



US-China Review

Spring 2021

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**50th Anniversary of Ping-Pong Diplomacy
Youngest Team Member Reflects on 1971 Trip
U.S.-China Climate Change Cooperation?
History, Importance of Scientific Exchanges**



US-China Peoples Friendship Association

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Best Wishes for a Healthy and Prosperous Chinese New Year of the Ox

Determination, reliability, perseverance, dependability, strength and gentleness—these are qualities of the ox, the second animal in the Chinese zodiac. Qualities that ambassadors, peacemakers and, dare I say, governments should embody.

It is with great hope that I, as president of US-China Peoples Friendship Association, add my voice to a chorus of other hopeful voices all over the world that the U.S. and Chinese governments make the art of diplomacy a top priority.

We envision the ideal of the State Department and its Chinese counterpart to be made up of knowledgeable, bright, truth-seeking individuals. We want them to be able to reach out to like-minded counterparts worldwide to solve difficult and, in some cases, potentially catastrophic global challenges, through the painstakingly arduous means of step-by-step diplomacy.

The new president of CPAFFC, Ambassador Lin Songtian, sent cordial greetings for the new year (see page 8) and we reciprocate with our best wishes for a healthy and prosperous new year to him and his family, to Youxie and to the Chinese people, with whom we continue to foster a long and lasting friendship.

The Call to Convention is included in this issue. The 28th USCPFA National Convention will be hosted by the Eastern Region, whose president is Mel Horowitz. It will be mostly online due to the pandemic and its unpredictability for travel to any site. The theme will be U.S.-China Relations: Roots of Friendship—Finding Common Ground. *Be sure to renew your USCPFA Membership!* Watch for registration details in the next *USCR*.

This Spring issue of *USCR* has extensive coverage of the 50th anniversary of the U.S. table tennis team's trip to China. "Ping-pong diplomacy" led to President Nixon's trip to China in 1972, the Chinese team's trip to the U.S. in 1972, and eventually to diplomatic relations.

This edition of our magazine also has two articles describing the importance of U.S.-China scientific exchanges, including dozens that took place before normalization.

For USCPFA members, as citizen ambassadors, friendship must be the goal, and peace the outcome, of our work here on Earth. USCPFA longs for peace and friendship. Each person can choose to lift up another. Mutual respect and understanding will be recognized when we decide to make that deliberate effort to reach out. I am becoming increasingly hopeful, in tiny increments day by day, that everyone will decide to walk the hard path of finding common ground and peaceful solutions to difficult issues that would make all of our lives better, not just for us now, but for our children's future.

In friendship,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Diana C. Greer'.

Diana C. Greer
President of USCPFA



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About the cover:

*Judy Bochenski and a visiting Chinese player compete in Detroit in
1972, the year after she and the U.S. team went to China.
See article on page 6. Photo provided by Judy Hoarfrost.*

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50 Years Ago: Ping-Pong Diplomacy Changed the World

By Mike Revzin

Table tennis is played with a ball that weighs a mere ninety-five thousandths of an ounce, but the sport has had a weighty impact on U.S.-China relations.

April is the 50th anniversary of the start of what became known as “ping-pong diplomacy.” When 15 U.S. table tennis players, officials and spouses entered China from Hong Kong on April 10, 1971, it was the first official U.S. delegation to set foot in that country since the People’s Republic of China was formed in 1949.

In the years since 1949, the U.S. and China had not had diplomatic relations or trade, and China and the U.S. had fought on opposite sides of the Korean War. In 1971 China was in the midst of the Cultural Revolution, which included anti-American wall posters and propaganda, and the U.S. was fighting North Vietnam, which received support from China.

Reasons to Reconnect

Despite all this, both nations had reasons to want to reconnect with each other. China saw better relations with the U.S. as a counter to China’s tense relations with the Soviet Union. The U.S. believed a rapport with China could help in peace negotiations with North Vietnam, and could give the Soviet Union an incentive to improve U.S.-Soviet relations. Even before



Ping-pong diplomacy and news about China made the covers of magazines in the U.S. and China in 1971. (Photos by Mike Revzin)

becoming president, Nixon had written, “We simply cannot afford to leave China forever outside the family of nations.”

An opportunity for a breakthrough took place in Nagoya, Japan, where the table tennis teams of China and the U.S. were among those participating in the 1971 World Table Tennis Championships.

After a practice, 19-year-old U.S. player Glenn Cowan boarded a shuttle bus carrying the Chinese team. The Chinese were reluctant to interact with him. But the star Chinese player, Zhuang Zedong, eventually shook his hand and gave him a silk picture of China’s Huang Shan (Yellow Mountain). The next day, Cowan gave Zhuang a T-shirt with a peace symbol and the Beatles’ lyric “Let It Be,” a moment that drew media attention and led to the Chinese government inviting the U.S. team to visit China after the tournament.

A Spontaneous Encounter?

Officially, the meeting on the bus was described as a chance

encounter. But in the book *Ping-pong Diplomacy: The Secret History Behind the Game That Changed the World*, Nicholas Griffin writes that the meeting was no accident. It quotes Cowan as saying, “I was invited actually to board the Chinese bus with the team, which shocked me of course.”

Whether that encounter was spontaneous or not, it led to the invitation that stunned the world. The next year, the Chinese team toured the U.S., and President Richard Nixon made his historic trip to China, where he met Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai.

Nixon called his trip “the week that changed the world.” Writing about the visit years later, Nixon noted that the Chinese leaders “took particular delight in reminding me that an exchange of ping-pong teams had initiated a breakthrough in our relations,” History.com reported.

The U.S. team’s trip to China received extensive news coverage.

The cover of the April 26, 1971 *Time* magazine had a photo of the team on the Great Wall, with the headline “China: A Whole New Game.”

The U.S. team included self-described hippie Glenn Cowan, who had long hair



Zhuang Zedong presents a silk picture to Glenn Cowan in Japan.

In 2004, Glenn Cowan died of a heart attack at age 52 while undergoing bypass surgery. Upon hearing the news, Zhuang Zedong called from Beijing to express sympathy. Three years later, Zhuang met Cowan’s mother during a visit to the U.S., calling never being able to see Cowan again “the greatest regret of my life.” Zhuang himself died in Beijing in 2013, at the age of 73. — *China Daily*

and wore a big yellow hat and tie-dyed pants; a college professor, a Guyanese immigrant and two high school-age girls.

One of the members of the team was Connie Sweeris, the reigning U.S. national champion at the time of the China trip. In 2011, she told *Smithsonian* magazine, "At the time we were in China, we knew our trip was pretty newsworthy because of all the reporters wanting our stories. However, I do not think any of us realized the history we were making and how important it would be to future relations between the U.S. and China."

Meeting Zhou Enlai

Zhou Enlai hosted a reception at the Great Hall of the People for several visiting table tennis teams. When he shook hands and chatted with the U.S. delegation and three American reporters, Zhou said, "We have opened a new page in the relations of the Chinese and American people," *Time* reported.

"Even two weeks ago, the prospect would have seemed incredible," the *Time* cover story proclaimed. "After years of xenophobia and anti-American fulminations, after an era in which China seemed as tightly closed to Americans as the Forbidden City ever was to outsiders—here was the Chinese premier being amiable to Americans. Here, after years of hearing that Americans were foreign devils, were masses of schoolchildren smiling and waving to U.S. visitors." About the time that Zhou was greeting the visitors, the U.S. announced that it was removing most aspects of its 20-year embargo on trade with China.

One of the three American journalists allowed into China to cover the visit was John Roderick of the Associated Press. The others were NBC reporters John Rich and Jack Reynolds.

Roderick and Rich had reported from China in the 1940s. Roderick would later reopen the AP bureau in Beijing when American journalists were first allowed to reside there in 1979.

Roderick had been in the U.S. Army in World War II, assigned to the Office of Strategic Services in Kunming, China. He stayed in China after the war, and spent seven months covering Mao, Zhou and other Communist guerrilla leaders at their headquarters in caves in Yan'an in Shaanxi province.



Americans and Chinese play ping-pong under a banner that "Warmly Welcomes the U.S. Ping-Pong Team." American players in the photo are Olga Soltesz (front table, left) and George Braithwaite (back table, right). Photos provided by Judy Hoarfrost.



The U.S. table tennis delegation meets Premier Zhou Enlai.

In 2006, looking back on the 1971 trip, Roderick wrote, "The accepted wisdom at the time was that the visit was engineered by the urbane, international-minded Zhou, who wanted to establish diplomatic ties with Washington as a hedge against Soviet expansionist plans." But Roderick added that in the book *Mao: The Unknown Story*, by Jung Chang and Jon Halliday, the authors say it was Mao, not Zhou, who decided to invite the Americans.

Goodwill Ambassadors

"From their arrival April 8 through their 10 days in China, the American ping-

pong players proved superb diplomats just by being themselves. Wherever they went—the Great Wall, the former imperial Summer Palace—they touched off spontaneous cheers and applause," Roderick wrote. "*Meiguo ren hen hao*" (Americans are great), the crowds shouted.

"The cheers mounted as they played exhibition matches before 18,000 spectators, revealing a reservoir of good will among Chinese which no amount of anti-American propaganda had been able to suppress," Roderick added. 友

15-Year-Old American Played Role in Ping-Pong Diplomacy

By Mike Revzin

The youngest member of the U.S. team on the 1971 China trip was Judy Bo-chenski (now Judy Hoarfrost) of Oregon, who was 15 at the time. The *US-China Review* contacted her in the Portland suburb of Tigard, where she owns the Paddle Palace Table Tennis Company. Here are her reflections on that historic trip.

You almost didn't get to go with the team to Japan and China?

Yes, at the tryouts I earned the second alternate spot for the U.S. team that would go to the 1971 World Championships in Nagoya, Japan. When two players dropped out, I was fortunate to be next in line. This was my first World Championships. I made the team for the next three as well, in 1973, 1975 and 1977.

What did you know about China before you went there?

When I was 14 years old we studied China in my history class, but it was mostly about ancient history. I knew relatively little about recent history or current events that were taking place in China in 1971. I had a vague perception that people were living under difficult circumstances and that there was a lack of freedom under the communist system. But I really did not know much.

I learned an incredible amount in China. I was fascinated by all the sights and smells and sounds and experiences, all of which were very different from my life in my small city of Eugene, Oregon. I was fascinated by all that we were told by our Chinese hosts, and by the all the discussions we had on the trip.

What were some of the details of the trip?

We were treated very well for the eight days that we were there. We had a "red carpet tour" of China. We saw wonderful sights such as the Great Wall (which they closed for our team's visit) and we met Premier Zhou Enlai. We had wonderful banquets of Chinese food. I had not had food like that before, as it was different from the kind of Chinese food I had eaten in the U.S.

The guides and interpreters all did their best to fill any requests that we had or any needs that they noticed. For example, one of our players was homesick for American food and they went out of their way to prepare her a hamburger.

How about the ping-pong matches?

We had "friendship matches" in each of the three cities that we visited—Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou.

The Chinese players played to our strengths and helped us to play well in front of the audiences. We heard over and over again the motto "Friendship First, Competition Second." This applied to our table tennis play, but it also applied to the larger picture of what the trip symbolized for our countries.

Have you kept in touch with the Chinese players?

The Chinese team from the World Championships was not in China when we were there. The players we played in China in 1971 were different in each of the three cities. I have seen two or three

We heard over and over again the motto "Friendship First, Competition Second."

of them on anniversary trips to China.

The players who were on the Chinese World Championship team came to the U.S. in 1972 and I traveled with them for the two weeks. Since that time, I have met some of them at ping-pong diplomacy reunion trips.

When you were 15, did you realize the significance of your team's trip to China?

As soon as the news of this broke, we were surrounded by reporters. Many of the people on our delegation were being solicited by many news organizations such as the *New York Times*, *Newsweek* magazine and *Time* magazine to be their eyes and ears inside China. At the farewell party at the end of the World Championships in Japan, when it was known we were going



Judy Hoarfrost owns Paddle Palace Table Tennis in Oregon.

to China, there were so many cameras on me that when I accidentally spilled a Coke many flashbulbs went off.

When we were inside China, there were Chinese reporters documenting our trip but they were not aggressive or particularly noticeable compared to Western reporters. The news agencies in China at that time were all owned by the government and they were not competitive as Western news organizations were then and now, and they were not competitive like Chinese news organizations are now.

When we received the invitation, we knew that we were the first group of Americans to go to China since before the Cultural Revolution, and we knew this was big news for U.S.-China relations. However, the full scope of the significance struck home after we left China.

When we were on the train from China back to Hong Kong, that was when the media attention reached an insane level. It was overwhelming.

What surprised you about China?

To be honest, I didn't really know what to expect in China. Pretty much everything was surprising and fascinating, nearly everything I experienced was a first for me. I was young and just went with the flow. There were many things: The strident way that people spoke Mandarin, the way things were interpreted for us into English, the way the people seemed to all wear similar clothes and to wear their hair the same, the enormous

number of signs all over the buildings, all with red Chinese lettering. The photos of Mao on every building, the lack of cars, the packed buses and many bicycles and carts. The modest homes of the people. Meeting Premier Zhou Enlai. The way the Chinese played us in the exhibition matches. And all of the explanations of our hosts for the way things are done in China and why.

How did the Chinese public react to suddenly seeing Americans after all those years of isolation and hearing negative news about the U.S.?

People on the streets seemed surprised to see us. We were an oddity. I think many or most of the people did not know much about Americans. And the people constantly heard a lot of negative propaganda about America. There were signs posted, such as one that said, "People of the world, unite and defeat the U.S. aggressors and all their running dogs."

