

# China Eye



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

**Summer 2023**

**Number 78**



## **Contents include:**

**Zoe Reed Outgoing Chair's Message**

**Chris Nash Incoming Chair's Message**

**Dragon Boats and Poems**

**Francis Moll-An Appreciation**

**Jesse Booth at Chinese Government Office**

**Clubbable China**

**Lee Ki Hung Gallery Reception**

**The Rise of China-Book Review (English and Chinese)**

**Artificial Intelligence in China**

**Reading About China**

**Sino File/SACU Diary**

# CHINA EYE

## Summer 2023 Issue No 78

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## Contents

3	Welcome
4	SACU Notices and SACU news
4	Letter from incoming chair
5	China Eye Diary
5	Lee Kai Hung Gallery Reception
6	Francis Moll-An Appreciation
7	Zoe Reed Outgoing Message
9	Chris Nash-Incoming Message
14	Authority Symbols-Republic of China
15	Dragon Boat Racing and Poems
17	Artificial Intelligence in China
18	The Rise of China-Book Review
19	The Shang Player
20	Reading about China
21	Clubbable China
24	Sino File of Current Events

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**The Autumn issue (Number 79) of China Eye will be available in early September 2023. Please send news or articles for inclusion before 20 August 2023 to Walter Fung, Tel 0161 799 6944,**

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**Front cover: In the Four Girls National Park, Sichuan (WF)  
Back cover; Market in Yunnan (WF)**

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

## Welcome Summer 2023

**SACU has a new Chair. There is a message from Zoe Reed, outgoing chair and a message from our new incoming chair Chris Nash on pages 7-10**

An interesting snippet from CDGW of 7-13 April, reported that in January, US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen, specifically flew to Switzerland to meet China's vice-premier Liu He, who was on his way to Davos. Yellen asked him for China's support for the dollar by buying US Treasury IOUs. She then flew on to Africa to warn African nations of China's so-called debt-trap diplomacy!

The anti-China reports and Cold War activities seem to be increasing. Accusations of 'Chinese police stations' in Western countries, have been followed with a headline in *The Times* (28/4/23) of 'Chinese banks 'laundering cash for drug cartels. Whatever Next?

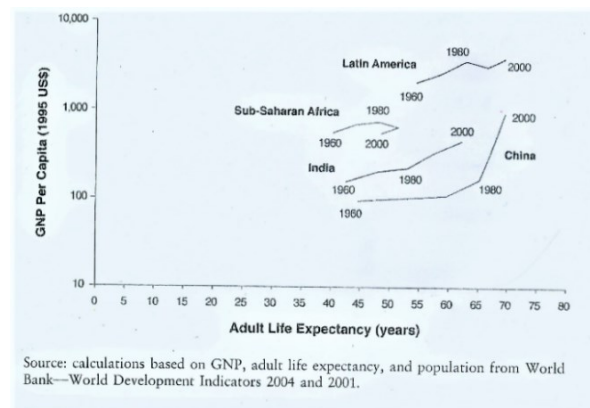
Meanwhile China continues to build infrastructure apace and focussing on developing the country and improving the lives of its people. The BRICS partnership is strengthening and over 14 other countries are said to be eager to join. (See Sino File on page 25). The BRI is making steady progress; Saudi Arabia could join the Shanghai Cooperative Organisation. Chinese built infrastructure is appearing in many countries. The world is changing. It is unfortunate that divisions are becoming more pronounced and this is likely to continue because of the perceived 'threat' of China by Western nations.

Analysts ponder if China will overtake the US economy. In purchasing power parity (PPP) China is already about 20% larger than the US. Very recently some 'experts' have expressed the view that China may never become an equal. *The Economist*, this week (13/5/23) has an article about 'China reaching its peak'. Presumably meaning that China will not grow significantly anymore? However, China's GDP per person is only about a quarter that of the US per person. 400 million Chinese are now middle class - the other one billion are in the range from near poverty to almost middle class. If the other billion people's wealth increases by only a small amount, the GDP of China will continue to grow. The Chinese government is determined to continue to raise the living standards of everyone, especially those in the lower sector. Even if the GDP per person increases to only half that of the GDP per person of the US, the overall Chinese economy will be twice that of the US.

Are the restrictions on trade and 'cold war' attitudes imposed by the US and other Western countries going to affect China's rise? They are bound to have some effect, but China has manged through very difficult times before with hardly any help from the West. From 1949 to 1979, the US did not recognise China. In fact, it was illegal for US citizens to go to China. But China made crucial advances in health care - a solid foundation for growth. In 1949 a quarter

of all Chinese were refugees in their own county - about 100 million. Expectation of life was 41 years and the infant mortality rate was 195 per thousand births. By 1960, the expectation of life had improved to 65 years and the infant mortality rate had dropped to 53 per thousand. In 2022 both the expectation of life and the infant mortality rate are very similar to the figures for the US. Infant mortality rate: China 5.7, US 5.4; Life expectancy about 78 years for both countries.

Significantly during 1949 to 1960, China eliminated or markedly reduced infectious diseases such as cholera, smallpox, plague, malaria, hookworm and schistosomiasis. The general condition of China in 1960 was below sub-Saharan Africa as the diagram shows but has made and continues to make rapid progress. China has gone through some very difficult times and made enormous progress with its own efforts. Chinese people trust their government. Ratings of well over 80% are consistently recorded in the Edelman Trust Barometer. Edelman is a US organisation.



From *Adam Smith in Beijing* by Giovanni Arrighi,, Verso 2007

**Words of advice from Vivienne Stern, chief executive of Universities UK (UUK), representing more than 150 UK universities** told the *I newspaper* that it would be good for both of us' if the UK encouraged more young people to study at Chinese universities. Since 2013, more than 67,000 people from the UK have participated in study, internship and teaching programmes in China, according to the British Council. However, this is dwarfed by the number of Chinese students coming to British universities every year, almost 115,000 enrolling last year alone - the highest of any country. Ms Stern said 'I believe that it's just as important for us to gain knowledge and understanding of China as the other way round. We should be encouraging more UK students to spend time in China, to learn Chinese, and to spend time in Chinese institutions.

**The Times of May 16<sup>th</sup> reported that virtually all Chinese Universities gained ground in the World University Rankings.** The lead university in China is Tsinghua, which was rated 44<sup>th</sup> in the world. This is comparable with King's College (40<sup>th</sup>) and Edinburgh (48<sup>th</sup>). China has ploughed money into its universities. British universities generally lost ground, although, Cambridge was rated 4<sup>th</sup> and Oxford 5<sup>th</sup>.

**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 the support of individual members. All SACU Council members are volunteers, nobody is paid. If you can help, please contact **Zoe Reed, SACU Chair**, on 07768 207702 or email: [chair@sacu.org.uk](mailto:chair@sacu.org.uk).

### Membership

Membership is open to all who subscribe to SACU's aims. Membership applications and renewals can be made online by logging into SACU's online membership account from our website: <https://sacu.org/join.html>

#### 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

#### Membership payment methods:

**Online:** pay with PayPal using your PayPal account or credit/debit card, by logging into SACU's online membership account from our website: <https://sacu.org/join.html>

**Offline:** bank transfer, standing order, cheque, recurring PayPal subscription plan – please email for details: [membership@sacu.org.uk](mailto:membership@sacu.org.uk)

Cheques may be made payable to SOC FOR ANGLO-CHINESE UNDERSTANDING LTD and send to: Mrs Rosamund Wong, SACU Membership Secretary, c/o 27 Portland Close, Bedford MK41 9NE, Mobile: 07906 956426 email: [membership@sacu.org.uk](mailto:membership@sacu.org.uk)

**Your email address will be used only for SACU purposes.** It will not be passed to any other person or organisation without your permission. In circulars such as the **SACU Email newsletter** your email details will be 'blind' and not visible to others.

### SACU Newsletter

We circulate a monthly email newsletter for members, which lists notices of forthcoming events, member news, and links to topical information that we consider will be of interest to SACU members. Members are invited to send items for inclusion to the SACU newsletter team. The newsletter is emailed to all members.

For your copy, please let the newsletter editor have your current email address by email: [membership@sacu.org.uk](mailto:membership@sacu.org.uk) Please remember, you can unsubscribe at any time.

### SACU's Digital Communications

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SACU suspended 'live' events because of the coronavirus pandemic. We have since held our events, Council and Executive Committee meetings on Zoom, with a successful 'hybrid' AGM. SACU's membership is spread across the UK and beyond and Zoom has enabled us to reach more of our members and the public than we did when holding physical meetings. We will therefore continue to hold some online and some hybrid events.

We are making increased use of our newsletter, social media and website to post articles and online events which inform and educate our members and readers about China and help counteract the many negative arguments currently appearing in the western media. Please do check our digital communications channels for details of new SACU events as they become available.

**SACU's three Working Groups** meet by Zoom on SACU Council days to plan more events and activities. **The working groups would welcome more members to join: if you would like to be involved, please contact us.**

Ros Wong, [membership@sacu.org.uk](mailto:membership@sacu.org.uk)

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## A letter from Chris Nash, incoming SACU Chair

Dear SACU members,

“有朋自远方来，不亦乐乎？ yǒu péng zì yuǎnfāng lái, bù yì lè hū, Isn't it pleasant to have friends coming from afar?” These are the inspirational words from the opening of the Analects of Master Kong, commonly called Confucius in the West.

Ever since the first contact between China and the western world in the Han dynasty in about 130 BCE, there has been an amazing series of networks and bridges between China and Europe. Did you know for example that the first Chinese visitor to Britain came in 1687, was named Shen and that he had an audience with James II?

Since 1965 the Society for Anglo Chinese Understanding has been building bridges of better understanding between Britain and China so that little known facts like this become

wider knowledge. Our team of hard-working volunteers have dedicated themselves to the task of harvesting knowledge on all the vast areas of common ground that bring our two countries with their profound histories and cultures together. For the last 14 years the team has been led superbly by Zoë Reed in her role as Chair and I'm sure all members will join in wishing her the sincerest of 'thank yous' for her dedication and hard work - 非常感谢

I am humbled to take on the responsibility of being chair of such a distinguished organisation. I want to thank the SACU Council for their trust in me and commit myself to furthering the great project that they have served for much longer than me. I know we will work together in the future to build on the rich legacy that Zoë and others have built. I bring to the position a life dedicated to the service of others in education, for 25 years in London schools in the UK and for the last 10 years in China.

I have used my time in China to absorb myself deeply in the culture, history and society of the country I have come to love. For ten years I believe I have built bridges between our two countries by preparing Chinese students for effective study in the UK and then to make their contribution to China and the wider world. All my life I have seen how knowledge breaks down barriers and deepens tolerance and understanding and that is the spirit I will bring to my work for SACU.

Sadly, around us lies a world of mistrust and division. I believe SACU shares with the vast majority of the ordinary British people and the Chinese people the idea that deeper partnerships between our two countries are not just of benefit to us, but to the whole world. Poetry unites our two countries in our deepest humanitarian ambitions. In the Tang Dynasty (618-907), the poet 王之涣 ~ Wang Zhihuan wrote a poem called '登鹳雀楼 Dēng guàn què lóu' or 'Climbing the Stork Tower': "欲穷千里目，更上一层楼 Yù qióng qiānlǐ mù, gèng shàng yī céng lóu"

Yearning to see a thousand miles further? Just climb one more storey." SACU brings us together with a shared dream, to touch the hearts and minds of the British people and the Chinese people, so that together we can climb a few more rounds of the Stork Tower of mutual understanding. Together through SACU we can better appreciate the centuries of history and culture that unify us in order that together we can better serve a wider world that will benefit from the deep wells of our two civilizations.

Best wishes, Chris Nash

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## China Eye Diary

This year (2023) is the Year of the Rabbit. Years are in a sequence of twelve animals: Rat, Ox, Tiger, Rabbit, Dragon, Snake, Horse, Goat, Monkey, Rooster, Dog and Pig.

2023, Year of the Rabbit,  
Next year 2024 is the Year of the Dragon

22 June, Dragon Boat Festival  
22 August, Chinese Valentine's Day  
1 October, National Day (usually a week-long holiday)  
23 October, Chong Yang (Senior's Day)

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## Forthcoming Council Meetings and Working Groups sessions

Council meetings are for council members only, but the Working Group sessions are usually open to all SACU members. Please consult the regular monthly newsletters. You will need to register for zoom connections.

