

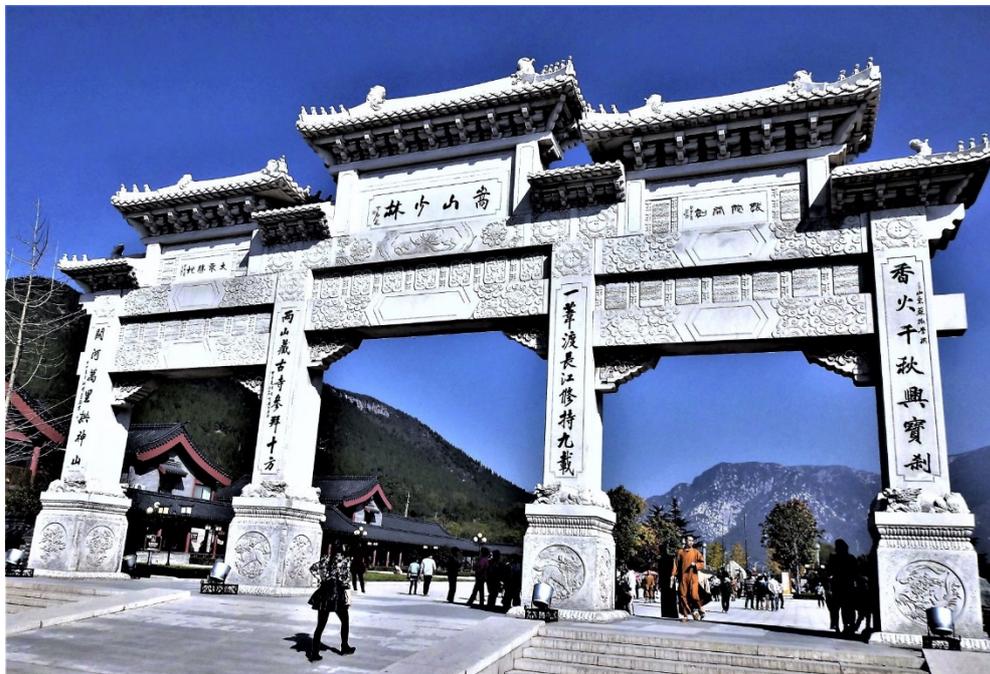
# China Eye

英中友  
解協會

**SACU: The Society which has promoted understanding between the peoples of China and the UK since 1965**

**Autumn 2020**

**Number 67**



## **Contents include:**

**British and European contacts with China 1700-1800**

**The Will of Dr Sun Yatsen**

**An interview with a Wuhan Doctor**

**SACU Zoom discussion; The Opium War**

**The Art of Kingfisher Feather Decorations - Part II**

**'Real Word Ready'**

**Chinese Horoscopes**

**Sino File of Current Events**

**Sinophile**

# CHINA EYE

## Autumn 2020 Issue No 67

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SACU was founded in 1965 to promote understanding and friendship between the peoples of China and Britain and is open to all those interested in Chinese affairs and who are supportive of its aims, regardless of political affiliations.

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## SACU E mail Newsletter

SACU issues a monthly E mail newsletter providing details of events and news about China. Members are invited to send details of happenings to SACU for inclusion in the newsletter. If you wish to receive it, please let Ros Wong have your E mail address. It will be sent out bcc (blind copies). This means that nobody else can see your E mail address and it will only be used for SACU business. It will not be passed to anyone else without your permission and you can unsubscribe at any time. Contact Ros Wong at [membership@sacu.org.uk](mailto:membership@sacu.org.uk)

**The Winter issue (Number 68) of China Eye will be available in early December 2020. Please send news or articles for inclusion before 20 November 2020 to Walter Fung, 11 Collyhurst Avenue, Walkden, Worsley, Manchester M28 3DJ. Tel 0161 799 6944, E mail; [walter.fung888@btinternet.com](mailto:walter.fung888@btinternet.com)**

**Front cover:** Shaolin Temple Gateway (WF)

**Back cover:** 'Forest of Pagodas' at the Shaolin Temple (WF)

**All photographs are by the authors except where stated.**

## Welcome

Viruses are creeping up on us. This is a very trying time for Anglo-Chinese relations. The political virus has proved very effective amongst some Western nations. Time will heal.

Richard Horton, the editor of The Lancet, a British peer reviewed international medical journal, reports that five articles published in the journal in the *last week of January 2020* detailed the nature of the coronavirus; it is deadly, no known cure, people-to-people contact infectious, the need for isolation and personal protection equipment. All this information was published and known to the world by the end of January. His interview is on Youtube.

The Times of 29<sup>th</sup> January 2020, complemented Chinese scientists in releasing the genetic sequence of the coronavirus on 13<sup>th</sup> January. No mean task - it took four months to identify the genetics of the SARS virus. In the Sunday Times magazine of June 7<sup>th</sup> 2020 was an interview by Bryan Appleyard with Richard Horton, in which he gave the names of three Chinese scientists who were happy to help. He does not know why they were not consulted. Eventually data was accepted from Italy but much later, during March. This view begs the question, could the pandemic have been better managed and lives saved by seeking early Chinese advice? The Chinese lockdown of 65 days seemed to have substantially halted the spread of the virus.

It is worrying how some senior UK Tories and some of the media, without any evidence, were very quick to make judgement. 'We need to rethink the way we do business with China.' Sinophobia appears to have become more widespread. Comments on social media are scathing, many believing every word of some senior US politicians, again without any evidence. Yet initially, the World Health Organisation and politicians in the US, UK and France praised China. A report in China Daily Global Weekly 21-27/2/20). states that 'Xi Jinping spoke recently to Boris Johnson and Emmanuel Macron of France. Johnson spoke highly of the measures taken by China to prevent and control the disease, share information with the international community in a timely manner and make efforts to stop the global spread of the disease'. Macron said virtually the same, praising China's effective measures and its openness and transparency.

The effect on Chinese restaurants worldwide is devastating. Even well before lockdown, people were staying away from Chinese businesses believing that you were more likely to catch the virus from Chinese people. But even after restrictions are lifted, recovery will take a long time. At the moment, confidence in anything Chinese seems to have been dented. But I don't think this will be long lasting, especially for international trade. Maybe five to ten years from now, Western businesses seeking new markets will no doubt look at up to 600 million middle class Chinese as potential customers, this will apply especially to luxury goods.

## A new 'Cold War'

US hostility against China is very worrying, at least the 'containment policy' is now in the open and apparent to the whole world. Kishore Mahbubani, the Singapore diplomat and academic presents his views in interviews available on Youtube, which I can recommend. He has also written a couple of books on the current superpower situation. Historical analysts believe the Thucydides Trap approaches. This when a dominant superpower and a rising superpower clash, usually violently. As examples they quote: Athens and Sparta, Rome and Carthage, Britain and Germany etc. Other factors add to the current situation: fear of the 'Yellow Peril' and a perceived challenge to liberal democratic values of the Western world. There are fundamental differences which are likely to always separate nations e.g.: East (family and collective values) and West (value of the individual), Western capitalism versus Eastern socialism and communism.

## SACU activities

The coronavirus has changed the way of life of us all. People have been forced to work from home but this has its advantages, no commuting saving time and money. SACU has also had to change ways of doing things, which have brought some benefits. We have held two Zoom China Chat sessions, which have both been very well attended. The first 'pilot' Zoom was held on 25<sup>th</sup> June. The subject was the Opium War and was introduced by Jenny Clegg. Two reports on the event appear on pages 16 – 20.

A second Zoom China Chat was held on August 23<sup>rd</sup>, when Andrew Hicks and Barnaby Powell led a discussion on the current Hong Kong situation. Members who have not been able to attend actual meetings, due to distance or unable to leave home, have been able to join us. Notably, members in China have been able to participate – very difficult in 'real' life. In addition, the cost of hiring venues, which contributes to limiting activities does not arise. Further information on events is always available on [www.sacu.org.uk](http://www.sacu.org.uk)

By the time members receive and read this issue of China Eye, a very important SACU Zoom event will have taken place on September 1<sup>st</sup>, 'entitled, 'Finding our way forward in difficult times'. It will involve our new President Michael Wood and three other distinguished speakers, Ruby Wong, Graham Perry and Kerry Brown.

**Some Council news:** Linxi Li was appointed SACU Archivist at the last SACU Council meeting. Linxi has already carried out a substantial amount of work.

**SACU's 2020 AGM**, postponed from July will be held via zoom on 10<sup>th</sup> October this year. There will be workshops in which members can participate Please see page 4 and watch out for details in the SACU E mail Newsletters.

**Walter Fung**

## Can you contribute to SACU'S Mission?

**To promote friendship and mutual understanding between the peoples of Britain and China.**

**To provide facts and analysis about China – not uncritically but always from a firm basis of friendship.**

**To help the British people understand the meaning of China – past and present.**

SACU Council strives to achieve these aims but needs support of individual members. All SACU Council members are volunteers, nobody is paid. If you can help, please contact **Corinne Attwood, SACU company secretary** on 01273 205899 or email: [secretary@sacu.org.uk](mailto:secretary@sacu.org.uk) In particular we need members who can help arrange events and especially help establish local branches outside of London.

### New Membership rates from 1 October 2019:

Individual	£23
Retired/Unwaged	£18
Students (PDF only)	£10
Institutions and Libraries	£27
Overseas Airmail	£35
Overseas (PDF only)	£13

**Please make cheques payable to 'SACU', but to reduce the administration burden, please consider paying by standing order, or preferably use Paypal via our website: [www.sacu.org.uk](http://www.sacu.org.uk) Send applications and renewals to SACU Membership Secretary, Ros Wong, 27 Portland Close, Bedford MK41 9NE. Mobile: 07906 956426, e mail: [membership@sacu.org.uk](mailto:membership@sacu.org.uk) Please be sure to include, full name, address, post code, telephone number and e mail address. Your e mail address will be used only for SACU purposes.**

It will not be passed to anyone without your consent. In circulars such as the SACU E mail newsletter your e mail details will be 'blind' and not visible to others.

**The SACU members' E mail newsletter** is issued about once every month and provides news and details of events involving China or Chinese culture. For your copy, please contact **Ros Wong** at [membership@sacu.org.uk](mailto:membership@sacu.org.uk) Please remember, you can unsubscribe at any time.

**Michael Sheringham and Fang Wang** now compile the SACU E mail Newsletter. It is distributed by Ros Wong to whom information and enquiries should be directed.

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## Chinese Brush Painters' Society (Yorkshire)

This society provides a focus for all who are interested in Chinese Brush Painting. The society arranges workshops with Chinese and other experienced tutors and provides information and assistance to members on all aspects of the subject. The group produce a regular monthly newsletter packed with information. Meetings are however suspended during the coronavirus pandemic. **Further information from the secretary, Anne Allan. Tel 01422 368482 or e-mail [mail@anneallan.com](mailto:mail@anneallan.com) Website: [www.cbpsyorks.co.uk](http://www.cbpsyorks.co.uk)**

## SACU: Online events

SACU, similar to other organisation, has suspended 'live' events because of Covid-19. 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.

Website: [www.sacu.org.uk](http://www.sacu.org.uk)

Facebook: [facebook.com/sacu.uk](https://facebook.com/sacu.uk)

Twitter: [twitter.com@sacuuk](https://twitter.com@sacuuk)

YouTube: 1965 SACU

WeChat: ID: SACU1965

**The SACU AGM will be held online on October 10<sup>th</sup> at 11.30 am until 1.30pm. It will be followed by afternoon workshops for members. You need not travel to London, so could members please consider attending this year by Zoom to learn more about SACU and its activities in the workshops, which will be organised around our three working groups: Public Education (UK), Chinese Heritage and China Connections, Membership support and development.**

**Also please consider standing to be a member of SACU Council. The more numbers actively involved, the more we can achieve as a society. Invitations will be sent out nearer the time. They and further information will be in the SACU E mail newsletter.**

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

- [chinaexchange.uk](http://chinaexchange.uk) includes past events such as interviews with Xue Xinran, and Rana Mitter.
- [www.chinaminutes.com](http://www.chinaminutes.com) "China Minutes sets out to make sense of China and Chinese culture"
- <https://chinachannel.org/> The Los Angeles Review of Books with plenty of reviews of books both from and about China
- Laszlo Montgomery's history podcast series <https://www.teacup.media>
- <https://www.chinasage.info> "Your guide to all things Chinese" the website of SACU Vice President Rob Stallard.
- Kim Dramer's mini videos on Chinese culture and literature. Access via Youtube. Highly recommended.

