



April 2011

Australia-China Friendship Society

Victorian Branch (Inc).ABN 39 746 574 225

NEWSLETTER

4TH FLOOR, ROSS HOUSE, 247 FLINDERS LANE, MELBOURNE VIC 3000

TEL/FAX: 03 9654 8099

MOBILE: 0431 155 139

E-MAIL: ACFS.VIC.@GMAIL.COM

WEB: WWW.ACFSVIC.ORG

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

APRIL 2011

It is with great pleasure that on behalf of our ACFS (Vic) I welcome the new Chinese Consul General, Mr Shi Weiqian. Our society looks forward to working with Mr Shi and his staff to further the great cause of friendship between the Chinese and the Australian people.

In mid-March I hosted an informal dinner for Mr Zhang Haifeng and his wife who were on a brief visit to Australia, and their daughter who is currently studying in Queensland. Mr Zhang is the First Secretary to the Governor of Shandong Province. Also in attendance at the dinner was Ms Georgina Patterson of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. Discussions took place concerning our Society's links with Shandong Province and also in relation to a unique rubber processing technology which has been established here in Australia.

I also had the pleasure of meeting with Mr. Bill Wilson, the President of the Australian Sister Cities Association. I had previously met Bill in Shanghai in September 2010 and we discussed areas of common interests and activities.

This newsletter displays a new ACFS Logo. After lengthy discussions with our other state branches, it was decided to adopt a common logo which will be readily recognisable internationally and which will demonstrate the national character of our Society. This is a great step forward.

Our committee has discussed the issue of member's and supporter's feedback on our newsletter and our activities. This is most welcome and I encourage any comments or criticisms. Without our membership's feedback and involvement we cannot function to our full potential. I also encourage contribution from you or your organisation of any

items relevant to our charter (200-300 words). These may be book reviews, travel reports, commentaries on topical subjects and the like.

On a national level I am delighted to announce that agreement has been reached by our National body, the two New Zealand China Friendship Societies and the Tongan China Friendship Society to proceed with our plans to establish the South Pacific Association of China Friendship Societies. We are in the process of formulating a constitution. Further progress reports to follow.

Yours in Friendship

President : John D Breheny

ACFS Chinese New Year Picnic

- Robin Matthews

On Sunday 13 February, ACFS members enjoyed a picnic in the Fitzroy Gardens to celebrate Chinese New Year and welcome the Year of the Rabbit.

The picnic spot was adorned with red and gold balloons to identify the picnic location.

The Committee was well represented and we were pleased Betty Little, long standing member of the ACFS was able to attend.

This was the first Victorian ACFS activity for 2011.

Members brought food and drink and shared many delicacies of Chinese and other origin such as dumplings, noodles, rice dishes, soup, cakes and sandwiches.

There was great conviviality and many joined in a spontaneous Tai Chi lesson.

The un seasonal Melbourne weather was a little cool but it didn't dampen enjoyment of the Members or their friends who attended.



Australian students in the dark as Asia's century dawns

Jenny McGregor - April 13, 2011

Future generations are ill-prepared for dealing with our major partners.

Two decades ago, Australia traded with China at about the level we now trade with Malaysia. For a long time it was a slow-growing relationship - just a worm creeping up the graph. Then it jumped.

Now Australia is more dependent on the Chinese economy than any other country in the world. And, as Australian ambassador to China Geoff Raby says, it is hard to conceive of the possibility of any other country on Earth ever again replacing China as our top market.

It is in this environment that we must decide as a nation how we want to equip the next generation of Australians. Is it enough that just 300 non-Chinese-heritage students studied Mandarin at year 12 level in Australia in 2009? Are we engaging fully in this so-called "Asian century" if Indonesian language learning disappears entirely at year 12 level, as it will, on current trends, within five years?

One could argue that language is not the key knowledge required, and I would not entirely disagree. We know from Australian businesses active in Asia that speaking the local language is useful. What matters even more, though, is knowledge of the people, their histories and social structures, their legal frameworks and political processes.

Yet very few Australian students are learning anything about Asia. Despite the inclusion of one or two texts with an Asian theme on Victoria's VCE English curriculum in 2008, examiners' reports found little evidence of teachers or students having chosen them.

