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# US-China Review

Summer 2021

Vol. XLV, No. 3



**US-China Relations: Where to from Here?**

**People-to-People Possibilities**

**Sylvia Krebs Retrospective**

## Letter from the President



### *US-China Peoples Friendship Association*

Office of the National President  
105 Treva Road, Sandston, VA 23150  
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#### **Mark Your Calendar for the Convention in November**

Dear friends of the Chinese people,

Greetings! USCPFA National is planning to hold the 29th National Convention virtually on the weekend of November 5, 6, & 7, 2021, starting at 6:00 p.m. EST. Please be sure that renewals for membership are received by September 30, 2021, to Marge Ketter, Membership Chair, for the purpose of verification in order for chapters to vote at the plenary.

See the registration page in this issue. The convention fee will be \$25 for both members and non-members. You will be able to mail a check to David Sutor, convention treasurer, or you will be able to pay the \$25 registration fee online with Eventbrite.

Charles Petersen from Minnesota chapter has resigned as rotating editor of the *US-China Review* after nine years. Charles has held so many important jobs at the national and local levels and was awarded our highest award, the Koji Ariyoshi, for his outstanding volunteer USCPFA efforts since the 1980's. He initiated and implemented exchanges in sports and art exhibits between China and USCPFA and completed them quite successfully. We send best wishes to Charles in all future endeavors and thank him for all of his service to USCPFA.

Ambassador Cui Tiankai is leaving his post at the Chinese Embassy and here is a quote from his farewell letter to USCPFA.

“Upon my departure, I am confident that the bond and friendship between the 1.7 billion peoples of our two countries will stay strong and unbreakable, and it will be our source of strength and wisdom to brave any storms in the future and meet the expectations of our people. As a private citizen after my retirement, I will continue to devote myself to the friendship between the two peoples.”

Ambassador Qin Gang will succeed Ambassador Cui Tiankai.

We hope to see you in the virtual convention in November. It will indeed be a joy to see you after all we have been through with the pandemic. Please stay well and safe.

In friendship,

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

Diana C. Greer  
President of USCPFA



# US-China Review

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### US-CHINA PEOPLES FRIENDSHIP ASSOCIATION A California Non-profit Corporation

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educational organization whose purpose  
is to build friendship between the peoples  
of China and the United States.*

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#### About the cover:

*"Health Station in a Li Minority Village," woodcut print by Wei Zhi-ren.  
From New China magazine, 1978. See article on page 15.*

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## Rays of Hope

This issue has several articles concerned with the current difficulties between the United States and China. While recognizing current problems, our selections seek to look with optimism on possibilities for the future. Surely we have improved prospects with the new administration. If the policies of this administration presently appear consistent with those of the previous one, we can feel some relief about the calmer tone established up to now. At least we may trust that false accusations and bluster will be replaced by even-handedness and concern to avoid provocation from this side of the Pacific.

Here we also have some worthy material from the earlier years of USCPFA, from our predecessor journal, *New China*. While the arts now reflect the more complicated society that China has become, these articles reflect USCPFA's early enthusiasm for a "genuine peoples republic" that idealistic Americans loved and supported—and for the people with whom our country had not had any relationship for a generation. These offer a chance to review our perceptions during years when our relationship with the Chinese people could be—or seem to be—almost completely positive.

Then there's a third part of this issue that is very personal to me. Sylvia planned to edit this summer issue, and I said I would help. When she died, it seemed right to continue this project. So I did, with the excellent help of our coordinating editor, Paul Morris. I hope readers will understand the "Sylvia content" here. Many have experienced the sense of loss I have felt since January 12. For readers of the *Review*, I think quite a few will be pleased to see this last hurrah from my beloved life partner with her perceptive, compassionate mind and heart. We shared so much: a simple outlook and life-style, a desire to understand our fellow humans, wide travels, and our experiences in the world that is China.

—Ed Krebs

## More Graduates Opt for Blue-Collar Life

By Li Hongyang

Zhang Quan, one of hundreds of waste collectors registered with a recycling company in Chengdu, Sichuan province, recently amazed his colleagues and netizens with his resume. The 31-year-old said he has a master's in international management from Loughborough University in the United Kingdom, and he used to work as an analyst for a state-owned financial enterprise.

His decision to abandon his office job and become a blue-collar worker is at odds with the accepted career path of most university graduates. Last month, China News Service posted a video detailing Zhang's change of occupation on Sina Weibo, China's Twitter-like service. It provoked widespread discussion about whether young people who have enjoyed higher education should waste their talent on "petty" jobs. Zhang's response to such comments: "Most people treat waste collection as a low-end job. When I am sorting recyclable materials from smelly garbage, passing parents sometimes warn their curious children to keep away from me and my trash pile. I feel uncomfortable hearing those words, but I know what I'm doing because waste sorting is a promising industry in China. I plan to devote myself to this career and maybe open my own business in the sector."

Having started his new life in December, the native of Urumqi, Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, buys recyclable waste from local residents and carries it by truck to a recycling station where he sells it at a profit. His monthly income can reach 40,000 yuan (\$6,152), while his basic salary as an analyst in Chengdu was 1,500 yuan.

The downside is that he works more than ten hours a

day and is only free after ten p.m. When he discussed his story on the phone, he yawned several times. "There is nothing to be ashamed of: I'm doing what I want and making money with my own hands. At the end of last year, my father was diagnosed with bone marrow cancer. I need to support him financially," he said.

He used to wear a suit to his office job, but now he drives a truck around the city and picks up waste on dusty roadsides. Before, he handled multimillion-yuan investment deals, but now he bargains with people over a few cents for some cardboard.

Zhang said he enjoys his new job. "When I worked in the office, I dared not speak out loud because people communicated with each other via WeChat. I prefer my current situation, which is more physical and with noisier surroundings," he said.

He recalled a scene in the UK that impressed him, when he witnessed a group of construction workers on the street who sang as they toiled. During their lunch break, they bought coffee and sat chatting on the side of the road. "They seemed really happy to me," he said.

### An educated nanny

Recently, Liu Shuang, a nanny in Hangzhou, capital of Zhejiang province, has

*Continued on next page*



A manual laborer with a master's degree (second right) displays fruit grown on his farm in Meishan, Sichuan. Hou Yu/China News Service

# What's Next for the U.S. and China After the Anchorage Meeting?

by Yawei Liu

In June 2020 senior Chinese diplomat Yang Jiechi and then Secretary of State Mike Pompeo met in Honolulu, Hawaii. The world learned about that meeting only after it ended, and it became clear that the meeting had not gone well.

Not long afterward, the Trump administration began an unprecedented and coordinated assault on China with the American national security advisor, attorney general, FBI director and secretary of state all giving speeches in different cities in the U.S. Pompeo declared in his speech at the Richard Nixon Presidential Library that “We must induce China to change in more creative and assertive ways, because Beijing’s actions threaten our people and our prosperity.”

There was little known about the more recent meeting between top diplo-

rats from China and the U.S. in another American city, Anchorage, Alaska, on March 18 and 19, 2021. This time, not only did people on both sides of the Pacific know in advance of the meeting, the entire extended opening exchange between Yang Jiechi and Wang Yi on the China side

and Antony Blinken and Jake Sullivan on the U.S. side was broadcast online for the whole world to see.

It was shocking to see how both sides abandoned diplomatic nicety and went after each other so ferociously. Most note-



Foreign policy leader Yang Jiechi outlines China's position in Anchorage.

worthy was Yang Jiechi airing a long litany of criticisms of the U.S. from its brutal wars against other nations to its ongoing discrimination against African Americans.

*Continued on next page*

## Blue-Collar Life *(continued)*

also been the subject of discussion. The 33-year-old has a master's in French from Xi'an International Studies University in the capital city of Shaanxi province.

Her resume states that she is fluent in French and English and has work experience at a branch of a communications company in the African country of Guinea. She has also taught English at an early education company in Hangzhou.

Last year, she became a registered nanny with Swan Daojia, an online domestic service platform. She said that, unlike working in a traditional office with many rules and codes, she can be more relaxed and treat her clients like family and friends.

“I think this way of getting along will promote long-lasting cooperation,” she said. “However, my mother didn't quite understand me in the beginning because she holds the stereotypical view that a nanny is someone who ‘serves others’ and is inferior. She couldn't accept that I would do that after undertaking higher education.”

Liu added that demand for high-end services in the domestic market cannot be met, and the industry has huge growth potential. Moreover, her strong academic

background makes her popular with customers, who are happy to pay more for the services she provides.

“Busy working parents need someone to provide high-quality care for their children. A tutor can't live with the children, but I can teach them languages and play with them like a friend. That is exactly what the customers want.”

She was inspired to enter the sector after dealing with a nanny she hired to care for her own children. “I found that being a nanny requires not only organizational ability, but also good communication skills. I like organizing things and am confident about my social skills, so I applied for a job,” she said.

She declined to disclose her earnings, but an internet search suggested that the current monthly salary for high-end domestic helpers is more than 10,000 yuan.

### A technical knockout

Like Liu, interest and a sense of belonging led Zhou Hao to his career after he made headlines by dropping out of Peking University, one of China's most prestigious schools, in Beijing. In 2011 he quit the elite university, where he was studying life sciences, and transferred to the Beijing Industrial Technician College

to learn computer numerical control—the programming and use of automated machinery.

“Compared with, say, Germany, China lacks highly educated skilled workers. I have loved dismantling machinery and installing home appliances since I was a child, so I decided to go with my interests,” he told *China Youth Daily* in 2014.

According to the newspaper's report, Zhou, now 31, won admission to the technical college in 2011, but he encountered opposition from his parents and other relatives. “I tend to care about other people's opinions, but doing something I don't like would ruin my life. When I am living a wonderful life, no one will doubt my choice,” he was quoted as saying.

In 2014, Zhou won first prize in the CNC Machine Tool Assembly and Maintenance Competition, a national skills contest. He became a lecturer at the technical college, and in 2018 he won first prize in a national contest for teachers.

“Every trade has its master. Everyone needs to work in a position that suits and interests them. People who find their true position will enjoy life more,” Zhou was quoted as saying in the *China Youth Daily* story.

*China Daily 3/22/21*

## What's Next *(continued)*

While it is disheartening to see diplomats from the superpowers becoming political warriors in hopes of avoiding criticism at home for surrendering to the other side, this may be a necessary prelude for the U.S. and Chinese leaders to finally realize it is time to shelve fundamental differences and begin the daunting task of fixing the relationship so that it does not delink and derail the global train of peace and prosperity.

In this sense, the Anchorage meeting made Beijing fully aware that Washington does not like Beijing's policies toward Xinjiang, Hong Kong and Taiwan; resents China's economic and military coercion of its allies; and wants more protection of American intellectual property rights and greater access to the China market. The meeting also highlighted China's firm position: it will not concede on any issues related to China's sovereignty, security and development interests; it does not intend to change its structure of governance; and it objects to the U.S. effort to form an anti-China coalition. Both sides should know by now that any effort to seek policy change and behavioral change by the other side on issues of their core interests will be futile, unwise and a complete waste of time.

It was unfortunate that both sides chose not to wine and dine together, but comforting to see that neither side walked out of the meeting. This indicates that Beijing and Washington both know their relationship is too big to fail. The challenge now is to find realistic ways to avoid a zero-sum rivalry, intentional conflict and unintended confrontation.

For China, the new framework for managing the volatile bilateral relationship was introduced by Foreign Minister Wang Yi at the July 2020 meeting: namely, identifying and implementing areas for cooperation, dialogue and crisis management. This initiative was completely ignored by the Trump administration. Although the Biden administration is still in the process of reviewing its predecessor's policies toward China, it appears to be at least partially responsive to the framework proposed by the China side.

In his first foreign policy speech, Secretary Blinken defined the management of the volatile bilateral relationship as

follows: "Our relationship with China will be competitive when it should be, collaborative when it can be, and adversarial when it must be. The common denominator is the need to engage China from a position of strength."

The U.S. is still in the process of moving itself into a position of strength through containing the pandemic, repairing its broken alliances, reducing domestic political polarization, and recovering the economy. China does not think the U.S. is in a position of strength. At the same time, Washington sees China as too aggressive

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### *Beijing and Washington both know their relationship is too big to fail.*

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toward its neighbors, too coercive against those nations that dare to criticize it, and too destructive toward the international order. It has used many tools to block the rise of China. While this dynamic will continue for a long time, there are two factors in the Biden administration's approach for China to respond quickly and positively.

First, China should welcome competition with the U.S. but needs to work with the U.S. to ensure this competition is a race to make both countries and the world better, not an effort to cripple the other competitor in order to win the race.

More importantly, both China and the U.S. need to figure out how to collaborate "when it can be." While there was no joint statement from the Anchorage meeting, the Chinese media reported that both sides had conducted constructive discussion on very concrete issues that will enable the two countries to quickly normalize their pre-pandemic travel and interaction. This is a good step toward injecting positive energy into a relationship that has been in a free fall for too long.

Even better was the meeting in Shanghai between John Kerry, U.S. climate envoy, and Xie Zhenhua, his Chinese counterpart. These talks were held on April 14 through 17, just weeks after the Anchorage sessions. A joint U.S.-China statement on climate change was issued after these bilateral talks were completed.

