

Sine

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Scotland-China Association



Issue 2

Autumn 2023

苏格兰中国协会

蘇格蘭三中國協會

Sine

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2023 is the year of the hare or rabbit
Hare images by Anisa Caine (Ainisha)

Síne is Gaelic for China

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The Scotland–China Association is a society of people, generally based in Scotland, who have an interest in all aspects of Chinese life and civilisation.

It exists to foster friendship and understanding between the people of Scotland and China to include peoples of Chinese ethnicity worldwide. The Association is non-political and non-sectarian.

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Update: The Scotland-China Association in 2022-23

The Scotland China Association has been successfully meeting in person during 2023, and we hope to continue in this way through 2024. Talks have been hybrid, so as to allow members unable to travel to participate from home.

In May a small group visited the Himalayan Garden at Craigieburn, near Moffat – not strictly speaking Chinese, but cultivating many plants known to the British as British garden plants, and actually imported by the plant hunters of the nineteenth century. The visit was a convivial event, preceded by coffee and followed by lunch in Moffat.

Our speakers in February and March were drawn from the SCA's own talent bank, and both dealt with the topic of working in China as specialised professionals: in February Vincent Day talked about his experience of ship design and building on the north eastern coast, in the highly developed industrial port of Dalian; in March Ian Cameron provided insights into working with local engineers on a pipeline in the rather less developed area on the northern edge of the Kumtag desert in Xinjiang.

In April Andrew Law of Newcastle University gave a talk on the Hanfu movement; his research was carried out by closely involving himself in the movement. The presentation which followed the AGM in June was given by artist Roy Petrie, who has lived and worked in China for a number of years.

The 2023-24 programme started with a lunch at Sanchuan Restaurant in Potterrow, Edinburgh.

The remainder of the 2023-24 programme is still to be confirmed, but we expect to welcome talks from a variety of speakers, including Francesca Bray, an expert on the history of food in China. We are planning an outing to the Oriental Museum in Durham in May, and we hope to show a film at some point.

Please look out for information on all activities by email.

Articles in this issue of Sine cover four distinct topics. We start with an up-to-the-minute report on Sino-Scottish collaboration in the field of special education, contributed by Patricia Johnston of the Scottish Churches China Group. Our second article is historical, created on the basis of notes from a visit to China in 1972. Jonathan Wills' article shows how different China was fifty years ago, a far cry from the wealthy, sophisticated China we know today. The excerpt from Frank Whaling's article, originally published in Sine in 2009, illustrates the situation nine years on from Jonathan's visit, when the new policies of reform and opening up were being implemented, and religious bodies were once more able to practise limited worship and fellowship. Frank died this year, and is remembered in an obituary which precedes his article. Copies of this article, and others by Frank, are available from the editor, or from Dale Finlayson. The final article is cultural and pictorial, giving an overview of the Chinese arch, or pailou.

We welcome contributions. If you have articles, news items, photographs or readers' letters which you would like to contribute to the magazine, please send them to the editor.

We are indebted once more to Anisa Caine (Ainisha) for her evocative hare images.

Working with the Amity Children's Development Centre

By Patricia Johnston



Little did we know what was ahead of us when we first started to get news of a serious virus affecting the residents of Wuhan and spreading across China. As the pandemic took hold, we all had to find new ways of working and keeping in touch when our usual methods had to be paused. It is quite an adjustment, not to mention disconcerting, when we realise what we consider to be ‘the norm’ turns out to be so fragile!

For the Scottish Churches’ China Group (SCCG) planned partner visits, to and from Scotland and China, had to be suspended. We didn’t know how long this was going to go on for, so we needed to look for ways to minimise the negative impact on our project work. Email and Zoom calls have been vital but it hasn’t been the same as in-person contact and some work has suffered. When dealing with sensitive materials or opinions it is much more difficult to be as open and honest in emails and Zoom conversations. In addition, there have been some unexpected consequences of the pandemic which are understandable but, perhaps, we didn’t entirely anticipate them.