**Ros Wong**

## British and European contacts with China 1700-1800 by Rob Stallard

*Rob Stallard is a Vice President of SACU and is a regular contributor to SACU's China Eye magazine.*

An article in China Eye (No. 59) covered the first few contacts between the U.K. and China leading up to 1700. Many people still regard the first important contact was with the Opium Wars (1842-60) so it is interesting to continue to delve into the background of the events that led up to it. The 18th century covered by this article saw a great change in attitudes to China in Britain while direct contact was still very limited.

To set the scene at around 1700 there were two strands of contact: mercantile and intellectual. British traders were keen to dislodge the Portuguese and Spanish from their very lucrative monopoly of trade with China. The 'conquest' of India was in the hands of the mighty English East India Company (EIC) became Britain's main focus. Once India became the dominant cash cow bringing fortunes to many concerned with the trade, thoughts must naturally have turned to China. India had an ancient civilization that had fallen into decline; surely India's neighbour, China, might just as easily fall into Britain's lap?

However, in the 18th century the general view of writers and intellectuals in Europe, including the UK, was one of admiration of China. It was considered to be an ancient and remarkable civilization, the epitome of wise government and makers of goods of the greatest quality and beauty.

### Trading with China

The traders who sailed the seas were there to make a profit. In 1557 Portugal had secured control of Macau and so a stranglehold of the Guangzhou (Canton) trade. However, in 1684 the English East India Company did manage to establish their first factory (warehouse) at Guangzhou. One event poisoned Chinese-European relations for a long time. This was the behaviour of the Dutch at Jakarta (then known as Batavia), Java where a large overseas Chinese community had rapidly built up. In 1740 they revolted over poor pay and conditions and the whole Chinese community of 10,000 were brutally slaughtered. Trust in all European traders by the Chinese was greatly damaged.

In 1743 the British had an encounter which further soured relations. Commodore George Anson sailed the battle-damaged HMS Centurion (sixty guns) to Guangzhou to have his ship repaired towing a captured Spanish galleon laden with silver. As he was not trading, he did not expect to pay harbour dues and wanted to meet the Viceroy. He was refused, so like Captain Weddell in 1637 he just sailed up the Pearl river to Guangzhou anyway without permission and with a very reluctant Chinese pilot held at gunpoint. At the city all Chinese help was refused and he ran short of food; he fired a large cannon twice a day to remind the Chinese of his ship's power. It was only when he helped the Chinese put out a large fire in the city that he was granted an interview with the provincial Viceroy and allowed to leave with provisions. On his return, his bitter report accused the Chinese of all forms of deceit and innate dishonesty. He thought that the use of Pidgin English gave the case for Chinese stupidity (pidgin was now in use rather than Chinese which Anson considered obtuse and impractical). He thought the Chinese were just imitators lacking creativity.

In 1756 Frederick Pigou, a director of the East India Company (EIC), suggested that Shanghai would be a suitable site for development. These plans were to come into fruition in the next

century. In the following year, 1757, Captain James Flint sent a petition to the Chinese Emperor complaining of being cheated of due payment by Chinese merchants as well as requesting the opening of trade at Ningbo, Zhejiang. He failed and the result was further restriction on trade and Flint's imprisonment. In the UK this became known as the notorious 'Flint Affair'.



***The Capture of the 'Nuestra Señora de Cavadonga' by the 'Centurion', 20 June 1743.***

Flint's efforts led to the foundation of the Canton system in China to try to prevent further effrontery. The Guangzhou (Canton) system established in the mid 18th century was hugely corrupt. It was administered by a guild of 'hongs' who could demand whatever tariffs they wished on exported goods. It was so lucrative that the three-year appointment as a hong had to be bought at a very high price. The first two year's income went to pay the bribes to get the position, only the last year gave any profit to the hong. Above the hongs was the overall administrator the 'Hoppon' who in the early days had to be a Manchu. He was immensely powerful and subservient only to the Governor of Guangzhou and Viceroy of Guang (Guangxi and Guangdong were then combined as one province).

Undeterred other European traders sought to set up trading posts elsewhere: Ningbo and Xiamen but the Qing government decreed all trade must be through Guangzhou, with very limited Spanish trade at Xiamen. The emperor considered it expedient to move the trade as far away from the capital as possible as he believed that foreign contacts, quite rightly, often led to conflicts and rebellions. In any case the traders at Guangzhou were keen to keep the monopoly and so fix prices sky high. Foreign ships were only allowed into harbour during the trading season, at other times they had to stay at Macau. Foreign hostility over these restrictions to trade grew and grew.

Then followed the Lady Hughes incident of 1784 where the accidental death of two Chinese fishermen further heightened diplomatic tensions. The Chinese demanded the British seaman who fired the cannon that killed the fishermen to be handed over. The British captain refused, so then the Chinese halted all European trade. After some delay the seaman was very reluctantly handed-over only to be summarily executed by the Chinese.

During the century Britain overtook Portugal, France and all others to become the major trading nation at Guangzhou, fuelled by its expansion to India, the discovery of Australia by Captain Cook in the 1770 and other new territories in the Pacific. Britain formed a stranglehold on Chinese trade. However, the East India Company was facing ruin over the tea trade because China demanded payment in silver and in the 1780s the newly independent United States was refusing EIC imports. This was a big deal, in 1759 the EIC bought 15% of all Chinese tea. It was then that the opium trade began in 1760 with only small amounts but the volume soon built up in the 1780s. Initially it was Chinese opium growers who were

disadvantaged by the imports of pure, cheap opium, and so the government was pressured to protect domestic production.

The newly formed United States of America (1777) was also keen to set up trade with China in the 1780s. In 1784 the 'Empress of China' was their first vessel to dock at Canton. Initially the trade was in sea otter furs and sandalwood which became very popular in China. The loss of the American colonies forced many British sea traders to look elsewhere for their markets. They became increasingly desperate to break into the China which remained the most prosperous and most populous nation on Earth. As far as most of these European and Americans traders were concerned China was a land of lofty isolation and aloofness brimming with self-serving officials full of conceit.

### The end of the Jesuit mission

Going back again to the start of the 18th century. The Jesuits had then high hopes in China during Emperor Kangxi's long reign (1661-1722). They took part in educating the Emperor's children in the western mathematics of Euclid as well as Christianity. However, the Papal mission of 1705 split the Jesuit community, as well as other missions and alienated the Emperor. Then, in 1707, the Pope undermined the whole mission by deeming that ancestral worship was incompatible with Christian doctrine. The Emperor responded by banning Christianity, expelling the missions and the only churches allowed to remain were at Guangzhou and Macau. Kangxi's son and grandson condoned the persecution of Christians. The few remaining Jesuits were restricted to secular work - designing buildings (most notably the Old Summer Palace) and astronomy. In 1773 the Jesuits were disbanded by the Pope and the remaining Chinese missionaries returned home or lived on in secret. So, in the 18th century the direct link from the Chinese Imperial court to Europe was lost and mutual misunderstandings grew.

### European thinkers

Western intellectuals and writers were not interested in the woes of a few sea captains trying to make a fast buck in China, they wanted to learn about Chinese culture. The Jesuit mission had written extensively about China and the Vatican library held a great deal of information for scholars to study. From these the French Jesuit Jean du Halde produced his encyclopaedic 'History of China' in 1735 which became the standard text (translated into English in 1741).

The favourable Jesuit view of a land of wise rulers surrounded by educated scholars persisted in the European mind into the start of the 18th century, but some influential writers began to shift their thinking. Daniel Defoe in 1719 published 'The Farther Adventures of Robinson Crusoe' with rather negative attitudes about China, he considered them backward in religion, architecture and that the army, boats, scholars and farmers were not up to western standards. Defoe wrote that the Chinese have 'Contempt of all the world but themselves'.

Only a few Chinese men came to Europe and these were all Catholic converts. Jonathan Spence has written a short book 'A Question of Hu' all about the appalling pressures of such a life. John Hu came to Europe in 1722 and was exploited by a zealous French priest to translate Chinese texts, Hu ended up abandoned, living in squalor in a mental asylum, so it is not a happy tale. One Chinese national who had a better time was Arcadio Huang who rejected his faith once in France (1704/5) and went on to influence the great writer and philosopher Montesquieu. He married a Parisian and was fêted by all the fashionable circles. Unfortunately, his wife and daughter died in 1713 and he followed them shortly

after in 1715. Huang's collaboration with Montesquieu helped produce 'The Spirit of the Laws' (1748) with a wide ranging look at types of government including examples from Chinese history. It was a landmark in political theory that influenced the writing of the American Constitution

. A continental philosopher and mathematician of great influence in the whole of Europe was Gottfried Leibniz. He published a pamphlet 'News from China' in 1699 full of praise. He considered Emperor Kangxi to be a great and learned ruler. He thought China surpassed Europe in many ways. Leibniz discovered binary arithmetic and was encouraged in this by studying the Yi Jing (I Ching) believing that ancient Chinese had discovered the binary system. As all modern computers are based on binary we can see how Chinese knowledge has contributing to technological advancement. Leibniz was keen to open trade and debate with China through Russia (he corresponded with Peter the Great). All this Chinese knowledge stimulated Matteo Ripa to set up the first ever institute of Chinese Studies at Naples in 1732. There was an invitation for Chinese scholars to come to Europe but this was not carried out. History of relations might well have turned out somewhat differently if scholars had settled in Europe. However Leibniz in his later years (1716) did wonder if his enthusiasm had been too great and the Chinese system may be based slavish servitude rather than honour.

In 1741 the ancient Chinese play 'The Orphan of Zhao' was translated and put on stage and proved very popular across Europe. The French writer and philosopher Voltaire (1694-1778) produced



his own version of the play. In it the Chinese are shown to have superior moral values compared to their Mongol overlords. Voltaire eulogized: 'The Chinese for four thousand years when we were unable to read, knew everything essentially useful of which we boast at the present day'. Voltaire started with broad positive appreciation of China but later

thought it had not developed to its full potential, for example, improvements to its many inventions. He thought it was held back by respect of the past, and its complex language. Later on though, in 1755, Voltaire changed his mind and thought Chinese science was empirical rather than based on sound theory. In France a major proponent of Chinese ideas was François [Quesnay whose book 'Le Despotisme de la Chine' \(1767\)](#) described his understanding of the Imperial system and the use of promotion by merit and universal education. It is Quesnay's attitude that may have brought the phrase 'laissez faire' into widespread usage - reflecting the laid-back attitude of many officials in China. His description of Chinese intensive agriculture from Feng Shui and Daoist thought influenced French farmers. In general, Chinese civilization and culture had wide application in Europe.

The European view was shared by the U.K. at the start of the century. China was seen as the top nation with benign and well educated leadership. This can be seen in Oliver Goldsmith's (1728-74) work. In 1760-61 he published his 'Citizen of the World' better known as 'The Chinese Letters' which proved extremely popular. In these letters he pokes fun at English fashion, class and behaviour from the perspective of a fictional Chinese gentleman. The fact that he chose Chinese as the nationality of a person who was erudite, cultured and perceptive speaks volumes about the general attitude to China at the time.

However, the view about China changed in the U.K. before the rest of Europe probably from the experiences of traders and diplomats like Anson and Flint. Horace Walpole (1717-1797) influential son of the longest serving Prime Minister Robert Walpole wrote a satire on the taste for everything Chinese: 'Mr Li: A Chinese Fairy Tale' in 1785. It marked the turn away from idolizing China. Britain now chose Classical Rome and Greece as the civilization to be emulated rather than China.

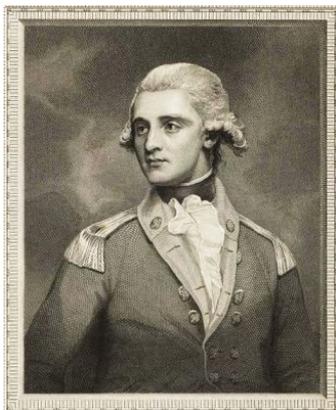
**Diplomatic Missions**

In total there were only six European embassies to China in the period 1656-1753. Two were Dutch, two Russian and two Portuguese; only one of the Russian missions got anywhere near the Imperial court. As well as the sea route to southern China there was the overland, northern route through Mongolia into Russia and then to Europe.

Joining the Russian mission of 1714 was Scotsman John Bell. He had graduated as a doctor at Edinburgh University and then went to seek his fortune in Russia. He published his memoirs in 1763 in which he describes the trip in a matter of fact manner, in contrast to the religious/philosophic viewpoint of the Jesuits. He crossed the Great Wall and found it a very impressive construction. They were granted an audience with Emperor Kangxi for which they were forced to kowtow despite protests. Bell considered the Emperor sprightly for his age of sixty. He was impressed by the acrobats and jugglers he saw. Unlike Marco Polo he noticed how the women used foot-binding. Overall, he was positive about China - he considered the people generally trustworthy but with a few idle liars. The Russian mission concluded that while they could quite easily conquer the country, they could see no point in disturbing the peace and good governance.