I had a sinking feeling when watching

the undiplomatic and hostile exchange at the beginning of the Anchorage meeting, but I was very encouraged by the small but positive steps taken by both sides during the closed-door sessions. I am hopeful the baby steps taken by the two sides will soon become bolder and more concrete measures to fix the relationship.

If left unfixed, the two countries may soon be engulfed by conflict and confrontation that will send the Asia Pacific region and the world into disastrous turmoil. The world has already been dragged into a catastrophic recession. A zero-sum Sino-American rivalry will make global economic recovery impossible, destroy the peace and prosperity Asia-Pacific over the past four decades and threaten the happiness of both the Chinese and American people. 友

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*Note: Yang Jiechi's full title is Director of the Central Foreign Affairs Commission. He served as ambassador to the United States from 2001 to 2005 and as Foreign Minister from 2007 to 2013. Wang Yi is the current Foreign Minister. Originally published March 22, 2021 on US-China Perception Monitor.*

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*Yawei Liu (刘亚伟) is the senior advisor for China at the Carter Center and a member of the Council on Foreign Relations. He is also associate director of the China Research Center in Atlanta and an adjunct professor of political science at Emory University. He is the founding editor of [www.china-elections.org](http://www.china-elections.org), which went online in 2002. He launched the US-China Perception Monitor websites [www.uscnpm.org](http://www.uscnpm.org) (English) and [cn3.uscnpm.org](http://cn3.uscnpm.org) (Chinese) in 2014. Yawei earned his B.A. in English literature from Xi'an Foreign Languages Institute (1982), M.A. in recent Chinese history from the University of Hawaii (1989), and Ph.D. in American history from Emory University (1996).*



# How People-to-People Ties Can Reforge Links

By Ed Krebs

An international webinar organized by the Carter Center, “Can Our Concerns about U.S.-China Relations Be Helped by People to People Activities?” was held on April 21. Moderators for the webinar were Yawei Liu of the Carter Center in Atlanta and Dingding Chen of Jinan University in Guangzhou. The participants reviewed the history of people-to-people activities over the past century-and-a-half and offered many thoughtful suggestions as well as hope for the theme indicated in the webinar’s title. Still, most of the panelists agreed that the hopes they laid out must wait for initiatives from the U.S. and Chinese governments.

**Jeffrey Koplan**, Vice President for Global Health at Emory University, spoke first, recalling early missionary activities in China as people-to-people activities in that



time long ago. Peter Parker established a hospital in Changsha, Hunan, in 1835. This hospital grew into today’s South Central Hospital, now with 5,000 beds. John Grant launched the Beijing Union Medical Center (PUMC), which will soon mark its one hundredth anniversary. Clearly these relationships are long established and have continued through momentous political change

Thus there are linkages through exchanges and collaborations over generations: The Center for Disease Control (CDC) and the National Institutes for Health (NIH) from the U.S. side maintained links to Fudan University and the Chinese Academy for Preventive Medicine (forerunner of China’s CDC). More recently institutions such as the Gates Foundation have gotten involved as well.

Dr. Koplan also mentioned that the Africa CDC, established in 2017, was encouraged and assisted through efforts by both U.S. CDC and China’s CDC. Africa CDC has its headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; it faces its own challenge in the Covid-19 pandemic.

Koplan also noted that health issues

in the U.S. and China have begun to be similar: These concerns include aging populations, urbanization, and environmental degradation. He thinks that these relationships can be rebuilt through cooperation in medicine and science.

Professor **Hao Li** of Wuhan University followed, observing that Chinese professors have benefited through cooperation with Harvard and the University of Washington. Professor Li expressed hope that the U.S. might send more students to China. Li was first of the panelists to note that China has sent 370,000 students to the U.S., while now only 10,000 from the U.S. have gone to study in China. Li hopes to see university-level cooperation strengthened in coming years. He also noted that through better cooperation, anti-virus medications might have been developed more quickly.



**Jamie Horsley** of Yale, senior fellow at the Paul Tsai Center at Yale Law School, followed. Her research interests include government transparency and accountability and public participation. Prof. Horsley noted that she has worked in NGO activities, beginning with the Carter Center’s Village Elections Project.



Professor Horsley pointed out that Yale has an office for NGOs in China, which tries to help Americans understand ground-level activities in China. Yale in China, another arm of the university’s activities in China, began in the 1980s to send Yale graduates to China to teach English for two years.

Professor Horsley observed that more recent activities of the Yale center began at a time when relations weren’t very good. There have been a number of “good starts” that weren’t followed up on very well; this over about 20 years. There are a good many concerns linking the U.S.

and China that could be helped through the NGO approach. Unfortunately, a few years ago China put American NGOs under public security as opposed to international relations. Thus many American NGOs have had to close their offices in China.

She observes that we as Americans also have work to do: we need to get away from “making a caricature” of China, and stop “beating up on Confucius Institutes.”

**Lu Miao**, co-founder of the Chinese Center for Globalization (CCG), brought an unusual outlook to the concerns of this panel. She observed that the youth of both countries understand the other country less well than in earlier years.

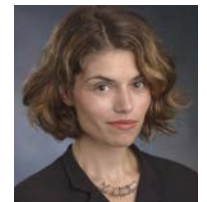


She suggested several other groups for exchanges: media people, U.S. Congress members to China, and exchanges of think tanks. Prof Lu further observed that student exchanges should be restarted; the China-US Scholars Program, which provided scholarships to students from both countries, could return to the activities it formerly carried on.

Ms. Miao says that her CCG held 70 webinars during the pandemic, each with one million virtual attendees.

Another possible area for possible cooperation, Miao, suggested, is climate change. And exchanges between Chinese universities and U.S. programs and study centers such as Kunshan Duke could be beneficial. In concluding, Miao suggested that cooperation that would include third countries such as Singapore and European countries, could be fruitful.

**Maria Repnikova**, who specializes in media issues, noted that she began as a Fulbright scholar, a program now sponsored by the Luce Foundation. Prof Repnikova observed that



not all Chinese media are tightly controlled, and it should be possible to work

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## Webinar Report *(continued)*

with those less controlled. As is generally understood, media relations too are now in limbo. Now, even coverage of China by the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* has become more limited than before.

Her suggestions for possible improvement on current situation: Each country should begin to allow more journalists from each other's countries. Journalist fellowship programs could begin to rebuild trust. Both countries are facing declines in traditional journalism. The U.S. could invite more Chinese journalists. There might begin engagement with student journalists. And there's plenty of room for different thinking about media on both sides.

Professor **Zheng Zhai** of Beijing University of International Studies observed that he has been both a beneficiary and a leader in U.S.-China exchanges. Professor Zhai's first experience was in Helena, Montana. Back in China he worked in American Studies at "BeiWai." He was the last director of the Confucius Institute at the University of Hawai'i.

He notes that many U.S. programs have been defunded, obviously with adverse effects. Further, popular feelings mirror government relations. And the mass media in both countries have gotten into a downward spiral. Yet we still need individuals who can show understanding across differences. People to people relations, he noted, are more subtle than diplomacy. Here he cites "ping pong diplomacy" of 50 years ago. (See the articles in the spring issue of this *Review* for details on that early episode.)

Zhai uses relations at the Great Wall in traditional times as an example of good things happening in an apparently negative situation: there was exchange of goods, and of the cultures of both sides, at the openings in the Wall.

The final panelist was Professor **Wei Zhao**, who joined the panel as a senior observer, noted that he is "not a cultural person," but a computer science expert. He commented on an irony of the internet as a factor in global relations: This technological innovation to enable better communication ironically has fostered a winner-take-all mentality, he says. What

we need instead is an attitude of "we can all win!"

Prof. Zhao, like Prof. Zhai, cited history for an example of successful long-term relations: the Portuguese-Chinese relations in Macao, China's oldest nation-to-nation relationship with a Western country. There have been ups and downs over the centuries, but this relationship has dealt with these over many centuries.

To conclude the webinar, each panelist was asked to suggest one way to begin to improve the U.S.-China relationship. Dr. Koplan observed that relationships in health and science can continue despite lapses on the political side. Relationships built over forty years, he noted, can continue despite governmental differences.

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### *Relationships built over forty years can continue despite governmental differences.*

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Professor Li suggested that universities could offer scholarships and internships to draw students from the other country. Online training would also be a possibility. Professor Horsley noted that media could play a helpful role by giving more and better information on NGOs and their contributions. And clearly the relationship would be helped if both governments would open up more than they have in the past few years. Prof. Repnikova suggested that those in media not wait for governments to open up; instead, they can find new spaces for their work. Zhai agreed that we can't wait for the government side, and that individuals can learn a new language as a basic step toward understanding. Prof. Zhao expressed hope that "Mars will be more peaceful than Earth!" He blamed "the professors: we didn't teach them well!" Everyone should study history and international relations. Finally, he noted that the pandemic has shown us the value of online meetings.

This webinar offered many ideas for potentially valuable U.S.-China joint activities that would begin to improve more formal relations. But all the panelists pointed out that such activities will remain limited until the political leadership in both

countries begins to relax. Perhaps USCPFA members, with our active concern about these issues, might make a real contribution to this process by contacting political leaders and officials in the relevant Federal institutions to express our concern.

To follow up and express your opinion on people-to-people efforts, here is contact information for an old-fashioned letter. It would be a good idea also to urge Secretary Antony Blinken and the Department to support and help arrange people to people activity also in educational and cultural exchanges. To further the reach of your letter, also send copies to your Senators and Representatives in Congress. Note: These are individual opinions with no references to our organization.

To contact the Department of State with your comments, use this address:

Secretary of State Antony Blinken  
US Department of State  
via Office of Public Liaison  
2201 C Street, NW, Room 206  
Washington, DC 20520-2204

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*Ed Krebs is a modern China historian. Besides book publications, he has edited a journal issue on "new historical thinking" in the Reform years, and on other topics on contemporary China from things seen while living and traveling in China.*

### Member Address Updates Are Important

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# Strategies for Mending the U.S.-China Relationship

By Frank Neville

Thank you, Yawei [Liu, China Program director at the Carter Center and China Research Center board member], for your comments about engagement and the role of the Carter Center, because that is a great foundation on which to start the conversation tonight. Unfortunately, it is not the foundation that most people are on right now. It is no secret there is a lot of controversy and tension in U.S.-China relations. Right now in Washington, I do not know if it is confusion but certainly a searching for answers and a sense that past practices, past policies are no longer a guide for us going forward. But I do believe that engagement and focus on common purpose and common benefit is the path that will take us forward.



Frank Neville

I will come back to this point in terms of what specifically I mean, but I want to lay out that I think it is important to be grounded in hope for the future, but also be cognizant of reality and not be naïve about where we are in terms of the challenges currently facing us.

When I say “us” I mean all of you who are involved in U.S.-China relations, including commercial relations, or in my case, educational relations or whatever other relationship you have with China. All of us feel this tension between the growing importance of China globally and the need to engage but also challenges that are being brought about by virtue of China’s changing role in the world.

*Frank Neville spoke on Feb. 18, 2021 during an online meeting of the World Trade Center Atlanta New Year’s Business Forum, organized by the World Trade Center Atlanta and sponsored by the China Research Center and the Carter Center. His comments have been edited for clarity and length. We gratefully acknowledge the China Research Center for this article. It appears in China Currents (2021, no. 1). China Currents may be purchased through Amazon or accessed through a sign-up space at each e-issue.*

China is becoming much more assertive in a lot of different dimensions, which is challenging global norms, and that has unsettled people.

This situation is different than when I first became involved in China in 1989 when I joined the State Department. Today, we find ourselves with the United States and China as the two most powerful, most consequential nations in the world. In 1989 we all saw that future, but now it is here. We need to have the wisdom and the patience and skill to be able to deal with what is a very new reality. What people are feeling on an individual level again is a degree of uncertainty and frustration and concern. For example, there’s a lot of frustration on the part of U.S. business about market access, about an unequal playing field within China, and China’s been very forthright about an assertive industrial policy. These things have unsettled the commercial relationship between our two nations and pose significant challenges for the path forward. Another example is workers concerned about lost jobs here in the United States due to China’s success in exporting and particularly in the wake of the WTO accession about 20 years ago. We’ve seen that rumble through our political landscape.

A third example is considerable concern among national security experts about how to engage with China on issues such as how to deal with China in the South China Sea or with cybersecurity. Finally, human rights groups are concerned about recent events in Hong Kong or what’s going on in Xinjiang. At this point, people have more questions than answers.

## The Biden Administration

The old measures of dealing with these issues when viewed from policymakers or interested parties’ points of view, particularly in Washington, no longer seem to be applicable. There is a growing consensus that the United States needs new thinking regarding its relationship with China. We’ve seen some of that already coming from the Biden administration.

For example, we’ve seen some tough signals that the administration will try to distinguish itself from the policies of the Obama administration. That was necessary

to acknowledge because there’s a pretty firm bipartisan consensus in support of a more firm China policy. This may not include all the things that we’ve seen in recent years with the trade war and some of the other things that the Trump administration did, but definitely there is a general consensus that the United States needs to be more active in defending what people consider to be U.S. interests.