A 2009 study found that just 2 per cent of year 12 history students chose to study history with Asian content, while 65 per cent chose Germany and 19 per cent Russia.

Economics is a significant driver for educational policy. Parents often ask, when confronted with competing priorities in an already crowded curriculum, how will this help my child get a job?

Business leaders have been saying for some time that a deficit of Asian languages and cultural understanding is holding back our integration with the region.

But the message that these skills are badly needed has yet to penetrate sufficiently well into school systems and families. Indeed, this is an inter-generational task that has not been helped by stop-start national policies on Asian studies and languages. Business people also express anxiety about the danger of Australia not being "ready" for the Asian century. High-profile rejections of foreign investment from Asia in recent times, for example, may be based on real national interest considerations, or could they be the result of negative attitudes in the community?

From a national interest perspective, we need people who can navigate not only the complex worlds of international finance, but who are equally able to make decisions that are free from unnecessary confusions about another country's culture.

And while prosperity matters, there are other reasons for wanting a broad community understanding of Asia.

New threats to stability and social harmony require an Asia-engaged Australia. We face a rapidly changing global landscape, with large population movements, new viral diseases, people smuggling, terrorism and even climate change.

In diplomacy, we have seen friction over violence against Indian students in Melbourne and Sydney, over the arrest in China of Australian mining executive Stern Hu, over our Defence white paper's allusion to China as a potential threat.

Within Australia, we could benefit from an education system that enhances a sense of our common humanity and shared future - something many young Australians feel strongly about. Multiracial societies need to be nurtured.

And while there is no question that it is essential our students learn about the foundations of our own society, the roots of liberal democratic ideals and the histories of Western civilisation, it also cannot be doubted that encouraging schools to teach children about Asian societies will help build a more harmonious community.

Australia's political leaders are crucial to this project. Since 1970, there have been a depressingly high number of reports - at least 20 - calling on federal governments to invest much more in creating the



student demand and teaching supply for Asian studies and languages education.

The Rudd/Gillard government has shown leadership: \$62.4 million was allocated to the National Asian Languages and Studies in Schools program from 2008 to 2011. But that program is due to end soon and it was never sufficient for the magnitude of the task. Business leaders are urging the government to not only continue this funding but increase the investment.

Equipping future generations of Australians for the challenges of this century requires a game-changing vision that ensures we don't consign our children to the fringes of global action.

It requires prime ministerial leadership and a long-term national commitment to a level of investment that will deliver globally competent citizens.

Jenny McGregor is chief executive of Asialink and the Asia Society, Australia.

Chinese People's Humour

Those of us who have Chinese friends will know humour is very much part of their character. Chinese are always ready to laugh, yet some Australians express surprise when I mention Chinese humour. Maybe the old picture of a bespectacled Chinese focusing on work or study is so ingrained into Western brains that they are blind to the warm human side.

Then there is language. In humour, idiom is of vital importance. In Chinese humour, spoken language plays a huge part, often untranslatable. A slight change in intonation can result in hilarious connotations, as can double-meanings of written characters.

My inability to laugh at Chinese jokes showed when I stepped into a taxi at Guiyang airport and the cab driver made an excuse for the pouring rain: "The sun is too expensive here." This is a pun on the name of the city. Once translated and explained, I understood, but it did not trigger spontaneous laughter.

A popular form of humour in China is "cross talk" (comedy duos) - comedians become celebrities if they are good at it. Chinese friends translated some exchanges but I could not find one line funny enough to make me laugh - all was lost in translation.

Foreigners are a rich source of amusement: children laugh at our efforts to pronounce Chinese. Even hairy legs and bushy eyebrows seem hilarious if displayed by Westerners (who "look funny" to start with).

When pressed to tell a joke, Chinese sometimes tell variations of gags we read 50 years ago in Readers Digest; they believe these are new and of Chinese origin! But there are other undoubtedly Chinese jokes, very old and still funny.

For example: "A monk walks past a cemetery at night and is attacked by a demon. He has a hard time fighting it off and just as he seems about to succumb, a traveller comes by and helps the monk, saving his life. Ever so grateful, the monk is eager to show his thanks. He takes an amulet from around his own neck and hands it to his saviour saying: "Here, take this lucky charm which has been in my family for generations. It is guaranteed to save you from being attacked by demons!"