If asked about this, the interpreters would make a distinction between the people of U.S. and the U.S. government. When we visited, I never felt threatened or endangered, and I was never treated in a way that made me feel uncomfortable.

The Chinese ballet and the Chinese opera that we experienced were political statements which you could definitely call "propaganda."

Decades later I had the wonderful opportunity to talk with one of the younger players from the Chinese team who came to the U.S. in 1972. When asked how she felt about coming to the U.S. she said she had some concern because of all the negative things that she had heard before she came. But when she was in the U.S. this changed.

I think this is somewhat similar to the process that many of the U.S. players experienced. When people have the opportunity to have exchanges, through sports or other mutual interests that bring us together in real and positive ways, we gain very important understandings of each other as fellow humans.

Did anyone from the U.S. State Department accompany the team on the visit to China? What was the official reaction from the State Department about your visit?

No, the State Department did not accompany our team on the trip to China and had no prior knowledge of the Chinese

invitation. Our group had one meeting with somebody in the State Department before we left Japan to go to China.

We handed over our passports and they crossed out "Mainland China" from the list of restricted countries. Just a couple months earlier, the U.S. government had lifted the restriction on U.S. citizens traveling to the People's Republic of China.

The official story was that Glenn Cowan and Zhuang Zedong had a spontaneous meeting on a shuttle bus. There are others who believe that, because Zhuang had a gift ready, the Chinese planned such a meeting. Do you have any insight into this?

I don't have additional information on this beyond everything I've read on the subject. I expect Zhuang Zedong had gifts ready in general since being at the World Championships was a big deal in itself, so this is not a reason to think it was pre-planned. From accounts I've read, it has been reported that Chairman Mao discussed with others in advance about inviting the U.S. team. I read that the International Table Tennis Federation president said he discussed it with the Zhou Enlai. At that point, other teams were already invited to go to China after the World Championships. As reported, it might be true that the incident with Glenn Cowan and Zhuang Zedong was a final impetus that made Mao decide to extend the invitation.

What was it like when you returned home?

I was the first of our group to arrive back in the U.S. I arrived by myself in San Francisco, then took a plane from there to Eugene.

When I arrived in San Francisco, I was escorted to a big stage in front of tons of reporters and cameras and they asked me questions. Reporters purchased plane tickets to sit next to me on the flight from San Francisco to Eugene and they talked with me all the way.



After her trip to China, Judy Bochenski (Hoarfrost) became Grand Marshal of the 1971 Portland Rose Festival Parade.

The media attention lasted for a long time and resulted in many interesting opportunities for myself and my teammates. I was interviewed by Barbara Walters on the *Today Show* in New York, and made dozens of other TV appearances. I did not especially want that kind of attention but I learned to push aside any shyness and took it in stride as something I was supposed to do. I did enjoy meeting all different kinds of people.

What was it like to come back to your high school after becoming famous?

I got more attention than usual, but at school I didn't expect people to treat me any differently than before. Mostly my classmates got back to acting normally before too long.

Tell us about the honors you received.

I was grand marshal of the Portland Rose Festival Parade in 1971. The Oregon Legislature passed a bill proclaiming May 5th, 1971 as "Judy Bochenski Day" for the state of Oregon, and I spoke to the legislature. I received the "Young American Award" from the Boy Scouts of America.

Your father arranged table tennis tours to several states in which the public could play ping-pong with you?

My father, a lover of the sport, had already spent many years coaching table

Continued on next page

Youngest Player *(continued)*

tennis and running clubs and tournaments.

He and my mother were both teachers. In the summers of 1971 and 1972, instead of teaching summer school, it was my father's idea to arrange a table tennis tour where, as the press called me, "The Girl Who Went To China" or "The Ping Pong Diplomat" would go to shopping malls and take on all challengers.

Nearly everybody that signed up to play was very easy to beat, usually getting only one or two points in a game up to 11. The mayor might show up. Sometimes I would receive the "key to the city." Usually at each destination there were articles in the local papers with headlines such as, "Judy Mows Them Down" or "Heads Swivel as Table Tennis Champ Visits."

Did the publicity from ping-pong diplomacy increase Americans' interest in playing table tennis?

I heard that the year after we went to China, sales of table tennis tables skyrocketed. Yes, ping-pong diplomacy helped table tennis grow with a broader range of players in the U.S. And, from what I see being in the table tennis business, it remains a factor in the interest in the sport.

Tell us about your career and family in the 50 years since 1971, especially regarding table tennis and China.

I got a degree from Stanford University and went on to get a master's degree in education. I got married in 1980 and my name changed to Judy Hoarfrost from Judy Bochenski. My husband Dan and I have three children. Our two daughters Megan and Adrienne are scientists and our son Ryan works as my partner at Paddle Palace Table Tennis. We have four young grandchildren and one more on the way. After a few years as a teacher, I became owner of Paddle Palace Table Tennis. It started as a table tennis club in the 1970s but today we are the leading North American distributor for the major brands of table tennis equipment. We also opened a new Paddle Palace Table Tennis Club in 2015 at our location in Portland, Oregon.

I was inducted into the USA Table Tennis Hall of Fame. And I was inducted into the Oregon Sports Hall of Fame.

How often have you been back to China since 1971 and were those trips for ping-pong?

I have been to China several times since 1971. Three of those visits were for the 25th, 35th and 40th anniversaries of the 1971 trip. I was invited by the Chinese to attend the 110th anniversary celebration of Zhou Enlai's birth in his hometown of Huai'an in Jiangsu province in 2008. I went to Beijing for the 30th anniversary of diplomatic relations. I went to Suzhou for the World Championships in 2014. Additionally, I have been to Shanghai to meet with business partners.

Tell us about your family ties to table tennis and about your business in Oregon.

My whole family played table tennis while I was growing up. After I got mar-

ried, my husband and three children all played. My son Ryan Hoarfrost, who works with me at Paddle Palace, has especially inherited a love of table tennis, and he is a top player in Oregon.

What are your views on U.S.-China relations today?

U.S.-China relations are critically important and are in need of improvement. The world is greatly impacted by the extent that the U.S. and China can work together to maintain peace and stability in the world. This takes diplomacy and cooperation at the highest levels of government, and it also takes a willingness of all of us at a personal level to strive to understand differing points of view and to interact peacefully. 友

CPAFFC President: Chinese, Americans Share Desire for Peace, Stability

President Lin Songtian of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (Youxie) sent this greeting to USCPFA President Diana Greer as 2020 was drawing to a close.



Lin Songtian

Dear Ms. Greer,

To welcome the new year, on behalf of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, I'd like to say Merry Christmas and happy New Year to you and your family and express our sincere gratitude for your support and firm belief in our friendship.

The year of 2020 is difficult for every one of us. Since the start of this year, the sudden outbreak of Covid-19 has endangered millions of lives and severely interrupted people's way of living around the globe. But it is good to see that in the joint fight against Covid-19, Chinese and American people extended heartwarming sympathies and supported each other by generous donations in

cash and kind. I'm deeply touched by the mutual assistance among our peoples in the face of the ravaging pandemic, and I am fully confident that the pandemic will be over, the China-U.S. friendship will get better and stronger.

It is our firm belief that peoples of China and the U.S. share the common aspiration for peace, stability and a better life and can achieve common prosperity through cultural exchanges and win-win cooperation. Looking ahead, we should jointly promote the people-to-people exchanges and sub-national dialogues between our two countries on topics of common interest such as public health care, climate change, green development, digital economy and smart cities so as to bring visible and tangible benefit to the peoples of both countries.

I strongly believe the year of 2021 will arrive with many more blessings as we wave goodbye to the turbulent 2020. May you and your family enjoy good health and have a joyful new year.

I wish you all a Merry Christmas and happier New Year!

Newsman: 1971 China Trip Was Like Landing on the Moon

By Mike Revzin

One of the three American journalists who covered the U.S. table tennis team's trip to China was John Rich of NBC News.

"It was the first time that non-Communist newsmen were being admitted to the mainland," Rich recalled in a 2008 interview available on YouTube. "I never landed on the moon, but it was a little bit like that."



John Rich

Rich had covered the Chinese civil war in the 1940s and had left China in 1949. "The intervening 22 years have been bleak ones in Chinese American relations," he said in an NBC report as he prepared to cross the border near Hong Kong into China to cover the ping-pong team's visit. "Obviously more is at stake than a few games of table tennis. More newsmen will probably be following us. Hopefully this may mean the start of something new and better in U.S.-China relations."

"Everywhere we went we drew crowds," he said in the 2008 interview.

"That first evening we went into that vast, cavernous cable office in Beijing... and there was a Canadian correspondent there and he looked up and said, 'Oh, here come the Yanks.'"

In those days, TV film footage had to be shipped by plane. Until that film was processed and shown on American TV, information that Rich sent by wire was shown on "the crawl" at the bottom of TV screens while Rich narrated a voiceover with still photos.

"Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai declared today that a new page is opening in relations between the United States and China," Rich reported. "He termed the present visit to China of U.S. table tennis

players and three American newsmen a beginning again of friendship. And he said he believe it would have the approval and support of the great majority of people in both countries. The Chinese premier made his historic remarks at the close of a reception for the athletes from five nations, held at Peking's Great Hall of the People. It seemed clear that he was calling for a reciprocal move on the part of Washington."

Zhou Relaxed, Jovial

"The premier was in a relaxed and jovial mood as he bantered with the visitors from overseas. It was an odd setting for such a major pronouncement. The prime minister of China chatting and joking with a group of foreign ping-pong players. He said that the door had been opened and more U.S. newsmen will be admitted to China, to use his words, 'in batches.'"

In the 2008 interview, Rich said, "I'll never forget the stadium where they had the first match, filled with thousands of Chinese. The Americans came in, and this American hippie with a bandana around his forehead (Glenn Cowan) came in first."

In sports, at least, the Chinese and Americans have obviously found a common meeting ground.

Reporting from the 1971 trip, Rich told the American audience, "In China, one thing more popular than opera is ping-pong, or table tennis. In fact, it's more popular than just about anything. This match in Peking was played in a new auditorium with 18,000 seats. They were all filled."

"The crowd sat attentively. Applauding the good shots and showing no partiality between nationalities. Peking television covered the event," Rich noted.

Walking Hand in Hand

"The Chinese and everyone else were surprised when the American men won the first two matches. The Chinese finally won,

which had been expected. Then came the closing ceremony, more impressive than the start," Rich reported, as video showed each Chinese player walking out hand in hand with an American counterpart, to rhythmic applause.

"It's been an incredible afternoon. The Chinese cheering Americans, clapping hands. Americans and Chinese holding hands. A remarkable display of warmth and goodwill. In sports, at least, the Chinese and Americans have obviously found a common meeting ground," Rich reported.

In the 2008 interview Rich said, "The real significance of the entire trip was not ping-pong but politics," and that the most important moment took place at that reception at the Great Hall of the People.

"Premier Zhou Enlai first shook hands with each member of all the delegations," Rich reported. "Premier Zhou was clearly in a good mood. He was alternately charming and witty. He changed his chair often so that he could sit and chat with each national group. With the Americans he had a conversation with Graham Steenhoven (president of the U.S. Table Tennis Association.) Glenn Cowan, long-haired member of the U.S. team, engaged the prime minister in a discussion about hippies. This led to a general talk about youth of the world."

A Momentous Statement

"After the preliminary exchanges, the premier brought up what seemed to have been on his mind all along. It was a momentous statement, as far as the future of China and the United States was concerned. He said a new page was opening in U.S.-China relations. The premier's remarks were clearly the highlight of the table tennis visit to Peking. The next move seemed to be up to the United States," Rich concluded.

The following year, the Chinese table team accepted an invitation to visit several U.S. cities, and President Nixon went to China. 友

Ping-Pong Diplomacy Led to Science Exchanges

By Li-chun Wu

“Ping-pong diplomacy” was an important historical step toward better relations between the U.S. and China. It led to Secretary of State Henry Kissinger’s secret 1971 trip to China, President Nixon’s much-publicized trip there in 1972 and to full diplomatic relations in 1979.

An important development for my late husband Robert Wu and me came in 1972, with the start of scientific exchanges. We were born in China, went to college in the U.S., and returned to our homeland in 1956 to help “New China” develop science and technology. Upon return to China, we worked at different institutes of the Chinese Academy of Sciences. I worked at the Institute of Zoology in Beijing.

Before the Communists came to power, my father had moved our family from China to India, where he had a business partner. My younger brother and sister and I went to high school there.

I came to the University of California at Berkeley in 1951, and earned an Associate of Arts degree in biology. I then transferred to Simmons College in Boston, where my then-boyfriend Robert went to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology for his master’s degree. I received a Bachelor of Science degree in 1955.

For the first 30 years after Mao Zedong’s Communist Party began to rule in 1949, there was almost no interaction and a lot of hostility between the U.S. and China. China was perceived by the U.S. to be behind a Bamboo Curtain, similar to the post-World War II Iron Curtain between the West and the Soviet Bloc.

The Bamboo Curtain was closed even further by the radical policies of the Cultural Revolution, controlled by Mao’s wife Jiang Qing and the Gang of Four, between 1966 and 1976. Families separated by the border could not even communicate or correspond for fear of being branded as “anti-revolutionaries.”



Li-chun Wu, second from right in front row, and other scientists on their way to the May Seventh Cadre School. (Photos provided by Li-chun Wu and Mingde Li)

For the Chinese scientific community, the impact of the Cultural Revolution was even more disastrous, with intellectuals deemed as class enemies and demons of society. They were sent to the countryside to participate in manual labor.