There are also important signals in terms of what we have not seen, such as discussion over decoupling. In fact, President Biden has talked about intense competition, which is a nod to the reality of the political climate currently in Washington. But he is trying to frame it in a way that provides for a more productive agenda as opposed to confrontation or decoupling or some of these other words that have gotten tossed around in recent years.

## Lessons

I’d like to offer a few thoughts on how to go forward in this environment. I’d like to frame my comments by being cognizant of my assumptions and things that I’ve learned in the 30 years of being involved in U.S.-China relations. I’ll go back to my first day on the job, which was June 4, 1989. Things changed on that day in the U.S.-China relationship. We were thrown into a period of turmoil, which meant that my first years dealing with China were dominated by the fallout of that day.

During the time I was in the embassy working in China throughout the ’90s, in addition to rebuilding bridges on the ground, our job was to go back to Washington to explain to members of Congress who were mainly opposed (from the executive branch’s point of view) to engagement with China at that point. Our job was to explain how China was changing in terms of openness or human rights or commerce, among other trends. We were met by strong skepticism on the Hill. It was a tough road because there was a desire to punish China. There was also the sense that China had a different political model that we didn’t agree with and so we should not engage. We talked past one another, and in retrospect, we were both wrong.

*Continued on next page*

## Strategies *(continued)*

Today we're having that same discussion, but again we are talking past one another and even within Washington, we're taking positions that are extreme. That is not going to bring us to a consensus.

Let me give you a couple of specific lessons that I've learned from those early experiences. A key takeaway was the idea that China could be isolated or that its rise could be thwarted by strong U.S. pressure. In hindsight, this was clearly naïve. What was happening in China was related to dynamics within Chinese society. Of course, the accession to the WTO was obviously a choice on the part of the U.S. administration, but it was not a real choice in that China was heading in that direction anyway, becoming more and more connected to the global economy. So, bringing it into the WTO, yes, was a choice, but it was an eventuality that the United States could not really stop.

So, to re-emphasize, the idea that the United States could somehow stop, or block or thwart China was naïve then, and that idea is still naïve now. The idea that Chinese development would automatically lead to a political model that looked like the United States, what we would call a Liberal Democratic model, was also naïve. I was one of the ones who probably believed more in that eventuality than being able to block China's rise, but in retrospect, again, what we misunderstood then, and in some cases we misunderstand now, is that China's development has its own internal dynamic. External forces can maybe shape or adjust that but cannot significantly bend that trajectory.

Given these lessons, then, in thinking about what we can do with China, or what should we do vis-à-vis China, is we need to drop this false dichotomy of either trying to stop China or leaving China alone because it will become a western liberal democracy if we just give it enough space. The past 30 years have proven that both of those views are wrong. So, we're not going to isolate China, as it's not North Korea or Cuba, and decoupling would certainly hurt the U.S. economically and strategically. We've already seen some decoupling to the detriment of the United States both commercially and strategically. China has started to build its own—I

won't call it a world order—but at least regional structures and alliances and supply chains. The less the United States is a part of changes in the world order, the more our interests are damaged, but at the same time, we can't force China to adopt American values and should not see shared values as a precondition for engagement.

To repeat, China is not going to become the United States, and U.S. policymakers and Americans more generally need to

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*We cannot isolate China,  
but we can steer it by  
championing a rules-based  
order.*

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understand that. The ultimate goal for the United States should be to find an acceptable, reasonable, and realistic role for China in a rules-based global order. When I say acceptable, I mean acceptable to the United States from the United States perspective. Not *ideal*, but acceptable.

### **An Eight-Point Strategy**

Let me lay out my eight-point strategy. This could have been a six-point or ten-point strategy, and I am sure once I share these things, you could add or subtract your own, but since eight is a lucky number, I am going with eight.

Number one is we need to put the U.S. house in order. We have heard some talk about that in Washington and just as China's source of global strength and global emergence was the result of changes happening domestically within China so should the United States' global strength be grounded and emanate from domestic strength, such as the strength of our economy, our educational system, our technology, etc.

Number two is the United States needs to champion a rules-based international order. As I mentioned, we cannot stop China's emergence, we cannot block China, we cannot isolate China, but we can steer it by championing a rules-based order. That will be a change from previous years where there was a lot of concern about the international order not serving U.S. interests. But the international order was largely built by the United States principally to serve American and western

European interests. In my view, it still does that quite well, and we are better served strengthening and updating the order rather than stepping outside it.

Third, we need to rebuild alliances with like-minded nations. We have seen traditional American allies head in different directions on China policy, but there is strength in numbers. This will help us shape the rules-based order if we have allies who are working in concert, maybe not on everything, but with a general shared interest in strengthening international institutions and by building international cooperation that steers China toward outcomes that we believe are more aligned with a stable, long-term relationship.

The fourth issue is we need to live up to our values and for those of you who remember June 4, 1989, you'll remember that there was a makeshift Statue of Liberty built in Tiananmen Square. Fast-forward 30 years and the Chinese people do not see the U.S. as a model to emulate and that is largely our fault. The values upon which this country was built have served us well in times of crisis and the values that made the United States a model for others are ones that we need to embrace to strengthen our leadership. Doing so will not corrode our power.

Fifth, we need to be realistic about what China will and will not do in response to outside influence. China's dynamics are domestic dynamics. There are things that are core to Chinese interests that will not bend to outside pressure just like there are things in the United States that are core interests which will not bend to pressure.

Sixth, we need to compete hard where our interests are really at stake. I'm encouraged by President Biden's choice of characterizing the relationship as "intense competition." I hope that gains traction and helps to frame both the reality but also to center the thinking of American policymakers and others here in the United States in terms of what we need to do to deal with all these U.S.-China issues that have caused so many concerns. We need to win in technology, but this requires a different approach in terms of the public-private division of labor. In the U.S. model of individual responsibility and somewhat limited government, there are public goods that government needs to invest in. We have lagged in investing

*Continued on next page*

in things like basic research, education, infrastructure, and I would add primary health care and public health, as we've seen in the past year. Also, having a society where some people are providing fewer and fewer contributions to economic activity so there's an increasing inequality of wealth distribution does not serve our interests well. If you are a sports team and 30 percent of your players can't play, you're not going to be a very competitive sports team. Similarly, with a nation, if you have large segments of your population who, just by virtue of their birth, are destined to unproductive economic lives, even leaving out all the other sufferings, you are holding yourself back as a nation.

Seven is to separate issues where we can and link them where we must. In my 30 years of watching China relations, trying to link issues has led us to dead ends where we couldn't reach agreements. We tended to assume that negotiations were a zero-sum game, and if any of you who has studied or taught negotiation knows that in zero-sum games you better be considerably stronger than your opponent to win consistently. If we take a zero-sum approach against China, which is an immensely powerful nation in so many dimensions, the likelihood that we are going to end up with significant net benefits is highly naïve in my view. We need to be smarter about how we connect issues and be more thoughtful in how we negotiate.

Finally, the more we can tone down the political rhetoric and focus on tangible outcomes that really matter, I think all of us will be better off.

In conclusion, I hope that outlines at least a framework and a starting point for discussion that provides a realistic, yet hopeful, view of a path forward. 友

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*Frank Neville is Senior Vice President for Strategic Initiatives and Chief of Staff at Georgia Tech. He joined Georgia Tech in September 2019 as senior vice president for strategic initiatives and chief of staff in the Office of the President. In addition to his experience in higher education, Neville was a career diplomat with the United States Department of State, where he spent 15 years of service in Taipei, Chengdu, Guatemala City, and Beijing.*

## Zoom Meeting Celebrates Ping-Pong Diplomacy

By Diana Greer

A gala for the Commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of Ping-Pong Diplomacy was held virtually on April 23. Hosted by the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (CPAFFC), General Administration of Sport of China, and the China-US People's Friendship Association, an array of videos, virtual activities and live interviews were used together to seamlessly display a Zoom-style technological feat that was interesting to watch.

The theme was Friendship First—Competition Second. In the first segment recorded remarks were given by H.E. Wang Qishan, Vice President of PRC, Dr. Henry Kissinger, and Winston Lord, former U.S. ambassador to China. Vice President Wang stressed that cooperation was the only right choice for both countries. Our two countries need to focus on cooperation in the areas of covid, global economy and peace and stability of the world.

Dr. Kissinger told the story of the secret back-channel discussions between Pakistan and U.S. that eventually led to diplomatic maneuvers between Washington and Beijing. He told of the importance of people-to-people exchanges and how early overtures to Chinese government led by subnational U.S. friends of China or "ambassadors" helped to "soften" the hearts and minds of Chinese officials to be open to new thinking on diplomacy with the United States.

Ambassador Lord discussed the secret talks between the Nixon administration and Beijing, which started in January 1971, and not until later after three months of silence, China issued an invitation to the United States to participate in the international table tennis games



Wang Qishan



Winston Lord

to be held in Nagoya, Japan. This proved to be the "icebreaker event" which led to Nixon going to China in 1972 and later, the Shanghai Communique.

Table tennis (ping pong) became the national sport of the people of China after Mao Zedong declared it so in the early 1950's, after the founding of the PRC in 1949. The National Committee on U.S.-China relations facilitated the participation of the U.S. in the 31st International Table Tennis Federation. In 1959 Ruo Guolan became the world's top table tennis player and the sport under Mao's Chinese communist government helped to legitimize the government in the eyes of the world as China won three subsequent titles. The Chinese people loved the sport and its embrace helped build their confidence in domestic and international competitive sports. Mao wanted everyone in China to play the sport and it became a source of great pride for the Chinese people.

At least fifteen other speakers were involved in the program, which included prominent current and former sports figures from the United States and China, including Yao Ming, Stephon Marbury, Jan Berris, Dr. Susan Brownell and others. Table tennis, basketball, gymnastics, figure skating, volleyball were the sports which figured prominently in the program. Watching Judy Hoarfrost and a Chinese star play virtual ping pong was fascinating and to me, it looked like playing the Wii games that many of us have tried in our own homes.

President Xi Jinping's declaration of the integration of sports and education was demonstrated through various segments relating to high schools and sports departments.

One speaker, Dr. Susan Brownell of the University of Missouri, St. Louis, is a recognized expert on Chinese sports. She is often asked to be interviewed on this topic and shows the integration of sports and education in important ways. She grew up in Virginia and graduated from University of Virginia. She was a track and field athlete before going to Beijing University in 1985-86 for Chinese studies. She represented Beijing on the university

*Continued on next page*

## Ping-Pong *(continued)*

track team and set a national record in the heptathlon. She is quite influential in areas of Chinese/East Asian health and sports medicine, anthropology, archeology, and Olympic Game and World Fair history.

Ambassador Lin Songtian, president of the Chinese People's Association of Friendship with Foreign Countries (CPAFFC) spoke about the importance of "people to people" diplomacy and world peace.

In his own words, here are some of his thoughts from the CPAFFC website as the new president of CPAFFC—

With the purposes of enhancing people's friendship, furthering international cooperation, safeguarding world peace and promoting common development among different countries, CPAFFC upholds the idea of building a community of a shared future for mankind and commits itself to the missions of "leading people-to-people diplomacy, serving as the mainstay in public diplomacy and promoting exchanges between Chinese and foreign local governments." Representing the Chinese people, the Association has been making friends across the world, serving China's peaceful development and the great cause of nation reunification and working for the promotion of friendship, cooperation, peace and development of mankind.

The main point I wish to convey was that throughout the program, the theme of friendship was evident as the most important goal of sports and education, reiterating that competition in sports was a secondary goal. I am a realist when it comes to world problems and we know how difficult solving climate change, finding Covid solutions, and discovering global economic answers that work for the worldwide community is truly difficult. Only when countries try to cooperate in good faith and have the world's people at heart, will we make headway towards peace and stability for all. We must not give up the hope that on this earth, we must think in new, creative ways to live peacefully on this planet. 友

*Diana Greer is USCPFA National President.*

# A Life of Encounters with China

## Vignettes from Sylvia Krebs' Memoir

*Editor's note: Below are two excerpts from Sylvia H. Krebs' book, How Am I to Touch with You? Encounters with China, (reviewed in this issue). The book includes a number of reminiscences on individuals the author knew in China. This first excerpt is one such sketch on a woman Sylvia knew and respected, in Xi'an, pp. 234–35. The second, longer excerpt is from the concluding chapter, her general summing-up, pp. 251–52, 256.*

### A Teacher's Story

Du Fangchi, who came to the English Training Center for the 1997 spring term, taught at the nearby education college. She and her husband, who was working in southeast China, had one son. As the term progressed, Du was interested and hard-working, but she never talked about her personal life.

A faculty group from Agnes Scott College in Atlanta visited us that spring, and we arranged for Du and another student to talk with them about education in China. I was surprised to learn that she was a Party member. "You have to believe in something," was her first explanation. Later in the discussion, she said, "You must join to be a leader." Those were only tidbits of information, and although I liked Du Fangchi very much, I knew I didn't know her very well.

Just before I left Xi'an in late June, Du Fangchi invited me to dinner at a neighborhood restaurant. The invitation itself demonstrated just how much China had changed since 1984 in Chongqing. Then, one young Chinese woman probably wouldn't have invited a foreign teacher for dinner, partly because it just wasn't done, partly because she just wouldn't have had the money. Du Fangchi had money for more than dinner. She came for me in a taxi, and we went home in a taxi. The food was excellent, but best of all, she made no attempt to impress me with exotic or excessive dishes.

