



US-China Review

Fall 2021

Vol. XLV, No. 4



A 3-Week Trip to China Becomes a 50-Year Stay
The First Chinese to Graduate from a U.S. College
The Joys and Frustrations of Learning Chinese
Honoring Chinese Americans' WWII Service

Letter from the President



US-China Peoples Friendship Association

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Register Early for the Convention

Dear friends of the Chinese people,

I send you best wishes for good health in these difficult times. The Eastern Region is hosting the USCPFA 28th National Convention online starting at 6 p.m. Eastern Time on Friday, November 5 and concluding on Sunday, November 7. "Roots of Friendship: Finding Common Ground" is the theme.

Go to www.uscpfa.org and click on the Eventbrite link to register online or register by mail by sending a \$25 check, payable to USCPFA-Eastern Region, to David Sutor, Convention Treasurer, 6 Winners Circle, Apt. 628, Albany, New York 12205. Best to register early, and no later than October 15. See page 17 of this *US-China Review* for the mail-in registration form and other program details.

The convention committee is planning an exciting program. Friday night includes a personal account of her China connections by sports historian Susan Brownell, and a New England chapter presentation on "China: the Environment and Climate Change."

Saturday evening will open with the plenary and awards and will include PBS documentary filmmaker Dodge Billingsley showing his Chinese art collection. Judy Manton will discuss her family's multi-generational connections to China.

Sunday evening will include discussions on U.S.-China issues by Yawei Liu, Director of the China program at The Carter Center, and Weiping Wu, an expert on Chinese migration and urbanization. Watch for further details on the website.

Please be sure that you are a current member of your USCPFA chapter or member at large. Chapter presidents or treasurers—please send in dues to Marge Ketter, National Membership Chair, by September 30, the cut-off date for membership valuation to determine members eligible for voting at the Convention.

His Excellency Cui Tiankai served as the People's Republic of China's Ambassador to the U.S. for eight years and was an ardent supporter of USCPFA. His calm demeanor and firm approach made him a reassuring figure to me. USCPFA sends him best wishes in his retirement as he vows to continue his friendship role as a private citizen. We look forward to meeting the incoming Ambassador Qin Gang, who has written an introductory letter to USCPFA, included in this issue.

Stay well and join us in November for the first virtual USCPFA National convention! Your participation is vital!

In friendship,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Diana C. Greer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Diana C. Greer
President of USCPFA



US-China Review

Fall 2021 • Vol. XLV, No. 4

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

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is to build friendship between the peoples
of China and the United States.*

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Jaime FlorCruz doing a story about pandas for CNN. See article on page 4.

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The *US-China Review* is published by the USCPFA four times a year. U.S. annual subscription rates are \$38 for individuals and \$38 for institutions; overseas \$49. A charge may be assessed for replacement copies or special requests; contact Subscriptions for details. USCPFA members' subscriptions are included in annual dues. **Address changes should be sent to: USCPFA, 7088 SE Rivers Edge St., Jupiter, FL 33458; email margeketter@bellsouth.net.**

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A 3-Week Trip to China Becomes a 50-Year Stay

Journalist Jaime FlorCruz Arrived in 1971

By Mike Revzin

Jaime (“Jimi”) FlorCruz, 70, was born in the Philippines but has lived in China for most of the past 50 years, first as a student and then as a journalist. FlorCruz is now an adjunct professor of journalism at Peking University.

He is working on a book titled *The Class of 1977*, about the years he studied at Peking University (1977–82), as part of the first class to take the college entrance exam after the Cultural Revolution. Among his classmates was current Chinese Premier Li Keqiang.



Jaime FlorCruz

This interview includes statements he gave in previous interviews in the Philippines and China.

2021 marks 50 years since you first went to China. Did you ever imagine you would stay there that long?

No, in 1971, as an anti-Marcos activist and college student leader in my native Philippines, I went on what was supposed to be a three-week trip to China with 14 other radical students from my country. While I was there, then-President Ferdinand Marcos declared martial law, and I might have been arrested if I had returned. I was among five students who chose to stay in China. My passport eventually expired, and I was a stateless person stranded in China for 12 years.

I read that you almost missed your flight to China?

Yes, I didn’t know about it until years later, but I had overslept on the day my trip was to start and my mother wondered whether or not to wake me up. In the end she decided to wake me up because she knew I wanted to go to China.

The Philippines did not have diplomatic relations with the People’s Republic of China in those days, and China was in the middle of the Cultural Revolution. How did your group get permission to visit?

We were allowed to come in through Hong Kong, without our passports being stamped. We wanted to go to China because we were inspired by Mao Zedong’s “New China” as a development model.

What were conditions like for you during the Cultural Revolution? Were you forced to work?

No, I and the other Filipino students were not required to work, but we requested to go to school or to work. Schools were closed, so we worked on a state farm in Hunan in 1972. Initially, I found it a romantic idea but it didn’t take long for the romance to wear off. Clearly it was not the

We were considered invited guests and were shielded from political campaigns.

utopia that we thought China was. Farm work was tedious and backbreaking. Even though we were never short of food and housing, we lived a spartan life. To fight the cold and damp winter, we learned to use primitive wood-stoves. Once or twice a month, we were treated to hot showers in a city guesthouse an hour’s drive away. Looking back, it was a good experience, a base line of where China came from.

What other work did you do during that period?

In 1973 we moved to Shandong province to work in the fishing industry. I worked on trawler boats, which sailed the Bohai Sea and beyond to catch fish, prawns and other seafood. We typically sailed for



Jaime FlorCruz on the Great Wall in 1971, his first year in China. (Photos courtesy of Jaime FlorCruz).

five to seven days on each trip, enduring back-breaking work and lonely nights.

For you, what was the worst aspect of those early years?

As I said in a *China Daily* interview in recent years, the lack of entertainment, such as good books, plays and movies, was the worst sacrifice. Worse than the physical labor was the boredom—the monotony of life most people suffered at that time.

As a foreigner, how were you treated during the political campaigns?

We were considered invited guests and were shielded from political campaigns. It was exciting to watch them and see the posters, but we were told not to get involved.

Did you attend school in China?

I took two years of intensive Chinese language study at the Beijing Languages Institute (1974–76). I entered Peking University in 1977—the first class after the Cultural Revolution in which students again took a nationwide college entrance examination. Among my fellow students were Li Keqiang, who has been premier since 2013, and Bo Xilai, who became a powerful politician but was later sentenced to life in prison for alleged corruption. I received a B.A. in Chinese history from Peking University in 1982.

What else did you do?

Starting in 1978, I taught English to pro-

fessors at Peking University and later to students at Peking Normal College. I also appeared on Chinese national television, teaching English songs in a weekly program "Let's Sing."

Have you lived anywhere else but China since 1971?

No, but I'm spending longer and longer time in my homeland, the Philippines.

Tell us about your wife and children.

My wife, Ana Elena Segovia, graduated from the University of the Philippines. While waiting to enroll in law school in 1985, she went to Beijing to visit her aunt, a career diplomat who was serving at the Philippine Embassy. We met during her visit.

She returned to Beijing and worked at the International School of Beijing (ISB), and later as business and communications manager of an American law firm in Beijing.

Our two children, Joseph and Michelle, were born in Manila but grew up in Beijing, where they attended the ISB. Joseph works for a bank in L.A. and lives there with his wife and three children. Michelle lives in New York, where she is Asia Society's social media and digital content manager.

Did you dream of growing up to be a foreign correspondent, reporting for magazines and TV on the tremendous changes that have taken place in China over the past five decades?

Goodness, no. When I was in college, I simply hoped to get my degree, find a great job and a pretty and smart (perhaps rich) wife, and drive a red Mustang.

Tell us about your journalism career.

During my senior year at Peking University I became a *Newsweek* stringer (part-time reporter). My first big story was the "Gang of Four" trial. I was able to get inside information because one of my students was the son of a member of the court.

What other major events did you cover?

Various aspects of the economic and social reforms, the 1989 Tiananmen protests, the death of Deng Xiaoping, the 1997 Hong Kong handover, the 2008 Sichuan earthquake, the 2008 Beijing Olympics, and ethnic unrest in Tibet and Xinjiang.

Any other events?

WHAM's concert, which was the first Western pop concert in China. I was there

when Coca-Cola went on sale for the first time. I interviewed Yao Ming when he was drafted by the Houston Rockets to play in the NBA. Despite all these big events, I think the best stories are often of ordinary people.

You served as president of the 400-member Foreign Correspondents' Club of China and have been referred to as the dean of the foreign press corps. Who else did you work for as a journalist?

I was hired by *Time* magazine in 1982, was its bureau chief from 1990 to 2000 and worked for CNN from 2001 until my retirement in 2014.

How has Chinese journalism changed over the years?

I've witnessed China's transformation from the 1970s to present. I know what it was like then, so I appreciate even the small, incremental changes, the baby steps, that China makes. I tend to view China as a glass half-full, not a glass half-empty.

Still, China faces many daunting challenges, some old, some new. China needs to learn from its past mistakes to avoid repeating them. It also needs a free and responsible media, not just to record history but to serve as a watchdog.

The Chinese media has become more robust and diverse but they are still censored. If the Chinese media in the 1970s and 1980s was a bird inside a small cage, now it's a bird inside a bigger cage. Media organizations are still in a cage but there's more room for reporting on topics that are not politically sensitive. Given the constraints on them, I respect their efforts and achievements. It's tough, but young, enterprising journalists are fighting a good fight.

How have women's lives changed since 1949?

The Communists did many terrible things, but they made women's lives better. They



Jaime FlorCruz working on a farm in the 1970s.



Jaime FlorCruz interviews Yao Ming in 2002.

ended foot binding and concubinage, closed down brothels and legalized divorce. When we got there, women were brave strong, independent. As a Chinese proverb says, "Women hold up half of the sky."

What other changes have you seen in society?

My Chinese friends now have much more personal freedom—to travel, to choose where to live, to choose a job. Freedom

Continued on next page

FlorCruz (continued)

of speech has its limits, but most people know where the red line lies. Of course, there are problems. Many are the unintended consequences of the reform, such as environmental pollution and the rich-poor divide. Others are age-old ills, like corruption, official abuse, sexual discrimination and narrow nationalism.

What happened to your four fellow exiles?

Jose Santiago “Chito” Santa Romana, our delegation leader in 1971, is now the Philippine ambassador to China. Before taking this post, he was the Beijing bureau chief for ABC News. Eric Baculinao is the

Beijing bureau chief of NBC News. Grace Punongbayan leads Migrante International, an NGO based in the Netherlands. Rey Tiquia lives in Australia, where he practices acupuncture and has written books about traditional Chinese medicine.

You’ve lived and worked in China for decades. Are you a Chinese citizen now?

No, I am not. I can never be one (because of Chinese law) even if I lived there for 100 years. I’ve adapted well there, learned its culture and language well enough to pass for a local, but I’ve always been an expatriate and a proud Filipino in China.

Any final thoughts?

As I said in a *China Daily* interview, China

is not this perfect, romanticized country, nor is it the big, bad villain some make it out to be.

Similarly, in an interview with CNN.com, I noted that China has changed dramatically. I feel fortunate to have been in the right place at the right time to have witnessed these changes up close.

For better or worse, China now is a major player in the world. I never imagined China could be so prosperous, powerful and proud. Whatever China does, or does not do, has an impact on global affairs and our lives. For our sake, and China’s too, I hope China will emerge as a peace-loving global power. 友

Letter From Chinese Ambassador to USCPFA

President Diana Greer received this letter from incoming Chinese Ambassador Qin Gang in August.

Embassy of the People’s Republic of China
3505 International Place NW, Washington, DC 20008

Dear President Greer,

On the occasion of my arriving in the United States to assume office, I wish to express cordial greetings and best wishes to you.

As Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the People’s Republic of China to the United States of America, I arrived in the United States on July 28 and presented to the Department of State the copy of Letter of Credence on July 29. I will present the Letter of Credence to President Joe Biden soon.

The China-U.S. relationship is at an important stage. The sound and stable growth of China-U.S. relations serves the fundamental interests of the two peoples and meets the overall expectation of the international community. In his call with President Biden on the eve of Chinese New Year, President Xi Jinping pointed out that China and the United States should make joint efforts in the same direction, follow the spirit of no conflict, no confrontation, mutual respect and win-win cooperation, focus on cooperation, manage differences, and work for the sound and stable development of China-U.S. relations. In this way, our two countries can deliver more benefits to the two peoples and make due contributions to fighting the Covid-19 pandemic, promoting world economic recovery and maintaining regional peace and stability.

As Chinese Ambassador to the United States, I feel on me an honorable and significant mission. The China-U.S. relations are rooted in the local and the people, and their exchanges serve as a solid foundation and enduring driving force for the sound and stable development of China-U.S. relations. Over the years, friendly organizations and friends from both countries have made great contributions to promoting friendship and deepening cooperation between the two sides. We highly appreciate their efforts. I look forward to establishing sound working relations with you and your institution US-China Peoples Friendship Association, to jointly follow the spirit of the telephone conversation between the two heads of state and work together for greater China-U.S. exchanges, dialogue and cooperation. I also hope that I can count on your support and assistance for my performance of duties in the United States.

With best regards.