Sent to Countryside

I was sent to Hubei province along with other scientists to be “re-educated” at a May Seventh Cadre School for 14 months starting in 1966. We took care of water buffalo, raised pigs, cleaned animal sheds and used shoulder poles to carry water from a pond. Other scientists tended crops and built houses.

During the Cultural Revolution, all research projects except work related to the national defense or military was stopped, and publication of all scientific journals ceased. My husband was never sent to the countryside because he was working on developing semiconductors,

mainframe computers and a microprocessor-controlled minicomputer for China’s space program.

With universities closed and professors denounced, no new graduates entered the research community. Most personnel ceased work at the Chinese Academy of Sciences, the State Scientific and Technological Commission, and the Chinese Association for Science and Technology. Only the Chinese Academy of Sciences had a skeleton crew remaining. Chinese



Li-Chun Wu’s certificate from her May Seventh Cadre School.

scholars were scorned and isolated in China, and lost touch with the rapid global advancement of science and high-tech industries.

A Gradual Thaw

The ping-pong diplomacy, starting with goodwill between athletes of the two countries, gradually brought a thaw to the Cold War. The eventual lifting of the Bamboo Curtain “opened the door to trade, culture, and advancements in technology and sciences, while also creating a window of opportunity for China to shed the isolationism and grow into one of the most powerful countries in the world,” Richard P. Suttmeir wrote in 1998, in the *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*.

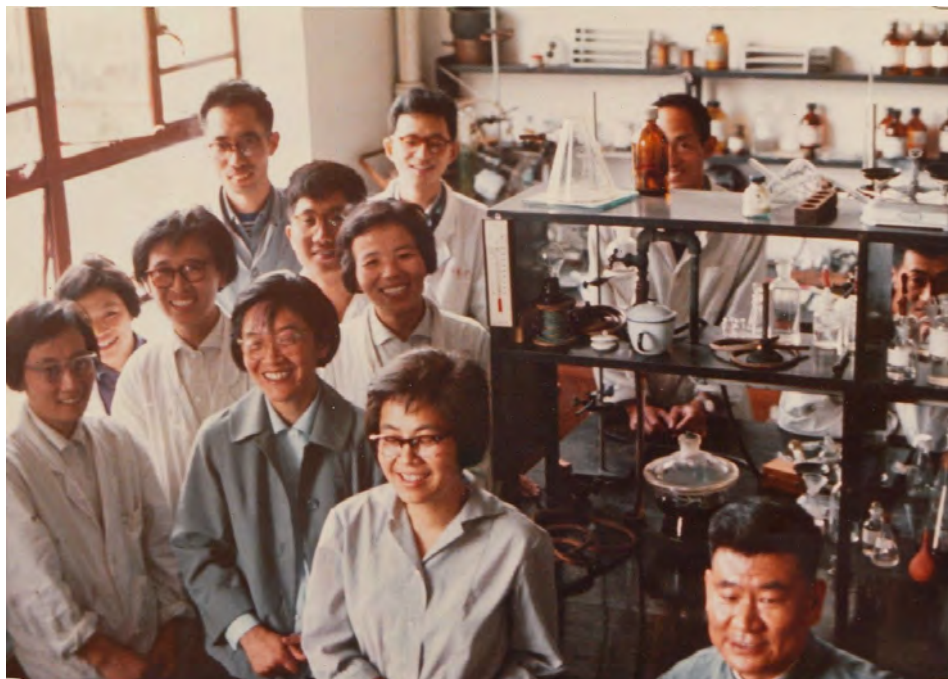
Ping-pong diplomacy also opened the door to private visits initiated by U.S. scientists of Chinese descent. They noticed signals that the Chinese government might be open to nongovernmental scientific exchanges between the two nations.

At first, preeminent Chinese scientists were invited to visit the U.S. The organization in charge was the Committee on Scholarly Communication with the People’s Republic of China (CSCPRC), a nongovernmental organization facilitating people-to-people contacts in various disciplines of the scientific community on all levels.

By 1976, the CSCPRC had hosted Chinese delegations to the U.S. and organized several trips of U.S. scientists to China. The American steroid chemistry and biochemistry delegation, one of several U.S.-China scientific exchanges organized jointly with the National Science Foundation, sent a team of doctors and scientists to China in October 1976 to study the widely used Chinese steroid oral contraceptive.

Since the start of scientific exchanges, in addition to doing my regular research work, I had been asked to be the scientific interpreter for visitors to my institute and others. But this 1976 exchange was one of the largest people-to-people scientific exchanges I participated in before the establishment of formal diplomatic relationships.

The host in China was supposedly a nongovernmental organization, the Scientific and Technical Association of the Peoples’ Republic of China, as a stand-in for the skeleton Foreign Affairs Service Group of the Chinese Academy of Sciences.



A visit to China by Stanford Professor Carl Djerassi, nicknamed “Father of the Pill” for his work on developing the birth control pill. Li-chun Wu, who was his interpreter, is third from right in the top photo, and second from the right in the first row in the bottom photo during a visit to a laboratory.

This delegation came at an opportune time, the first American group to visit China at the end of the mourning period following the death of Mao Zedong in September 1976.

Exciting News

They arrived in Beijing four days after the arrest of the Gang of Four. The members of the delegation were warned by the U.S. Embassy on a stopover in Tokyo not to talk about this explosive news with Chinese hosts, as the news had not yet

been publicized in China. However, at the U.S. Liaison Office cocktail reception for them in Beijing, a Liaison Office staff member slyly hinted about the event. I had to pretend I was ignorant of his innuendo, although I had learned the news via the grapevine from my fellow interpreters who were staying at the Peking Hotel.

One interpreter, who had just come back from Northeast China, told us about the arrest of Mao’s nephew, who was an ally of the Gang of Four. We were all excited

Continued on next page

Science Exchanges *(continued)*

by the significance of the downfall of the Gang of Four, but we had to pretend that we knew nothing, as news of this magnitude had to be trickled down to the ordinary citizens after the high-ranking officials and Communist Party members were informed of it.

By the time the delegation arrived in Shanghai, toward the end of the visit, the whole nation and the world had learned about the downfall of the Gang of Four and the changes in Chinese political leadership.

Big character posters, *dazibao*, were posted on the walls surrounding their hotel and everywhere, denouncing the crimes committed by the Gang of Four, and containing the details of how they were arrested.

The news was a delight to the delegates, including David M. Lampton, a political science professor from Ohio State University. He and Leland Chinn, a research fellow at Searle Pharmaceutical Company, originally from Hong Kong, photographed all the posters they could find, and were aware of the political implications.

Lampton, a China expert, later served as chairman of the Asia Foundation from 2014 to 2018, president of the National Committee on U.S.-China Relations (1988–1997) and has written many books and articles on China's domestic and international policies.

Dozens of Exchanges

Between 1972 and 1979, China sent 43 scientific groups to visit the U.S. and hosted 36 groups from the U.S. The scien-



Vice Premier Yi Fang (front right) receives Rockefeller Foundation President Sheldon Segal, and Temple University's Man-Chiang Niu (front left) in 1978. The interpreter (back left) is Mingde Li, who accompanied the first delegation of Chinese scientists to the U.S. in 1972. Deyin Lin (back right), of the Institute of Zoology, takes notes.

tific exchanges amounted to two-thirds of all types of exchanges during that period. The direct contacts between people in scientific exchanges gradually led to mutual understanding and trust that helped pave the road to normalization.

The initial private contacts of Chinese American scientists, such as Nobel Laureate Yang Chen-Ning (Yang Zhenning), and Temple University biologist Niu Mann-Chiang and many others were critical in helping Chinese researchers rejoin the international scientific community.

In 1979 we decided to move back to the U.S. so our daughters could have an opportunity for higher education. When one of our daughters finished high school in China, she had been assigned to work in a yarn factory because her grandfather had

been a capitalist, and capitalist offspring were denied higher education.

We immigrated to the U.S. with green cards, as my parents and siblings—who had remained in the U.S.—were U.S. citizens. I became a U.S. citizen in 1984, my husband in 1985.

I worked at the Life Science Division of the NASA Ames Research Center in California. After retirement, I assisted my husband in founding the Nanyang Model High School Alumni Group in Northern California, founded the Berkeley Chinese Alumni International Association, and the non-profit U.S. China Green Energy Council. Robert and I were also directors of the 1990 Institute.

The following two articles, published in the *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* in 1998, recount in detail the history and the role scientists played in normalizing U.S.-China relations.

1. Kathlin Smith, 1998. "The Role of Scientists in Normalizing U.S.-China Relations: 1965–1979."
2. Richard P. Suttmeier, 1998. "Scientific Cooperation and Conflict Management in U.S.-China Relations from 1978 to the Present." 友



(From left) Li-chun Wu, Robert Wu, former U.S. Ambassador to China Gary Locke and Bill Fuller of the Asia Foundation.

The History, Importance of U.S.-China Scientific Exchanges

The following excerpts come from "US-China Scientific Exchange: A Case Study of State-Sponsored Scientific Internationalism during the Cold War and Beyond," written by **Zuoyue Wang** of the Department of History, California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, California. The paper was published in 1999 by the University of California Press in *Historical Studies in the Physical and Biological Sciences*. The excerpts are published here with the permission of the author.

Despite its considerable significance, scientific exchange has often been treated as a sideline in U.S.-China relations.

Chinese American scientists were crucial in the forging of this new international scientific network. They, along with Chinese scientists who were trained in the U.S. in the 1930s and 1940s, helped to stimulate and sustain the exchange program.

Both the U.S. and China saw scientific exchange as a neutral, non-ideological route to mutual understanding after so many years of isolation. The U.S. recognized the military implications of technological exchange, but decided to take a calculated risk in the hope that a modernized China would help in the balance against the Soviet Union.

In many ways, Zhou Enlai became the gatekeeper in scientific exchange with the U.S. in the early 1970s. He personally negotiated the first formal academic exchange agreement with the Committee on Scholarly Communication with the People's Republic of China (CSCPRC).

During a session with the CSCPRC delegation on May 27, 1973, in Beijing, Zhou Enlai gave his blessing to nine scientific areas of cooperation that ranged from earthquake prediction to acupuncture to anthropology. But he excluded three social science projects (China studies, urban studies, and science and technology in China's development).

The CSCPRC, operating within the National Academy of Sciences and with funds from the U.S. government and private

foundations, became the de facto liaison in the U.S. for academic exchanges with China.

The CSCPRC sponsored American delegations in almost all major scientific fields to visit China, usually for several weeks. Upon their return, these groups published detailed reports about the status of Chinese science, technology and education and made suggestions for future exchanges.

The committee also arranged for the visits of Chinese delegations to the U.S. These early, brief exchanges were sometimes criticized as "scientific tourism" by American scientists who wanted to expand the depth and length of contacts. But the exchanges proved to be enormously useful to Chinese scientists, who needed information about the state of the art in various fields of science.

During the Cultural Revolution, thousands of Chinese scientists, especially those senior scientists trained in the U.S. and Europe, were accused of being reactionary bourgeois academic authorities and American or Western agents and spies. Hundreds were killed or committed suicide and many more suffered persecution.

Chinese scientific and educational institutions stopped functioning from the beginning of the Cultural Revolution in 1966 to about 1970. Universities admitted no new students for those years; laboratories and libraries were abandoned; professors and students, like much of the rest of the society, were engaged in political campaigns, either as victims or victimizers. International exchange stopped completely.

The stunning revival of U.S.-China relations and images of Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai shaking hands with Richard Nixon in the midst of the political turmoil brought political relief to many scientists. Before Mao's death and the arrest of the Gang of Four in 1976, however, Chinese



First row, middle: M.C. Chang, a Chinese-American biologist whose pioneer work in animal studies paved the way for the steroid oral contraceptive. First row, second from right, the pioneering Chinese obstetrician and gynecologist Dr. Lin Qiaozhi, who led the first medical delegation to visit the U.S. First row, right, translator Li-Chun Wu.

scientists ran political and personal risks by taking part in exchanges.

The significance of the U.S.-China scientific exchange should also be viewed in the context of a major politically and ideologically charged science policy debate over basic research. During the Cultural Revolution, scientists had defended basic research as the foundation of technological advances; the radicals denounced it as a reactionary bourgeois ideology of science.

Foreign scientists visiting Chinese universities in the early 1970s were impressed by the emphasis on practical applications, but many of them also questioned the lack of balance.

Among those who raised the issue of basic research with Zhou Enlai was Chen-Ning Yang. Yang, a Chinese American physicist then at the State University of New York, Stony Brook, was well known in China for sharing the Nobel prize in physics in 1957 with Tsung-Dao Lee, a Chinese American physicist at Columbia. When the U.S. lifted its ban on travel to China in early 1971, Yang was one of the first Chinese American scientists to take advantage of it.

The pivotal roles of Chen-Ning Yang in the debate over basic research and T.D. Lee in the development of the high energy physics program provide examples of the profound and at times conflicting

Continued on next page

History of Exchanges *(continued)*

influence of Chinese American scientists in Chinese science and politics.

Hundreds of Chinese American scientists and professionals visited China in the 1970s.

Many of these Chinese American scientists were first-generation immigrants, who received their undergraduate education in China and came to the U.S. in the 1930s and 1940s for graduate training, often with funding from the then Nationalist government of China.

For all their contributions to American science, Chinese scientists had a bitter-sweet history in the United States. Racial discrimination often marked their earliest social experiences in the United States during the era of Chinese Exclusion, which lasted from the turn of the century to World War II, when most Chinese were not allowed to become permanent residents or citizens. Even as late as 1954, developers in New Jersey refused to sell a house to Yang, then a member of the Institute of Advanced Studies at Princeton.