Over dinner Du Fangchi told me her story. She had grown up in a poor area of northwest China. "I was given away three times," she said, meaning that her parents couldn't always provide for all of

their five children. When resources were stretched too thin, they sent Du Fangchi, and perhaps one or more of the other children, to live with better-off family or friends.

Du's story of growing up poor segues into her really important memory. She said that the students in her home village took turns going early to build a fire in the stove at their ramshackle school house. A boy felt sorry for her and always came to help when it was her turn. As the two grew older, they fell in love, but her parents disapproved. Despite their poverty, her parents had high hopes for their daughter, and the boy wasn't acceptable to them because he had no plans for college. Chinese families being what they were then, the daughter bowed to her parents' will.

In college Du Fangchi met the man she later married. As she told her story, I didn't doubt that she loved her husband and that her marriage was happy. But I also knew that the boy who helped her build fires in that poor village school house still held a very, very special place in her heart. The surprise this time was that she had established contact with



*Sylvia became friends with the proprietor of a xiaomaibu convenience store next door to our unit.*

him. "My husband likes him," she said, "and I like his wife."

When we got back to my apartment, Du gave me a piece of hand-woven cloth from her husband's home area. It remains one of my favorite gifts from a student. Not only did it fit my taste, its simplicity symbolized for me Du's early life and the values she still lived by.

As we parted that night, Du Fangchi said, "I wish I spoke better English. There is much in my heart to tell you." The feeling was mutual. I regretted that my limited Chinese kept me from knowing what more was in her heart and life—and from sharing more of myself with her.

## Living in China

"Multifaceted" best describes the experiences I had living and teaching in China. To arrange them in neat categories is almost impossible. For that reason if no other, tying up loose ends is a tricky business. At the beginning I admitted that my choices of what to include—both in the way of personal experience and of historical and contemporary context—were idiosyncratic. The same can be said for the way I choose to sum it all up. Trans-Pacific travel is a ho-hum experience for me now, but I'm still partly a Mississippi country girl who is most interested in how ordinary people live, wherever they are.

Throughout the 1990s, the views from the windows of my upper-floor apartments in *Nan Da's Xiyuan* constantly reminded me of the impressive changes in China. Brightly colored pedestrians, chaotic automobile traffic, and countless construction cranes (China's national bird, some would say) were all a far cry from the monochromatic, slow-paced world of middle 1980s Chongqing. The total effect of the changes is nothing less than mind-boggling, as thousands of stories in the American media have attested. And yet history and tradition still exert a powerful influence on the lives of the Chinese people.

The continuity, the heavy weight of history in China, continues to fascinate me. Over the years I've added other images to the silhouette of a horse-drawn cart and a power station that I saw from the Beijing-Chongqing train in 1984. A woman pulling a cart loaded with coal in front of a computer store, bicyclists us-

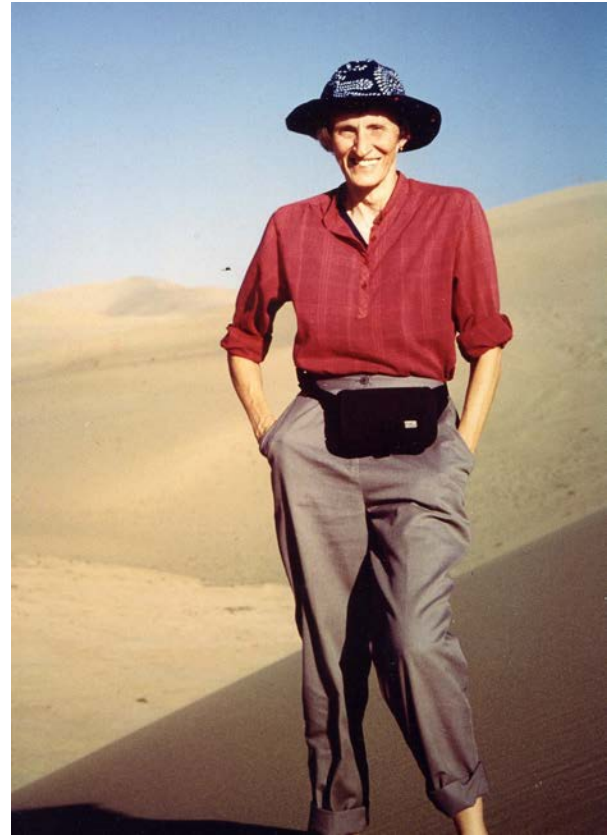
ing cell phones, television sets transported by shoulder poles, modishly dressed Chinese tourists photographing somber ancient sites. Everyday life in China is filled with evidence that the past and the present often live side by side in practical matters. The coexistence of tradition and modernity in people's minds is less obvious but much more important—and more problematic.

The changes in Chinese life over the past two-and-a-half decades are inescapable and sometimes superficial. What, for better or worse, remains the same often runs much deeper. Tradition affects how women are treated, how children are reared and educated, whether farmers accept new methods, how politics works, and how people view their government. This, of course, only scratches the surface of its influence...

Living and working in China has been a challenging, eye-opening, emotion-stirring part of my life. Long ago, I gave up trying to explain, even to myself, the appeal of a country that can be so psychologically frustrating and physically uncomfortable. I can only say that over the centuries, thousands of other foreigners—teachers, students, missionaries, diplomats and business people—have also succumbed to its attraction.

Now, however, I do view China and its society with a much more critical eye than I once did. In part that is due to my feeling that some aspects of Chinese society today are a caricature—and not a humorous one—of American life. As the country rushes pell-mell toward modernization, as it takes on more and more of the trappings of Western societies, I have hoped that it would learn from the mistakes of the more developed countries. The possibilities of that don't seem likely as pollution worsens, crime increases, and the divorce rate rises, to name only a few of the social challenges that China now faces.

But what about the importance of learning "to touch" with each other? As I look back on all my encounters with China over



*The adventurer at the Singing Sands dunes near Dunhuang.*

the past twenty-five years, I'm drawn to what I wrote in 1985 after returning from Chongqing. "We are alike—our strengths, weakness, goodness, evil—are pretty much the same. We're different because our experiences—individually and collectively, historically and presently—are so vastly different as to boggle the mind." And I recall something that my best Chinese friend once said in his usual fractured English, "Everybody needs a little money, some worth work, and somebody to lover."

Recognizing the common humanity that we share with real live people in other countries gets lost in the tendency to demonize a government and stereotype its citizens. How can we touch with each other? In part by knowing as much as possible about the everyday lives of people—what they do, what they think and why. That knowledge provides valuable counterweight to concerns about what a powerful China and its authoritarian government might mean to the United States and to the world as we struggle with the challenges of the 21st century. 友

# On the Grasslands One Act of Kindness Deserves Another

By John Marienthal

In 1994, while visiting Xinjiang's Shihezi University, where I had taught English about seven years earlier, I met my successor, Phyllis Wachob.

She invited me to come with her and our former student, a young woman who would serve as our translator, on a trip to Sayram Lake for the Mongolian Naadam Festival. We also hoped to find Sawresh, a Mongolian herdsman who Phyllis had met a year earlier and who lived near the festival site.

Phyllis had stayed in a yurt with Sawresh and his family in 1993 and wanted to find him again—somewhere out in the sheep pastures by the lake. We rented a mini-van and driver from the school. A 240-mile bumpy drive later, we ended up sleeping overnight in the van by the lake.

Sayram Lake is part of a Mongolian prefecture in Xinjiang. Every year, the Mongolians drive their sheep up from Bortala to pasture in the grasslands around the lake. While the men herd the flock to the new location, the women ride to the pastureland on trucks, pick a spot and kick their 400-pound yurts out of the back of the trucks. The men arrive in the afternoon to help finish setting up the yurts.

We had no idea where to find Sawresh, but Phyllis had his name on a piece of paper. The next day, we wandered around asking at the fairgrounds—where wrestling, archery and camel races were under way—until we found him.

Of course Sawresh said that Miss Fi Li Sha, as Phyllis's name was pronounced in Chinese, and her friends could stay with his family. Off we went cross country, driving through shallow streams 12 miles to his yurt. What we did not know until later was that the driver was nearly panic-stricken about the possibility of breaking an axle. But we were friends of his school and he wanted to help us. Our first of three nights in the yurt was celebrated with *bai jiu* (a clear distilled liquor) vodka and freshly roasted lamb.

The next day, while driving back to the yurt from the festival, we came across two of his uncles on horseback, and invited



At the start of the camel race, the last camel in the line sat down and refused to move.



Our gift to Sawresh: the first-ever two-person hiking tent at Sayram Lake.

them to ride home in the van. One of their sons brought the horses to the yurt. Seven of us now, the van axles even lower, we took off. Sawresh could now say he had taken his uncles for their first "taxi ride." We and the van arrived safely, and the two uncles joined us on the second night, when we were guests of honor and

got to eat a sheep head—a Mongolian delicacy. 友

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John Marienthal is a member of USCPFA's South Bay chapter.

# Worker Woodcuts: A Revolutionary Tradition

by Susanne Cohn and Ruth Nesi

In 1974 worker-artists from the industrial cities of Luda, Shanghai, and Yangquan exhibited their work as part of a major show of fine art in Peking. It was the first national exhibition of worker art since the Cultural Revolution of the late 1960s.

A striking feature of worker art is the popularity of woodcuts, a form widely practiced by workers who create art in their spare time, like Sui Gui-min, maker of "The Refinery in the Morning Sunlight." The bold, vigorous woodcut art reflects the spirit and accomplishments of workers in the struggle to develop a modern, industrialized state.

The form has had a long history in China. The earliest examples are Buddhist images from the Tang Dynasty of the ninth century. For a thousand years after that, woodcuts made by the common people served as popular book illustrations, playing cards, New Year's pictures, and decorations on writing paper.

In the late 1920s, the writer and cultural leader Lu Xun realized that a new art form was needed in the rising struggle against feudalism and the reactionary forces of old China. "In a revolutionary age,



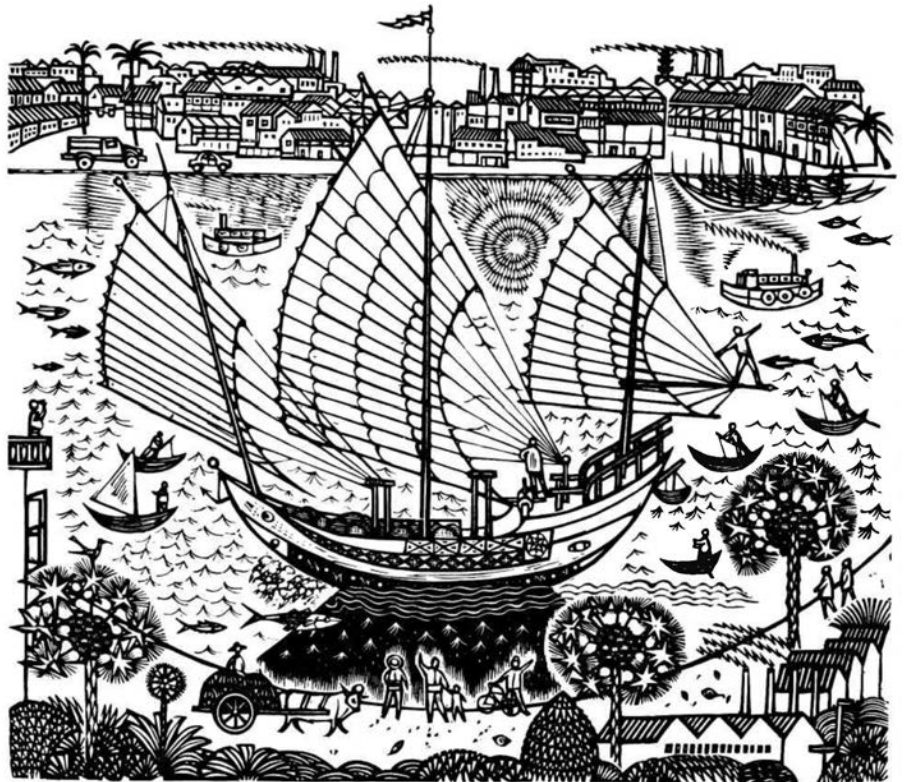
Lu Xun by Ch'en Yen-Ch'iao.

woodcuts have the widest use," he wrote. "They can be quickly produced by busy people." Lu Xun encouraged young artists to develop the new woodcut art, and published albums of old Chinese and modern Japanese and Western prints.

Woodcuts soon became a revolutionary cultural force with rapidly growing influence. In the early 1930s, they were

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*This article appeared in longer form in the June 1976 issue of New China, USCPFA's magazine published from 1974 to 1979. The biographies noted that Susanne Cohn was a painter and printmaker who had visited China in 1974 and interviewed several worker artists. Ruth Nesi was a textile designer who visited China in 1973.*



"East Wind" by Huang Yong-yu. Beijing, 1958. Combining Eastern and Western styles, this woodcut reflects the optimism of the Great Leap Forward.