Sincerely yours,



Qin Gang
Ambassador

China Boasts the World's Biggest Shopping Day

By Stephanie Sun

The biggest shopping day in the world, in terms of sales, is not Black Friday, nor is it related to Christmas. It takes place in China, and it's a day that goes unnoticed by most Americans.

It is centered around November 11 (11-11, or Double 11) and, because of the four ones in the date, it was first called Singles' Day. It was originally a day on which college students bought gifts and held parties, hoping to end their single status and become part of a couple. Some say it began on a very small scale at Nanjing University in 1993.

In more recent years, the internet helped it quickly spread to young people in general, and to singles of all ages. It also became a popular wedding date, and a date for couples to celebrate their relationships. Many shops saw this as an opportunity and started to offer discounts to increase sales.

Started Small in 2009

On November 11, 2009, Tmall, the then new and rising e-commerce platform owned by Alibaba and very popular among young people, organized the first Double 11 online sales and promotions event. Only 27 brands participated, and the discounts offered were very small. However, the sales total was much larger than expected—8 million dollars.

Since then, Alibaba has made November 11 the day for its biggest annual sale. The idea spread beyond the original celebration of singles, and Double 11 became the day for large annual sales—both online and at stores—for retailers nationwide.

"Many people wait until this day to buy things that are waiting in their online shopping carts," said Brandon Zhu, an expert on the online retail industry.

Each year, as the influence of this annual event increased, more and more brands offered sales—and overall results kept breaking records. In addition to Tmall, other online platforms, such as JD.com, also saw the business opportunity and joined. In recent years, what is described as the Double 11 sales festival has even spread outside of China to become an important global sales day.



An employee moves packages at a logistics center in Nanjing. Photo by Fang Dongxu, China Daily.

According to Tmall's data, 180,000 brands accounted for 32.8 billion dollars of sales for Tmall on November 11, 2018. In 2019, Tmall's sales totaled 41.3 billion dollars for that day. Because people were confined by the pandemic and relied more

The term “双十一” (Double 11) was trademarked in China by the Alibaba Group in 2012.

on online sales, Tmall's figure reached a new high of 76.7 billion dollars in 2020 for November 1-11. The 2020 sales were different and longer than other years because of the pandemic.

More than 800 million consumers from 216 countries and regions, 250,000 brands and 5 million stores were involved in the Tmall event. More than 76 million Overseas Chinese placed orders in 2020. News coverage was the most extensive ever. Tmall's competitor JD.com made 41.8 billion dollars in sales.

In 2020, sales-related activities began a couple weeks before the actual November 1-11 sales days. Customers could search for items and even make down payments in advance. "People had more time to com-

pare and choose the things they wanted," Zhu said.

Livestreaming, a new trend in sales that took off during the pandemic, further helped with Double 11 sales. Here's how *Forbes* magazine described livestreaming: "It's like Home Shopping Network, but with charismatic, trendy anchors. It's also been described as part infomercial, part variety show."

Along with the increase in the monetary value of Double 11 sales, the variety of items available online has increased tremendously. Clothes were the main products sold during the festival in 2009 and for some years after. However, as more big brands saw the sales opportunity that Double 11 brought, more products were offered.

Almost Anything for Sale

Today, products sold during the festival include clothes, personal care items, books, cameras, food and even cars and heavy equipment. Almost anything you can buy in traditional stores is now available online.

"I bought some groceries and home supplies from JD.com during last year's Double 11 festival. The prices are lower than usual," said Hang Xiaohan, a housewife who lives in Shanghai.

Continued on next page

Singles' Day *(continued)*

At the same time, overseas brands and products are increasing their participation. Korean cosmetics, English tea, French fashions, wine from Argentina and products from Ghana and Chile were among those available last year.

"The best bargain that I had during the Double 11 sales festival was personal health care products. Tmall has an advantage (in bargaining power because it belongs to Alibaba, the largest e-commerce platform in China) in introducing personal health care products from Japan, and its prices are much lower than other importers," said Zhu.

Travel restrictions during the pandemic boosted people's demand for imported goods. There was a 47.3% growth in Tmall International's imports from November

Singles' Day generates more sales than Thanksgiving Day, Black Friday and Cyber Monday combined.

—Richway Group

1 to November 11, compared with that same period a year earlier.

"Double 11's influence in the global market is growing very fast. I think the growth of the overseas market is much faster than the growth of the domestic market. This includes both foreign goods sold to the China market and domestic goods sold to the overseas market," said Zhu.

Delivery companies also saw the opportunity of the fast development of online shopping, and new delivery companies grew like bamboo shoots after a spring

An attempt to promote the Double 11 shopping festival in Belgium met with negative public reaction because November 11, the day World War I ended in 1918, is a day for somber commemoration of the war dead.

—Wikipedia



About 100 couriers from 11 delivery companies gather for a ceremony at a transport hub in Beijing. Photo by Luo Wangshu, Chinadaily.com.cn.

rain. SF Express, ZTO Express, Yunda Express, YTO Express and STO Express have become the main players of the industry.

83 Billion Items Sold

In China, the number of deliveries for the whole year increased from 2.3 billion pieces in 2010 to 83.4 billion in 2020. During most of the year, orders are usually promised to be delivered within one or two days. During the busy Double 11 sales season, most consumers can count on delivery within a week.

From November 1–11, 2020, 3.97 billion packages were handled by China's postal service and delivery companies. On November 11, 675 million packages were handled. That was a 26.16% increase from a year earlier, and a record one-day high.

"The number of people shopping during the Double 11 sales kept increasing. In order to make sure people don't have to wait too long to get delivery, Tmall organized pre-sales and pre-storage," said Zhu.

According to *China Daily*, to deal with the increase in orders for 2020 Double 11 sales, major courier companies had to hire 490,000 temporary staff in advance, and arrange to use 100,000 extra vehicles



An express worker processes packages at a delivery station in Hebei province. Photo by Cao Jianxiang, China Daily.

and an extra 58 million square feet of warehouse space.

To make the event even more attractive, Tmall began to combine sales with entertainment. An annual Double 11 Gala, first hosted in 2015 by Alibaba, has become the opening event of the shopping festival. Held on the night of November 10, and broadcast through the internet to the whole world, the gala connects consumers and Tmall stores. Chinese and international stars like Lang Lang and Taylor Swift, as well as new rising stars that are popular among young people, are invited to perform at the gala. 友

Stephanie Sun is a Chinese journalist who lives in Shanghai.

China to Be First Country Where Most Retail Sales Are E-commerce

By Mike Revzin

This year, China is expected to become the first country in which a majority of retail sales will be through e-commerce. The research firm eMarketer predicts that 52.1 percent of China's retail sales in 2021 will come from e-commerce, up from 44.8 percent last year.

China is far ahead of the country with the next highest rate—South Korea, with 28.9 percent. The U.S. figure is expected to be 15 percent, and the average among Western European countries will be 12.9 percent, the firm predicted. As recently as 2018, China's figure was only 29.2%.

"China seemingly reached a behavioral tipping point over the past few years, wherein e-commerce enthusiasm accelerated rather than leveled off. While the pandemic did not create this trend, it certainly buttressed it, and China's most recent e-commerce boom did not decelerate even after the country got a handle on the virus and the economy fully reopened," the report said. "Last year, brick-and-mortar sales declined by 18.6% in China, and we project brick-and-mortar sales will decline by another 9.8% this year. By comparison, e-commerce grew by 27.5% in 2020 and will grow by another 21.0% in 2021."

China's Unique Factors

China's e-commerce success also derives from many factors unique to that country, and it's possible that no other region will emulate the country's e-commerce transformation—or at least not to such an extreme degree, the researchers predicted.

Ten years ago, e-commerce's share of total retail in the U.S. and China were nearly identical (4.9% and 5.0%, respectively). China's share shot up soon after that for a range of reasons that can be traced to the 2000s and early 2010s.

For example, the emergence of Alibaba, the revolutionary, ubiquitous, easy-to-use Chinese e-commerce platform, gave consumers affordable and reliable access to almost everything imaginable, and swift delivery for just about anything. Not long after, JD.com emulated Alibaba's successful formula, providing another massive and easy option for new shoppers.

Innovative digital payment systems, like Alibaba's Alipay and Tencent's WeChat Pay, were years ahead of their Western competitors in terms of accessibility, ease of use, and the speed in which they became embedded into online (and brick-and-mortar) checkout options.

An inconvenient, non-customer-centric, and often confrontational in-person shopping culture helped motivate shoppers to embrace the straightforward reliability of e-commerce, particularly the ease it offered for making returns and securing refunds, the report said.

A total of 81.3% of e-commerce in China will be via mobile devices this year.

A nearly limitless supply of low-cost delivery services, provided by China's millions of migrant laborers, enabled companies like Alibaba and JD.com to provide same-day delivery for just pennies.

A smartphone-driven m-commerce culture (using mobile handheld devices such as cellphones) existed right from the start. Most Chinese skipped the personal computer era and joined the internet age directly via mobile devices.

Not all of these factors are still in play, the researchers noted. Labor costs in China have skyrocketed, and most buyers and sellers can no longer arrange for consumer products to be delivered within hours for just a few cents. Similarly, the in-person

shopping experience has improved dramatically, thanks perhaps to competition from e-commerce. However, both of these elements played a key role in the consumer's initial embrace of e-commerce. In the early years, it was often cheaper, easier, and more pleasant to use e-commerce than it was to go to the store. That was not the case in the U.S.

Thanks to this early enthusiasm—and, of course, thanks to its enormous population—China today is far out in front of the world in terms of overall e-commerce sales. Despite the U.S. remaining just ahead of China in overall retail sales (\$5.506 trillion versus \$5.130 trillion in 2020), China will outpace the U.S. by nearly \$2 trillion in e-commerce this year, the report predicted.

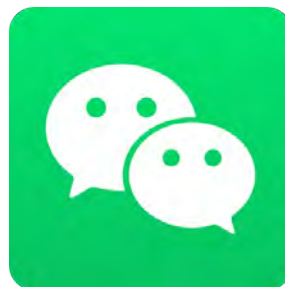
China's culture of m-commerce is still very relevant. A total of 83.1% of e-commerce in China will be via mobile devices this year. Thanks to the early availability of affordable smartphones and their rapid proliferation, online retailers in China have had to be mobile-centric since day one.

The research firm pointed out that social commerce grew by 44.1 percent in China last year and will grow by another 35.5 percent this year, reaching \$363.26 billion. By comparison, social commerce in the U.S. will be about one-tenth of that figure. Social commerce involves selling products directly on social media, such as Facebook, Instagram or the Chinese equivalents, rather than on retailers' sites or branded apps.

Third-Party Commerce

China's WeChat mobile app recently added programs that allow third-party commerce. They are extremely popular among both merchants and consumers, the researchers said.

The researchers' prediction for China said, "In 2022, we project e-commerce sales growth of 11 percent, and that its share will reach 55.6 percent of total retail. The \$3 trillion threshold for e-commerce sales should be breached as well." 友



The WeChat logo



Book Commemorates Chinese Americans' WWII Service

By Maj. Gen. Bill Chen, U.S. Army (retired)

Ethnic Chinese living in America, whether they were U.S. citizens or not, made a major contribution to the U.S. military effort in World War II.

The story of the Chinese American World War II veterans is told in *Unsung Heroes: Recognizing and Honoring Chinese American World War II Veterans*. I was the editor-in-chief of that book, published in 2020, about two years after those veterans collectively became Congressional Gold Medal recipients.

Their story actually begins before Pearl Harbor, when Chinese Americans, such as Arthur T. Chin from Portland, Oregon, performed with distinction in helping China fight the Japanese before the U.S. entered the war. Chin was part of the first group of U.S. volunteer combat aviators. He gained U.S. veteran status and is rec-

ognized as America's first flying ace in World War II. (Veteran status was granted to pilots and crews who supported the Air Transport Command's operations to fly supplies over the Himalayan Mountains from India to China—known as "flying the Hump.")

During the Sino-Japanese fighting, Chinese American communities raised funds for China relief and also organized Chinese American volunteers to fight the Japanese. Among those was Bill King from Locke, California, who went to China in

Chinese Americans served in every theater of World War II and in every branch of the service.

1939. He flew for the Chinese Air Force and was a highly decorated fighter pilot in the Chinese American Composite Wing of the 14th Air Force under General Claire Chennault of the legendary Flying Tigers.

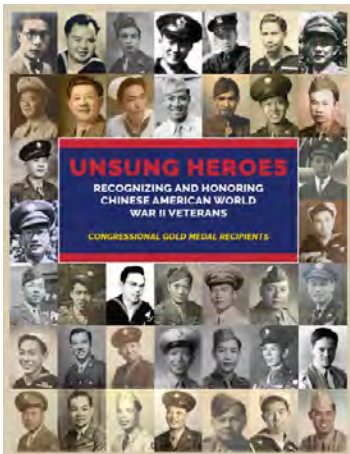
At the time of World War II, there were 100,000 Chinese and Chinese Americans in the U.S., including the U.S. territory of Hawaii. They were largely in major cities, mostly in Chinatowns. For the most part, they largely interacted with other Chinese and Chinese Americans. Chinese in Hawaii probably were more integrated with the general population than those living on the U.S. mainland.