The Korean War, which broke out in the summer of 1950, soon closed the window of opportunity for Chinese students and scholars who wanted to return to their homeland. The U.S. government forbade Chinese nationals, especially those specializing in science and engineering, from returning to China.

The best known example of the disillusioned Chinese scientist in the U.S. was Qian Xuesen (Hsue-Sen Tsien), an aerodynamics scientist at the California Institute of Technology. Qian rose to the top of the profession in the 1940s, helped found the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, and contributed to U.S. weapons development during World War II.

He applied for U.S. citizenship in 1949. Trust turned into suspicion during the McCarthy era when he was charged with being a Communist Party member and a spy for Communist China. The U.S. government put him under house arrest for five years and prohibited him from leaving the country.



Qian Xuesen

Qian and hundreds of other Chinese scientists and engineers were eventually allowed to return to China as a result of the Geneva Conference in 1955.

To stay out of trouble, many in the Chinese American community, including scientists, adopted the strategy of striving for achievement in professional fields while shunning politics.

After the purge of intellectuals during the Anti-Rightist campaign in China in 1957, few Chinese scientists in the U.S. returned to their home country. Many, including Chen-Ning Yang, applied for and were granted U.S. citizenship.

They often drew inspiration from examples of community solidarity provided by other ethnic groups, especially the African American civil rights struggle and the Jewish people's fight to remember the Holocaust.

By all indications prominent members of the Chinese American scientific community were becoming politically active and were waiting for a suitable venue to express their political opinions at the time of the U.S.-China rapprochement in the early 1970s.

A comparison of the U.S.-China scientific exchange with that between the U.S. and the Soviet Union, which has been judged less successful, helps illuminate aspects of Cold War science. Geopolitics played an important role in defining the characteristics of the two exchanges. There was much unease in the U.S.-Soviet exchange on both sides, probably because the contacts were to serve the purpose of defusing the danger of war. In contrast, the U.S.-China exchange was designed more to build an

alliance. Also, the historical ties between senior members of the Chinese and U.S. scientific communities and the active role of Chinese American scientists—not to mention the traditional missionary spirit to change China toward an American model—gave the U.S.-China exchange an emotional appeal that was missing in the U.S.-Soviet case.

The U.S.-China scientific exchange benefited much from the intermixing effect of Chinese American scientists as an international ethnic and scientific community, which helped blur national boundaries in science, even at the height of the Cold War. 友

The complete article can be found at <https://www.cpp.edu/~zywang/us-china.html>

Documentary Features Philadelphia Orchestra's 1973 China Trip

PBS is airing the feature-length documentary *Beethoven in Beijing* this spring, about the Philadelphia Orchestra's groundbreaking trip to China in 1973 at a time when Western music was banned.

The film shows how the visit by American musicians helped thaw U.S.-China relations and revive classical

music in China. Today, the Chinese are great consumers and producers of classical music. Internationally famous Chinese musicians include pianist Lang Lang and Tan Dun, who won an Oscar for the Best Original Score for the movie *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*. Tan Dun was inspired by the music he heard broadcast on loudspeakers during the Philadelphia Orchestra's 1973 trip.

An article about the historic trip, written by Jana McBurney-Lin of USCPSA's South Bay chapter, appeared in the Fall 2018 *USCR*.

The film also shows how some financially troubled American orchestras have been helped in recent years by support from the Chinese. Check local listings for dates and times of the documentary. 友

*Beethoven
in Beijing*
贝多芬在北京

Can U.S., China Cooperate on Climate Change?

By Mike Revzin

Can the fight against climate change become an area of cooperation between the U.S. and China? A panel of experts discussed that topic during a webinar hosted by the United States Heartland China Association (USHCA).

The discussion, titled “Big Power Responsibility,” took place in October. It is among many webinars posted on the website of the USCHA, a nonprofit, bipartisan organization committed to stronger ties between the U.S. and China. (An article about the USCHA appeared in the Winter 2021 *USCR*).

The introduction to the webinar says, “As the world’s dominant powers, the U.S. and China have a tremendous influence and impact on a global response for climate change. In this discussion we will hear...how the U.S. and China can collaborate on climate change for the benefit of our world.”

The panelists were Barbara Finamore, Senior Strategic Director for Asia at the Natural Resources Defense Council; Fritz Mayer, Dean of the Josef Korbel School of International Studies at the University of Denver; Beth Keck, Volkswagen Sustainability Chair and Schwarzman Scholar at Tsinghua University; and Professor Sui-sheng (Sam) Zhao, Director of the Center for China-US Cooperation.

Former Missouri Governor Bob Holden, who is chairman and CEO of the USCHA, began the climate change event by saying, “There’s probably no more important issue in the world. China and the United States, if we can figure out how to work together, can be real problem solvers.”

Zhao, who served as moderator, added, that “This is particularly important at a time when communications between the two governments has not been very good.” People-to-people nongovernment communications will take a particularly important role, he added.

Finamore has worked on environmental law and energy policy for decades, with a long-term focus on China. Her book on the topic, *Will China Save the Planet?* was published in 2018.

She began the discussion with details about President Xi Jinping’s pledge, made



Barbara Finamore



Fritz Mayer



Beth Keck



Sam Zhao

in September, for China to peak emissions by 2030 and obtain carbon neutrality by 2060. She recalled that, about 12 years earlier, China had said that developing countries should not be required to commit to environmental goals at the same level as developed countries. The 2060 pledge would require China to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by up to 90 percent.

Describing China’s pledge, Finamore said, “It’s extremely important because China is the world’s leading emitter of greenhouse gases. It’s responsible for about 28 percent of global CO₂ emissions, which is more than the United States and the EU combined.

Achieving carbon neutrality in China will require enormous and unprecedented transitions.

If China is successful in achieving carbon neutrality that will shave about 0.2 to 0.3 of a degree Celsius off global warming projections, which is very important, she said, adding, “It would make Xi Jinping’s commitment the largest climate commitment to date.”

Is the Pledge Feasible?

“But how feasible it is, economically, technologically, politically?” she asked. “One thing is clear: achieving carbon neutrality is going to be a colossal undertaking for a country that is still so heavily dependent on fossil fuel. China burns half the world’s coal and it continues to build new coal-fired power plants even though they are increasingly uneconomical and unnecessary. And China also burns mas-

sive amounts of coal directly in factories that produce half of the world’s steel and cement.”

China is the largest global auto market, the largest importer of crude oil and the largest financier of coal-fired power plants overseas as part of its Belt and Road initiative, and those overseas plants are not part of China’s pledge, she added.

“Achieving carbon neutrality in China will require enormous and unprecedented transitions in China’s energy system, its transportation system, its industry, its urban infrastructure and its land,” Finamore said.

“In order to achieve those transitions, it will require massive amounts of investments, very difficult political reform and strong political will,” she said. “At every step of the way, China to date has met stiff resistance from local government and powerful fossil fuel interests whose cooperation is most needed.”

Clean Energy Leader

“But here’s the paradox. China is also the world leader in the very clean energy technology that will help to make this pledge feasible,” Finamore said. “China is by far the largest investor and producer and consumer of renewable energy. One out of three solar panels and one of three wind turbines in the world are in China. China is also home to half of the world’s electric cars, 98 percent of its electric buses and 99 percent of its electric two-wheelers.”

China also dwarfs the rest of the world in the current and planned amount of capacity to produce electric batteries that will power electric vehicles and store electricity on the grid, she added. China’s clean energy drive and its scale have brought down the cost of clean energy technology

Continued on next page

Climate Change *(continued)*

dramatically enough that it can compete with fossil fuel technology everywhere.

"But to achieve carbon neutrality, China is going to have to accelerate everything that it has done so far," Finamore said. It's going to have to increase its wind and solar power and its energy storage capacity by tenfold—and it's already, by far, the largest in the world. "Many new clean energy technologies need to be developed and brought down in price, especially for heavy industry," she said.

"Some people estimate that achieving carbon neutrality in China will cost at least 15 trillion dollars, but it will transform the global climate fight by helping to make the next generation energy technology available and affordable for everybody in the world," Finamore said.

Finamore said that the timing of China's pledge, "was clearly designed to take advantage of the lack of U.S. climate leadership at the national and international level" during the Trump administration and possibly to preempt pressure to act on climate change from a new U.S. administration and the European Union.

Under-promising, Over-performing

On an optimistic note, Finamore said, "China has a track record of under-promising and over-performing on its climate pledges. The fact that this pledge was made by President Xi Jinping himself sends a strong signal to everybody in China that climate is a top priority, and to the rest of the world. But the devil is in the details."

A week before the webinar, Chinese scientists proposed details of how their country could achieve its goal.

"Will China save the planet, or will it at least do its part? The jury is still very much out," she said. "But two things are clear to me. One is that moving to a path of deep decarbonization is very much in China's own self-interest: to avoid the worst impact of climate change, to benefit from the green energy economy and to protect the health of its people. The second thing that's clear to me is that cooperation on climate between the world's two largest emitters will benefit both countries," she concluded.

A Different Tone

Mayer commented on the U.S. situation, saying, "We've not been doing very well" as a country, although work on climate

change is being done by states, cities and the private sector.

Commenting on the Chinese system of government, he said "There are things we don't like about that government, to be sure, but its capacity to do things is significantly different from our own capacity."

As for the U.S., he said, "If we can't get our act together at home, our credibility in the international arena and our ability to lead is going to be much diminished."

Speaking less than two weeks before the November election, Mayer predicted that a Biden presidency, "would set a completely different tone on the U.S. context. He has pledged to make the U.S. carbon neutral by 2050. Whether the U.S. can get there is another question."

Mayer said, "There has been growing

The fact that this pledge was made by President Xi Jinping himself sends a strong signal to everybody in China that climate is a top priority.

support in the United States for action on climate change," but there is still a big partisan divide on many aspects. "There is support for certain things. The support is much more in the arena of supporting renewable energy, planting trees, fuel efficiency for cars," he said, adding that there is not bipartisan support on other issues, such as a carbon tax.

Mayer accurately predicted that a Biden administration would rejoin the Paris climate agreement, which the U.S. withdrew from during the Trump administration. But Mayer said

U.S.-China relations on this issue will not return to the status quo, and overall bilateral relations are "tenuous at best." He said there are still flashpoints on human rights, security in the South China Sea and other issues.

Competition and Cooperation

"In the green energy arena we're going to be competitors, assuming we seek to invest," he said. "So our interests are not that fully aligned." Despite that, "I expect to see much greater cooperation," he said.

"Why? Because there's no other way. We have to do this. It is in the interest of China, it is in the interests of the U.S.," as well as other countries.

"The slow shift in public opinion in the United States and the salience of this issue make the moment right for a significantly greater cooperation. China has pledged to be carbon neutral by 2060. Biden says 2050. Maybe we'll have a race to the top before this is all over," he concluded.

Keck began by talking about the business angle. "China and the U.S., we are the two largest economies in the world. We are also the two largest global emitters of greenhouse gases," she noted. "So we have a lot in common here."

Economies Linked

"One thing else that I think is salient to point out is that, despite all the economic and political tension for the last four years, our economies are still very much linked and the trade in goods between the two countries was 500 billion (dollars) last year." China is the largest importer of goods into the U.S. and "for all of those goods that go between our two countries we have embedded in them carbon and environmental degradation, and so we have very much a linkage in terms of the future of our planet, the health of our planet," she said.

"I think there's a couple of interesting things to look at as we think about collaboration instead of competition, and one is just understanding how each of the business communities in our two countries responds to government policy," she said.

"In China I have always been struck by how Chinese companies follow the Chinese government. They always look to the government for guidance and, once they know which way the government wants to go, the companies often will fall right behind and support those goals and policy objectives."

"One of the most interesting concrete examples of that in recent times has been poverty alleviation," Keck said. After Xi set a goal of eliminating poverty by 2020, companies made that goal a main corporate social responsibility activity, Keck said.

"And so I am very optimistic about Chinese firms and Chinese industry getting behind this very big statement of policy of carbon neutrality put out by China's president last month."

"Now I'd like to contrast that with what's happened in our country in the last four years," she said. Although the U.S. withdrew from the Paris agreement, many American companies continued their environmental efforts. "All of a sudden we had this new organization called "We Are Still In," in which about 4,000 businesses, universities and organizations vowed to continue working for carbon neutrality. Together, those groups represent almost half of the U.S. GDP.

"I think that, because of the business response, it sets us up for a very interesting great opportunity for business-to-business collaboration," she said, but added that other changes must take place.

Environmental Regulations

Keck noted that China began to revive its economy 30 to 40 years ago using a successful export strategy. This led to U.S. companies making their products in Chinese factories.

At first, this involved U.S. companies only telling the Chinese factories the specifications and quality requirements for those products, she said.

"But things happen and we've had a lot more transparency in society and by the 1990s what was going on was that we would have NGOs looking at what was going on in the factories and finding that the working conditions were not up to the standards that they should be, and rightfully bringing that to the attention of us as consumers and to the companies to take action." That led to an interesting business-to-business dynamic "because the environmental regulation was very poor in China. They had great regulations on the books but the implementation of them was really poor," she said.

"As a result, companies started their own standards for suppliers, so if you wanted my purchase order you had to meet my standards for worker safety," Keck explained. In the past 10 years that has expanded to include requirements for environmental sustainability and efficiency.

Keck said that, when she worked for Walmart in China, "We had a great collaboration on trying to bring energy efficiency into the factories because it was a great business case and it was great for the environment. All of a sudden these retailers and brands were using the power of the purchase order" to bring about environmental change.

