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1964: My Life in the Four Cleanups Campaign
Covid-19 Kept CDC Busy in China
Prosperity and Waistlines Expand in China
Singapore's Success Influenced Deng's Reforms

Letter from the President



US-China Peoples Friendship Association

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Washington Seminar to Focus on Challenges and Opportunities

Dear friends of the Chinese people,

We are looking forward to another virtual meeting, the Washington Seminar on US-China Relations, to be held on October 13 and 14, from 6 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. EDT.

The theme will be “Challenges and Opportunities,” and we will focus on how to find ways that the peoples of our two countries can better understand one another. We will share ideas for constructive dialogue and other cooperative measures.

Please work diligently on getting membership renewals completed during the next few months. Some chapters are still meeting by Zoom and others are looking for exciting ways to meet in person.

Here are some of the topics covered in this edition of the *US-China Review*:

- For more than three decades, the U.S. CDC has had close cooperation with its Chinese counterpart. Find out how that relationship helped the fight against Covid-19.
- When you were a kid, did your parents tell you to “clean your plate” because the children in China were starving? Today China is telling its people to clean their plates. Find out why.
- Why does China matter to the U.S. heartland? Read a state-by-state summary of China’s economic and cultural ties.
- Speaking of the American heartland, the Chinese Ambassador to the U.S. Qin Gang has published an op-ed titled “A Journey to the Heartland and to My Heart.”

Enjoy reading the articles that editor Mike Revzin has included in this issue and let us know what your chapter has been doing to keep up member interest.

In friendship,

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

Diana C. Greer
President of USCPFA



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

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Urban students working in Sichuan during the Four Cleanups Movement. See article on page 4.

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My Life in the Countryside in 1964 During the Four Cleanups Movement

By Li-chun Wu

I was among five million intellectuals who were sent for re-education during the Four Cleanups Movement of 1963-1966. Most of us went to poverty-stricken rural areas during this campaign, which is not as well known outside of China as the Cultural Revolution.

Chinese researchers estimate that 77,000 people died, according to articles cited by Wikipedia. I don't know if that figure is accurate, but I think the victims were mostly people who were falsely accused of corruption or other misdeeds. Many were beaten to death by mobs or committed suicide.

We now know that the campaign, also called the Socialist Education Movement, was part of a power struggle between Mao Zedong and President Liu Shaoqi, and that we were puppets.

The campaign was designed to strengthen the central government's control over the countryside by cleaning up politics, the economy, the party organization and ideology. It was followed by the Cultural Revolution of 1966-76, which had a much greater death toll, caused even more widespread suffering and disrupted the country for 10 years.

The Chinese Communist Party felt that Chinese intellectuals were tainted by bourgeois ideology and needed to be re-educated. The Four Cleanups Movement was one of many political campaigns designed to do that.

It was launched by Mao in 1963. All intellectuals, including government workers, cadres and researchers, had to "volunteer" to participate, regardless of any family cir-



Wang Guangmei, Liu Xiaoqi and two of their children.



Beijing University political science and law students work in the Sichuan countryside.

cumstances or whether they were already doing essential work.

Liu's Wife's Secret Mission

Liu was in charge of the Four Cleanups. At the start of the campaign, his wife, Wang Guangmei, was sent to investigate the situation in Hubei province for five months under an assumed name and to write a report about her experience. Chinese citizens later attended meetings in which her findings were discussed. She reported there were great problems in the countryside, and more must be done to clean up the rural leadership.

In 1964, I was among the second group from the Chinese Academy of Sciences in Beijing to be sent to the Anhui province countryside to be re-educated by peasants. One of my colleagues was pregnant, and I suggested that she be excused, but I was admonished by the party leader for not upholding socialist standards.

At the time, my second child was less than four years old. But I did not dare mention any personal hardship for fear of being branded a counter-revolutionary,

especially since I had returned from being educated in the U.S.

More than 1,000 of us from the academy boarded a train that was designated solely for our group. It took more than three days and two nights to travel from Beijing to Hefei, the capital of Anhui province. Today, it takes less than four hours on a high-speed train.

There was only one sleeper carriage, with a capacity of less than 100. Team members would take turns sleeping for an hour or two. The rest of the time, we just adapted to the situation, sleeping underneath the seats, on the seats, or even on the overhead luggage racks.

Upon arrival, we spent two days in study sessions. We then boarded buses, with our luggage stored in nets on top, and went to the communes in Lu'an, a prefecture-level but poor city in the northwestern part of Anhui in the foothills of the Dabie Mountains.

Although the mountain peaks are no higher than 1,300 feet, the area is hilly with few flat plots for agriculture. In the lowlands, only one season of rice was

planted, and tea plants were cultivated on the hilly slopes. The area had been well known as one of the Red Army bases before the establishment of the People's Republic of China.

In Wake of the Great Leap

The Four Cleanups occurred after the Great Leap Forward, which was supposed to spur economic reconstruction. But the Great Leap's disastrous economic policies, with an over-reliance on political ideology rather than sound scientific judgement, and its encouragement of outlandish inflation of fake crop yields, led to mass starvation.

During the Great Leap, traditional villages were abandoned, and peoples communes were formed, disregarding time-tested farming practices. On top of this, three years of natural disasters caused drastic reductions in the output of crops. The central government's agrarian tax and grain procurement rates were based on false reports that greatly inflated the true crop yields. Thus, the peasants had little left to feed themselves, and a massive famine ensued.

The Great Leap had gravely damaged the party's reputation and prestige among the peasants. Many grassroots cadres were also disillusioned. Mao's standing had also been diminished. In order to restore his power and purge Liu, Mao initiated the Four Cleanups. Mao saw the need to revitalize the party through class struggle. In many villages, cadres were wrongly persecuted and attacked. Liu advocated reforms that made use of technocrats and experts. We were not aware at the time of these major disagreements over the goals and execution of the campaign.

In 1965, an official document emphasized that the nature of this movement was to resolve the "struggle between socialism



Peasants denounce a cadre accused of corruption.

and capitalism," and that the focus of this movement was to root out "those with power in the party who took the capitalist road." By December 1965, about one-third of counties and districts in the country had carried out the campaign, which continued until the beginning of the Cultural Revolution in the summer of 1966.

Intellectuals, including party cadres, students, writers, and artists, were sent down to the countryside to be re-educated by poor and lower-middle peasants, and to assist in cleaning up the rural areas politically. We were to share food, lodging and work with the peasants. This was aimed at creating a new type of intellectual by removing the difference between mental and physical labor.

In the eyes of the party, it was of particular interest to bring intellectuals close to the working people because the intellectuals were below the status of workers, peasants and soldiers. Requiring intellectuals to do physical labor would also demonstrate that the party was not a distant leader, and that it cared for the welfare of the masses.

Liu's push for economic reforms was designed to help the nation recover from the Great Leap and the natural disasters of 1959–61. Estimates of the death toll range from 15 million to 55 million.

My group was sent to the most hard-hit province, Anhui, which had lost an estimated 18 percent of its population during the famine—the highest per capita in the nation. Elsewhere, Chongqing had lost

15 percent, Sichuan province 13 percent, Guizhou province 11 percent and Hunan province 8 percent of their people.

Destitute Peasants

We went to an area where the peasants' annual income was less than the lowest monthly pay of our laboratory workers. Living among the destitute peasants shook us up. We witnessed the hardship of peasant life, and recognized the vast disparity between the nation's urban and rural areas. Our life in the countryside made us realize that we had to do more to build a better future for everyone.

The Socialist Education Movement aimed to reinvigorate the revolutionary spirit among the peasants and the local cadres to continue the move toward collectivization in the countryside. Poor and lower-middle peasants were urged to take the initiative to control local cadres and to oppose any anti-socialist activities.

Our propaganda work group of 10 people, including two cadres from nearby Shouxian County, joined a group from the Institute of Zoology. We were spread out, living in households in the hilly area where there were no large villages. Although we were supposed to live with the poor and lower-middle peasants, they really did not have any spare room.

Lived in Storage Room

I and the principal of Shouxian Elementary School lived in a former storage room, which the work team had rented from

Continued on next page



Map of China showing Anhui province.

Four Cleanups *(continued)*

a homeowner. It was connected to the family's kitchen, from which the smoke wafted through, as there was no chimney. All their small animals, including roosters, hens and geese, were kept in the kitchen overnight. We would be awakened by the roosters crowing early in the morning.

Our beds were split bamboo strips, with bales of straw as mattresses. They were infested with fleas, and mosquitoes were flying everywhere. We had to spray DDT every night before going to bed as there were no mosquito nets. There was a small opening that served as a window in a dry mud wall, and the room had a straw thatched roof. Opening the door was the only light source, and we used a kerosene oil lamp at night.

The houses were usually small, with the front door opening to their center room, where the family ate. A bedroom contained a bed where the whole family slept together with no blanket or quilt. They only used straw and loose cotton blocks and human body heat to keep warm in the winter. There would always be an empty pot in the room to collect night urine, which they would use to fertilize their private plot of vegetables.

We were assigned to eat with a rotation of peasant families every day. We paid them 35 cents and gave them food coupons for 600 grams of food per day. The families welcomed us because the cash and extra coupons were precious to them.

They were told that they should not treat us special, and just share with us whatever they ate. In summer, the leftover rice soaked in warm water turned sour from sitting on the stove top from breakfast to dinner. Firewood was scarce, and the family could only afford to cook once a day.

Sometimes the family felt they should treat us better and might get the young boys in the family to catch small shrimp in the rice field, but we were required to decline anything other than their homemade fermented vegetables with red pepper. The incidence of gastric cancer was high in that area due to their diet.

Excused from Farm Work

The work in the fields was quite technical, and the peasants could not afford to risk having those of us from the city, with

no farming experience, ruin their crops. So we were spared from doing physical labor. Peasants would get work points. At the end of the year, after paying the agricultural tax, they would divide the rice crop according to their work points. But a whole year of labor only earned them less than a hundred yuan.

Our job was to visit all the households to collect information, and write reports about their living and working conditions. The first person we visited was an old lady who was the work team's welfare recipient, called a "five guarantee person"—guaranteed food, clothing, medical care, living and funeral expenses by the work team. She had lost more than a dozen family members of three generations during the famine.

Another person was an orphan, who also lost his family members during the famine. His education was paid for by the work team, and he was one of the few to

A whole year of labor only earned them less than a hundred yuan.

become literate. He was assigned to work as a bookkeeper to record the work points. Almost every family in this work team had lost family members due to starvation.

We observed the peasants planting rice, harvesting and threshing. We watched women working in the hilly tea plantation, collecting tender leaves early in the morning while there was dew on them, and then processing and drying the tea in the evening.

The women's leader of the village had



Senior leaders and scientists of the Chinese Academy of Sciences in the Shanxi countryside during the Four Cleanups movement.

three children and was my age, 28, but looked much older from working in the fields all her life. During the tea harvest season, the girls and women used their arms to stir the fresh tea leaves in a pan, then brought the processed tea to the collection station. That was the work team's only cash crop.

In addition to rising at dawn to pick tea leaves, the women did other chores during the day. By the time they began processing tea leaves in the evening, they were exhausted. In order not to fall asleep, they would sing folk songs while they gently turned the tea leaves.

No Grievances Against Leader

In the evening, after they had washed up and changed into clean clothing, we would have meetings. We encouraged the poor and lower-middle peasants to vent their grievances against the work team leader, who was a middle peasant. He was an experienced farmhand, and would get up early to visit the fields before assigning work.

When there was a lull in agricultural activities, he would lead young and able-bodied peasants on a 20-mile walk to the mountain to cut pine tree branches. They would then walk another eight miles to a nearby town to sell them. He was usually the one who brought food and fuel to the five-guarantee old woman, who

lived alone with no neighbors around her. The locals trusted him and had nothing to say against him during those meetings.

In the winter, when there was not much farm work, men and women would be assigned by the commune to work on irrigation and hydrological projects in a nearby town. The first such dam was built entirely by manual labor, as there was no machinery.

Hospitalized for Month

When sweet potatoes were harvested, everyone would save their rice and only eat sweet potatoes, because they cannot be preserved for long. I got severe abdominal pain from eating that diet. Peasants, using a bamboo bed as a stretcher, carried me on the narrow path between the rice fields, and took me to the side of the road where the ambulance from Lu'an Hospital picked me up. I was hospitalized for a month, and returned to Beijing just as the next group arrived to take our place.

I was a city girl, and had never been to a village, especially a poverty-stricken area. I learned that the peasants toiled without complaint and got very little in return for a whole year of back-breaking work.

