



Australia-China Friendship Society

Victorian Branch (Inc).ABN 39 746 574 225

Newsletter

December 2022

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

PHONE: 61 478 530 515 E-MAIL: SECRETARY@ACFS-VIC.ORG

FOLLOW US ON  TWITTER @ACFSVIC AND  FACEBOOK @ACFSLTD.



President's Report

Summer isn't very 'summery' and we have not had the sort of good weather associated with this time of the year, so let's trust things will improve.

Sadly, with the rise in COVID cases, we were unable to hold our AGM, but we will try once the graph is on a downward trajectory. In the meantime, keep wearing masks and look after yourselves.

A week ago, Secretary Robin travelled to Canberra for Ambassador Xiao Qian's celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Australia and China. Her report is in this newsletter. I remained in Melbourne to participate in the annual Language and Culture Awards, the first face-to-face event in 2 years. I congratulate all 11 who won the certificate, plaque, and prize, but wonder why there was only one female amongst them! May next year be more balanced!

The Pacific-China Friendship Association (PCFA) had its Board and Extraordinary General Meetings on December 2 - 3. Australia is one of the Board members. After no in-person meetings for 2½ years, the Constitution was changed to make Executive positions permanent and to clearly divide the Association into Board and Executive groups, each with different functions. The next step is to map out plans for the short - and medium-term, and send them to the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (CPAFFC - Youxie).

In closing, I thank once more the hard work of the Committee – the administrative work of Secretary Robin, the cultural reviews of Lia, the numbers-crunching of Treasurer Ian, the communications work of Tower and the general support and input of Damon and Joe. I hope you have a safe, happy,

and sunny festive season and we'll see each other in the new year, maybe for the AGM first of all. Remember too that Chinese New Year (Year of the Rabbit) falls on January 22, so there will be festivities around that time. Rest, revive and have a wonderfully peaceful end of year.

Kind regards,

Anthony Leong President ACFS Vic Branch

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS BETWEEN AUSTRALIA AND CHINA

On 9 December, I was fortunate to attend a reception at the Chinese Embassy hosted by His Excellency Mr XIAO Qian Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to Australia.

The occasion was to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Australia and China.

The event was held in the delightful gardens of the Embassy and attended by diplomatic missions from around the world, academics, business entrepreneurs and friends of China.



Seven guests including previous Australian Ambassadors, DFAT Deputy Director, Nicholas Whitlam, academics, industrialists and ping pong players recalled their experiences of working in and engagement with China. Guests were bestowed with beautiful weather, entertained by concert performers and enjoyed a sumptuous buffet meal.

It was good to meet up again with ACFS colleague from Darwin Shu Qin Li and other friends from the Embassy.

Various gifts were presented to the Ambassador and attached is a photo of a painting of Gough Whitlam and Mao Tse Tung.

Robin Matthews



AUSTRALIA CHINA FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY VIC BRANCH INC

9 December 2022

His Excellency the Chinese Ambassador to Australia
Mr Xiao Qian
Embassy of the People's Republic of China
15 Coronation Drive
Yarralumla,
ACT Australia

Dear Ambassador Xiao Qian

In 1951, students from the International Students' Club of Melbourne University formed the "Australia - China Society". Amongst them was one destined to become Deputy Prime Minister of Australia, Dr Jim Cairns, and soon-to-be-married Maurice Leong and Eunice Chinn.

In early 1972, my father, Maurice Leong, 梁國祥 stood on the Melbourne Town Hall stage to introduce the Australian Labor Party leader, Mr Gough Whitlam, to an excited Chinese audience. This was the first time Chinese had publicly participated in white Australian political life. Among the pledges Mr Whitlam gave was recognition of the People's Republic of China and denunciation of the White Australia Policy.

With the 1972 election, Australia voted for progressive, structural reforms. Chief among these was diplomatic recognition of China. The change from a conservative government to a progressive Labor government was heralded by the Labor election campaign, whose theme was "**It's Time**".

The Australian people had tired of conservative governments – the final insult being the Vietnam War. Led by courageous Ms Jean Maclean and Dr Jim Cairns, hundreds of thousands protested against the war, with "**It's Time**" chanted by ordinary Australians frightened for the future. It was indeed "**Time**", and on 21 December 1972, a new Whitlam Labor government ratified diplomatic relations with China.

The badge pinned to this letter is a symbol of the sweeping change in Australia-China relations. The badge was worn by many thousands to signal change – Australia should remember this now.