Of those Chinese and Chinese Americans (hereafter referred to jointly as Chinese Americans), about 20,000 volunteered or were drafted and served in the U.S. armed forces. About 40 percent were not U.S. citizens. At that time, the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act prevented most Chinese immigrants from becoming U.S. citizens. The Chinese Americans who were citizens had been born in the U.S. They were descendants of prior immigrants.

Chinese Americans served in every theater of World War II and in every branch of the service. In contrast to other minority groups, such as Japanese Americans and African Americans, Chinese Americans were predominately integrated into the U.S. armed services. The only all-Chinese American units were the 14th Air Service Group and the 987th Signal Company assigned to the China-Burma-India theater.

While there were Chinese Americans who earned every type of award for valor up to the Medal of Honor, the basis for the award of the Congressional Gold Medal to Chinese American World War II Veterans was not bravery or valor. It was that they served and fought for the U.S. as Americans in spite of the discriminatory aspects of the Chinese Exclusion Act, which remained in place until December 1943.

But the real heroes were the Chinese Americans in the U.S. armed forces who were killed in action in World War II. Saint Mary's Square in San Francisco has a memorial plaque honoring Americans of Chinese ancestry who gave their lives for



Top: 1943 Memorial Day march. Above: front cover of *Unsung Heroes*.

the U.S. in World War I and II. Likewise, in New York City, the Kimlau American Legion Post has an arch that is in memory of the Americans of Chinese ancestry who lost their lives in defense of freedom and democracy.

Paved the Way

Collectively, what did these Chinese American World War II veterans do? They:

- Made known to the American public who Chinese Americans were and their abilities.
- Demonstrated their skills, competencies, loyalty and patriotism.
- “Demonstrated highly uncommon and commendable sense of patriotism and honor in face of discrimination,” as stated in the law that awarded them the medal.
- Served with pride as Americans.
- Paved the way for future generations to serve in the U.S. armed services.
- Opened up opportunities for Asian and Chinese Americans to be in mainstream America post-World War II.
- Continued the legacy of progress of Chinese Americans in the U.S., as initially established by the Chinese railroad workers, and enabled following generations to live the American dream.

The story of Chinese American veterans continued after their separation and honorable discharge from the U.S. military. They continued to work hard; brought wives to the United States based on the War Brides Act, or married women already in the United States, and raised families.

They viewed their war experiences as seeing a whole new world outside their family traditions—making friends and acquaintances from all walks of life in America. Many took advantage of the G.I. Bill and began businesses or attended college and started professional careers.

They provided a better life for their families and encouraged their sons and daughters to graduate from college—to live the American dream and be an integral part of mainstream America. Indeed, the Chinese American World War II veterans were part of America’s Greatest Generation, although no book on the Greatest Generation captured their lives and stories.

Gold Medal Design

The U.S. Mint designed the Congressional Gold Medal for Chinese American World War II Veterans. Eligible veterans, or their next of kin, can receive a replica of the medal. The front side of the medal has images of servicemen in all branches of the services. Also, a female nurse is included to represent the service of Chinese American women in the armed services. “Proudly Served as Americans” is also inscribed on that side.



The gold medal

The reverse side shows how Chinese Americans fought in World War II—on land, sea and air—with images of a Sherman tank, the USS *Missouri* battleship and the P-40 fighter of Flying Tigers fame; with a 48-star U.S. flag serving as a backdrop.

Honored at Ceremony

An official virtual award ceremony took place last December, with Speaker of the

Continued on next page

Served With Distinction

Many Chinese Americans distinguished themselves. Some notables:

Francis B. Wai, awarded the Medal of Honor for actions during the recapture of the Philippines.

Gordon Pai’ea Chung-Hoon, awarded the Silver Star and Navy Cross, later promoted to rear admiral, the first Asian American of that rank in the U.S. Navy.

Dewey Lowe, a pilot in the China-Burma-India theater, later promoted to major general, the first Chinese American general in the U.S. Air Force.

Wau Kai Kong, the first Chinese American fighter pilot in the U.S. Army Air Forces.

Randall Ching, the only Chinese/Asian American in the Rangers in World War II; fought from Normandy on D-Day until the end of the war.

Loren L. Low, awarded the Silver Star in the of invasion of Saipan.

Pak On Lee, a member of the original Flying Tigers, later integrated into the U.S. Army Air Forces.

K. J. Luke, achieved the rank of major during the war, making him the highest-ranking Chinese American Army officer at that time.

John C. Young, designed and helped to implement a plan to detonate U.S.-supplied explosives beneath the Japanese garrison in the Battle of Mount Song in Yunnan province—resulting in the reopening of the Burma Road. He returned from war as a major.

Clarence Young, the lead navigator in the air raid on Luzon in the Philippines.

Leo Soo Hoo, a P-51A Mustang fighter pilot, 14th Air Force.

Hazel Yang Lee and Maggie Gee, the first and second Chinese American Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASP) who tested and ferried aircraft and trained pilots.

Jesse Yi Lee, Women’s Army Corps, believed to be one of the first to enlist in the San Francisco Bay area.

Moon F. Chin, distinguished civilian Hump pilot who flew Jimmy Doolittle out of China to India; was granted U.S. veteran status.

WWII Chinese *(continued)*

House Nancy Pelosi presiding. In her remarks, Pelosi said, “Despite decades of systemic racism, discrimination and xenophobia, as many as 20,000 Chinese Americans bravely answered the call to serve to defeat tyranny and to safeguard freedom for all. Shamefully, due to the hateful laws of the time, including the bigoted Chinese Exclusion Act, Chinese

“Despite decades of systemic racism, discrimination and xenophobia, as many as 20,000 Chinese Americans bravely answered the call to serve to defeat tyranny...”

immigrants were unable to gain U.S. citizenship. Still, in the face of this injustice, approximately 8,000 Chinese immigrants who were denied their rights proudly served.”

“The patriotic Chinese Americans who served hailed from every state in the union, served in every branch of the U.S. military and courageously fought in every theater of the war. And wherever they served, their heroism helped secure victory for the Allies and advance the promise of liberty for people around the world,” Pelosi said.

“Today, with fewer than 300 Chinese American veterans of the Greatest Generation remaining, it is more important than ever that we honor their service and remember their sacrifice. We pay tribute to our Chinese American veterans not only as defenders of democracy, but as an inseparable part of the fabric of our country,” she added. 友



Major General Chen Discusses the Gold Medal, His Career

By Mike Revzin

What is the Congressional Gold Medal and why was it awarded to these veterans?

The Congressional Gold Medal is the highest award bestowed by Congress. It honors individuals or groups whose achievements have had an impact on American history and culture. In this case, a citation from the law says, “The commitment and sacrifice of Chinese-Americans demonstrates a highly uncommon and commendable sense of patriotism and honor in the face of discrimination.”

Other World War II groups that received the Congressional Gold Medal include the Navajo Code Talkers, the Tuskegee Airmen, Japanese American veterans, Montford Point Marines and Filipino World War II veterans.

How long did it take to get this recognition?

House and Senate bills were introduced in Congress in May 2017. It took a little over a year and half until The Chinese-American World War II Veteran Congressional Gold Medal Act was signed into law on December 20, 2018. This is considered fast.

What obstacles and discrimination did Chinese American service members face during World War II?

The 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act was still in place until December 1943. This meant that the immigrants were denied citizenship and could not vote. There were individual cases of bias and discrimination experienced by service members, ranging from insults to harassment. However, there are also many stories of bonding, gaining mutual respect and forming life-long friendships.

What influenced the decision to change the Exclusion law?



Bill Chen in 2017

It was incompatible with China being an ally in the fight against the Japanese. The impetus to repeal the Chinese Exclusion Act might also have been precipitated by Madame Chiang Kai-shek’s visit to the U.S. and address to Congress.

Your father also served in the U.S. military?

My grandfather came to the U.S. and became a railroad worker. My father, orphaned at 15, earned a degree in aeronautical engineering, became a U.S. Mail Service pilot, and then went to China in 1937 to fly for an affiliate of Pan American Airways. He flew the route from Shanghai to Peking, but as the Japanese attacked Nanking, he flew many evacuation flights from Nanking.



Bill Chen's father, Captain Moon Chen, U.S. Army Air Forces

In 1939, my father began work for the company that later became the official employer for the American Volunteer Group, headed by General Claire Chennault. After Pearl Harbor, my father joined the U.S. Army Air Forces and was assigned to the China Air Task Force and the 14th Air Force commanded by Chennault. He flew the Hump and was later served as Chennault’s liaison officer to the Chinese Air Force.

You became a two-star general (a major general) in the Army, the first Chinese American to wear two-star rank in the Army. Tell us about your career.

I entered the College of Engineering at the University of Michigan in 1956 and enrolled in Army ROTC. In October

1957, the Soviet Sputnik I was launched. Later the first successful U.S. satellite was Explorer I, launched by an Army team headed by Dr. Wernher von Braun of the Army Ballistic Missile Agency. I wanted to learn as much as possible about Army missiles and rockets. I got my master's degree in aeronautical and astronautical engineering and then entered active duty.



Maj. Gen. Bill Chen

Looking back at my 32 years of active duty, from June 1961 to September 1993, I had a gratifying career. Aside from my overseas assignments in Korea, Vietnam, Thailand and Laos and my tour commanding a battalion, most of my other assignments were in the development and program management of missile and missile defense systems. Who could have imagined that, as a sophomore in 1958 when I first learned of the Army Ballistic Missile Agency, that 31 years later as a major general I would command that organization when it evolved to the U.S. Army Missile Command? Similarly, who could have imagined that in 1992, as a major general, that I would head up the Army's missile defense programs?

After retirement from the Army, I worked in the defense industry for 18 years, including six years in an international assignment in a joint venture U.S.–Turkey company in Ankara, Turkey. Describe any examples of discrimination you faced during your career.

I may be naïve, but I don't think I experienced any discrimination in my career. I believe that the Army and military services have a system for advancement—selection for promotion and advanced schooling—that is merit-based.

On the other hand, were there mentors who helped you?

In my time, there was no public discussion of mentors or mentorship programs. Likewise, in my time, the words diversity, equality, and inclusion didn't exist in our vocabulary. There was "equal opportunity," but there were few Chinese or Asian Americans in military service, so most equal opportunity programs seemed to apply more to Blacks and Hispanics.

I had bosses who treated me well, gave me challenging tasks and helped in my advancement. I never had a superior, contemporary or subordinate who was a Chinese or Asian American. I never viewed the need to have a Chinese or Asian American role model. I would look at effective leaders I respected, whether superiors or contemporaries, regardless of race or national origin—and look to them as role models and those who I would want to emulate.

How can we combat the recent incidents of hatred toward Asian Americans?

Combating hatred toward Asian Americans is not an easy task and undertaking. Anti-Asian hate has been a part of American history. In my opinion, combating hatred of Asian Americans, or any ethnicities, starts at the home with the upbringing of your children. That's where anti-hate must be instilled. Then, there is the K–12 system, where our educational system needs to cover American history that is more inclusive of the peoples of America. 友

Why Were There So Many Chinese American Troops from Idaho?



By Mike Revzin

Samantha Cheng is the author of another book on this topic, *Honor and Duty, The Chinese American WWII Veterans*. In an interview on C-SPAN, she described the difficulty that present-day researchers had in determining the number of Chinese American World War II veterans.

"Because of the Chinese Exclusion Act, Chinese was not a category you could check a box off in your enlistment form," Cheng said. "It was not until the repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1943 that you started to see the ethnicity of Chinese mentioned in any of the service records."

Another problem was that a number of service members who were listed as being from China were not Chinese—they were Russian immigrants to China. Also, some surnames, such as Lee, required further investigation to determine if they were of Chinese or European heritage.

Researchers were also surprised to find about 2,000 Chinese American World War II veterans who were listed as being from Idaho. Upon further investigation, "We realized there was a very simple reason why there were that many Chinese people designated from the state of Idaho," Cheng explained. "It's because Hawaii was not a state yet. Hawaii did not become a state until 1959. Yet, there were so many Chinese Americans or Chinese who were not yet citizens who hailed from the great state of Hawaii."

Where do you put them? What letter follows "H?" "I." and the first "I" state is Idaho. So we have 2,000-plus Chinese service personnel from the state of Idaho. But they are really from Hawaii."

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Highlights and registration form are on page 17.

Grandson Describes Life of Yung Wing, First Chinese to Graduate From an American University

By Frank Yung

In 1854, my grandfather, Yung Wing 容闳, became the first Chinese to graduate from an American university. Later, thanks to his efforts, dozens of other young Chinese came to the U.S. for higher education, and returned home to make major contributions to China's development.

In the 1880s, Yung's work was heralded by such notables as Mark Twain and Ulysses S. Grant. He has since been honored in many ways in his native country and in the U.S.

I should start with some history. There have been other accounts of the man and his exploits, but this article will provide the views of a devoted family member.

Yung was born in 1828 to a poor family in Nanping Village in Zhuhai, which borders Macau in Guangdong province. His name in Mandarin would be pronounced Rong Hong. At an early age he attended the Morrison School in Hong Kong. It was generally believed then that the English language skills from a missionary school, such as that one, would provide one with better earnings as an adult.

The principal of the school, the Reverend Samuel Brown, was planning to return to New England for health reasons. The story goes that he asked whether any students in the senior class would be willing to follow him to that part of the U.S. for further education, and 16-year-old Yung was the first to put his hand up.

