lesson are half an hour even earlier. In the soft rain the monastery has a comfortable faded appearance. It had been destroyed by the Taipings but protected from the Red Guards, so much of it is late Qing. A fine white pagoda, set at a pleasant angle to the central axis and dating from the Song, was restored in 1957. In the rear courtyard, several unused buildings: one has a huge wooden bed frame, and a few cheap images stored. In the garden a large magnolia tree with some generous waxy white flowers. Beside the pagoda, a well-kept flower garden: poppies and marigolds with a pleasant medicinal smell. We are alone in the monastery: a smiling elder monk and two lay workers show us stones listing the donations: special attention for those who have given 10,000 renminbi.

#### Train to Nanchang

Curving fields of paddy, no two the same shape. It is a running exhibition of paddy production: stumps of old paddy, bright green and densely growing young paddy, separated into bunches against a wooden rack, tossed out into the empty water and laid out by hands, growing freshly. And a living display of the water buffalo, at this season mostly having an easy time: scratching its horns against a tree stump, splashing in empty water, grazing in rough streamside pasture, led down watery sidings as a short cut, or just idling.

One exceptional village with crenellated end roofs; some villages with no new housing at all - tiled roofs and porticos, others with new balconies and whitewashed walls. A lot of water: netted duck ponds, lotus farms, rivers and a misty glimpse of the Boyang Lake.

On the train: coffee!, Xmas streamers, but loos locked and table covers removed after two- thirds of the journey. On arrival in Nanchang, successful purchase of sleeper tickets

for Fuzhou, though a day later than planned. Successful choice too, from hastily bought town map at the station, of the Jiangxi Hotel: CNN and un-chipped china.

#### 9 MAY; Nanchang

The *Youminsi* temple has the standard layout: outer hall with four fierce kings guarding, red, black or white face, then the middle hall with a huge Buddha: a balcony allows inspection of him from beneath the gaudily painted ceiling: the inner hall with the Buddha plus Lohans, and an elaborate rear screen of the Guanyin, all expensively restored; stone masons chipping in the yard. We buy a *mu yu* (wooden fish) and a *dangzi* (brass bell) from the stalls outside.

#### **10 MAY**

We return to the temple, now echoing with firecrackers and wrapped in candle and incense smoke. A young man, studying economics for a further degree, a Buddhist, explains the symbolism of the fish: it never shuts its eyes, and continual study is needed to achieve understanding. A young woman medical worker at a hospital also volunteers information. I talk to some local *zhao gong* [labourers seeking work]. It is hard to do business here.

#### MAY 11-12; Gutian-Fuzhou

We catch the night train from Nanchang, and get off in the early morning at the small Town of Huangtian, where we take a local bus to Gutian. This is where a group of missionaries and their families were killed in 1895, in one of the first episodes leading up to the Boxer Uprising. We visit the town's new dam, and walk to temple of Tai Bao [太保, one of the local gods], past another being renovated. Slogan: Struggle so that everyone has health provision by the year 2000. Clouds spilling down the side of the distant range where the missionaries' summer retreat was located; dull green spines in the heat; sound of peasant voices in paddy fields below; a lantern swinging in the wind. There are swallow-tails and altars to the family gods. The temple was built, probably on the site of a destroyed temple, in 1992-3: there is a *duilian* – parallel inscriptions -- on the pillars of the opera stage erected at the front of the temple. One of these reads:

kan wo fei wo, wo kan wo fei shi wo. 看我非我,我看我非 是我

[You see me but it's not me; I see myself, but it's not myself]

We eat a late lunch at the Riri Jiujia, 日日酒家。Quick-fried bamboo; ditto local fungi; some simple pieces of fish; a sweet "hot-sour" soup also based on fungi; local beer, all for 87RMB or seven pounds.

#### 13 MAY; Fuzhou

The view from a McDonalds on May 4th Street. Past a smiling Ronald, an old building with tiled roof and elaborate four course coping; a ramshackle wooden superstructure above; behind, blocks of cramped '70s flats with barred windows. Inside the fast food restaurant, high school girls buy milk shakes; a young couple bite questioningly into their cheeseburgers; a little boy does his homework while his mother has a snack.