One such example has been the deterioration in language skills of some Chinese partner staff. With no overseas visits or visitors, the opportunity to practice and use English language skills largely dried up. The impact of this became evident when a staff member from one long time Chinese partner was offered the opportunity to undertake an online Masters degree. This

offer was made not only because of their remit within the organisation, but also because their English was so good. As enthusiastic as they were to begin with, this changed when they realised how much work would be involved to restore their English language skills to their previous level. None of us appreciated just how much study would be required for this individual to meet the university's minimum International English Language Testing System (IELTS) score, such was the level of deterioration in their previously excellent English. Ultimately, they withdrew from the project which was sad for both them and the clients they work with.

Fortunately, this hasn't been our experience with all pieces of work and that is what I would like to focus on in this article.

The SCCG has, for about 15 years, worked with staff from the Amity Children's Development Centre. This is a small centre, originally set up to 'train' pre-school children, on the autistic spectrum, to be able to cope with moving into mainstream schooling at the same age as their peers. SCCG support for this piece of work came in several different forms. Some staff from the Amity Children's Development Centre came to Scotland to undertake placements at New Struan School, a day and residential school which is part of Scottish Autism. Other staff visited educational and community resources throughout Scotland, while Scottish experts spent time in Nanjing running training courses for Amity staff or speaking at conferences on autism organised by Amity.



The Amity Children's Development Centre in Nanjing interior view

Over the years the original vision had to be tempered as the obstacles to the transition into mainstream education became more and more apparent. Gradually, the Amity Children's Development Centre expanded the age range during which children could remain at the Centre. It also started to accept children with different additional needs, for example, Downs Syndrome. Despite the challenges, the goal remained that, at some point, a number of children would move into mainstream education.

The ongoing collaboration in this project was always encouraging and productive but there has always been some underlying 'tension.' This comes from two parties wanting to work together while holding different core understandings of the work. This became evident in one key aspect.

Chinese staff aimed to modify behaviours to enable the child to fit into a mainstream educational setting whilst the Scottish perspective was to provide training, education and support to enable the child to reach their full potential. This difference was encapsulated in a conversation between Jasmine Miller, former Head Teacher in New Struan School, me, a former Social Worker who specialised in working with adults with additional needs, and Amity Children's Development Centre staff.

The occasion was a visit to Nanjing to assess progress, after a number of years of joint working, and to map out the future direction of the partnership. As part of the process each Amity staff member was asked to write an outline for a child they were working with, entitled 'a day in the life of...' This would be followed by the opportunity for questions to be asked and explored further. After one presentation an Amity staff member asked us for guidance on a 'problem' they had with their particular child. Their question was:

'Child A is only really happy when they are outside in the playground so when we bring them in for their afternoon nap they cry a lot and can become disruptive. What can we do to stop the crying and correct this behaviour?'

Our reply was multi-faceted and asked questions such as:

Is the child tired when you try to bring them in?

What is their normal sleep pattern like?

Why does the child need to sleep at that point in the afternoon?

What medication is the child on?

What does that child's personal development plan include and focus on?'

This conversation highlighted the difference in the approaches and understanding. For our Chinese colleagues, the needs of the service took precedence. Culturally, there was a set time in the afternoon when everyone had a nap. From the Scottish side, the needs of the child should be front and centre. The child did not need a nap at that time in the afternoon and forcing them into this pattern was causing them distress. There is always an understanding that the needs of the service must be considered and built into any child-centred plan, but it is when they are the priority that the tension between the two approaches is most clearly seen. We never did find out how the Amity staff member handled the situation thereafter!



The Amity Children's Development Centre in Nanjing
outdoor activity

While tension of this kind can be frustrating, it can also be productive as it invites an opportunity for reflection and a deeper understanding of both viewpoints. The Scottish aim would be that some children and young people need additional support to benefit fully from their education. My experience in China is that the needs of the community take precedence over the needs of the individual and the underlying aim is to 'cure' the child so that their behaviours are modified in a way that enables them to fit into mainstream education.

This understanding would appear to be borne out in research from Nan Zhu and Guanglun Michael Mu (2019) that states, *‘China does not have a national overarching special education law to legitimate the need for, and the use of, behavioural interventions and supports for students who are thwarted by, or at risk of, problem behaviours that impede school success.’*¹

This understanding is not restricted to the educational setting. We have seen this in the work the SCCG is involved in with the Palliative Care Ward in Shengjing Hospital, Shenyang. For many medics and nursing staff, having a palliative care ward is a waste of medical training, time and resources as the patients cannot be cured. Indeed, some of the staff in the ward have been told they are wasting their skills as they were trained to ‘cure’ and since palliative patients aren’t going to get better what is the point of them being there. This perspective is reflected, also, in wider society.