The Rev. Brown took three young boys, including Yung, back with him to New England. They attended the Monson Academy in Massachusetts. One boy returned to China due to ill health and the third boy left the U.S. to study medicine in Scotland.

Upon graduation from Monson, Yung received an offer for a scholarship to attend Yale College, on the condition that he would later



Rev. Samuel Brown

return to China to become a missionary. Even though Yung, then 22, was a convert to Christianity, he declined the offer because he hoped to return home after graduation to promote education for his countrymen.

Fortunately for him, another scholarship offer for his Yale education came from the Ladies Association of Savannah, Georgia. Four years later, in 1854, he became the first Chinese to graduate from an American university.

On a Mission to Modernize

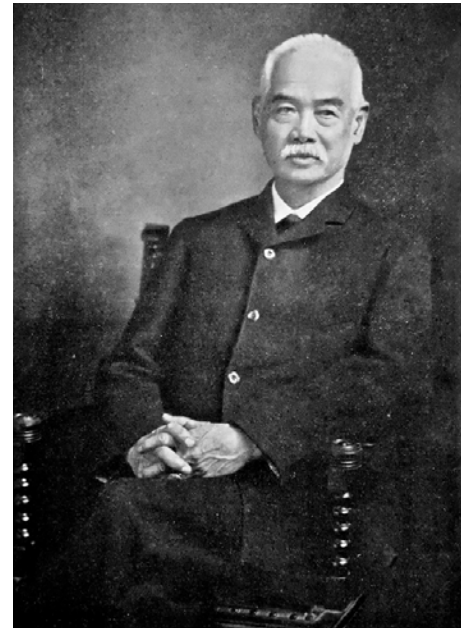
Now it should be emphasized that, in addition to his scholastic activities, Yung nursed a burning ambition. It always troubled him how backward China was in terms of economic development and modernization compared with the U.S.

My grandfather, in his mid-20s, carried with him a heavy mission—he wanted as many as possible of his countrymen to benefit from the same type of education he had received. This would become his life's dream.

On his return to China, Yung found himself ill-fitted for traditional careers, although he did find some success in commerce and employment with foreign firms. He even met with members of the Taiping Rebellion, who were trying to overthrow the Qing dynasty, but his proposals for the modernization of China were not accepted as they were not well understood.

However, a great opportunity came when a friend introduced him to Viceroy Zeng Guofan (曾国藩) who was interested in his English language skills and was soon to recognize Yung's intellect and critical thinking abilities. Zeng is perhaps best known for defeating the Taiping Rebellion.

The viceroy was frustrated with China's defeats in wars against foreign nations, and assigned Yung to purchase military equipment from the U.S. Yung suggested that he should also look into acquiring a machinery manufacturing plant. Yung left China on a three-month journey to the U.S. carrying 68,000 taels of silver (a tael is about an ounce). His effort resulted in the Jiangnan Ammunition Factory in



Yung Wing

Shanghai, the first modern manufacturing plant in China. Yung also established a training school for mechanics. The factory evolved into a shipyard and existed well into the 20th century.

Students Come to U.S.

With that success under his belt, Yung presented the viceroy with his plan for overseas education. The proposal was to send boys from ages 10 to 16 to the U.S. to learn applied science, military knowledge and Western technologies, with the objective of transforming China.

The Chinese Education Mission (CEM) plan was approved by the Manchu Court in 1872. Yung had labored for 17 years to bring this plan to fruition. The next hurdle was to convince parents to allow their sons to be educated in a faraway land. He overcame initial recruitment difficulties with the lowest hanging fruit approach. Consequently, out of the total 120 young boys, eight were his relatives, 31 were from his hometown, 45 were from Guangdong province, and the rest were from other provinces.

The 120 boys arrived in batches of 30 in New England towns over four years. Yung made arrangements for them to live with American families in twos and threes, rather than stay in a large group

of only Chinese. In this way, the boys would assimilate better and learn more about American culture and traditions.

The boys attended high schools in New England towns. There was a CEM House in Hartford, Connecticut, where Chinese-speaking tutors helped them with their lessons. The CEM was to be the opening trickle of a flood of Chinese stu-

Mark Twain and Ulysses S. Grant wrote to the Manchu Court on behalf of Yung.

dents going to learn from the West. Yung was appointed joint chief of the mission and concurrently a diplomat as assistant minister in Washington.

Program Halted

In 1881, about 10 years after the young boys first arrived in New England, the Manchu Court was persuaded to end the mission and order the boys to return to China. The reason for the recall was the assessment by prejudicial Chinese officials that Western influence was undesirable, as a large number of the boys had cut their pigtailed and some had become Christians.

By the time that the students were recalled to China, about 40 of the older ones had been in the U.S. long enough to commence their studies at such institutions as Yale, Harvard, Columbia and Boston School of Tech (now called the

Massachusetts Institute of Technology). Two of these boys obtained their degrees. Two other boys received financial help from Yung that allowed them to stay and study in the U.S., and they later married Americans.

It is clear that the recall of the students was a serious blow to Yung's life dream. Yung contributed to China in other ways, including a stint in Peru, where his report on inhuman working conditions among Chinese laborers helped end those practices. However, his greatest achievement must be the CEM. In this context, the success does not belong to Yung alone, but to many of the 120 young boys who returned to China and became major contributors to the nation and society.

Prominent Participants

Names that come readily to mind include Tang Shaoyi (唐绍仪) (prime minister), Tang Guoan (唐国安) (first president of Tsinghua University in Beijing), Jeme Tien Yow (詹天佑) (China's most outstanding railway pioneer) and Liang Tun Yen (梁敦彦) (foreign minister). There were more than 20 others who became cabinet officers, diplomats, senior government officials, admirals, academics and other high achievers.

If I may digress to talk about Yung's personal life: Having successfully established the CEM while already in his late 40s, he was resigned to the thought that having a career in America meant it would be unlikely that he could ever find a Chinese woman to be his wife. Further, he concluded that no American woman would marry him.

Fortuitously, Yung had a great friend in the Reverend Joseph Twichell. Twichell and his wife were adamant that Yung was wrong in this respect and were partially responsible for his courtship of Mary Kellogg of Avon, Connecticut, which led to a happy marriage. They had two sons: Morrison Brown Yung, who was my father, and Bartlett Golden Yung.

The Rev. Twichell was not only my grandparents' lifelong friend, (in fact, he brought up my father and uncle after their mother passed away and when Yung was out of the country) but also the best friend of Mark Twain. The latter was one of two prominent Americans who wrote



Mary Kellogg, Yung Wing's wife

to the Manchu Court on behalf of Yung, asking it to rescind the recall of the CEM. The other prominent American was former President Ulysses S. Grant.

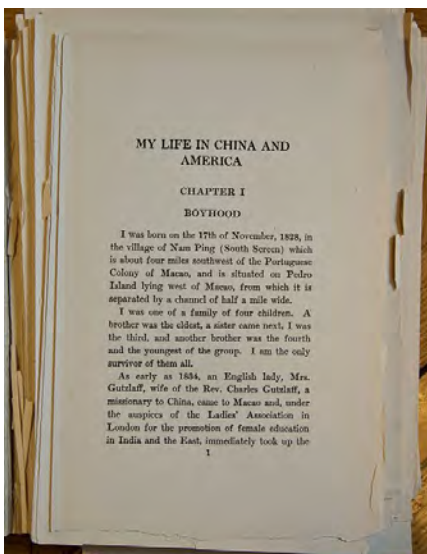
The sad epilogue of the recall of the CEM was that, after Yung returned to Beijing and had an opportunity to explain details to the top official responsible for that decision, Viceroy Li Hong Zhang (李鴻章), the viceroy reportedly regretted his decision.

My History

Now, some personal history. My father passed away within days of my birth and my mother remarried. The first time I heard about Yung Wing was when my mother told me he was the first Chinese graduate from an American university. As a young boy, I remember it was like someone being the first to ascend Everest.

When I was in my teens, I started reading books and articles about my grandfather and the CEM, including Yung's autobiography, *My Life in China and America*. As a young man I was sought out by many scholars and authors who would forward their research material to me as a descendant of Yung Wing. Looking back, I am extremely grateful to these academics and authors from both China and America.

Continued on next page



Yung Wing published his autobiography in 1909.

Yung Wing *(continued)*

Since 1998, a group of descendants of the 120 young students has met on the internet and organized several in-person "reunions," the first one being at Yale University, followed by three more at Zhuhai. On the first occasion, Governor John Rowland of Connecticut sent one of his senior staff to officially welcome the delegates. He also declared that day the Yung Wing and Chinese Education Mission Day.

In 2000, United Technologies, which is based in Hartford, donated a portrait of Yung, and the unveiling ceremony was at the home of Richard Levin, president of

A life-size bronze statue, donated by the city of Zhuhai, stands in Yale's Sterling Library.

Yale. On these occasions I was inevitably put up as a speaker purely because of bloodline, but was customarily backed up by heavyweight professors who would deliver the well-researched history of Yung and the CEM. Partly because of these occasions, I discovered what significant contributions the young students had made for China.

In the last 20 years I have had the immense pleasure of meeting many descendants of the 120, many of whom become close friends. Initially on our meeting, and without any words being exchanged, there would develop an understanding of the close relationship our grandfathers enjoyed. Many a time the subsequent conversation would include, "Without your grandfather we would not be where we are today," and my response would be "Without Rev. Brown none of us would be where we are today."

Linking the Two Nations

Over time I also gleaned how Yung is regarded with respect, but in different ways, in China and America. In 1876, Yale conferred an honorary Doctorate of Laws degree on him. His portrait is on display at Yale. A life-size bronze statue, donated by the city of Zhuhai, stands in Yale's

Sterling Library. There is a public school in New York City named after him. Two presidents of China, Jiang Zemin (江泽民) and Hu Jintao (胡锦涛) on respective visits to Harvard and Yale spoke about the first Chinese graduate. Yung is an obvious cultural and educational icon that links the two major nations.

In China, Yung is better known in Guangdong than in other provinces. Academics refer not only to his CEM work, but also his later exploits against the Manchu Court and his association with Dr. Sun Yat-sen, the first provisional president of the Republic of China. Yung submitted material proposals for development and nation building. In 1912, Dr. Sun wrote to Yung, who was residing in Hartford, asking him to return to China to serve the common cause. Sadly, Yung was within days of passing away and was unable to respond to the call for additional duty.

They regard Yung first as a patriot, then a pioneer, a reformer and of course an educationalist. In Zhuhai there are schools and a museum in his name. He is referred to in learned circles as the father of overseas education.

Yung died in Hartford, Connecticut, in 1912. He had become a naturalized U.S. citizen decades earlier, but that status was revoked under the Naturalization Act of 1870. 友

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.



Frank Yung

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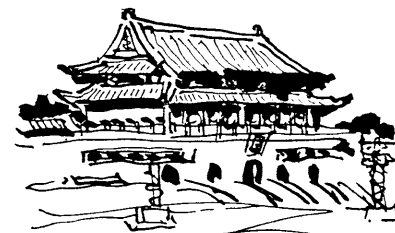
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USCPFA NATIONAL CONVENTION PROGRAM



Bonus Pre-Convention Viewing Opportunities *(Details on these videos will be on USCPFA.org and emailed to registrants.)*

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

Friday Evening, Nov. 5

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

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

Saturday, Nov. 6, 6 p.m.

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

Sunday, Nov. 7, 6 p.m.

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

REGISTRATION

USCPFA National Convention Online November 5–7, 2021

There are two ways to register for the virtual convention, either by check sent through the mail or online at Eventbrite. Register one way only. Please complete the following information to register by mail. Registration is only \$25.

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Make check for \$25 per registrant payable to USCPFA-Eastern Region and send to: USCPFA-Eastern Region, David Sutor, Convention Treasurer, 6 Winners Circle, Apt 628, Albany, New York 12205. Letters must be postmarked by Oct. 7, 2021. If you have any questions about mail-in registration, call David Sutor at 518-463-7405 and leave a message.

OR

To register online at Eventbrite, please go to www.uscpfa.org and click on the Eventbrite link provided. Register as soon as possible and no later than Oct. 15.

The Joys and Frustrations of Learning Chinese

Learning to speak Chinese can be:

- A. Fun
- B. Frustrating
- C. Rewarding
- D. All of the above

The correct answer, based on responses to our survey, is “D.”

We received a variety of submissions to the question “How did you learn Chinese?” (Or, for native Chinese speakers, “How did you learn English?”)

We also asked about humorous mistakes, as well as “ah-ha” moments when the hard work of learning the language paid off. And we asked for tips on how to learn Chinese.

Thank you to everyone who took time to write about your language learning experiences, and especially to Margaret Wong of USCPFA’s Minnesota chapter, who encouraged her students and former students to participate in this project.

—Mike Revzin

Teacher Wong’s Tips for Learning and Teaching Chinese

By Margaret Wong

“Ms. Wong, are you Chinese? Why are you teaching English and French? I think it is time for you to start teaching Chinese to our American high school students, since President Nixon has already opened China to us now,” Dr. John Davis, superintendent of the Minneapolis Public Schools, said to me in 1974.

That challenge was how I began my 41-year career teaching Chinese to American high school students in public and private schools, and taking my students and their parents on 32 study trips to China.