This simple item, Ambassador, is a reminder that from humble beginnings, great achievements can be made. This possibly is among the smallest gifts you are given, but symbolically amongst the most powerful. It is a reminder of the catalyst for change – two simple English words.

On behalf of the ACFS, we wish you well and may the friendship between our two countries continue.

Kind regards,



Anthony Leong
President
ACFS Vic Branch



ACFS VIC BRANCH LANGUAGE AND CULTURE AWARD

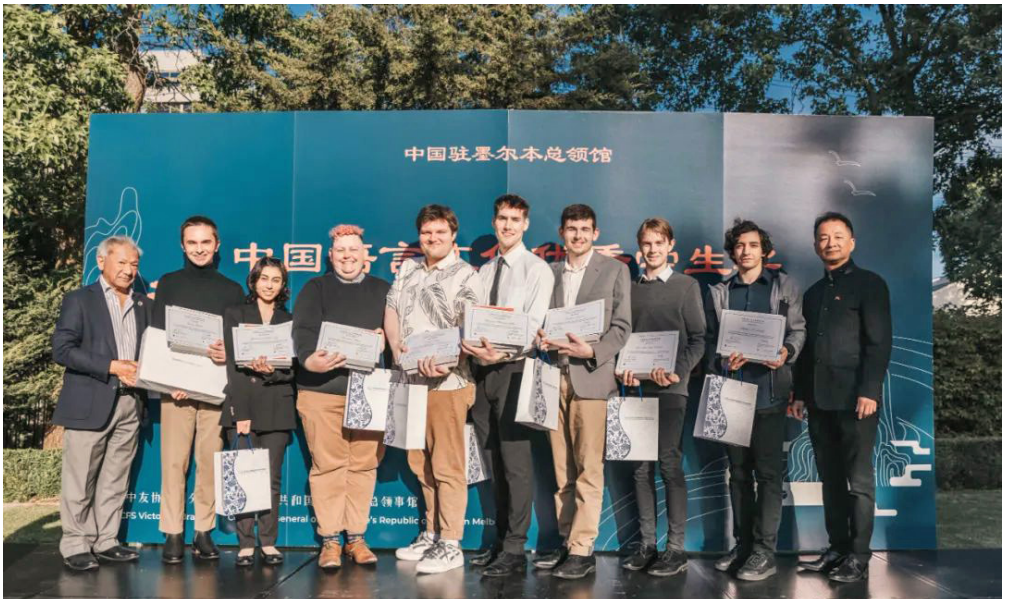
Eleven tertiary educated students received awards for their Chinese language proficiency and knowledge of Chinese culture at a ceremony hosted by the Chinese Consulate in Melbourne on 9 December.

ACFS Vic Branch President Anthony Leong and Acting Consul General Zeng Jianhua presented the prizes. Prizes consisted of a certificate, plaque and computer tablet or Iwatch.

The winners were selected by the Chinese Teachers Association who attended a range of Victorian universities.

The Award recipients were able to meet one another and ACFS Committee members at a delightful evening garden party at the Consulate. Guests enjoyed a sumptuous meal and were entertained by a player of a traditional Chinese guzheng.

The Committee looks forward to many of the recipients joining future ACFS activities to practice their language skills and share their knowledge and experiences of friendship.



Award students and President ACFS Vic and Acting Consul General Zeng Jianhua

PACIFIC CHINA FRIENDSHIP ASSOCIATION

The PCFA held an extraordinary meeting in Auckland New Zealand earlier in December. The meeting over two days was attended by the sixteen member Pacific countries or their nominees. Australia was represented by our National President, Jan Everett Tasmania, Tower Liu Victoria, Roz Hanley Western Australia and Robin Matthews Victoria. Anthony Leong Victoria President and Secretary General of PCFA.

The Pacific China Friendship Association was formally established in 2016 to strengthen relations and enhance friendship and understanding between the peoples and nations of the Pacific and China. It was also to participate in projects of mutual interest, including cultural, educational, and economic activities. PCFA contributes to a peaceful, prosperous, and just Asia Pacific community, a vigorous hub for cooperative dialogue on critical issues of common concern to the Asia Pacific region.

The first day was a dedicated Board meeting that was also attended by the Presidents of the member associations. ACFS Ltd is one of the five founding Board members of PCFA.

The Board meeting was officially opened by the Patron HRH Princess Salōte Mafile'ō Pilolevu Tuita, Princess Royal of the Kingdom of Tonga. After introductions and nomination of proxies, the meeting voted to accept all Presidents as Board members.