22 July 2023

23 September 2023 SACU AGM

21 October 2023

**SACU has a new treasurer**, Miss Chunbin Zhao who was introduced to us by the new SACU Chair Chris Nash. Her appointment was approved at the last Council meeting.

**The SACU Archive Collect** is now up and running researchers can obtain a password from SACU council members.

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## SACU members at the Lee Kai Hung, Chinese Gallery Reception at Manchester University Museum

On 27<sup>th</sup> April SACU members amongst others were invited to a special reception at the new refurbished Manchester University Museum to welcome Dr Lee Kai Hung, the benefactor of the Chinese Gallery. Following, musical entertainment on solo Chinese instruments and songs by the Yinghua Chinese choir, welcome speeches were made by the Manchester University Vice-chancellor, Dame Nancy Rothwell, the museum director, Esme Ward and by the Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Greater Manchester, Steven Yeung. Steven is a director of the Yang Sing Restaurant and businesses in the Manchester Trafford Centre.



The Yinghua Choir of Xinhua Chinese Association (WF)



**Special reception at the Manchester University Museum. On the left; Walter Fung, Iris Yau; On the right, Bryan Sitch, Deputy Head of Collections and Project Assistant Fang Zong.**

## FRANCIS MOLL – AN APPRECIATION

I was saddened to receive the following e mail from the Meridian Society on 23 April 2023.

‘It is with great sadness that we have to inform you of Francis Moll’s passing. Francis served as Trustee/Director of The Meridian Society from 2015 to 2021 and carried out his duties as Secretary with the greatest diligence and deepest sense of responsibility. Despite his physical disability, he valued his independence and would partake in every activity possible, joined all the society’s tours to China and trudged with us through the battlefields of the Somme to commemorate the Chinese Labour Corps. In his spare time, he kept a keen eye on the stock market and would gladly give novices a tip or two. Those of you who knew Francis will remember that he was always of a cheerful disposition and enjoyed a good chat with friends old and new. We will miss him sorely.’



**Francis is in the centre of the trio laying a wreath to the five CLC men buried at Anfield cemetery in Liverpool (WF)**

Francis organised the Meridian holiday to Shandong where we visited the Tomb of Confucius, Mount Taishan and also Weihai. He was meticulous in tour details and produced a well-researched and informative leaflet of the itinerary, He had planned a tour of Hunan for 2019 but unfortunately it did not take place, because of the pandemic.

In Shandong, we managed to meet up with some descendants of the Chinese Labour Corps whom we had met in Flanders. This was arranged by Francis; it must not have

been an easy task. I was a little sceptical of it happening as we were on a tour which Francis had arranged with China Touring Corporation (CTS). However, at a bus stop in Zhoucun town there was a delegation of about eight civic leaders waiting for our arrival. They included CLC descendant, Mr Li Jun Qing, whom we had met in Flanders. He received us with great enthusiasm. They gave each one of us 12 Meridian/SACU members, a whole carton of Chinese biscuits, a bottle of Baijiu and other items.

Our CTS guide was concerned at these bulky gifts and commented that ‘they are going home to England, not just Beijing’. Zhoucun was in fact a major recruiting centre for the CLC. The civic leaders took us on a tour of the town. It was all impromptu and unexpected. One of their number was a photographer; maybe we appeared in the local press. Francis showed his resourcefulness and invited a number of the delegation to join us for dinner.



**Mr Li Jun Qing (wearing a hat). Francis is on the far right**



**At Zhujiacun village, Shandong with Mrs Cheng Ling. Her grandfather died clearing up a battlefield in Flanders. (WF)**

Francis was also a member of SACU. I will always remember him. I was with him on several trips to China and also on the Meridian expedition to the Battlefields in Flanders. Francis was active in the Meridian Society’s travels around England to pay tribute to the CLC men and draw attention to their sacrifice and contribution to the Allies in World War One. He participated in the ceremonies at the various locations, including Liverpool, where he laid a wreath

Francis attended a variety of both SACU and Meridian Society events in London and I joined him several times for a meal afterwards. Despite his disability he was always cheerful and positive about events. He was interested in all things Chinese. He was a Friend of China.

## Walter Fung

## Zoë Reed is our outgoing Chair and has written this companion piece to that of our incoming Chair (Chris) on pages 9 and 10

### Zoë Reed

My 14 years as Chair of SACU has been an amazing journey - making many new friends and having many different experiences on the way. The trust and support that I've received from SACU Council members, as well as the membership as a whole, has enabled us to reinvigorate SACU to become the thriving, relevant organisation it is today.

I joined SACU Council in 2005 and was asked to take over the Chair in 2009. My motivation was more personal than political. Joseph Needham had brought my father to study in UK and it was then that he met my mother. He returned to help build the New China in 1950. I had no contact with him until I traced him to Lanzhou, Gansu in 1997. My commitment to Joseph Needham's organisation and to Anglo-Chinese understanding was therefore very much a personal issue.

I felt then and remain with a sense that I am not an expert in the issues that are blocking the building of friendship and understanding between the peoples of China and the UK. However, what I could see around me in SACU Council and the wider membership was a wealth of expertise on the subject. What I could bring to this talent pool were skills and experience in leadership, strategy and coordination. These are the skills I use in my day job and whilst they are deployed differently in a setting peopled entirely by volunteers, nevertheless they proved to be what I could best contribute to our collective efforts to reviving SACU and ensuring it has a future that is relevant in this new age.

Issues of concern back in 2009 were a dwindling membership – holding at around 170 – and running a small annual deficit budget. Overwhelmingly though our main concern was the ageing demographic of SACU and that if we didn't become relevant to the next generation so they would join and maintain SACU, it would eventually cease to exist. As the Chair I knew that my primary responsibility was to ensure the continued existence of SACU as a thriving and relevant organisation. We respected the work which Council members has been doing to sustain SACU up to that point, however we knew things had to change. So in 2011 we started work on a strategy and invited the membership to help us develop a 21<sup>st</sup> Century SACU. Our vision for the future was that SACU would be a thriving organisation with a growing, active and involved membership with increasing influence nationally; would work in partnership to help build understanding on issues of global significance that impact China and UK; and would respect our heritage rooted in peoples-to-peoples connections and the Needham legacy. We published our strategy in China Eye Autumn 2011 and then set about working to it.

It is certainly very satisfying to look back at the strategy we developed over 10 years ago and see how much of it we have achieved. Membership growth is slow but steady and we are getting closer to double what it was then. We have a healthy budget from a

combination of excellent membership management, strategic partnership donations and fortuitous legacies. The Pandemic forced the pace of our modernisation and efficiency programmes which saved venue and travel costs by moving many of our administrative meetings and public events online. This also increased our reach and influence exponentially. Our contribution in the field is respected and most importantly of all we have a growing number of younger people joining the organisation as well as now comprising about 50% of SACU Council membership.

HE Ambassador Liu Xiaoming attended our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations in 2015. He also saw an important future for SACU and opened our conference with a congratulatory speech about what it had achieved. Amongst the things he said was that *Dr Joseph Needham has devoted his whole life to promoting understanding of China .... He was certainly worthy of the title "People's Friendship Envoy" – he was a great role model for us all.* He concluded his speech with the following remarks *Confucius said "At fifty, I knew the mandate of Heaven." Today SACU turns fifty. On this very special day, I give SACU my best wishes from the bottom of my heart. I believe you not only know your mandate but are fully committed to it. It is the mandate to advance China-UK understanding and friendship. It is the mandate to carry forward, in this new age and with new ideas, the lofty cause of bridging gaps and strengthening bonds.*

During my journey as Chair, I have learned a tremendous amount from many sources including Council members and new friends in China and UK. I have become more knowledgeable and appreciative of Chinese history and culture and how crucial it is to promote this in the current geopolitical context where some won't accept the significance of these aspects and also seek to divide humanity rather than to unite. The significance of the role SACU plays as a small but active and influential organisation seeking to educate the British Public on the culture and contribution of China is as crucial now as it was in 1965 when SACU was founded. And we are now set to continue our mandate.

I feel therefore that the time is right to handover the Chair and am absolutely delighted that Chris has taken up the baton. We have been working together for a smooth handover and I'm confident he will be a great Chair. I would like to place on record my thanks to SACU Council members for their commitment and hard work to the cause of building friendship and understanding between the people of China and the people of UK. We fulfilled our strategy and delivered our vision for SACU and can now work together for the next 10 years' development of SACU.



**孙如意女士 (Zoë Reed) 是我们英中了解协会即将卸任的主席，本篇文章与下一页即将上任新主席 (Chris) 撰写的文章是姐妹篇。**

## 孙如意

我担任英中了解协会 (SACU) 主席的 14 年是一段奇妙的旅程。这一路上我结交了许多新朋友，也获得了很多不一样的人生经历。英中了解协会理事会成员和全体会员都给予了我信任和支持，这使得我们得以重振我们的协会，让它能够与时俱进，迸发出新的活力。

我在 2005 年加入了协会的理事会。2009 年我被赋予主席这一职责。我接任主席的动机并非从政治角度出发，而是由于我个人的原因。李约瑟 (Joseph Needham) 教授将我的父亲带来了英国接受教育，就是那个时候，我父亲与我母亲相识相爱。父亲在 1950 年选择回国为建设新中国出一份力。而我一直到 1997 年才辗转在甘肃兰州找到了他，终于与他取得了联系。因此，我对李约瑟教授一手建立的这个组织的承诺，对推动中英文化了解出力，都是出于个人的原因。

从当时到现在，我一直觉得我并不是研究和理解中英两国人民建立友谊所遇到的障碍的专家。我身边的理事会成员和更广泛的组织成员在这一研究领域有着极其丰富的专业知识，而我则可以为这些有才能的人带来战略领导和协调上的技能和经验。这也是我在日常工作中所使用的技能。虽然我们的协会完全由志愿者来运营，这样的工作环境也需要不同的人员部署，但是事实证明，我们为了这个集体都做出了最好的努力，从而能够确保我们的协会在新时代能够与时俱进，在文化交流方面做出更大的贡献。

早在 2009 年的时候我们就有一个令人担忧的问题，协会的会员数量不断减少，大约只有 170 名会员。我们的年度预算赤字很小。我最大的担忧是随着我们会员慢慢老去，而且没有新一代会员加入并运营我们的组织，最终这个协会将不复存在。作为主席，我明白我的职责是确保英中了解协会能一直存在下去，并且要与时俱进蓬勃发展。我们尊重理事会成员为协会做出的贡献，但是我們也需要做出改变。

所以在 2011 年，我们开始着手制定一项战略计划，并邀请我们的会员们一同来发展二十一世纪的协会。我们对未来有着这样一个愿景：英中了解协会会成为一个蓬勃发展的组织，活跃参与的会员越来越多，并且可以在英国范围内具有越来越大的影响力。与此同时，我们会一同推动并加深中英文化的交流和了解，对具有全球发展意义的问题进行更深的探讨，尊重根植于两国人民之间联系的文化遗产和李约瑟教授所留下的宝贵精神。

我们在 2011 年秋季的《中国眼》杂志上发布了我们的战略计划，并开始着手实施。

如今回顾我们十多年前制定的计划，我们所实现的成果令人十分满意。我们的会员数量增长缓慢但稳定，这个数字即将要达到当年数量的两倍了。因为我们有着出色的会员管理模式，再加上战略合作伙伴的捐款和幸运的遗产捐赠，因此我们的年度预算处于健康的状态。全球的新冠疫情使我们不得不加快了管理现代化和高效化的脚步，通过将行政会议和公共活动转移到线上，我们节省了场地费用和差旅费用，这也使我们在网络上对更多人产生了更大的影响。我们在中英文化交流的领域中的贡献也受到了大家的尊重，更重要的是，越来越多的年轻人加入了英中了解协会，现在我们理事会一半的成员都是年轻人。

2015 年中国驻英大使的刘晓明大使 (HE Ambassador Liu Xiaoming) 出席了英中了解协会的成立 50 周年庆典。他不仅认为我们的协会在未来扮演一个重要的角色，而且他为我们的会议开幕上致辞，赞扬了协会历年来的贡献。他的演讲词中讲到这一句：

*李约瑟博士毕生致力于促进对中国的了解... 他当之无愧得“人民友谊使者”这个称号，是我们大家的楷模。*

那天，刘晓明大使还用以下的话结束了他的演讲：

*孔子说：“五十而知天命”。今天英中了解协会五十岁了。在这个非常特殊的日子，我发自内心地向协会致以最美好的祝愿。我相信大家不仅明白我们的使命是什么，并且我们一直为之全心投入。增进中英了解和友谊就是我们的使命。在这样的新时代，我们带着新理念，继往开来，努力弥合鸿沟加强纽带，这一崇高的事业就是我们的使命。*

我在担任协会主席期间，我从协会理事会成员和其他中英两国的新朋友身上学到了很多，受益匪浅。我对中国的历史和文化也有了更好的了解。而且我明白在如今的地缘政治背景下，在有些人不明白人类团结的重要性继而寻求分裂的时候，促进中英两国理解和友谊就显得尤为重要。协会作为一个小而充满活力有影响力的组织，我们致力于向英国公众宣传中国的文化与贡献。如今，这一理念的重要性与 1965 年协会成立时一般重要。我们也做好了准备，会继续努力实现完成我们的使命。

综上，我认为现在到了交出指挥棒的时候了。我很欣慰克里斯愿意接任主席。为了交接顺利，我们也一直共同努力着。我有信心他将会是一位出色的主席。我要正式感谢理事会成员为建立中英人民之间的友谊和理解所做出的承诺和付出。我们已经实现了我们十年前对协会的愿景和战略计划，现在我们将为协会的下一个十年的蓬勃发展继续共同努力。



## Welcome address from Chris Nash, SACU's incoming Chair

Chris Nash 克里斯 纳什

### 'Climb one storey higher' '更上一层楼'

“有朋自远方来，不亦乐乎？”

yǒu péng zì yuǎnfāng lái, bù yì lè hū ?