I started teaching Chinese at Minneapolis Central High School to 17 bright and eager students the very next week after Dr. Davis talked to me. I probably did not appreciate how much of a pioneer I would be. I had no predecessor to train me and no appropriate high school textbook to use. In preparation for my first lesson plan, I had to look back at my own elementary school education in China to figure out what I should teach and how to teach it.

Born and educated in China through only the second grade, I was able to maintain my proficiency in Chinese by speaking Chinese with my family when we moved to Brazil and later by writing weekly letters to my father when I came to the U.S.

Of course, my college major of French and Spanish helped me devise teaching strategies. Most fortunate of all, my parents were visiting us from Brazil—a visit that extended to an entire year. My father was a Nationalist general during China’s Civil War, so that was the reason we had to flee China, and eventually go to Brazil, when the Communists won.

Like any educated Chinese of his generation, my father was an accomplished



Margaret Wong’s Breck students at the Great Wall.

calligrapher. So, right from the start, I incorporated the teaching of history and culture into my language curriculum.

I frequently brought my students home on field trips to get lectures on Chinese history and calligraphy demonstrations from my father. The visits would often include a sumptuous Chinese lunch cooked by my mother, who enlarged their vocabulary by identifying every dish she prepared. They quickly learned to say *chāomiàn*, rather than chowmein, *dòufǔ*, rather than tofu and *guōtiē* rather than potstickers. Imagine how quickly my students got hooked on Chinese!

Tips for Learners of Chinese:

- *Start early.* Capture the small window of time when a child’s ears are especially receptive to every kind of sound. That is why we all learned our first language

so quickly and so well! And that is why I was able to learn so many dialects of Chinese and foreign languages when we were escaping China, moving from province to province, country to country, continent to continent, and of course the reason why I chose teaching languages as my profession. Ten years after I started teaching Chinese in high school, my principal asked me to initiate the teaching of Chinese in kindergarten. Today, many parents enroll their children in language immersion schools.

- *Build a strong foundation.* Learn all four skills in the language—listening, speaking, reading and writing. In Mandarin, that foundation includes the *tones*! Chinese linguists advise an “uncompromising vigilance on establishing the habits of correct tonal pronunciation

before bad habits can take root.” It is also important to know that learning the foundation skills well is much more important than fast. If you learn the foundation skills well, you can more quickly become an independent learner, whereas if your foundation is weak, you will probably never become fluent, and definitely never achieve native proficiency. After 10 years, when you are an adult, you will feel ashamed that your Chinese still sounds like a beginner. You will feel too embarrassed to even utter a word.

- *Make friends who can practice Chinese with you.* Even better, find a girlfriend or boyfriend. Falling in love is the best way to make progress in your language proficiency. I remember a former student who, in college, went to China for a study abroad program at a university. He fell in love with a classmate from Japan, who didn’t speak a word of English. And he didn’t speak a word of Japanese. They were forced to communicate only in Chinese, which not only got them both good grades, but led eventually to a marriage!
- *Use technology to learn this ancient language.* Chinese has always been perceived as an impossibly difficult language for westerners. There were many legitimate reasons in the past—lack of a phonetic system, the multitude of dialects and the thousands of characters. However, the arrival of the computer has solved so many of the difficult aspects of Chinese. First of all, there is now a uniformity of pronunciation based on the official phonetic transcription system: pinyin. All Chinese people under 50 years of age can speak both their home dialect, as well as *pǔtōnghuà*, based on the Beijing dialect. Also, the number of characters one needs to learn for basic literacy has been reduced from 10,000 to 3,500, and one-third of those characters are simplified. Best of all, Chinese characters now can be written on your computer or iPhone—in fact, faster than you can write English words. If beautiful calligraphy isn’t an essential personal goal for you, then just learning to write Chinese, learning to recognize characters—in other words to read and write Chinese—has been enormously facilitated by the computer.



Margaret Wong and Kent Lee during an online session.

Try it sometime. Furthermore, there are hundreds of apps for learning Chinese, and there are thousands of YouTube videos for learning.

Tips for Teachers of Chinese:

- *As much as is possible, try to understand both cultures equally well.* In order to understand and appreciate a new culture, you must understand your own better, and vice versa. That is equally true when teaching a foreign language. I remember one of our exchange teachers asked the American teachers at my school a point of grammar. When he couldn’t get a satisfactory answer, he finally asked me. I was able to give him a good answer, because I had learned English as a foreign language.
- *Create a Chinese environment in the classroom.* This will allow you to use less and less English during your instruction. Plaster the walls with Chinese characters, pictures of China, Chinese labels on all the furniture, and so on. Of course, I had my father’s beautiful calligraphy all over my classroom walls, from classic documents by Confucius to slogans in modern China. My father also wrote my students’ names in calligraphy, which I gave to them, laminated as bookmarks.
- *Tell stories, teach history, celebrate culture.* Add these enticements to the “boring” aspects of repetitive learning of language. Teach a slang word or a proverb every day.

Conduct Chinese morning four-minute physical exercises to music. Introduce a piece of current events about China and discuss its effect on our country. Do volunteer work with Chinese senior citizens. Celebrate Chinese holidays by practicing some of the customs in the classroom. Invite Chinese artists in your local community to do demonstrations in your classroom, or to teach a song, a dance or to make a special Chinese dish, or simply how to make *jiaozi* (dumplings). During my 41 years of teaching I led 32 trips to China. I also held an annual Chinese New Year celebration for the entire student body and parents with lion dancing, a dragon parade, jiaozi making, Chinese game playing and a 10-course Chinese New Year banquet. I still have the 41 T-shirts featuring all 12 animals of the zodiac.

- *Develop a sister-relationship with a school in China.* Begin the exchange by having students write pen-pal letters, and later use email or WeChat. For my students, after the individual relationships were

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Some of Margaret Wong’s students (and grandchildren)

Learning Chinese (continued)

established, the students got to meet each other when we visited each other's schools on our trips. I was lucky to have developed several sister-school relationships when we had both teacher exchanges as well as student exchanges yearly. Those bonds are so strong, I have seen the children of my former students go on exchanges or host their children.

- *Read up on child psychology and books related to how American young people learn.* Most of the Chinese teachers in schools today are born in China and never went to pre-college schools in the U.S., so one of the hardest aspects of teaching is classroom management. If they don't have strategies on how to grab students'

attention in the classroom, no amount of expertise in the language is of any consequence. I feel that one of the main reasons for my success in teaching is because I went to an American high school as a teenager, and I persuaded my students to like learning Chinese, because they witnessed my passion and bonded with me, and they could feel that I liked them in return.

- *Learn from other language teachers.* Collaborate with them on organizing a Language Day or an international bazaar, or a Career Day featuring how a language skill is the vehicle to your dream job. Borrow or modify their strategies for teaching and apply them to Chinese. I remember that I started teaching Chinese by using all

the educational strategies I learned in teaching French. I remember teaching the Chinese New Year wish: "*Nian nian you yu*" (May you always have plenty) by saying that the Chinese "u" sound is the same as the French sound "u."

In summary, I am filled with gratitude that, quite by accident, I have had the good fortune of pursuing a profession that not only has given me so much joy and fulfillment, but one in which I have gained a broad group of young and old friends.

I have loved every minute of my 41 years of teaching Chinese—so much so that I never wanted to really retire. Now, five years after retirement, I continue to teach—my grandchildren and students who are the children of my former students. 友

Learn Culture Along with the Language; Don't Be a Space Alien

You are learning a language, but all language is rooted in culture. Your experience will be many times richer and more successful if you take some time to understand Chinese culture and history, instead of just focusing on characters and tones. Your goal, after all, is to communicate with Chinese people, not to speak Chinese with Mexicans or Kazakhs.



Jim Harkness

Non-Chinese who have some facility with the language but no understanding of China are sort of like the visiting space aliens in movies who can use English words but are flummoxed by slang or human emotions.

Imitate! Imitate! Imitate! In addition to learning about China's history and culture, make a point of studying not just the way Chinese people speak and the things they say but the way they act when they talk to each other in everyday situations: their gestures, tone of voice, body language. TV and movies or even hanging out in Chinese restaurants can all help.

Adopt a Different Persona

When I speak Chinese, I go so far as to adopt a persona different from my English-speaking self. When I shop or order food in a restaurant I try to channel

an old badminton partner of mine who always struck me as particularly funny and charming in those situations. In more formal settings, I try to do my version of one or another of the various government officials I remember and admire. Finally, one of the most culturally informed parts of the Chinese language is the *chengyu*, or idiomatic expression. These are not the same thing as slang, which changes every decade or so: they have a much longer history, often rooted in old moral fables or legends. Some have obscure or very specific meanings and

usages, but others are frequently used and correspond closely to similar expressions in English. 一朝被蛇咬三年怕井绳 literally "One day bit by a snake, three years scared of coiled rope," in other words, "Once bit, twice shy." A shorter one is 英雄所见略同, which means "Great minds think alike." If you have a few choice *chengyu* up your linguistic sleeve and use them properly, you will sound more like a flesh and blood Chinese person and less like a talking robot.

—Jim Harkness

Language Should Be a Means to an End

I think I represent an atypical case for a beginner with the Chinese language. I am 58 years old, a business owner and operator, married with children and probably someday soon grandchildren, and in general in a completely different life situation than I was when I last tackled learning a foreign language.

For me, Chinese is my fourth attempt at a foreign language. I tried and failed miserably at French in high school; a similar outcome with German. I did, however, find a lot of success with the Russian language, starting when I was a third-year university student, maybe 20 years old.

This success completely changed my life. It was the critical factor in enabling the conceptualization of an entrepreneurial

venture which has turned into multiple businesses for me over the past 32 years. And it was the key that unlocked my entry into Russian culture, where I have met my wife, formed my closest friendships and experienced so many amazing relations.

No foreign language has ever come easy to me, not even Russian. Neither is Chinese coming easy, as my teacher can certainly attest!

A Means to an End

But there are some things worth reflecting on. First, if your target language of learning is a key to enriching an existing (or potential) passion in your life, then you will find it infinitely worthwhile to do everything to master it. The passion

could be your work, your hobbies, people you care about—almost anything. But my point is that the language becomes a means to your desired end, not the end itself. I think this helps keep some of the pressure off of learning a foreign language.

Fluency is a much-abused word, perhaps. Or at least it means many things to many people. You will find that your language skills develop to the extent that they serve your passions.

Teacher's Critical Role

Second, I would note the critical importance of the teacher's role. With older students such as myself, I do not think that this can be overstated. Of course, all students must make progress with the basics.

Older students may have a harder time with making time for homework—I know that I certainly do. So it means slower progress—which is a big challenge for a teacher to accommodate. (If I were in a group learning situation, my efforts would long ago have ended in failure as I fell increasingly behind and got frustrated.)

In my case, I have been blessed to have access to one-on-one tutoring for almost 15 months now. I realize that this is not possible for everyone, but it will definitely be the key to my successful mastery of Chinese. My teacher is very patient and innovative and in fact is setting me up for a lifetime of independent learning—which after all must be the situation to which any student of a foreign language transitions. The training wheels eventually will come off and we must explore the world on our own.

A good teacher helps tailor the learning process to the unique situation of each student. A great teacher does this, while keeping the passion alive as well. After all, this passion is what brought the student to the foreign language in the first place.

Reactivate Your Neural Pathways

I would add this—especially as a message to older readers who may be considering learning Chinese. I have to confess, or at least speculate, that the language-learning process reactivates neural pathways and centers of the brain that are perhaps otherwise lying dormant. And this is an incredibly pleasant feeling! I have left learning sessions feeling literally “high”! Like a little boy who just discovered how cool are reptiles, or some other fascination.

You cannot buy this kind of feeling; it does not come in a bottle. It comes from activating, from stimulating, some cerebral center that must exist for a reason. At my relatively advanced age, I am both blessed and tickled to discover this. It makes the effort so worthwhile. That teachers help unlock this for students—well it's just sacred and to be celebrated.

I have one advantage in my Chinese-language quest. I know what lies on the other side of the chasm that now

Hearing Chinese spoken in the streets... I felt like Dorothy going from black-and-white Kansas to the full-of-color Land of Oz.

separates me from “fluency,” whatever that turns out to be for me.

Incredible richness, the ultimate pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. With the Russian language, I have breached this chasm and as I said, it changed my life. I was able to communicate effectively with anyone (over 200 million people) from one of the world's great civilizations. With Chinese—the consequences boggle the mind. It could give me the tools to effectively communicate with (and try to understand) many times this number—way over a billion people—including those who have lived in the past and who live on through their voluminous writings and other records.

Cheers and good fortune to all of you embarking on learning Chinese! May it change your lives in the most profound and magnificent of ways!

—Kent D. Lee

CEO, East View Information Services

From Silent Film to Stereo Sound

First in high school for two years and then in college for two and a half years I studied Chinese in classrooms and language labs before I had the opportunity to go to China.

Finally, in 1984 during the spring semester of my junior year in college, I had the opportunity to go to Nanjing University

to study Chinese and live among the Chinese (more or less).

Not only was this my first time visiting China, it was the first time I heard the music of the Chinese language. I don't know how else to explain it. No amount of classroom Chinese or repetitive tapes or rounds of oral practice could possibly compare with hearing Chinese spoken in the streets, restaurants, parks, and stores all around me. It was like moving from a silent film to stereo sound; from black and white to color; from a two- to three-dimensional space. I felt like Dorothy going from black-and-white Kansas to the full-of-color Land of Oz.