"What if we reset the business-to-business engagement?" she asked, to find a way to accelerate voluntary compliance. On environmental issues, the U.S. companies and NGOs have had a stronger presence in the planning stages than the Chinese manufacturers, she said.

"I think there's a fundamental human reaction that if you're included you have a stake in it and you have an emotional stake and you'll want to make things happen, rather than it coming down as a hierarchical power relationship," she said.

"The other side of this would be what needs to happen on the China side. And that means that the Chinese companies need to step up. I've been in forums where Chinese companies have shown up. They'll send a low-level person" with no authority, she said. When Chinese or U.S. companies give importance to their sustainability teams, it creates momentum, she added.

Multilateral Cooperation

Zhao, the webinar's moderator, asked the panelists about a recent proposal to set up a multilateral international organization for climate change.

Finamore said there was "very intense bilateral cooperation between the U.S. and China" on climate change during the Obama administration, but that multilateral cooperation would be a good choice now.

There will be competition between countries in developing their green energy technology and businesses, Finamore said, "But, aside from the technologies themselves, there's tremendous opportunity for experts...to work together on shared challenges, such as how do you make your grids more flexible so they can integrate all the renewable energy that's becoming cheaper and more available?"

"We've got a situation now where California has declared that by 2035 there's going to be no more sales of gasoline or diesel vehicles. And Hainan province in China has said the same thing."

If the U.S., EU and China together announced such a ban, "Just think about what signal that would send to the vehicle manufacturing community," she said. That would allow manufacturers "to make the necessary investment in training so they can make that switch, knowing there'll be a market out there."

"I'm not saying that you come up with one standard for everybody. But, if the... jurisdictions were to come up with related domestic commitments like this, it would totally transform the transportation industry. So I agree this is the time to find areas of collaboration even though there is going to be lots of competition."

Mayer said, "The idea of China and the EU and the U.S. taking the lead makes a ton of sense. I think when you start talking about multilateral governments though, how do we actually structure this?" He said it would also have to include India, Brazil and other countries around the world.

"In the beginning, the WTO was organized and controlled by a relatively small number of players. As it expanded its membership, including China, it became much more unwieldy," he said.

International Standards

Keck said that climate cooperation among business in different countries would be easier if international standards were set.

"Business hates having different standards around the world. It's very cost inefficient" when a company wants to sell a product globally.

Mayer described the range of issues in U.S.-China relations, saying that in "many of them we are competitors, many of them are points of contention on security issues, on human rights, even on some of the economic issues." But the climate change issue "is an area where we actually have common interests. So if I was thinking about how to reset the relationship between the U.S. and China, and I'm looking for an issue where we can make progress and change the tenor of things, there's a lot to be said for really making this a centerpiece of U.S.-China relations."

Common Interests

He added, "This is an area where, by and large, we share interests. We're both better off if we collaborate. And I think there will be a will to do that. Climate has never been a centerpiece of foreign policy," he said. "Those of us who worked in it have always been frustrated at how marginalized it tends to be. But here's a moment because it's such a salient issue, or a more salient issue, globally, and I

Continued on next page

Climate Change *(continued)*

suspect both countries will be looking for ways to lower the temperature in our relationship. I can see this as being an important element of an evolving U.S.-China relationship," he said.

"I'm a real believer in having multi-dimensional relationships with countries," Keck said, "and right now of course it's really troubling because there's such a black and white view of China that it's all bad... And that puts us on a very dangerous pathway."

If you have good rapport in several aspects of the relationship, you won't get derailed over one area of disagreement, she said.

"Right now we're just focusing on the tough stuff and we're not putting any effort into the areas where we can have cooperation across the myriad complexities of our two governmental systems. And, to me, that's a high risk."

China is trying to corner the market in raw materials used in clean energy technologies, Finamore said, but continuing to mine these minerals is not sustainable. Recycling is an alternative, she said, adding that China "is already a leader in recycling electric vehicle batteries, not out of the goodness of its heart but because it realizes there is economic value in doing so."

Another alternative is to develop the next generation technologies. "Developing alternatives to batteries, that don't rely so much on these questionable minerals," she said.

Tesla is already doing research and development on cobalt-free batteries, Finamore said, adding that this is the kind of innovation that the U.S. has always excelled at, given adequate funding. She called for ramping up spending on research and development for clean energy technologies in order to harness the innovation for which the U.S. has a competitive advantage.

Mayer said that even areas without cooperation can be beneficial. "The competition can be healthy to the extent that the countries are racing to develop these technologies and investing and competing in some sense on the subsidy side of things," he said.

"Eighty percent of Chinese citizens are regularly exposed to pollution levels higher than those considered safe by the

EPA," Keck said. "People in China are more adversely affected by environmental degradation than those in almost any other country. And if you're talking 80 percent, that's all economic levels. If you look at it from that perspective, it is a social justice issue and it is a public health crisis for China."

Keck noted that environmental issues and social justice issues are often linked

This is an area where, by and large, we share interests. We're both better off if we collaborate.

in the U.S., such as the movement against pollution-causing industrial activities in poor minority areas. "We need to clean up our act here at home and bring it into our global conversation," she said.

Finamore said that pollution exposure is a social justice issue. "Many of the people with the highest levels of exposure in China are workers at these factories," she said. A related social issue for both the U.S. and China, she said, is "how do you ensure as you go through this transition away from these fossil fuels" that you have a just transition for workers in those industries?

Zhao asked if there were domestic political factors that motivated Xi to make his 2060 pledge. Keck replied, "One thing that's very clear is that there's a huge understanding of the environmental degradation now."

Finamore added, "Air pollution in particular has really driven so much of China's action on climate change because coal is the major factor causing the air pollution as well as the carbon emissions. One more domestic reason is that China understands that clean energy is the largest market opportunity of the 21st Century and they're determined to lead the way."

"China recognizes that this is good for their economic bottom line as well as the long-term sustainability of their economic system, which is under stress lately. They have to move away from the export-driven, heavy industry-focused economic model if they're going to survive," she said. 友

Chapter News

South Bay Holds Virtual Spring Festival

The South Bay chapter held a Spring Festival celebration on Zoom on February 11, Chinese New Year's Eve. President John Marienthal organized it, Billy Lee gave a talk about his friendship blog, Winny Lin presented a report about her Chinese New Year celebration online with her students all over the world on Outschool and Shirley Lin Kinoshita presented her sumi-e style watercolor painting on the Year of the Ox. National President Diana Greer also participated.

—Winny Lin

Richmond Supports ChinaFest

The 16th annual ChinaFest, based in Richmond, was held virtually this year, starting in February. The University of Richmond and the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts partner for this event with Rose Chen, founder of the Rose Group for Cross Cultural Understanding, who initiated ChinaFest, which has grown quite successful.

The opening lecture and panel featured Yue-Sai Kan, co-chair of the China Institute in Manhattan, and was about her "Journey Through a Changing China, The China I Know."

As a journalist, author and pioneer, she was a mainstay of the television program *Looking East*, which reached 400 million viewers. She gave a fascinating commentary on the diverse, resilient Chinese people moving up in the world.

Three movies were offered for screening: *Beijing Bicycle*, *Finding Kukan* and *Girls Always Happy*. That last one was about two writers, a mother and daughter, who share a love-hate relationship while living in a Beijing flat under stressful economic conditions.

Chinese students shared the Hometowns Project, featuring information on where they grew up and how they lived.

Ongoing parts of the festival will be available online for the rest of the year. USCPFA Richmond is proud to support ChinaFest, which promotes better understanding between the people of China and the U.S., as is the aspiration of USCPFA.

—Diana Greer

China's Outbound Tourism Flourished Before Pandemic

Editor's note: The pandemic caused tourism to screech to a halt worldwide, and it's uncertain when things will get back to normal. But, before the interruption, one of the most significant trends in international tourism was the dramatic increase in Chinese tourists traveling outside of China. This article, based on statistics before the shutdown, looks at that topic.

By Stephanie Sun

As people get richer, they're more likely to have the ability and desire to travel to foreign countries for sightseeing and shopping. The Chinese are no exception.

"I think travelling and talking to local people is the best way to know them," said Li Yong, a 39-year-old Chinese businessman who has traveled with his wife and child to parts of Asia and Europe.

At tourist sites around the world, where it was once unusual to see Chinese tourists such as Li, it is now commonplace. Travel-related industries have started to take steps to accommodate these tourists, with such things as Chinese language menus and brochures, and hotel rooms with tea kettles.

According to China's National Bureau of Statistics, the per capita disposable personal income of urban residents in China increased from 6,280 yuan (\$912) in 2000 to 39,251 yuan (\$5,703) in 2018.

China's middle class was the main group that contributed to the income rise. According to Credit Suisse's "Global Wealth Report 2015," China's middle class included 109 million people in 2015. But the China Household Finance Survey, conducted by Southwestern University of Finance and Economics in Chengdu, Sichuan, put that figure much higher—at 204 million. Either way, members of

Chinese Tourists Are Big Spenders

According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization, Chinese tourists account for about a fifth of the money spent by international travelers. The average Chinese visitor spends about twice as much per day as the average non-Chinese tourist.



Chinese tourists visit a lavender garden in Cotswolds, England. Photos by Stephanie Sun.

the growing middle class now have the resources to take outbound trips and are eager to do so.

For the first three decades of the People's Republic of China, until the reform and opening of 1979, overseas travel was impossible for individual citizens.

Early Restrictions

In the early 1980s, when travel was first allowed, it was restricted to group travel for residents of Guangdong province to travel to Hong Kong and Macau to visit relatives. Later, people in Northeast China were allowed to take group trips across the border into North Korea. These limits, pertaining to travel to those areas, remained until 1990.

In 1988, group travel to visit relatives in Thailand was approved, followed by Singapore, Malaysia and the Philippines in 1992. This was known as the Approved Destination Status program, which widened the limits of outbound tourism. In 1997, more outbound destinations were added for group travel.

In 2003, China began to allow individual Chinese travel to Hong Kong and Macau, and overseas travel also gradually became easier. Individual travel to Hong

Kong and Macau was introduced gradually. At first, only people in four cities of Guangdong were given permission for such travel.

As of March 2018, China allowed travel to 129 foreign countries and regions, or 72 percent of the total number of countries that have diplomatic relationships with China.

Simplified Procedures

At the same time, passport applications also became easier and more convenient. From 2002 to 2017, about 173 million passports were issued to Chinese residents, or more than 10 percent of the Chinese population.

Efforts were also made by countries trying to attract more Chinese tourists. Since 2013, many countries and regions

started to simplify visa procedures in order to attract more Chinese tourists. Because of this, more than 98 million Chinese traveled overseas in 2013, up 18 percent from a year earlier.

Since then, the number of countries or regions that don't require visas for Chinese tourists increased to 15 and the number of countries or regions that



A Chinese passport.

Continued on next page

Chinese Tourists *(continued)*

allow Chinese tourists to obtain visas after landing increased to 44.

"We traveled to England this year (2019.) We might go again next year to see more because we got visas valid for two years," Li said, before the pandemic hit.

As a result of various factors, 130 million Chinese traveled abroad in 2017 and the number increased to almost 149 million in 2018, up 14.7 percent from a year earlier.

The number looks big, but compared to the total population, it remains small. In 2018, about 71.3 million Chinese traveled outside of Greater China (the mainland, Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan), which means fewer than five percent traveled overseas, and the untapped group of potential tourists remains huge.

Top 10 Destinations

Among all international destinations, nearby countries and regions remained the top choices for most tourists. According to Ctrip, one of the biggest online tourism platforms in China, and data released by destination countries, the top 10 destinations that Chinese tourists traveled to in 2018 were Thailand, Japan, Vietnam, Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia, the U.S., Cambodia, Russia and the Philippines.

The fastest growth destinations were Myanmar, Montenegro, Serbia, Laos, Argentina, Spain, Cambodia, Mexico, Brazil and the Czech Republic.

The choice of overseas travel destinations is always affected by many factors such as politics, foreign relationships and exchange rates. For example, visa applications to the U.S. increased by 57 percent

1984: First Chinese Group Visits Japan

In 1984, it was literally international news when a group of Chinese tourists traveled to Japan. The Associated Press quoted the Workers' Daily on the first group of "rich peasants" traveling from China to Japan as tourists. "Fifty peasants from Hebei province leave next week for a 10-day tour of Japan at their own expense. Those peasants who get rich from their hard work are eager to widen their horizons, enjoy foreign scenery and make their life richer and more colorful," it said.

after the 10-year U.S. visa was launched in 2014, and the number of Chinese tourists who travelled to the U.S. in 2015 increased by 16.8 percent over the previous year.

However, the growth trend failed to continue because of frequent trade friction between the two countries. The number of Chinese tourists to the U.S. decreased to 2.9 million people in 2018, down 5.7 percent from the previous year. It was the first decrease since 2003. The trend continued in the first half of 2019. From January to May 2019, about 773,000 Chinese visitors travelled to the U.S., down 5.3 percent from that period a year earlier.

More Chinese women travel abroad than men. Among the 149 million Chinese travelers in 2018, 52 percent were female and 48 percent were male.

Biggest Age Group

People born in the 1980s were the main group of travelers, while the travel demand of people born in the 1990s kept increasing. In 2018, 29 percent of the travelers were born in the 1980s and 18 percent were born in the 1990s.

When outbound travel first began, most travelers came from China's tier-one cities, where incomes are higher and it's more convenient to get visas from foreign embassies and consulates. But the travel demand of people from tier-two and tier-three cities has steadily increased in recent years.

Airlines and agencies also noticed this change. In the two or three years before travel was interrupted by the pandemic, international air routes were added by domestic and international airlines from tier-two and tier-three cities.