The following day, the meeting heard via video from Ambassador Lin, President of the Chinese Peoples Association of Friendship with Foreign Countries and later in the day from the Shanghai Ocean University and the Chinese Overseas Fisheries Association. The meeting voted to accept changes to the President's report, then broke into discussion groups who reported back that they wanted greater clarification of the executive roles and responsibilities. A working party was established of interested members who worked throughout the night and a new structure emerged the next day consisting of the new Board to be chaired by the Patron or her representative and a new Secretariat for the expanded Board.

We wait to see how the structure will be implemented in the future.

The Difference between Chinese and Western Cultures (中西文化比较)

Philosophy

Let's begin with the difference between western and eastern philosophy. The most often cited difference is, western philosophy is 'fragmentary' while eastern philosophy is 'holistic'. The contemporary philosopher Sankara Saranam wrote "eastern philosophy is concerned with general knowledge while western philosophy aims at specific knowledge". Aristotle emphasizes how a person should conduct themselves to live well while Confucius dealt with the inner and outer life of a person, in other words holistically.

Both philosophies have developed quite separate from one another. Each philosophy is complicated in its own way. Thus as here, comparisons between the two are often over simplified. Western philosophy is derived from Greek Philosophy and its roots can be found in Rome and Christianity, e.g., Latin in its roots. It has influenced most of the western civilisations. Chinese Philosophy is derived from Confucianism. Its roots can be found in classical Chinese Eastern Philosophy and has influenced most of the Asian civilisations.

The two most famous Chinese philosophers were Confucius 孔夫子 (551-479 BCE) and Mencius 孟子 (372-289 BCE). While the two most famous Western philosophers were Socrates (470-299 BCE) who was Greek and Plato (429-348 BCE) as student of Socrates was an Athenian.

Language

Comparing Chinese and western languages is much like comparing chalk and cheese. Chinese is spoken by more people than any other language (about 1.3b people). The Chinese language is all but unique as a first language and there is not one single Chinese language for example: Wu – the oldest more than 3,000 years old, Cantonese – mainly Southern China and Mandarin - some 70% of the population in mainland China.

The written language is the same using either traditional characters or simplified characters. Chinese unlike western languages does not have an alphabet. The written language uses characters based on around 200 pictographs. Some 80% of Chinese characters are (形声字) Morphological words which contains a sound and a meaning component. The rest are referred to as single component characters. Pronunciation of characters uses a combination of 23 initial and 35 final sounds.

Most western languages are Latin based. For example, English, German, French and Italian look somewhat similar. The English language as we know it is the combination of many languages over a very long period of time. Thus, the written Western languages look very similar unlike Chinese compared to other Asian languages, e.g., South Korean although based on pictograms looks very different. Western languages use alphabets ranging from 26 to 30 letters. These are used to construct all words and pronunciation is achieved by combining letters into sounds.

The relationship between language and culture is profound. We use our language to communicate and keep culture alive. Ideas within our culture and language are strongly intertwined. Whether you are born in China or Australia or Europe, it does not matter you are all exactly the same (in fact Confucius said this). It is only when you are exposed to language and culture that you become different. Acceptable behaviours vary from location to location, and this is how culture shapes us and our language (Brooks, 1968). Brooks went on to suggest everyone's view of everything depends on the culture in which we develop.

Communication

When the two cultures communicate, obviously we both use different spoken languages. Some simple differences are Chinese would say: "Hello, my old friend" and in a friendly way say "you should pay attention to your body" or "have you eaten yet". Westerners would say: "Hi", "Good morning" and "G'day". To westerners the Chinese greetings hover somewhere between confusing and rude and no doubt vice-versa.

Both cultures use non-verbal communication, it is said that 90% of our communication is non-verbal. Chinese might shake hands where westerners might hug each other. When Chinese beckon someone it would be with the palm facing down Westerners palm would be facing upwards. Expressing "good" or "ok" with the thumb is often used but, in some Western cultures is quite rude, but not all. In western countries it is not unusual for strangers (in the street) to smile at each other for no other reason than to be polite. In China, this sort of behaviour in public, more often than not, does not occur. Expression in someone's eyes varies significantly from culture to culture. In China one should stare fixedly at the leader and lower the head when the leader speaks to them. In western countries it is not polite to stare at another's face for an extended period.