In 1727 Russia managed to sign a new treaty with China - the Treaty of Kiakhta - which was the main frontier post for the tea trade with Russia. Kiakhta is situated north of Ulan Bator on the Mongolian border. Russia had already signed a deal (written in Latin) - the Treaty of Nerchinsk in 1689. The success of the Russians in signing treaties with China must have rankled with the other Europeans keen to do the same.

Later on a British mission to China led by Lt. Col. Charles Cathcart of the EIC set off in 1787. He unfortunately died in transit off Sumatra and the mission was aborted. This was soon followed by the massive Earl of MacCartney mission in 1793/4.



**Chinoiserie**

The thoughts of merchants, intellectuals and diplomats had little impact on ordinary people. In the UK the perspective, at the start of the

18th century, was China as an exotic almost mystical land far away. What they could see with their own eyes was the exquisite workmanship and taste of Chinese manufactures - particularly silk, ivory and lacquer-work. They were stunned by the light, thin porcelain. No heavy, dull European earthenware came close by comparison.

So in the first half of the 18th century China supplied the must-have goods unmatched in Europe. The fashion for anything Chinese was born. The genuine Chinese goods were far too

expensive for the masses so Europeans set about making cheap imitations. 'Chinoiserie' was the French term used for these wares that adapted Chinese style to European tastes. It is these rather strange mixtures of European and Chinese styles that make up the bulk of Chinoiserie. Initial designs were crude caricatures of the genuine articles, but over a hundred years the designs became much more like the real thing.



It was the rapid addiction to the new mania for tea drinking that gave Chinese style great impetus. What could be more appropriate than to drink Chinese tea in Chinese style teacups? Once people took to teacups then why not expand the style to the whole room in which to drink the exotic and very expensive new beverage? In the early days of tea drinking remnants of the formal tea drinking ceremony were followed, it was a rather formal affair. Among fashionable circles the competition to show off the finest and latest porcelain tea services became intense. Porcelain began to be made at Sèvres in 1756 and Royal Worcester in 1751. European manufacturers began to be able to achieve the same fine quality as Chinese goods. Some commentators believe the European advantage was more efficient manufacturing and delivery of goods than in far away China. The transition to home-made goods began to see acceleration now that the Industrial Revolution had begun in the UK. It was only the addiction to tea that made continued trade with China essential.

**Qing ascendancy**

The 18th century in China is regarded as a spell of good government and continued overall improvement. The first four Qing Emperors Shunzhi, Kangxi, Yongzheng and Qianlong ruled long and skilfully, their reigns covered 150 years of relative prosperity for all in China. The Manchu people introduced some wise reforms and accepted Confucian orthodoxy in government. The defeat of Mongol leader Galdan in 1696 at the battle of Urga pacified the northern border, and enabled the subsequent conquest of Xinjiang in 1759. The annexation of Tibet helped pacify the Mongols because they had embraced Tibetan Buddhism. Use of European designed artillery proved crucial to the military superiority of Qing forces. At around 1750 China remained the largest, strongest, wealthiest and most populous nation on Earth.

Most historians consider the decline of the Qing to begin after the death of Qianlong in 1795. He was followed by a series of short-lived and ineffective emperors who failed to modernize and adapt to the growing threat of the west.

**Contending perceptions**

All that the Chinese Imperial court could see in its dealings with Europeans (and Americans) were squabbling adventurers who behaved little different to the pirates which continued to harass shipping in the South China Sea. The different European 'tribes' were hard to distinguish and their different versions of Christianity

baffling. China had often had issues with ships from far away but they had always been just a short term nuisance as the boats soon had to go back to their home shores. What China failed to notice was that the British now had a huge base on their western border - India. An army could be raised in India; it did not need an Armada to come all the way from Europe. The sheer number of ships that could easily reach China made previous calculation of threat out of date.



From the British perspective they believed they had built a benign administrative system in India. The administrators made fortunes in India every bit as immense as the Canton hongers. To treat these British lords ('Nabobs') as pirates was a severe Chinese miscalculation. The shift from just trading in India to ruling the country began in about 1740.

The famous Lord Clive of India arrived there in 1744 and began building a significant army recruited from among the Indian kingdoms. Lord Clive's experiences led him to say in 1763 that it would be easy for Britain to conquer China. He considered China to be in little better condition than the Indian princely states that had been so easily subjugated. All this had been done under the aegis of a private company, the English East India Company. A company with a large army seems a strange idea even today, this and other factors required structural changes that were to adversely affect China.

#### **The Macartney Mission of 1794**

By the end of the 18th century the roots of conflict in the following century were clearly set out. Europeans (especially Britain) and China viewed each other as inferior barbarians. In 1793-4 the great English East India Company mission of Lord Macartney set out to negotiate with the aging Emperor Qianlong. Macartney came well prepared, taking with him every book he could find about China; by contrast it seems China had little idea about even where Britain was located. Whole large books have been published about this momentous clash of civilizations and so the end date for this piece must be the eve of that momentous mission.



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### **Gottfried Leibniz**

[https://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Gottfried\\_Wilhelm\\_Leibniz.jpg](https://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Gottfried_Wilhelm_Leibniz.jpg)

### **Charles Catchcart**

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### **Decorated Plate**

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bord\\_in\\_chinoiseriestijl,\\_Petrus\\_Regout\\_%26\\_Co\\_\(2\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bord_in_chinoiseriestijl,_Petrus_Regout_%26_Co_(2).jpg)

### **Kew Pagoda**

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Pagoda,\\_Kew\\_Gardens.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Pagoda,_Kew_Gardens.jpg)

### **Macartney Mission**

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# THE ART OF KINGFISHER FEATHER DECORATION. PART II – JEWELLERY & WORKS OF ART

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). In Part I I focussed on the use of kingfisher feather for costume and dress accessories, particularly from the second half of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911). We will now consider how this decorative art form was used not only in creating exquisite jewellery but how this technique extended to large decorative objects for the domestic and export markets in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

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, Beverley Jackson. 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.

It is important to repeat that the use of animal products, such as ivory, tortoise shell, coral and feathers, 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 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.

The focus of this article will be the Qing Dynasty where the art form was termed *'tian-tsui'* which literally translates as *'dotting with kingfisher'*. We know that early in the dynasty the Imperial Court were employing artisans in specific Imperial Workshops 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.

Production techniques were considered in Part I as was the evolution of this art form since the earliest records of the Han Dynasty (206BCE-220CE) indicated that the feather had decorated wall hangings. The first mention use of kingfisher feather as a decorative feature on



court costume dates to Taizu (960-976), the first emperor of the Song Dynasty (960-1279).

It would appear that the production of purely decorative objects, ranging from jewellery to wall and freestanding pieces, did not develop until the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) but due to the perishable nature of this natural product we have very few surviving examples that pre-date the Qing Dynasty. I will therefore concentrate on the 18<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> Century where at court, and in high society, kingfisher embellished objects reached their peak in terms of quality, variety, and volume of production. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century the art form received a boost due the opening of trade with Western Colonial Powers which resulted in a sizeable export market to satisfy ever-increasing demand.

## Jewellery

In Part I there was consideration of items defined as a 'dress accessory'. Whilst these items were highly decorative, they also performed a practical function in terms of completing a formal or informal costume.

In contrast, jewellery was worn primarily for its visual impact and in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century items that incorporated kingfisher feather dominated both demand and, therefore, supply.

Jewellery in Chinese culture can be traced back to Neolithic times (4000-3000BCE) in the Yellow River Valley, the 'Cradle of the Chinese Civilisation'. Since that time, it had an important role in China's social history but rather than being a visual statement of wealth an item often viewed as a personal expression of the owner's sophistication.

The Emperor acquired jewellery from 2 distinct sources. Firstly, a significant volume of jewellery arrived at court as part of the process of 'Tribute' from Vassal or Tributary countries that surrounded the Chinese Empire. Whilst these countries maintained an independent administration under a designated ruler, total loyalty was pledged to the Chinese Emperor. Tribute of rare natural resources, luxury good and works of art were gifted to China on a regular basis (normally on a 3-yearly cycle) where Ambassadors were received at the court The system operated successfully for centuries and not only assisted in the protection of China's borders but also created a vast economic bloc in East and SE Asia.



As stated previously kingfisher feather supplies came from Cambodia, and other SE Asian counties, together

with semi-precious minerals, jade, and pearls for use in the Imperial and Commercial workshops.

All items of jewellery gifted to the Emperor were added to the Imperial Household Inventory before being stored. Each item had a



yellow silk tag attached giving key source information of source. The same process was followed for contemporary items created by the Imperial Workshops. This has resulted in items remaining in the Imperial collection, predominately residing in The Palace Museum, Forbidden City, Beijing, carrying a clear provenance so vital for research purposes.

The Emperor, as patron to a wide range of Imperial Workshops, each specialising in either an art form and/or a material or technique, received all commissioned pieces of jewellery. In the Qing Dynasty Imperial Art reached a pinnacle in terms of diversity, quality, and quantity of production under the patronage of the Qianlong Emperor (1735-1796). There were over 40 imperial workshops and jewellery was produced in a variety of workshops that focused on jade carving, metal working, enamelling and the use of kingfisher feather. Generally, all contemporary items were destined for the Imperial Household Collection and used as required. A small percentage, however, became 'tribute' to a Vassal State or were gift by the Emperor to family members, courtiers, or officials in recognition of services to the court or as part of the Lunar New Year celebrations.

Whilst the nobility was predominantly Manchu it was natural that Han Women also loved their jewellery and were strongly

influenced by fashion trends that emanated from the court. There were, however, clear ethnic and cultural bias influencing the form of certain objects.

An item of jewellery that was uniquely Manchu were the Nail Protectors worn by the women. In previous Han Chinese Dynasties men, scholars, and officials, who aspired to being members of the 'literati' had grown their fingernails as long as possible to demonstrate they had no need to perform manual work. Unlike the women they felt no need to protect these nails. In the Han Chinese culture an indication that a young girl was of 'high birth' was the fact that she had undergone the foot-binding process and therefore wore appropriately shaped shoes (this will be covered in a later article). In contrast, Manchu ladies never followed this custom but grew the nails on their 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> fingers as long as possible.

The nails were protected by a highly decorative pair of protectors. These objects were created with a variety of metals ranging from gold to base metal, normally in a lattice style pattern. The structure was then decorated predominately with enamelling and kingfisher feather with pearls and semi-precious stones applied.

The Dowager Empress Cixi had a spectacular collection of nail protectors and portraits of her in informal costume always included these items. Cixi possessed a vast collection of jewellery and most items incorporated some degree of kingfisher feather decoration. The bulk of her collection was stored in a purpose-built room in her personal quarters at The New Summer Palace where she resided from 1891 until her death in 1908. Reputedly there were 600 yellow silk lined trays containing her favourite items.

Manchu noblewomen, also wore a most distinctive headdress called a *liang patou*, as illustrated in the Cixi image, and this was described in Part I. The hat would be decorated by a varying number of items that featured kingfisher feather as the dominant embellishment. These items would normally be bought as a matching set as illustrated below.



Manchu and Han women would normally wear earrings. In the Qing Dynasty each ear would have been pierced three times. The practise dates back until at least the Song Dynasty (960-1279) but then only a single pair would have been worn. It was the Manchu that introduced the custom of wearing 3 pairs. Court Costume regulations specified the format for formal occasions but informally there were a vast range of designs and materials. The two basic structures were the earrings with a drop design known as *ehr-chui* and a version with no attachment (*erh-huan*). Finally, a lady might wear additional kingfisher embellished jewellery in the

form of hair attachments or brooches for informal robes.



**Decorative Works of Art**



The final section will look at items that were not worn but were created purely as a standalone decorative piece. These items targeted not only the domestic consumer but, in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century, they were offered to an ever-growing export market.

Fans were a popular accessory, given the summer climate, and had a long cultural history. *Hangzhou* was recognised as the centre of

this craft. Whilst men and women used fans it was the the ladies that displayed the most striking designs.

**Fans had three categories:**

- Ceremonial fans (*t'uan-shan*): these were used by courtiers attending imperial processions or ceremonies. They were created with peacock feather plumes or pheasant tail feathers.
- Hand-screen fans (*pien mein*): these were of a solid flat construction attached to a handle. Normally they would be of a circular or oval shape. The fan would be covered with feathers, painted paper or embroidered silk stretched over the frame. Folding Fans (*chenshan*): the fan was constructed of rigid segments attached to a base by a rivet. The most common forms were of paper, carved ivory, goose feather, sandalwood, tortoiseshell with feather.
- Folding Fans (*chenshan*): the fan was constructed of rigid segments attached to a base by a rivet. The most common forms were of paper, carved ivory, goose feather, sandalwood, tortoiseshell with kingfisher feather decoration.