The city museum on Yishan, dimly seen in dark halls; an older exhibition of Min history dating from a more didactic

time -- also when foreign tours still came to Fuzhou so English captions of a sort. "Social productive forces had developed highly, primitive communism disintegrated and class society birth" [sic]. The verb to resist fankang [反抗] is translated as the verb "to against": thus "many farmers and fishermen againsted feudal government one after another". On this last morning chance plays a part. My map shows a "Fuzhou Antique Street" gujie [古街] near the river. I suspect rightly this is a phoney reconstruction with shiny fanciful "traditional roofs". But it is also the entrance to old Fuzhou, surviving next to the river, which had given the old treaty port its reason for existence.

A network of narrow lanes with overhanging wooden balconies, stone sinks, washing hung out to dry, open-air work; one old man busy mending a bed-frame; open-air mahjong and (it is only 10.30 am) open-air lunch. The main street is 30s to 50s China, now buzzing with cut-price clothes shops whose salesmen entice customers by shouting out the discount on offer and beckoning with flags. Another street is lined with small shops selling temple decoration and drums, dozens of them. Within minutes we have bought an ox-hide drum, with cymbal for good measures, for our musician son. Then a taxi back to the world of piped music and vaults of hotel glass.

# The Wendy and David Rosier Collection of Imperial textiles has a new home

For the last three years, David Rosier has written regular articles in China Eye on Chinese Imperial Court Costume, Insignia of Rank and dress accessories. He and his wife Wendy have collected about 700 items over a 30-year period. During the last two years, they have been considering ways of disposing of the collection, hoping that any new owner would keep the collection intact.

It seemed that no UK museum was interested and so David consulted Christies and other possible ways forward. Eventually he was introduced to a curator of the Shanghai Museum, which was intending to open an annexe in the Pudong area of the city. A textile collection fitted in with their plans and a team of five specialists from Shanghai came to London to inspect the collection. They made recommendation to acquire it and this was ratified by senior museum management in Shanghai. Following further discussion involving documentation, image creation and other factors, agreement was reached in late December 2019. The collection was transferred to Shanghai in early 2020. There are plans for a permanent display and also themed exhibitions, but the coronavirus crisis has put plans 'on hold' for the time being.

#### Sino File by Walter Fung

## In Beijing Review of August 15th 2019 was a report of the 'Healthy China 2030 Plan'

China has invested funds, technology and human resources to raise people's health standard. In 2018, China's life expectancy rose to 77 years from 74.83 in 2010 which is higher than the average for some high-income countries. This demonstrates the progress being made. The whole Healthy China Action plan for 2019-30 details some16 campaigns which include higher life-expectancy, health awareness, heathy diets, national fitness, tobacco control and mental health. It focuses on key groups such as women, children and seniors. Great attention is paid to disease control both the prevention and control.

#### The 'Middle Income Trap' (MIT). Will China stagnate?

The MIT term is applied to countries which progress to a certain level but find it difficult to progress to the next stage of 'well developed.' The term MIT was first used by the World Bank in its report 'An East Asian Renaissance: Ideas for Economic Growth' issued in 2007. According to the 2019 standard, countries with gross national income per capita (GNI) of below \$1,025 are considered low-income countries. Those with GNI between \$1.026 and \$3,995 are classed as lower middle-income countries and those with GNI between \$3,996 and \$12,375 are classed as upper middle income. If the GNI is above this upper level, it is a high-income country.

Many countries of the world have progressed to the middle-income levels, but have so far failed to progress further. Economists have tried to analyse why this happens very frequently. They believe that there is a variety of reasons which vary from country to country. China reached the \$10,000 level in 2019 and faces the challenge of progressing into the high-income standard. (*From an article in Beijing Review 30/1/20*)

#### From the British press

#### Beijing vigilance to avoid recurrence of Covid-19

China is intensifying its campaign to avoid asymptomatic resurgence. There were 63 new infection cases yesterday compared to 62 the day before. Of the 62, all but one was from abroad. The total number of confirmed cases is now 81,865. Since 1 April, 657 asymptomatic cases have been recorded and of these 57 developed symptoms. Experts say that understanding what proportion of people who are infected but experience no illness is a key piece in the coronavirus puzzle. (*From I 10/4/20*)

#### China bans wild animal trade

The National People's Congress has said that it will immediately ban the consumption and trade of wild animals in a fast-track decision to stop the spread of coronavirus. The practices were suspended in January. Scientists, suspect, but have not yet proved that the virus passed from animals to humans. Some of the earliest infections were found in people who had been to a wildlife market in Wuhan. (*From I* 26/2/20)

Doctor who gave warning of virus pardoned.