Often I am asked about political cartooning in China. Are artists free to have a go at anything? Unfortunately a simple yes or no cannot suffice. There is a traditional respect for authority that underpins self-censorship. There are common "approved" targets: bureaucracy, shoddy work, Japanese militarism, American imperialism. Education has always been valued highly in China and one common target of ridicule was unlearned people, especially if they pretended to be educated. Some targets have declined over the years. Western fashions, once seen as ridiculous, are now widely adopted. To criticise government is seen as unhelpful to social stability and unity, though I suspect some cartoonists occasionally itch to have a go. What some might call blind obedience to government policies, others see as social conscience, policies which, despite shortcomings, are moving in the right direction. The incredible success of the Chinese economy and general prosperity is undeniable.

There was indeed a time when cartoonists had to consider the implications of every line they drew. There are examples (now amusing) from the days of the Cultural Revolution, when a ladder innocently leaning against a wall could lead to intense questioning by the Red Guards: Did the cartoonist try to say that China was full of thieves? What else was being implied? Why these expressions on the faces?



Australian cartoonists have for some years worked towards closer relations with their Chinese colleagues and to our shame it must be said that Australia lags far behind China in financing exhibitions, festivals or exchanges. Consider the cultural project in Guiyang, where a huge derelict diesel-factory is being converted into a cartooning centre bound to become an international drawcard. Australian cartoonists have already donated works for its archives and pledged future cooperation. Beijing and other cities have already completed similar projects and on a scale that makes our projects look tiny. As Professor John Lent (Chair of the Guiyang Project) says: "The Chinese never do anything on a small scale".

He's not wrong there!

Rolf Heimann was for years Vice President of the Australian Cartoonists Association and is a regular visitor to China. In 2003 he was voted Australian Cartoonist of the Year. He has published numerous books and is on the Board of Governors of the Guiyang Project.

A NIGHT AT THE MOVIES WITH LINDA LIN DAI

On the evening of February 17th 2011, some members of the ACFS were invited to attend the first of a series of films starring Linda Lin Dai, at the wonderful ACMI (Australian Centre for the Moving Image) at Federation Square in Melbourne. I had the great pleasure of accompanying the Victorian Branch President, Mr John Breheny, along with other executive members as well as other guests.

I have to admit, that despite my age being one where the film career of Linda Lin Dai was within my potential orbit, I had not heard of her. We were treated to drinks and nibbles and a short explanatory presentation by the Director of ACMI, and the curator of the film season dedicated to "this queen of Hong Kong cinema".

The season ran from February 17th to 28th, and they even had alongside the film season, a mahjong competition for beginners to experts in the ACMI lounge, with a Linda Lin Dai mahjong prize for the winner.

Linda Lin Dai had a brief but successful career and is described as a superstar actress of the 50's and 60's, having won four Best Actress Asian Film Awards. She made many of her films with the

legendary Shaw Brothers Studio in Hong Kong. The season of films was made possible by the recent restoration of old film footage, due to advances in digital film technology today, under the Celestial Pictures mantle, as they have taken over the former Shaw Brothers film archives.

Linda was masterful in many genres of film, from tragedy, romance, to folk legends and musicals. Her rendition of the key song in the film we saw, "Love Without End", is still popular in China today apparently. In the comfort of one of the many cinemas at ACMI, and described as the film Linda Lin Dai made when at the pinnacle of her screen career, I was engrossed in this tale of tragic love. Linda Lin Dai plays the part of a songstress who arrives in the city from her village and falls in love with a man, whom she sacrifices everything for. A highly emotional film, with remarkable cinematography, her acting, singing and totally believable portrayal, was rivetting.

Linda Lin Dai made a huge impression throughout Asia and beyond, and was described as simultaneously being able to demand what she wanted from her film industry colleagues, whilst being able to portray soft, appealing and engaging characters as well as feisty heroines, on screen. She married the son of a former Yunnan Governor in 1961, they had one son, but Lin Dai tragically took her own life in 1964.