Ever since I first started to study Chinese with 王老师 (Margaret Wong) at Central High School in Minneapolis in the late 1970s, I had always preferred the written to the oral language. Chinese poetry, grammar, four-character idioms, and especially classical Chinese gave me much pleasure to read, whereas for so many years I had few opportunities or need to speak.

But during that spring semester in freezing Nanjing (no state-paid heat at that time anywhere south of the Yangtze River!) I came to appreciate the tonal music of spoken Chinese in a way I can only describe as revelatory.

—Marta E. Hanson 韓嵩 Ph.D.

The Johns Hopkins University
Department of the History of Medicine



Marta Hanson

My Language Ability Comes to the Rescue in Boston

For me, language is more than just strings of verbs, nouns and adjectives. Language is a vehicle for culture. For example, what does it mean that Spanish has gendered verbs?

I studied Mandarin Chinese from kindergarten through college and, while it was not always easy, the lessons gave me a greater understanding of the language and the culture.

As I continued my education, I was exposed to other concepts of the Chinese education system, cultural events and Chinese history.

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Learning Chinese *(continued)*

Getting Mom and a Horse Mixed Up

I often found myself confusing new words with old. In my kindergarten Chinese class, I remember adoring our teacher, Liu *Laoshi*. One day, however, after several units on foods, drinks and animals, I mistakenly called our teacher *Niu Laoshi*, or “Teacher Cow.” Needless to say, she was not pleased.

As a rite of passage in Chinese language learning, I also often fell prey to tonal errors that resulted in comic phrases. I once wrote a paragraph about my Mom, only to find that I confused the words “mother” and “horse.” Both are pronounced “ma,” but with different tones and characters. If there is one thing I realized through practicing spoken Chinese, it is this: be cognizant of your tones!

An “Ah-ha” Moment

The “ah-ha” moment for me was a year or two after my rigorous Chinese education had ended. I was weaving through a farmer’s market in Boston when I heard a question in Mandarin. A young woman was going from food stall to food stall asking in Chinese for directions to Faneuil Hall.

People were trying to help her, but could not do so. Thanks to the long hours of listening to dialogues and years of Chinese oral presentations, I was able to provide her with directions in Chinese and to ease her stress. It was in that moment when being able to communicate in Chinese, and the many years of labor that went into that, felt worth it.

Improve by Being Challenged

To those who are learning Chinese, my main piece of advice is this: constantly practice in the mode that you want to perfect. If you want to master Chinese writing, keep writing and rewriting. If you want to improve your conversation skills, set up daily calls with a fellow Chinese language student.

My final piece of advice is to find teachers or fellow students who will push you just beyond your perceived limits. I would not have been able to gain the compre-

hensive understanding of Chinese I now have if I did not have mentors and faculty on my side.

—Nath Samaratunga

MD Candidate, Class of 2025, Rutgers
Robert Wood Johnson Medical School

Showing Off New Vocabulary

I decided to take Chinese when I transferred to Breck School in ninth grade, and going into my first week of class I will admit I was excited but a bit nervous. However, all of my apprehension vanished after my first few classes. I almost immediately fell in love with the language and I cherished the fact that Mandarin was so very different from English.

I enjoyed learning the language so much that I decided to take a full year of Chinese II in just a few months over the summer.

My tutor was Margaret Wong, who was the first to bring the Chinese language to Minnesota high schools, and she helped me to solidify my passion for Chinese. I remember going home after every lesson that summer and immediately showing off to my family, speaking in Chinese and teaching them the new words, phrases, and cultural nuances I had learned.

After that summer, I was asked to join the International Club at my school, where I got to befriend the foreign exchange students at Breck from China. I continued to devour my Chinese studies until my junior year when I was offered the opportunity to host a Chinese exchange student.

I gladly accepted, and a few months later I got to meet Evan Lin, who stayed at my house for an entire semester. I think sometimes Evan may have gotten a bit annoyed with me, considering how many questions I asked him about everything from his school back in China, to his favorite Chinese musicians, but I just couldn’t stop learning about his experiences. I learned a lot from Evan, in fact, we are still friends today, and I plan to visit him in China when I get the chance.

From starting as a complete stranger to Chinese as a freshman to now planning on studying Chinese in college, I have really learned and experienced a ton, and learning Chinese has shaped the way I look at the world around me. I love how the language challenges me to think differently about how I communicate with those around me, and learning about Chinese

culture has helped me to better appreciate those that are different than me.

—William Sweeney
Boston College freshman

Absorbing Chinese While Eating Jiaozi

I traveled to China before I ever studied a word of Chinese in school, when my *Nainai* (grandmother) Margaret Wong took her children and grandchildren to see her homeland. I was introduced to Chinese by her during my middle school years.

My father now regrets resisting learning the language when he was young, and so both he and my *Nainai* were determined to instill more interest in Chinese in my generation.

She would have her grandchildren—my siblings, my cousins, and me—over almost every week to eat breakfast, brunch, or lunch, as long as we did a little bit of Chinese study together before the meal.

As her homemade *jiaozi* (dumplings) and *muxu* pork are my favorite foods in the entire world, I always obliged, and thus I was subconsciously tricked into a fascination with the Chinese language.

We never followed too strict of a textbook or plan, although *Nainai’s* teacher instincts would always trickle into the lesson somewhat, and the sights and sounds of the language found their way into my brain.

I signed up for Chinese 1 in my sophomore year of college, and that’s where I have seen the family meals come to fruition. I wasn’t fluent, but just by absorbing the culture and language throughout my young life, sentences flowed off my tongue more easily than they did for other students in the class, even some who had taken four years of high school Chinese.

It made me realize that the learning of a language can be achieved not just through rigorous schoolwork, but also through cultural experiences, which for me have been even more influential.

—Sawyer Michaelson
student, Macalester College

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Nath Samaratunga



Sawyer Michaelson

“English is Crazy!”

By Judy Manton

In September 1980, I arrived at the South China Institute of Technology in Guangzhou to become their first “foreign expert,” as teachers were called then. A group of Chinese teachers of English, who were to become my students, gathered to excitedly welcome their first foreigner.

In preparation for my life-changing stay in China, I had tried to learn some basic Chinese from audiotapes.



Judy Manton

So, as I was being welcomed, I listened intently to the teachers' chit-chat. At one point I chimed in with “certainly,” but was puzzled when the teachers put their hands over their mouths to try to contain their laughter. Someone then explained that I had said, “cockroach” (*zhanglang*) rather than “certainly” (*dangran*).

Sometimes in the evening, I would turn on the black and white TV in a futile search for something I could understand. Occasionally I would catch a couple of guys doing a rapid-fire comedic dialogue—sort of a Chinese version of Abbott and Costello's “Who's on First?” I learned that this type of humor is called *xiangsheng*, or crosstalk.

I began to collect my students' funny mispronunciations in preparation for writing a *xiangsheng* of my own that would be not only humorous, but also instructive—calling attention to some of the most frequently mispronounced words, but doing so indirectly, thus respectfully.

Later, under the auspices of the Zigen Fund, I founded the English Teachers' Training Program. For 10 summers, in various parts of China, we introduced communicative methods of teaching English that would engage young students, help them see that English was a live, international language, and that it could

even be fun to learn it.

At the end of the month-long program, the officials of the education bureau would always invite us to a formal dinner to thank us and the Zigen Fund for helping raise the English level of their teachers and thus, of their students. However, at one of these events, the visiting Zigen Fund staff member raised his wine glass and toasted me with “Judy, I hope you will *leave* forever!” Of course, my team and I could not suppress our laughter.

Thus the crosstalk “English is Crazy!” evolved. At the end of every closing ceremony thereafter I introduced the event by first sharing my 1980 confusion over the pronunciation of *dangrang* and *zhanglang* and then the anecdote of being asked to *leave* forever! Then one of the Chinese teachers of English and I, with tongue in cheek, performed our carefully rehearsed crosstalk, “English is Crazy!” which follows.

A Crosstalk Based on English Pronunciation Problems

The scene is a street corner encounter between a very particular English teacher and a friend from Guangzhou.

Judy: Oh, hi, Yang Lin. Hey, where are you going?

Lin: Oh, hi, Judy. I'm going to buy a *car* for my father's birthday.

Judy: A *car*! Wow! You must be rich—so rich that you can buy your father a *car*! Are you going to buy him a Chinese *car* or a foreign *car*?

Lin: Oh, no, not a *car*...a *card*...a birthday *card*.

Judy: Oh, that's different. Say, Yang Lin, how long have you been in the U.S. now?

Lin: I've been here one *ear*.

Judy: *Ear*? Oh, Yang Lin, I think you mean one *year*, not one *ear*!

Lin: Yes, I arrived *one year old*.

Judy: Now, wait a minute. You were only *one year old* when you came here? But you are an adult now. My, you grew up very quickly!

Lin: No, no. I came last year, not when I was *one year old*.

Judy: Oh, you came last year. That's *one year ago*. Did you come by plane?

Lin: Well, first I went by *sheep* to Hong Kong. Then I...

Judy: By *sheep*! My! That must have taken a long time if you rode on the back of a *sheep* all the way to Hong Kong!

Lin: No, not a *sheep*. A *sheep* is an animal, right? I went by boat, by *ship*!

Judy: Oh, now I understand. Did your friends see you off?

Lin: Yes, all my *friend* saw me off.

Judy: Your *friend*? You mean you have only one *friend*? Oh, Yang Lin, I'm your *friend*. Now you have two! Did you come to the U.S. by yourself?

Lin: No, my wife and *tree* children came with me.

Judy: *Tree* children? You mean your children look like *trees*?

Lin: No, no. I have *three* children... 1, 2, 3. And my *knee*, who is a doctor, came also.

Judy: Your *knee* is a doctor. Oh, how funny! Your *knee* is a doctor!

Lin: Oh, no, not my *knee*...my brother's daughter.

Judy: Oh, your *niece*! Did you take the overnight ship or the train?

Lin: We took the overnight ship. We got really excited when the boat went out into the *liver*.

Judy: What? Into your *liver*! Oh, how painful!

Lin: No, not *liver*, *rrr...river*.

Judy: Oh! How long did it take you to get to Hong Kong?

Lin: I *sink* it took...

Judy: *Sink*?! *Sink* means to go under the water, maybe even *sink* to the bottom. I'm sorry to hear that your ship...

Lin: No, our ship didn't sink. We had a good trip with no problems. We slept overnight. We had our own room. We were so tired that we just *shoot* the door and went to sleep.

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Crosstalk (continued)

Judy: What? You *shot* the door of your room? What were you doing with a gun, anyway?

Lin: No, we didn't *shoot* it.

Judy: Oh, did you mean you *shut* it?

Lin: Yes, we were so nervous and excited that we didn't *slip* well.

Judy: *Slip!* Was there ice in your beds?

Lin: No, there was no ice! We just didn't *slip* well.

Judy: Oh, *sleep!* You didn't *sleep* well.

Lin: Yes, that's what I mean. After we got up, we were so *angry* that...

Judy: Wait a minute. What were you mad about? You said you had a trip without any problems and now you say you were mad.

Lin: I didn't say I was mad, just very

angry. After all, we hadn't eaten for a long time.

Judy: "Eaten" oh, maybe you mean *hungry* instead of *angry*. Is that what you are trying to say?

Lin: Yes, of course. I mean to say "*hungry*"! So we went to the dining room for some *soap*.

Judy: No, you went to the wrong room! You get *soap* in the bathroom, not in the dining room.

Lin: We didn't want to wash our hands, we wanted to eat.

Judy: Oh, you wouldn't like to eat *soap*, so I think you really wanted *soup*.

Lin: Yes, we each had a big bowl of *needles* soup for breakfast.

Judy: *Needles!* Ouch! My stomach! *Needles* are for sewing, not for eating! I think you ate *noodles*. Were the *noodles* good?

Lin: Yes, the *foot* was delicious.

Judy: *Foot!* Oh, yuck! I hope they washed it before they cooked it.

Lin: Not *foot*, *food*. Then, from Hong Kong, I took a plane to the United States.

Judy: Well, you had quite a trip! When you were about to arrive in the U.S., you must have been a little nervous. You probably wondered if anyone would meet you at the airport.

Lin: Yes, I was nervous, but when we arrived, my *ankle* was there to meet us.

Judy: Your *ankle* met you at the airport! Oh, no!

Lin: Oh, my! Judy, I give up.

Both: Isn't English crazy? 友

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

My Parents' China Foresight

My experience learning Chinese undoubtedly changed my life. Unlike many American Chinese speakers, I began studying Chinese in kindergarten and have continued learning the language for roughly 20 years.

My grandparents used to live in Hong Kong, and during that time my parents learned a significant amount about China. From what they learned, they anticipated that China's rise



Hannah Price

would be one of the greatest issues of our time. They then seized the opportunity to put me into a school in Minneapolis that taught Chinese, so that I could play an active role in the world's changing dynamics.

Learning the language from such a young age was truly a game-changer for me. I grew up with an ear for the language, and native Chinese teachers assured me that my tones were identical to that of native speakers.