China has posthumously pardoned a doctor who was reprimanded for his warnings about coronavirus. The Communist Party's top disciplinary body said that the Wuhan police had revoked its admonition of Dr Li Wenliang, which included a threat of arrest. A solemn apology had been issued to Dr Li's family. Two police officers, identified only by their surnames had been disciplined. (*From I* 21/3/20)

### China observes three minutes silence for victims of coronavirus

This is to mourn the thousands who died in the fight against the pandemic. Air-raid sirens, the horns of cars, trains and ships will 'wail in grief' after three minutes silence to be observed at 10.00am on 4<sup>th</sup> April. (Which in fact is Qing Ming, 'tomb sweeping day). China appears to have curbed the epidemic by draconian restrictions that lasted two months. Yesterday, the National Health Commission reported 31 new case, down from 35 the previous day. All except two involved travellers from overseas. However, residents in Wuhan have been warned to stay vigilant and avoid going out, even as no new infections have been reported in the city, which was central to the outbreak.

Total infections on the mainland, which excludes asymptomatic patients, stands at 81,620, while the death toll rose by four to 3,322. Worldwide the number of cases has topped a million with at least 52,000 deaths. Top officials are concerned about the risk of a second wave of infections, especially in Wuhan. The Communist Party chief, Wang Zhonglin ordered citizens to avoid leaving their homes unless necessary. The lockdown has been eased for some of the population of 11 million, who can go out for the first time since 23 January. (*From I* 4/4/20)

#### Wuhan virus death toll revised upward

The number of coronavirus deaths in Wuhan has been revised to 3,869, an increase of 1,290. The revised figure is to include belated, missed and mistaken reporting. The total number of infections is put at 50,333, which is about two thirds of the total in China, 82,367. Xinhua mentioned the insufficient admissions capability of the overwhelmed medical facilities at the peak of the outbreak. (*From I* 18/4/20)

#### **Donations from China**

Ping An Insurance is to provide the UK with 10,000 diagnostic test kits, 15 respirators, 4,000 sets of protective clothing, 100,000 surgical masks, 100,000 pairs of gloves, 10,000 face masks and 10,000 hand sanitisers. The company will also supply technological support by donating 1,000 units of the Covid-19 smart image-reading system which is claimed to be capable of generating rapid and accurate analysis lung scans for individual cases within 15 seconds with an accuracy of 97%. (From I 4/4/20)

#### Robot to carry out virus testing in China

Researchers have said that they have designed a robot that can perform ultrasounds, take mouth swabs and listen to sounds made by a patient's organs. These tasks are normally carried out by doctors, but this robot, which is fitted with cameras can these perform tasks without medical personnel being present. Tsinghua University Professor Zheng

Gangtie, the robot's chief designer has said that they can now use robots to perform the most dangerous tasks. (*From* I 6/3/20)

#### Hold up of protective equipment in Scotland

At Prestwich airport, 100,000 testing kits and 10 million facemasks from China are being help up due to 'labelling issues. It is reported that they are not needed immediately. (*From I* 27/4/20)

#### Wuhan has no remaining hospital coronavirus cases

Today, Wuhan hospitals have no coronavirus cases. China as a whole has had no deaths for 11 consecutive days. There were 11 new cases, bringing the total number to 82,827. Five of these were in Heilongjiang province which borders on Russia. (*From I* 27/4/20)

#### Chinese school classes resume

Lessons for middle and high school students in Shanghai and Beijing began preparing for examinations. They have the option of continuing on-line studies or virus testing and social distancing in the classroom. No new deaths have been reported in a month in China. One retrospective case brought the number to 4,634 out of 82,947 infections. China's domestic airlines have resumed and are running at the 60% level, about 10,000 per day. (*From I 18/5/20*)

#### Labour Day public holiday lockdown eased

Hundreds of China's sightseeing sites have re-opened but attendance is capped at 30% of capacity to adhere to social distancing rules. Travel regulations have been relaxed as the number of cases of coronavirus dwindle. On May 1<sup>st</sup> Labour Day, there were a reported 23.36 million travellers compared to 67.13 last year. (*From I 4/5/20*)