Isn't it pleasant to have friends coming from afar?"

(Confucius)

These are the inspirational words of the opening of the Analects of Master Kong, commonly called Confucius in the west. Ever since the first contact between China and the western world in the Han dynasty in about 130 BCE, there has been an amazing series of networks and bridges between China and Europe. Did you know for example that the first Chinese visitor to Britain came in 1687, was named Shen FuTsung and that he had an audience with King James II

Since 1965 the Society for Anglo Chinese Understanding has been building bridges of better understanding between Britain and China so that little known facts like this become wider knowledge. Our team of hard-working volunteers have dedicated themselves to the task of harvesting knowledge on all the vast areas of common ground that bring our two countries with their profound histories and cultures together. For the last 15 years the team has been superbly led by Zoe Reed (孙如意女士) in her role of Chair and I'm sure all members will join with me to wish her the sincerest of 'thank you's' for her dedication and hard work - 非常感谢！

I am humbled to take on the responsibility of being chair of such a distinguished organisation. I want to thank the SACU board for their trust in me and commit myself to furthering the great project that they have served for much longer than me. I know we will work together in the future to build on the rich legacy that Zoe and others have built.

I bring to the position a life dedicated to the service of others in education, for 25 years in London schools in the UK and for the last 10 years in China. I have used

my time in China to absorb myself deeply in the culture, history and society of the country I have come to love. For ten years I believe I have built bridges between our two countries by preparing Chinese students for effective study in the UK and then to make their contribution to China and the wider world. All my life I have seen how knowledge breaks down barriers and deepens tolerance and understanding and that is the spirit I will bring to my work for SACU.

Sadly, around us lies a world of mistrust and division. I believe SACU shares with the vast majority of the ordinary British people and the Chinese people the idea that deeper partnerships between our two countries are not just of benefit to us, but to the whole world.

Poetry unites our two countries in our deepest humanitarian ambitions. In the Tang Dynasty (618-907), the poet 王之涣 ~ Wang Zhihuan wrote a poem called '登鹳雀楼 Dēng guàn què lóu' or 'Climbing the Stork Tower':

“欲穷千里目，更上一层楼。”

Yù qióng qiānlǐ mù, gèng shàng yī céng lóu.

Yearning to see a thousand miles further? Just climb one more storey.”

SACU brings us together with a shared dream, to touch the hearts and minds of the British people and the Chinese people, so that together we can climb a few more rounds of the Stork Tower of mutual understanding. Together through SACU we can better appreciate the centuries of history and culture that unify us so that together we can better serve a wider world that will surely benefit from the deep wells of our two civilisations.



## 更上一层楼 –

作者：Chris Nash 克里斯 纳什

译者：Jiayi Li 李佳锡

“有朋自远方来，不亦乐乎？”

yǒu péng zì yuǎnfāng lái, bù yì lè hū ?

*Isn't it pleasant to have friends coming from afar?"*

*(Confucius)*

这些给人带来灵感的诗句来自于孔夫子《论语》的开篇，西方人称其为孔子。自从公元前 130 年左右，中国古代汉朝人与西方人首次接触以来，中国与欧洲之间就出现了一系列令人叹为观止的人际连接的网络和桥梁。比如你是否知道，历史上第一位来到英国的中国游客名叫沈福宗，他还见证了当时的英国国王詹姆斯二世？

自 1965 年以来，英中了解协会 (SACU) 就一直致力于在中英两国之间建立起互相理解的桥梁，这样一来，像以上的这些鲜为人知的事实才能得到更广泛的传播。我们协会的志愿者们十分勤奋，他们努力在中英两国大量的共同点上发掘知识，正是这些共同之处让我们两个国家深厚的历史与文化联系在一起。

在过去的 14 年里，孙如意女士 (Zoe Reed) 一直担任着协会的主席并出色地领导着这个志愿者团队，我确信所有的会员都会同我一起向她致以最诚挚的感谢，我们感谢她的辛劳与奉献——非常感谢！

英中了解协会是一个杰出的组织，能够担任这个组织新一任的主席，我感到十分荣幸。我要感谢协会理事会成员们对我的信任，我也要感谢他们在过去的几十年里为了不断推动中英交流这一伟大事业所做出的长期贡献。我们将在未来共同努力，在孙如意女士和其他成员们已经建立起来的丰富遗产的基础上更上一层楼。

那么我能为这个难得的岗位带来什么呢？我曾在英国伦敦的学校里工作了 25 年，过去的十年，我在中国工作。在这总共 35 年的时间里，我一直是个勤勤恳恳的教育者。我热爱着中国，我也利用在中国的这十年时间深深地融入了中国的文化，历史与

社会。我相信我也一直为中英之间的文化桥梁出一份力——我帮助我的学生们为有意义的留学做准备，我也帮助他们进一步为中国和更广阔的世界做出他们的贡献，成为中英文化的破冰者。在我的一生中，我不断见证了知识如何打破文化壁垒，如何加深彼此的宽容与了解，以上就是我能给协会带来的精神。

可悲的是，我们现在生活在一个缺乏信任和团结的世界。我相信英中了解协会和绝大多数的英国民众想法是一致的——那就是我们两国之间更深层次的合作不仅有利于彼此，对整个世界也是有好处的。

从最深切的人道主义出发，诗歌可以把英国和中国团结起来。唐代诗人王之涣 (618 - 907) 写了一首诗为《登鹳雀楼》：

“欲穷千里目，更上一层楼。”

Yù qióng qiānlǐ mù, gèng shàng yī céng lóu.

*Yearning to see a thousand miles further? Just climb one more storey."*

因为有着共同的梦想，英中了解协会把我们大家聚集起来去共同触动英国人民和中国人民的心灵。那么让我们一起再登鹳雀楼，再上一层楼，继续加深彼此文化上的了解吧。

英国和中国的悠久历史和文化让我们团结在一起，通过这个协会，我们可以更好地欣赏彼此的历史和文化，继而可以为更广阔的世界做出贡献，而这个世界也一定会从东方文明和西方文明中同时受益。



# JESSIE BOOTH AT THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT INFORMATION OFFICE

## Marion Carlise

*Marion is a musician and writer, now living in West Wales. She grew up in Harpenden just down the road from her grandmother, Jessie Booth. As a child, Marion knew how interested her grandmother was in China. Now, reading through her correspondence file Marion appreciates just how much her grandmother did for Anglo-Chinese cooperation in the 1940's. Jessie has not been forgotten.'*

## JESSIE'S LIFE AND INSPIRATION

My grandmother was born in 1900 to working class parents in North London, Mr and Mrs Law. Jessie trained as a secretary and would have been employed before she joined the Chinese Government Information Office (CGIO) in 1942. She was a great organiser as many of her extended family know well, and always curious about people and places.



## Jessie Booth with her husband in 1949

When her interest in China began is unclear. She was very interested in Chinese history, poetry and the moral teaching of Confucius. Almost certainly, her Socialist background inspired her to look towards China in the early 1920's. Jessie and her wide circle of friends were members of the National Council of British Socialist Sunday Schools. The Ten Socialist Precepts were very different from the Ten Commandments; these precepts reflected a passion for justice, rights and equality.

The final Declaration reads: *'We desire to be just and loving to all our fellow men and women, to work together as brothers and sisters, to be kind to every living creature and so help to form a New Society, with Justice as its foundation and Love its law'*.

In 1923, she married Frederick Lennox Booth. Jessie and Len (as he was known) loved music and theatre and performed in concerts for North Islington Socialist Sunday School. Frederick J. Gould, a well-respected pacifist and socialist, was among their friends (*Towards a World at*

*Peace - Pages for Young Readers*, 1919). Here is part of his letter to Jessie's son, David Lennox, just after his birth.

Dear Comrade David Lennox,

'I cannot expect you to reply to this note at present. And to tell you the truth, friend David, although I am 71, and am a Socialist and have read many books in the British Museum Library, and have been to Bombay and Rome and Chicago, I really do not know a vast deal about this world myself. But among other things, I know you have a good mother and father and a good grandmother and grandfather and I think, well, I know that England is a good Motherland to belong to.

And I can tell you a dream of mine - of a world where all homes, from Pole to Pole are beautiful and no man is poor and friendless. You can help to make the dream come true, comrade David and that will be your reply to this little Note.' Your friend, F.J. Gould

Jessie was also a story-teller and had two children's books published in the early 1940's: *'Little People in Far Off Lands - China'* and the following year *'Tales from China'*. She describes family life in China - how far this was her imagination or from research, I don't know. Here is the first part of *'New Year At the Tan's'* (the Chinese New Year, of course).

'It was the morning of New Year's Day and the Tan family were gathered in a room which was bare except for a small table on which were laid several large books containing the family records. Above the table on the wall were fixed the ancestral tablets, paintings and photographs of members of the Tan family now dead. The grandparents, who had died quite recently, had had their portraits painted while alive and these now hung over the table. The tablets, looking like little panels of painted wood, were decorated each with the name of an ancestor and his or her date of birth and death. There were sixteen Chinese in that room and one little English girl. The Chinese, of course, were all Yui's relations and the little English girl, as you will guess, was Betty Jones'.

After 1949 the Booth family left Edgware and moved to Harpenden in Hertfordshire. In later life Jessie and Len travelled widely, to Europe and America for holidays with a specific cultural or literary focus. Jessie was very active until the end of her life at the age of 72 in the W.E.A., the local amateur dramatic society and as chairperson of the local Cooperative Society. She organized garden parties, poetry readings and much more. She also had her two granddaughters just down the road to mentor and enjoy.

## THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT INFORMATION OFFICE

My grandmother's love for China, I believe, was inspired by her Socialist understanding and hope for a brighter tomorrow. And then the chance arose for her to join the Chinese Government Information Office.

She was one of the first to join the staff at the Chinese Government Information Office (CGIO) in Cavendish Street, London (1942 to 1949). As Director of Public Relations and General Office Affairs, she ran the Speakers Bureau which organized meetings throughout the United Kingdom during the war and afterwards. The aim of these meetings was to foster and maintain the interest of the general public in political and cultural matters in China. The Director of the CGIO was Dr. Neville Whymant, a scholar of Chinese history, classics, art, education and philosophy. He was described as a 'sinologue of high standing and distinction'.

Jessie's work at the CGIO happened at a time of great upheaval and uncertainty in China. She never spoke to me about her political views (I was a young teenager when she died), so I don't know how strongly she leaned towards the Communist Party of China. Certainly, Jessie was supportive of the communist vision of a fairer and more egalitarian society, at odds with the official view in the U.K. which was strongly anti-communist. This put her in a dilemma - which she refers to in her 1949 letter to Dr. Yeh (China's government representative in London) over the Taiwan crisis.

Another clue to her political views is Edgar Snow's *'Red Star Over China'* - the classic account of the birth of Chinese Communism. This was first published in 1937, so did Jessie already have a copy of the book when she worked at CGIO? Over twenty years later, she gave me the book when I was eleven or twelve - and I read it with curiosity.

My father kept a file of letters addressed to Jessie from her Chinese colleagues, some of whom became close friends. These letters reflect political and social changes leading up to the final victory of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). After 1949, her colleagues went in different directions. Kuang-Mien Chu returned to mainland China while others left for Taiwan.