Finally, screens of varying sizes, decorated with kingfisher feather, were a popular 'household' item which enhanced imperial palaces as well as homes of the wealthy.

Table screens were used to divert drafts. This decorative form is seen in the illustration of the carved wood screen, from the Qing Dynasty, displaying a naturalistic scene on black lacquer.

Room-dividing screens were the other end of the size spectrum and were constructed as individually decorative panels that were hinged together.



These large screens ranged from a 3 or 4 section form, that acted as a backdrop for a throne or several seats for important guests, to a full room-divider. Screen decoration varied greatly but was deployed to reflect the affluence of the owner and his assumed intellectual superiority.

Qing Dynasty screens often incorporated kingfisher feather applied to the wooden carved design. One of the most spectacular examples is now in The Field Museum, Chicago, and dates to the late 18<sup>th</sup> or early 19<sup>th</sup> century. It was probably made in Suzhou or Yangzhou.



The screen is known as ‘Flower Calendar Screen’ and each of the 12 sections has a design of the flower that is representative of a specific month of the lunar calendar. The screen measures 8.5 feet long and 3.5 feet high, so far from the largest surviving examples.

There are 3 sections on each panel:

- Upper: selection of Buddhist and Daoist 12 Precious Objects
- Middle: the flower of plant for each month
- Lower: range of vases

These screens became particularly popular with Western Royal Families and many examples exist in royal collections.

### Conclusion

As I have shown there are a vast range of decorative items dating, particularly from the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, that utilised kingfisher feather embellishment.

Examples regularly appear at auction or are offered by specialist dealers, but a potential buyer must be cautious as there are many fakes in circulation. Some are easy to identify because the blue colouring is enamel, but others will appear to have natural feather and unusually the piece is in perfect condition. As with all items, provenance and source are vital clues as to authenticity.

Judgement should be based on the quality of the workmanship, how intact the feather appears, and the price. There are no bargains when it comes to quality items.

Most original pieces being offered today will have clear evidence of loss of the delicate feather. Illustrated below is a brooch that shows typical deterioration due to the ageing process. Caveat emptor!



In my next article I plan to discuss the art and variety associated with items such as purses that were worn on a belt around the waist as robes had no pockets.

## The Will of Dr Sun Yatsen



Sun Yatsen (1866-1925) was born at Cuihong, Zhongshan county, just north of Macao, in Guangdong province. From an early age he was conscious of the poor quality of life in China and the need for change. He went to live with his brother in Hawaii. He converted to Christianity and studied medicine. Dr Sun wanted to help his country, but soon realised that a revolution was the only way to improve China's position in the world. He visited many overseas Chinese communities lecturing, organising and raising money for a rebellion in China to depose the Manchu emperors. It is said he never spent more than six months in any one place over a period of 30 years. For security, Sun Yatsen took different names at various times. He is also widely known as Sun Zhongshan and he used the name Sun Wen on his will.

Dr Sun initiated ten unsuccessful uprisings, but the eleventh succeeded even though it took place before the planned time. This became known as the Xinhai Revolution in 1911 and he became the first President of China at Nanjing on 1<sup>st</sup> January 1912. However, he was not able to hold on to the position for more than a few weeks. For national unity, he stood down in favour of Yuan Shikai, who was the leader of the army under the Manchu emperors. Yuan tried to start a new dynasty of emperors, but had little support. A disappointed man, he died shortly after and China descended into the Warlord Period as individual military chiefs took hold of various parts of China for their own personal gain.

Sun Yatsen continued to try to unify the country over the next 13 years. He had to contend with a wide variety of adversities, including fellow revolutionaries and several powerful warlords. He got little help from the Western powers. He founded the Kuomintang political party and opened a military academy as he came to realise that a strong well-trained professional army was needed to overcome the warlords. After various battles and negotiations, a chance of some success seemed to be in the offing, when a group of warlords in the north of China,

invited him to Peking (now Beijing) to discuss unification. However, by this time he was seriously ill with cancer and died shortly after arrival. His will became required reading for all government officials, military leaders and scholars in China.

**'For forty years I have devoted myself to the cause of the National Revolution with but one end in view, the elevation of China to a position of freedom and equality among the nations. My experiences during these forty years have firmly convinced me that to attain this goal, we must bring about a through awakening of our own people and ally ourselves in a common struggle with those people of the world who treat us on the basis of equality.'**

**The work of the Revolution is not yet done. Let all our comrades follow my Plans for National Reconstruction. Fundamentals of National Reconstruction, Three Principles of the People and the Manifesto of the First National Convention of the Kuomintang, and strive on for their consummation. Above all, our recent declarations in favour of a National Convention and the abolition of unequal treaties should be carried into effect with the least possible delay. This is my heartfelt charge to you.'**

**Sun Wen, (孙文) 11th March 1925 \***

Both the Communist Party of China and the Kuomintang on Taiwan regard themselves as the true followers of Sun Yatsen. He is regarded by all Chinese, including the overseas Chinese in well over 70 countries of the world, as the Father of Modern China. Removal of the foreigners from China became a sacred duty, but it was not until the end of the Second World War that the last foreign concession was closed. Territories captured by Japan e.g. Manchuria and Formosa (Taiwan) were restored to China but Macao and Hong Kong remained under foreign rule.

Dr Sun's message to all his followers and indeed the world is Tian Xia Wei Gong (天下为公). 'The world belongs to everybody' or 'The whole world as one community'. This message can be seen on his Memorial Hall (second storey) in Guangzhou. His portrait is frequently displayed in the meeting halls of Chinese societies worldwide. He is also associated with the words 'Bo Ai' (博爱) 'universal love'. Dr Sun's dying words were, 'Peace, struggle, save China.'



**Sun Yatsen statue and Memorial Hall in Guangzhou (WF)**



Sun Yatsen Mausoleum in Nanjing (WF)



A portrait of Dr Sun Yatsen is displayed in Tiananmen Square on National Day (1 October) and on other special occasions (WF)

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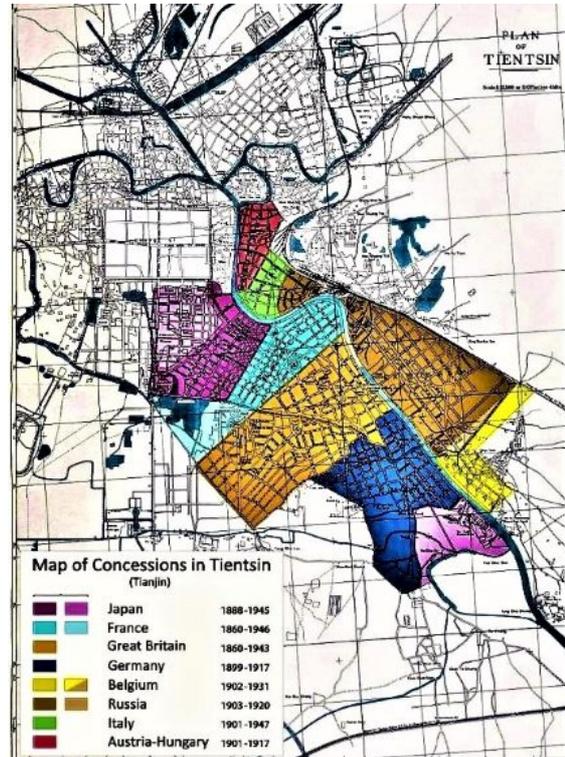
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\* **Sun Yatsen using the name Sun Wen.** English translation by Dr Frank W Price, President of Hangzhou Christian College, Hangzhou). He translated the whole of Dr Sun's book, *San Min Chu I*, (The Three Principles of the People) into English.



This map of Tianjin (From the Wikipedia, 'Concessions in Tianjin'), shows more than half of the city occupied by concessions of eight European countries. There were numerous other concession ports and cities including Shanghai, Ningbo, Canton (Guangzhou), Ichang, Amoy (Xiamen), Foochow (Fuzhou), Changsha, Hankow (Wuhan), Hangchow (Hangzhou) Chefoo (Yantai), Weihai, etc. Also, China was forced to accept the concept of 'extraterritoriality' by which wrongdoing foreigners could not be tried in a Chinese court. After the wars China was obliged to pay substantial sums of money in 'compensation'. This was especially large after the Boxer Rebellion. In addition, the European countries claimed 'spheres of influence' and by the turn of the 20th Century, they were poised to partition China.

China sent over 140,000 labourers to help the Allies in WW1 with the expectation that after Germany was defeated, German possessions in China (Shandong province) would be restored to China, but instead they were given to Japan at the Versailles Treaty. Chinese people regarded this day as 'National Humiliation Day'

Before the 1949 revolution, which brought the Chinese Communist Party to power, the leader of the then ruling party, the Kuomintang, Chiang Kaishek in his book, *China's Destiny*, (Denis Dobson London 1947) devoted a whole chapter to 'the origins of National Humiliation and sources of the revolution'. Defeat in the Opium war was the 'First National Humiliation.' The term 'humiliation' has not been recently introduced by the Communist Party of China.

**Walter Fung**

## An interview with a Wuhan Doctor

The information here was supplied by Dirk Nimmegeers of the Belgian-China Friendship Association. Dirk is also editor of the website *Chinasquare.be* and a SACU member. This is a summary of an account of an interview of Dr Li Yan by Ng Sauw Tjhoi, a VRT journalist, earlier in May, following a webinar organized by the Beijing People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, Beijing NGO Network for International Exchanges and Beijing Medical Women's Association (May 13, 2020). Thanks are due to Dirk for sending it to us.

Dr Li, who lives in Beijing, answered a request on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2020 for volunteers to provide medical assistance to Wuhan at the start of the Covid-19 crises. At very short notice, she left behind her husband to look after their six years old son and their parents. She boarded a plane with 36 other doctors, 100 nurses and five tonnes of medical equipment. She was one of 40,000 doctors who came from all over China to assist the Wuhan medical authorities. They were to spend the next 65 days in Wuhan, which was in lockdown to prevent the spread of the disease.

In Wuhan, no individual travel was allowed, but thousands of volunteers had come forward to help the population with supplies, shopping and other necessary services. All shops, supermarkets, restaurants and all other places were all closed in a complete and strict lockdown.

Dr Li was posted to the Wuhan Medical Union Hospital. All Covid-19 patients had their medical fees paid for by the government; treatment was free of charge. During the lockdown, residents in the multi-storey housing blocks sang patriotic songs which kept up their spirits.



The medical policy of doctors was 'never give up anyone'. A 91 years old patient asked his doctors to divert their efforts from him to younger patients, saying he did not have long to go in any case. However, they treated him with modern anti-viral drugs and Chinese herbs and managed to cure him after 22 days. Before discharge the doctors discovered that he had developed anti-substances, which would give him immunity from the disease for at least another six months.

Dr Li explained that every death from Covid-19 was recorded in a special register and underreporting was not possible. A full report was passed to the Wuhan Health

Service every day and this was passed on to the National Health Authorities.



The 91 years old patient is discharged from hospital



The medical teams worked very long hours during their time in Wuhan but they did have some recreational facilities and the opportunity to seek psychological assistance if requested. So many of them worked under tremendous pressure and had seen so many people die. Some of the medical staff, including Dr Li, suffered from Post-traumatic Stress Disorder, but she had no regrets, saying many people would have died if it was not for their efforts. She learnt a lot from the experience, including the strength and value of team working.

**Walter Fung**

## The Opium War, a SACU Zoom Discussion on 25 June 2020.

Walter Fung

**This first 'China Chat Zoom' was recorded and a video is available which members can access using the link provided in the July E mail newsletter.**

The subject was introduced by Jenny Clegg who presented her impressions on Stephen Platt's new book, *Imperial Twilight, The Opium War and the End of China's Last Golden Age*. The Opium War was a turning in China's history. It revealed the decline of the Qing Dynasty and set off the rise of nationalism and communism, events which have resulted in China today. China has become the second largest economy in the world and rivals the US. Jenny mentioned the Thucydides Trap' by which a dominant superpower feels threatened by an ascending superpower. History shows that the resulting hostility generally leads to war between the two powers.

China, in the late 1700s, exported large amounts of tea to Britain, but in return did not import anything. Indeed, trade and contact with foreign countries was restricted to Canton (Guangzhou) and only via a small group of Chinese merchants, known as 'hongs'. Contact with foreigners was strictly limited, indeed anyone caught teaching Chinese to outsiders could face the death penalty.