#### Confucius Institutes (CI), mixed receptions

Sweden has shut down its last Confucius Institute, the only European country to close all of these institutes. Relations between China and Sweden have deteriorated since Gui Minhi, a Swedish citizen published a book criticising China. Since then, China has cancelled trade missions to Sweden. Some US and Canadian CIs have been closed, but there are still 525 CIs and 1,100 Confucius Classrooms around the world; 13 CIs are in Britain with 45 Confucius Classrooms. However, in Scotland, a specialist classroom has been opened and a new headquarters established. Strathclyde University's CI has been recognised as a 'model' CI and is amongst the top four in the world. (*From The Times* 21/4/20)

#### Former BT chairman joins Huawei board

Sir Mike Rake, the former chairman of BT, has joined Huawei's UK board as a non-executive director. Sir Mike was president of the CBI from 2013 to 2015. In January, the UK government decided to allow Huawei to build parts of the UK 5G network, with a cap on its share of the market, despite US officials raising security concerns. Some Conservative MPs disagree with Huawei's involvement and 40 rebelled in a vote against the government. Sir Mike, who chaired BT from 2007 to 2017 said that restricting Huawei or removing existing 4G equipment will not only incur very significant costs but prejudice trade relationships with

China. It would also significantly set back the UK's broadband ambitions. (From The Daily Telegraph 16/4/20)

#### Growth in Chinese graduate students a 'risk'

The Higher Educational Policy Institute has warned that over-reliance on UK-Chinese post-graduate students is a risk factor. The number of UK domiciled post graduate students has risen by 10% from 2008-09, but the number of non-EU international students, especially Chinese has grown by 33%. However, the fees paid by these students provide stability and makes some courses viable. (*From I 14/5/20*)

#### Chinese steel firm saves 3,300 British jobs

Jingye Steel has completed its takeover of British Steel for a reported £50 million. The deal is expected to safeguard 3,300 jobs out of 5,000 posts in Scunthorpe, Teesside and Cumbria. The sale will unlock investment of £1.2 billion over 10 years to modernise the main site in Scunthorpe and fund improvements in energy efficiency and environmental performance. The deal includes assets in the Netherlands but not the Hayange plant in France which Jingye hopes to acquire. (From The Times 10/3/20)

#### Blackmore hoping to expand into China

Vitamins company Blackmore is to substantially increase its investment in China to sell to the 'modern career woman' In addition the company is considering exporting pet supplements and products to China, a market expected to more than double to \$260 million by 2024. (*From The Times* 26/2/20)

#### 25 New Energy projects

The Three Gorges Dam company, which built the famous dam, has announced the start of 25 new energy projects with a total investment of 58 billion yuan (\$6.5 billion). The projects' total capacity will reach 3.92 million kilowatts, will be in 14 provinces and regions and will create 17,000 new jobs. (From The Times 26/2/20)

#### **HK** former CEOs form party

Tung Chee-hwa and Leung Chun-ying, both former chief executives of Hong Kong are forming a pro-Beijing party in the former colony ahead of September's elections. They intend to promote stability, prosperity, the rule of law and uphold the One-China-Two Systems concept. They also intend to recover the prosperity of the territory. (*From I 6/5/20*)

#### Chinese in US face work curbs

The number of Chinese nationals permitted to work at the US offices of major Chinese state-owned media outlets is being slashed. This is to retaliate against Beijing's alleged 'long-standing intimidation and harassment of journalists' Beijing vowed to retaliate. Last month it revoked the visas of three *Wall Street Journal* reporters in Beijing because it declined to apologise for a column with the headline calling China, the 'Real Sick Man of Asia'. (*From I 4/3/20*)

#### Bicester now a ghost town

Bicester village in Oxfordshire has become a 'ghost town' since the coronavirus outbreak. Tourism has slumped and even locals are staying away. More than half of Chinese visitors to Britain shop at Bicester. They are attracted by its

location near to London and Oxford and designer goods at discount prices. The shopping centre was built in the style of an English village and it allows Chinese shoppers to claim back VAT on purchases. (From The Times 28/2/20)

#### From the Chinese press

BEIJING, May 16 (Xinhua) -- China is able to conduct 1.5 million nucleic acid tests for COVID-19 every day. Testing capabilities need to be further improved as work and production resume, said a Chinese health official on Saturday at a press conference in Beijing. The National Health Commission has called on all qualified and registered medical institutions across the country to conduct nucleic acid testing since the end of January to deal with the rapid growth of COVID-19 cases. The next step is to step up the building and management of laboratories, biosafety management and the training of medical personnel...