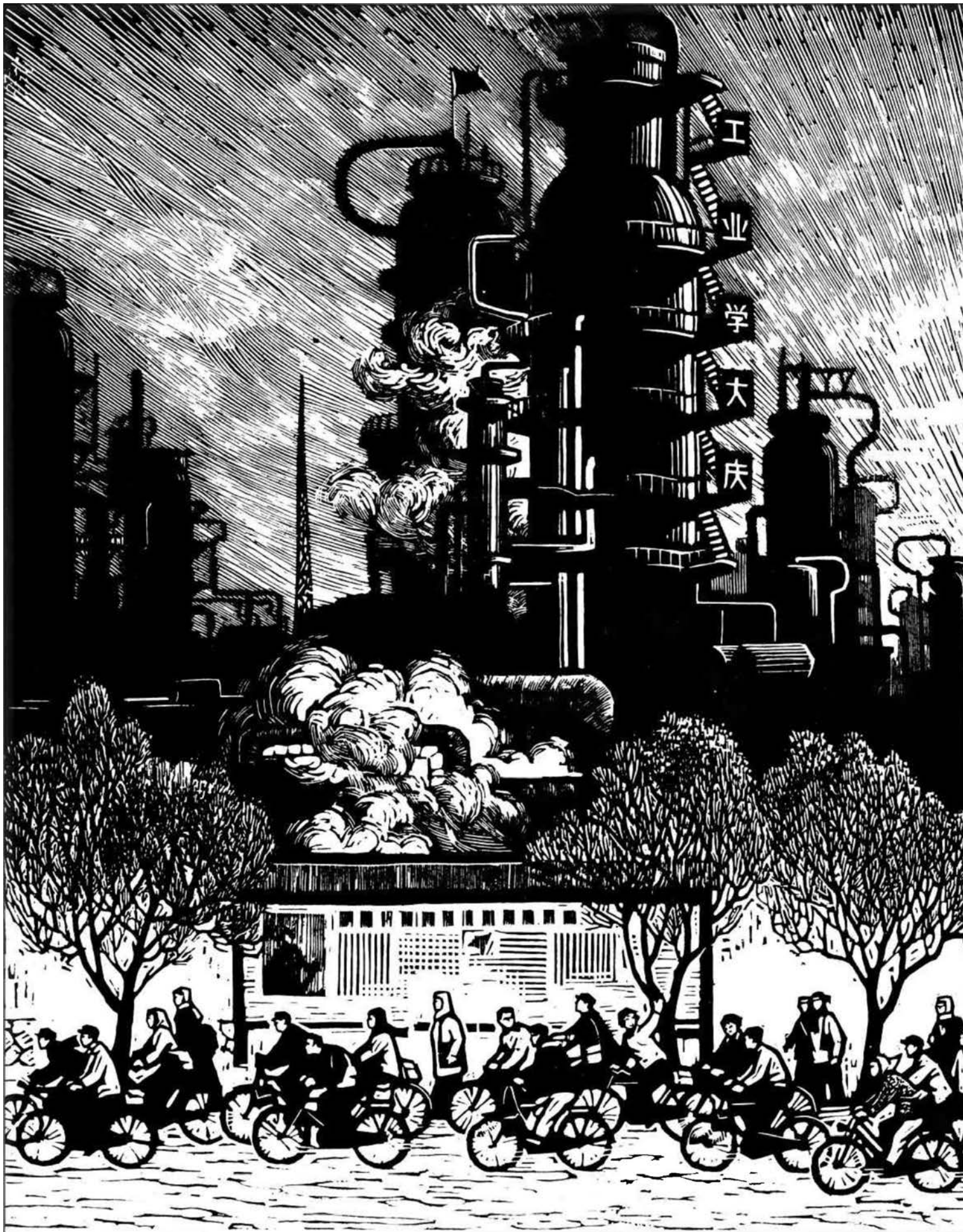
banned by Chiang Kai-shek as "dangerous"; prints were destroyed and artists imprisoned. Despite such obstacles, the Woodcut Movement, as it came to be known, spread.

A Yenan school for cultural workers, named after Lu Xun, had a special section devoted to woodcuts, where both artists and non-artists from all over China came to learn and teach. Since the beginning of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, the industrial workers in China have begun to take a more active role in the arts. Crowds gather at work-

places and exhibition halls to see their lives and activities reflected in woodcuts designed, cut, and printed by their co-workers. In today's revolutionary age, woodcuts have the same appeal as in Lu Xun's time. 友



"The New Grain Overflows the Bins" by Liu Bin. Luda, early 1970s.



Sui Guimin, "The Refinery in the Morning Sunlight," Luda, early 1970s.







## REGISTRATION

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- Check the USCPFA national website at [www.uscpfa.org](http://www.uscpfa.org) for the latest convention information. Zoom links will be emailed to registrants.
  - Not a member? Visit [www.uscpfa.org](http://www.uscpfa.org) for a downloadable membership form.
  - Chapters: remember to get your renewals in on time. The September 30, 2021 membership report will determine voting numbers at the convention in November.

# CONVENTION PROGRAM



## For Your Viewing

(Details will be on [USCPFA.org](http://USCPFA.org) and mailed to registrants.)

- From the **ChinaFest** website, Hosted by Rose Chen of the Rose Group for Cross-Cultural Understanding/ChinaFest:
  - Pre-recorded lecture by Ms. Yue-Sai Kan, Co-chair of China Institute in Manhattan:  
**Journey through a Changing China: The China I Know**
  - **The Hometowns Project:** Videos created by Chinese students at University of Richmond for ChinaFest

## Friday evening, Nov. 5

Plenary meetings and programs will be on Zoom. Schedule is subject to change. Meetings will be approximately 6:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Eastern Time so that members in all time zones can participate.

- Welcome, announcements
- Lin Songtian, President of CPAFFC (invited)
- Chinese Embassy representative (invited). Ambassador Cui Tiankai is leaving his post.
- Susan Brownell, Anthropologist, Sports Historian: **How Sports Have Connected China to the World: A Personal Account**
- Duncan McFarland and New England Chapter: **China, the Environment and Climate Change**

## Saturday evening, Nov. 6, starting at 6:00 p.m. EST

- Plenary, awards
- **Dodge Billingsley**, documentary filmmaker, historian, and collector of Chinese “red art.” The documentary *Helen Foster Snow* (aired on PBS), directed by Billingsley, was the inspiration for initiating his art collection, which spans the years 1955–1984. He has made many trips to China to interview the artists.
- Judy Manton was in China in the early 70’s exciting events leading to the opening of China to the world was happening. She tells her story: **Building Bridges with China through Five Generations.**

## Sunday evening, Nov. 7, starting at 6

- **Yawei Liu** is the Director of The Carter Center’s China Program and will discuss his perspective on some of the more pressing and difficult issues relating to US-China relations and possibly based on questions from the participants.
- **Weiping Wu**, professor at Columbia University and an internationally acclaimed scholar working on global urbanization with expertise in issues of migration, housing, and infrastructure. She has published eight books, the latest being *The Chinese City*.
- Cultural event
- Closing remarks



A woodcut from Dodge Billingsley's collection of revolutionary art.

# Impacting One Million Children in China

By Tom Stader

Fifteen years ago, I founded a nonprofit organization that donates libraries to rural elementary schools, orphanages, and community centers in China. Since then, we've provided three thousand libraries impacting more than one million children throughout the country.

In 2006, The Library Project started as a simple idea over a few drinks with friends in Dalian, China. We were a rag-tag group from the USA, Canada, and China, with no intention of starting a nonprofit organization. All we wanted to do was get a few kids living at an orphanage a small library. That's it. There was no grand plan or vision statement. We just wanted to support the community that we temporarily calling home.

Over the next few months, this small group of friends would get together and move the ball forward. For example, we created a relationship with a private language school to collect children's books. We partnered with the Dalian Charity Federation to help comply with local laws. We then raised a few hundred dollars via a PayPal account that I had created.

It took us about six months to deliver the orphanage their beautiful new library. The space we created was filled with over three thousand children's books, tables, chairs, shelving, lighting, and a globe. The children gravitated to the library because it was the brightest, most exciting place at the orphanage. We were so proud.

## Beginning

I can only speak for myself when I say it felt good after donating that first library. It felt like we had accomplished something. I can't honestly say that I understood the impact we provided at the time, but I knew that we were onto something. So, without any real forethought, I decided to start a nonprofit organization called The Library Project. I bought a website URL, asked my friend to design a logo, built a website, and formed a Board of Directors. This whole process took no more than one month.

Then, two months later, I quit my job and hired a full-time team member. I honestly believe most people thought I was having a breakdown. But that's how most nonprofits are founded in the world;

fast and loose. Rarely are these early-stage organizations started by someone with an MBA and thinking more than a few months out. Founders, especially at the beginning, are fueled by idealism and hope. That's how I remember those first few libraries. They were exciting, they felt huge, and that we were making an impact.

With all of that said, there was a lot that I didn't understand, such as what literacy was, how you measure "need," and how you grow a nonprofit organization. Of those three things, I chose to focus on the latter. For everything else, I would hire people to figure out. To this day, I still believe that was the single best decision I ever made at the organization. That decision would define the kind of leader I would eventually become and the organization our team would create.

## Today

Fast forward fifteen years, The Library Project is a very different organization, but it has retained the foundation that we laid during our first library. For example, all 3,000 of our libraries were made possible because of over 140 government partnerships; from provincial boards of education to local government nonprofits. These partnerships are the reason why we continue to be able to conduct programming in 27 provinces throughout China. It's also a reason why I personally don't like the description, Non-Government Organization, when it's related to the work that we do. That name implies that our work is in some way in opposition to government policy. That couldn't be farther from the truth. For example, the book content and teacher training that we provide schools directly support China's education curriculum and outcomes. If it didn't then we wouldn't of been able to donate more than two million books to the China public school system.

Our libraries have also grown into world-class programs. From Reading Rooms that benefit entire schools to STEAM Classroom Libraries that help, you guessed it, classrooms. This past year we even launched Children's Literacy Bags that provide students with their first home library. Every library we provide has a comprehensive teacher training strategy

consisting of in-person and online training components. After one year, we then conduct monitoring and evaluation of each library we donate. If there are areas that need improving, we then double down our training effort.

More than anything, I am proud of our team. They work tirelessly providing libraries to rural elementary schools throughout China. As I type out this article, we have three groups of people on the road preparing to provide schools with beautiful new libraries. I honestly couldn't be more proud.

As for the organization, my role has changed dramatically. Talk to any founder of a sixteen-year-old nonprofit, and that persona will talk at length about how his or her job role has changed over the years. I am no different. In those early days I was present at every single library we donated, whereas today I am lucky to get to five a year. I now spend most of my time supporting our organization's leadership, raising awareness about our work to potential donors, and building a strong Board of Directors. It has been an exciting journey to get to this point, and I'm equally excited to see where the next sixteen years leads me.

Finally, speaking to China and what the country has given me personally over the years. Well, I won't lie, it wasn't always easy. China, like anywhere, presents unexpected challenges that all entrepreneurs must overcome. With that said, China and the Chinese people have been very good to our organization. As I mentioned previously, we have made over 140 government partners located in 27 provinces that have supported us every step of the way. Whether they are volunteers, donors, partners, or government; the people we work with are all good people focused on making their communities better for their children. It's been the privilege of a lifetime.

To learn more about what we do at The Library Project, please visit our website at [www.library-project.org](http://www.library-project.org). 友

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*Before launching The Library Project in 2006, Tom Stader earned his degree in fine arts at Northern Arizona University.*

# Friendship Has A History: Paul Robeson

By L. H. Yeakey & Robert Glassman

Paul Robeson, the famous Black singer and actor, has been an active friend of the Chinese people for most of his 76 years. Younger Americans may not know Robeson's story. He welded his art to strong political stands, becoming a hero to many people around the world. In 1937 he expressed his belief: "The artist must elect to fight for Freedom or Slavery. I have made my choice." Songwriter Oscar Hammerstein dedicated the original of "Ol' Man River" to Robeson. By the 1940s Robeson had changed the lyrics into a fighting song: "Tote that barge an' lift that bale/ You shows a little grit an' you lands in jail./ I keeps laffin' instead of cryin',/ I must keep fightin' until I'm dyin'...."

Robeson was the first Black actor to play Othello on Broadway. The production he played in set an all-time record for the longest running Shakespearean play in New York. He won a gold medal for the best diction in the American theater. Robeson also sang and acted in eleven films, including *Emperor Jones* (1933) and *Proud Valley* (1939). In the making of *Proud Valley*, Robeson lived and worked for a time with the miners in the Rhondda Valley in Wales and portrayed their heritage of culture and struggle. He frequently gave up chances for profitable appearances because he wanted to perform "only at gatherings where I can sing what I please." In this spirit he traveled to the front lines of the Spanish Civil War in 1936 to sing for the anti-fascist fighters, and wherever else he was needed over the years.

Beginning in the late 1920s and 30s, Robeson became deeply interested in China and its people. He read books on Chinese culture and history and, as with an impressive number of other languages,

*This article originally appeared in the spring 1975 issue of New China, published 1974-1979 by USCPFA. The biographies noted that L.H. Yeakey visited China in 1973 and was a graduate student in Afro-American history and politics at Columbia University. Robert Glassman was a day-care worker in New York's Lower East Side. Paul Robeson died in January 1976, never having visited China.*

learned to read, write, speak, and sing in Chinese. When the Japanese invaded China, he gave several popular concerts in Europe and the United States to raise support and funds for China Relief. In 1941 he recorded a benefit album with a Chinese chorus; the title song was *Chee Lai!* (起来), Chinese for "Arise!" [and the beginning of the PRC national anthem, "March of the Volunteers."]