There is also a confidential report from the United Kingdom Office in 1947 (Report No. 38). Jessie certainly would have read it. The report reflects the Foreign Office view of so-called propaganda relating to the CCP, at that time a guerilla army in the liberated areas. This contrasts with the experience of the Adviser from the New China News Agency who saw events unfolding in China with his own eyes. I wonder how my Grandmother viewed the situation?

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### **From the Report of the opening of the London and European Office of the New China News Agency 1947**

'The New China News Agency was formerly inaugurated in June 1947 with an office in Fleet Street. They had a number of correspondents in the 'so-called liberated areas' plus military and political experts. Jack Chen, the news agency Adviser, addressed the Press gathering as he had recently been in China. Two things had struck him most in his recent visit to China; the degeneration of the Kuomintang and the tremendous and growing support for the administration in the liberated areas.

He took the usual party line about the corruption in the present Government and alleged that only five months after promulgation of the new Constitution practically every big city in China was under martial law. Newspaper men and liberal elements were arrested as the Kuomintang (Nationalist Government) was eliminating opposition before the forthcoming election. He called for the true Kuomintang policy as laid down by Dr. Sun Yat-sen. 'Get rid of the right-wing leadership in the Kuomintang and you will get peace,' he said.

About the Outer Mongolian invasion, Chen said it was a mere frontier incident, such as often happened before. The Kuomintang was over-exaggerating the affair in order to convince the United States of the real danger from Russia and thus push through the American loan. U.S. policy, Chen said, was the key to peace in China. The right-wing elements in the U.S. were planning to finance the Kuomintang sufficiently to keep China in a state of war in order to keep down Communist influence.

Jack Chen denied, as usual, that the liberated areas were Communist and said that he was working for a democratic government which would not be a puppet of either the United States or Russia. He said he had no need to emphasise the strength of the liberated areas as the Press had no doubt read what Edgar Snow, Harrison Forman and Robert Payne had written.

In conclusion he passed a message to Britain to the effect that the New China News Agency should provide a valuable link between New China and Britain, and that any British Parliamentary Mission would be welcome in the liberated areas.

There were about 40 Pressmen present in all, but no leading dailies were represented. Even though the reception was held in Fleet Street and convenient for press people to pop in, nothing appeared in the following morning's newspapers.

Afterwards, a member of the Far Eastern Information Department of the Foreign Office assured the writer of this report that he and others fully understood the background and character of the New China News Agency. 'I know Jack Chen very well, as we all do, and also what the New China News Agency is.'

As far as official British circles were concerned, the whole organisation was ignored as a propaganda agency of an anti-Government political faction of a foreign country. At that time the United Kingdom Office, Ambassador F.T. Cheng, the Central News Agency of China and the British Foreign Office all took the same attitude ie not to attach any importance to the Communist news agency but to keep their eyes and ears open to what was happening.'

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### **EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS TO MRS. JESSIE BOOTH**

**From Chu Fu-Sung, Director of the Interational Department of the Government Information Office (CGIO) Nanking, China. September 1948**

Dear Dr. Whymant and Mrs. Booth,

Recently I had several talks with Dr. Yeh about the United Kingdom Office. Both he and I felt that some sort of award should be given to the British members of our London staff as a sign of appreciation. As a result we decided to petition the Government to include your names (Whymant and Booth) in the forthcoming Double Tenth or New Year's Honour List.

The economic situation in China has become much more stabilized since the adoption of the new Gold Yuan system. The prices have definitely been checked to a not too intolerable level. The President's son, Chiang Ching-kuo, is doing a courageous and fruitful task by arresting a number of the so-called big shots and executing several of them on account of hoarding and speculation. The future lies in the military campaign and we hope the rebels can be checked. I've been back for six months. My thoughts have been with you all the time. I hope that some day I may come back for a look. I shall appreciate a line from you from time to time.

Yours sincerely, Chu Fu-sung

**From Chu Fu-sung, Taiwan Provincial Government, Teipei, March 1949**

Dear Mrs Booth,

Many thanks for your letter of 10<sup>th</sup> February. I am sorry that you and all other English staff in the CGIO London office have gone into retirement after so many years of invaluable service. I wonder how the office is carrying on with so few persons, I'll be very grateful if you will keep me informed.

My wife is here in Taiwan with me. As life is rather hard on the continent, I have decided not to proceed to Canton, and therefore I have resigned from the directorship of the international department of the CGIO. (NB: the headquarters of the CGIO had moved from Nanking to Canton). As Taiwan has become very important in view of the changes on the continent, I think it is worth while to have a try on this island. So I have now joined the provincial government as a Counselor in charge of public relations.

I shall be much obliged if you will once in a while send me some press cuttings bearing important views on China and the Far East. Some time ago I bought a Penguin book entitled *'Labour Marches On'*, but it is now lost. Will you please buy a copy and airmail it to me? If there are any other good books on British Labour Government and its policies and administration, please also buy some for me.

With kind regards to you all and to your husband and David.  
Yours sincerely, Chu Fu-Sung

**April 1949 News Message from Nanking issued by the CGIO, London:**

Along with other Chinese Information Offices in Europe, the CGIO in London was closed: *'By order of the Executive Yuan the Chinese Government Information Office*

*has been abolished and for the time being, China Newsweek will cease publication.'*

**From Kuang-Mien Lu, International Refugee Organization, Geneva June 1949**

Dear Jessie,

It is already over two weeks since I came back from China. I felt very sorry that you had to leave your present work and I hope the time will come sooner or later for you to make your valuable contributions to a somewhat similar kind of work. The picture in China will be quite clear within the next couple of months. I am sure the New Government will be a coalition. It all depends to what extent it is really established on a broad democratic basis. If it is a real coalition, then it will certainly be a new era for China and we may expect the forthcoming of bright days and new developments as we have been expecting for all these years.

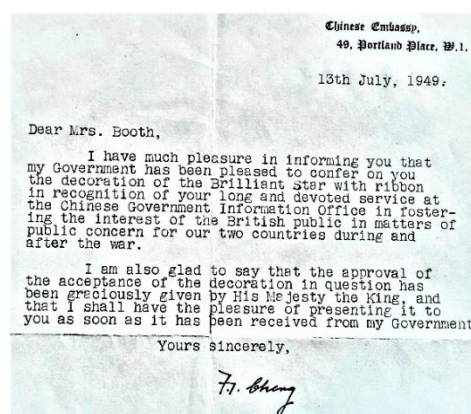
Hoping to hear from you soon and with best wishes to you and the family. K.M. Lu

**From the Chinese Embassy, Portland Place, London July 1949**

Dear Mrs Booth,

I have much pleasure in informing you that my Government has been pleased to confer on you the decoration of the Brilliant Star with ribbon in recognition of your long and devoted service at the Chinese Government Information Office in fostering the interest of the British public in matters of public concern for our two countries during and after the war. I am also glad to say that the approval of the acceptance of the decoration has been graciously given by His Majesty the King and that I shall have the pleasure of presenting it to you as soon as it has been received from my Government. Yours sincerely etc.

NOTE: In January 1950 there is still no news of the Brilliant Star award. It never did arrive.



**Letter to Jessie from the Chinese Embassy 1949**

**To be continued in China Eye No 79, Autumn 2023**

# THE TWELVE SYMBOLS OF IMPERIAL AUTHORITY 'VISUALISING THE MANDATE OF HEAVEN' by David Rosier

This article is a continuation from China Eye No 77, Spring 2023

## The Republic of China 1912-1928

With the fall of Imperial rule in 1911 one would logically assume that mandated/regulated court costume, with its iconography associated with status and rank, would have become obsolete. That, however, was not the case and what transpired is directly associated with the use of the 12 Symbols of Imperial Authority.

General Yuan Shikai was a leading military figure in the last 2 decades of the Qing Dynasty and a close ally of the Dowager Empress Cixi. Following the abdication of Emperor Xuantong (Puyi) on 12<sup>th</sup> December 1911 Sun Yatsen (Father of the Revolution) was appointed Provisional President.

Yuan Shikai quickly manoeuvred events such that he was appointed the First President of the Republic of China on the 14<sup>th</sup> February 1912. From the outset it became obvious that Yuan Shikai wished to re-establish a hereditary monarchy and on the 12<sup>th</sup> December 1915 proclaimed himself the Hongxian Emperor.



As part of this process, he created insignia of rank badges for himself and his senior ministers. These roundels depicted a varying number of the 12 symbols of imperial authority. Yuan Shikai wore all 12 symbols (see illustration) and his ministers' displayed badges with 10, 9, 7, 5, or 3 symbols according to status.



The self-appointment as emperor proved extremely unpopular and after only 83 days he was forced to abdicate on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 1916. His health was rapidly deteriorating and on the 6<sup>th</sup>

June 1916 he died of uraemia aged 56.

That is not quite the end of the deployment of these symbols because in 1912 the government had approved a design that would become the *National Emblem of the Republic*.

It incorporated several of the 12 symbols and would be used until 1928.

## Dragon Boats... and Poets

Chris Nash

Chinese culture is now world culture and dragon boat racing is one of the potent symbols of how Chinese roots are growing international fruit across the world. This June there will be Dragon Boat races at locations across the UK. We hope people will enjoy the spectacle and a taste of Chinese culture, but there is so much more to this festival than dragon boats.

First of all we can note that it's not called 'dragon boat festival' at all in Chinese. The name in Chinese is 端午节 - duān wǔ jié, which means the festival of the fifth day of the fifth month - the 'double fifth'. That's because it's more about the time of the year than an event. Let's explore this a little. One of the deepest connections between Chinese and British culture is that both cultures are still strongly rooted in the changing seasons. Just underneath the Christian festivals in Britain are the haunting echoes of older celebrations linked to nature's cycle. The most ancient origins of the double fifth festival are in beliefs about the fifth month as a time of the year when as temperatures increased there were increasing health risks.

There is a set of customs linked to this. One of these is to put medicinal herbs on door lintels to prevent diseases from entering the house. And this is not just superstition. One of the herbs, called mugwort or 艾蒿, àihāo in Chinese has been proven to have medicinal properties, including the ability to deter mosquitoes. Another health related custom is the drinking of a type of wine called 雄黄酒 - xióng huáng jiǔ or in English 'realgar wine'. The realgar is believed to keep away poisonous creatures. People will draw the Chinese character '王' on the foreheads of their children using the wine. '王', wáng is a character associated with power, so putting a 王 on the forehead will give your child the power to resist disease at the dangerous time of the fifth month.

There are two ways of looking at these sorts of beliefs. On one level they are certainly superstitions and most scientific thinking modern Chinese people will not follow them. Nevertheless there are always deep roots and wisdom behind them, a different science to our own.

Just like in the UK, no festival in China is complete without a festival food. For 'duan wu jie' we must eat 粽子, zòngzi which are dumplings made of glutinous rice wrapped in bamboo or reed leaves. In the north of China jujube dates are often added to the sticky rice. In the south bean paste, ham or egg yolks are common. Nowadays there are zòngzi to match every taste. There is archaeological evidence that people in China were wrapping food in leaves to cook it as much as 8,000 years ago, soon after rice cultivation started.

In fact zòngzi became very popular as a Chinese equivalent of the later British sandwich, an easy and convenient food to carry around with you!

So where's the link between zòngzi and dragon boats? Nearly there. To make that link we need to introduce a very famous Chinese poet and politician, 屈原, Qū Yuán who lived in the Warring States period between 340 and 278 BCE. He was a very talented poet indeed and one of his poems 'Sorrow at Parting', 离骚, Lisao is well worth reading. But it is Qū Yuán's death which is inextricably linked to Dragon Boat festival and zòngzi. Qū Yuán was a nobleman in the state of Chu, one of the warring states in conflict with 秦 Qín which is part of modern Shaanxi and Gansu provinces and which eventually brought the warring states together as one unified country. There is a long tradition in China of exiles from the seats of power becoming wandering poets. Qū Yuán was one such, but with a tragic ending. Eventually he drowned himself in despair in the Miluo River, a tributary of the Yangtze.

Enter the zòngzi and dragon boats. The legend is that local people went out in their boats to try to save the drowning poet and when they failed to find him they dropped parcels of sticky rice into the river waters so that hungry fish would feed on the rice, rather than the body of the poet. In order to commemorate Qū Yuán, every fifth day of the fifth lunar month people beat drums and paddle out in boats on the river as they once did to keep fish and evil spirits away from his body.