I have memories as a young girl of looking at shapes on a rug and learning how to say them in Chinese. After I grew older and visited China, I was able to bargain at fake markets in Chinese.

Most recently, I have been able to use my Chinese skills professionally. Learning the language has allowed me to understand the intricacies of China on a deeper level, and, for that, I am truly grateful.

—Hannah Price

Program Manager, the China Power Project at the Center for Strategic and International Studies

Out of the Mouths of Babes

One of the best Chinese teachers I've ever had is my girlfriend's five-year-old daughter Allie, who I babysit routinely. She has no qualms at all about berating me for incorrect tones. "*That's not right!*" she will yell at me. With her help, I now have impeccable tones, and I will certainly never again confuse "doll" with "socks," which are both pronounced "wa."

There is a time for traditional teachers who practice patience, but I've discovered sometimes the best teachers are the little ones who give you immediate and ruthless direct feedback.

—Andy Green, 30, consultant in Taipei

"There Is No Ferry"

During my college semester at Chinese University of Hong Kong I arranged to have classes Mondays–Wednesdays so each week I could head up to Shenzhen

and go as far as a bus, train, or ferry would take me, knowing that I must get back Monday morning for class.

One Sunday evening I was in Haikou, Hainan Island, at the ferry terminal to buy a ticket for the thrice-weekly ferry to Shenzhen. This was pre-smartphones and all I had was a listing in *Lonely Planet* that the ferry should exist. I went to the ticket counter and asked for a ticket for the sailing. "There is no ferry" was the answer. No matter how I asked, I kept getting the same, curt answer.

With no alternatives to get me back to Hong Kong by classes Monday, I was scrambling to figure out alternative transport that might get me back by Tuesday.

Then I had a realization that I was getting only literal answers to my specific questions. The volunteering of information, too much information sometimes, that I might get when, say, visiting my grandparents in Brooklyn, was not to be found with this ticket seller, or broadly, in many public interactions in China.

I went back to the ticket seller and asked, "Does Haikou have another ferry terminal?"



Stefan Krasowski

“Yes, the Haikou New Ferry Terminal.”
“Does the Haikou New Ferry Terminal have a ferry to Shenzhen?”

“Yes.”

“When does it leave?”

“It leaves at...” and the time to depart was so close that I was on the run to a taxi before the answer had finished.

That was my “ah-ha moment” in learning Chinese.

—Stefan Krasowski

Margaret Wong’s student from Breck School, 1990-98, and always her student

Learning Chinese Is Essential

The most memorable aspect of learning Chinese was our spectacular teacher, Wong Laoshi (Teacher Wong). Margaret Wong is a tour de force, a force of nature, and a gifted, brilliant and innovative educator.

She convinced us that learning Chinese was not only easy, but also essential, something that we must do as we go ahead into the future. She was correct. Along with classmates, I still vividly remember the snappy dialogues she taught us, such as:

中文難，英文難，中文英文都不難！

“Is Chinese hard, is English hard,
Chinese and English they are both not hard!”

Long live Wong Laoshi!

萬歲萬歲萬萬歲！

—Hugh Shapiro

Associate Professor (East Asia)
Department of History
University of Nevada

“I Can’t Hear You”

I began learning Chinese in June of 2020 under the auspices of Margaret Wong and have enjoyed every moment of it. It has never felt like work, which I think can be attributed to the foundational pronunciation work that we did as our first phase of study. Focusing so intently on the beginning and ending sounds, as well as the tones, gave me confidence. I would recommend spending a month or more on *pinyin* pronunciation practice before moving on to vocabulary and grammar acquisition.

I work with the Princeton Chinese Primer textbook and have been following the

Pimsleur method (an audio-based course). Where the two curriculums intersect, which is common, there is always the pleasing sense of an “ah-ha” moment happening; much like when you are learning a new city and take a small side street that spits you out somewhere familiar.

It hasn’t been all smooth sailing though. In my last lesson via Zoom, my teacher began by telling me in Chinese that she couldn’t hear me. I thought it was because I was speaking English and she was indicating that if I wasn’t speaking Chinese, she couldn’t hear me. So I replied to her in Chinese that I was sorry and that I couldn’t understand her, to which she then wrote on a piece of paper in *pinyin* saying she couldn’t hear me.

This time I believed it to be because I wasn’t responding in the way she wanted. I was growing increasingly frustrated, but knew that she was doing this to test my patience and my linguistic problem solving skills. After nearly five minutes of a total failure to communicate, and me being on the verge of tears of pure frustration, I noticed that my microphone was muted.

—Conor McGill

Bargaining for a Teapot

The fun in learning a language is in being able to converse—to put words you’ve learned together on your own to express what you want to say, and not just what the lesson dialogue says.

I remember being amazed at how quickly this comes when learning Mandarin.

She never said “Chinese is hard.” Her enthusiasm sparked our confidence.

The ability to speak and understand whole sentences came to me much earlier in 9th grade than it had with the French I was also taking. Short words, simple grammar rules, and lack of verb conjugation—combined with a dynamic and enthusiastic teacher, Wong Laoshi, made for rapid progress.

Within weeks, my classmates and I were enjoying the hilarity of our own made-up, inside jokes, like “the horse scolds mom” (each word is “ma,” but with different tones).

Wong Laoshi put high energy into her teaching and conducted most of the first class hours entirely in Chinese. She held our attention with stories of her family, descriptions of Chinese culture and customs, and explanations of the pictures hidden within characters.

She demonstrated tones with extra expression, lobbed props across the room, and used lots of chalk to show stroke order and grammar. She had us repeat phrases and listened to and improved our pronunciation. Most importantly, she never said “Chinese is hard.” Her enthusiasm sparked our confidence and urged us forward.

Wong Laoshi worked to create all kinds of interactions with Chinese speakers. She also encouraged us to speak Chinese with whomever we could, from former students to Chinese restaurant employees.

Two Months in China

Finally, after my junior year in high school, I went to China as an exchange student along with two others, and stayed for two months. It was 1987, and Beijing was still filled with bicycles and dust. We lived in the high school dormitories, had some simple classes in Chinese, tai chi, and calligraphy and taught short classes of English conversation to our Chinese peers.

We thought it was great and ironic fun to participate in morning exercises (*yun dong*) out on the packed earth of the schoolyard, lined up in precise rows with hundreds of Chinese students, all of us wearing identical, gray, polyester track suits.

I remember going to a street market on one of our first days out together, looking to buy a little teapot to bring home. The vender we found didn’t speak any English. The price seemed high so I started by saying, “This is pretty, but too expensive.” The seller disagreed and pointed out its features. I offered less and she countered with another price. We went back and forth, with some drama (I even pretended to walk away saying, “It’s not possible/can’t do it”), and finally I paid for it with *renmenbi*, at a little over half of the starting price.

I was very happy with the teapot, not to mention with my performance. I realized how far I’d come. I’d just been haggling with a local shopkeeper on the streets of Beijing! Although my Chinese wasn’t perfect,

Continued on next page

Learning Chinese (continued)

thanks to Wong Laoshi's confidence-building foundation I could jump in and put words together to fully express what I wanted to say. It wasn't hard; it was fun!

—Kirstin Marie Erickson, M.D.

"Friends" Helped Me Learn English

I was an English major in college but I had no opportunity to practice spoken English.

Except for learning from our textbooks, we didn't have many other choices. I remember watching old Hollywood movies like *The Sound of Music*, *Casablanca* and *Waterloo Bridge*. But the conversations in those movies were not very helpful for learning daily life vocabulary.

My English improved a lot in 2004 when I started to work in an American company, as I had to talk and work with my American colleagues. Almost at the same time, more American TV shows like *Friends* and *Prison Break* became available in China.

—Ming Wu

Learning English at Work

I learned English mainly from school as there were no other resources like American TV shows to learn English from, even though I grew up in Shanghai.

When I started to work at a foreign company, I was in an environment to practice spoken English, but I was very nervous when I first spoke to a foreigner. My English further improved when I travelled to other countries.

You can't be afraid to make mistakes when learning English, and it is also important to read English books and newspapers.

—Li Fang

Julie Andrews Inspired Me to Learn Chinese

I was a high school student in Malaysia, which has a large Chinese population, when I went to see the Julie Andrews movie *Thoroughly Modern Millie* in 1967.

There's a scene where Millie (Julie Andrews) tosses a lit cigarette on the ground in front of some boxes that have Chinese characters on them. Chinese speakers in

I'm Margaret Wong's Husband, Not Her Student

Since I am Margaret Wong's husband, the very first thing I need to emphasize is that I am certainly not a prize example of an accomplished language learner. In fact, if I venture to speak a simple Chinese phrase in the presence of others, she will immediately mention that I was never one of her students! I do however have a couple of insights from the student perspective.

I took a year of German in college. One tool that our instructor used consistently was memorization and recitation of what seemed like trivial conversations, with sentences such as, "Where can I wash my hands?"

Memorization Works

Do you know what has stuck with me all my life from those drills? It is German word order, which of course applies to everything you say or write. Fast forward some 30 years, and I met Margaret and discovered that she also stressed memorization of dialogues in her Chinese classes, for the very same reason. It works.

Now, one other observation of an amateur learner. As an adult in my mid-40s, and before I had met Margaret, I took it into my head to enroll in night school Chinese at the University of Minnesota.

Every class session would include in-your-face conversation between teacher and the class. This required the most intense concentration from the student, since there were only perhaps six students, and you didn't know whether the next question would be directed to you.

Years later, while accompanying Margaret on a tour of her colleagues on the East Coast, I watched a professor at Middlebury use exactly this same in-your-face fast-paced dialogue in a class of perhaps 15 students. He walked up and down the aisles between desks like a revival preacher, and it worked just as effectively as I had seen in my class of six. You couldn't be a slacker in that atmosphere.

—Walter Graff



Walter Graff

the audience burst out laughing, even before the translation, "fireworks," came on the screen. "Wow," I thought, "that must be something to be able to read Chinese."

Five years later I had just started to study Mandarin in college when I went to cover the 1972 visit of the Chinese ping-pong team for my school newspaper. At a welcoming ceremony, an American greeted the team in Chinese. I turned to the man sitting next to me, a member of the Chinese delegation, and tried out my newly learned vocabulary.

"Does he have a good accent?" I asked in Chinese. The man answered affirmatively. This was the first time I had spoken Chinese outside of the classroom, and I thought to myself, "This really works."

In those days, before Americans could routinely travel to China, much of our classroom work involved reading political passages from China. Decades later, while working in Shanghai, some of my young Chinese colleagues asked me what I knew how to say in Mandarin.

"I'm a running dog of imperialism," I said in Chinese, and they laughed, saying

that the only time they had heard that phrase was in old movies.

—Mike Revzin

Mistakes Can Help You Learn

Unlike today's kids, who start to learn English in kindergarten, I started in junior high school with very simple greetings.

In senior high school, English got very boring and difficult as it was all grammar. When I got to college, English wasn't so important a subject so most people didn't spend much time on it.

After graduation, I moved to Shanghai and had more opportunities to meet and talk to foreigners. My English improved greatly at that time.

Some people are afraid to speak English because they are not confident about their accent. I think as long as you are not afraid to speak, and can express yourself clearly, making mistakes and having accent problems are no big deal most of the time.

—Stephanie Sun

友

A Frighteningly Realistic Scenario: War Between the U.S. and China

2034: A Novel of the Next World War

By Elliot Ackerman and Admiral James Stavridis
Penguin Press, 2021
Hardcover \$16.29, Kindle \$14.99

Reviewed by Mike Revzin

The war in this book begins 13 years from now, but the events leading up to it could have been lifted from today's headlines: A dispute between Chinese and U.S. ships in the South China Sea; rising tensions over Taiwan. The title of the book, *2034: A Novel of the Next World War*, makes it clear that these events escalate into military conflict.



The all-too plausible scenario is written by retired U.S. Navy Admiral Jim Stavridis and Elliott Ackerman, a former White House Fellow and Marine who served in Iraq and Afghanistan.

We are introduced to key characters in the U.S. and Chinese governments and armed forces—their personalities, motivations and—more importantly—their miscalculations of their counterparts on the other side.

Describing the initial military encounter at sea, in which the Chinese use a disguised fishing trawler, the *Wen Rui*, to spring a trap on the Americans, the authors write, “As it was said of the 9/11 attacks, it would also be said of the *Wen Rui* incident: it was not a failure of American intelligence, but rather a failure of American imagination.” Events and personalities in the Mideast, Russia and India also come into play.

Details seem to be deliberately sketchy. For example, the U.S. president is a woman who is “the first American president who was unaffiliated with a political party in

modern history,” but we never even learn her name.

The U.S. Navy ships are under the command of Captain Sarah Hunt, on her last voyage before she retires. An American pilot who plays an important role in the story is Marine Major Chris “Wedge” Mitchell—a fourth generation military pilot whose combat lineage began with his great-grandfather's service in the South Pacific in World War II.

The Pence Presidency

Brief phrases cleverly embedded in the writing give us a short-hand update on what has happened in the years leading up to 2034. For example, we learn that Dr. Sandeep “Sandy” Chowdhury, the U.S. deputy national security adviser, got his start “in the one-term Pence presidency.”