Commenting on these issues isn’t about judgement. When I started working with adults with additional needs in 1979, we were based in a condemned building and when a new, purpose-built centre was proposed in the heart of a local community there were petitions against its development because, as one resident told me, ‘These people will never marry so what’s the point...’!! As I said, this isn’t about judgement, rather, it is recognising differing cultural perspectives, journeys and aims and finding ways to work together that acknowledge these differences.

So where is China in terms of its services, including inclusive education, for children with additional educational needs?

Various government policies have enshrined the right to an education for a child with additional needs. According to the Chinese government’s official English language website:

¹ Zhu, N.; Mu, G.M. (2019) Behavioural support for students with Special Educational Needs: Trends Across the Asia-Pacific Region. Chapter 9 Behavioural Support in Mainland China.

‘On January 25, 2022, The General Office of the State Council forwarded the “14th Five-Year Plan Action Plan for the Development and Improvement of Special Education” (《“十四五”特殊教育发展提升行动计划》) issued by the Ministry of Education and other departments, deploying all localities to accelerate the high-quality development of special education. All provinces and cities across the country actively responded to this policy... In February 2023, the General Office of the Nanjing Municipal Government issued the “Nanjing 14th Five-Year Plan Action Plan for the Development and Promotion of special Education” (《南京市“十四五”特殊教育发展提升行动计划》), proposing that by 2025, the enrolment rate of children with special needs in preschool education stage will reach more than 85%, the enrolment rate of students with special needs in compulsory education stage will remain above 99%, and the education rate of students with special needs in high school stage will reach more than 80%.’

While these plans and goals are impressive, the question remains. How much progress has been made? According to Zhu and Mu,

‘As a sharp contrast to the image of an emerging economic giant, China has yet to develop a proactive and progressive education system of quality and equality that can ensure education rights for all children, especially those with special educational needs (SEN).’

With China facing many challenges as they seek to meet the growing needs of the largest disability population in the world, should we be surprised that it has a long way to go?

Part of the problem may be that, while there are various legal documents affirming the rights of children with additional educational needs, the detailed specifics of what must be provided is less clear. In addition, the mechanisms for the implementation of these laws and policies has not yet been fully established. All of this leads to a wide variety of practice and resources when translated into the provision of services in different towns,

cities, and provinces. This reminds me of a situation in Scotland in the 1980s when legislation stated that every Local Authority must provide day care services for adults with learning difficulties. It did not, however, specify even the minimum requirement to fulfil these obligations. This left it entirely up to each Local Authority to decide how much they actually invested in their services and for some, it was very little. The situation appears to be very similar in China just now and until minimum requirements are set out in any legislation, it becomes a post code lottery as to how well served a child with special education needs will be.

However, let us acknowledge, that, in some areas, things are changing. Just last year (2022) Ma Xiaobo, of the Amity Children's Development Centre, was asked to pilot an Integrated Kindergarten project. This piece of work would see some of the younger children from the Amity Children's Development Centre meeting in a mainstream school and integrating with some of the other pupils. Ma Xiaobo has told us the programme is going well but details have not been shared, so I look forward to a partner visit in November when we may be able to see it first-hand. My curiosity will be around several areas.

Firstly, how are the needs of children being met in the ultra-competitive environment of a Chinese school? So much emphasis is put on results, and I have questions about how the parents view a programme like this. Are the parents of a child with special educational needs worried that their child's needs won't be met in favour of maintaining a curriculum that focuses on exam results? Will the parents of the other children in the class be concerned that their child won't get the benefit of a 'normal' exam-driven curriculum in favour of one that is modified to meet the needs of an inclusive class?

Another question is about the physical environment of a school that offers inclusive education. For children on the spectrum, any kind of transition e.g., from class to class, class to playground etc., can be very stressful if it is not managed well. Will the movement of pupils be staggered to reduce the numbers in corridors at any one time? Will there be quiet areas where a child who is feeling overwhelmed by auditory or visual stimuli can rest and destress for periods of time? Will corridors be widened to enable a child

on the autistic spectrum to safely navigate them in a way that reduces physical contact with others, in turn reducing their stress and agitation? What consideration will be given to lighting and décor to produce a calm, peaceful learning environment? These are just some of the issues that will, at some point, need to be addressed if inclusive education is to develop to the point that it is meeting the needs of all children attending the school.