So there we are, we've joined the loose threads together. Like so many folk festivals and customs here in Britain, at the heart of Dragon Boat we can find the timeless idea of protecting ourselves in an unpredictable world.

Thank you for following the article. Now to get ourselves in the mood for the excitement and drama of the racing let's read an extract from the famous Chinese novel '*Bian Cheng / Border Town*' written by the author, Shen Congwen. It is set in a small rural town in 1930's Hunan province, then very remote.

"At the Dragon Boat Festival on the fifth day of the fifth lunar month, women and children put on new clothes and painted the character wang, or "king," on their foreheads using wine mixed with realgar. Everybody got to eat fish and meat this day. By eleven o'clock in the morning, all Chadong was sitting down to lunch, after which those who lived in town locked their doors and went down to the riverside to see the dragon boats race. If they knew people on River Street, they could watch from the houses on stilts overhanging the river. Otherwise, they watched from in front of the customs house or from one of the many piers. The dragon boat race began downstream at the Long Depths stretch of the river. The finish line was in front of the customs house. The local military officers, customs officials, and all people of importance gathered at the customs house this day to take in the excitement.

The oarsmen had prepared for the race days in advance, with each competing team selecting its strongest and nimblest young lads to practice their manoeuvres in the deep part of the river. The dragon boats were longer and narrower than ordinary wooden boats, with upturned ends and a long vermilion stripe painted on the hull. Most of the year they were stored in dry caves by the river. When it came time to use them, they were towed out into the water. Each boat sat twelve to eighteen oarsmen, a helmsman, and two men to beat the drum and gong.

The oarsmen's short paddles rowed the boat forward to the rhythm of the drumbeats—first unhurried, then urgent. The red-turbaned cox sat in the prow waving two little signal flags left and right, directing the motion of the boat. The men who pounded the drum and beat the gong usually sat amidships.

The moment the boat launched, they started up the single-minded booming and clanging that governed the speed with which the boatmen thrust their oars into the river. The boat's speed had to follow the sound of the drum and gong, so whenever two boats got to the climax of their competition, the thunder of the percussion, added to the encouraging cheers from both banks, recalled novels and stories about Liang Hongyu beating her drum in the historic naval battle at Laoguan River, and the cacophony when Niu Gao fished the rebel Yang Yao out of the water.

All who rowed their boat to victory were rewarded at the finish line in front of the customs house with red silk and a little silver badge, not just for their individual efforts but to acknowledge the boat's glorious teamwork. Soldiers used to taking things into their own hands felt compelled to congratulate the victorious boat by setting off strings of five-hundred-pop firecrackers.”

(*Shen Congwen, Border Town, 1934, page 27*)

Let's enjoy the Duanwu, double fifth festival and see it as an opportunity to deepen our knowledge of China and the bonds of understanding between two great traditional cultures full of fascinating customs.



粽子, zongzi



屈原, Qū Yuán



凤凰 / Fènghuáng

## 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. Currently the group has over 140 members, who travel from Cumbria, Cheshire, Nottingham and Lancashire as well from all parts of Yorkshire to attend workshops. These workshops usually take place at a weekend and sometimes for two-days. They are suitable for beginners or experienced artists.

The group produces a regular monthly newsletter packed with information. Meetings are usually held every month at the Pool-in-Wharfedale Memorial Hall LS21 1LG (on the A659) at the bottom of Pool Bank, just off the A658 between Bradford and Harrogate). The venue has excellent facilities and car parking.

**Further information from the Secretary: Anne Allan,**  
**Tel: 01422 368482 or email: [mail@anneallan.com](mailto:mail@anneallan.com)**  
**Website: [www.cbpsyorks.co.uk](http://www.cbpsyorks.co.uk)**



## Artificial Intelligence in China by Oliver Harris

China's relentless pursuit of artificial intelligence (AI) dominance has caught the world's attention. The Chinese government has poured significant resources into AI development, with the goal of making China the world's primary AI innovation center by 2030. Stanford University's AI Index, which assesses AI advancements worldwide across various metrics in research, development, and economy, ranks China among the top three countries for global AI vibrancy.

China's AI landscape is rapidly evolving, and the government has made it a strategic priority. China's State Council has released a national strategy for AI that outlines the country's plan to become the world's leading AI power by 2030. To achieve this, China has pledged to invest heavily in AI research and development, with the aim of generating \$150 billion in AI-related revenue in the next 7 years.

China's AI industry has grown significantly in recent years, with companies such as Baidu, Alibaba, and Tencent upgrading their AI-research divisions of their organisations. These companies have developed AI-powered products and services in areas such as finance, e-commerce, and healthcare. McKinsey's research indicates that in the coming decade there is tremendous opportunity for AI growth in new sectors in China, including some where innovation and R&D spending have traditionally lagged global counterparts: automotive, transportation, and logistics; manufacturing; enterprise software; and healthcare and life sciences.

As cities become more populous, the demand for efficient transportation and public safety increases. Fortunately, AI-powered solutions are emerging to help meet these challenges. Imagine a future where traffic flows smoothly, thanks to advanced AI-powered traffic management systems that optimize routes and reduce congestion. Meanwhile, AI-powered surveillance systems keep a watchful eye on public spaces, identifying potential safety hazards and deterring criminal activity.

And in the classroom, AI-powered personalised learning systems empower students to learn at their own pace, while providing teachers with real-time feedback on their progress. With these innovative technologies, we can create safer, more efficient, and more effective cities that benefit everyone.

Hopping over to the other side of the world, the field of AI research is thriving in the UK, with world-renowned institutions and a strong community of experts driving innovation. However, the potential for collaboration extends far beyond national borders.

One promising avenue is the UK-China Research and Innovation Partnership Fund, established in 2014 to foster collaboration between researchers in both countries on cutting-edge technologies such as AI and robotics. By

pooling resources and expertise, the UK and China can accelerate progress and unlock new opportunities in these rapidly evolving fields.

Ethical and moral issues thrown up by AI can also be areas where dialogue between China and the UK can intersect. As AI becomes more prevalent in society, ethical considerations become increasingly important. In the UK, the government has established the Centre for Data Ethics and Innovation to develop best practices for the ethical use of AI. Meanwhile, China has also taken steps in this direction, releasing its first national-level guidance on AI ethics. By working together on AI ethics and governance, the UK and China can help ensure that these powerful technologies are used responsibly and for the benefit of all. With collaboration and cooperation, the possibilities for AI are limitless.

The race for AI dominance has reached fever pitch, with China's relentless pursuit garnering significant attention. The Chinese government has strategically poured vast resources into AI development, aiming to establish the country as the world's leading AI innovation center by 2030. With innovation in AI expected to expand into previously untapped sectors such as transportation, manufacturing, and enterprise software, a future filled with smarter cities, personalized learning systems, and ethical AI governance is not far off. The UK-China Research and Innovation Partnership Fund represents a promising avenue for these two global powerhouses to combine forces and advance at an unprecedented rate, unleashing new and uncharted opportunities in the rapidly-evolving field of artificial intelligence.

And for SACU? Well, the author of this article can quite happily conclude their role will be made significantly easier with the improvement in quality of AI technologies. In fact, what if I told you that most of this article was written by AI? Would you be able to tell which paragraphs were written by a human and which were written by AI? What about this line?



**Oliver prompted an AI website with the 'The Future of AI in China' and received this back!**

读 2021 年 09 月英文版《中国崛起》有感  
Dr Yong Sun (孙踊)

2023 年 03 月 08 日

今天 2023 年 03 月 08 日收到网购来的，估计是 2021 年 09 月英文版“中国崛起”，即：The Rise of China: fresh insights and observations - a collection of essays, 全书 154 页 15 章外加前言和引言以及致谢，书背写到：The Rise of China - Fresh Insights and Observations is a carefully curated collection of essays from China experts. The intent of the book is to educate, inform and stimulate readers to rethink some of the highly complex issues at hand. Taken as a whole, the book urges readers not to fall into the singularity trap of viewing China only through single lenses such as breaches of human rights, or of the competition between the world's super powers as a zero sum game; but to see the light between tensions where bridges between cultures are constructed from informed dialogue to tackle some of the planets' most intractable problems to create a safer, kinder future. 这几天有书读了。

2023 年 03 月 10 日

今天 2023 年 03 月 10 日读英文版“中国崛起”有近一半，感觉是英国自由民主党组织的一个有关中国议题的一个汇总，印象是前言提到鸦片战争的后果仍然影响着当今的中英关系，引言提到该书要整体来看，第一章引人注意的是，说中国有 4 千 6 百万公务员，占全中国 7 亿 7 千万的雇员来说是 13%，同样的数字在美国是 16%，而法国是 26%，第三章作者不负其履历，第 7 章作者中规中矩，还是支持中国在香港的一国两制之实践，对于当前香港人才流失，作者提到 1989 年大陆风波之后，香港那时流失去加拿大的人才，有 30 万后来陆续返回，暗示不用过于担心，因想尽早知道全书的概貌，提前读了最后一章，引起关注的是说若新冷战引起西方封锁马六甲海峡的话，中国在吉布提的军事基地之军会封锁苏伊士运河来反制，目前这就是读此书一半的感受。

2023 年 03 月 11 日

读了《中国崛起》的后半部分，觉得第 12 章至第 14 章值得读，这里要说的是第 14 章是我看到的英国今后在世界上占位的一篇公开叙述，概括起来就是“美欧英中”，不知这只是英国自由民主党的立场，还是有更广泛的共识，总之，同意引言作者说的，该书要整体来看。

附注：不知何因，第一章作者把 4 千 6 百万公务员占 7 亿 7 千万全中国雇员的百分比定为 13%？应当是近 6% 才对。

My thoughts on the English version  
(September 2021) of “The Rise of China”  
Dr Yong Sun (孙踊). Translated by Jiaxi Li (李佳锡)

8<sup>th</sup> March, 2023

Today I received a purchased copy of “The Rise of China” in English. It was published in September 2021 and its full book title is “The Rise of China: fresh insights and observation – a collection of essays”. This book contains 154 pages and 15 chapters as well as a preface, an introduction and acknowledgements. On the back of the book cover, it reads:

*“The Rise of China - Fresh Insights and Observations- is a carefully curated collection of essays from China experts. The intent of the book is to educate, inform and stimulate readers to rethink some of the highly complex issues at hand. Taken as a whole, the book urges readers not to fall into the singularity trap of viewing China only through single lenses such as breaches of human rights, or of the competition between the world's superpowers as a zero sum game; but to see the light between tensions where bridges between cultures are constructed from informed dialogue to tackle some of the planets' most intractable problems to create a safer, kinder future.”*

I have something to read now.

10<sup>th</sup> March 2023

Today is the 10<sup>th</sup> of March 2023 and I have nearly half of the book “The Rise of China”. It reads like a summary of discussion of China-related topics by the British Liberal Democratic Party. My impression is that the consequences of the Opium War still have an impact on Sino-British relations today. The preface mentions that this book should be understood as a whole.

In Chapter 1, it is noticeable that the author says there are 46 million civil servants in China, accounting for 13% of the 770 million employed people in China. The respective figures for the US and France are 16% and 26%. The author of Chapter 3 writes some interesting content, which is consistent with his academic qualifications and experience.

The author of Chapter 7 takes rather a neutral position on the issues related to Hong Kong and is neither pro-China nor pro-UK. He does support the implementation of China's One Country, Two Systems policy in Hong Kong. Regarding the current problem of brain drain in Hong Kong, the author maintains that many Hong Kong talents left for Canada after the political disturbance in mainland China in 1989, however, 300,000 Hong Kong people gradually returned to Hong Kong afterwards. Therefore, he suggests that this is problematic now.

I was eager to understand the overview of this book so I jumped to the final chapter. One argument caught my

attention – it was argued that if the west blocked the Strait of Malacca (the route for much of China’s oil) as a result of today’s new Cold War, China might be forced to respond to this extremely provocative action. This concludes my reviews of half of the book so far.

### 11<sup>th</sup> March 2023

After having read the second half of the book “The Rise of China”, I think Chapters 12 to 14 are worth reading. In Chapter 14, a world ranking of powerful countries is explicitly narrated. In a nutshell, the US is the number one, followed by EU, UK, and China. I am not certain whether this is only the position of the Liberal Democrats in the UK or whether it is widely accepted. Overall, I agree with the author who wrote the introduction – this book should be understood as a whole.