On the Chinese side we see Admiral Lin Bao, China's defense attaché in the U.S. who, implausibly, has risen to the

Passing through the much-disputed Spratlys with her flotilla was the legal equivalent of driving donuts into your neighbor's prized front lawn after he moves his fence a little too far onto your property.

top ranks in the Chinese military despite having an American mother and dual citizenship (which China does not recognize).

As the initial crisis begins, Lin shows up unannounced at the White House gate to talk to Chowdhury. “Casually eating from a packet of M&M's,” he shows off his knowledge of American pop culture by commenting to Chowdhury, “That's your saying, right? ‘Melts in your mouth, not in your hand.’”

His understanding of America came not just from his mother, but from attending university and military programs in the U.S., as well as by participating in exercises with his Western counterparts.

At the White House encounter, Lin ominously proves his country's cyber-spying capability by accurately telling Chowdhury, who has been too busy to check his cellphone messages, “Your mother has been texting you.”

Small details add comic relief to this tale of war. When Lin tosses the M&M's candy wrapper on the sidewalk outside of the White House, Chowdhury takes his focus off the fact that the two nations are on the brink of a world war, and says, “Pick that up, please, Admiral.”

Another example of dark humor occurs when the Marine pilot “Wedge” is forced down over Iran, in an incident that China and Iran coordinate to coincide with the events in the South China Sea. Mitchell is captured, blindfolded and imprisoned. “The dank air. The putrid scent. If Wedge hadn't known any better, he would've thought he'd been detained in the public restroom of a Greyhound bus terminal,” the authors write.

The crisis escalates when China's launches a cyber-attack that knocks out electricity to Washington and other parts of the U.S. Trent Wisecarver, the national security advisor, rushes to the White House for an emergency meeting. Because electronic devices are not working, he can't use a credit card to pay for his cab ride, and has to first rush into the meeting room to get cash from his colleagues.

The authors explain why the Americans are at a disadvantage: “They lacked the capability to hack into China's online infrastructure. The deregulation that had resulted in so much American innovation and economic strength was now an American weakness.”

China's cyber warfare capability is a key factor in the early military clashes, rendering much of America's military power useless.

Freedom of Navigation

The authors have a down-to-earth way of explaining military strategy. When the book begins, Captain Hunt is contemplating her mission:

“Her small flotilla was twelve nautical miles off Mischief Reef in the long-disput-

Continued on next page

ed Spratly Islands on a euphemistically titled freedom of navigation patrol. She hated that term. Like so much in military life it was designed to belie the truth of their mission, which was a provocation, plain and simple. These were indisputably international waters, at least according to established conventions of maritime law, but the People's Republic of China claimed them as territorial seas. Passing through the much-disputed Spratlys with her flotilla was the legal equivalent of driving donuts into your neighbor's prized front lawn after he moves his fence a little too far onto your property. And the Chinese had been doing that for decades now, moving the fence a little further, a little further, and a little further still, until they would claim the entire South Pacific."

The authors show that both the Chinese and U.S. political and military leaders engage in intense internal disputes as to how far their countries should go in escalating the conflict. At one point, the hawkish Wisecarver physically restrains the more moderate Chowdhury in a White House hallway, preventing him from telling his views to the president. It is reminiscent of the scene in the movie *Dr. Strangelove* in which the U.S. president admonishes an American general and the Russian ambassador, "Gentlemen, you can't fight in here! This is the War Room!"

Battle scenes are described in broad terms. For example, when a U.S. Navy ship sinks: "As the weight of the water contorted the steel hull, it creaked mournfully, like a wounded beast."

For the most part, military and civilian casualties are mentioned as if they were box score statistics—X number of deaths on this side, X number on the other. There are few accounts of pain or suffering.

Lin often reflects on the differences between China and the U.S.

"When he studied at Harvard's Kennedy School as a junior officer and later at the U.S. Naval War College in Newport as a mid-level officer, and when he'd attended exercises with his Western counterparts, he was always fascinated by the familiarity so common among senior- and junior-level officers in their militaries. The admirals often knew the first names of the lieutenants... The egalitarian undercurrents

ran much deeper in Western militaries than in his own, despite his country's ideological foundation in socialist and communist thought. He was anything but a 'comrade' to senior officers or officials, and he knew it well."

"But our strength is what it has always been—our judicious patience. The Americans are incapable of behaving patiently. They change their government and their

*Conflict is not inevitable,
but if you don't seek to
avoid it, the chances go up.*

policies as often as the seasons. Their dysfunctional civil discourse is unable to deliver an international strategy," he thinks to himself.

Unbelievably, even when the fighting is well under way, Lin still daydreams of moving to the U.S. after the war and teaching at the Naval War College.

There's a passage about post-World War III America that could have come from today's headlines about anti-Asian American sentiment: "The Chinese community had to contend with the suspicions of other Americans, many of whom assumed their complicity in the recent devastation."

Both authors attended The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University. In an interview about this book with the Tufts Now website, Stavridis said, "Conflicts are not inevitable. For every conflict that we have, I would guess there are more that have not occurred... So the idea of putting out the story as a cautionary tale, I think, is important. Conflict is not inevitable, but if you don't seek to avoid it, the chances go up."

Some readers and reviewers of the book have pointed out specific military or diplomatic twists or turns in the plot that they find unlikely.

But perhaps the most frightening aspect of this book is that few people seem to be saying that the overall scenario could never happen. *2034: A Novel of the Next World War* is a work of fiction. Let's hope it stays that way. 友

How the Under Half Lives

Land of Big Numbers

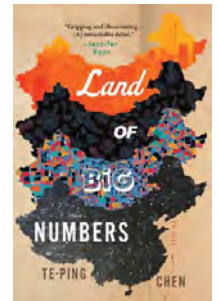
By Te-Ping Chen

Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2021

234 pages. Kindle edition, \$9.99, Paperback \$19.99

Reviewed by Fran Adams

Perhaps this book of short stories, set mostly in China, should start with the warning "Abandon hope all ye who enter here." The stories are almost unrelievedly grim, and paint a sad picture of Chinese life, past, present and imagined future.



In the title story, a young man living with his parents dreams of riches through playing the stock market, and goes so far as to "borrow" money from his job to invest, knowing that it won't be missed until the accounting books are checked at the end of the quarter. As the stock market falls, and the end of the quarter approaches, one knows that this will not end well.

The young man asks his parents for a large amount of money to slip back into the coffers at his job, but they just laugh. The young man hears for the first time that his father was a taxi driver who made a good salary until he was involved in a protest movement and his taxi license was permanently revoked, leaving him to scrounge for small change by offering rides on his motor scooter.

The protests that ruined the father, the reader guesses, are the Tiananmen Square protests of 1989. But no one speaks of them, and the young man had not heard of them. The past also haunts the present in memories of the Cultural Revolution, giving some of the older characters nightmares and stabs of waking guilt that shadow their lives. But again, no one speaks of these things openly.

As for the present day, here is a description of one of the author's typical settings, from the story "Shanghai Murmur": "The

light outside was turning that pallid gray of late afternoon, stealing across the sidewalk, muting even the garish red sign across the way that blared *Health Products, Adult Products*, the jumble of computer cards and pipe fittings next door and beyond that, the dirty, slovenly floors of a small restaurant named for its chief menu item, Duck Blood Noodle Soup." The unappealing settings set the mood of these stories.

The main character in "Shanghai Murmur" is a young woman from a village, working in a Shanghai flower shop, who develops a crush on a wealthy man who is her regular customer. With just a few precise details, the author shows that these two people live in different worlds.

Those stories set in a slightly fantastical future suggest that the government has

perfected its means of control. In the story "Gubeikou Spirit," subway passengers are trapped in a station as the months pass. It is comfortable there, with beds, TVs, good food, a karaoke machine and crayons for the kids, and yet no one can leave. And would they in fact leave if a train finally pulled into the station and they could get on? That is not at all clear.

The author, Te-Ping Chen, is a journalist who has reported from Beijing and Hong Kong for the *Wall Street Journal*. Her style is straightforward and unadorned. Her characters tend to be a bit flat, never changing in the course of the stories other than progressing from foolish hope to inevitable disappointment. She knows how to make an effective point though, and her stories can be powerful. And we

must give her credit for focusing on the less fortunate members of society.

In the story "Lulu," twins take divergent paths, one becoming a successful professional video games player and the other a dissident who is quickly and effectively silenced and jailed. It's a schematic story, in which the characters explicitly raise the question of whether either of the twins' ways of life are at all meaningful. It is to the author's credit that the answer is left ambiguous. She does not offer any too-easy resolutions.

As with many of the stories in the book, the stark simplicity of "Lulu" makes it indelible. This book is not pleasant to read, but if one is looking for a portrait of the underbelly of today's China, this book certainly delivers. 友

Transitions

John Jung Chronicled the Chinese American Experience

By Mike Revzin

John Jung, a member of JUSCPFA's Long Beach chapter, died in July at age 84. After Jung retired as a psychology professor, he reinvented himself as a historian and author, writing about the lives of Chinese Americans.



His fifth book about Chinese Americans, *A Chinese American Odyssey: How a Retired Psychologist Makes a Hit as a Historian*, described that transition.

His other books include the cleverly titled: *Southern Fried Rice: Life in A Chinese Laundry in the Deep South*. That one is the story of he and his three siblings growing up in Macon, Georgia, during the Jim Crow era. Jung's parents were immigrants from China, and they were the only Chinese-American family in town.

An excerpt in that book, describing how they got their story and picture in the local newspaper during Madame Chiang Kai-Shek's 1943 visit to Macon, shows Jung's sense of humor. "Someone decided that we four Jung children, being the only children in town of Chinese descent, should be invited to attend the festivities," he wrote.

"The publicity staff saw a human in-

terest story in giving cute little Chinese children a chance to see the most influential Chinese woman of her era. We were paraded out for public display. I was only about six, and none of it meant much to me, although the press release gushingly described our encounter of a few seconds with Madame Chiang as a thrill that we 'tiny Jungs' had eagerly awaited. The most I recall was that it was a hot summer day, and I was more interested in finding a shady spot than in getting a glimpse of Madame Chiang."

Jung's family moved to San Francisco when he was a teenager.

In *Southern Fried Rice*, he said that his adjustment to living in a largely Chinese community in California was difficult.

"I was a skinny and self-conscious kid who was unusually tall for a Chinese at six-four," he recalled.

On his author page at Amazon.com, Jung wrote, "Even after we moved to San Francisco when I was an adolescent, it was still difficult for me to know what it meant to be a Chinese American because I was so different from the San Francisco Chinese who had lived so closely among other Chinese all of their lives."

He later majored in psychology at the

University of California at Berkeley and went on to earn a Ph.D. at Northwestern University. He was a professor of psychology at California State University, Long Beach for 40 years, and was the author of several academic textbooks.

His other books on Chinese Americans were *Chopsticks in the Land of Cotton: Lives of Mississippi Delta Chinese Grocers*; *Sweet and Sour: Life in Chinese Family Restaurants* and *Chinese Laundries: Tickets to Survival on Gold Mountain*.

Jung was a captivating speaker who entertained and informed audiences across the country with information about Chinese American history, including details from his own research.

On Amazon.com, Jung described the purpose of his writing. "My books share the common goal of exploring how Chinese immigrants, starting from the late 1800s until beyond the middle of the past century, managed to overcome the hostile societal prejudices against Chinese and other 'Orientals' to succeed in opening family businesses such as laundries, grocery stores and restaurants that enabled their children to gain an education that allowed them to move from these humble origins to careers in many fields." 友

Owensboro/Evansville Participates in Multicultural Festival

The president of USCPFA's Owensboro/ Evansville chapter, Beth Hubbard, and her daughter Lily set up and ran a China booth at the 23rd Owensboro Multicultural Festival in August. They have participated in the award-winning festival every year since Lily was about four years old, and now Lily is in charge of the China booth.

Over the years, Lily has performed on stage as a singer and dancer, as well as leading a Chinese dragon dance. Winny Lin, the founder of the chapter and the festival, donated \$1,000 toward a college scholarship for Lily, who is a freshman at the University of Southern Indiana in Evansville.

—Winny Lin



Left: Lily receives a \$1,000 scholarship. Above: Lily, top row, left, led the Chinese dragon dance. (Photos by Beth Hubbard)



South Bay Members Teach English Online to Chinese Students

Several South Bay chapter members and friends started teaching English online to students in the Number 9 High School of Anshan, Liaoning province, in 2020, right after the pandemic hit.

Now, four outstanding seniors have passed the gaokao college entrance examination with high scores to pursue their dreams in international trade, tourism, broadcasting and agricultural science.

For their high school graduation gifts, Winny Lin mailed them cards and the classic book *The Prophet*, by Kahlil Gibran. Chapter President John Marienthal is the only one still involved in the English program.

The four Chinese students are 李金阳 Li Jinyang, 李昱霖 Li Yulin, 陈吉泰 Chen Jitai, and 李佳蓉 Li Jiarong. With the help from Winny Lin, all except Chen Jitai participated in Yo-Yo Ma's #songsof-comfort online project, had their music posted on the PBS Facebook page and got good reviews.

Li Jiarong played the Chinese flute and recited a poem in Chinese and English, while Li Jinyang composed and performed a piano piece, and Li Yulin did a Chinese and English rap about Covid.

—Winny Lin



Li Jinyang



Li Jiarong with her book. (Photos by Winny Lin)

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2021 Is the Year of the Ox



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