Lord Macartney led a British trade delegation to negotiate two-way trade with the Chinese Emperor Qianlong. They took with them a variety of gifts designed to impress and to arouse trade interest. They included ingenious items such as a diving bell, clocks and even a planetarium, which had taken 30 years to build.

A major initial problem was that Macartney, as the representative of a great country (Britain), felt unable to kowtow to the emperor. Eventually a solution of some sort was found, but the emperor was not at all interested in trade, stating that China had everything it needed. The mission was a failure.

British free traders however, were desperate for trade with China and believed diplomacy was of limited use. They pressed for more action, not ruling out force. Others, which included government officials, opposed their belligerence. Despite being forbidden to deal with foreigners, certain Chinese merchants were also eager to trade. Meanwhile 'spy missions' were sent up the Chinese coast revealing an antiquated Chinese navy and that the Chinese people did not support their government. This information was to prove extremely useful in subsequent dealings with China.

Trade was essential for a nation such as Britain and so a second attempt was made to secure a deal in 1816 led by Lord Amherst. They were better prepared to meet Emperor Jiaqing but it was a disaster. On arrival in China, following a number of mishaps, the kowtow was again an issue and in fact discussions did not even take place.

On the way home, they were shipwrecked and called in at St Helena, where Amherst met Napoleon who was there in exile. He warned that, 'you would doubtless, at first, succeed, but you would teach them their own strength. They would be compelled to adopt measures to defend themselves against you..... and in the course of time defeat you.'

Britain began to supply opium to China. Although illegal, this trade which began in the late 1700s increased rapidly by significant amounts. Eventually so many Chinese became ill and incapacitated by smoking the drug it had a disastrous effect on Chinese society and economy. Appeals to the British to cease were disregarded and eventually the Chinese emperor appointed commissioner Lin Zixu to end the trade. After the British traders' refusal to cooperate, Lin seized the entire stock of opium at Canton and destroyed it. The British traders appealed to their government for firm action.

Parliament debated whether or not to go to war. By a narrow margin, nine votes, the decision was made to send warships. It would seem that the main reason for the war was British prestige and the damage to Britain's reputation in the world if nothing was done. National pride was an issue which would have negative resonance in other British territories, especially India. Ministers said that China should be taught a lesson, China should improve itself, and China should be made to join the civilised world of free trade.

**Following Jenny's introduction, members were invited to speak; points made are summarised.**

Zoom enabled SACU members from all over the UK and China and from different backgrounds to give their views and different perspectives of the Opium Wars. Especially important differences in the concept of the Opium Wars emerged from contributions by British and Chinese SACU members. Some British members had not even heard of them, whilst in China they were a historic turning point, the beginning of the 'Century of Humiliation'.

The war was China's first encounter with imperialism and an awakening; Subsequent events over the next 60 years or so, lead to the proposed 'carving up' of China into 'spheres of influence' by the European powers and the reduction of China to semi-colonial status. These events set off proposed reforms led by Prince Gong. Amongst them was a 'self-strengthening' programme. However, these reforms were resisted by conservative elements.

Today, Chinese people believe that it is important, especially for young people to know the facts from both sides which will help them understand the present world situation.

Although the subject was taught in some British schools, the moral aspects were not discussed. In general, not enough seems to be known about the truth of the Opium Wars by the British population. One SACU member was told that a Hong Kong textbook stated that the British warships came to China to prevent the opium trade. Another account maintained that the Chinese resisted the British supplying opium to China, to protect sales of their own opium production. In fact, the British decided to send warships to

China, so the supply of opium could continue and also to open up Chinese ports for trade in general. However, there was some resistance to this 'gun boat diplomacy'. Gladstone was strongly against the opium trade; his own sister was an opium addict. In addition, some British groups, campaigned against the trade which they believed was immoral.

In modern times, accounts and interpretations of the Opium have become highly politicised presumably to undermine or reduce the concept of the 'Century of Humiliation' of the Chinese nation. Some accounts on the subject stress that Britain did not introduce opium and some are even dismissive of the harm that opium did to the Chinese people. (Dikotter et al, Blunden and Elvin). However, Dr RG Tiedemann in an article in *China Now No 132*, December 1989, states that in the 1830s medical opinion in Britain maintained that opium was not harmful to health, but the China lobby in London was well aware of the harmful effects of opium smoking in China and did their best to conceal this from the British public. Also, incredibility, that the traders handed out free samples to induce addiction, which was also concealed from the British public.

Whilst it is true that the drug was used from earliest times for medicinal and recreational purposes by the aristocracy, no excuse can be made for the increase of the amounts supplied by a factor of about 40 over a period of about five decades, i.e. 1,000 chests in 1767, 5,000 in 1820 to over 40,000 by 1839. (Beeching, Booth). Many missionaries in China in the 1800s, who had no political agenda, recorded the devastation it was causing to the health and longevity of the population and hence the effect on the economy of China. (Huc, Giles, Bitten)

Mention was made of significant amounts of home-grown opium in China by the late 1800s, However, by the 1870s, the amount of imported opium had reached 70,000 chests. So, the quantity available must have been truly staggering.

As an aside: In the discussions, no mention was made about the outflow of silver from China, which led to serious problems for the Chinese – opium was paid for in silver.

SACU members who contributed to the discussion included; Peter Hunter, Fang Wang, Michael Sheringham, Linxi Li, David Ayerton, David Law, Tom Harper, Marguerita Morton, Peter Chin, Brian Sitch and Walter Fung.

### Footnote.

This first China Chat was 'attended' by about 40 members, 44 registered, and was considered a huge success. However, Jenny Clegg in conclusion emphasised that it will also be the last if members did not come forward to assist in the organisation. Suggestions of topics are invited, but assistance will also be needed to lead discussions and help in other ways e.g. managing Eventbrite bookings for future activities. Future zoom events should consider the time difference between China and the UK. Peter Chin in Xi'an made his contribution at 2.00am in the morning!

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### **An account of the event with analyses by Tom Harper is on the SACU website; his main points are summarised below.**

With the first salvos of the first Opium War, Britain opened China to a 'Century of Humiliation' where the once mighty Qing dynasty faced rapacious imperial powers. Platt sets out both the British and the Chinese sides as events moved inexorably to war. This potent turning point in China's history 'stands for everything that today's China seeks to put behind it', giving Platt's narrative 'important implications for today's uncertain and ever-changing world.' Platt's book has a contemporary resonance in light of recent political developments.

A wide range of perspectives were presented. These included the politicisation of the history of the Opium Wars and the 'Century of Humiliation' by both sides as well as the controversies over the nature of the imperial policies in the wake of the wars and the role they played in China's long-term reform and opening up.

This comes at a time where Britain's imperial history has come under renewed scrutiny as a result of the toppling of statues of major figures from this period. It is this aspect, alongside the parallels between the language of the imperial agents of yesteryear and the China hawks of today that has underlined the continued relevance of Pratt's book.

Upon reflection in the light of recent events, it is necessary to re-evaluate the Opium Wars as part of the wider debate regarding the controversies of Britain's imperial history.

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**Rodney Mantle, who visited some of the sites in China associated with the Opium War presents his experiences and reactions to China Chat, with illustration on pages 18, 19 and 20.**

## Reactions on the Zoom Discussion and *Imperial Twilight* by Rodney Mantle

Platt's alternating use of Western and Chinese sources was rightly felt to be one of the book's strong points. For example, it helps portray the reasons behind the change from 18<sup>th</sup> century European admiration of China to 19<sup>th</sup> century contempt. The sections on the White Lotus and Chinese pirates are good examples. This approach contrasts with much English-language historiography on China, which tends to use solely or primarily sources in Western languages. An example is Diana Preston's *The Boxer Rebellion*, 1999.

The zoom event started at 18:00 and finished at 19:30. Around 19:00, just as I was about to raise my hand to contribute to the discussion, there was a thoroughly justifiable request from meeting host Zoe Reed for more female speakers. I therefore refrained. Below is what I was planning to say - and more.

The discussion was excellent, and I learned a lot, not least from reading *Imperial Twilight*. I have belonged to various bilateral, international, voluntary organisations over the years; SACU has the advantages (and disadvantages) of all of them.

On the one hand, cumulatively, there is an enormous fund of knowledge about the two countries in question; on the other, there are occasional failures to look beyond the bilateral relationship. My comments above and below illustrate both points:

1) In the discussion, there was a passing reference to the outflow of silver from China for the opium trade, but there was no reference to the Qing's reserves of silver, mostly accumulated by the substantial export of goods (tea, silk, spices, ceramics [Jingdezhen], art [Chinoiserie]) to the west, with no significant compensating imports to China. In *Imperial Twilight* (p. 47) this is confirmed: "Qianlong knew the value of China's foreign trade [...] because a significant portion of the tariff income it generated went toward underwriting the lavish expenses of the imperial household." It is my impression that Macartney and (in a different way) Amherst were both sent inter alia in attempts to rectify this imbalance.

*Imperial Twilight* also devotes a section (pages 287-294) to the complexities of the silver: the Qing administration accepted only Spanish silver dollars, but the opium was paid for in Chinese "sycee" silver coins, which the administration could not accept from foreigners. In addition, *Imperial Twilight* throws (for me) new light on Qianlong's claim about not needing foreign products: "For wealthy urbanites in China, Western goods were all the rage by the 1820s [...]," *Imperial Twilight* (p. 114).

2) Most of the references to imperialism/colonialism concerned the UK, but other powers waited for the UK to do the "opening up", then benefited, e.g. Tianjin/Tientsin (UK; France; Japan; Germany; Russia; Austria-Hungary; Italy; Belgium), as well as Germany in Qingdao/Tsingtao. In 1784, the first American ship arrived in China, and by 1802

there was an American "factory" (= "trading centre") in Canton, replacing the French, driven out by the Napoleonic Wars. The Americans imported Turkish opium into China.

3) Most of the participants referred to subsequent developments. One person mentioned the later role of Hong Kong as an opium trading centre.

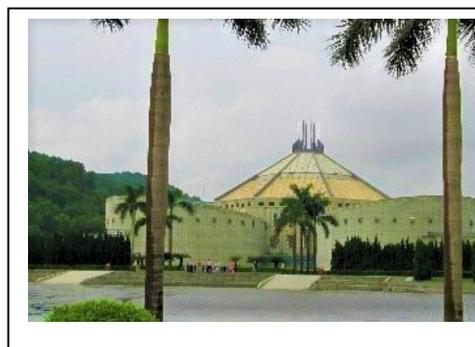
The history of opium in the U.K. could also be of interest. Britain limited the sale of opium under the Pharmacy Act of 1868, followed by prohibition under the Defence of the Realm Act (40B) of 1916 and the Dangerous Drugs Act of 1920. Such national laws had however no imperial reach. In 1928, Rudyard Kipling described the inner workings of the Ghazipur opium factory, which transformed the vast poppy fields of Benares into 'the drug, which yields such a splendid income to the Indian government'. (For more, including the situation in other Asian colonies, see: <https://aeon.co/essays/how-european-empires-broke-the-habit-of-opium-consumption>)

4) Among the many surprises *Imperial Twilight* held for me were: a) the term "Opium War" was coined in the UK before the war's start (p. 377) and stuck;

b) "The only appearance of the word "opium" in the final treaty would be to describe the commodity whose value was being reimbursed [...]" (p. 406); and

- c) Napoleon's comment in St. Helena on ultimate Chinese revenge, quoted by Jenny.

In the Chat, a participant supplied the URL for the Opium War Museum in Humen (<http://www.yppz.cn/f/index> - the only reference to it).



### Opium War Museum

In June 2014, I spent most of a day there with a British friend, Luke Stables, now living in Beijing. I should like to thank Luke for his help with parts of this article. According to the museum's website, in 2016 this museum won the 14th Annual Excellent Awards issued by the Museums Association of China and the 1st Annual Excellent Awards by the Museums Association of Guangdong Province.

Its wide-ranging exhibits deserve that. They underline much of what was said during the SACU event but - despite the inevitable anti-British element - show clearly that the UK

was just one of numerous western naval powers involved. This can be seen in the painting of the harbour in Canton (Guangzhou) below.



**The thirteen Hongs of Canton**

One of the naval powers was Sweden. In the exhibition was a scale model of the Swedish ship **Göteborg** (Gothenburg), which in September 1745, at the end of its third trip to China, apparently foundered just as it was entering the harbour. No lives were lost, and some of the cargo was saved.



**Göteborg scale model**

Outside the exhibition was one of the (restored) pools where reportedly Lin Zexu had the confiscated opium destroyed.