By living among peasants for nearly eight months, we learned that we should respect them. It also taught us to appreciate the poem by a Tang dynasty poet:

*Hoing the grass under the noonday sun,
His sweat drips on the ground beneath.
Who knows that on the dining plate,
Every single grain means hardship.*

Overall, this Socialist Education Movement mobilized millions of intellectuals and cadres in a large-scale military-style campaign. The Chinese Academy of Sciences suspended all research projects and sent more than 10,000 researchers to the campaign. Most went to the countryside but some, including new college graduates, went to factories without ever getting to do a single day of research work. This disrupted the nation's research and interrupted the introduction of new personnel to the academy.

On the surface, the Four Cleanups was meant to strengthen the control of the central government over rural areas, and stamp down peasant unrest over the failure of the Great Leap. But, in reality, it was a prelude to the Cultural Revolution,

which exposed further discord within the Chinese Communist Party.

Liu and Wife Imprisoned

During the Cultural Revolution, Liu was purged, beaten and imprisoned. His wife, Wang, was publicly humiliated for her "bourgeois crimes." She was forced to stand in front of a crowd of 500,000, wearing a tight-fitting *qipao* and a necklace of ping-pong balls to mock the dress and pearls she had worn on a state visit with her husband to Indonesia. She was imprisoned, and her four children also were sent to the countryside.

Liu died during confinement in 1969, but Wang was not told of his death until later. In 1980, after Deng Xiaoping came to power, Liu was posthumously rehabilitated. Wang was rehabilitated after the Cultural Revolution. She died in 2006 at the age of 85. 友

Li-chun Wu and her husband, the late Robert Wu, moved to the U.S. in 1979



Shanxi residents hang a peasants association plaque next to a sign reminding them not to forget class struggle.

and became citizens in 1984 and 1985, respectively. Li-chun Wu worked at the Life Science Division of the NASA Ames Research Center in California. After retirement, she assisted her husband in founding the Nanyang Model High School Alumni Group in Northern California, founded the Berkeley Chinese Alumni International Association and the non-profit U.S. China Green Energy Council. She and her husband were also directors of the 1990 Institute.

Sister Cities, CPAFFC Discuss Resilient Partnerships

By Barbara Cobb

The first-ever virtual USA-China Dialogue, sponsored by Sister Cities International (SCI) and the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (CPAFFC), was held in April. Opening remarks were made by CPAFFC President Lin Songtien, SCI President and CEO Leroy Allala, Chinese Ambassador to the U.S. Qin Gang and others.

Under the theme of Building Resilient Partnerships, officials from several state-province, county and city partnerships described their activities. Topics included sports diplomacy, climate change and the digital economy. Speakers emphasized common interests with

their partners, like the wine-producing regions of Sonoma, California, and the Penglai District of Yantai City in Shandong province.

The moderator for the meeting was Director General Shen Xin of CPAFFC's Department of American and Oceanian Affairs. He is known to USCPFA for his service at the Chinese Embassy in Washington and with CPAFFC in Beijing.

With a mutual interest in China, USCPFA chapters and members often collaborate with local Sister City groups to develop and strengthen partnerships with Chinese cities and provinces. 友

Barbara Cobb is a USCPFA National Board member and lives in Nashville.

First Months of Covid-19 Kept CDC Busy in China

A First-Hand Report by Dr. RJ Simonds

For more than three decades, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has had close cooperation with the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention (China CDC), working together on public health issues and collaborating in the fight against outbreaks of diseases in China, the U.S. and other countries.

The training that many experts from the China CDC received in the United States over the years helped them fight Covid-19 when it first appeared in China in 2019. But, in a break from past cooperation practices, China did not accept an offer from the CDC to assist with the outbreak in China. Despite this, the CDC kept busy in China during the outbreak.

My connection with China began in 1970, when I began studying the Chinese language in Mount Lebanon High School in Pennsylvania which, with amazing historical foresight, had begun offering Chinese in 1967.

Although I continued studying Chinese off and on, including a couple of stays in Taiwan, I eventually ended up becoming a physician and pursuing a career in public health as a medical epidemiologist, starting at the CDC in 1990.



Dr. RJ Simonds

Most of my career was spent addressing global health issues.

As I was nearing my retirement from CDC, I had the opportunity to serve my final assignment as director of CDC's China office. CDC has offices in more than 50 countries, working with Ministries of Health to jointly address public health problems and build public health capacity around the world. In 2003, I had helped start CDC's office in China, and in 2018 I had the opportunity to lead it.

The first year and a half of my China assignment was spent running an office that focused on working with China CDC to strengthen field epidemiology training

and collaborate on influenza, tuberculosis and other public health issues of importance to both countries.

We also maintained close working relationships with other organizations working on health in China, such as the World Health Organization and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. As is

the case in most other countries, CDC's office is housed in the U.S. Embassy, where CDC works alongside other U.S. government agencies in China under the authority and coordination of the U.S. ambassador.

Covid-19 Outbreak

On December 31, 2019, while my wife, Rumiko, and I were in the U.S. visiting our children and grandchildren, I began receiving calls and emails from our China office, as well as from CDC headquarters, about an announcement of an outbreak of unexplained pneumonia in Wuhan, which of course turned out to be Covid-19. I returned to Beijing several days later. My job was never to be the same.

Within the first few days, the CDC director offered to the China CDC director CDC's assistance in addressing the outbreak—but this offer was never accepted. Although it was disappointing to be unable to work closely with our China CDC colleagues on the Covid-19 response as we had in prior outbreaks of avian influenza, the CDC office in China nonetheless became busy on other fronts.

Embassy Marshals Resources

U.S. Ambassador to China Terry Branstad quickly declared the outbreak to be the top priority of the embassy, as it became clear that trade and all other former priorities would be overshadowed



The usually busy Liangmaqiao Road, February 8, 2020. Photos by RJ Simonds.

by the emerging pandemic affecting both countries. Anyone not directly involved with this priority was asked to depart the post, reducing the size of the American Embassy community to less than 25 percent of normal.

The CDC office, which at that time consisted of three American and 11 Chinese staff members, remained open. But in the early weeks of the outbreak, the Chinese staff remained out of the office for the Lunar New Year holiday, which was extended by several weeks by the Chinese government to keep people from crowding and close contact. (Typically, 3 billion trips are taken throughout China over the two-week holiday period.) CDC's routine work in China ended as both we and our partners became all-consumed by the outbreak.



A public health poster in Beijing in February 2020: Early detection, early reporting, early isolation, early treatment.

A key early activity was to keep CDC and the embassy updated on developments in the outbreak. Although it was difficult to access information about the outbreak outside of official documents, CDC's Chinese technical staff members were able to identify and translate for CDC headquarters reports on the status of the outbreak as well as policies instituted by the Chinese government such as transportation restrictions, quarantines, contact tracing and mass testing. They also tracked and summarized in English for the CDC and the embassy community late-breaking Chinese language scientific reports on Covid-19, including progress on China's Covid-19 vaccine development.

Within the embassy, the CDC worked closely with the health unit and other embassy offices to help formulate and evolve strategies, based on constantly emerging data and guidelines, to keep the embassy community safe. We spoke in embassy town hall meetings to inform staff and families about the outbreak and ways to prevent infection. We also worked closely with the health unit to guide practices and policies, such as how to manage symptomatic staff or family members, and provided public health support for the departure from and return to China of American staff and families. We helped evaluate community health care facilities to understand what protocols to expect should someone in the embassy community get sick with, or test positive for, Covid-19.

Located Supplies

As Covid-19 began hitting the U.S., it became clear that the supplies of safe and effective medical devices in the U.S. were inadequate to support the prevention, treatment, and diagnosis of Covid-19. The ambassador therefore launched the Mission China PPE (personal protective equipment) and Medical Supplies for America Task Force in March 2020 to identify new sources of medical supplies in China, where most of these products were sourced. Through this task force, the CDC worked with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and other sections of the embassy to help assure the quality, safety and effectiveness of the PPE (such as masks, gowns, gloves and thermometers) identified in China for procurement and transport to the U.S.



RJ Simonds' living compound, closed to visitors, April 2020.

My wife had stayed in the U.S. and ended up not being able to return to China until late 2020. So, my personal experience included living alone and working long days with the small group of hard-working CDC and embassy staff who remained. As a result of the extended Lunar Holiday period, Beijing was weirdly quiet during the early weeks of the outbreak. I enjoy walking and would take long walks every weekend, giving me the opportunity to see and experience the response to the outbreak firsthand. At the peak, usually busy streets were deserted, shops were closed, and subways were empty as nearly everyone stayed out of town.

For those remaining, government and community control measures popped up everywhere—temperature screening before going into many stores, the subway, even into our own housing complex. On some days, I had to search hard to find a place open for lunch or dinner. Public messaging around Covid-19 was prominent, often in the form of large character posters.

Decades of Collaboration

I retired from the CDC and left China in August 2021. As I look back on this final assignment, I am struck by a few impressions.

For the past 30 years, the CDC and China have collaborated on public health, focusing on building China's capacity to detect, respond, and prevent emerging infectious diseases. We did so by such activities as training hundreds of disease detectives to respond to outbreaks, helping improve China's surveillance systems for

severe respiratory infections and hosting hundreds of exchange visits of experts to the U.S. to learn public health preparedness.

We also jointly responded with China to outbreaks of H1N1 (swine flu) in 2009 and H7N9 (bird flu) in 2013 in China, built capacity in hospital infection control practices, and supported training in crisis and emergency risk communication. I feel proud that these decades of strong and collaborative technical support helped China's public health response to the Covid-19 pandemic when it emerged in China.

During the Covid-19 outbreak, the CDC China office was helpful in protecting Americans in China and providing information to help the CDC's efforts to stem the spread of the outbreak in the U.S. and globally. The ability of our office to be immediately helpful when the outbreak began can be attributed to the CDC's longstanding positive reputation, the investment over the years in developing trusting relationships, our familiarity with the Chinese language and context, and close communication with the Atlanta headquarters, despite 13 time zones of separation.

Personally, this experience represented an unanticipated and extraordinary final chapter of my career at the CDC. I couldn't be more grateful to have been able to apply the language skills first learned in high school to contribute to this unprecedented pandemic 50 years later. Far from the low-key glidepath to retirement I had anticipated, this exhausting, adrenaline-filled, fascinating, and challenging ride made for far more memories to look back on and tell stories about! 友

Dr. RJ Simonds is a medical epidemiologist who recently retired from the CDC after a career in epidemiologic and implementation research, HIV program implementation, governmental and nongovernmental leadership and management, and international health diplomacy with a focus on China/Asia. Most recently, Dr. Simonds served as CDC's China Office Director in Beijing from 2018 to August 2021, where he led CDC's team of U.S. and Chinese public health professionals, including during the first 20 months of the Covid-19 pandemic. Prior to this, Dr. Simonds served in multiple positions at the CDC and the Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation.

Deng Xiaoping saw Singapore as a model for some of China's economic reforms. Here are two articles on how that tiny city-state influenced some of China's decisions.

Singapore's Success Influenced Deng Xiaoping's Reforms

By Frank Yung

There are many books and articles about Deng Xiaoping, and how his reforms resulted in decades of phenomenal economic growth in China. But one detail that doesn't always get attention is how his study of Singapore's success may have influenced his policies.

Let me start with a brief account of Singapore's economic development. In 1960, Singapore's per capita GDP was about U.S. \$500; today it is U.S. \$61,000. By the 1970s—together with South Korea, Taiwan and Hong Kong—Singapore was recognized as one of the four “Asian Tigers” for achieving rapid economic growth and industrialization. Furthermore, its culture of honest leadership and pragmatic policies resulted in sound nation-building and social development.

In 1978, after Deng became China's pre-eminent leader, he made a trip to Southeast Asia, including Singapore. He wanted to know what Singapore was doing right as a developing nation.

By then, Singapore had attracted a fair amount of foreign investment toward its goal of being an exporter to world markets and had an impressive program of public housing. Today, around 85 percent of Singaporeans own their own homes. Approximately 80 percent of the homes are government-built apartments, located near schools and clinics, amid greenery.

What must have added to Deng's interest in Singapore's success was that the population is 75 percent ethnic Chinese. Last, but not least, perhaps in his eyes Singapore appeared to have a one-party system.

Deng spent three days in Singapore. In big picture terms, I will illustrate the long-term value of the visit. Singapore Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew, who served from 1959 to 1990, later referred to Deng as the most impressive leader he had ever met. I'd also like to refer to something Charlie Munger, an American billionaire investor with Berkshire Hathaway, once said. Munger stated that Deng's reforms and swing toward a market strategy were

due to one man, a Chinese in Singapore, Lee Kuan Yew.