In her introduction to that album, Mme. Sun Yat-sen (Soong Qing Ling) wrote, "Some of the finest songs [of the Chinese mass movement] are being made available to Americans in the recordings of Paul Robeson, voice of the people of all lands."

After World War II, Paul Robeson championed the Chinese revolution as the only way for China to develop free of exploitation and foreign domination. Confident that "the Chinese people have their freedom and are going to keep it," he saw the Korean War as an attempt to renew Western control of China and insisted from the start that "the new and real China be seated in the U.N."

In the 1950s Robeson was already perceiving what was to become increasingly obvious to others later: the people of the Third World were uniting to become a

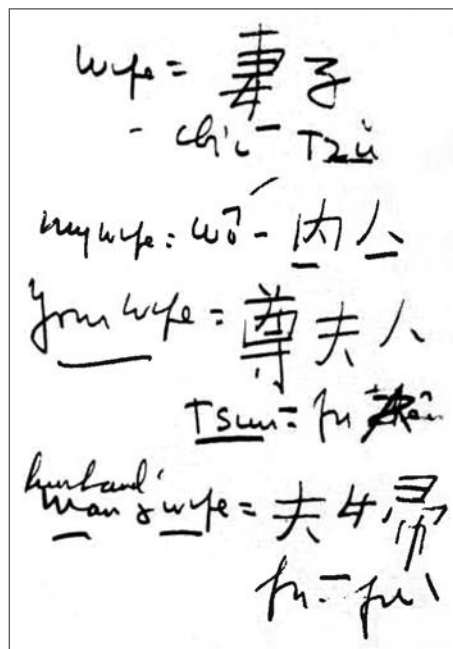


*Singing for China Aid, 1941.*

powerful historical force. In the Harlem monthly newspaper *Freedom*, which he edited along with Shirley Graham Du Bois and others, he wrote, "The signs have long been clear that so-called 'colonial' peoples, mostly colored, were moving toward some measure of freedom.... Of all developments, the change in China has been the most significant. The overlords have gone, and forever" (1953). In 1955 Robeson hailed Chinese participation in the Bandung Conference in Indonesia as an historic step forward in developing unity among Third World peoples.

Robeson unflinchingly supported the Chinese and African liberation struggles despite government harassment and threats to his life. He was deprived of his passport, in the incredible words of the government brief, "solely because of his recognized status as a spokesman for large sections of Negro Americans..., in view of his frank admission that he has been for years active politically in behalf of independence of the colonial people of Africa." During the McCarthy era, Robeson's fearless stands against U.S. government policies became a yardstick with which to measure the commitment of Black intellectuals, artists, politicians, and trade unionists to the liberation of colonial peoples.

Although he was denied an opportunity to visit China while he was still in good health, Robeson maintained, "I have for a long time felt a close kinship with the Chinese people." He believed that "a new strength like that of gallant China will add its decisive weight to insuring a world where all men can be free and equal." 友



*Robeson practiced Chinese calligraphy.*

# A Passion for Pandas, and Children's Story Books

By Sylvia Krebs, with Ed Krebs

When I was a preschooler, my favorite story book featured a panda family: Papa Panda, Mama Panda and their son Andy. The little boy panda got lost, and no matter how often I read the story, I nervously awaited his safe return to his parents. Andy was always returned by a band of pygmies, but of course the factual problems of the account didn't bother me.

Then came first grade, and before Christmas I had most of the childhood diseases. Thus it was deemed unwise for me to wear the scanty fairy costumes like the other girls. My mother solved the problem by making a panda costume complete with ears and tail, everything color-correct. What she didn't realize was that she had created a bond between me and the cuddly black-and-whites. Over the years I kept a soft spot in my heart for pandas, but as I put away childish things, the story book, my stuffed panda and the costume went into the attic. The bond ran deep but hidden before resurfacing years later in a curious situation.

By then I was teaching in a community college and had just moved into a new office. The door was about half glass, and I chose the iconic poster of a panda chomping on bamboo to provide some



Sylvia at age eight with her stuffed panda bear.

privacy. One afternoon as I was thinking about the next day's class, my gaze landed on the poster, and I had an epiphany: in my favorite story book, pygmies returned Andy to his parents. Pygmies in China? A panda family in Africa?

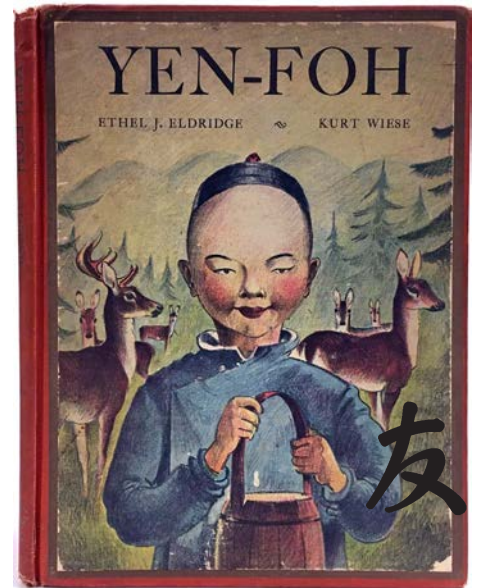
That set me to thinking. Over the years, what have American children learned from their story books about other countries? Is the information misleading at best, false at worst? Positive or negative?

The small staff in the Forest (Mississippi) Public Library know of this part-time resident's China interests. When space or someone's idea of relevancy dictate, some books have to be discarded. So one day the head librarian gave me *Yen-foh, A Chinese Boy*, adapted from the Chinese by Ethel J. Eldridge, illustrated by Kurt Wiese, Junior Press Books, Albert Whitman & Co., Chicago, 1939.

An internet search for Eldridge was unsuccessful except for a comment from *Kirkus Review*: "Eldridge made no attempt to convey the feel of the language though she has carried over a dramatic sense of Chinese life and customs."

On the other hand, Kurt Wiese, a native of Minden, Germany, was a well-known illustrator. For six years he had lived in China, working as a salesman. Wiese's first big project was illustrating *Bambi, A Life in the Woods*, translated from the German by, of all people, Whittaker Chambers. During his subsequent career, Wiese won two Caldecott Honor Book Awards as well as a Newberry Award for his illustrations in *Young Fu of the Upper Yangtze*. Another of Wiese's early efforts was *The Story about Ping*, a duckling who gets lost and then finds its way home again; this story has had continuing appeal over decades. Wiese's career as an illustrator was long and prolific, with more than 400 books illustrated.

Before I opened the Yen-foh book, I had certain expectations. It came to the local library from a small Baptist church. Given the importance of missionary work in China to the Baptists, I thought it could be an account of the little boy's conversion to Christianity.



*Yen-foh: A Chinese Boy.*

I couldn't have been more wrong. Christianity was not mentioned, but the story described characteristics that could be ascribed to any "good little boy" regardless of ethnicity, nationality or culture. Yen-foh figured out how to save a classmate who had fallen into a huge water jar. He generously gave a poor friend the supplies the boy needed to do his school assignments. He insinuated himself into a deer herd (myth intrudes here) and harvested the milk required to heal his parents' eye disease.

In these and other situations, Yen-foh "always used his mind." The story tells readers that: "In China it is considered very important to use the mind." Children are expected to study hard to become wise and cultured.

My own experience with the children's story about Andy Panda getting rescued by pygmies, contrasted with the Yen-foh story with its emphasis on building a child's mind, stimulates reflection on different approaches in children's literature in various cultural contexts. I first heard of work done on this subject by Professor Cecilia Cheung of the University of California at Riverside, on NPR in autumn 2020. Cheung and two colleagues surveyed more than 300 children's stories from each of China, Mexico, and the United States. In comparing China and

the U.S., they presented the differences in two representative stories.

In the Chinese story, *Cat that Eats Letters*, the cat eats poorly written characters the children make as they learn to write. This way, the children will work hard to make progress with their writing. They do indeed progress, but then the cat runs out of things to eat. So the children then realize that if they make a few flawed characters even though they now know better, the cat will be well fed.



The American story is entitled *The Jar of Happiness*, the girl protagonist loses a jar in which she was concocting a potion for happiness. Gradually she finds that the support of friends after her loss is what's really important, and that having friends is most important in happiness. The two books show a contrast: The Chinese book seeks to encourage achievement; the American book emphasizes happiness. Do these respective emphases in children's stories also reflect differences in the larger cultures? This is a subject worth further discussion. Both emphases have positive aspects and provide motivation for accomplishment.



One further note on *Yen-foh*, the children's book, is relevant. It seems most likely that the real-life model for the story's young exemplar is Yan Fu, one of the first Chinese intellectuals to introduce the Darwinist concepts of natural selection and survival of the fittest in China. Born of a scholar-official family in Fuzhou, Yan failed in his early hopes to pass the

official examination, but he soon entered the academy associated with the Fuzhou Naval Arsenal, an early modern institution where new-style education headed him on a progressive life-course.

After serving on naval vessels he had a sojourn in Britain from 1865 to 1867. His experience led him to encounter Western thought, and by the 1890s he began translation work that became a new career. His translation of Thomas Huxley's *Evolution and Ethics* introduced the Darwinist concepts of natural selection and survival of the fittest to Chinese readers just as they were trying to come to grips with the nation's disastrous defeat by Japan in the war of 1894-95. Yan Fu also translated Adam Smith, John Stuart Mill, and Herbert Spencer into Chinese editions and wrote many articles further presenting his modernist themes.

Yan's translation work brought him national prominence. Progressive thinking did not mean radical politics in his case; after 1911 he favored a return of the imperial system. During these years of political upheaval, he was granted an honorary *jinshi* "presented scholar" degree and also was appointed first president of the newly established National Peking University, now Beijing University. Yan was skeptical of cultural revolutionaries like Hu Shi, and his translations into literary Chinese seemed a bit remote to the activists of that period. Yan returned to Fuzhou, where he died in 1921. Wherever his career took him during a period of vast change, he remained a worthy model for the *Yen-foh* of this children's story book. 友

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*Sylvia Krebs is familiar to readers of this review. This article discloses some of her earliest interests, especially the childhood stories that our parents encouraged. Besides pandas, Sylvia read lots of novels about dogs and horses. After she retired from teaching, Sylvia devoted lots of effort to writing; the "China book" reviewed in this issue, was only one of her enthusiasms. She also began to write fiction, doing a novel and quite a few short stories. Some of her writing might have gotten published twenty years ago, but apparently didn't fit the sensibilities of recent times. Not surprisingly, Sylvia resisted self-publication for this part of her writing. But who knows? Someone might get part of this aspect of her writing published yet!*

## China to Africa, Africa to China

The history of Sino-African connections belies the image of China as a nation isolated from the rest of the world. The early interactions were tenuous, but they provide interesting detail about China's relationships with foreigners and with other countries. Coincidentally, two of the earlier contacts featured Muslims—Ibn Battuta, the noted Moroccan traveler, and Zheng He, the commander of China's mighty "treasure fleet."

Ibn Battuta's travels took him to China in 1345 or 1346, and his stay there may have been less than a year. The Ming voyages of exploration, led by Zheng He, began in 1405 and ended abruptly in 1433, but during that time, Chinese ships reached the east coast of Africa.

After 1949, connections between China and African countries often had to do with their common fight against foreign oppressors. That sense of a shared, painful historical experience has helped to shape today's relationships.

In 1414, one of the treasure ships returning from a voyage to Africa brought back a strange creature to present to the Emperor. The Chinese thought it was a *qilin*, a mythical animal believed to appear only in a well-governed country or when a wise man was born. Confucius' mother was said to have seen a *qilin* before his birth. Other such creatures followed from later voyages, and the animals were admired and pampered. But after a series of misfortunes befell the Emperor, the Chinese concluded that these were not the mythic animals. They were, in fact, giraffes.

On the east coast of Africa, the giraffes' story hasn't been forgotten. Members of the Washanga tribe still tell about two giraffes sent to China as gifts by the King of Malindi (in present day Kenya.) Five centuries after the first giraffe arrived in China, the president of Kenya visited China and presented two giraffes as his gift to the Chinese people.

Today's Sino-African relationships have nothing to do with myth and much to do with economics and international politics. The tenuousness of the early contacts has given way to the realities of shared experiences and to the search for a better life in the 21st century.

—Sylvia Krebs, reprinted from the summer 2007 USCR

# Chinese Bike Manufacturers Are on a Roll

*During the pandemic, with limited access to gyms and playgrounds, many Americans have turned to bike riding for exercise. Bike sales have soared, and supply cannot keep up with demand. This December 2020 China Daily article by Wang Ying describes how this increased demand has benefitted bicycle companies in China.*

Chinese bicycle makers are seeing rapid growth in overseas orders as the Covid-19 pandemic has transformed lifestyles for many people, and demand for social-distancing transportation and exercise rises, according to industry insiders.