As Brian Hu, editor and specialist in Asian film states in his blog on the ACMI website (2011), "Linda Lin Dai was the biggest Chinese star of her time. Her fans knew it, her studios knew it, and she knew it". And of her tragic early death he writes, "Perhaps a better way to remember Lin Dai is through the songstress film Love Without End (1961). As she sings the title song onstage for the last time, the audience is completely still. When the camera tracks back to reveal her husband's face, we can't help but feel his fear that even though the song sings of love's immortality, this may be the last time we get to hear the tearful ballad in the flesh. "Forget not your tears, forget not your laughter. Forget not the sorrow of leaving..."

ACMI have a large film library, and ever changing and varied exhibitions of film genres to suit many interests, I would encourage all members to join up or check out their diverse program, there is sure to be something there for everyone.

ACFS Member - Liz O'Connor



Zhou Enlai

Barry Pond ACFS Melbourne

Childhood Zhou Enlai was born on the 5th March 1898 in the town of Huaian, located in Jiangsu Province. His given name means the “coming of grace.” He came from a financially impoverished upper class family. He saw very little of his father who was usually absent from home looking and undertaking work in many different locations. While still an infant, his uncle died leaving behind a childless young widow. This well educated aunt became his foster mother, and she lavished much attention on young Zhou Enlai. This aunt provided him with his earliest education. By the time he was ten years of age, however, his natural mother and later his foster mother had died.

Schooling In 1910 at the age of twelve, Zhou Enlai first attended school. He was enrolled in the sixth grade. In 1913 Zhou Enlai entered the Nankai Middle School in Tianjin. The principal of this school was a former naval officer, Zhang Boling. Because of high entrance test scores, Zhou Enlai was placed with older students and bettered them in literature and social sciences. In addition, he wrote many articles for the school newspaper a number of which were on political themes. During his time at the Nankai School, Zhou was hired by the principal to work in the school office as a part-time secretary. This enabled him to pay for his tuition and accommodation thus making him financially independent of his relatives. In the spring of 1917 at the age of nineteen, he graduated from this school.

The May Fourth Movement After a stay in Japan where amongst other things he studied the works of Karl Marx, events in China drew Zhou back home in April 1919. Japan had extracted concessions from a weak Chinese government which included a claim to China’s Shangdong Province. To the horror of many Chinese, these concessions were ratified within the Treaty of Versailles by the victorious powers of World War 1. Zhou joined in what was to become the May Fourth Movement organising throughout many cities a series of demonstrations, strikes at Japanese owned factories and persuading merchants to close their offices and shops. In January 1920, Zhou led a group of students petitioning for the release of arrested students and the dismissal of the local chief of police. He and the other students were promptly arrested and spent the next six months in gaol. During this period of incarceration, he studied the life of Karl Marx and compiled two books.

Journey to France After being released from gaol in September 1920, Zhou left for France under a work-and-study programme. Most of his time in France was consumed with work and politics. At that particular time, France had a manpower shortage. Zhou thus easily found work as a mechanic in the Renault factory. During this particular period, Zhou Enlai became a committed socialist. He was of the belief that it was the path that China should follow. When the Chinese Communist Party was formed in Shanghai in July 1921, he became a foundation member of the French branch. One of his earliest recruits was Deng Xiaoping. One of Zhou’s greatest talents, that of negotiation, surfaced and matured during this period. He had the patience to listen and talk through an issue until it was resolved.

Return to China Zhou returned to China in 1924. At that time a Nationalist Party Government was being set up in Guangzhou under the leadership of Dr. Sun Yat-sen. Also at that time the Chinese Communist Party allied itself with the Nationalists. In fact, the CCP was able to operate as a block within the Nationalist Party. Because of his European experience, Zhou was appointed to the army’s political wing where he was responsible for the training of political commissars.

During his stay in Europe, Zhou continued to correspond with a fellow activist, Deng Yinchao. He had long been opposed to arranged marriages and had refused many such offers on previous occasions. Soon after his return, he married Deng Yinchao. This was not only a relationship of husband and wife but also of fellow revolutionaries that lasted for more than fifty years.

After the death of Dr. Sun Yat-sen in March 1925, the various wings of the Nationalist Party began to draw apart. Chiang Kai-shek, the key man in the Nationalist Army, viewed the increasing influence of the CCP with deep suspicion. In March 1927, Zhou successfully led a general strike and a takeover by armed workers who seized police stations and military arsenals in Shanghai. The Nationalist Army, waiting outside the city, entered it unopposed. Chiang Kai-shek established a government in Nanjing, and proceeded to purge CCP members in government offices and the military. In Shanghai, the Nationalist Army crushed the armed workers who had delivered the city to them and then systematically arrested and executed CCP members. Zhou narrowly escaped execution and fled to Wuhan.