**Opium Destruction Pool with author**

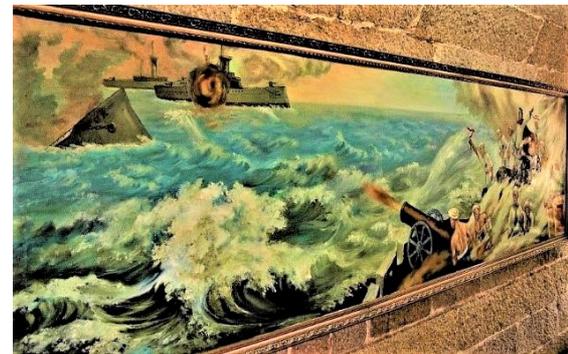
It is claimed: “More than 1.1 million kilograms of the British and American opium were destructed [sic] at Humen beach in public. “Chapter 12 of *Imperial Twilight* provides detailed background for this event, confirming the huge gaps of perception and knowledge between the two sides: “[...] in early January 1839, even as (Senior Superintendent of Trade) Charles Elliot still waited in confident expectation that the ban on opium would be lifted any day, Lin Zexu was starting on his way down to Canton with full powers to put an end to the traffic for good.” (p.337)

3) One participant noted that the Opium Wars had helped a Chinese trading bourgeoisie to develop. A significant part of modern China's role in international trade are four of its major ports, all initially developed from modest beginnings by foreigners: a) Dalian (Russia/Japan). b) Tianjin (see above). c) Shanghai (UK/Europe/USA - the 1910s municipal flag includes 12 national flags). d) Hong Kong (UK).

At the start of the Zoom, we were encouraged to recollect how we first learned about the Opium War(s). My contribution: before in 2003 I went to live in China for 10 years and during and after my stay, I devoted a lot of time to familiarising myself with the country's history and culture. When the Opium War(s) came up, I can recall already knowing about their existence but not how or when I acquired the knowledge.

In answer to the Zoom enquiry about young Chinese reactions: In 2008 two students from a Nanjing university took me inter alia to the room where reportedly the Treaty of Nanking was ratified by Emperor Daoguang on 27 October 1842 (as prince, Daoguang had written a poem in praise of opium smoking - *Imperial Twilight*, p. 210). The students commented on the Treaty: "That was a long time ago - we don't think about it anymore." This could of course have been the politeness of Chinese harmony.

**Footnotes:**

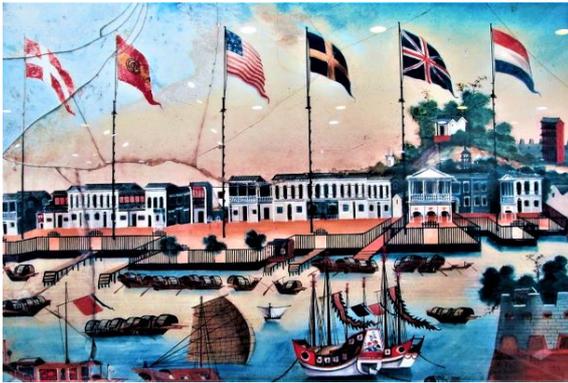


**Mural in Xiamen**

- 1) This is a photo I took in May 2005 of a mural in Xiamen showing the sinking of a Royal Navy ship. I wish I knew more. Can anyone help?
- 2) During a conference (in Malaysia in 2005), I met an Indian woman who told me she came from an area (in Bihar, I think) where poppies had been grown. In that area, there was, she said, a very good museum, but the Indian government did all it could to ensure that the museum got as little publicity as possible outside the area.



Above Rodney Mantle's photo of Guangzhou provincial museum and below the hongts from a mural in the museum



A link to the Opium War Museum in China is as follows:

<https://artsandculture.google.com/partner/opium-war-museum>

## “Real World-Ready” by Barnaby Powell

The stated aim of my old school is to make pupils ‘real world-ready’. This is a project conceived as one of boundless ambition in a time before the almost inconceivable consequences of Covid-19 could be imagined. The world is now almost immeasurably different and ‘real world’ has taken on an entirely new complexion and meaning. What the Covid-19 virus has done is to throw into stark relief the weakness and vulnerability of the West and its woeful lack of preparedness in the face of both disease and the manifest power of China to make the weather.

China looms large in the lives of younger people everywhere. What Napoleon foretold – ‘When China awakens, the world will tremble’ – has come to pass. The speed of its rise over the last thirty years has been astounding. The transformation achieved by the U.K. through its Industrial Revolution has been accomplished by China in under half the time.

Its per capita income has increased 30 times since 1990 (by comparison, that of the U.S. has increased only 2.5 times). 800 million people have been lifted out of poverty. This is a country like no other. Unlike modern nation-states, it is an ancient empire currently striving to join a deep-rooted past to a new global order, to re-connect with its true place in the

world. Its people long to be understood, for their achievements to be acknowledged and respected. They are enormously energetic, active and entrepreneurial. Yet they have been hampered by a century or more of turmoil and foreign encroachment, a bitter price to pay for their transition to modernity.

Now, with the revival of their innate capacity for invention and innovation, the Chinese people seek to go global as its leading manufacturers and main suppliers by mid-century of railways, computer chips, jet planes, electric cars and satellites. Their missions to Mars are underway and their extension of trade routes across the Eurasian landmass and by sea through new infrastructure and electronic connectivity makes them a prime locomotive mover of the world economy. They have also become a champion of development in the global South in Africa and Latin America.

What this means is that the younger generation need to acquire a degree of ‘China literacy’- to enable them to engage more effectively with China’s culture and to negotiate with Chinese on the basis of Western principle and Eastern practicality and pragmatism. This does not necessarily mean becoming fluent in Chinese (although this is clearly an advantage), but it does mean achieving a level of cross-cultural understanding (the Chinese know much more about the West than we do of them) based on extensive networking, organisational initiative, interpersonal skills, critical/adaptive thinking, emotional intelligence, collaborative capacity and a high level of computer literacy towards building close and lasting relationships. In this way, ‘domain’ knowledge and know-how in areas like science, engineering, software, education, the environment, the arts and sport may be transferred to mutual advantage, while much of the traditional areas of law, medicine and finance is likely to enter the realm of artificial intelligence.

This engagement is imperative for the U.K. (not at the expense of the U.S. and European allies) to secure a stable future and to address intractable common problems like global warming, clean energy, food security, nuclear proliferation, healthcare and space exploration. Our object must be to achieve social cohesion based on collective purposes via diplomacy and the negotiation of a free trade agreement and a dependable economic partnership.

### **Contributors to China Eye are welcomed.**

**Ideal word length is up to 2,000 with illustrations; but any length is fine, even just a few paragraphs.**

**Please study China Eye format and if possible, try to E mail your article in this format, using Word and font size 10. ‘Deadline’ is detailed on page two of every China Eye.**

## **Sino File of Current Events compiled by Walter Fung**

### **WHO praises China's speedy response?**

The World Health Organisation publicly praised China for its speedy response to the new coronavirus and for sharing the genetic map of the virus 'immediately'. (Jamey Keaton in Geneva published in I 3/6/20).

### **International WHO team visits China**

Bruce Aylward, deputy director-general of WHO said China had achieved real success in its efforts to contain the virus. The distinguished Canadian epidemiologist was leading a team of 13 experts of different nationalities who inspected five cities to study the state of the epidemic and China's response. They issued a report on 28 February. (*From China Today April 2020*)

**Other comments: China Daily Global Weekly 21-27/2/20).** Xi Jinping spoke recently to Boris Johnson and Emmanuel Macron of France. Johnson spoke highly of the measures taken by China to prevent and control the disease, share information with the international community in a timely manner and make efforts to stop the global spread of the disease. Macron said virtually the same, praising China's effective measures and its openness and transparency.

### **From the British press**

#### **China returns to growth in second quarter**

China's economy has returned to growth after its biggest contraction since 1992. GDP grew by 3.2% in the second quarter, from a year earlier, after having fallen by 6.8% in the first quarter. Growth is being driven by government stimulus to tackle the shock from Covid-19 and whilst it exceeded forecasts of 2.5% growth, it is the weakest on record. Factories have reopened, but the economy is still fragile as it emerges from lockdown.

Global demand has fallen as many other major economies are still in lockdown. The IMF forecasts the worst global recession since the Great Depression. (*From The Times 17/7.20*)

#### **China ready to put US companies on 'unreliable' list**

China is ready to put US companies on an 'unreliable entity' list as part of countermeasures against Washington's move to block shipments of semi-conductors to Huawei. The means could include launching investigations and imposing restrictions on US firms, such as Cisco Systems and Qualcomm as well as suspending purchase of Boeing airliners, Global Times reported yesterday. (*From I 17-18/5/20*)

#### **Beijing puts in checkpoints after Covid-19 spike**

Several districts in Beijing have put up security checkpoints, closed schools and ordered testing after an unexpected spike of Covid-19 linked to the biggest wholesale food market in Asia. After nearly two months with no new infections, 79 new cases have been reported over the last four days. This is the biggest cluster since February. (*From I 16/6/20*)

### **Intercontinental hotels reopen in China**

This hotel group which owns the Holiday Inns and Crown Plaza chains announced that most of its hotels in China had reopened as bookings continue to improve. (*From The Economist 2-8/5/20*)

### **Mobile screening in China for Covid-19**

Sporadic outbreaks of Covid-19 have necessitated quick testing. A mobile inflatable testing laboratory has been provided by Chinese biotech company BGI Genomics. It is capable of running 30,000 tests per day. An illustration shows a seven-person team at work in full protective clothing. China seems to have restricted an outbreak in Beijing. The authorities claim to have tested 2.5 million people in 11 days. (*From I 26/6/20*)

### **High tech applications in China**

Robots in Wuhan hospitals helped treat patients by delivering food and medicine. A Chinese company using 3-D printing has built a 10-home village in one day. (*From The Times via I 5/8/20*)

### **France and Germany boost funds to WHO**

Following President Trump's proposal to cancel funds to the 'China-centric WHO' both France and Germany have announced increased donations to the WHO. Germany is giving 500 million euros this year and France is giving 90 million euros for a WHO research centre near Lyon and an additional 50 million euros. The Director-General of the WHO said it was getting the support needed, both politically and financially. (*From I 26/6/20*)

### **Cinemas reopen in China**

Cinemas have been allowed to reopen in China in low-risk areas. They operate at 30% capacity, booking on-line is necessary, use of non-adjacent seats, every other row and social distancing of one metre arrangements are in operation. Eight hundred and eighty-four cinemas in 175 cities have reopened and bookings are being taken, especially in Shanghai and Hangzhou. (*From China Daily 21/7/20*)

### **Huawei Cambridge research unit to go ahead**

South Cambridgeshire District Council have just approved the building of a Huawei research and development laboratory near Cambridge. (*From I 26/6/20*)

### **BeiDou nears completion**

BeiDou is China's new satellite navigation system. The project began in 1993 and work has proceeded in three phases. The first two provided coverage across China and the across the rest of the Asia-Pacific region. The third phase covers the globe. Before China had to rely on the American GPS but there was a risk that it could be switched off by the American Air force, which operates it. The completion of BeiDou eliminates dependency on the US. It is also more advanced than the American GPS and it claims accuracy to 10cm compared to the 30cm of GPS.

In December 2019, China said that BeiDou-enabled products had been exported to 120 countries and Beidou receivers may soon be in every phone. America began to

upgrade its GPS system in 1997, but it may take a further 15 years to complete the task. *(From The Economist 18/7/20)*

### **Surge in electric car charging points**

The International Energy Agency, reported that in 2019, the number of charging points increased by 60%. There are 862,118 in the world, of which 60% are in China, the largest market for electric vehicles. Fast-charging points, include Tesla 'supercharges' which can re-charge up to 80% battery capacity in about half an hour. Fast charges comprise about a third of the stations in use. Again, China leads in the number available. *(From I 16/6/20)*

### **China's climatic goals on track**

China vowed to cut its 'carbon intensity' (carbon dioxide emission per unit of GDP) by 40-45% at the Paris Conference. The China Ministry of Ecology and the Environment announced that despite coronavirus China would meet its target this year of reducing carbon emissions by 4.1% compared to 2019 levels. *(From I 3/6/20)*

### **UK invests £100 million in Africa**

This is designed to boost UK-Africa trade. The money will be spent to restore the road between Benin and Niger. Boris Johnson sees west Africa as a key target post-Brexit. By 2050, analysts predict that 25% of world consumers will be in Africa. The continent is a battleground for influence. China-Africa trade is £169 billion annually and accounts for 40% of all infrastructure in the continent. Europe once accounted for 44%, of infrastructure, but is now only 34%; the US was once 24% but is now less than 7%. *(From I 17/6/20)*

### **Replacing Huawei could cost £1.5 billion**

Experts have warned that a cut-off date of 2023 for installing new Huawei equipment is impractical and will force telecoms companies to spend nearly £1.5 billion to remove existing technology. The UK is under pressure from the White House to lock out Huawei, citing fears of spying. Senior Tory politicians are increasingly restless about the UK's dependency on China. *(From The Sunday Times 12/6/20)*

### **Gender discrimination maths books withdrawn**

A Chinese publisher has apologised and withdrawn copies of a maths textbook that had two versions, one for boys and one for girls. The versions were written based on alleged gender differences; the boys' version used games, while the girls' version used scenarios such as buying vegetables in a market. Xiong Bingqi, an academic specialising in education criticised the books for reinforcing stereotyping and said there is no scientific basis. Song Jinbo, another scholar criticised the books by saying that we are living in a society where gender stereotyping is prevalent and the idea that there is no use for girls to go to school is still popular in some central and western regions. *(From The Times 22/8/20)*

### **From the Chinese press**

#### **Covid-19 survey**

To track asymptomatic cases of the coronavirus, Wuhan launched an epidemiological sample survey on April 14.