Chinese Study Singapore Model

In the 1980s, in the years following Deng's visit, China sent 50,000 cadres and senior civil servants to study Singapore's public housing plans, economic development and investment strategies and probably also Singapore's successful one-party rule. I met and had meaningful conversations with a small number of these cadres. Eventually, these visits ceased after China became more developed and overtook Singapore in trained manpower and talent.

But let me add one more detail about Deng's visit. The minister assigned to shepherd Deng around was Dr. Goh Keng Swee, who served as Minister for Finance and in other high posts, and is credited with laying the economic foundations of modern Singapore.

At the time of Deng's visit, I happened to be a regular Saturday golfing partner of Dr. Goh's. Picture this scene: in the morning he sees Deng off at Singapore's Changi Airport, no doubt relieved after three days of official duties, then arrives at the golf course to relax. As a rule, I would never ask Dr. Goh any politically sensitive questions. However, on this occasion I could not resist, and gingerly asked him what Deng's impression of Singapore had been.

Dr. Goh chuckled and said, “He was flabbergasted.” I sought elaboration and he mentioned Deng's questions such as, “Without natural resources, how was a small nation able to achieve progress and success within a short number of years?”

Deng was well aware that we were a nation with an ethnic Chinese majority. But, in Deng's mind, we were the de-

scendants of southern Chinese peasants and laborers—not the type of people one would expect to create an economic miracle. Therefore, he was amazed at the island's performance.

For the sake of readers who are not familiar with politics in Singapore, I should add that when I referred to “one-party rule,” I am referring to the People's Action Party (PAP). It is true the PAP has been in power ever since our independence 57 years ago. But I should add that, under the Westminster parliamentary system used here, we have elections every five years, and there are two other parties. So it is possible that one day the PAP will not be returned to power. In other words, we do not live under a dictatorship. 友

In the fall issue of 2021 US-China Review, Frank Yung wrote about his grandfather, Yung Wing, who was the first Chinese to graduate from an American university. Frank Yung spent World War II in Shanghai, then went to Hong Kong for boarding school. He studied to be a chartered accountant in Scotland, worked in London, then moved to Singapore in 1960, where he lives today. Yung, 88, has retired from a career that included being a CEO of two listed companies. He served as chairman of Singapore Telecommunications for 12 years. For the last 27 years he has served as a non-executive director of seven listed companies, including Singapore's largest bank.



On a 2014 visit to Singapore, Xi Jinping, who was then vice president of China, and Lee Kuan Yew unveil a sculpture honoring the late Deng Xiaoping. (Xinhua photo)

Similarities, Differences Affect China Using Singapore as Role Model

By Mike Revzin

In a 2019 article, Mark R. Thompson summarized comments that several observers have written about Singapore's role in China's economic reforms. The article appeared on newmandala.org, hosted by the Australian National University's Coral Bell School of Asia Pacific Affairs. Here are some excerpts.

The article said it is instructive to recall the role Singapore played in Deng Xiaoping's reform and opening process. "Unlike other Chinese party leaders and academics who... were looking at a variety of potential models such as Sweden... Deng was single-mindedly focused on Singapore," the article stated.

"Crucially, Deng and Lee Kuan Yew developed a special relationship during Deng's short visit. Both were anti-colonial leaders at the forefront of their countries' revolutionary movements and committed to political order over chaos."

Ezra Vogel, in his 2011 biography of Deng, commented that, "Deng admired what Lee had accomplished in Singapore, and Lee admired how Deng was dealing with problems in China. Before Deng's visit to Singapore, the Chinese press had referred to Singaporeans as the "running dogs of American imperialism." A few weeks after Deng visited Singapore, however, this description of Singapore disappeared from the Chinese press. Instead, Singapore was described as a place worth studying.... Deng found orderly Singapore an appealing model for reform, and he was ready to send people there to learn about city planning, public management, and controlling corruption."

China's observers tend to see Singapore as "Chinese" and Confucian-influenced (ignoring its distinctive national identity and multi-ethnic character), making it seem more culturally appropriate for emulation.

By viewing determined leadership as the main lesson from Singapore, while at the same time rejecting an effective and independent legal system which was key to the city-state's success in combating

corruption, the Chinese leadership has picked "lessons" that confirm their own policy style while ignoring others that could potentially raise critical questions about it.

In many important ways, from country size to political "DNA" (i.e. the legacies of totalitarianism in post-Mao China compared to Westminster-style parliamentary institutions in Singapore), the two nations are simply too different to allow for any meaningful policy transfer. (Singapore, only about 3.5 times the size of Washing-

Before Deng's visit, the Chinese press had referred to Singaporeans as the "running dogs of American imperialism."

ton, D.C., has a population of 5.5 million. China, about the same size as the U.S., has a population of 1.4 billion).

Singapore shows what China can become: a highly modern but still one-party state undertaking carefully calibrated reforms. Thus, small though it is, Singapore has played an outsized role in reinforcing the CCP's leadership's belief that it can avoid the "modernization trap" and remain resiliently authoritarian during modernization and even after it successfully modernizes.

Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong recently described the island state as little more than a "bonsai tree model of what China is" that might be "intriguing to scrutinize" but from which it is hard for a gigantic country like China to draw lessons. Seemingly consigned to a his-



Deng Xiaoping and Lee Kuan Yew during Deng's 1978 visit to Singapore. (IC photo)

torical period of conservative reformism in China, the "Singapore model" now appears to represent a path not taken by the mainland's hard-line leadership.

To read the entire article, go to newmandala.org and search for "How Deng and his heirs misunderstood Singapore." 友



Deng Xiaoping and his wife Zhuo Lin view the port at Singapore.

Chinese Ambassador: A Journey to the Heartland and to My Heart

The Des Moines Register published a guest column by Chinese Ambassador to the U.S. Qin Gang on April 29, 2022. It was titled "A Journey to the Heartland and to My Heart." Here is the full text.

As I conclude my first ever visit to Illinois, Iowa and Minnesota and return to Washington, my heart remains in the vast American Heartland. I came with friendship and cooperation in my heart, and I take back even more of it, plus many days of fond memories.

I have been touched by the stories of win-win cooperation. Agriculture took a major part of my visit. At the Kimberley farm, I promoted American beef and bacon on live-stream and tried my hand at driving a John Deere crawler tractor. At the Syngenta parent seed lab, my team and I joined the workers in selecting seeds and learned about their market in China. At the Zoetis plant in Charles City, we were informed that most of the plant's animal vaccine products are exported to the Chinese market.

During the lunch we had with workers at the Smithfield processing plant in Denison, we were delighted to know that the world's largest pork producer has created thousands more American jobs since its acquisition by a Chinese company. We were also at Marquis Energy to discuss how to restore the company's export of ethanol fuel and DDG [distillers dried grains] to China.

The journey to the Heartland has afforded the entire Chinese delegation a panoramic understanding of the whole industrial chain of America's agriculture, from which we see that American farmers and agricultural companies need China, benefit from China, and look forward to further cooperation with China.

China and the United States are natural partners for agricultural trade. With the Chinese market wide open, the two sides have broad space for further agricultural cooperation, and this is a call to action to create conditions for two-way, normal agricultural trade and lift the additional tariffs and other obstacles. On top of that, our cooperation should not just be about "buy and sell"; it can go deep into agricultural technology, climate action and sustainable development. Economic and

trade ties, especially those in agriculture, are the ballast of China-U.S. relations, and the American business community and farmers are the backbone of a stable China-U.S. relationship—this trip has deepened my belief in this basic fact.

I have been touched by the stories of friendship passed through generations. My colleagues and I visited the Sino-U.S. Friendship House in Muscatine, where President Xi Jinping stayed during his visit to Iowa in 1985, and we met with old friends Sarah Lande and Luca Berrone who twice welcomed President Xi. Their recollection of the time-honored friendship was heart-stirring.

There we also attended the signing ceremony for Chinese enterprises to sponsor local Iowa students to study in China. We could tell that the seeds of friendship first sown by President Xi have taken root, sprouted, blossomed and borne fruit in Iowa. We could also see from this experience that the bond between China and the United States is unbreakable, and such bond is forged by all those people who champion the cause of China-U.S. friendship and cooperation.

I have been touched by the common qualities of Chinese and Americans. Every place we visited, we felt keenly how nice and sincere, how friendly and hard-working the Americans are, and we were often overwhelmed by their hospitality. One night, we reached Amana at 10 p.m. after a long drive, and were so moved to know that the local museum had remained open just for us.

Doug and Jody Fairbanks have raised as many as over 400 cows on their dairy farm, for 20 years without letup. Smithfield workers begin their workday at 6 a.m., and in winter, they literally work "from dark to dark." Chinese and Americans have so much in common—they are both kind and genuine, and they both do all they can to earn a better life for themselves



Chinese Ambassador Qin Gang greets people at a farm in Iowa. China News Service photo.

and their families. These shared qualities have made our two nations who we are today, and they are why we have natural affinity for each other.

I have been touched by young people's respect and appreciation for the other country and its culture. At the University of Chicago and the Iowa State University, we saw Chinese students pursue their study alongside their American friends, a telling example of China-U.S. communication and cooperation. At Yinghua Academy, a Chinese immersion charter school in Minnesota, we watched its K-8 students sing Chinese songs, play Chinese musical instruments, recite ancient Chinese poems, and recount their stories of learning the Chinese language. These young people are like the seedlings of China-U.S. friendship, who will one day grow up, take over this great cause and carry it forward into the future.

I leave the Heartland with my heart filled with friendship and cooperation, and more importantly, filled with confidence in the future of China-U.S. relations. Just as the mighty Mississippi River cannot be stopped by any undercurrent in its course to the sea, I am convinced that the China-U.S. relationship will also keep surging ahead, towards a better tomorrow. American Heartland, until we meet again! 友

Submitted by Barbara Cobb, a USCPFA National Board member who lives in Nashville.

Why China Matters to the U.S. Heartland

The United States Heartland China Association (USHCA) held a webinar and published details this year on how the 20 states in its region benefit from economic, educational and cultural ties with China.

"Why China Matters to the Heartland," can be found on the USCHA's website. Go to "usheartlandchina.org," "News and Updates," and search for "Why China Matters," to see the webinar and the state-by-state summaries.

USHCA is a nonprofit organization committed to building stronger ties between the U.S. and China. It focuses on heartland states from the Great Lakes to the Gulf of Mexico, but also works with communities elsewhere in the country. Details of this organization can be found in an article in the *US-China Review's* winter 2021 edition.

Here are some excerpts from Why China Matters to the Heartland:

Michigan's deep connection with China rests on two pillars: education and industry. The University of Michigan welcomed its first Chinese students in 1892... Michigan boasts two Chinese sister provinces, Sichuan and Guangdong—both are strong bases for the Chinese automotive industry. Iconic companies from Michigan such as GM and Ford have been very successful in China. ... More than 300 Chinese companies with operations in Michigan have created more than 10,000 jobs and invested more than \$4 billion into Michigan's economy.

China is a key trading partner for **Wisconsin** and is the state's largest source of imports and third largest export destination. Among the many agricultural exports from the state to China is the famed American Ginseng grown in Wisconsin... Along with the rest of the U.S. dairy industry, Wisconsin is interested in expanding its dairy exports to China.

Arkansas enjoys healthy two-way business ties with China. Arkansas's top employers, such as Walmart and Tyson Foods, count China as their major markets. It is also among the top five states in the U.S. in attracting foreign direct investment

(FDI) from China. A recent tally of FDI investments from four Chinese companies is expected to total \$1.4 billion.

Mississippi counts China as its third leading trade partner, boasting a 63.8 percent increase in trade from 2019 to 2020.

The cultural ties between **Missouri** and China are deep and unique, from the Missouri physician who founded a Rotary Club in Shanghai over 100 years ago to Edgar Snow, whose book *Red Star over China* (1937) is still celebrated today.

Colorado has seen a steady growth of its service exports to China, which more than doubled since 2010. The state's strength in clean-tech and tourism played a significant part in that expansion. ... Chinese Americans in Colorado have played key roles in promoting exchanges in culture, education and business between the state and China. Thanks to John Yee, a Flying Tigers veteran who had emigrated to Colorado, Denver and Kunming became sister cities in 1986.

Illinois became the first state to open a trade office in China in 1974. Since then, China has been a critical trade and investment partner for Illinois. In 2019, China was Illinois' fifth largest export market and its largest import market.

Many global corporations headquartered in **Indiana**, such as Cummins and Eli Lilly, have benefited significantly from their investments in China.

Iowa's agricultural abundance positions it well to meet China's huge demand for agriculture imports. Today, Iowa is the largest pork, feed and fodder trading partner with China.

Kansas has seen its exports to China steadily expand since the establishment



The heartland states.

of a sister state relationship with Henan province in 1981. Its total exports to China reached \$1.2 billion in 2020.