"In 1994, Phoenix Bicycle reached a historic sales peak of 5.51 million units that it wouldn't achieve again for more than two decades. But this year (2020), we expect to rewrite this record," said Ji Xiaobing, vice president of Shanghai Phoenix Bicycle Company. Worldwide sales of Phoenix in the first 10 months of 2020 had already surpassed 5.51 million units.

The company's shares have been witnessing robust trading on the bourses recently. Various factors are backing the capital market to buy into the Shanghai-based bicycle brand. One is the surging demand from home and abroad for its bikes amid the backdrop of the pandemic, and the other is China's quick recovery in economic activity and its complete industrial chains.

Like Phoenix, other major bicycle manufacturers have been seeing soaring sales over the past few months.

"Since July, we have seen an average of thousands of new orders per day, with the majority placed by customers overseas," said Li Qing, president of Easy-Try Cycles (Tianjin) Company. Currently, Easy-Try clients need to wait about 100 days to receive their bicycles, and the Tianjin-based company was striving to deliver another 100,000 models by the end of 2020.

Likewise, Guangdong province-based TAILG Electric Vehicle Company is working against time to make and ship their electric bikes and scooters to domestic and foreign buyers.

"Our schedule is booked up until 2021, and the earliest delivery date for any order placed today is 120 days later," said Zhu Wenqing, general manager of

export production with TAILG.

The trend is similar for Shanghai Forever Bicycle Company, which saw an all-time high sales in the first 10 months, registering a year-on-year growth of 70 percent.

"During the period from January to October, Forever's sales of bicycles surged 70 percent and electric bikes grew 22 percent. Our profit increased more than 70 percent, and we sold out up to 200,000 units of products online during the Double 11 shopping festival," said Miao Dan, director of branding with Shanghai Forever.

"Facing the unprecedented need for bicycles, it is only possible for Chinese manufacturers to make delivery because China has brought Covid-19 under better control across the nation and has a complete production chain in place," said Qi Xiaozhai, director of the Shanghai Commercial Economic Research Center.

China's effective measures in containing the contagion enable the country to resume production, and the country became one of only a few nations reporting positive economic growth in the third quarter worldwide.

In the meantime, thanks to the nation's complete manufacturing system, Chinese bicycle makers have formed competitive capabilities in production, technology development and cost controls, said Qi. From January to September, \$5.09 billion worth of bikes, electric bicycles and components were exported from China,

a growth of 6.8 percent from the same period the previous year, said the China Bicycle Association.

Affected heavily by the Covid-19 pandemic, some overseas bicycle manufacturers suspended production. But the contagion also led more people to shift from public transportation to bicycles or electric bikes for health concerns, according to Zhu. As bike stocks were depleted, Chinese makers suddenly received an escalating amount of orders.

A bicycle often cannot be rideable with the absence of even a single component, and the manufacturing of bikes needs dozens of parts and components, and therefore a complete supply chain, Zhu said.

Chinese manufacturers had already made quick responses to the surge in demand. As many as 18,538 new bicycle manufacturing firms were registered in July, 15,540 in August, 15,730 in September and 11,024 in October, reported the *Securities Times*, citing data from business information provider Tianyancha.

"In order to meet rising demand, our employee numbers have nearly doubled in comparison with the amount before Covid-19," said Li with Easy-Try Cycles. He added that with the support of Tianjin's Jinnan district government, the company has secured a plant of about 10,000 square meters, and a new electric bike production line was projected to begin operations



People check out Phoenix bicycles at the Shanghai Exhibition Center in September 2018. (Photo by Zhou Liqin/China News Service)



## Bikes on a Roll *(continued)*

before the upcoming Chinese New Year.

Thanks to safety concerns and local government support for sustainable transportation solutions, Ji with Phoenix Bicycle believes overseas consumers' preference for bikes for daily transportation is going to continue over the long term. Phoenix Bicycle therefore plans to considerably increase its exports in the coming years.

In July, Phoenix Bicycle made a public

announcement saying that it would take full ownership of Tianjin Aisaike Bicycle Company and Tianjin Tandem Bicycle Components Company, both of which have a presence in overseas markets.

The merger and acquisition of Aisaike and Tandem will not only enhance the Shanghai-based bike brand's export capability, but also make Phoenix a world-class bike maker, Ji added.

Challenged by the contagion, Shanghai Forever Bicycle decided to carry out industrial upgrading, sharpen technology

and innovation capabilities and optimize production targeting broader and younger generations, said Miao.

Bikes are not merely a transportation modality, but also a preferred means of exercise. In the meantime, products can vary in terms of meeting different niche requirements in accordance with separate age groups or functions, Qi said.

"Answering the call to meet complicated demand contains tremendous opportunities for innovation and exploration," Qi added. 友

## Film Reviews

### My People, My Homeland

*Produced by Zhang Yimou*  
*Beijing Culture Films, 2020*

*Reviewed by George Chen*

*My People, My Homeland* (我和我的家乡) is a movie anthology that showcases many well-known directors and actors from China. The actors serve in main roles, supporting roles, and cameos. The Executive Producer is the renowned Zhang Yimou. According to IMDb database, this 2-hour-33-minute-long movie has grossed over \$422 million at the box office worldwide since it was released on October 9, 2020 during the National Day holiday. It is ranked as the 12th highest grossing non-English movie historically.

This movie follows the blockbuster *My People, My Country* (我和我的祖国) released on September 30, 2019 to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China. While that earlier movie used historical drama in seven stories, this later movie uses humor in five stories to shed light on the relationships of people to their hometowns.

Directed by Ning Hao (*Breakup Buddies* [2014], *Crazy Alien* [2019]), "The

Good People of Beijing" features Ge You and Zhang Zhanyi. It involves a man living in the big capital city in northern China—having just saved up enough money to finally achieve his life-long dream of buying a car to start a chauffeur business—who is now confronted with helping a relative suddenly seeking to reconnect with him due to a health issue. The creative solution is quite entertaining.

Directed by Xu Zheng (*Lost in Russia* [2020]), "The Final Class" features Fan Wei and Xu Zheng. It describes how an elderly professor living overseas in Switzerland begins to show symptoms of dementia so his former students feverishly and meticulously restore a tiny rural village in Zhejiang (on China's east coast below Shanghai) province to circa 1992 time-frame to help him recover during his return. The slapstick comedy is rather amusing.

Chen Sicheng's "A UFO Falls from the Sky" features Huang Bo, Wang Baoqiang, and Liu Haoran. It revolves around journalists from a TV station who arrive in Guizhou province (in the southwest) to meet a local inventor who claimed to have witnessed a UFO. Although not plausible, it does work as broad satire.

Under co-directors Peng Damo and Yan Fei (*Hello Mr. Billionaire* [2018]), "The Magic Brush" features Shen Teng and Ma Li. It shows how an art teacher goes to great lengths on social media to embellish his prestigious studies abroad so as to please his pregnant wife back home who is a wrestling trainer in northeastern China. The hijinks cleverly parody Russian culture.

Also by joint directors Deng Chao and Yu Baimei (*The Breakup Guru* [2014]), "The Road Back Home" features Deng Chao and Yan Ni. It describes people returning for a school reunion in Shaanxi (north central) province who see that the area has coped very well with inevitable sandstorms to successfully develop its economy. The outcome is unexpectedly touching.

Amidst the impeccable production values and gorgeously photographed scenery highlighting all the segments, the movie juxtaposes montages of selfies—accompanied by quotations from real people revealing their memories of growing up in their hometowns.

In the opinion of the author, this movie works best for people familiar with the *oeuvre* of the directors and actors from China. It is fun to see so many familiar faces and recognize their mannerisms.

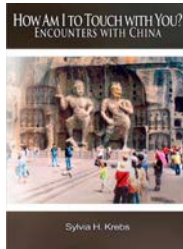
However, those in the audience relegated to reading the subtitles in English may enjoy the movie somewhat less. The viewing experience may suffer even more for those who are not familiar with the geography of China. Unlike for sinophiles in general, or nationalistic emigres scattered across the Chinese diaspora in particular, these fictional vignettes showcasing a polished perspective of contemporary Chinese culture may not "compute" for international audiences. 友

*George Chen has worked for many years in the computer hardware industry. He enjoys both domestic and foreign travel to meet people and learn about their cultures.*

## How Am I to Touch With You? Encounters with China

By Sylvia Krebs  
Lulu, 2010, 256 pages  
Paperback, \$16

Reviewed by  
William F. Rope



Sylvia Krebs, long-time USCPFA member and frequent contributor to this *Review*, was a thoughtful, perceptive, and highly accomplished individual. I was privileged to know her and greatly saddened by her unexpected death this winter.

Although I knew much about Sylvia—including that she was an outstanding athlete whose basketball exploits landed her in the Mississippi Sports Hall of Fame—her obituaries told me something I did not know. In 2010 Sylvia published a fascinating and informative memoir of her experiences of living and teaching in China over two decades, with her husband Ed. A short Google search told me the book, *How Am I To Touch With You?*, is still in print, and the title alone spurred me to order it.

What I received was an engrossing and often moving cross-cultural work spanning a remarkable time in modern China's history, as relevant today as when first published. Indeed, at a time when China is increasingly, and in my view inaccurately, portrayed as a top threat to U.S. security, it serves as an important reminder of the value and importance of engagement between the Chinese and American peoples.

Sylvia was not a China historian or student of PRC politics by training, but her memoir reflects deep understanding in both areas. Interspersed with interesting, often amusing accounts of everyday life, travels throughout China, cross-cultural encounters and life-long friendships, are informative forays into Chinese history and culture, modern events such as the Great Leap Forward and Cultural Revolution, minority issues in the forefront today, and the tragic events of June 1989.

They were pioneers of a sort, moving to Chongqing in 1984 to live and teach at the Sichuan Foreign Languages Institute.

By Sylvia's own admission, it was not a transition a "Mississippi country girl" was sure she wanted to make. Early contacts with the Institute made her and Ed wonder "What have we done?" The reforms of Deng Xiaoping had begun to take hold, but deep in the heartland conditions were rough. There was "rawness" about the place and its poverty. Yet, thinking back, Krebs was amazed at how easily she adjusted: "In a very short time, doing without a refrigerator and sometimes carrying hot water for baths up four flights... became a normal way of life;" and while "obstinate bureaucrats, threatening security people, inadequate [teaching] materials," and other inconveniences posed challenges, "the bottom line was still a plus. The people we met, especially the students, made the difference."

Indeed, as has happened throughout its history of foreign contacts, cultural and political differences notwithstanding, China has a way of drawing people in and changing their perspectives. What was striking to me—as one who first lived and worked in China as a diplomat in Mao's time, cut off from meaningful relationships with ordinary Chinese, or even with Chinese counterparts—was the degree to which Sylvia and Ed were able to form close ties with students and others whose lives they touched daily and who—taking advantage of the Krebses' open door policy (office and home)—sought them out privately as well as in academic settings. Also striking was the range of foreign literature available at least to foreign language institute students. This was often revealed by Krebs through amusing stories like that of the student who, after submitting an essay reviewing *Lady Chatterly's Lover*, had to be educated on why one didn't use "every four-letter word that D.H. Lawrence committed to paper" in an academic treatise.

From student papers alone—and the burden on foreign teachers in terms of numbers of classes and students ensured that they were numerous—Sylvia gained insights into many aspects of her charges' lives and Chinese society in general. Her accounts and commentaries about them form the backbone of the book; but there is far more. Her expositions of the intel-

lectual influences of China's past and recent present—Confucianism and the "Cultural" Revolution—are perceptive and illuminating. So, too, are chapters on Muslims in China and the Krebses' journeys to the west, including the Mogao caves of Dunhuang and ancient cities of Xinjiang. Her observations on Uighurs and Huis remain accurate today. Among other things, I learned that a Chinese hero, admiral Zheng He, whose 15th century voyages as far west as the Arabian Peninsula and East Africa are sometimes alleged to be examples of Chinese expansionist tendencies, was Muslim—a Hui.

Chongqing was only the first of seven academic adventures for Sylvia and Ed between 1984 and 1999, taking them to Xi'an ("our second home"), Chengdu, Nanjing, northern Jiangsu province, and Beijing. Sometimes they taught in the same institutions; at other times they did not, as when Sylvia taught at Nanjing Normal University while Ed headed the Duke program at Nanjing University. Throughout, the two witnessed incredible growth and changes taking place in China, and Sylvia's observations on the transformation were consistently incisive. Of particular interest were the Krebses' experiences in the spring of 1989, when for months they had ringside seats—including bicycle seats—on student demonstrations and government reactions that in Beijing led to the tragedy of Tiananmen.

All of this Sylvia presented in eminently readable prose, written by a remarkable woman who, while objective in her views of the pluses and minuses of today's China, was above all a wise and empathetic observer. *How Am I To Touch With You?* made me all the more an admirer of Sylvia and the courageous dedication she and Ed showed in advancing knowledge while furthering understanding between Chinese and American people. 友

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*Bill Rope is a retired Foreign Service Officer who served in Taiwan and Hong Kong before being posted to Beijing as a member of the first U.S. Liaison Office team in 1973. He directed the State Department's China Desk in 1981–83 and in retirement served as American Co-Director of the Hopkins-Nanjing Center in China.*

## Empress Dowager Cixi: The Concubine Who Launched Modern China

By Jung Chang  
Alfred A. Knopf, 2013  
436 pages, \$22 hardback, \$16 paper

Reviewed by George Chen

Visitors to Beijing, especially during April–May or September–November, often spend a day touring the Summer Palace in Haidian District toward the northwest.