Moreover, new visa service centers were also added in these cities so that people don't have to go to tier-one cities like Beijing

and Shanghai to obtain visas. In 2018, millions of travelers from more than 200 cities in China booked group or individual travel, cruises, tour guides and other overseas services to 157 international destinations.

Shopping for luxury goods is a big reason for overseas travel by Chinese, but less than it once was. According to the China Tourism Academy, Chinese tourists spent \$120 billion on luxury goods on trips outside of China in 2018, or about \$800 per capita per trip.

In the past, tourists from tier-one cities were the main ones to buy foreign luxury goods while traveling abroad. Now, tourists from tier-two and tier-three cities are gradually becoming the main purchasers of foreign luxury goods, while tier-one city tourists are shifting their travel reasons to cultural education and high-quality tourism experiences.

In general, there has been a decrease in growth in the number of Chinese shopping overseas for luxury products, and the demand has shifted to recreation and cultural experiences.

Also, the travel habits of young travelers are different. Young travelers born in the 1990s and 2000s like individual travel, favorable hotel and airline prices and tailored itineraries—for example, having a local tour guide.



Tourists pass a Chinese language ad for cashmere scarves.

Catering to Chinese

In order to serve the increasing number of tourists from China, many travel destinations, such as Japan and Spain, have made changes or added services especially tailored for Chinese tourists.

Some hotels in the U.S. have also started to cater to the needs of Chinese tourists—offering a warm welcome by Chinese-speaking staff and not decorating lobbies with white flowers, which symbolize death in the Chinese culture. Some high-end hotels in Southern California offer Chinese newspapers, slippers and electric tea kettles. Theme parks, sight-seeing companies and shopping malls have also added translators and Chinese brochures.

As one of the main travel destinations for Chinese tourists, the U.S. attracted 2.9 million Chinese tourists in 2018, a dramatic increase from 249,000 in 2000, according to McKinsey and the U.S. government's National Travel & Tourism Office. It is reported that shopping, sight-seeing and food remained the top three interests of Chinese tourists in the U.S. in 2018. Chinese tourists spend big money on U.S. travel—about \$7,000 to \$8,000 per person, according to various surveys. This is more than 50 percent higher than other foreign tourists, according to the U.S. Travel Association.

Traditional tours and sightseeing in big cities remain popular, but demand for tours to small towns and suburbs grew the fastest. The top American destinations are New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Las Vegas, Washington, D.C. and Boston. In Boston, for example, Chinese accounted for 15 percent of tourists. In the western U.S., visits to national parks are also popular among Chinese tourists.

According to the U.S. Travel Association, Chinese visitors make up the third-largest source of overseas travel to the U.S., after the U.K. and Japan, and they spent \$18.8 billion dollars in the U.S. in 2017. 友

Stephanie Sun is a Chinese journalist who lives in Shanghai.



Chinese language on the welcome board at Edinburgh Castle in Scotland.

—TRAVEL TRENDS—

Domestic Travel Picks Up

According to China's Ministry of Culture and Tourism, in October 2020, during the first four days of the eight-day National Day holiday, about 425 million people traveled within China. While that was fewer than the 542 million in the same period a year earlier, it was a sign that domestic travel had begun to recover. Tourist attractions were limited to 75 percent of capacity, and tickets quickly sold out for popular destinations, such as the Badaling section of the Great Wall.

Chinese Visits to Alaska Increase

About 10,000 Chinese tourists visited Alaska in 2018—five times as many as seven years earlier. The *Anchorage Daily News* attributed the increase to social media and increasing Chinese interest in winter tourism.

RVs Becoming Popular in China

The recreational vehicle (RV) market in China is expanding, according to an article in *Inkstonenews.com*, an online newspaper launched by Hong Kong's *South China Morning Post*.

With international travel shut down by the pandemic, Chinese have turned to domestic travel, when it is possible to do so. A small but growing number have rented or bought RVs.

One online rental platform has 2,000 vehicles available in 18 provinces. A network of RV parks has also sprung up

around the nation. More than 50 vehicles were sold at one RV show in Beijing for an average of \$60,000 to \$76,000.

North America and Europe remain the biggest RV markets, with 500,000 new vehicles hitting the road every year. But one person in China's RV industry was quoted as predicting, "The China market will catch up in around six years."

Cruises Gaining Popularity in China

Before the pandemic, the number of cruise ship passengers in China had risen tenfold in five years, to around 2 million in 2016, making it the world's fastest-growing market, according to a Bloomberg.com article.

Major international cruise lines were competing with Chinese companies, which were building their own big ships. Most Chinese passengers make shorter trips—five days on average—and travel to South Korea and Japan. Cruise lines are adapting to local tastes, with Chinese food and entertainment, and more emphasis on shopping.

"But perhaps the biggest difference in China is that cruises are often a multigenerational holiday," Bloomberg reported.

Chinese Flock to Indonesia

In 2017, Chinese replaced Australians as the largest group of visitors to Indonesia, with Bali by far the main destination.

A Chinese Tourist's View of the U.S.

Beautiful Scenery, Old Subways

Editor's note: What does the U.S. look like through the eyes of Chinese tourists? Tourists' opinions vary, of course, based on their experiences. Here is one example.

By Huang Xi

During my two trips as a tourist to the U.S., I have seen the beauty of Napa Valley and the bright lights of Las Vegas, but avoided the aging subways of New York.

I made my most recent trip to the U.S. in March 2019, along with my aunt, to attend the wedding of my cousin (my aunt's daughter), who has lived in San Jose, California, for eight years and is starting her own trading company.

We went to her new house, and then drove a couple hours to beautiful Napa Valley for the wedding ceremony. Napa Valley, with its tranquil scenery and leisurely pace, was a good venue for the wedding. Two years earlier I had visited New York City where, like Shanghai, people always seemed to be rushing here and there.

I enjoyed the wine in Napa Valley, and a visit to a spa. I still remember the delicious lemon tart I ate in Napa Valley, sour and sweet, and the steak at the wedding—tender and juicy. My cousin told me the restaurant had a one-star Michelin rating.

After the wedding, we flew to Las Vegas. While there one evening, after we finished our dinner at a famous Japanese restaurant, we wanted to walk back to our hotel—about 30 minutes away. I was surprised when my cousin insisted that we take Uber. She told me that, unlike Shanghai, it was not safe to walk at night in that part of the city.

With the development of China's economy and the expansion of tourism to the U.S., it was easier to get a visa to go to the U.S. than it would have been a couple decades ago. I applied at the U.S. Consulate in Shanghai, answered several routine questions during an interview, and got a 10-year, multiple-entry visa.

I enjoyed the food in the U.S. and the different culture, as well as the weather and shopping. But I thought that New York was dirty and the taxis were not convenient.



Huang Xi (left) and her aunt at UCLA.

I didn't try the subway, which I was told is also old and dirty.

On the New York trip, we also went to California. One of the touristy things we did was go to see the taping of a TV talk show in Hollywood. Although I can speak

English, I could barely understand what they were talking about, due to the cultural references.

Generally speaking, I found Americans to be friendly. During my trips, some places helped Chinese tourists by having information in Chinese, but other places only used English. My advice would be for hotels and tourist places to help Chinese by translating more information. Even Google Translate or similar technology could help tourist locations in this effort.

My husband and I traveled to Malaysia for our honeymoon. Overall, I think it's interesting to travel to other countries to see the cultural differences, experience daily life and see wonderful scenery. We now have a three-year-old daughter. I hope we can travel with her to the U.S. and elsewhere in the future. 友

Huang Xi works for the *China Daily* in Shanghai.

Monastery Tour Shows Differing Views

By Gregory Brown

About 10 years ago, I was teaching English and teaching-methods to English teachers in a city in Jiangsu province. My hosts took me on a tour of their city and nearby attractions.

One of our stops was an ancient Buddhist monastery, including a leaning pagoda, located on a small island. The government had invested some serious money in a bridge to the island and had spruced up some of the monastery's buildings. It did have a bit of the flavor of an amusement park. The intention of course was to encourage tourism. But it was also an active, working monastery.

So, as about eight of us were walking the grounds, one of the younger (early 20s) teachers tugged on my sleeve and discretely asked, "Do you feel the spir-

its?" Not feeling the spirits, but not wanting to offend my host, I mumbled something innocuous and avoided a direct answer.

Not ten minutes later, one of the older (late 40s) administrators referred to the chanting monks with some venom, "They can eat meat! They can marry! It's just a job!" He, who had come of age under Mao, had learned his atheism and his skepticism about religion well. All of this, to my mind, reflected how substantially and rapidly attitudes about religion were changing in China. Mixed signals about religion have not totally disappeared. 友

Gregory Brown is a member of USCPFA's Kansas City chapter.

1990 Institute Promotes US-China Relations

Offers China Webinars, Teacher Training

Editor's note: The following information about the 1990 Institute's China-related programs and webinars was compiled from the organization's website. For further details and to see videos, including those mentioned in this article, go to 1990institute.com.

The 1990 Institute is a San Francisco-based nonprofit organization that promotes a constructive relationship between the U.S. and China, and fair and equal treatment for Asian Americans.

Billy Lee, a member of the USCPFA's South Bay chapter, was one of its four founders. He is still an honorary co-chair of the 1990 Institute. Dan Chao is chairman of the board of the Institute's executive committee.



Dan Chao

The 1990 Institute creates and supports educational programming. It also develops networks for leaders to improve mutual understanding between people of the two countries.

The institute was founded in 1990 by C.B. Sung, Dr. Hang-Sheng Cheng, William (Billy) Lee, and Rosalyn Koo. The founders were all deeply interested in helping the people of China modernize and address its social and economic challenges through productive dialogue, while also avoiding any involvement in the politics of either China or the United States.

The organization's website says that it was founded "during a period when people-to-people interactions were very much needed to supplement and assist government-to-government discussions."

During the early years, the founders galvanized a group of prominent American business, academia and community leaders. The 1990 Institute had the support of many university presidents, former diplomats, bankers and business people across the U.S.

Think Tank

The 1990 Institute began as an economic and social research think tank



aimed at assisting China during a period of modernization. It hosted numerous scholar conferences and joint research projects with the Federal Reserve Bank and other groups. In addition, the 1990 Institute funded Chinese scholars who were in the United States to collaborate with U.S. experts on writing reports related to monetary and social reforms.

In 1994, the 1990 Institute's U.S.-China collaborative research report, titled *China's Economic Reform*, was presented to President Jiang Zemin at a convention. It was well received and later became a textbook in Stanford University's economics courses.

The 1990 Institute is one of three organizations examined by Norton Wheeler of the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga in his book, *The Role of American NGOs in China's Modernization: Invited Influence*, as having an unconventional approach to U.S.-China relations that yielded positive results in the early years of engagement.

Culture, Philanthropy

During the 1990 Institute's second decade, it pivoted its focus to cultural and philanthropic projects in China and collaborated with the All China Women's Federation. Major programs included the Spring Bud Girls Education Program, where 1,000 girls from poor rural families were given scholarships and all of their expenses for school were covered. The goal was for the participants to continue their schooling and attain the highest level of education they could achieve.

The Pucheng Women's Sustainable Development Association microfinance program provided funds, governance, structure and support to this rural microfinance operation in Shaanxi province and was recognized by the Chinese government as a model operation. The 1990 Institute also partnered with the China National Children's Center to conduct a number of

U.S.-China children's exchange programs, starting with a Children's Art and the Environment Contest. Over one million children all over China participated.

Teaching U.S. Students

During the 1990 Institute's third decade, as China developed economically and brought hundreds of millions of people into the middle class, the focus turned to educating young Americans about China.

Very little about modern China is taught in secondary schools in the U.S. In 2013, the institute launched an annual two-day teachers' professional development program for sixth- to 12th-grade teachers called China Now Teachers Workshop. In 2020, the institute partnered with Asia Society Northern California to expand the impact of this workshop.

For several years, the institute also conducted a nationwide video contest called Youth Voices on China, a digital learning initiative that empowered students to learn and create videos on U.S.-China topics. A college essay contest was started in 2019 to encourage college students to gain a deep understanding of modern China.

Youth Voices

Two videos from the Youth Voices on China contest are posted on the site. One is about an American student who moved to China and spent years becoming a Kungfu expert. The other one calls for more opportunities for American students to study the Chinese language and culture in school.

At the end of the 1990 Institute's third decade, there was increasing anti-Asian American sentiment in the U.S. caused by adversarial and competitive tensions between the U.S. and China. The negative sentiments were exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic. Against this backdrop, the 1990 Institute vowed to continue its vision to achieve a positive environment for Asian Americans and to create a constructive dialogue in U.S.-China relations.

The institute creates innovative programs involving video storytelling and

Continued on next page

1990 Institute *(continued)*

panel discussions. It also works with institutions to establish a library of reference materials, and it uses technology and networking to broaden understanding and increase the impact of its programs.

Maintaining objectivity and nonpartisanship are the underlying principles that guide the choice and design of the programs. Education, which leads to understanding, is at the core of the programming.

To support an expanded mission in 2020, the 1990 Institute launched several new initiatives for the coming decade.

The new Discovery Series explores two important facets of life for Asian Americans—it brings to light diverse stories of Americans with an Asian heritage, and it also provides information on modern China and how the current perception of China is affecting Asians in America.

This Discovery Series is a multipart, multimedia programming initiative with videos and discussions to engage a wide variety of people. The goal is to provide a more nuanced and in-depth understanding of the contemporary issues affecting Asian Americans and U.S.-China relations.

Asian Americans comprise one of the fastest growing groups in America. The 1990 Institute aims “to reframe the conversation around, and therefore the perception of, Asian Americans from being a group separate and distinct from the rest of America to one that is recognized as a vital part of the fabric of the American experience.”