The Long March In late 1931, the first Chinese Communist Government was formed. Called the Jiangxi Soviet, it was headquartered near Ruijin. With Nationalist troops arresting CCP members in cities throughout China, Mao Zedong was of the view that it was not practical to lead a revolution from the cities. Zhou Enlai and other members of the leadership did not initially share this view. After numerous attempts by the Nationalists to overrun their base, the other members of the CCP leadership came to share Mao's view. Thus in October 1934, the Chinese Communists commenced their now famous Long March, a journey of approximately 10,000 kilometers that took 12 months to complete. The Chinese Communists established their new base in northern Shaanxi Province, initially in the town of Wuqi and later at Yan'an.

Mao Zedong won a dominant position within the leadership of the CCP. From that time onward, the Party followed the policy of agrarian rather than urban revolution.

Japanese Invasion For the next ten years, Zhou Enlai was the chief publicist and negotiator for the CCP, not only for China but also to the rest of the world.

The Communists took the position that the Japanese invaders were their principle enemy. The Nationalists, lead by Chiang Kai-shek, took exactly the opposite view. Two local warlords allied to Chiang doubted his resolve to fight the Japanese. Chiang visited them with the aim of persuading them to continue the fight against the Communists. Instead, when he arrived, he was promptly placed under arrest. A Communist delegation lead by Zhou was invited to determine the fate of Chiang. At that time many people assumed that Chiang would be executed. The leadership of the CCP took the view that Chiang should be released providing he agreed to form a united front against the Japanese. Despite considerable difficulties, Zhou managed to achieve this objective.

A good deal of Zhou's time was now spent in the in the Nationalist capital initially located in Nanjing. As the Japanese advanced, the capital was moved to Wuhan and later to Chongqing. His job was chief negotiator for the CCP. His prime responsibility was to prevent the united front from falling apart. During this period of time, Zhou became well known to the officials of many foreign embassies. In addition, he also organised clandestine activities in Nationalist controlled areas.

The Communists were far more successful in fighting the Japanese than were the Nationalists. Between

1938 and 1945, the number of people in Communist controlled areas increased from 1.5 to 90 million. Correspondingly, the size of their army increased to 900,000 with a militia of 2.2 million. In northern China, the Japanese only occupied large towns. The countryside was in the hands of the communists.

Civil War Victory At the end of World War 2, Zhou Enlai attempted to negotiate for the formation of a coalition government, in which the Communists could share power. This, however, was not to be. By November 1946, the civil war began in earnest, and Zhou returned to Yan'an. The question is often asked, how were the Communists successful when they faced a better armed and numerically superior foe? They concentrated on winning the support of the peasants who in turn respected them and set up village peasant associations. The Communist soldiers were well disciplined and politically motivated. In contrast, the Nationalist soldiers were often press-ganged into service and often deserted at the first opportunity.

During the civil war, Communist propaganda proved very fruitful. In many cases, whole Nationalist commands and their troops defected with their equipment. Zhou and other members of the CCP leadership were continually on the move. They maintained contact with their forces via radio. Most of the large battles in the civil war occurred in the countryside. After negotiating a surrender, the Communist armies often entered large cities such as Shanghai and Beijing unopposed. By the spring of 1949, the Communist armies controlled all of China north of the Yangtze. By the end of 1949, they controlled the entire mainland while the Nationalists fled to Taiwan. The population was not necessarily committed to the Communists. What they hoped for was that their new masters were more capable in governing China than were the Nationalists.

Establishment of the Peoples Republic of China

On the 1st October 1949, Zhou Enlai stood beside Mao Zedong and Zhu De above the Gate of Heavenly Peace in Beijing as Mao proclaimed the establishment of the Peoples Republic of China. While Mao became the President and Chairman of the Central Committee of the CCP, Zhou was appointed Premier and Foreign Minister. He was and remained part of the collective leadership for the rest of his life. It would appear that Zhou's leadership contained the qualities of one who wishes to serve rather than one who wishes to rule. He avoided identifying himself with any existing group and avoided using his contacts in the army, Party and government. He lived frugally, and he did not use his



position to favour friends and members of his family. In addition, he had little time for those who practiced flattery and sycophancy. One personal quality he did have which is rare in politicians is that he was quite open about his failures.