Louisiana plays a significant role in American energy exports to China, thanks to the state's unique strength in ocean freight and port services.

Minnesota's relationship with China has evolved over a century through many exchanges in culture, education and business. Leading multinational corporations headquartered in Minnesota, such as 3M, Cargill and General Mills, have significant business interests in China.

Given **Nebraska's** leading role in the livestock and food production industries in the U.S., it's not surprising that Nebraska exported over half of the total U.S. beef exports to China in 2018, and was the No. 1 U.S. beef exporter to China in 2019. Universities in Nebraska have well-established partnerships with Chinese universities, such as a short-term health professional exchange program between University of Nebraska Medical Center and three top Chinese medical schools: Shanghai Jiao Tong University School of Medicine, Tongji University and Capital Medical University.

Among the 50-plus Chinese companies in **Ohio**, Fuyao Glass America is the largest Chinese foreign investment in the U.S. to date.

South Dakota more than tripled its exports to China from 2018 to 2020. Not surprisingly, soybeans and pork accounted for a big part of the state's \$970 million in exports to China in 2020.

Tennessee's diverse economic base helps the state develop a wide range of business connections with China. Large employers, such as Eastman Chemical and FedEx, have significant connections to China. The strong global automotive industry in the state also attracted many Chinese component producers to set up operations in the state to be closer to their customers.

The **Texas** trade volume with China dwarfs that of many other states. The strength of the state's energy industry lends it well to meet the growing energy needs of China. 友

China's Census Indicates Slow Population Growth but Big Increase in Families with Second Children

When the results of China's 2020 census came out last year, the website radiichina.com listed six "startling statistics":

1. The population increased to 1.412 billion, up from 1.339 billion in 2010, despite predictions that China might see its first population decline in decades.

2. Two provinces (Liaoning and Jilin, both in the northeast) have more women than men, even though the nationwide population is 51.24 percent male.

3. The urban population rose 14.21 percent in the past decade to 901.99 million, from 665.57 million in 2010.

4. Second children made up 50 percent of all newborns in 2017 (the most recent year in which this statistic was available), compared to 30 percent in 2013.

5. About 218 million people in China have college degrees. The average years of schooling of the population aged 15 and above increased from 9.08 years in 2010 to 9.91 years.

6. The average age in China is 38.8. But the number of Chinese people aged 60 or over rose 5.44 percentage points, to 18.7 percent.

Meanwhile, Hong Kong's *South China Morning Post* newspaper noted that the share of the population soon to be, or already at, working age declined. There were 894.38 million people in the age group between 15 and 59, 63.35 per cent of the population, down 6.79 percentage points from 2010.

China's one-child policy, which began in 1980, ended in 2016, when married couples were allowed to have two children, and expanded to three children in 2021. The government is considering financial incentives to encourage couples to have children, but news reports indicate that the high cost of raising a child is one factor that is keeping some couples from having more children, or even one child.

Beijing-based YuWa Population Research Institute reported that the average cost of raising a child to the age of 18 in China in 2019 stood at 485,000 yuan (\$76,629) for a first child, 6.9 times China's per capita GDP that year, Reuters reported. China ranks second highest among the 13 countries included in the study, behind only South Korea, which has the lowest

birth rate in the world. The U.S. figure, based on 2015 data, stood at 4.11 times per capita GDP while Japan's figure, based on 2010 data stood at 4.26.

The Associated Press reported that, although there were 12 million births reported in China in 2020, this number was down nearly one-fifth from 2019.

The Sixthtone.com website reports that health authorities in Beijing said they will include 16 assisted reproductive technologies under the city's public medical insurance plan, as part of the effort to boost the country's declining birth rates.

Xinhua reported that China may also gradually raise the retirement ages, which are 60 for men, 55 for white-collar female workers and 50 for blue-collar female workers.

The *New York Times* said that the proposal to raise the retirement age is unpopular. The newspaper said, "... older workers have already decried being cheated of their promised timelines, while young people worry that competition for jobs, already fierce, will intensify." 友

As Prosperity Expands in China, So Do Waistlines

By Stephanie Sun

Older Chinese can remember a time when they struggled to find enough to eat. Today, with increased prosperity, many Chinese are facing a different problem—how to lose weight.

In traditional China, being overweight was considered a sign of wealth and happiness. There is even an old saying, "Being carefree and contented makes you fat." During the Tang dynasty (A.D. 618–907), plump women were considered good-looking. In Buddhism, Buddha was portrayed as overweight.

With the development of medical science, people's concept has changed, and Chinese today know that being overweight can be considered detrimental to their health.

The problem of widespread obesity is relatively new to China. There was mass

starvation from 1959 to 1961. Even in the decades after that, there was not much variety or quantity of food. Staples, such as flour, rice, eggs and cooking oil, required ration coupons.

"Food was very scarce, with each family having five or six kids. Eggs, meat and sugar were luxuries. We could have them only during Chinese New Year," said Wang Xizhen, a 65-year-old housewife.

Until the past couple of decades or so, there were few overweight people in China. This started to change as the na-



High school students exercise in Wuxi, Jiangsu province. (Xinhua photo).

tion's economic reforms greatly improved the standard of living.

Cars and Fast Food

One big factor was that many people switched from commuting by bike or on

foot to driving or taking mass transit. Also, China's rapid urbanization meant that many people no longer had jobs involving physical labor.

Meanwhile, in the 2000s, improved transportation led to an increase in the supply and variety of food. Before that, consumers were mostly limited to what was available locally and seasonally. A common sight in Beijing, for example, was piles of cabbages on balconies.

As more food became available and affordable, people were more likely to eat meat, and use too much cooking oil, salt and sugar. A study also found that people ate fewer grains and vegetables, and more fat than before. Fast food, including many American brands, became readily available in China. In 2015, a report showed that the average Chinese person's fat intake was already more than 30 percent of their diet, higher than the recommended 25 to 30 percent.

Stricter BMI Standards

In October 2015, China announced its first Body Mass Index (BMI). Based on weight and height, it became one of the main standards that China uses to gauge people's health. In China, adults with a BMI of 24 are considered overweight, and those with a BMI of 28 are considered obese. The World Health Organization and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control use slightly different figures. For adults, a BMI of 25 is considered overweight and 30 is considered obese.

According to China's BMI index, in 2015 China had 46 million obese adults and 300 million overweight people. By numbers, not percentage, China was second only to the United States. In 2017, for the first time, China reported the statistics for Chinese children. An estimated 4.76 million children ages 7 or younger were obese and 34.95 million children ages 7 and older were either overweight or obese.

In December 2020, a nutrition and chronic disease report released by China's State Council Information Office said that the average weight of Chinese males and females over 18 years old was 153 and 130 pounds respectively. That was 7.5 and 3.7 pounds higher than 2015.

The overweight and obesity rates among Chinese over 18 years old were 34.3 percent and 16.4 percent respectively, compared with 2015's rates of 30.1

and 11.9 percent. The overweight and obesity rates of children between 6 and 17 years old also increased, to 9.6 percent and 6.4 percent respectively.

In the United States, nearly three out of four adults ages 20 or older are either overweight or obese, according to the National Institutes of Health.

In addition to the lifestyle changes mentioned earlier, other factors can lead to weight gain.

"I was less than 110 pounds as a student. Then I gained weight while working for a company that offered free carbonated drinks. After I had two babies, my weight went up to 132 pounds," said Deng Jie, a children's tutor.

Regional Differences

Obesity also has regional differences. There are more overweight people in northern China than in the south, and more overweight people in large cities like Beijing, Tianjin and Nanjing. People along the coast are more in shape, partly because of a diet of rice and seafood, while people in central and western China are more likely to be overweight, partly because of a diet of wheat and meat.

For example, according to a report released by the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention in 2017, the overweight rate of Liaoning province in northeast China was 38.2 percent, while the overweight rate in Guangdong province in southern China was only 26.2 percent.

As more Chinese make an effort to get into shape, the nation's weight-reduction businesses are growing very fast. Data released by iMedia Research showed that, in 2019, the market for weight-loss foods and products was \$28 billion, and this figure is expected to double by 2023. Weight control services are more popular and easily found in tier-one cities, such as Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou and Shenzhen.

However, among the Chinese who are making an effort to control their weight, less than 50 percent actually have a BMI that classifies them as overweight.



Light meals, consisting mainly of vegetables, have become popular among city residents. (Hua Weiyi for China Daily)

According to an article in a Beijing newspaper, Chinese women are more sensitive than men are about their weight. Most Chinese women would consider themselves fat and be motivated to lose weight if their BMI is over 20.5. Women under 30 are even more sensitive about their weight and would likely try to lose weight if their BMI is above 20. As a result, these young women account for 79.4 percent of those trying to lose weight.

The weight loss effort is greatest among those in the south, such as Guangdong, Zhejiang and Jiangsu provinces, though they are usually not as overweight as those in the north. "I tried to lose weight several times. This summer I succeeded. I didn't touch carbonated drinks or grains, but just had protein-rich food and vegetables," Deng said.

The government is also encouraging people to embrace a low-salt, low-fat and low-sugar diet. As part of this effort, labels on food packages will be more detailed, and some products will have less sugar.

At the same time, action is being taken to increase exercise time at school. In 2020, there was a proposal to help fight the overweight problem by including a physical fitness test in the all-important *gaokao* college entrance exam. Public reaction to the proposal was largely negative, with people saying that an additional test would add to students' already high level of stress. But exercise and weight-reduction training camps for young people are available in many cities. 友

Stephanie Sun is a Chinese journalist who works in Shanghai.

China Tells Its Citizens: “Clean Your Plate”

By Mike Revzin

Some older Americans remember a time when their parents admonished them, “Clean your plate—the children in China are starving.”

About two years ago, the Chinese government began urging its citizens to do the same, after President Xi Jinping said that the amount of food wasted in China was “shocking and distressing.” That “Clean Plate Campaign” is still under way, and there was a similar one in 2013.

Traditionally in China, it has been considered rude for guests to “clean their plates.” Doing so implied that the host had not offered enough food. But, under the “Clean Plate Campaign,” groups of diners are encouraged to not waste food, and to order one less dish than the number of people. For example, a party of 10 would order nine items. In some cases, restaurants actually impose restrictions.



Children in Suzhou in 2020 put up posters urging people not to waste food. (Photo by Hua Xuegen for China Daily)

Chinese and Western news media reported that some Chinese trains introduced smaller food portions to reduce food waste, schools told students not to waste food and people were encouraged to post “Clean Plate Snapshots” on social media.

The website whatsonweibo.com reported that one restaurant in Hunan province even encouraged customers to weigh themselves and order food accordingly. That policy was ended after it caused a

In the 1960s, the average Chinese person consumed less than 11 pounds of meat annually. Today, various sources estimate the average as between 97 and 138 pounds.

controversy on social media.

In April 2021, Chinese lawmakers passed an anti-food waste law, Xinhua reported, explaining that it was “aimed at safeguarding the country’s food security.”

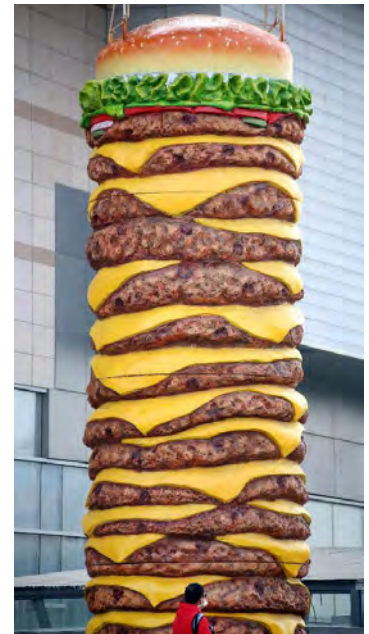
“The law stipulates that catering service providers can charge a disposal fee for customers who leave excessive amounts of food waste,” the Chinese news agency reported. “Catering service providers are also required to remind customers of food frugality duties. Restaurants found guilty of inducing or misleading behaviors that lead to diners wasting food will receive a warning. Serious violators will be fined up to 10,000 yuan (about 1,500 U.S. dollars).”

Binge-Eating Videos Banned

The law also bans online bloggers from livestreaming binge eating. “Media outlets that publish such content will receive a warning, and if their violations are deemed severe, they will be shut down, according to the law,” Xinhua reported.

Yahoo News reported that “Binge-eating videos, in which influencers gorge on massive amounts of food in a short period of time, had become a popular form of online entertainment” in China and other countries.

“Many of the most-viewed videos on Douyin, the Chinese version of TikTok, are of beautiful, often petite young women eating their way through mammoth-sized meals,” it reported.