*Notes: Somehow, the author of Chapter 1 decided that 46 million civil servants account for 13% of 770 million employees in China, by my calculations, this figure should be approximately 6% only*

## THE SHENG PLAYER

### Toto Guo

My name is Toto Guo, a model and influencer. When my dad had a stroke during lockdown and I wasn't sure how much time he had left, I made a short documentary about his life and music. Since then, he's also become an influencer! I help him edit and upload his videos, and he really enjoys it. It's so cute!

We finally held the documentary premiere on 22nd May 2023. About half the guests were his fans and half were my fans, so we had all different ages and people, and lots of family and old friends too.

There were over 500 guests, including Dr. Frances Wood, SACU Vice President, Iris Yau (SACU Council Member) and Penny Robbins SACU Member (see the attached photos) in the end!

It was great to see so many people, but more so great to see such a big mix. I love the London Chinese community with all my heart, and bringing them together at the same time as celebrating my dad made for an awesome day!



### 笙乐手

#### 郭头头

我的名字是郭头头。我是一名模特，也是一名网红。在新冠疫情的封锁之中，我的父亲突然中风，我不知道他还能活多久，所以我为了他的生平事迹和音乐事业做了一个很短的纪录片。从那开始，他也变成了一名网红！我帮他剪辑上载他的视频。父亲也一直享受其中，他真是太可爱了！

我们终于在 2023 年 5 月 22 日这一天实现了纪录片首映。观众中一半的人是我的粉丝，一半是他的粉丝，所以各个年龄段的人都来了。除此之外，还有很多家人和老朋友也参加了我们的首映礼，包括英中了解协会（SACU）的副会长吴芳思博士，理事会成员丘静雯和协会成员 Penny Robbins（请参照下方的图片）。

能见到这样一群人我们真的很高兴，尤其是我们的观众来自不同的背景和年龄群体，真是太棒了！我全心全意爱着伦敦的华人群体，这么多人能够聚在一起为我爸爸庆祝他的音乐梦，真的令人赞叹不已！



## Reading about China

### Two new books by Pascal Coppens

**Dirk Nimmegeers**, a SACU member in Belgium has brought to our notice, two books by Pascal Coppens, a Sinologist and international keynote speaker on China. Two books by Coppens are available in English. The first, *China's New Normal, How China sets the Standard for Innovation*, relates China's technological innovations especially in the areas of artificial intelligence and other new technologies of the future. He declares that Baidu, Tencent and Alibaba are only 'the tip of the iceberg'.

In the second book, *Can we Trust China? A different view on a country in transition*, Pascal tells of a new world arising; China is taking on the role of a new superpower, which is beginning to rival the US, making the West feeling uncomfortable. He says that analysts seem to take either positive or negative views of China. However, what we need is a more nuanced view to take advantage of the opportunities of what China's rise and transition can offer.

Both books are written in a clear, openminded and non-Marxist style and are best sellers in Belgium.



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### SHANGHAI AND NANJING 1937, Massacre on the Yangtze. Benjamin Lai. Osprey Campaign 309, 2017. ISBN 978 1 4728 1749 5. A review by John Ham

A glance at the map shows how much Japan had gobbled up China in the decades before the Second Sino-Japanese War. By 1937 belligerent Japanese generals wanted more. Navy Special Landing Force marines garrisoned in Shanghai were ready to fire the first shots. Chiang Kaishek's "Germanized" Nationalist Army, deficient in artillery and tanks – handfuls of Vickers 6-tonners, Vickers-Carden-Loyd amphibians. Panzer Is, CV 13/35 tankettes – could not match the Japanese.

He planned a delaying battle at Shanghai, then withdrawing to inland defence lines hoping the Western Powers would come to his aid. The Chinese Navy lost most of its ships to Japanese bombing trying to block the Yangtze and prevent the IJA Shanghai Expeditionary Force landing. Chiang's Air

Force and Soviet volunteers downed some aircraft but could not stop the bombers. Attrition battles continued for Shanghai and neighbouring cities. Further Japanese reinforcements landing at Hangzhou threatened pincer envelopment, and despite stands like the legendary "800 Braves", Shanghai was abandoned. Advancing to Nanjing the Japanese Army breached its fortress walls, overcoming defence lines and hill forts. Panicked inhabitants died in lethal crushes trying to exit the city gates when the evacuation order was given.

Then the killings began: civilians and soldiers – regiments of POWs and beheading competitions. Post-war few war criminals were indicted. The book includes a very detailed order of battle and well-designed maps indicate unit positions and movements; for linguists names are given in Chinese and Japanese characters.



Monument to the victims of the Nanjing massacres (WF)

These early WW2 Far East battles attract less attention in English language publications. The writer is ex-military and includes substantial material on participating Chinese regiments. Recommended. Thanks to Osprey for the book sample.

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### THE RISE OF CHINA PUBLISHED BY THE PADDY ASHDOWN FORUM.

This book claims to offer 'fresh insights and observations' on China. I believe it delivers these in a very clear and concise manner and I can strongly recommend it. There are fourteen contributors each presenting a chapter on different important aspects of the current China question. Four of the authors are SACU members or associated with SACU.

Professor Kerry Brown explains the system of government in China. Books by Sir Vince Cable and Dr Yeow Poon have been recently reviewed in China Eye. Merlene Emerson MBE, a former member of SACU, explains the Belt and Road Initiative extremely well. In addition, Andrew Leung provides information on the Hong Kong incidents, which are not well reported in UK newspapers.(WF)

**This book is reviewed by Dr Yong Sun in Chinese with a translation by Jiayi Li in this issue of China Eye, p 18.**

## Clubbable China by Barnaby Powell

*The Chinese have either looked down on foreigners as brutes or up to them as saints, but have never actually been able to call them friends or speak of them as equals. (Lu Xun).*

The early nineteenth century brought not a clash of civilizations but a rupture in China's settled way of life, sense of supremacy and imperial security. The Western impact was a rude awakening to the power of logic to form pathways to modernity. The West's advantage over China stemmed from the Industrial Revolution, hastening the migration of people off the land into cities and providing the panacea of social democracy. The Chinese have no Greek roots, of course, no Aristotle, Socrates or Plato, neither Magna Carta nor rule of law, but they do have a civilization based on moral codes: Confucian obligations rather than statutory rights. What are the odds of balancing the European Convention on Human Rights with a Human Obligations Code?

Faced with having to deal with each other for the first time, the Chinese and Westerners viewed one another with shock and disgust. Each must have struck the other as absurd. To the Chinese, Westerners were simply rude and hairy interlopers who had strayed in from the nether regions of the earth with nasty habits – an impression quickly reinforced by the odious opium trade. The Chinese called them 'raw', while those who had bothered to immerse themselves in a little local custom were called 'cooked'. The West found China caught in a curious kind of time warp, apparently hidebound by ritual, elaborate attire and highly affected manners and forms of address.

The wellspring of the Chinese spirit is the written word. It is the touchstone of their memory, imagination and inspiration. Momentous events and instants in human experience are captured in single characters of calligraphy which have today the force and power of scripture. They remain abiding reminders of both identity and purpose, lighting the Chinese mind in triumph and adversity. Only two civilizations on earth have enjoyed unbroken continuity. While those of Egypt, the Middle East, Persia (Iran) and India are no less ancient, it is the culture and traditions of the Jews and the Chinese alone which have survived intact as spiritual phenomena throughout recorded history. The writings of the Jews have passed down in an almost unbroken line through the Torah and the Talmud. Those of the Chinese originate in forms of script which have undergone remarkably little transformation – only deviation with the Mongol (*Yuan*) and Manchu (*Qing*) dynasties – over several millennia.

The written language is also the root of the Chinese spirit in that the script is treated as an art form. Chinese calligraphy is endlessly expressive and instructive of both their literacy and philosophy, as is their brush painting of traditional subjects like plum blossom, lotus flowers and small figures in a landscape at one with nature. The written word in its finest calligraphic form is the one great constant thread which links the present with the remote and ancient past of prehistory. In the millennia BC, it was the crude, runic inscriptions on the flat shoulder-bones of cattle carcasses and the shells of tortoises which first served to record the mind and magical invocations of the earliest Chinese (on their so-called 'Oracle Bones'). From this developed a form of script which is, with Arabic, one of the highest of the human arts in the beauty of its precision and execution. The cultivation of this art demands an intensely rigorous discipline in self-control and mental equilibrium. It is as if, with every brush-stroke, an attempt must be made to live up to the spirit of the original word-character.

Much of the civilizational clash has arisen from the teachings of Confucius in the form of a set of moral or ethical obligations applied to hierarchical members of a state, to patriarchal members of a family, and across networks through trustworthy friends. Confucius, like Christ, worked to lower the prevalence of enmity and strife, help stabilise society and bring peace. China's stabilisation, resulting in a more structured state, also brought an increase in penal law and acknowledgement of the Emperor's 'Mandate of Heaven'. The mandate was, in effect, a right to rule with the rights liable to forfeit.



**Tomb of Confucius at Qufu, Shandong (WF)**

The people would accept the Emperor's mandate from on high provided he was just and fair. Acts of injustice would be countered with opposition to that mandate through riot and rebellion. Repression often followed with coercion its natural successor. It is this tradition of 'Legalism' – of punitive controls and sanctions against all forms of protest

and dissidence as opposed to the benevolence of Confucian rule – that has produced the currently unstable equilibrium in China, where ‘stability’, ‘harmony’ and ‘security’ can only be maintained by force.

The West’s insistence that only ‘Enlightenment’ values of the rule of law, democracy and human rights will solve China’s problems of governance and stability is a misreading of its historical evolution as a society and civilisation. Who is to say that China did not evolve, through Confucius’ teachings and their adoption, a set of rational and enlightened moral principles to live by in a man-centred world? In their world, there is no higher authority than that of their temporal rulers, no acceptance or acknowledgement of any higher power. Thus, the notion of transcendence that forms the central tenet of religious faith is fundamentally inconceivable to them and Christianity, in particular, is regarded by an overwhelming majority of Chinese as simply another ‘ideology’, notwithstanding the current surge in its popularity. The major obstacle that China faces is in overcoming its difficulties in reconciling its values with those of the West – while its priorities remain the collective over the individual, the relational over the contractual and duties, obligations and responsibilities over rights.

The twin pillars of wisdom in the West have been law and religion (with a stout buttress of philosophy). The absence of both such pillars in China appears to have caused Western concern and some dismay. Western legal process enables governing controls over society – as does religion with its commandments and strictures. China also has controls, substituting a confrontational, dichotomous, legal process with an opaque bargaining system based on arbitration and reciprocity, two constructs not unusual in Western legal systems. The opacity is created by bargaining (which can be corrupt and manipulative) within closed networked connections (*guanxi*) to ensure ‘a very present help in trouble’.

The rise of China will be unstoppable unless it fails to acknowledge the need for the restoration of a traditional mandate from the people. This mandate must permit participation by the people in the organisation of their affairs and the true representation of their legitimate interests in an increasingly plural society. Hong Kong is the current crucible of the struggle for liberty and representative government. Here wills and cultures collide in the wrangle over social and political freedoms. People there and in Mainland China want to be citizens, not servants of the state. Recent events in Hong Kong show that the local leadership is perceived to be toeing the Party line at the expense of any kind of public mandate in the election of its leaders. The ‘universal suffrage’ granted by central government under the ‘Basic Law’, which serves as Hong Kong’s constitution as a Special Administrative Region, has no meaning if there is no

real choice to be made in the selection of candidates for office. Similarly, the ‘rule of law’ (whose Chinese translation, *fazhi*, is more commonly interpreted as ‘rule by law’) and the Chinese constitution are invoked to safeguard ‘human rights’ and to eradicate corruption. However, since the Party has absolute control over judicial decision making, it sits in absolute authority above the law and is not accountable to the people for anything other than year-on-year growth in GDP, where the law of diminishing returns has already set in.



**Beijing innovative office buildings (WF)**

The Party enjoyed an undoubted mandate after it prevailed against the Nationalists and the Japanese during World War II. It was akin to the Imperial ‘Mandate of Heaven’. But can that mandate be balanced, if it is not harmonious and if there is no process possible to assess accountability of the Party to the people for the mandate? That mandate can be measured against the achievement of key performance indicators outlined within objectives laid out in the ‘2030 Report’ compiled by the State Council and the World Bank. These focus very practically, as Deng Xiaoping would have it, on ‘seeking truth from facts’ in the evolution of a new society, on achieving structural reform (private sector development); championing innovation (and re-routing education); cleaning up the environment; creating opportunities for all (the people have entered society); strengthening the tax system (and the restitution of a quality civil service); and seeking ‘mutually beneficial relations’ with other countries (a deeper cultural understanding).