Early in his stewardship as Foreign Minister, Zhou Enlai managed to negotiate a firm relationship between China and the Soviet Union. This relationship soured in the early 1960's becoming what was known as the Sino-Soviet Split. Other major events that occurred around this time were the Korean War, the Tibetan Rebellion and the confrontation with India over the border that these two countries shared. Zhou travelled extensively throughout Asia and Africa promoting China as a country interested in constructive international relations which was independent of any other country.

As Premier, he had the day to day control over the administration of a nation of whom eighty percent were peasants, many of them illiterate. Although he was part of the collective leadership, Zhou often had to carry out policies initiated by others. As such, he was involved in drawing up and implementing successive Five Year Plans for economic development. Mao was not enthusiastic about formal education and training, whereas Zhou championed research in those areas earmarked for rapid development such as atomic energy, aeronautics and electronics. The relationship between Mao and Zhou Enlai was one of colleagues rather than friends.

The Great Leap Forward Mao hoped that China could, with revolutionary zeal, overcome many of the great obstacles that held the country back from rapid economic development with one mighty effort by its huge population. This called for greater collectivization at the local level and for small-scale labour intensive industries such as coal-mining, fertilizer production and so called backyard manufacture of iron and steel. It is said that this programme was far too ambitious and foundered in the first year. The Great Leap Forward stunted China's growth by several years.

The Cultural Revolution In 1966, Mao launched the Cultural Revolution in order to remake the Party into a revolutionary instrument. Mao did not want China to develop into the type of society that the Soviet Union had become with its new middle classes made up of management, Party and professional elites. He wanted to reduce the gap between the industrial and agricultural societies. Students were encouraged to denounce party officials at the national, regional

and provincial levels. These officials were accused of going down the "capitalist road". Once started, this movement had a momentum of its own. It included workers in major industrial centres and resulted in reduced production. This movement offered an opportunity for some to express grievances and pursue political power.

Zhou Enlai's private views on the Cultural Revolution are unknown. He chose to play an active part in the movement in order not to be accused of being a "capitalist roader". He did not, however, escape denunciation by extreme elements of the Red Guards. In August 1967, angry crowds besieged his offices. Zhou worked tirelessly to maintain the authority of the central government. He often met with main stream members of the Red Guards, listening to their grievances and participating in serious discussion with them. In addition, he flew to various cities throughout China in order to resolve factional disputes. In some provinces, the leadership had to rely on the army to restore order. Clashes between Chinese and Russian troops on their shared borders provided yet another warning to the leadership that further encroachments on China's sovereignty might occur if internal unity was not restored.

The Latter Years In 1970, the leadership saw the USSR as China's principal adversary. In addition, they were aware that China's economy needed to be modernized and improved. Mao and Zhou guided their country into the mainstream of international life. In 1970, diplomatic relations were established with Italy and Canada. In 1971, Zhou co-ordinated what became known as Ping Pong Diplomacy. In October of the same year, China was formally admitted to the United Nations. In February 1972, US President Richard Nixon travelled to Beijing. The first senior official he met was Premier Zhou Enlai. Later that year diplomatic relations were also established with Japan and Australia.

In the period 1972 to 1976, Mao may have been the more dominant figure. Zhou, however, was the more active. He was a moderating influence in the liberalizing of the economic, cultural and social life in China.

Epilogue After a prolonged illness, Zhou Enlai finally succumbed to stomach cancer and died on the 8th January 1976. Zhou Enlai was the Chinese leader best known and respected internationally. Since his death, he has replaced Mao as the leader most warmly regarded by his own people.

THE AUSTRALIA-CHINA FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY'S AIMS

Cultivate friendly relations with the people of China by fostering the study of China's history, language, culture, social and political structure.

Promote mutual understanding through friendly exchanges between the people of China and Australia. Strengthening ties with travel, the exchange of ideas, information and trade between the two countries.

To seek to clarify misunderstandings between the peoples of China and Australia, which may arise from the misrepresentation of information.

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