The introduction of fast food to China has contributed to the obesity problem. This photo shows a 33-foot-tall hamburger sculpture advertising a fast-food restaurant in Shenyang, Liaoning province. (Xinhua photo)

A woman known as Big Stomach Mizijun was one of the best-known creators of food-binge videos. “She became a viral sensation in 2016 after she ate 10 bowls of very spicy instant noodles in 16 minutes and 20 seconds. She had more than 13 million followers on Douyin and a huge following on YouTube,” according to a December 2020 Yahoo News story. 友

Philippine Ambassador Dies in China, First Lived There from 1971 to 1986

Philippine Ambassador to China Jose Santiago “Chito” Sta. Romana died in China in April at age 74, the Associated Press reported.

In 1971, he led a group of Filipino activists on what was supposed to have been a short trip to China. Because of their opposition to Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos, he and some others were unable to go home. Sta. Romana eventually returned to the Philippines in 1986, after Marcos left office.

One of the others on his trip to China was Jaime FlorCruz, who ended

up spending most of the past 50 years in China and worked as a CNN correspondent. The fall 2021 USCR cover story chronicles FlorCruz’s life in China. From 1989 to 2010, Sta. Romana worked in China for ABC News. He became ambassador in 2017.

A Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson said Sta. Romana was “well known for his profound knowledge of China. He worked and lived in China for many years and was our old friend and good friend.”

A Health Care Mission to the Roof of the World

By Dr. John Mulder

My 1999 trip to Tibet was facilitated by my role as chairman of the board of International Aid, a medical relief agency based out of Spring Lake, Michigan. We were in Tibet to meet with health care leaders, foreign Christian missionaries, and Communist Party leaders to assess specific health care needs and identify opportunities to provide resources. Our agency had the opportunity to provide specific goods, equipment, supplies, training and counsel. Our team included our CEO Ralph Plumb, board member Wally Olson, Greg Yoder (a radio news journalist for a Christian radio network) and me.

The first thing I noted was the altitude: we flew from Bangkok, Thailand (elevation 4 feet) to Lhasa, the capital of Tibet (elevation 11,995 feet). On deplaning, one of the team became nauseated, lightheaded and short of breath. Another developed a headache that persisted during almost all of the trip. All of those are symptoms of altitude sickness. The third member of the team and I had elected to take advantage of recommendations from a naturopathic colleague of mine who had a recipe for thwarting altitude sickness. We were fine the entire time, including traversing the Kampala Pass at Yang Zhuo Yong at 16,200 feet. The other two thought that bee pollen, ginkgo, vitamin C and garlic was just a bit too wonky for them. (I took advantage of my pharmaceutical knowledge to supplement the naturopathic remedies with some standard medication.)

Something else was eerie: when we walked down steps to the tarmac there were no planes in sight except ours. And no other travelers than those on our plane. Accustomed to bustling airports, it was disarming to see it essentially abandoned. In 1999, there were only one or two flights per week, to and from Chengdu in Sichuan province and Katmandu, Nepal. The airport was only open for a couple hours surrounding the incoming flights, which would reload and depart. There was never a plane on site other than those couple of times a week.

We were in Tibet with the permission of the governmental authorities. You can't travel there without it. Itineraries are pre-



The Kampala Pass. Photos by John Mulder.



Dr. John Mulder meets children in Tibet.

scribed for you, including when (or even if) you can tour attractions. Although an overtly Christian organization, we were given latitude and access not granted to the typical American tourist. The authorities recognized that we had the capability to assist with some critical health needs.

China does not allow evangelism or proselytizing, but the missionaries in Tibet were not, in the eyes of the government, working in religious activities. They were teaching, building, consulting and providing health care. Were it found out that

Continued on next page

Tibet (continued)

they were engaged in religious activities, they would have been deported at best, jailed at worst. We had to be careful about our language and activities—we were constantly monitored and followed, and anytime we left our rooms, they were searched, and our computers rifled.

Tibet is rural, remote, pristine and beautiful. Lhasa, the largest city in Tibet, has a population of around 500,000—a fraction of most Chinese capital cities. The terrain is rugged, roads rutted and flat tires plentiful. The air is thin and crystal clear, the lakes and rivers as blue as I'd ever seen.

Although there are a handful of cities throughout the region, many of the villages had no running water, electricity or any other amenities that we would consider essential. Families live here in congregant settings and live a subsistence lifestyle. Yak and sheep are plentiful and contribute to the village economy and diet. One of the most notable things that was pervasive in the villages was the unquenchable joy that was evident in the faces of all that I met—especially the children. Unattached from the world outside their village, they had no reason to believe that everything they would ever need wasn't within their grasp within their community. Their lives were full and complete.

Influenced by ER TV Show

In most of the villages, there is no access to any health care resources. People must travel distances, usually on foot, to find medical care. In a couple of villages,



Dr. Mulder met Tibetans of all ages.

we did meet “health workers” and the space that they used as their office. Their qualifications? They had been to the “big city” (Lhasa) and happened to have access to a TV and saw episodes of *ER*. They had no medical training—I specifically asked them. They had an interest in medicine, and exposure through media, and apparently that was enough.

Their clinic space was sparse, spartan and bereft of anything remotely related to what we might find in a typical medical office environment. In most circumstances it was a place where local residents could

simply gather for health-related conversation. It's not clear specifically what else they actually were providing to their clients. They were not diagnosticians, nor did they actually provide medical treatment.

When we asked them what they thought would be useful to them, they proudly announced, “MRI!” Apparently, something they picked up from *ER*. We arranged to get them bicycles, which would allow them to more quickly reach people who needed them. We also provided some resources that would help in monitoring pregnant women for basic metrics that





The spartan health clinic.



could identify preventable complications.

In another circumstance, we suggested that moving the community latrine away from their water source could very likely reduce the incidence of diarrhea that pervaded their village.

One final note about religious restrictions. On an earlier trip to China, my group went to Yunnan province and met Chinese evangelist Chen Minying, also known as George Chen. He had one of the most compelling stories of anyone I've ever met. Chen (who died last year at age 89) had been in prison under horrific conditions from 1960–1978 for refusing to renounce his religion.

When we met him, Chen was working with the Lisu tribe in an area just above the Golden Triangle, a prime area for drug trafficking into China. But the government noticed that there was no drug trafficking in the area served by Chen. The government was interested in our organization's ability to build and equip a small hospital in that area and, in return, they allowed us to include building materials for Chen's church, as well as Bibles and other materials. 友

John Mulder is a physician in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

If at First You Don't Succeed...



Liang Shi (China Daily photo)

A 55-year-old Chinese man has taken the *gaokao* college entrance exam for the 26th time with the hope of being admitted to Sichuan University, according to Yahoo News.

Most Chinese who hope to attend college take that test during their final year of high school. Liang Shi first took it in 1983.

He described himself as “still young” and reassured his critics that he has no issues with studying at his age. Liang had to skip the exam 14 times due to work and policies that required students to be unmarried and under the age of 25, which were later removed in 2001, according to the news story.

In 2018, Liang received a score of 469 out of 750, which was high enough for admission to some universities, *China Daily* reported. But Liang is determined to attend Sichuan University, which required a score of at least 521.

“I will continue to take the *gaokao* until it becomes obvious that my dream cannot be realized,” Liang said.

Liang currently owns a building materials company in Chengdu, the capital of Sichuan province.



“China’s Oprah” is TV Personality, Entrepreneur and More

By Mike Revzin

Yue-Sai Kan’s well-known presence on Chinese TV and her role as a social influencer in China caused her to be dubbed “the Oprah of China.” Like Oprah, she is well known to the public by her given name. At the USCPFA National Convention in November, registrants had the opportunity to learn about her fascinating life through her video: *Journey Through A Changing China, The China I Know*.

Yue-Sai’s official website describes her as, “an Emmy-winning television host and producer, successful entrepreneur, fashion icon, bestselling author and humanitarian,” and adds that *People* magazine called her “the most famous woman in China.”

Yue-Sai was born in Guilin. Her family moved to Hong Kong when she was 2, and at age 16 she attended Brigham Young University-Hawaii.

In 1972, Yue-Sai created the weekly television series *Looking East*, the first of its kind to introduce Asian cultures and customs to a growing and receptive American audience. In 1984, PBS invited her to host the first live broadcast of a television program from China—the parade celebrating the 35th anniversary of the People’s Republic of China.

Two years later the television series *One World*, produced and hosted by Yue-Sai, aired on China’s national television network CCTV, with a weekly viewership of 300 million. It was the first time a non-Chinese citizen hosted a TV series in China. At that time, with her broadcasts in both China and the United States, she was the most watched woman in the world.

In 1992, Yue-Sai created the Yue Sai Cosmetics brand which grew into China’s leading cosmetics company. It was purchased by L’Oreal in 2004. Additionally, she has written nine best-selling books, and in 2000, became the first and only living American featured on a Chinese government-issued postage stamp.

Yue-Sai has been deeply involved in charity work in China and the United States.

Since 2011, Yue-Sai has been helming the Miss Universe China Pageant. The final pageant is Shanghai’s most glamorous charity ball and has raised millions

for charities and scholarships.

In 2018, Yue-Sai was elected co-chairman of the New York-based China Institute, with its mission of advancing a deeper understanding of China through programs in education, culture, art and business.

In her video, Yue-Sai described the dramatic changes she has seen in China during her decades as a media person, businesswoman author and philanthropist.

“I witnessed a country with millions of impoverished people who did not have enough food to eat, clothes to wear or decent housing. Today China has eradicated poverty and is now firmly established as the second largest economy in the world. In many ways, hundreds of years didn’t accomplish what has taken place in China over the past four decades. There has been a fundamental transformation of 1.4 billion people, their lifestyle and the future.”

“Speaking as one of the few Chinese Americans who has had this opportunity to be deeply involved in this period starting in 1984 it has been a rare privilege that I have not only been a witness, but a participant and beneficiary of this transformation.”

“It has been my honor to be a bridge between the two most powerful countries in the world. They have been the two constants throughout my life: China, where I was born, and the United States, where I am a citizen and have lived most of my life.”

Yue-Sai shared her “observations and critiques and responses to a radically new China.”

“After 1949, China completely shut its doors to the outside world. Chairman Mao may have been a brilliant military strategist, but the China under his leadership almost collapsed. Natural disasters, famine, the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution. One chaos after another.”

Deng Xiaoping came to power and proclaimed the open door policy in 1978. His



Yue-Sai Kan at home.

reforms included some elements of private ownership, market economy and opening China to the outside world. Starting with President Nixon, there had been a shift in U.S. policy, to counter the influence of the Soviet Union, she said “but there was also a genuine desire to bring China into the world family by introducing universal values to its people such as democracy, human rights and prosperity.”

Having grown up in Hong Kong during a time when China was closed, “I knew almost nothing about China until I moved to New York City in the ‘70s and started a TV show called *Looking East*. It was the first U.S. TV show to introduce Asia to Americans, who at that time had very little interest in Asia. “In fact, Mike Wallace told me it was a very bad idea because no one would watch me. I knew he was wrong.”

In 1984, when PBS asked her to host a live broadcast of the Beijing parade, she had two days to prepare and found out there would be no narration on the feed from China. Yue-Sai was asked to do an off-camera narration, but declined, asking, “Would you ask Walter Cronkite to do that?”

“I was really bold to make such an overstatement,” she said. “Despite my Chinese face, my knowledge of China was very limited. I didn’t even speak Mandarin at that time.”

But she quickly did enough research to be able to narrate the coverage. In the U.S., “Some praised it, and some said PBS should never have given China a chance to do propaganda,” she recalled, adding that there was positive reaction from Chinese Americans.

Later in 1984, CCTV invited her to China which, she recalled, “at that time was much like North Korea today. Dark and dreary with many Russian-style buildings.”

CCTV asked her to create a program to help educate Chinese about the outside world.

“I said I could produce a TV series better than anyone else in China because I am American educated. I would have a much broader view of the world than their brainwashed colleagues,” she said.

In the early 1980s, state-owned CCTV was the only TV station for the entire country, and only broadcast for six hours a day.

“Programming was cheap and boring because there was no money, no advertising due to no consumer spending. There was simply nothing to buy,” she said.

“I was stunned that they would ask a foreigner to produce and host a series on the national network,” she said. They had no money, but they let me earn money by selling advertising. *One World* was the first TV series in China to have advertising. It was completely funded with commercial time she sold to companies such as Coca-Cola and Nestle.

Today CCTV has 50 channels, is accessible in six languages to 1 billion people, and the advertising rate for five seconds in prime time is \$17,000.