The *guanxi* system is unique to China. It is not based as networks of influence are in the West on clubs, schools, colleges and regiments and other institutions like the law and the church. Its function is not so much to secure advantage and privilege as to protect the secrecy and anonymity of networks established to ensure survival of core interests and to hold people safe from harm and arbitrary victimisation. Thus, *guanxi* are as vital to peasant farmers as they are to members of the Party, closed as they are in networks set against each other to enforce ‘harmony’ and

'security'. In time, the Chinese will be able to divest themselves of these expensive insurance policies.

The initiatives set in train by the campaign of Chinese cultural dissemination overseas have aroused no little suspicion. Are the Confucius Institutes mere propagandistic stalking horses, established to present the smiling face of friendship and China's peaceful ascendancy? The acid test, of course, and the proof of cultural and artistic integrity is the degree to which foreigners may find some intrinsic appeal and attraction in the cultural 'products' on offer. In this regard, the Chinese language is a barrier and bottleneck; the essence of its cultural strength may be lost in translation. The challenge for China in 'going global' is to project the integrity and authenticity of the finer elements of its culture as an instrument of soft power. As the philosopher, Ludwig Wittgenstein, remarked in his *Philosophical Investigations*, "To restore a broken culture is like trying to repair a torn spider's web with our fingers."

East and West are often literally poles apart in their representation of life in both literature and drama. Comedy and action-fantasy apart, the plot lines of Western and Chinese novels and dramas tend, respectively, towards the up-beat and down-beat. While the stories of Western books and films are generally optimistic or at least stoically realistic, those of the Chinese are often imbued with a certain tragic sense of life, as if it were driven by the cruelty of fate. Perhaps this is no wonder, given the misery and suffering that they have had to endure over the last century. It is almost as if the 'bitterness' which they have had to 'eat' has become bitter-sweet, part of a staple diet. Even if read only in translation, it is a country's literature which speaks most clearly to foreigners in its disarming directness.



**China's National Theatre in Beijing (WF)**

The Chinese take pride in their culture as it is exported, with 5.5 million Chinese now working overseas (up from 3.5 million in 2005). Sixty million Chinese travelled abroad for tourism in 2011. China's role as a major player on the world stage is evidently widening: in 2003, it chaired the 6-party talks on North Korean nuclear disarmament; in 2009, it joined the anti-piracy force

policing the shipping lanes in the Indian Ocean and Gulf of Aden; in early 2012, Jinhai Lin was appointed Secretary of the IMF, making him a pivotal figure in easing co-ordination with China and liaising with member countries for Chinese assistance to the Euro-zone and other crisis-ridden areas of the world.

The world is slowly working towards a rules-based international order, ostensibly based on 'universal values', which are still anathema to the Chinese. The main stumbling-block to its achievement is the challenge of reconciling differing value systems, particularly in areas such as human rights, the rule of law and the Separation of Powers (with its independent judiciary). One major consequence of the financial crisis from 2008 is that China is becoming, almost by default, the world's banker. With the creation of the new Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, it is establishing a parallel institution to the IMF/World Bank and may effectively wrest the reins of finance for the developing world away from Western institutions. The Bank with its initial capital of \$50 bn. and contingency reserve fund of a further \$100 bn. will be set to enable countries suffering heavy capital outflows to by-pass the IMF. In this way, China intends to supersede the international monetary order created at Bretton Woods in 1944 and dominated ever since by the US and Europe.

It is now all the more important for Western institutions to engage in urgent discussions with China to make common cause to find solutions to the most intractable problems besetting the world economy. This task is unavoidable for, as the historian Tony Judt argued, it is essential to rediscover 'the politics of social cohesion based around collective purposes'. These collective purposes extend from clean energy, environmental protection, disease control, food security, a regulatory framework for banking, investment and trading, legal and dispute resolution, particularly in matters of IPR, technology and innovation, to population control and space exploration. In a word: collaboration.

China is understandable through our common humanity and is neither a threat nor an enemy: it must be a chosen companion. As with many companions, there is also a problematic side to the relationship. Just as one might try to neutralise an annoying idiosyncrasy with a joke or a diplomatic comment, so China must be humoured to minimise misunderstanding. We see no adaptation of the Western democratic model for China; yet its necessary political reform may only come through a proper people-to-Party mandate. For the present, the Party forges a critical stability following the extension of President Xi's term of office beyond 2018 and an affirmation of the metaphysics of Marxism.

## Sino File Summer 2023

### Items worth reading again

#### **Falling birth rates in Xinjiang (*Beijing Review* 20/5/21)**

The central government has encouraged women from poverty-stricken areas to obtain employment in cities. In 2017 alone, 10,000 jobs were created in the Kashgar and Hotan regions many of which were taken up by young women, who would otherwise have married and given birth at a very early age. Significant economic and social development has taken place in the region. In the period 2015 to 2019, the average annual growth of disposable income has been more than 8%. The per-capital disposable income has grown from 9,425 yuan (\$1,450) in 2015 to 13,122 yuan (\$2,018) in 2019.

#### **Chinese medical aid to India (*Beijing Review* 20/5/21)**

In the past two weeks, 61 cargo flights bearing medical aid have flown from China to India. The supplies included 150 ventilators and 20,000 oxygen generators. In addition, the Chinese Red Cross Society has donated \$1 million in cash to its Indian equivalent.

### From the British Press

#### **China helps Saudi Arabia and Iran repair ties**

Saudi Arabia and Iran have announced that they are renewing diplomatic ties after eight years of hostility. The deal was negotiated and signed in China. The two countries are to resume diplomatic relations and reopen their embassies within two months. They also promised not to interfere with each other's internal affairs. After the killing of a Saudi journalist in 2018, Biden was one of Saudi's fiercest critics, called it a 'pariah' and said he would distance himself from it. As far as Iran is concerned, Trump abandoned the 2015 nuclear deal with that country and Biden did not restore it. Thus, the US alienated both countries and China has filled the gap which was left. (*From The Times* 11/3/23).

**NB.** In the Times, the next day, a columnist commented that China had not done this for 'altruistic' reasons.

#### **Liz Truss demands Britain must stand up to China**

In a speech in Tokyo, former Prime Minister, Liz Truss said that Britain should stand up to totalitarian China and prepare sanctions to deter Beijing from invading Taiwan. She is expected to increase the pressure on Sunak to strengthen Western support for the island. However there seem to be deep divisions in the Tory party. Lord Hammond of Runnymede, the former chancellor defended the 'golden era' with China and called for a return to a 'business as usual' relationship with China. He wrote in China Daily that other western countries were trading with China, quietly increasing trade, whilst Britain's trade has stagnated. He added that Britain should adopt a 'trade-first approach' with China and that there was no credible plan for a future without China. Recent polling on the rise of China, by Kekst CNC and the Munich Security Conference, showed that France, Germany and Italy were more relaxed about trading

with China, but the UK, the US, Japan and Canada had concerns. (*From The Times* 17/2/23)

In a report in *The Times*, the next day, Sir Jake Berry, warned Truss to stop criticising the government. During her brief tenure as prime minister, Truss was more confrontational regarding China than the US, and other G7 nations. Rishi Sunak was said to be resisting calls from within the Tory party to officially label China as a 'threat' in the integration review of foreign policy to be announced.

#### **UK universities too reliant on Chinese students**

The Office for Students (OfS) has written to 23 universities in England which it fears are too dependent on high levels of recruitment from China. The OfS expects them to make contingency plans in case there is a sudden drop in overseas students and the income they bring. Overseas students pay undergraduate fees of £22,000 a year, but this can exceed £40,000 in some cases. During 2021/22, there were 124,370 Chinese students in English universities. In some universities Chinese students made up nearly a quarter of the student population. English universities with the highest number of Chinese students in 2021/22 were University College London, Manchester, King's College London and Sheffield. In each of these universities, Chinese made up 15% of the total. It has been said that if universities take on more home students, they lose money; if they recruit from China they get admonished by the OfS.

**NB.** Rishi Sunak said yesterday that he would not ban Confucius Institutes from campuses despite saying that he would during his leadership campaign. Some organisations accuse the Institutes, based at about 30 universities, of posing a threat to freedom of speech, academic freedom and safety from harassment. (*From The Times* 18/5/23)

#### **Honduras turns away from Taiwan**

Honduras has terminated diplomatic relations with Taiwan and switched to recognising Beijing. The country is expected to join the Belt and Road Initiative and hence gain access to concessional loans that can be difficult to obtain from the World Bank. This leaves 13 countries with relations with Taiwan; these includes the Vatican State. Before Honduras, eight countries had cut ties with Taiwan in the last six years. The countries which retain diplomatic ties are mainly small nations in Latin America or the south Pacific. Eswatini, formerly Swaziland is the only African nation retaining ties and the Vatican is the only European state. (*From The Times* 27/3/23)

#### **Chinese electric cars to arrive in the UK**

Car dealers are preparing for as many as 25 Chinese-built electric car brands from next year. Mark Raban, chief executive of Lookers, the UK's largest dealer, said that his and other companies were laying the foundations and forming partnerships for a big Chinese push next year. From next January 1<sup>st</sup>, 22% of cars sold must have zero emissions. Carmakers will face penalties if this is not met. At present 16% of car sales are electric. Chinese cars are already present in Britain. MG, owned by Shanghai Automotive, has increased its market share to 4%. An increasing proportion of these have zero-emission. Ora, the electric brand of Great Wall and BYD have begun shipments of electric cars to



Britain. BYD is a leader in the electric bus market. *(From The Times 11/4/23)*

### **Jack Ma returns to China**

The Alibaba entrepreneur has returned to China after living abroad for a year. Immediately Alibaba shares gained 4%. A market commentator believed that it would boost the sentiment of the broader internet industry. An analyst thought that Xi Jinping was trying to ease the pressure on China's economy by encouraging the return of the flamboyant entrepreneur. Ma's return coincides with a visit to China by Tim Cook, the CEO of Apple, Qualcomm boss, Cristiano Amon, Pfizer boss, Albert Bourla and billionaire hedge fund tycoon, Ray Dalio. They are attending a three-day forum dubbed 'China's Davos'. *(From The Daily Telegraph 28/3/23)*

### **High-speed rail networks**

It has been 14 years since HS2 was first proposed. After much indecision and many delays, completion is not due until 2029 at the earliest. The project's scope has also been much reduced. The UK has fallen a long way behind the rest of the world, especially China. Length of high-speed networks in various countries; -

China; 40, 474 km.

Spain; 3,661 km.

Japan; 3,081 km.

France; 2,735 km.

Germany; 1,571 km.

Finland; 1,120 km.

Turkey; 1,052 km

US; 735 km.

UK 113 km.

Netherlands; 90 km

Maximum speed achievable by trains in the country's network in 2021 are as follows;

China; 350 kmh.

France, Japan and Morocco, 320 kmh.

Belgium, Italy, Germany, Netherlands, Spain and UK; 300 kmh.

Denmark; 250 kmh.

Austria, Finland and the US; 240kmh or less

China leads on speeds as well as distance covered.

*(From The Times 15/3/23)*

### **China urges Afghanistan to reform**

In a meeting with Afghanistan and Pakistan officials in a mini summit, China urged Afghanistan to reform its radical policies excluding women from education and public life. China also asked Afghanistan to adopt a more resolute attitude to controlling terrorists and to promote trade and lower border tensions. In addition, the country should make efforts to interface with the international community. It is rare for China to make comments about a country's internal affairs. *(From Independent on the internet 10/5/23)*

Afghanistan is to be included in the BRI China-Pakistan Economic Corridor with \$60 billion for trade and development. *(From Caixin on the internet 8/5/23)*

### **NATO concern about China's stake in European ports**

Beijing's ownership of communication networks, harbours and shipping is a threat to Europe's critical infrastructure a

NATO official has warned. The German chancellor is pushing through a plan for investment for Beijing in Hamburg. Cosco, the Chinese shipping company is seeking to buy a 24.9% stake in the Tollerort container terminal. However, there is opposition. Cosco already holds financial stakes in many European ports;- Piraeus in Greece, Le Havre in France, Zeebrugge and Antwerp in Belgium. Even at ports such as Felixstowe in Britain, Cosco and other Chinese-run docking terminals control up to 80% of container trade, although they do not hold ownership stakes. *(From The Times 2/5/23)*

### **China ups military spend in face of foreign threats**

China is increasing military spending by 7.2% to 1.55 trillion yuan (£187 billion, \$227.67) the sharpest rise since 2019, when it rose by 7.5%. China is still a distant second in military spending; the US spends \$773 billion. Although China's defence budget is second largest in the world, it is only about 1.7% of GDP, which is said to be below the world average. Last year China's GDP grew by 3%, the lowest in decades. Growth was down because of Covid and tourism, retail and property markets suffered. However, the inflation was only 2%. Urban unemployment was 5.5%. The growth target for this year has been set at 5.0%. *(From The Times 6/3/23)*

*The Times* of 17<sup>th</sup> March presents a list of countries' military expenditure in dollars and as % of GDP in 2021

Source; SIPRI

US; \$800.7 bn... 3.5%

China; \$293.4 bn...1.7%

India; \$76.6 bn... 2.7%

UK; \$68.4 bn...2.2%

Russia; \$65.9 bn...4.1%

France; \$56.6 bn...2.0%

Germany; \$56 bn... 1.3%

Saudi Arabia; \$55.6 bn...6.6%

Japan; \$54.1 bn...1.1%

South Korea' \$50.2 bn...2.8%

NB. The figures quoted on 17<sup>th</sup> March do not match figures in the report of 6<sup>th</sup> March.