**BEIJING, May 15 (Xinhua) --** China's economic activities continued to normalize as the latest data on industrial output, retail sales and investment showed across-the-board improvements, but the recovery still faces uncertainties and challenges from the global spread of the virus. The industrial sector was among the quickest to rebound with the value-added industrial output returning to growth last month, the first expansion since the virus outbreak as factory activities recovered amid easing containment measures. The value-added industrial output went up 3.9 percent year on year in April, rebounding from the 1.1-percent drop in March and 13.5-percent slump seen in the first two months of the year, according to data from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) on Friday.

Adding to the recovery signs, the index measuring services production fell 4.5 percent last month, narrowing from 9.1 percent in March, while retail sales of consumer goods went down 7.5 percent, recovering from a drop of 15.8 percent a month earlier. With consolidated epidemic control efforts and the restoration of economic activities, major indices have sustained the improving momentum since March, the NBS said. "But it is still challenging for the economy to wipe out the severe shocks incurred by the epidemic," said NBS spokesperson Liu Aihua.

China's economy shrank by 6.8 percent year on year in the first quarter, as the virus outbreak dealt a huge blow to economic activity. While the epidemic has been basically brought under control at home, the global spread of the virus and collapsing external demand will complicate future recovery.

#### Praise from the WHO

The World Health Organisation (WHO) said on 12 January 2020 that China's sharing of the genetic sequence of the coronavirus was of great importance for the world for developing specific diagnostic tests. (From Beijing Review 23/1/20)

#### Medical workers go home

The first of more than 42,000 medical workers who travelled to Hubei, to help tackle the coronavirus have left to return

home. They had been away from their home base for two months. They had come from all over China, including Guizhou, Tianjn, Jiangxi, Qinghai and Shandong. They were given a warm send-off by local workers and the police. (From Beijing Review 26/3/20)

#### Sharing of coronavirus data with US database

The genome sequencing of five 2019 novel coronavirus strains have been synchronised and shared with the Genbank database at the US National Center for Biotechnology Information. Since the release of the database, the genome sequences of 82 virus strains worldwide have been collected and integrated. With over 300,000 sequence file downloads, the database has provided services for over 30,000 visitors from 106 countries and regions. (From Being Review 20/2/20)

**BEIJING, May 17 (Xinhua)** -- Three COVID-19 vaccines have entered phase II clinical trials in Beijing, said a municipal health official on Sunday. Xu Qiang, head of the Beijing Municipal Science and Technology Commission, said that 21 science and technology projects have been arranged in response to the epidemic. Five innovative drugs have been approved for clinical trials, and all of them have entered phase II clinical studies,

According to a three-year action plan on strengthening the emergency management system for public health security in the capital (2020-2022), Xu said Beijing will establish a linkage mechanism for prevention, clinical practice, scientific research, treatment and project emergency approval. He said that the research and development of diagnostic reagents, drugs, vaccines and medical equipment will be accelerated, and support will be given to pharmaceutical and vaccine manufacturers. In addition, Beijing will strengthen the supportive role of new technologies such as big data, artificial intelligence, 5G and the Internet of Things in epidemic monitoring and analysis, virus tracing, prevention, control and treatment.

#### **Assistance for workers**

The Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security and the State Council department dealing with poverty alleviation has stated that Chinese local authorities should provide help to prevent people from falling back into poverty due to the coronavirus.

Arrangements will be made to allow migrant workers to return to work in a safe and orderly manner. Allowances will be given to key enterprises that give preference to qualified poor workers in recruitment. Impoverished workers taking up temporary posts related epidemic control will get subsidies. Employers should be assisted in deeply impoverished regions to create job opportunities. (*From Beijing Review 5/3/20*)

#### Assistance to businesses especially SMEs

A range of measures were introduced by the State Council on 18<sup>th</sup> February to assist businesses and especially small-medium enterprises (SMEs). The SMEs have been exempted from social insurance payments and the collection of housing provident funds has been deferred to help mitigate the effect of the epidemic. The SMEs face more problems

than large companies, but they are very important for stable employment and they are needed to maintain the momentum of economic growth. (*From Beijing Review 5/3/20*)

#### Signs of recovery?

The Beijing News on 21<sup>st</sup> February reported that tourist attractions in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province such as West Lake have announced their reopening in an orderly manner. Visitors will be asked to wear face masks, accept temperature monitoring and avoid crowding.