Globalisation is increasing the situations in which different cultures are finding the need to communicate. Culture is important in the way we communicate if not a determining factor. Not understanding these differences can cause what is known as ‘Pragmatic Failure’ that is to say, the message intended to be communicated is not the one received (Thomas, 1983)

Ian Parker

- *Brooks N (1986) Culture in the classroom. In Joyce Merrill Valdes (Ed.) Culture bound bridging the cultural gap in language teaching. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp 123–128*
- *Jenny Thomas (1983) Cross-cultural Pragmatic Failure in Applied Linguistics in Applied Linguistics.*

A short review of Red Star Over China by Edgar Snow



This is a classic first-hand account of the decades immediately before the successful Chinese People’s War of Liberation culminating in October 1949.

Edgar Snow was an American reporter who spent over a decade in China from 1928. He went to Xi’an in the summer of 1936 and managed to cross the front line of the civil war.

He met many interesting people in the liberated zones and went on to meet the leadership of the CPC and the Red Army in the Yan’an Soviet. He was the first Western reporter to meet them after the Long March. He stayed in Yan’an for 4 months conducting interviews and observing the lives of the leadership and fighters of the army.

It is an invaluable first hand account, with lots of information that have not been known previously. There is so much intimate detail that is fascinating, concerning Mao’s early life, the reasons for the revolution and in more general Chinese history amongst many issues. Some of the most fascinating narratives were his reports of speaking with rank and file soldiers and peasants.

I first read this book more than 40 years ago and I have read it more than once. I read it as a great adventure originally but when I re-read it a few years later, it amazed me even more to realize the detailed writing and the value of his work. Edgar Snow went on to write a number of books on China (the last in 1972) but this stands out as his best work. This is supported by the number of editions that have been published in the last 85 years, in English, Chinese and a number of other languages. In 2016 Hunan TV made a TV series based on this book and those of his first wife Helen Foster, who also wrote under the pseudonym “Nym Wales”. I would highly recommend her books as well, particularly on the co-operative movement.

My China Daily (English/Chinese) **By MAHER Edwin, ZHANG Lixin (Translator)**

Edwin Maher came to China by accident. It happened in Melbourne on a rainy day in March 2003. With nothing better to do, he turned on his shortwave radio to see what stations he could pick up and through the static came a news broadcast in English. At first, he couldn't identify the accent, then the announcer said: This is China Radio International (CRI). A few days later, Maher sent an email with his resume to CRI's English service and was offered a contract to come to Beijing as a Voice Coach. In 2004, he moved to CCTV-9, the English Channel of China Central Television International as News Anchor and Voice Coach. Edwin Maher has been a journalist and broadcaster all his working life, in fact I really started while at primary school when I delivered the daily newspaper in my hometown, Levin, New Zealand, he remembers. Then began a long career in the media, spanning the years between 1965 and now. Edwin Maher has worked in radio and television in both New Zealand and Australia, including 20 years at the ABC. In My China Diary Edwin shares with us not only his experiences in his first year of work in China but also his humour and unique perspective from 'down under.'

Peter

For anyone wanting to get a close up and personal account of this period of the Chinese revolution, this is certainly the book to start with. I highly recommend it.

Red Star Over China by Edgar Snow,
My China Daily (English/Chinese)
By MAHER Edwin, is available at China
Books.



MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

Family Name (Mr /Mrs/Ms/Other)

Given Names

Address P/code.....

Phone Email

VICTORIAN MEMBERSHIP RATES

Family \$40.00 Single \$30.00 Concession \$15.00

Corporate on Application

I/We support the Society's aims: Signature/s

I/We enclose the sum of \$ for my/our membership subscription.

Pay directly into the ACFS Victoria Branch Account,

Commonwealth Bank BSB: 063-019, Account number: 10040625

Please put your name in the subject line & email REFERENCE to

acfs.vic@gmail.com

You may send cheques to the Treasurer at the ACFS office address

YOUR DONATION WOULD BE GRATEFULLY RECEIVED

Promoting Friendship and Understanding Between the
Australian and Chinese 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.

The ACFS Victorian Branch

PRESIDENT: Anthony Leong

SECRETARY: Robin Matthews

VICE PRESIDENT: Damon Feng
Tower Liu

TREASURER: Ian Parker

COMMITTEE: Lia Cross, Darell Egan and Joe Montero

We are always looking for interesting stories and articles to share with our members. Any members who have great stories to tell please contact ACFS office or e-mail to acfs.vic@gmail.com