### **Secret Chinese police stations in UK**

Following an article in *The Times*, MPs have accused the Chinese government of using undeclared overseas police stations to intimidate dissidents. The minister for policing told the Commons that the government was aware of about '100 alleged' police stations around the world. A Chinese person accused of being involved with a secret police station said that he simply agreed to host a service for overseas Chinese nationals to renew driving licences and other administrative tasks. Yvette Cooper, the shadow home secretary and also Sir Iain Duncan Smith have criticised the government for not taking action. The Americans and the Dutch have shut down 'stations,' *(From The Times 20/4/23)*

### **China's 'secret spacecraft' lands after nine months**

The spacecraft landed at Jiaquan launch site in the Gobi Desert after nine months in orbit. The 276-day mission was believed to be an experiment in reusable spacecraft technology. It performed complex tasks which had the highest technical difficulty. They included shifting to

different orbits, testing heat protection and telecommunication and navigation operations. China is examining more convenient and economical means of space exploration. *(From The Times 10/5/23)*

### **India to become world's most populous country**

India's population is set to overtake China's within the next three months. Data from the UN Population Fund states that India will have 1.4286 billion people by the middle of the year compared with 1.4257 billion in China. This will be a gap of 2.9 million. The US is more than a billion behind with 340 million. However exact comparisons are difficult because data is collected at different times. India's population is projected to continue to grow for the next 30 years, peaking at about 1.6 billion. China's population fell last year for the first time in decades. *(From The Times 20/4/23)*

### **Yangtze sturgeon thought extinct is thriving**

For the first time in two decades, the Yangtze sturgeon, considered extinct, has laid eggs in the wild. Researchers released 20 adult sturgeon, 10 male and 10 female, into an artificial egg-laying nest. They have mated and fertilised eggs have hatched. Researchers have called it a milestone; fertilisation rate was above 50%. The process seemed simple, but the work took years of effort. The result shows that with good egg-laying areas, the fish can achieve natural breeding in the river. Efforts have been made over many years to replenish sturgeon stocks. Beijing has made it a national priority to protect the environment, repair damaged ecology and to increase biodiversity. *(From The Times 29/3/23)*

## **From the Chinese Press**

### **Xi Jinping congratulates new UK King and Queen**

Xi Jinping and his wife Peng Liyuan sent a congratulatory message on the coronation. Charles III asked Vice-president Han Zheng, who attended the coronation to return the good wishes. It is hoped that UK and China will continue to cooperate on green, low carbon, sustainable development and climate change developments. Last year, China-UK trade exceeded \$100 billion and two-way investment surpassed \$50 billion, according to the Chinese embassy in the UK. *(From CDGW 12-18/5/23)*

### **BRICS share of world GDP surpasses G7**

At the beginning of this year, the GDP, in purchasing parity, of the BRICS nations (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa), surpassed that of the G7 (Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, UK and US). World GDP of the BRICS nations reached 31.5% compared to the G7's 30.7%. Data is from Acorn Macro Consulting in the UK. The gap is expected to widen.

The 15<sup>th</sup> BRICS summit will be held in Durban, South Africa from August 22 to 24. Twelve nations are interested in joining BRICS including, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Egypt, Algeria, Argentina, Mexico and Nigeria. This will be considered at the summit. Amongst other nations keen to join are Indonesia and Turkiye (Turkey). With this expansion, the total population would exceed 4.3 billion, more than half of the world's total. The BRICS has

not yet become a free-trade zone, but cooperation will be agreed. In 2014 BRICS established the New Development Bank (NDB), whose main priority is development financing outside the Western mainstream. *(From CDGW 5-11/5/23)*

### **Steady growth in worker's pay**

The average salary of urban workers in China grew in 2022. Workers in the non-private sector reached 114,029 yuan (\$16,465) an increase of 6.7% from the year before. The real growth, adjusted for inflation was 4.6%. In the private sector, the average salary grew by 1.7% after certain price factors were deducted. *(From CDGW 12-18/5/23)*

### **Australia targets Chinese tourists**

The Australian Tourist Exchange five-day conference (30<sup>th</sup> April to 4<sup>th</sup> May) held in Queensland attracted 2,300 visitors from 30 countries. China with 113 individuals, was the largest delegation. The Australian agency's responsibility is attracting tourists, especially Chinese, who in 2019, numbered 1.4 million and spent a total of A\$12.4 billion (\$8.3 billion). However, Chinese appear to be slow to return to Australia, it is thought that it will be 2026 before the 2019 level is restored. *(From CDGW 19-25/5/23)*

### **New city of Xiong'an**

President Xi Jinping stressed the importance of promoting the high-quality development of the new town Xiong'an. He visited the area on 10<sup>th</sup> May and promoted it as a city of the future, a hub of innovation and entrepreneurship and a model of green development. Xiong'an is a new city situated just south of Beijing and was established to relieve the pressures on Beijing of functions not essential to Beijing's role as capital. The new city also advances the development of the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region. *(From CDGW 12-18/5/23)*

### **War Crimes Museum in Harbin**

More than 20,000 artefacts and documents are on display at the Museum of Evidence of War Crimes by the Japanese Army Unit 731, during World War 2. The museum is displaying some items for the first time, including bacteriological incubators. Harbin is the capital of Heilongjiang province. *(From Beijing Review 22/12/22)*

### **China's 'debt trap'?**

Sujoko Efferin, a professor at the Faculty of Business and Economics at the University of Surabaya, Indonesia, has said that debts owed by countries such as Sri Lanka are dominated by Western creditors or banks and not by China. In fact, China has freed African countries from their debts, which is something that Western creditors have never done. *(From CDGW 7-13/4/23)*

### **China's national park system**

Forty-nine candidate areas for building national parks to improve protection of wildlife species and their habitats have been selected. These sites include five, which had already been selected and cover an area of about 1.1 million square kilometres. There are 44 land sites, three sea sites and two land-sea sites. They were selected because of their ecological importance, unique natural landscapes and rich biodiversity. Several government ministries were involved including the National Forestry and Grassland

Administration. If all 49 candidate parks are approved, China will have the largest national park system in the world. More than 5,000 wild vertebrate species and 29,000 types of higher plants are present in these areas and include over 80% of China's protected fauna and flora. *(From Beijing Review 12/1/23)*

### **Chinese firms' optimism**

The majority of China's medium sized companies are optimistic about business expansion in 2023 according to a report by HSBC. Some 77% expect growth next year and 75% plan to expand overseas. These firms are likely to benefit from innovative technology and domestic growth. *(From Beijing Review 22/12/22)*

### **China's forex reserves**

China's foreign exchange (forex) reserves rose to \$3.1175trillion at the end of November 2022, up 2.13% from a month earlier. The forex is expected to stay generally stable as the Chinese economy has maintained its recovery momentum. *(From Beijing Review 22/12/22)*

### **Argentina to use RMB for imports**

From May, Argentina's imports from China will be settled in renminbi instead of the US dollar. China Daily calls this a 'win-win' development, which will strengthen Argentina's foreign exchange reserves and boost the renminbi's global profile. International use of the renminbi has gained traction this year. Brazil and China have agreed to strengthen trade in local currencies. An associate professor of international trade in China has said that the renminbi neither intends to challenge the dollar nor is it capable of challenging the dollar, but the world needs a more diversified payment system to reduce the risks at these complex and unstable times. *(From CDGW 5-11/5/23)*

### **Water and soil conservation**

China has issued a guideline to strengthen the conservation of water and soil to promote future ecological balance. The guideline has the backing of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and the State Council. Targets have been set for water and soil conservation for 2025 (water) and 2035 (soil). By 2035, a systematic, coordinated and efficient water and soil conservation system will be in place, human-induced soil erosion will be fully controlled and erosion in key areas will have been treated. *(From Beijing Review 12/1/23)*

### **China's luxury market**

This sector is expected to grow to 816 billion yuan (\$119.38 billion) by 2025. This will represent 25% of the world's total according to PwC China. Offshore duty-free shopping in Hainan accounts for about 13% of Chinese consumer spending. As normal travel from the mainland to Hong Kong and Macao returns to normal, luxury goods sales are expected to recover after Covid. *(From Beijing Review 23/2/23)*

### **Electric vehicle charging**

The number of charging points in China nearly doubled in 2022. There are now 5.2 million charging points in China. China now has the largest and most extensive charging infrastructure in the world. Further developments and

improvements in the industry are planned, including intelligent infrastructure. *(From Beijing Review 23/2/23)* (According to sources on the internet, there were 38,982 charging points in the UK and 130,000 in the US) (8/4/23)

### **China's first cruise ship nears completion**

The first Chinese-made cruise ship is 90% complete and is scheduled to be delivered to operators by the end of this year. Sea trials will be held during the summer. A cooperation agreement was signed in November 2018 between the Chinese shipbuilder, China State Shipbuilding Corp (CSSC) and Carnival Corp and Fincantieri for two 135,000 metric ton Visa-class cruise ships. CSSC is the world's largest shipbuilder. *(From CDGW 24-30/3/23)*

### **Tourism resumes in China**

From March 15<sup>th</sup> China resumed outbound tours to another 40 countries and regions These included Nepal, Spain and Denmark. Previously on February 6<sup>th</sup>, China resumed outbound group tours to 20 countries, including Thailand, Russia and Singapore. This followed implementation of their Covid-19 policies. Foreigners with valid visas issued before March 28<sup>th</sup> 2020 will be allowed to enter China. Visa-free entry will be resumed to Hainan and to Shanghai for cruise ship tour groups. In addition, visa-free entry will resume for Hong Kong and Macao tour groups to Guangdong province and tour groups from the Association of Southeast Asian Nation countries to enter Guilin. *(From Beijing Review 23/3/23)*

### **Winter water transfer**

The northern extension of China's South-to-North Water Diversion Project's eastern route started its first winter transfer on December 9<sup>th</sup>. The diverting of water to Hebei province and Tianjin is to ensure water for spring irrigation in 2023 and also to replenish groundwater in the region. There will be challenges to accomplishing this in the winter, because of the freezing temperature. A total of 248 million cubic metres of water has been diverted to Hebei and Tianjin since 2019. *(From Beijing Review 22/12/22)*

### **Afforestation progress**

China made afforestation progress in 2022 with 3.83 million hectares of forest planted. China has created the world's largest planted forests. Coverage has more than doubled from 12% in the early 1980s to 24.02% last year. Also vegetation coverage rose to 50.32% in 2022 and the vegetation of 1.85 million hectares of sandy and stony land was improved. All these developments are part of China's efforts to peak carbon emissions before 2030 and to achieve carbon neutrality before 2060. Forests and grasslands are sinks for carbon dioxide. *(From Beijing Review 23/3/23)*

### **Two Chinese judges appointed to the UN**

The 77<sup>th</sup> UN General Assembly on November 15<sup>th</sup> 2022 elected two Chinese to become judges of the UN Appeals and Dispute tribunals, the first time that Chinese have been nominated. Gao Xiaoli was appointed to The Appeals Tribunal for a term up to June 2026. Sun Xiangzhuang was elected to the Disputes Tribunal from July 1<sup>st</sup> 2023 until June 30<sup>th</sup> 2030, *(From Beijing Review 1/12/22)*

**NB. CDGW = China Daily Global Weekly**

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# The Society for Anglo-Chinese Understanding

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