Many places in China, except Hubei province, have seen a drop in new cases of coronavirus, indicating that the risk of spreading the disease has been reduced. Scenic spots are considered important as they have a positive effect on people who have experienced a long quarantine. However, decisions should be made flexible according to changes in the risk level, but prevention measures, such as temperature monitoring and crowd control should remain in place in the near future. (*From Beijing Review 5/3/20*)

#### Hydrogen from waste

Chinese researchers have developed a new method to produce hydrogen from the industrial waste, hydrogen sulphide. Researchers at the Dalian Institute of Chemical Physics have identified a remarkable metal catalyst encapsulated in graphene, by which hydrogen can be obtained from hydrogen sulphide with a high degree of efficiency. Hydrogen gas has tremendous potential as a sustainable clean source of energy generation. (From Beijing Review 20/2/20)

#### **Decisions on Huawei G5**

At the 56<sup>th</sup> Munich Security Conference on 14-16 February, the US representatives, Mike Pompeo, Mark Esper and Nancy Pelosi campaigned against Huawei, but the UK announced on 28<sup>th</sup> January that it would include Huawei in its non-core 5G networks. Germany, France, Italy and Sweden are not banning Huawei, but will impose some security checks. (*China Daily Global Weekly 21-27/2/20*)

#### Job interviews on-line

Many colleges in Beijing are resorting to cloud recruitment for this year's graduates to avoid coronavirus transmission. The job information website of Peking University lists 350 employers who are offering 23,000 jobs. So far there have been more than two million views. The university provides free on-line training for students intending to interview for national civil service jobs. For students of Renmin University, cloud recruitment allows them to submit resumes and have interviews on-line and can talk to prospective employers. (*From Beijing Review 19/3/20*)

CHENGDU, May 14 (Xinhua) -- More than 6,000 ancient tombs dating back between the Warring States Period (475 B.C.-221 B.C.) and the Ming Dynasty (1368—1644) have been discovered in southwest China's Sichuan Province, local archaeological authorities said Thursday. The Cultural Relics and Archaeology Research Institute of Chengdu, the provincial capital, said the site is located in southern Chengdu. Zuo Zhiqiang, who leads the archaeological excavation team said that apart from different types of ancient tombs, remains of residential sites at the end

of the Neolithic Age and tens of thousands of cultural relics of a variety of dynasties including pottery, bronze ware, stoneware and coins, as well as pearls of the Pacific Ocean and the Indian Ocean, have also been unearthed since March 2015. "The findings are important for the study of cultural exchanges between China and the West and also the ancient social changes along the Silk Road," Zuo said.

#### More trees in Xiongan

Xiongan New Area in Hebei province was established in 2017 to move non-capital functions out of Beijing. There are plans to plant trees on 6,670 hectares this year. By the end of 2019, Xiongan had already planted 14 million trees on 20,700 hectares. The new area features a planned hi-tech, smart and ecologically sound environment. It forms part of the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei cluster, which aims to provide a Chinese solution to big city malaise, which is associated with overcrowding, pollution and traffic congestion. (From Beijing Review 19/3/20)

#### Foreign investment in China at a record high in 2019

Against the background of slowing global economic growth, increased uncertainty in the international community and intensified competition to attract investment, China still absorbed RMB 941.52 billion (\$ 14.81 billion). This is an increase of 5.8% over the previous year and was the most received by developing countries, and the second highest in the world. In addition, by the end of 2019, a million foreign-invested enterprises had et up offices in China. (From China Today March 2020)

#### Green growth of Yangtze River Economic Belt

Financial Institutions will be encouraged to innovate green finance and supply diversified financial products to boost the development of the economic belt. In addition, banking and insurance institutions will provide financial support to major projects that serve public interests. A major project will be clean up the river. The goal is to eliminate more than 90% of black and odorous water bodies in cities at or above the prefectural level by the end of 2020. The Yangtze Economic Belt comprises nine provinces and two municipalities, which together have a population of 600 million and contribute more than 40% of China's GDP. (From Beijing Review 23/1/20)