Asian American Suffragists

A video on the institute’s site showcases two important Asian American suffragists: Dr. Mabel Ping-Hua Lee, an immigrant to the U.S., unable to vote due to the Chinese Exclusion Act, and Tye Leung Schulze, American by birth, who was the first Chinese woman to vote in a presidential primary. She cast her vote in 1912 in California, which granted women the right to vote eight years before the 19th Amendment was ratified, extending that right to women nationwide.

The video shows photos from a women’s suffrage march in New York in 1912. Lee was in the front, on horseback. She carried a banner, “Catching up with China.” In Guangdong province, the video explains,



Mabel Ping-Hua Lee

women were granted the vote in 1912. “Lee wanted to help more restricted American sisters gain the same rights,” according

to the video. (China’s National Parliament soon overruled the provincial authorities, and it was not until 1947 that women in China could vote.)

The 1990 Institute continues to build on years of experience designing and implementing programs that match the evolving relationship between the United States and China (and what is relevant to Americans today). As China changed from a developing country to an emerging economy, and then an economic powerhouse, the institute pivoted to new programs to take on current topics and issues that matter to its audience. 友

CALL TO CONVENTION

28TH National Convention

US-China Peoples Friendship Association

Theme: “Roots of Friendship: Finding Common Ground”

November 5, 6 & 7, 2021

Host: Eastern Region

The Convention will be virtual this year because of the uncertainty of the pandemic. USCPFA bylaws require a national membership meeting (Convention) in each odd-numbered year, but also provide for action without an in-person gathering. Therefore, we will be able to elect officers (president and treasurer) and conduct other business, as needed.

We hope to conduct the plenary session via Zoom, with as many members logged in as possible. We are discussing how to include speeches, lectures, awards presentations, and other programming. We may conduct the election of National President and Treasurer by email, before the Convention. Each region should make plans to elect their national board representatives, to take office at the close of the convention.

Watch for registration and program details in the Summer USCR, with updates on the website (www.uscpfa.org).

Members may submit resolutions, bylaw amendments and/or statements of candidacy for President or Treasurer that have been endorsed by their chapter. Mail these documents by August 1, 2021, to Paul Morris, Agenda Committee, 2234 NE 25 Ave., Portland, OR 97212, or email to Paul at pemorris07@gmail.com. The Plenary Guide with general convention procedures and nomination forms will be emailed to each chapter leader to share as necessary. The Working Papers will be sent by mail and email.

The September 1, 2021 National Membership Report (which is sent to each chapter) will be used to validate membership for quorum and voting purposes. Only USCPFA members who are listed as active on this Membership Report can vote in the plenary session. Chapters—please submit membership dues by August 1, 2021.

Book Shows How People of One Shanghai Street Reflect Today's China

Author Speaks to Teachers at 1990 Institute Workshop

By Mike Revzin

The 1990 Institute's program to help American teachers learn about China includes two-day workshops with China experts. Videos from that program can be found on the institute's site and on YouTube.

One such video shows the presentation given in 2018 by Rob Schmitz, correspondent for American Public Radio's Marketplace, and author of the book: *Street of Eternal Happiness: Big City Dreams Along a Shanghai Road* (Crown, 2017, paperback \$14.50, E-book \$12.99).

Schmitz served in the Peace Corps in Sichuan province in 1996–1998. He taught English, literature and history at a teachers college in Zigong, a city of a half million people that, like many parts of China, had been closed to foreigners until a short time earlier.

The books he was given by the Chinese government to use in his classroom were heavy with anti-U.S. propaganda, he said. "Every sentence ended with 'and that is why the capitalist system will never live,'" he said at the workshop.

But Schmitz said, "I had a real amazing experience there for those two years. What I saw, and the people that I met every day, inspired me to want to write about China because I thought it was just the most amazing county. The people that I met were incredible and I formed a lot of really personal connections with people."

From 2010 to 2016, Schmitz was the China correspondent for Marketplace and a reporter for some NPR stations. His book is based on his radio stories from Shanghai. He said it took him a while to find a way to "translate" China to the listeners in the United States.

"A lot of the information that we get from China comes from the media. A lot of the media about China is devoted to the Communist Party of China. So when

you look at most headlines it's about the government," he said.

"Because I'd lived in China before... I had a different view of China. My view of China was that the Party itself is not a very good representation of the people of China. What I wanted to do as a journalist was to tell the story of China—not through the government, not through the Party but through individual Chinese people."

To do that, Schmitz began working on a series about the tree-lined street he lived on in Shanghai's former French Concession, *Chang Le Lu*, 长乐路, Long Happiness Road or, more colloquially, The Street of Eternal Happiness.

His reports for Marketplace told the story of individuals who live or work on a two-mile stretch of that street. For the book, he added more details. The theme of the series and the book was, "What are people dreaming about? What are their hopes?" Schmitz explained.

With China's GDP growing at 10 percent per year, "I felt it would be interesting to focus on people in the wealthiest and fastest growing city in the country," he said. The lives of people he met on that street reflect China's progress, as well as its problems.

One of the people he focused on was nicknamed CK, a young man from Hunan province whose sandwich shop was not doing well, but who became successful selling accordions.

"Only in today's Shanghai can you sell sandwiches and accordions at the same time and actually make a heck of a lot of money," Schmitz said. Against his parents' wishes, CK had quit his secure job at a state-run accordion factory where "no one was really working that hard" in order to set out on his own. He helped an Italian accordion maker set up a factory in Shanghai, trained the assembly line workers and then became sales manager.

"Like many young Chinese, his spiritual side of himself was also awakening," Schmitz said, noting that CK became a devout Buddhist.

"Now is an interesting time in China," Schmitz said. "In the 1990s when I first lived there, everyone had the same dream—make money. Now, that dream



has been accomplished by many, including CK, and those dreams have spread out to other dreams—to dreams of spirituality, of making myself better, improving myself. Dreams of justice, dreams of freedom, dreams of being educated abroad. So these dreams are spreading out like wildfire."

"It's an interesting conundrum for the government of China in some ways. ... One of the main propaganda drives is called the 'Chinese Dream,' an idea from Xi Jinping," which is a dream for the rejuvenation of China and the Chinese people.

"But it also means that, if you have your own dreams, the dream of the country should take precedence over your dream," Schmitz said. "I think that's a tough sell to a country where people are becoming more materially well off, where they can dream of other things."

Another person described in the book is Zhao Xumin, who grew up in poverty in a coal mining town in Shandong province. She moved to Shanghai to escape her abusive husband and to make a better life for her and her two sons. She worked in a factory and then became successful as a flower shop owner on the Street of Eternal Happiness. She now makes more than her husband, who came to Shanghai to work in a restaurant, and she rejected his plea to let him move in with her. It was not all smooth sailing for Zhao. Back home, people spread rumors that she was working as a prostitute in the big city, and one of her sons, who won a national essay contest in middle school, ended up dropping out of school because, without a Shanghai *hukou* (household registration) he could not attend school there. He later became successful as a stock trader.

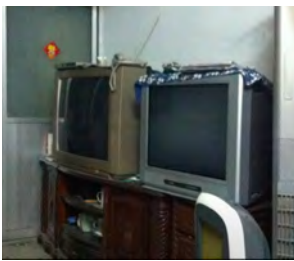
In the book, Schmitz also talks about an abandoned lot behind his Shanghai condominium in which people lived in

Continued on next page

Shanghai Road *(continued)*

burned-out buildings. It's an example of the land grab problem in China. The district government wanted to clear the land, so an overzealous developer set fire to people's homes while they were in them to try to get them out, killing two people. A wall was then built around the partially demolished neighborhood. Schmitz noted that "Chinese Dream" propaganda is posted on the wall.

Schmitz also told about a poor, elderly couple on that street who were involved in, and taken in by, Ponzi schemes. They no longer get along with each other, and can't even agree on what to watch on TV. So their living room has two televisions, side by side, tuned to different programs playing at high volume.



Letters Tell of Campaigns' Tolls

The last story that Schmitz talked about involved a box of letters, written from the 1950s to the 1970s, to and from a house on the Street of Eternal Happiness. The letters, found by an antique collector, are from a man who was arrested for being a capitalist and sent to a labor prison in Northwest China's remote Qinghai province for 20 years, and the wife and six children that he left behind. Schmitz was able to track down the youngest son, who now lives in New York and, at age 56, is trying to get his high school diploma.

Schmitz concluded his talk by playing one of his Marketplace stories from 2012 that he said, "explains the relationship between the U.S. and China, what I think the relationship should be."

Site of Shanghai Communique

The story involves the most famous event ever to take place on the Street of Eternal Happiness. It occurred at the Jinjiang Hotel, whose address today is actually listed as being around the corner on South Maoming Road. It is where President Richard Nixon and Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai signed the Shanghai Communique in 1972—a key step toward bilateral relations and trade.

The story focused on Qiu Huanxi,

who was 24 years old back then. He worked at the hotel's service counter, a job that paid him four dollars a month. "The rooms at the hotel were really cheap—20 cents a night," recalled Qiu. "It was the middle of the Cultural Revolution. Most of our guests came from other communist countries, like Albania, the Soviet Union and North Korea."

"The number one song in the U.S. when Nixon left for China was a sappy little number by Harold Nilsson, 'Without You,'" said Schmitz. In China, the lyrics to the most-often played song went like this: "The East wind is blowing, the war drums are sounding. It's not the people who fear American imperialism, but American imperialism that fears the people."

Witness to History

Zhou Enlai toasted Nixon and his wife at a banquet at the Jinjiang Hotel. Qiu and the other hotel wait staff were awestruck by what they were witnessing. They stood nervously at the back of the room, unsure of how to act toward the American guests.

"Our superiors told us not to be overly friendly to them, nor overly cold. We had to keep our distance," Qiu said, recalling a particular encounter.

"At one point, an American journalist turned to the hotel barber and said: 'In the U.S., we can protest a visit by a foreign president—we're very democratic. What do you think of Nixon's visit?' The barber answered, 'The leaders are negotiating, but the people of our two countries are friendly.' What a fantastic answer! His name was Wan Guoqi. I'll always remember him," Qiu said, smiling.

Qiu said he will never forget Nixon's words that night, delivered after the signing of the Shanghai Communique: "If we can find the common ground on which we can both stand where we can build the bridge between us and the new world, generations in the years ahead will look back and thank us for this meeting that we have held in this past week."

Qiu feels honored to have played a bit part in history. "Chi-



Zhou Enlai and Richard Nixon at the Jinjiang Hotel in 1972.

nese people remember only a few U.S. presidents, but Nixon is our favorite. He threw off the airs of being an American, he came here to our China, and he and Chairman Mao changed the world," Qiu says.

Qiu thinks it's amazing that he grew up as a young member of the Mao's Red Guards, seeing America as the enemy. Then he helped host Nixon at the Jinjiang Hotel, ushering in a new era of relations with the U.S. "China and the U.S. are on the right track now. We can go to the U.S. to study and do business. I've taught my daughter we all need to contribute to Sino-U.S. relations," he says.

She listened to her dad. His daughter is grown up now, speaks English, and works for the U.S. Chamber of Commerce in Shanghai, doing her part to bridge the trade relationship between the two countries.

And now, 40 years later, the chorus of that sappy 1972 break-up song—"Can't live, if living is without you"—sums up the economic relationship between the U.S. and China, concluded Schmitz's radio report. The countries' leaders may have spats here and there, but our economies are intertwined and co-dependent. 友



Today's Jinjiang Hotel.

Tibetan Herdsman Becomes Internet Sensation

By Winny Lin

One morning, when I was surfing YouTube for fun, something caught my eye. A very handsome young Tibetan herdsman with glistening white teeth, a cool haircut, a twinkle in his eyes and an earring dangling from his left ear. In the background were pristine snow-clad mountains, alpine grasslands, a cloudless blue sky and clear water. I could not resist—I needed to explore *Ding Zhen's World* 丁真的世界, as the video was called.

Who is Ding Zhen? I discovered that he's a 20-year-old herdsman living in Litang County in a Tibetan area of Sichuan, near the Tibetan border. He became an overnight internet sensation in China last October after a photographer posted a seven-second video of him on Weibo's microblogging site, with the Shaluli Mountains in the background.

As Ding Zhen's fame grew, the local tourist bureau recruited him to promote Litang County. The three-minute video *Ding Zhen's World* was released online, attracting internet users across China. In the U.S. it is available on YouTube.com, where I saw it.

Soaring Fame

There have now been more than a billion searches for topics with his name, and more than a billion views on Weibo. His fans gave him the nickname "Tian Ye" 甜野, which means sweet and wild—wild in the sense of natural. Some people become famous on social media for 15 minutes and then disappear—but not Ding Zhen.

Litang sits at an altitude of 12,972 feet. Looking at the pictures of the area, many online viewers thought Ding Zhen lived



in Tibet so, to clarify the issue, he appeared on the internet holding a sign that read, "I live in Sichuan" 家在四川. With a population of 47,500, Litang is a Buddhist region that was home to many important religious figures, including the seventh and 10th Dalai Lamas.

There is a Chinese saying "一方水土养一方人" meaning each region nurtures its own inhabitants, and Ding Zhen is a good example of it. He was born and raised in this gorgeous area and has the free spirit associated with it. He only went to third grade because his parents needed him to help with their yaks, and can only speak limited Mandarin because the main language in his hometown is Tibetan.

He said in his video that he loves to ride his favorite horse Crystal on that beautiful grassland, adding, "Time goes very, very slowly here, and I can lie down on the grass all day long."