One World ran for about a year, starting in 1986. “Surprisingly, I was given almost 100 percent editorial control,” she said. There were only two times she was asked to make changes. One was when the program filmed topless women on a beach in Denmark. “We were very careful only to film their backs, but it was still not good enough,” she recalled.

“The second one was Mother Teresa. Since the Chinese government did not recognize the Roman Catholic Church, they did not think it was appropriate to put a nun in the show,” she said. But Yue-Sai did convince them to show Mother Teresa in a segment from Sweden about the Nobel Prize. “I argued that the fact that she was a nun was not important, but the fact that she was a Noble Prize winner was,” she said.

“I’ve since done a lot of TV shows in China, but never have I experienced such freedom as this first series. Today the censorship is even more stringent,” she said.

“*One World* covered 16 countries with

information and images they had never seen before, and made me an instantly recognizable face for more than a billion Chinese. It fed into the deep desire of the Chinese people to be part of the world. Reactions were all positive. They said, ‘You inject a breath of fresh air into our stale world.’

One World opened my eyes, completely changed my life, inspired me to hope and dream. I’m here in the United States because of you.” Or “I learned to speak English because of you.”

“It is a real privilege that I was able to influence a whole generation of people,” she said.

Yue-Sai was also a pioneer in the beauty industry in China. “During the Mao era, from 1949, the use of cosmetics was limited to the people on stage. It was considered bourgeois, even a crime. The country was physically ugly, dull and colorless. The word *beauty* was not part of the vocabulary. Everyone looked exactly the same,” she said.

After the opening in 1979, people began to think of beauty and to dress a bit more colorfully, she said.

“But no one was leading the way until 1992 when I launched Yue-Sai Cosmetics in China. I wanted them to have a tool that could help them to look their individual best. I said to them that if you can change the way you look you can be and do anything you wish. It was a novel idea. And it was the very spirit that I wanted to inject into the psyche of Chinese women.”

When Yue-Sai Cosmetics became



Yue-Sai Kan demonstrates makeup for customers in a shopping center in Shanghai in 1996. (China Daily photo)

the number one brand in China in 1996, it “showed me that the message was accepted,” she said. “I invested a few million U.S. dollars, injecting color into a colorless country, and quote ‘changed the face of China one lipstick at a time,’ as *Forbes* magazine said.”

Yue-Sai said she wanted Chinese to have a brand that provided products for their skin and coloring, not just a copy of Western cosmetics. She staffed cosmetic counters with well-trained personnel, wrote articles, traveled around the country giving interviews and made appearances to packed crowds in department stores. “I helped to popularize the use of cosmetics in China,” she said. Her company went from having three sales counters in Shanghai in 1982 to 800 all over China by the time she sold it to L’Oreal in 2004. She also sold them three factories and 24 branch companies.

Continued on next page



Yue-Sai Kan presents her TV show *One World* from Brazil, in 1986. (China Daily photo)

China's Oprah *(continued)*

"I also helped to start consumerism in China," she said.

"Over the years, with the rise of the middle class, China has become the fastest growing market in beauty." This prompted foreign brands to sell in China.

When Yue-Sai registered her company in 1990, there were very few entrepreneurs, let alone women entrepreneurs. "I was one of the first ones to do business on such a big, national scale. I think I inspired others," she said.

"Chinese women are brought up under the slogan of women holding up half the sky, different from a lot of other countries. They are never discriminated against when it comes to business," she said.

"Many people have questioned me if I have found it difficult to do business in China as a female. Actually, not at all. I have found that being female, well, a bit famous, is sometimes an advantage."

According to the Hurun Global Rich List of the world's 100 wealthiest self-made women billionaires, 61 are Chinese, she said.

"However, I don't see that many Chinese women holding high political positions. Even if they do, their positions tend to be ceremonial or woman-related," Yue-Sai added. She noted that, although the U.S. has a female vice president, quite a few countries throughout the world have had female heads of states or government. "So China and the United States both have a lot to catch up in this regard."

Yue-Sai has also been involved in education. An international study comparing the status of teachers in 21 countries found that teachers in China have the highest respect, she said, pointing to the country's traditional emphasis on education.

Today, mandatory, free, nine-year compulsory education covers 85 percent of the population, she said. Yue-Sai has funded schools and libraries, and supports charities that send teachers to rural areas of China.

Yue-Sai also played a role in educating Chinese about Western etiquette. Foreigners who traveled to China in the 1980s and 1990s "often commented negatively on Chinese behavior in public. Rude, loud and poor hygiene," she said,

In 2000, "I gave the best gift I could give to the Chinese, by writing the first

book about etiquette in modern China." It included tips on manners, appearance, posture, how to eat Western food, invitations and thank-you letters. It was on China's best-seller list and was serialized in newspapers.

Philanthropy is another of Yue-Sai's fields. "Americans are the most generous people in the world. We gave away 450 billion dollars in 2019."

In China, philanthropy was a new word until recently. "The communistic system was supposed to take care of its citizens from cradle to grave. Early on, when people suggested outside contributions to China, the government was really embarrassed by it."

"This perception changed with the encouragement of the government when they discovered that citizens can do a lot to help elevate the society."

"Reform and opening up made China rich. Today, a lot of rich Chinese donate to charities, both in China and overseas."

"Now my focus has shifted to the environment," Yue-Sai said.

"Everything I did in China I first learned in America. I learned marketing, I embraced entrepreneurship. I believe in the American dream. I believe in helping others and doing good."

"While I'm a big fan of what China has accomplished in the last 40 years, there are so many things I can criticize China about. The press, for example, is never free." There's definitely corruption and copyright infringement, she added.

"One more thing I want to say though. For a long time, the Chinese believed that the West was great in everything. This rosy perception, I'm afraid, is no longer true, especially in the last four years. They still want modernization, not necessarily Westernization. But their interest in knowing and learning never changed."

Yue-Sai summarized the changes she has seen in China.

"In the last 40 years, the Chinese have built amazing infrastructures covering the entire country, with roads, tunnels, bridges and airports. More than anything else, this has helped to propel China's growth."

China is the biggest trading partner for many countries and it is the most important market for many companies.



Yue-Sai Kan meets Kermit.

"No one can ignore the China market, with its massive population that grows more affluent every day," she said.

Forbes reported in March 2020 there are 614 billionaires in the United States and 456 in greater China. "What a difference from just 36 years ago when I started working in China."

Another big change is freedom to travel. "Almost no one traveled out of China in 1978. But in 2019, 170 million Chinese traveled freely out of China, changing completely the global tourist industry in every way. By the way, they also returned freely back to China."

"Technology is a big game-changer in the Chinese society," Yue-Sai said. "Overnight, China has evolved into a no-cash, no credit card society. The smartphone does everything."

She also pointed out that English is a mandatory subject in the curriculum starting from grade one, and that an estimated 315 million Chinese have learned to read and speak some English.

In 1979, the first Chinese came to the U.S. to study. Today, there are almost 400,000 enrolled in U.S. schools, she said. "They will also be the catalyst to modernize China going into the future. I would argue that the Chinese know more about America than the other way around."

Noting that China is the fastest-growing economy and will impact every part of our lives, Yue-Sai said, "Maybe it's high time that we get to know China better. No matter what we do, China will continue to rise. This relation is important and we must resolve misunderstandings and find common ground so we can prosper together."

"It has been my lifelong mission to use media, culture and art to advance this relationship, and I hope you will join me." 友

U.S. National Zoo Celebrates 50th Anniversary of Chinese Pandas

By *China Daily's Yifan Xu*

In April, the U.S. National Zoo in Washington celebrated the 50th anniversary of the arrival of the first Chinese pandas in the United States, *China Daily* reported.

The “Pandaversary” was the start of a six-month series of events arranged by the zoo, the newspaper reported. Ling-Ling and Hsing-Hsing arrived at the National Zoo on April 16, 1972. Now Mei Xiang, Tian Tian and their youngest cub, Xiao Qi Ji, are in the zoo. Their other cubs, Tai Shan, Bao and Bei, were returned to China.

Chinese Ambassador to the United States Qin Gang and Brandie Smith, director of the National Zoo, kicked off “Pandaversary.” Qin said that the arrival of the pandas was one of the most important outcomes of President Richard Nixon’s historic visit to China in 1972. The 50-year cooperation on panda conservation between the U.S. and China “achieved a lot,” and the panda is no longer an endangered species, he said. Qin thanked the zoo for making Washington a wonderful home for pandas.

“Pandas are the symbol of friendships. And the successful story of panda conservation is a very good example of China and the United States, that we could cooperate to work together, not only in the area of panda conservation, but we can achieve more in other areas to benefit our two



Mei Xiang (left) and her cub Xiao Qi Ji eat a fruitsicle cake in celebration of the National Zoo’s 50th anniversary of the arrival of pandas. (Xinhua photo)

peoples and the peoples of the world,” he said. “So I wish the pandas live a happy life forever in D.C., and we are looking forward to more cooperation,” Qin added.

Smith said China and the U.S. have maintained good communications in their giant panda conservation efforts over the years and worked together to save the formerly endangered species. She said that giant pandas are the best proof that the two countries can work closely together, and they are the messengers of friendship connecting the two peoples.

Smith also expressed her expectation for the future of the U.S.-China cooperation program on pandas. “The panda is not endangered, but there still are not enough pandas on the planet. We still need more pandas; we still need to look at continuing to save the habitat. And for our program, what we want to do is continue to work with our colleagues in China to work on understanding pandas in the wild and on preserving their habitat, but also work on our plan to understand more about them as a species,” Smith told *China Daily*.

Ashley Clarke, a 35-year-old school counselor, came to the zoo from Philadelphia with her family to celebrate her daughter’s 12th birthday. “We just owe

China a debt of gratitude for creating this program and partnering with the U.S. Everyone is so interested in the conservation effort and wants to be part of it, and they remember as a kid growing up hearing all were in danger,” said Clarke.

There were special events and exhibits at the zoo for “Pandaversary,” including the Chinese Embassy serving panda-shaped buns to visitors and the debut of a new documentary, *The Miracle Panda*, which tells the story behind the birth of Xiao Qi Ji.

The documentary’s producer, Nacressa Swan, told *China Daily* that it was “a privilege and a pleasure” to make the film about how the U.S. and China have been working together for such a long time.

“I think the most impressive thing to me is that the collaboration was really strong between China and the United States when they have something in common. That is so important, like saving the giant panda. Our countries work together very well,” said Swan. 友

Giant Pandas No Longer Endangered

China no longer classifies giant pandas as endangered, but says they are still vulnerable. China announced the change in classification about one year ago. It said the number of giant pandas in the wild had reached 1,800, the BBC reported. BBC quoted experts as saying that the country managed to save its iconic animal through long-term conservation efforts, including the expansion of habitats.

In 2016, the Swiss-based International Union for Conservation of Nature removed the animal from its endangered species list and reclassified it as “vulnerable,” the BBC said. At the time, Chinese officials had disputed the decision, saying that it could mislead people into believing that conservation efforts could be relaxed.

Hessler Describes Limits of Free Expression in Chinese Classrooms

By Mike Revzin

Peter Hessler recently wrote an update as to why he is no longer teaching in China. Hessler is the author of *River Town: Two Years on the Yangtze*, which describes his work as an English teacher at a teachers college in Sichuan province about 25 years ago.

In 2019, he returned to China to teach at Sichuan University-Pittsburgh Institute in Chengdu, intending to stay for five years. But, in April 2021, his teaching contract was not renewed.

In a lengthy article titled “Letter from Chengdu” in the May 16, 2022 issue of *The New Yorker* magazine, Hessler describes how a distorted version of some comments he wrote on a student’s essay in 2019 were posted on the *Weibo* microblogging site, causing a controversy that ended his teaching assignment.

“At Chinese universities, when a student reports a professor for political wrongdoing, the verb that’s used to describe this action is *jubao*. It happens rarely, but the possibility is always there, because potential infractions are both undefined and extremely varied. A student might *jubao* a teacher for a comment about a sensitive historical event, or a remark that seems to contradict a Communist Party policy,” Hessler wrote in *The New Yorker*.

There are students assigned to report such behavior, as well as cameras in the classroom to record it, Hessler explained. Many students confided in him that they oppose such restrictions, he said.

“After the *Weibo* posts about me appeared, the majority of social-media responses seemed critical of the attack,” Hessler said. One *Weibo* user responded, in English, “Real problem is big brother.”

Hessler described the indirect approach that authorities took against him. “Throughout the various meetings, nobody ever said that I had done anything wrong. But neither was I told that it was a violation for a teacher’s private editing comments to be twisted and then posted on social media.” Hessler was even told that officials were satisfied that the *Wei-*



Peter Hessler

bo descriptions of his actions were not accurate.