#### Pet ownership in China.

Reports indicate that 72% of young people live away from their hometown and 61% feel lonely, from time to time, especially single people. This has resulted in pet ownership for company. Another major sector of the population is elderly people whose children have left home. The population of 'empty-nest' elderly is expected to exceed 200 million by 2030. By the end of 2019, the cats and dogs population reached 99 million, an increase of 8.4% over the previous year. According to a customer survey, pet ownership costs reached 203 billion yuan (\$29.5 billion) in 2019. The pet industry in China is flourishing. (From Beijing Review 23/1/20)

#### Beijing urban projects

In 2020, Beijing will push forward 300 urban projects involving 252.3 billion yuan (\$35.9 billion) in investment. Thy will consist of 100 infrastructure projects, 100 high-tech

industrial projects and 100 livelihood improvement projects. Under the infrastructure package building will start or continue on: 16 urban rail lines, including subway Line 22, which will extend to the north-eastern suburb of Pinggu, twenty-eight road projects, eleven waterway projects and six waste transportation and treatment projects. The high-tech industrial projects include experimental devices for extreme conditions, an integrated circuit production line and 5G facilities. The 100 livelihood improvement projects involve the completion of 90,000 subsidised houses and the construction of a number of university campuses, hospitals and facilities for the aged. (From Beijing Review 5/3/20)

CGTN, 21 May. Huawei, the Chinese tech giant, has formally announced a \$6.1 million five-year sponsorship deal with Imperial College London. The company will "provide Imperial with world-leading technology, such as 5G and AI Cloud for a new innovation centre," said Victor Zhang, vice-president of Huawei.

Imperial College is also currently working on developing a vaccine for COVID-19, which has involved collaboration with Chinese researchers.

CHENGDU, May 19 (Xinhua) -- The University of Oxford and China's Sichuan University have jointly launched a centre to bolster research cooperation on gastrointestinal cancer. A specialist cancer centre in Chengdu is planned which will focus on cancer therapies and tumour marker development in order to provide better treatment options for patients. The universities will work together in studying the pathogenesis, diagnosis and treatment of gastrointestinal tumours.

**LONDON, May 17 (Xinhua) --** Nigel Adams, Britain's minister of state at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Department for International Development, said it is important for Britain and China to cooperate closely in the battle against COVID-19 pandemic.

Adams made the remarks during a telephone conversation with Chinese Ambassador to Britain Liu Xiaoming on Friday. The two exchanged views on China-Britain relationship and joint response to the COVID-19 pandemic. During the talks, Adams gave an update of the latest situation regarding COVID-19 in Britain. He also thanked China for facilitating Britain's procurement of medical supplies in China, which played a significant role in Britain's fight against the pandemic.

For his part, Liu said that Chinese President Xi Jinping and British Prime Minister Boris Johnson had two telephone conversations in February and March, in which they reached important agreement on promoting China-Britain relationship and enhancing bilateral cooperation on fighting COVID-19 pandemic

#### Sinophile by Flo and Ivor Kenna

'External causes are the conditions of change and internal causes are the basis of change. External causes become operative through internal causes' (Mao Zedong, 'On Contradiction')

After Beijing Review (BR) for January 2<sup>nd</sup> we did not receive the magazine for some time. Then six consecutive issues came all at once (February 13 to March 19<sup>th</sup>)

BR of February 13<sup>th</sup> revealed how novel coronavirus started in China. 'The first alarm was sounded by vigilant medical workers in a hospital in Wuhan who identified a link between four people admitted to hospital with pneumonia at the end of December. All four had worked in the Huanan Seafood Wholesale Market, which sold live poultry, aquatic products and wild animals. It appears that the disease started with an animal in Huanan Market. Nobody has any idea how the offending animal got into the market. It is generally agreed that the Chinese people have shown unremitting courage and devotion and attention to detail in beating back novel coronavirus.

However, what Chairman Mao said above is relevant. After a baby is weaned off mother's milk, he or she spends his life getting iller and iller until death. The basis of change is an ill person, even if he does not realise that he is ill himself. Older people tend to be iller on average than younger people because they have spent more time becoming ill. The condition of change in this case is novel coronavirus. It makes ill people even iller, sometimes resulting in death. The basic problem is to keep people infected by coronavirus away from everybody else.