Originally the site of a summer palace built in 1153, the bucolic area around the Summer Palace—locally referred to as Yiheyuan—was enlarged in 1749–1764 by Emperor Qianlong to serve as a summer retreat. Beautiful and serene, the Summer Palace melds classical Chinese landscaping and architecture.

The manmade Kunming Lake and Longevity Hill remind us of a turbulent period starting in 1860 when Empress Dowager Cixi (1835–1908) lived in the Summer Palace. Today, sightseers can explore pavilions, halls, courtyards, temples, waterways, a 17-arch bridge, and a 118-foot long marble boat. The book describes how a low-ranking concubine from the Manchu Yehe Nara clan gained access to Emperor Xianfeng by bearing his first surviving male heir, Zaichun. Cixi promptly revealed her conniving character by launching a coup with Empress Zhen (Ci'an) to wrest power from the eight male regents designated by the court.

Unconstrained by loyalty or morality, Cixi became a corrupt despot who maneuvered shrewdly among men of privilege and power to survive almost five decades of court intrigue. Often single-minded, she even surreptitiously siphoned off substantial revenue which the nation could not spare to restore and beautify the Summer Palace, which was a favored endeavor of hers.

Studying secondary documents from archival sources not previously used by western scholars, Jung Chang has humanized Cixi. Being literate, Cixi could read and write as befits someone from a good family. Being methodical and meticulous, she thought carefully before asking questions or providing answers. However, she did not have a Confucian education, so her diction and vocabulary were not scholarly in tone or presentation. Later in life, she worked diligently with tutors to broaden her understanding of history, literature, and philosophy.

Cixi loved opera and helped popularize Peking opera. She enjoyed pampering her pet dogs. Following the Second Opium War in 1860, when British and French troops burnt down the “old” Summer Palace, a three-pound Pekingese was given in April 1861 to Queen Victoria of the United Kingdom, who named it “Looty,” referring to spoils of war. Pekingese were later given to several Americans, including J. P. Morgan and Alice Lee Roosevelt Longworth, daughter of Theodore Roosevelt, who named hers “Manchu.” Cixi also enjoyed posing for painters and photographers. In 1904, she gave a portrait of herself to U.S. President Teddy Roosevelt.

Cixi made her own soaps and placed fresh flowers in her hair. She appreciated fruits from her orchards, as well as flowers and vegetables from her gardens. She was not afraid of cold temperatures despite the discomfort suffered by eunuchs and her lady staff who all had to stand while she sat.

Cixi rarely traveled, but enjoyed entertaining her lady friends and guests, including Americans and those of mixed Chinese and American parentage. Quite the socialite, Cixi delighted in bestowing thoughtfully selected lavish gifts on her guests. She was considerate and generous in sharing her possessions, including clothing, with friends and those in need.

Chang uses informal and anachronistic language to comment on the actions of Cixi, but ironically, this idiosyncrasy makes the reader's comprehension easier. Some characterizations of Cixi come across as unconvincing. A tendency to psychoanalyze Cixi seems unjustified. Claiming that

Cixi was an insightful judge of character is not supported by evidence. Positing that Cixi, not her advisers or confidantes, was actually the one to make policy decisions does not seem credible.

An overall thesis is that Cixi boldly led China as Empress Dowager. In particular, Cixi wielded an outsize influence upon China's entry into the modern era. However, Cixi failed to fully grasp the reality of a modernizing world dominated by powerful foreign nations: Russia, Germany, France, Great Britain, Japan, U.S.A., Italy, and Austria-Hungary. Great Britain forced addictive opium on Chinese denizens. At least five nations licensed ports. War indemnity forced China to obtain loans from the same nations tormenting her. Conservative in temperament, Cixi opposed many reforms favored by Britain, France, and Japan.

According to Chang's reappraisal, Cixi may have been victimized by misogyny, male chauvinism, racism, stereotyping, and a European view of orientals, but she was not merely a sad victim in history. Cixi was a perpetrator of thoughtlessness, ruthlessness, and cruelty, but her contributions to her people and her nation—over almost five decades—were not inconsequential. Perhaps Cixi could have accomplished more if she had collaborated productively with her many rivals. Her two biggest failures were underestimating the perfidy and bellicosity of ambitious Japanese civilian and military leaders in the first Sino-Japanese War (1894–1895) that China fought unsuccessfully over influence in Korea (Joseon dynasty 1392–1897) and supporting the jingoistic, xenophobic, anti-Christian, anti-imperialist Boxers (Yihequan) in their quixotic and violent uprising (1899–1901).

The reproduction of 48 black-and-white photographs with 13 gorgeously rendered color plates provide nice and helpful context to the brisk storytelling by Chang. The single map is also helpful. Detailed notes are appended, followed by an extensive bibliography and index. The *pinyin* system is used throughout, but Chinese characters would have been preferred by this reviewer. 友

# USCPFA Logos: 友 Through the Years

By Paul Morris

In its early years our friendship association chose the character *yǒu* 友 as our principal logo. Its basic meaning is “friendship,” and it became the symbol for other China friendship groups worldwide.

Though I know almost no Chinese, I decided to investigate the various versions of our Chinese name and compare their styles, from the point of view of someone who appreciates the beauty of calligraphy.

*Yǒu*, with just four strokes, is not over complicated, and I think its resemblance to a stick figure gives it a certain human appeal. The four strokes can be expressed in very different ways, as we’ll see.

The current simplified logo that appears in this journal was made official in 1984 after a contest. The design was credited to unnamed staff members at the national office then in Washington, D.C., but the *you* character had been used earlier.

I know of no account of the discussion or participants on the staff that led to the choice, now registered with the Patent and Trademark Office.

But before this standard, our publications tried a variety of approaches, using artwork by various now-forgotten calligraphers. This will review some of the different versions of the logo used in USCPFA publications.

First, the translations. US-China Peoples Friendship Association is:

美中人民友好协会

*Měi Zhōng rén mín yǒu hǎo xié huì.*

The *you hao* is “friendship,” used here as an adjective. On our publications we used the similar term *you yi* 友谊, which is “friendship” in a slightly different sense.

Originally in 1977 the *US-China Review* used this four-character, vertical logo. *Měi Zhōng tōng xùn* 美中通讯 means US-China Communication, or News Story. (Here, as elsewhere, I will be grateful for any corrections to my minimal Chinese.)



1977

The version at right with our current simplified *you* appeared in the May 1980 *USCR*. Credit for the cover design was given to designer Wendell Lepic of Chicago and Richard J. Lindstrom, a history professor from Louisville. The *you* and *yi* have different styles.



1980

Starting with the November 1981 *USCR* a new calligrapher contributed this fluent and graceful version:



1981

January 1982 brought a new logo to the cover of *USCR*. This one has an antique air and uses the more complicated traditional character for *yi*. Even without really knowing how to read this, you can see the differences in style.



1982

Over the years chapters have come up with their own *you* logos. This bold character was in the program for a national convention in New York:



The freely drawn character below left was used in another convention publication; the squat *you* was used by the Los Angeles chapter.



Old-timers will remember the logo below with the two countries’ outlines. The linking figures have costumes that identify them as workers, peasants, soldiers, etc. The San Francisco chapter created this version with a spidery *you* character.



A bit of logo lore: I learned from former President Barbara Harrison that knowledgeable Minnesota chapter members had a problem with the logo adopted by National. They pointed out that the last, descending stroke should flip up slightly when it terminates, as is clear from several examples here. Our symplified character points firmly down. In the past the chapter used a more correctly done *you*, but now their website uses the national version.

Who knows? Future members may decide to overthrow our logo style once again. 友

USCPFA's name from chapter newsletters by local calligraphers:



Portland, Oregon, chapter, 1970s.



Detroit chapter, 1982.

## CALL TO CONVENTION

28<sup>TH</sup> 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 plan to conduct the plenary sessions via Zoom, with as many members logged in as possible. See a tentative schedule on page 19. We plan to 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 updates on the website ([www.uscpfa.org](http://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](mailto: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 30, 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 on time.

### US-China Review Editor Position Open

The *USCR* is edited by a rotating team of editors. Two of the positions are now open and we are accepting applications.

We are looking for someone with editing and writing experience, the ability to plan and write for a 32-page journal and meet deadlines. The editor must have a willingness to find source material for the journal, which does not pay authors. China knowledge and

familiarity with USCPFA are desirable.

At this time the spring 2022 issue is the first one for the new editor. Work would start by December. The editor's fee is \$1,250 per issue.

Send inquiries, writing samples and resumes to Paul Morris, Production Coordinator, 2234 NE 25th Ave., Portland OR 97212, email: [pemorris07@gmail.com](mailto:pemorris07@gmail.com).

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## Hawaii Subregion Donates to Palolo Chinese Home

By Randall Chang and Brenda Young Matsui

The Palolo Chinese Home (PCH) was first founded 125 years ago to provide a home for several hundred Chinese immigrants who were too old to continue working on the agricultural plantations in the islands. As time passed, PCH evolved to meet the needs of the state's expanding elderly population of all ethnicities, in many areas of senior care.

Today, our local Chinese community is proud of this accomplishment. At the same time, we are reminded of the Chinese proverb, "When drinking water, think of the source (Yin shui, si yuan)." While we are proud that PCH today serves the diverse ethnicity of Hawaii's citizens, we are also proud that the origin and source of this began over 100 years ago with the Chinese immigrants to our islands.

This historic reputation and continuing legacy of PCH is recognized even among friendship organizations in China. When visited by our counterpart organizations from China, it is not unusual for their leaders to inquire about PCH and even make visits to its modern senior care home facilities, which serve several hundreds of residents as well as providing care to senior non-residents. Leaders from China are interested to see for themselves how America approaches its management of senior care. In this way, PCH is a symbolic bridge between China and Hawaii.

It is in recognition of this that the Hawaii Subregion on April 6, 2021 made a donation of \$3,000 to Palolo Chinese Home for the direct benefit of its senior residents. President Randall Chang and Board Secretary Brenda Young Matsui attended the Zoom presentation to make the announcement to PCH executives Chairman Doug Smith, CEO Darlene Nakayama, and Funds Development Officer Eric Batalon.



Screen shots from the online presentation of the donation to the Palolo Chinese Home.

## Atlanta Chapter News

The Atlanta chapter has taken a further step in its rural China education project by adding a supplement to the original Library Corner we established in a village near the Henan province border with Hubei. This adds new books to the original set-up, making more resources for the young students. Better facilities for such schools allows young students in the lower grades to be better served near their homes and enables them to be prepared to go to school at the next level, where they will live in school housing in a school in a larger town. Thus this project helps local families to stay together until children are better able to adapt to a new environment. This also has been a project that could be carried out during the limiting conditions of this past year.

As was reported when the project was launched in 2017, this was carried out through The Library Project, the program described in the article by Tom Stader also in this issue of the *Review*. The staff of The Library Project have been easy to work with, and welcoming of a relatively

modest financial contribution from a local chapter. The result is assistance in a local situation in China where the need is great.

Other recent activities include chapter members' participation in webinars that provide new information on China, often on topics a bit out of the ordinary. We assume other USCPFA chapters and individual members are also taking advantage of these opportunities.

We report with sadness that long-time member Dr. Charls Pearson died in May. Dr. Pearson specialized in the study of philosopher Charles Pierce (pronounced "purse," as Charls insisted). Late in his career Charls enjoyed working in the program that sends cultural ambassadors to connect with people in China. Dr. Pearson was enthusiastic and successful in his efforts to introduce Pierce to many eager students and faculty in Chinese universities. He had been declining for many months and, while still enthusiastic in telephone visits, he succumbed to a series of setbacks. We will miss him!

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We rely on local members to inform us about the latest activities. Send articles, photos, and links to the editor of the next issue:

Fall issue pub. October—Materials due July 15 to Mike Revzin (mike.revzin@gmail.com)

Winter issue pub. January—Materials due Oct. 15 to Mike Revzin (mike.revzin@gmail.com)

Spring issue pub. April—Materials due Jan. 15.



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The US-China Peoples Friendship Association is a nonprofit educational organization. Our goal is to build active and lasting friendship based on mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of China. **We recognize** that friendship between our two peoples must be based on the knowledge of and respect for the sovereignty of each country; therefore, we respect the declaration of the United States of America and the People's Republic of China that the resolution of the status of Taiwan is the internal affair of the Chinese on both sides of the Taiwan Straits. **We also recognize** that friendship between our two peoples and good relations between our two governments plays a critical role in maintaining peace in the Pacific Basin and in the world. **As an educational organization**, our activities include sponsoring speakers and programs which inform the American people about China, organizing tours and special study groups to China, publishing newsletters and other literature, promoting friendship with Chinese students and scholars while in the United States, and promoting cultural, commercial, technical, and educational exchanges. **Everyone is invited** to participate in our activities, and anyone who agrees with this Statement of Principles is welcome to join. Subscription to *US-China Review* is included in membership.

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