In the essay that triggered the backlash against Hessler, the student had said that free speech isn’t necessary because the government always informs citizens in an accurate and timely manner.

“In my comments, I referred to the SARS outbreak of 2003, when the Chinese government was accused of hiding the true number of infections,” Hessler wrote. On the student’s paper, Hessler also commented, “One of the functions

The student had said that free speech isn’t necessary because the government always informs citizens in an accurate and timely manner.

of the media anywhere in the world is to report on things that the government might want to hide.”

Hessler also disputed the student’s comment that, “in a civilized country with the rule of law,” citizens aren’t allowed to make statements that question national sovereignty.

Describing how his comments were distorted, Hessler wrote, “using details from my comments and fabricating other things, the author created a scene in which

I argued aggressively in the classroom, browbeating students about China’s government.”

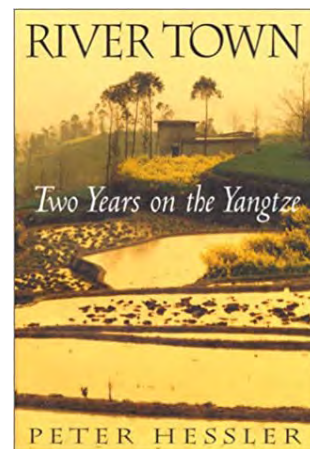
Hessler said he had a good rapport with his students, including the one whose essay he critiqued, and he does not know who posted the comments or what their motivation was.

Ironically, he noted, books such as *1984*, *Animal Farm* and *Brave New World* are not banned in China, and are often part of the assigned reading.

In *The New Yorker* article, Hessler described how today’s students are better off materially than his students from 25 years ago, still face intense academic competition, and seem to have less interest in political figures.

Both times that he taught in China, he asked his freshmen “to write about a public figure, living or dead, Chinese or foreign, whom they admired.”

“In the old days (1996–97), Mao had been the most popular choice,” but his recent students were much more likely to write about scientists or entrepreneurs. “Out of 65 students, only one selected Xi Jinping, which left the president tied with Eminem, Jim Morrison and George Washington,” he wrote. 友



Hessler’s 2001 account of his teaching in China.

Thank You, Mr. Nixon: Stories

By Gish Jen

Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 2022.

262 pages.

Kindle edition \$14.99, hardcover \$22.49.

Reviewed by Fran Adams

After my mother returned from a visit to China in November of 1972, she reported that their Chinese hosts were very much surprised that she and her tour group were not celebrating Nixon's re-election as president of the U.S. "He has done so much for us," they said. But in Gish Jen's affecting new book of stories, *Thank You, Mr. Nixon*, that gratitude, 50 years on, comes with a good helping of irony.

In the title story, the narrator is the girl in a pink coat seen in a well-known photo of Nixon taken during his historic visit to China in February of 1972. That this is an actual photo (you can see it below) puts the reader on notice that Jen's stories are informed by real events, and surely by real-life, lived, relations between Chinese people, Chinese Americans and other Americans. Jen is a second-generation Chinese American writer who has written some well-received fiction about the Chinese American experience, including her fine first novel *Typical American*, published in 1991. She has dedicated this



book, her latest work of fiction, to her immigrant parents.

In Jen's title story, that girl in the pink coat in the photo is now in heaven, writing to Nixon, who is residing in a particularly hot circle of hell. The pink coat, she says, wasn't a real coat, but one her mother had made of two coats. Later her father gave it to the wife of the local party secretary to avoid trouble. What Nixon saw was a "Potemkin China," says the ex-little girl, a false facade. But Pat Nixon's red coat (which can also be seen in real-life photos of the Nixons' visit)—that was what they all secretly wanted, she says. As she looks down from heaven at China in the present day, she sees nothing but shopping malls. To Nixon, she says "you let a big genie out of a bottle—a gaudy, awful genie, some would say." Is anything left of Chinese culture? This question remains unanswered, and yet Jen's characters go on, trying to make lives they can abide

"Gratitude" was one of several stories in the book that moved me to tears.

in, despite the moral dilemmas and the sometimes dire financial and emotional straits they face.

In these stories, which are arranged chronologically from Nixon's visit to Covid-era New York City, the characters' lives are full of dislocations and disjunctions between past and present, between China and the United States, between generations. In some ways, the characters and situations conform to certain tropes that we all are familiar with: parents pressuring their children to go into finance, law or medicine; children dropping out of school to become unsuccessful writers or to work for a non-profit in Africa, native Americans manipulated by Chinese people made wily by desperation, and wealthy Hong Kong investors buying up apartments in New York

and selling them to newly rich mainlanders. But in Jen's hands, stereotypes spring to full, rounded life. She gives to the reader deep knowledge of how her characters have been shaped by their times, their societies and their difficult pasts. There are no villains here, and nothing flat about the very alive people who populate her stories.

Some of the characters recur from story to story, sometimes in minor roles, sometimes in major ones. Some characters we come to know as children, and then are fascinated to encounter them as adults in a later story. One of the more richly developed strands concerns Tina and Johnson Koo, wealthy Hong Kongers, and their three daughters. When we first meet them, in the story "Gratitude," Bobby, the smartest daughter, the one who got into MIT entirely on her own merits, no large donations to the college necessary, has quit her job in finance and is not answering her cell phone. Tina wonders "For what did one labor and heave and suffer reconstructive surgery" to have children who don't answer their phone? We laugh at Tina for that "reconstructive surgery," but we sympathize with the parents' desire to be in touch with their children. When Tina and Johnson discover that Bobby has put her New York apartment on the market, the one they bought for her in the first place, they go to great lengths to arrange a surprise meeting.

Again, we laugh a bit at the Koo's ploy. We have sympathy for Bobby, who wants to be free to live with an unemployed drummer in New Jersey and get a degree in political philosophy rather than be forced into the mold of striving for the kind of financial success that her parents expect. Tina asks why people would want to be a poorly paid professor, such as she imagines Bobby will be, if they could do better. Bobby answers, "because they would rather think what they want than buy what they want," and we admire her for that. But how sad that she and her parents have no way to connect with each other. Bobby knows that her parents do not understand her life, and when Tina admits that this is true, Bobby thanks her for saying that. She is thanking her for just

Continued on next page



The girl in the pink coat meets President Nixon.

Gish Jen (continued)

that small moment of honesty. That is the best and only connection that they can achieve, despite the love that Tina and Johnson clearly have for Bobby and, we sense, she for them. The reader aches for both sides. "Gratitude" was one of several stories in the book that moved me to tears.

As a Chinese character says in the story "No More Maybe," "after a fire generation, it is only natural to have a water generation." The older generation, the fire generation, have been formed by the privations of China of the past, particularly those of the Cultural Revolution. The younger generation is ready not to fight so hard for money or for prestige, but to follow their predilections and beliefs, even if it means, as their parents believe, that they are wasting or endangering their lives.

In the story "Rothko, Rothko," a young Chinese American couple is so poor that they have to subsist on Soylent protein drinks. Arabella, from China, a lawyer, defends penniless Chinese immigrants from deportation although she could have become a well-paid corporate lawyer. Rich, a second generation Chinese American, is writing a novel and has a job teaching literature and writing "at an obscure branch of a city university." As Rich explains, their parents "are miraculously united by an evident truth: we were crazy."

This story takes on the question of the value put on the concept of originality, originality not as an absolute value as we might like to think, but something that depends on circumstances and culture. Jen does not mention the actual case of the Chinese artist Pei-Shen Qian, who, while living in Queens, New York, painted "Rothkos" and other fake works by well-known artists, for which he was paid a few thousand dollars, and which were then sold as genuine by a prominent Manhattan gallery for millions. When the ruse was uncovered, Qian was indicted and fled the U.S. for China.

"Rothko, Rothko" is clearly a commentary on those events, a nuanced one. Rich considers buying a "Rothko" from Ming (who is presumably fictitious), an attractive woman who supposedly needs the money for her sick mother in Chi-

na. She truly loves Rothko and follows his techniques in exacting detail. Rich can very much use the money he would get for it, even if he does not sell it as a genuine Rothko. At the same time, Rich deals with a plagiarized paper by one of his Chinese students. She says it's mostly hers—why should the fact that some of it is taken from the website www.straightA.com make it plagiarized? She truly does not understand. Rich reports her and she is suspended, the administration having wanted to make an example of her. Rich sympathized when she had said "but my parents!" and burst into tears. Perhaps he regrets reporting her. She is a good student who cares about the schoolwork, as Ming cares about her painting. Who are the victims here and who can afford not to care?

By the final story, "Detective Dog," protests in Hong Kong are in full swing. The title character is the nine-year-old grandson of the rich Hong Kongers Tina and Johnson Koo, the son of Bobby Koo's sister, living with his family in New York City. He finds out the truth of what is happening to family members in Hong Kong and China by assuming the guise of a detective who is a dog—as if the painful truth could not be faced as himself, whether for his own sake or his mother's. The detective dog's grandmother Tina warningly repeats her motto: "No politics, just make money," but some of her children and grandchildren disagree. They are a fire generation in a different way than the older one was. Thus we end the book in the middle of history, with no tidy resolutions offered in life or in fiction. These subtle and beautifully written stories leave one profoundly thoughtful about many questions of history as they are played out in individual lives. 友

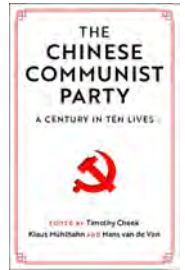
Fran Adams is a retired cataloger of art and architecture books at a university library. She became interested in China through her mother, Rezsín Adams, who was an active and enthusiastic member of the USCPFA.

The Chinese Communist Party: A Century in Ten Lives

Edited by Timothy Cheek, Klaus Mühlhahn and Hans van de Ven
Cambridge University Press, 2021
282 pages, \$24.99

Reviewed by Paul Morris

The year 2021 was the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Chinese Communist Party, the leading member of the international Communist movement. A number of histories have appeared in English to mark the occasion. This volume stands out as a chronicle told in ten lives of notable figures who joined and interacted with the Party. Instead of the vicissitudes of ideology we read the history of modern China through personal stories.



The editors have chosen portraits from leading writers who fit in the mainstream of academic thought on China. Timothy Cheek, a University of British Columbia professor and author of *The Intellectual in Chinese History*, contributes an essay on the 1940s. His and others' chapters are free of academic jargon and pitched to the general reader.

The stories of individual party members and their struggles adds valuable nuance to the history of a party often dominated by larger ideological narratives. The personal approach yields a more complicated portrait. It aims to be "a series of snapshots to reflect how different the Party was in different decades and how different the Party could be for different Chinese people over the century," according to the introduction.

The first decade of the Party, the 1920s, is represented by the work of Henricus Sneevliet, the Dutch Comintern representative also known as Maring. Tony Saich, an authority on the period, describes the



Henricus Sneevliet

back-and-forth efforts to join a united front with the Guomindang (Nationalist Party) while responding to the changing politics of the sponsor party in Moscow.

The 1930s are encapsulated in the story of Wang Ming, the leading Party figure who hewed to an internationalist approach and later broke with Mao, spending the last 18 years of his life in the Soviet Union, dying in 1974.

Less familiar but equally influential was the life of the intellectual Wang Shiwei. Wang became embroiled in Mao's 1942 rectification campaign, intended to enforce iron discipline on a unified, centralized Leninist party. Wang spoke out for a younger, more educated group within the Party who desired a more democratic intra-Party life and the right to criticize official policy. In a process that would be replicated in future campaigns, his views were met with repression, accusations of treason, and then, in 1947, execution. (He was rehabilitated in 1992.)



Wang Shiwei

The film industry of New China in the 1950s is the background of the life of Shangguan Yunzhu, a Shanghai movie star of the pre-revolutionary period who went on to star in modern political films after the studios were taken over by the state. Her story illustrates the tensions between popular culture and Maoist political policies. On the one hand Chinese people widely admired and followed film actors before and after 1949. But celebrity culture, with its Western-looking and bourgeois aspects, was considered politically backward.



Film star Shangguan Yunzhu in the 1950s.

But if old stars could be rehabilitated, they could be useful in drawing audiences to the new revolutionary dramas. Shangguan was allowed to act in a number of new films and regained some of her prior celebrity when Mao invited her to see him on several occasions. The Party leaders

were often as smitten by movie stars as anyone, but they had to fall into line when the Party branded a star a counter-revolutionary.

Shangguan Yunzhu's fortunes rose and fell through the campaigns of the 1950s, ending with her death by suicide in the Cultural Revolution.