In the Morning Star newspaper for April 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup>, Diane Abbott referring to coronavirus stated that the death toll in this country is more than three times that of Germany which has a larger population. A possible explanation is that Germany records the internal cause of death, perhaps a heart condition, while the UK records the external cause of death, coronavirus. That's almost all from us on coronavirus.

Later on, in BR of February 13<sup>th</sup> Kerry Brown writes a good article on Britain after Brexit. He makes a good case: in theory, Brexit Britain is in a place in which it can remake its relations with China in a more bespoke, more ambitious manner. However, he also writes that the EU are the US are by far the largest of Britain's current partners.

In pound or euro terms this is undoubtedly the case. However, if one takes into account the fact that the UK's imports from China are priced at a fraction of what they would cost if produced in the UK, the US or the EU, China's relative importance to the UK is vastly increased. Often the Chinese product is of more advanced quality.

On January 26<sup>th</sup>, a nationwide ban on wildlife trading was instituted for the duration of epidemic prevention and control. The article noted that coronavirus' genetic sequence is 96.2% identical to a bat coronavirus. Later on US based author, consultant and co-opted contributor to Beijing Review, Michael Zukkour writes, 'China has literally and

figuratively sneezed and the world is in fear of catching a cold. China is still the largest manufacturing hub in the world.

In an article in BR February 27<sup>th</sup>, the 56<sup>th</sup> Munich Security Conference MSC) was discussed. It was convened on February 14<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> and attracted hordes of senior international decision makers, such as Macron, Wang Yi and Pompeo. The chosen theme of this year's conference was Westlessness (sic) which has three specific aspects: the West is less Western, the world as a whole is less Western and a joint Western strategy is uncertain.

Contradiction exists in everything including the West which appears to be dividing between the US, the UK and the EU, as Chairman Mao might have pointed out had he been at the MSC.

Later on, we learn that job-sharing is helping China deal with the coronavirus. Companies pool human resources to meet labour shortages and layoffs.

An article in BR of March 5<sup>th</sup> is headed, 'The EU is not prepared to sacrifice its relationship with China to align policies with US recommendations'. Of course, the question that is raised and cannot be successfully answered is which other companies can compete with the high quality and low price of Huawei.

An article reproduced from Beijing Youth Daily in BR of March 12<sup>th</sup> will strike a chord with UK bookshops. 'Affected by the coronavirus epidemic, a large number of bookstores are finding it difficult to reopen due to lack of customers.' Beijing Municipal Government is helping them out with 100 million yuan (\$14.3 million)

Beijing Capital International Airport has been designated a special zone for all international flights as well as flights from Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan. All passengers disembarking are requested to undergo health check-ups including temperature screening. Chinese local governments demand people from countries and regions with increased risk of infection abide by local quarantine measures.

Medical workers from all over China rallied round to go to Wuhan to provide assistance. The fatality rate in Italy is nearly 8% h higher than the 2.8% in China. The rallying around was no accident. China is run on the principle that the people rule, the Party makes them conscious. In addition, China has not been slow in helping other countries substantially.

In China there are eight democratic parties which complement the Communist Party. Getting on for 100 million activists making the people conscious.

A former president of SACU, Dr Joseph Needham gets a mention in an article on 'the Needham Question'. Why did China fail to develop as Europe did, i.e. the Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution, despite enjoying cultural and scientific advance at least a century ahead of all others? Well, China is certainly more than making up for lost time now.

An article entitled 'Braced for Headwinds' reveals that the aviation industry grapples with coronavirus fallout all over the world. This includes China whose passenger throughput has plummeted 84.5% from the same period last year.

The China Banking and Insurance Regulatory Commission issued a guideline for insurance agents. It prohibits gatherings and group visits and holding group activities and training to minimise the possibility of Virus transmissions throughout the industry. The difficulty is that insurance is much more saleable face-to-face than on-line.

One recalls that lockdown rules also prohibit gatherings in this country. Political parties and trade unions are not meeting any more. One recalls the old saying, 'If it rains we'll hold the revolution in a hall' .... If it pandemics we'll hold the revolution on-line!

# **The Society for Anglo-Chinese Understanding**