Free nucleic acid and antibody tests were given to 880 residents. The survey will further involve 11,000 residents in 13 districts. To ensure data accuracy, random sampling will be carried out in 100 residential communities. The objective is to further understand transmission and epidemiological characteristics and pathogenic path of the virus. Similar surveys are being carried out in nine municipalities and provinces including Beijing, Liaoning, Shanghai and Jiangsu. The survey will investigate the Covid-19 antibody level and provide a scientific basis for adjusting the prevention and control strategy. *(From Beijing Review 23/4/20)*

### **Chinese medical aid to African countries**

The latest batch of medical supplies donated by China arrived on April 23 in the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa and is expected to be transferred to Angola, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Djibouti, Lesotho, Madagascar, Namibia, Niger, Rwanda and Somalia as well as Tanzania's Zanzibar, with more said to be coming. Chinese experts and officials from health and customs departments also shared information and experience about COVID-19 in video conferences with specialists from the African Union (AU), the Africa Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC), and various African countries.

As COVID-19 cases continue to surge across the African continent, a 12-member team of Chinese medical experts was dispatched on April 16 by the Chinese Government upon the request of the Ethiopian Government. On the same day, some other Chinese medical experts arrived in Burkina Faso. China has also activated its medical teams stationed there to help fight COVID-19.

There are nearly 1,000 Chinese medical personnel working in Africa long-term. Mafa Sejanamane, Permanent Representative of Lesotho to the AU and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), said that China's support is "essential" to Africa's fight against COVID-19. *(From Xinhua 26/4/20)*

### **China-Africa Anti-pandemic summit**

An extraordinary summit 'Solidarity Against Covid-19' was held via video link on 17 June. It was proposed by China, South Africa (rotating chair of the African Union) and Senegal (co-chair of the Forum on China-African Cooperation, (FOCAC)). The summit was chaired by Xi Jinping in Beijing. It was attended by African leaders, the Secretary General of the UN and the Director General of the WHO. China undertook to provide 30 million testing kits, 10,000 ventilators and 80 million masks each month. China had already sent medical teams and supplies to more than 50 African countries. A prime objective of the forum was to explore opportunities for multilateral cooperation through the FOCAC). Work would be started on the construction of a building to house the Africa Centre for Disease Control and Prevention ahead of schedule and when a vaccine is available, African countries would be amongst the first to benefit. *(From Beijing Review 6/7/20)*

**CGTN, 21/8/20.** China's vaccines for COVID-19 will be available and affordable to people worldwide, said Liu

Jingzhen, chairman of China National Pharmaceutical Group, in Beijing on Thursday. A ceremony took place in the Chinese capital to launch phase three clinical trials for a vaccine in Peru. National health authorities in the South American nation have approved the trials, the latest in China's efforts to strengthen international cooperation in pandemic control.

**LONDON, July 20 (Xinhua)** -- A phase 2 trial of a COVID-19 vaccine candidate conducted in China has found that the vaccine is safe and induces an immune response, according to a new study published Monday in medical journal *The Lancet*. The results provide data from a wider group of participants than the phase 1 trial, which was published in May. Phase 1 trial involved 108 healthy adults and it demonstrated promising results.

"The phase 2 trial adds further evidence on safety and immunogenicity in a larger population than the phase 1 trial. This is an important step in evaluating this early-stage experimental vaccine and phase 3 trials are now underway," said Professor Fengcai Zhu from Jiangsu Provincial Centre for Disease Control and Prevention, China. According to *The Lancet*, the trial of the Ad5 vectored COVID-19 vaccine candidate was conducted in the central Chinese city of Wuhan with 508 participants taking part. Approximately two thirds of participants were aged 18-44 years, with a quarter aged 45-54 years, and 13 % aged 55 years or older. Since elderly individuals face a high risk of serious illness and even death associated with COVID-19 infection, they are an important target population for a COVID-19 vaccine, said Professor Wei Chen from the Beijing Institute of Biotechnology in Beijing, China. "It is possible that an additional dose may be needed in order to induce a stronger immune response in the elderly population, but further research is underway to evaluate this," Chen said.

**Macao: moving towards an international financial hub**  
In the pursuit of a moderately diversified economy, Macao is making a focus on finance. Macao is expected to emerge as a new Asian hub of bond trading in the near future. As a new platform for financial transactions it will compete with Shenzhen and Hong Kong. Macao has close connections with the Portuguese-speaking business circle which had a GDP of over \$2.4 trillion and a trade volume with China of \$100 billion. The intention is to transform the industrial pattern centred on the casino and hospitality sectors. (*From China Today April 2020*)

**A maglev superfast high-speed train network**  
China's Ministry of Transport gave the green light to step up tests on the magnetic levitation, 'maglev' train, which has a top speed of 600 km/hr (373 mph). This follows guidelines issued last week to build a smart transport infrastructure. The first prototype was built in May and commercial production could start next year. In July announcements were made for nine maglev railway lines totalling 1,000 km. The train would bridge the gap between rail and plane. Maglev trains operate by magnetic levitation, which eliminates frictional contact.

There are two existing Chinese maglev lines in current use, in Shanghai (2003) and in Changsha (2006) but their top

speeds are about 350 to 380 km/hr. The Shanghai maglev was German built, but the Changsha one was Chinese made. Projected maglev lines are expected in the Yangzi and Pearl River deltas. The maglev could cut travelling time between Beijing and Shanghai by two hours. (*From SCMP 11/8/20*)

### **Buddhist murals in Ningxia Hui AR**

Cultural relic experts from across China have begun restoring murals in the Xumishan Grottoes in the Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region. These murals date back over 1,500 years and are a priceless example of Buddhist art. The project, which started in early April, is the first to save and restore the murals since the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911). The grottoes, initially built in the late Northern Wei Dynasty (386-534) have 162 caves, more than 1,000 statues and 185.47 sq. metres of murals. They were listed as a key state-level cultural item in 1982. Work is expected to last a year. (*From Beijing Review 23/4/20*)

### **New airport for Qingdao**

The new Jiaodong International Airport, about 24 km from central Qingdao, will replace Liuting airport, which is currently the 17<sup>th</sup> busiest airport in China and which handled 20 million passengers in 2016. The new airport, shaped like a starfish, has two runways initially and can serve 35 million passengers. The design is such that the furthest gate is only 550 metres from the check-in concourse. Eventually two more runways will be added, bringing the capacity to 60 million passengers. The new airport will help develop commerce and tourism in Shandong province. It was built in five years and occupies an area twice the size of Heathrow. (*From Xinhua, via the internet 24/7/20*)

### **China's investment in Africa**

This year marks the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation. Trade volume between Africa and China last year exceeded \$200 billion and China became Africa's largest trading partner for the 11<sup>th</sup> consecutive year. China's direct investment in Africa reached \$110 billion and more than 3,700 Chinese enterprises are present in the continent. China has built over 6,000 kilometres of railways and roads, nearly 20 ports and more than 80 large power plants. These have promoted industrialisation and enhanced the development of individual countries. (*From China Daily Global Weekly 17-23/1/20*)

### **Shanghai Ballet in the US**

Shanghai Ballet made its debut at the Lincoln Centre, New York on 17<sup>th</sup> January. It later went on to Indiana, Illinois and Kentucky to present four shows of the original Chinese Ballet production of *The Butterfly Lovers*, which is based on a traditional Chinese love story. (*From China Daily Global Weekly 17-23/1/20*)

### **Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) think tanks**

There are now 300 think tanks involved with BRI studies, 50 of which are non-Chinese. They are helping to drive the BRI project. December 2018 saw the opening of the BRI research centre in Bangkok, a joint venture of the National Research Council of Thailand and the Renmin University of China. A think tank involving China and 16 central and eastern European countries has also opened. BRI think tanks

assist issues such as those in Kazakhstan, a land locked country, which produces 20 million tons of wheat each year, 66% for export. (*From Beijing Review, 1/8/20*)

### **Surge in computer manufacture**

A total of 2.72 million computers were produced in March at LCFC (Hefei) Electronics Technology Co. Ltd., the largest PC research and development and manufacturing base of Lenovo, the Chinese tech giant. On March 27, more than 124,500 units of computers rolled off the production line, a record in one day. This is about three times the amount in the same period last year. The demand for electronic devices with a large display screen such as computers and tablets has surged amid the Covid-19 outbreak, when more people were housebound to prevent the spread of the disease. The electronic devices are essential tools for video conferences, and online education as well as computer games. (*From Beijing Review 16/4/20*)

### **Graphene in advanced face masks**

Researchers at the Aero Engine Corporation of China have developed a new type of facemask with graphene on the key filter layer. Graphene is a form of carbon used in aerospace, energy and biological medicine. It has high absorption capacity providing stronger antibacterial properties and better air permeability and the new masks last longer. They can be used for 48 hours, far longer than existing ones. (*Beijing Review 16/4/20*)

### **More support for the green automobile economy**

On March 31, the State Council announced three measures to stimulate the automotive industry. Subsidies and tax exemptions for new energy vehicles will continue for a further two years. Diesel trucks in areas such as the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region, that fail the emission standards will be phased out with government support. These acts have their focus on ecological protection and are a clear signal that future progress should emphasise green development. (*From Beijing Review 16/4/20*)

**KUALA LUMPUR, June 7** — The Chinese government said it is suspending debt repayment for 77 developing nations and regions to help low-income countries restart their economies and development amid the Covid-19 pandemic, a state news agency reported today. The *Global Times* reported China's Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs Ma Zhaoxu making the announcement at a news conference in Beijing during a white paper by the State Council Information Office on the country's fight against the coronavirus that originated from its province of Hubei. However, there were no details of any of the 77 countries and regions that would gain from the initiative.

A total of 77 nations and 12 international organisations donated items for us to combat the virus while people from all over the world showed their support for China in various forms. "We will not forget this precious friendship," Ma was quoted as saying by the agency. It further reported Ma saying China has provided assistance to more than 150 countries since the coronavirus outbreak. Last month, China was reported promising US\$2 billion aid to help other countries cope with the pandemic after-effects over the next two years.

### **China's economy recovering from Covid-19**

China is confident of achieving all fiscal targets and tasks set for this year. The economic fundamentals remain unchanged and its economy is steadily recovering. The finance ministry will work hard to ensure stability in six fronts and security in six areas and pursue a more proactive and impactful fiscal policy to achieve high-quality development.

The six fronts are employment, the financial sector, foreign trade, foreign investment, domestic investment, and expectations. The six areas refer to job security, basic living needs, operations of market entities, food and energy security, stable industrial and supply chains and the normal functioning of primary-level governments. China's economy has picked up since the second quarter, with production demand recovering and key economic indicators improving. The latest fiscal revenue data also added to positive signs toward a stronger recovery. The country's fiscal revenue growth swung back to positive in June, registering a 3.2-percent increase year on year. (*From Xinhua 7/8/20*)

## **Sinophile by Flo and Ivor Kenna**

A Nigerian scholar from Peking University wrote, in *Beijing Review* (BR) 2<sup>nd</sup> April, about railways. 'The centre for China-Europe cooperation and Chengdu stand at a strategic intersection of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). As the inland junction of the initiative, Chengdu has created direct and indirect trade network with over 220 cities worldwide through its rail lines. These railways operate six to seven times per week on average, transporting voluminous quantities of goods and offering cheaper and faster freight than road, air and ocean shipments.'