The eventful 1960s are described through the experiences of Wang Guangmei, wife of President Liu Xiaoyi and an accomplished scientist. The chapter by Elizabeth J. Perry recounts Wang's time in a work team sent to investigate rural conditions during the Socialist Education Movement (also known as the Four Cleanups) in 1964. She enthusiastically joined in an investigation of a Hebei village that uncovered corruption and gambling among local cadres. In a widely circulated essay known as "The Peach Garden Experience" she described the process of mobilizing peasants to engage in struggle against "class enemies." (See the article on the Four Cleanups in this issue.) The publication "provided a how-to manual for stirring up conflict and division in Chinese society."

That Wang Guangmei and her husband became victims of the more extreme and bloody Cultural Revolution is an irony that complicates the portraits of these urban revolutionaries. The same techniques she had popularized were turned on her. This prominent casualty of the 1960s survived to be rehabilitated and find a role as an admired philanthropist.

The chapter on the 1970s profiles Peruvian Maoist Abimael Guzmán, a representative of "global explosions of the Cultural Revolution." Julia Lovell's portrait is unsparing in its depiction of Guzmán's Shining Path and its violent insurgency.

The representative of the 1980s is Zhao Ziyang, the Party General Secretary who was edged out in 1989. His desire to open a dialogue with the students protesting in Tiananmen Square led to his ouster, but Klaus Mühlhahn argues that his views were significant in Party history: "Belief in a more humane, inclusive, and participatory form of socialism, and even in a more open, pluralistic, and liberal political system, has always existed and never ceased to exist in the Party."

The Party's next decades are exemplified

by the lives of writer Wang Yuanhua, who personified an independent intellectual spirit, and Party leader Jiang Zemin, who presided over what Jeremy Goldkorn terms "the golden age of Chinese liberalism."

Most recently internet celebrity Guo Meimei achieved fame in 2011, when online life in China was relatively free-wheeling. She became a victim of an online protest culture that has now been partially tamed by the state censors.

The variety of experiences represented by these ten lives shows that some members of the Party have always opposed a one-minded and dictatorial approach, and that undercurrents remain that advocate a more open and decentralized political arena. 友

Paul Morris is a USCPFA National Board member.

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Chinese Students Show Videos of Their Hometowns

USCPFA Convention attendees were able to go online to see programs from ChinaFest, an annual event organized by the city of Richmond, Virginia, and the University of Richmond. It offers discussions, films and other cultural resources to promote better understanding between the peoples of China and the United States.

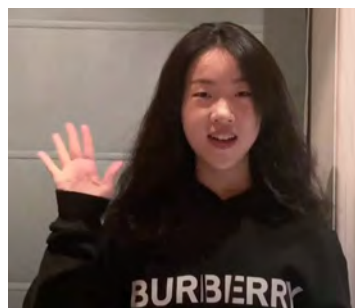
The University of Richmond and the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts partner with The Rose Group for Cross-Cultural Understanding on programming.

One program is the Hometowns Project, in which six students created short videos about their hometowns in China. The cities and the students are:



Shenzhen

Mandy from Shenzhen. Shenzhen, near Hong Kong, was China's first Special Economic Zone, and grew to its current population of 17 million.



Hangzhou

Fanny from Hangzhou. Hangzhou, the capital of Zhejiang province, is known for its scenic lake area and its silk industry.



Suzhou

Cisco from Suzhou in Jiangsu province. Suzhou is known for its canals and gardens.



Jining

Hannah from Jining. Jining is in Shandong province.



Chengdu

Elva from Chengdu. Chengdu is the capital of Sichuan province.



Wenzhou

Amy from Wenzhou. Wenzhou, in Zhejiang province, was a pioneer in private enterprises when China began its economic reforms.

Videos can be found online by searching for ChinaFest Hometowns Project. Scroll down to the map and click on each city's name. 友

Funding Pledged for Iowa Students to Visit China

Chinese Ambassador Qin Gang visited Muscatine, Iowa, in April to celebrate the city's long history of exchanges with China, including visits from Xi Jinping in 1985 and 2012. (See details in this issue).

During the visit, Dan Stein, a member of the Muscatine-China Initiatives Committee, announced that Pin Ni, the Chairman of the Wanxiang America Corporation based in Chicago, had pledged \$500,000 in monetary and in-kind donations to the Sarah and Roger Lande Scholars Program, which will conduct two trips to China for students from Muscatine High School and Muscatine Community College over a period of two years, once international travel restrictions have lifted sufficiently. In the past, Wanxiang helped fund three trips for Muscatine students, with the most recent one taking place in 2018.

—From the Discover Muscatine website



Pin Ni

Do You Have a Story Like This for the USCR?

By Mike Revzin

If you've been to China, you probably have some interesting stories to share with readers of the USCR. Here's one of my stories. Send yours to me at mike.revzin@gmail.com

Is This the Sichuan Restaurant?

In Shanghai, my wife, Oleta, and I took the elevator to a Chinese restaurant on an upper floor of a building.

We got off, I told the hostess "Two people," and she seated us.

We looked around and noticed that everyone was dressed up. Then we noticed that there was a bride and groom at one table.

I asked the waitress, "Is this the Sichuan restaurant?"

She said, "No, that's one floor below." We quickly left, after inadvertently becoming "wedding crashers."

Confucius Is Often Misquoted, Misunderstood

“Before you embark on a journey of revenge, dig two graves,” Confucius once said...except he didn’t. In fact, this is just one of countless proverbs, aphorisms, and quotes misattributed to the Chinese philosopher, along with “Choose a job you love, and you will never have to work a day in your life” and “The man who asks a question is a fool for a minute; the man who does not ask is a fool for life.”

The great sage’s thoughts and opinions are still widely referenced today in China (and across the world), and his pearls of wisdom are often quoted in daily conversation. Such is the weight of Confucius’ legacy, that any argument supported by a pithy saying from the philosopher born over 2,500 years ago is naturally more convincing.

But the sayings quoted by your teacher, grandma, and “spiritual” friends may well never have actually been uttered by Confucius; or if they were, they could



have been wildly misrepresented since his death.

Go to theworldofchinese.com, search for “Confucius,” and click on “Things Confucius Never Said,” by Sun Jiahui. The article shows quotes that are often misattributed to Confucius, as well as actual quotes from him that are often misunderstood.

—From *The World of Chinese website*

友 Washington Seminar
on US-China Relations

Challenges and Opportunities

October 13 and 14, 2022

6 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. EDT.

Stay tuned for details on registering for this virtual seminar on current topics in U.S.-China relations.

US-CHINA PEOPLES
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USCPFA.ORG

Jim Grantman Memorial Fund Helps USCPFA Chapters Sponsor Events

Here’s How Your Chapter Can Apply

Jim Grantman, a member of the USCPFA-Minnesota chapter, contributed tremendously to developing people’s friendship between China and the United States. After Grantman’s death in 2013, a memorial fund was established at USCPFA National, with donations from a board member, to promote activities to increase USCPFA membership.

In recent years, most USCPFA chapters have seen a notable decrease in membership. Membership is the foundation of USCPFA, and the National Board is making efforts to work with regional and local chapters to promote and preserve this foundation.

It is very important that we carry out meaningful and interesting events and programs to attract new members and retain current ones. The National Board understands that there are costs associated with sponsoring events, and encourages chapters to apply for funding through the Jim Grantman Memorial Fund. The application guidelines are as follows:

- All chapters that are in good standing in compliance with USCPFA national bylaws and external filing requirements are eligible to apply for the funding. The compliance requirement includes paying USCPFA National membership dues, submitting annual financial statements to the USCPFA National Treasurer, timely filing the annual IRS e-postcard, and not being in violation of any USCPFA National bylaws. Chapters that are in the process of formation are eligible as well.

- The initial application is for funding ranging from \$500 to \$1,000, depending on the chapter size, event and current chapter financial condition.
- The application must describe the event or program the local chapter is considering sponsoring and explain how it would attract new members.
- The application must include a budget for the event or program.
- The application should include the latest financial statement of the chapter, cash and equity balances.
- A chapter receiving the grant must report to the National Board on the results of the event or program within 45 days, including the number in attendance, the number of new members recruited and the amount of money spent.
- If the event or program brings in 10 or more new members, the National Board will disburse an additional \$500 from the Jim Grantman Memorial Fund to the local chapter for future activities.
- The application is processed on a first-in, first-out basis until the fund is used up.

Chapters that are interested in applying for funding should submit an application to:

Kirk Huang, Grantman Committee Chair
25 Mulberry Drive, Albany, NY 12205
Or send an email to: kkhbravo@yahoo.com

California Town Apologizes for Past Discrimination Against Chinese Americans

By *Winnie Lin*

On May 14, nine of us joined hundreds of others in Pacific Grove for the Walk of Remembrance to honor the contributions of Chinese to that community near Monterey. USCPFA member Gerry Low-Sabado, who died in 2021, started this walk 11 years ago. She was a fifth-generation descendant of a Monterey Bay Chinese fisherman.

The messages of this walk were, “change with kindness, remember and move forward, and diversity, equity and inclusion.” Gerry’s husband, Randy Sabado, has carried on her legacy, and the walk continues to attract wide attention.

This year, many local and California state officials came to the event, including California State Controller Betty T. Yee and former Oakland Mayor Lai Jean Quan.

Most significantly, on behalf of Pacific Grove, Councilmember Chaps Poduri gave an official apology to the Chinese descendants. This is the fifth city in California to take such action, along with Antioch, San Jose, Los Angeles and San Francisco.

A few days before this ceremony, the Pacific Grove City Council unanimously approved an “Apology Resolution to the Chinese Village Community and Descendants for systemic discrimination, acts of fundamental injustice, violence and cruelty.” It acknowledged the following:

The first men and women settlers from China arrived by ship before California’s statehood, and were met with prejudice and discrimination.

The Point Alones fishing village became the largest Chinese fishing settlement in California by 1906. On the evening of May 16, 1906, a fire of suspicious origin swept through the village, destroying most of the more than 100 buildings.

In the late 19th century, the town passed an ordinance that banned Chinese from fishing during the day, forcing them to do their work under dangerous nighttime conditions. Poduri also noted that Pacific Grove had, for decades, had an ordinance banning ethnic Chinese and other minorities from owning property.

As he finished his speech, I happened to be sitting right behind the podium. I softly said, “Everybody, say ‘thank you.’”

The crowd happily followed my direction and said, “thank you!” I was shocked that they had heard me. Some of my friends said, “Your voice carries.”

When I saw a diverse group, including whites, blacks, women, men and children holding large photos of Chinese fishermen, I realized that the tide has definitely changed to pro-Chinese instead of anti-Asian.

Shelly Gin, a sixth-generation Chinese fishing village descendant, was there to accept the apology. She recalled that her grandmother was bitter at her lack of opportunities and distrustful of white people and mainstream society because of discrimination.

Gerry spent the latter part of her life tirelessly working to bring awareness of the Chinese fishermen’s contribution to the community. Chinese developed fishing techniques and helped conduct research that enhanced the economic development of the region. Gerry once said, “We will not let others sweep our history under the rug.”

Now, on top of her messages, “diversity, equity, and inclusion,” I added my own, “unity” which I think is the ultimate goal of this movement. The night before the walk, I stayed up late to make four banners and added Chinese characters: diversity 差异, equity 公平, inclusion 包容 and unity 团结.

Shirley Lin Kinoshita, a board member of the USCPFA South Bay chapter who is an artist, made two signs with a peony, China’s national flower, on each. Because of the signs, we attracted a lot of attention and had our photos taken by many people, including the official event photographer.

The nine members of our group were John Marienthal, president of the USCPFA South Bay chapter; Shirley Lin Kinoshita, her husband Kim Kinoshita, me (Winnie Lin), my husband, Kenny Lin, two friends, Aileen Nicholas and Aubrey Szanto, from East Bay, and Eva Atkinson and her daughter Anna from Owensboro, Kentucky.

We were very happy that we made it



(From left) Shirley Lin-Kinoshita, John Marienthal and Winnie Lin at the event.

to the walk, using our voices to speak out against injustice. Most importantly, we witnessed the historic statement by Pacific Grove to the Chinese community. 友

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

Atlanta Connects With Student Group

The Atlanta USCPFA chapter is developing a friendship with the East Asia Collective (EAC), a student group at Emory University. The EAC members are mostly undergraduates, including many Chinese. EAC puts out a newsletter, which includes news from China.

Our leadership committee held a get-acquainted Zoom meeting with the EAC group. We agreed to participate together in future activities, such as our chapter’s forums. They have similar events, so we hope this can be a good way to bring in some younger members.

Long-time members will recall that USCPFA-Atlanta used to host visiting Chinese scholars and students at Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners.

—From Ed Krebs, National Board member and Atlanta chapter president

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Winter issue (January)—Materials due Oct. 15
Spring issue (April)—Materials due Jan. 15



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