Ding Zhen is deeply committed to his culture. Another one of his nicknames is "The Prince of Horses" 骑马王子 because he has won many horse races, which are popular there.

Increase in Tourism

Tibet and its people have always fascinated outsiders. I'm not the only one attracted by pictures of Ding Zhen riding his horse across the beautiful Maoya Prairie in western Sichuan with his hair blowing in the wind. Now that he has become the spokesperson for his hometown, his good looks, unique lifestyle and the spectacular scenery have caused domestic tourists to flock there.

Remember the movie *Lost Horizon*, which took place in a fictional utopia? Well, for tourists, Litang is the new utopia with snow-capped mountains, grasslands and temples.



Ding Zhen wrote to his fans, "I'm from Sichuan."

Three hundred years ago, Tulku Tsangyang Gyatso (the sixth Dalai Lama) wrote this famous verse:

天空中洁白的仙鹤,
White cranes in the sky,
请把双翅借我,
Please loan me your wings,
我不往远处去飞,
I will not fly far,
只到理塘就回!
I will return once I arrive in Litang!

Here in the United States, we have been very limited in where we could go and what we could do since March 13, 2020. While I'm stuck at home, the videos of Litang and Ding Zhen are more than enough to get my imagination moving. Horseback riding, clear water, green grass, blue sky. I am ready to go there.

This raises the question: Can Litang handle the sudden surge of visitors? Will an increase in tourists spoil this Shangri-la? Stay tuned to *Ding Zhen's World* to find out. 友

Winny Lin is a member of USCPFA's South Bay chapter.

Remembering Sylvia Krebs

Sylvia Krebs, a longtime member of USCPFA's Atlanta chapter, died in her native Mississippi on January 12 at age 83. She and her husband, Ed Krebs, who is chapter president, had celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary last August.

Sylvia spent several years as an editor of the *US-China Review* and also created an index of *USCR* issues to make articles easier to find. She also served as editor of the chapter newsletter for 20 years.

Sylvia was a lecturer at Southern Regional conferences and participated with Ed at National Conferences. She received the Southern Region's National Volunteer Award at National Conventions in 2001, 2009 and 2019. Sylvia was also involved in the Ida Pruitt Scholarship Fund to aid low-income students in Gansu province.

Her 35-year teaching career began at Yazoo City High School in Mississippi and continued in colleges and universities in Alabama, Georgia, Taiwan and China.

She earned her doctoral degree in U.S. history at the University of Alabama in 1966. Sylvia joined the history department at (then) West Georgia College in 1968. There she met and married Ed, who was her colleague. Sylvia joined Ed in Seattle soon after their wedding in 1970. Their honeymoon was a trip "out West," camping and pulling their belongings in a small trailer and visiting Yellowstone National Park and other sights along the way.

After Ed completed his course work in Chinese history at the University of Washington, the couple went to Taiwan in 1971-72 for Ed's program in Chinese language study. They made their first trip to the People's Republic of China in 1984-85, to teach English in a foreign languages institute in Chongqing.

Later sojourns in China were spent in Xi'an, Beijing and Nanjing. Sylvia and Ed spent about half of the 1990s in China. Sylvia taught courses in language, literature and culture while Ed worked with American students in the Duke University Study in China Program.

She wrote about her China experiences in her 2010 book, *How Am I to Touch with You?*



Sylvia on a 2017 trip with Ed on the Li River between Guilin and Yangshuo.

From 1999 until 2017 the couple organized travel tours to China; the last group was called "Family and Friends," and all but one of the travelers had spent some time with the Krebs at Sylvia's family farm where she grew up near Forest, Mississippi.

Sylvia loved to come back to Forest to work and relax at the farm, and Ed joined her enthusiastically. Stays at the farm were often planned for reunions with classmates and old teammates, lifelong friends. Even though Sylvia traveled widely, she always returned to her first home.

Sylvia enjoyed organizing Chinese art exhibits in Mississippi and in the Atlanta area. Some exhibits displaying children's art were done in cooperation with a friend in Xi'an.

Besides her doctoral dissertation on early post-Civil War Reconstruction in Alabama, Sylvia had articles published on a range of subjects, from the role of Chinese workers in Mississippi and other southern states after the Civil War, to family travels and manuscripts.

She was a regular contributor to the *USCR*. Her most recent article, "Musing about Past and Present on the Silk Road," appeared in the Winter 2021 *USCR*.

Some of her "op-ed" comments on China were published in the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*. She enjoyed sending observations on her experiences in China to the *Scott County Times* in Forest, Mississippi. Then-editor Sid Salter liked to call Sylvia "the *Times* China correspondent."

Perhaps less known to Sylvia's fellow USCPFA members were her accomplish-

ments as a high school and college basketball player and the fact that she was inducted into the Mississippi Sports Hall of Fame. 友

This article is based on information written by Ed Krebs for the Atlanta Journal-Constitution and the Clarion Ledger of Jackson, Mississippi. Paul Morris, Marge Ketter, Penny Blackford and Barbara Cobb also provided details.

Shirley Young, ex-GM VP, patron of arts, dies at 85

Shirley Young, a former vice president of General Motors who played a key role in the automaker's billion-dollar investment in China's auto industry, died in New York on December 26 at age 85.



Shirley Young

Young was also an ardent supporter of the arts, which she believed have the power to transcend ideological boundaries. She fostered cultural ties between China and the U.S.

Chinese Ambassador to the U.S. Cui Tiankai said she "not only had great business achievements, but also devoted her lifetime to advocating for the interests of Chinese Americans and the mutual understanding between the Chinese and American people."

Young was born in Shanghai in 1935. At the end of World War II, she came to the U.S. with her mother and sisters from the Philippines, where her father, a Chinese diplomat, had been executed by the occupying Japanese.

She became a trailblazer in marketing and, in the early 1990s, moved back to Shanghai to become involved in GM's efforts in China. In 1990 she co-founded the Committee of 100, which Cui said has been "an important bridge for China-U.S. political, economic, cultural and educational exchanges." 友

This information comes from a China Daily article. Photo by Gao Tianpei.

A Friendship Relay on the Yangtze River

By Judy Manton

During the summer of 2019, under the auspices of the Zigen Fund, I trained English teachers in a suburb of Wuhan. But, before that, I treated myself to a long-awaited three-day cruise on the Yangtze River.

At the ticket window in Chongqing I was told that, since I wanted to have the experience of passing through the locks, I would need to change boats at Yichang. I was also told that at the end of the first segment of the cruise, my suitcase would be put on a bus to Yichang.

On the cruise, all the announcements were only in Chinese. To my surprise, the only other foreigners on the river boat were members of an Indian tour group. As I had visited India several times, I enjoyed chatting with them and using my few words of tourist Hindi.

11-Year-Old “Interpreter”

Along the way, I was helped by an “interpreter”—an 11-year-old Chinese boy who was eager to practice his English. As I was travelling alone and looking for a companion, the second day I sat with a Chinese couple and dared to chat with them in my limited Chinese.

On this fabulous cruise, we stopped at Fengdu Ghost City and watched the awesome, outdoor high-tech light show about the “Romance of the Three Kingdoms” at Zongxian. I absorbed the beauty of the Qutang Gorge and then on a side trip on a small tourist boat marveled at the colors and contours of both Mt. Wushan and the lush greenery on the banks of the Goddess Stream.

Toward the end of this part of the cruise, an announcement came over the loudspeaker in Chinese that I didn’t totally understand. But that couple appeared and passed me to a woman who said she was an English teacher and that I should follow her as we disembarked at Yichang.

Helpful Handoffs

As the English teacher wasn’t planning to go beyond Yichang, on the dock she found another woman who could speak English and passed me over to her. That woman accompa-



Cruising on the Yangtze. (Photos by Judy Manton)

nied me on the second boat, which was lifted in the locks from the lower level of the Yangtze to the higher water level beyond the locks. We cruised on this portion of the river and returned to Yichang.

When our river boat finally landed, she told me that she was going to take a train to her hometown, but that I needed to board a special bus that was going to take the rest of us to the Yichang Tourist Center where our baggage would be waiting. She passed me to yet another woman who then accompanied me on the bus.

These three women seeing me, a foreign woman traveling alone, had each come

forward out of the crowds and had taken me under their wings to make sure I got to the right place at the right time. Maybe being 81 with white hair had something to do with it. This experience was yet another expression of friendship between the Chinese and American people. 友

Judy Manton is a member of the USCPFA's Northern New Jersey chapter.

The Joy Luck Club Honored

The Library of Congress selected *The Joy Luck Club* as one of the films to be added to the National Film Registry in 2020. The 1993 film was based on Amy Tan’s novel of the same name. It explores the lives of four Chinese women immigrants, who are in a mahjong club, and their relationships with their daughters.

Wikipedia’s summary of the plot says, “The film reveals the hidden pasts of the older women and their daughters and how their lives are shaped by the clash of Chinese and American cultures as they strive to understand their family bonds and one another.”

The Film Registry selects 25 films each year “showcasing the range and diversity of American film heritage to increase awareness for its preservation.”



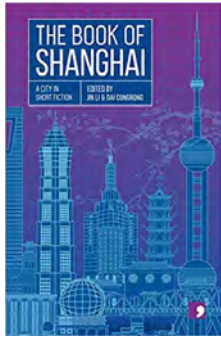
Entertainers on the boat wore historic Chinese clothing designed for royalty and the elite.

The Book of Shanghai: A City in Short Fiction

Edited by Jin Li & Dai Congrong
Comma Press, Manchester, UK, 2020
Kindle Edition, 150 pages, \$7.44
Paperback, \$14.69

Reviewed by
Fran Adams

Although I have never been to Shanghai, it is clearly a very modern city, full of skyscrapers, and a very large one: population somewhere around 27 million, probably the most populous city in the world. So I approached this book of stories set in Shanghai wondering if it would consist of tales of alienation and anomie that could have been written in New York, Los Angeles or Dubai.



And to some extent, it does. Young, depressed women sit in Starbucks or KFC, children whine to be taken to McDonald's. In "The Lost" by Fu Yuehui, the object lost is a cell phone. Was it lost in a taxi? wonders the protagonist, a question that must be asked thousands of times a day all over the world.

And yet, in the best stories of this collection, a sense of Shanghai-ness creeps in. Trees are often mentioned. There is a big camphor tree under which an unknown woman waits in "The Lost" and wutong trees that are observed at some length in "The Novelist in the Attic" by Shen Dacheng. So, surprisingly, perhaps trees are part of Shanghai's identity.

In the beautiful story "Ah Fang's Lamp" by Wang Anyi, a small Shanghai street and the life of the family that operates a small fruit stand beneath their window are conjured up with few words and almost no plot. I felt I could see the fruit stand and smell the fruit. A picture of a Shanghai of the mind, perhaps not exactly that of the camera, took shape.

And themes that seem particularly Chinese, if not especially Shanghaiese, also come to life in some of these stories.

In "Woman Dancing Under Stars" by Teng Xiaolan, a relationship between a young woman and an old one, who first meet by chance in a cafe, is movingly depicted. Such a relationship in which a young person finds it perfectly normal not only to respect elders, but to have a real friendship with one, seems much more characteristic of Chinese culture than it is of American. It was delightful to see such a friendship documented here, as the old woman teaches the young one to dance, and to notice that the stars are dancing in the sky above them.

This is a bittersweet story, turning sad when the two women lose touch with each other. Most of these stories are more bitter than sweet. Yes, urban alienation is ever lurking. And some of the stories go further in finding their settings in the realms of speculative dystopia.

Science fiction is a genre that seems particularly popular in Chinese literature today, and several of these stories fall into that category. Although these stories are set in some strange and not very recognizable future, one of them, "Suzhou River" by Cai Jun, does give us a picture of the rivers and bridges of Shanghai as the protagonist floats in his aluminum bathtub through a flooded city, perhaps in a dream. And in "State of Trance" by Chen Qiufan, the narrator is walking through a present-day Shanghai mall on his way to return a book to the Shanghai Library, which in the story may or may not still exist, as the world ends.

If in the beautiful first story, "Ah Fang's Lamp," we are perhaps reminded of a 19th century Tolstoyan past of happy families, by the last story in the collection, "State of Trance" we are very much in the future. A note says that some of the passages of this story were "generated by AI (artificial intelligence) programs trained on deep learning of the author's style," suggesting that in fact, the future may be now in Shanghai. Shanghai's past may live on, but in the stories of its younger authors, we are on the cutting edge of modernity.

If we cannot travel to Shanghai now, we can perhaps get some of its flavor through this book. The collection is at times jarring in its sudden changes of tone and style between the various stories. It is doubtful

that anyone will like all the stories. But it succeeds in taking the reader on a subtle journey to another place. 友

This book is part of a 15-book series from Comma Press called Reading the City. Each book features translated fiction from one city in various parts of the world. A list of titles can be found at commapress.co.uk/



Looking Forward to More Joy This Year

By Doris Ju

Just to keep social connection in a physically distanced world is a joy in itself, no matter what else. We look forward to a new year full of leaps of joy like the boy cowerd in the picture.

The water buffalo painting was by my late father Professor I-Hsiung Ju 朱一雄教授 (Zhū Yīxióng jiàoshòu). A student of his, Mr. Sun-Chueh Kao 高珊爵 (Gāo Shānjué) inscribed a poem for it, which translates literally as follows:

*The spring breeze blows a number of
thunder claps,
Green all over the mountains and streams
full of water.
The cowherd boy leaps joyfully on the
buffalo's back,
Accompanying daddy to plow the field.*

春風吹響數聲雷
綠遍山原畦滿水
牧童喜躍牛背上
相伴阿爹鋤禾揮

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