From BR of 9<sup>th</sup> April, we learn that President Xi called on all G20 members to take collective actions – cutting tariffs, removing barriers and facilitating the flow of trades, 'to battle Covid-19'. BR of 16<sup>th</sup> April reports that China has provided emergency assistance, including medical supplies such as a test reagent, face masks and protective suits to more than 120 countries and international organisations to combat Covid-19. T has also sent medical expert teams to, and held technical exchanges via video calls with over 100 countries and regions.

Michael Zakkour, in BR of 24<sup>rd</sup> April, outlines some positive aspects of the present world situation; for example; more people could buy more things from more places, for less money than any time in history. However, he thinks it unrealistic to 'reset to a world where countries bring back most of the manufacturing to their home shores. Later on, in the same issue, we learn that the foundation of Jack Ma and Joe Tsai, co-founders of the e-commerce giant, Alibaba, donated two to three million masks, 2000 ventilators and 170,000 pieces of protective gear to New York, the biggest private donation to the state so far.

Josef Gregory Mahoney in BR of 30<sup>th</sup> April, exposes the way US President Trump treats China as, 'The Enemy

Within', despite all the evidence to the contrary. Later on, the same issue criticises the US for suspending World Health Organisation funding. The next issue on May 7<sup>th</sup>, reports that tourists have to book if they want to visit Beijing's parks, to avoid gatherings.

In the issue of 29<sup>th</sup> April, there is a nice picture of buffaloes grazing on an island in the Jialing River, Nanchang City, Jiangxi. During April to October, hundreds of buffalo swim across the river to eat grass in the morning and swim back at dusk. No mention of social distancing!

In 2019, China surpassed the US as the top source of international patent applications, with 58,990 – a 200-fold increase in 20 years. Middle school students learn about the importance of creativity and innovation by building different model ducks out of Lego pieces.

In BR of 28<sup>th</sup> May, there was the quote, 'In the early days of the epidemic outbreak in China, one of the most widely praised quotes amongst the Chinese was, 'don't be afraid, as doctors and CPC members, we will go up first'

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If we look at Western representative democracy, I need not point out how many people come from the top of the pyramid and how many potential leaders come from wealthy families. Plus, in the West, the remarkable revolving door is always there, enabling unimpeded flow between the supreme legislature and the elite power group.

Let's compare the situation in Beijing, which is far closer to Wuhan than New York City – just 2,000 km away – which recorded nine deaths due to Covid-19. However, New York City, 20,000 km away from Wuhan, recorded 20,000 plus deaths. Who should be held responsible for what is happening in New York?

AIDS was first discovered in the US, but we do not name it, 'American virus'

Wuhan has conducted nucleic acid tests on all its 11 million residents to detect asymptomatic cases and control the disease.

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Between 1981 and 2016, China reduced the number of those living in internationally defined poverty by 868 million – out of a world total of nearly 1.17 billion.

BR of 11<sup>th</sup> June notes that the legal basis for the governance of Hong Kong by the Chinese government is the Constitution of China and the Basic Law of Hong Kong not the Sino-British Joint Declaration. Since the late 1970s, Hong Kong's per capita GDP in dollar terms has increased 11 times, surpassing Germany, the UK and Japan.

Finally, may we put in a commercial for Mao Zedong's two booklets *On Practice and on Contradiction*. They are particularly helpful in times like the present,

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## 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,

### Chinese Festivals

25<sup>th</sup> August is Chinese Valentine Day.

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

25<sup>th</sup> October is Chong Yang (Double Ninth)

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### Chinese Horoscopes

This article has only just surfaced. However better six months late than not at all! This year is the Chinese Year of the Rat. The twelve-year cycle in which twelve different animals have been allocated a year each came from the story of the Lord Buddha. Just before departing this life, he called all the animals to him. Only twelve listened and came and were rewarded by being given a year each in which to rule with their special strengths and abilities. The first to come was the rat followed by the ox, and the others in this order: tiger, rabbit, dragon, snake, horse, goat, monkey, rooster, dog and pig. Years were assigned to them in the order of arrival.

Each animal had different characteristics; the rat is said to be charming and will follow a goal to its end, the ox is calm and quiet. The twelve-year cycle means you have a long wait for your birth-sign. Your personal details can be checked on the internet. All this is similar to our horoscopes which can be found in monthly, weekly and even daily newspapers. There are similarities between Chinese and Western horoscopes. For example, the Rat and Pisces are both water signs. To some people it is just a bit of fun, but in some Chinese households parents may consult an astrologer to look for a good match for their son or daughter. Each Chinese sign has a different element according to the time of day or night a person is born. The elements include, Fire, Earth, Water, Wood and Metal.

Horoscopes are a fascinating subject to study; the East takes it more seriously than the West. However, most people enjoy reading their birth signs and seeing if they are suitable partners for a particular person!

I hope you will find it interesting to find your animal year and perhaps that of other family members. Good luck and a Happy New Year for 2020.

**Jacqueline Buksh**

## Tea Clippers – (the Great Tea Race), Silk and other Chinese ‘commodities’

Clippers were fast sailing ships designed to bring the first crop of tea of the year from China to England. Teas were believed to deteriorate with age and the most prized were those plucked first at the beginning of the season in the spring. The aristocracy in England gained considerable prestige by being the first to drink the newest crop each year and the first teas to arrive at the docks commanded a premium price. In 1866, a ‘Great Tea Race’ was held between several clippers sailing from Foochow (Fuzhou), Fukien (Fujian) province in China to London. The cargo was black tea from Fukien and about five ships participated.

A few months later, two ships arrived almost together; the Ariel was the first to arrive only minutes ahead of the Taeping. However the Taeping’s tug boat was faster than that of the Ariel and so there was some dispute as to who exactly was first. The ship which docked first and unloaded its tea cargo was generally regarded as the winner. To avoid dispute and possible withholding of the prize money, it was agreed by all concerned that the race was a tie and the prize shared between the two clippers. The ‘first tea’ earned a premium of 10 shillings extra per ton and the ship’s captain a sum of £100.

The voyage of 14,000 miles had taken 99 days. However, the days of the sailing clippers were already drawing to an end because, a steam ship, the Eri King carrying both passengers and tea, left Foochow eight days after the clippers but arrived 15 days before them. Steam was much quicker than wind and sail. The final nail in the coffin of the clipper sailing ships was the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869. Sailing clippers were not suited to canal passage.

The most famous clipper was the Cutty Sark but in fact it never carried tea. It had limited use because of the arrival of steam and was the last of the sailing clippers to be built. It is the only surviving ship of its kind and is moored at Greenwich as a tourist attraction.



Tea was originally only grown in China. It was believed to have been discovered by the legendary Chinese emperor Shen Nung about 2750 BC who drank from pot of boiling water into which some tree leaves had fallen. He was impressed by the taste and tea was born.

The technology of growing what was considered the best tea was stolen, along with numerous seeds and plants from

China by Robert Fortune acting for the East India Company about 1848. Up to that time, most tea came from China but this was to change as the British then grew tea plants in India, Sri Lanka and other places.



Meridian/SACU members enjoy tea tasting in Yunnan on the ‘Tea-horse Road Tour’, 2015 (WF)

Robert Fortune travelled extensively in China from 1848 to 1851. In some areas closed to foreigners, he disguised himself as a Chinese man, shaved his head and grew a queue. He was the first Westerner to discover that black and green tea came from the same tea plant variety; the difference brought about by the method of processing. In all, he collected 20,000 samples of tea plant and sent them back to his paymasters in India. It was a great theft of intellectual property. China was not only the inventor of tea, but was also the largest producer of tea in the world at the time. This position was soon lost as the Indian and Ceylon (Sri Lanka) tea industries were developed. China only regained the No 1 position very recently. Other thefts of intellectual property from China include silk manufacture and some aspects of porcelain production.

## Silk

The Silk industry is believed to have originated in China before 2,600 BC and silk products began to appear in parts of Asia and they eventually came to Europe via the Silk Road. This was not a single road, but a number of routes all going generally the same way across central Asia, via places such as Kashgar, Hotan, Samarkand, Merv to Europe.

Silk was being supplied to areas of northern India by 2,200 BC and was known to the Romans. However, the methods of production, called sericulture, were closely guarded secrets. This included, feeding silkworms with mulberry leaves, extraction of silk thread from cocoons and weaving the very delicate threads. In old China, those persons that disclosed information could face the death penalty.

However, over a long period of time, the silk secrets did eventually leak out in a variety of ingenious ways. A Chinese princess in 140 BC married a prince of Hotan, now in Xinjiang, north-western China, and brought with her silkworm eggs hidden in her headdress. About 550 AD, the Eastern Roman Emperor Justinian received silkworm eggs hidden in a bamboo stick from Persian monks. Although Justinian tried to guard the secrets, little-by-little silk industries became established in certain areas of southern Europe, The Moors are believed to have introduced the techniques into Spain and Portugal.



**Silk yarn spinning from cocoons at the Silk Museum, Suzhou, China (WF)**

The legend on how silk secrets were brought to England, involves John Lombe, who visited a silk mill in Italy and brought back with him an Italian mistress. He died not long after returning home, allegedly poisoned by the Italian lady who was believed to have been a hired- assassin. Lombe's family operated a state-of-the-art textile factory in Derby. The building is now the Derby Industrial Museum. Silk factories became established in several areas of England, chiefly in the midlands, the north-west and west Yorkshire. Macclesfield had become the main centre for power loom weaving of silk by the 1930s. One of the last silk mills in England was Paradise Mill in Macclesfield, Cheshire. It is now a Museum of Silk.

China remains the major producer of silk especially around Hanzhou and Suzhou and there is an extensive silk museum in Suzhou.



**Derby Industrial Museum, known locally as the Silk Mill.**

Other notable Chinese inventions, which transformed life in the West included, porcelain and of course silk. Chinoiserie designs and Chinese wallpaper were present in many country houses in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

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#### Chinese wallpaper in British and Irish houses

The National Trust magazine for Autumn 2017 has a lead article by Emile de Bruijn on Chinese and Chinese inspired wallpaper. He is aware of more than 160 houses that have or have had this type of wallpaper; some belonging to the National Trust, others in private hands. He believes that Chinese wallpapers are not just decorative objects of interest to art historians, since the 18<sup>th</sup> century, but have been embedded in our culture for several hundred years and they are still revered today. Research has shown that some wallpapers were partly woodblock-printed rather than completely hand-painted. Notable examples of Chinese wallpapers are in Penrhyn Castle (Gwynedd), Blickling Hall (Norfolk), Belton House (Lincolnshire) and Saltram (Devon). Further information is in Emile's book, 'Chinese Wallpaper in Britain and Ireland'.

#### Other Chinese 'contributions'

A British Born Chinese presenter on BBC 1, Shu Lin presenting the story of the British Chinese, from about 1950, in the series 'A Very British History' in February this year, maintained that Chinese restaurants, 'democratised dining out' in the UK. Many Chinese restaurants first opened in the late 1950s/early 1960s and enabled anyone to dine out at reasonable cost. Before this, only wealthy people could eat out regularly. Of course, Chinese cooking itself has contributed to our way of life. The technique of stir frying was new to cooking methods. It is environmentally friendly in that food, cut up first into small pieces, cooks faster using less energy. In addition, more of the taste is retained by the shorter cooking time. The term 'sweet and sour' was new to the British public. At first; it sounded contradictory and impossible to comprehend but it is now accepted.

Chinese words and expressions have crept into common use. A new member, Ed Conduit has drawn attention to phrases such as 'long time no see', 'take a look-see'. These are word-by-word translations from Chinese. They are concise and very effective in conveying the meaning. They were probably first heard by early travellers to China. Taipan, tycoon and typhoon also probably have Chinese origins. Tai probably came from the Cantonese, 'dai' meaning big (da in Mandarin). Also, the word Mandarin denoting a high government official in imperial China has come to mean a senior civil servant in the UK. Many of the 'Chinese-British' words are probably derived from the Cantonese dialect, possible because of the British presence in Hong Kong. The Mandarin words Gong He, (工合) the name first given to the Chinese Industrial Cooperatives, meaning, 'work together' has appeared as Gung-ho, the Cantonese pronunciation, with the meaning, 'enthusiastic eagerness' (Oxford Dictionary). An American WW2 film was called Gung-Ho.

Indeed, the first attempts of Chinese trying to speak English was termed, 'pigeon English' Missionaries in 19<sup>th</sup> century China, when attempting to discuss politics with some Chinese men, were told. 'politics not my pigeon, farming my pigeon'. I remember elderly Chinese Cantonese men in Liverpool (in the 1940s/1950s) using the word, 'pigeon' for a variety of different meanings. Some Chinese names are better known to the world in their Cantonese form. The best example is probably the former Chinese leader, Chiang Kaishek, in Mandarin he is Jiang Jieshi.

**Walter Fung**

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# The Society for Anglo-Chinese Understanding

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