In considering the wider context of inclusive education, there are questions around the involvement of parents in decision making and the input of Multi-Disciplinary Teams (MDT). While support from parents to help set teaching goals for their child will be important, as reinforcement of learning points may be required at home, what



The Amity Children's Development Centre
in Nanjing sociable climbing

about input from psychologists, speech and language specialists, physiotherapists, and nutritionists? The specialist knowledge of MDTs is invaluable to developing a holistic approach to inclusive education, but these specialists are not necessarily available in many parts of China.

Foundational to all of this is a highly trained workforce of Special Education Teachers who are not only familiar with best practice in teaching a child with additional needs but also possess an understanding of some of the challenging behaviours a child may present with. Being able to help colleagues understand that challenging behaviours are not related to a child requiring discipline but rather are rooted in their condition, be it autism, trauma based or associated with attachment issues, will be vital. If there is no understanding of the reason behind the challenging behaviour the necessary support will not be put in place. All of this can add to some parents, and perhaps teachers, being fearful of children with special

educational needs being part of mainstream schools as they can be perceived as being ‘dangerous’, ‘disruptive’ and ‘badly behaved’.

With all of these matters to be considered, we haven’t even touched on what will be needed if children with multiple complex needs are to be included.

Laws and policies that enable all children to flourish in an inclusive educational setting need to be clear about the physical environment it will take place in, and the professional skills required by the staff who will deliver it. The fact that this is a dynamic area of education also needs to be recognised as best practice will change as ongoing research offers new insights and understandings. All of this requires considerable financial investment and the desire of the local community to value a child with special educational needs and invest in their future. We, here in Scotland, are far from getting this right, so working together on projects like this offers us the opportunity to be open, not only to sharing what expertise we have but to learning from our Chinese colleagues.

To Beijing after Nixon

By Jonathan Wills

Following President Richard Nixon’s much-publicised visit to Beijing and Shanghai in February 1972 the Chinese authorities began to issue tourist visas as rarely before, seeking favourable publicity for the purported achievements of Chairman Mao’s ongoing Cultural Revolution and also to earn foreign currency. One of the many study tours to arrive in Beijing later that year was organised by the Scotland-China Association (SCA). The leader of the September 1972 tour was John Chinnery, Head of the Chinese Department at Edinburgh University, who had co-founded the association in 1965-6. Unfortunately, John Chinnery became ill shortly after the party landed at Kai Tak Airport, Hong Kong. Two days later he had a heart attack in Guangzhou. Thanks to prompt action by a medically qualified SCA delegate, Dr Mary Findlay, and first class treatment (including acupuncture) from the Chinese health service, he survived and lived for

another 38 years. However, he was far too ill to lead the tour and had to stay in hospital for the duration. Fortunately, another ‘old China hand’ was able to stand in for him. The Reverend John R. Fleming (1910-1999) was a divinity lecturer at St Andrews University and had been a Church of Scotland missionary in China before the People’s Liberation Army victory. He hadn’t been back since 1950.

I really should have written up the SCA study tour of China as soon as we got home, 51 years ago. But I was busy with other things and also, as the late Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai said when asked for his opinion on the French Revolution, it was too soon to judge. Now it may be too late. Although I never returned to China, friends who did have encouraged me to publish the 200 or more photographs that I took and which somehow survived half a century in our attic. Fortunately, the faded labels on the original cardboard slide mounts all noted when and where they were taken. But as I tried to write picture captions I realised the extent of my ignorance. So some background reading was required to put them into context, with my contemporary notes, which have also survived. The result is a book, *To Beijing after Nixon*, published at Amazon.

When I went to China I was in my last year as an Edinburgh University geography postgraduate. On the trip I worked as note-taker and photographer for Harry Dickinson (1924-83), a lecturer in the university’s Electrical Engineering department. Harry was a burly, blunt-speaking Lancastrian, a member of the Intermediate Technology Development Group (ITDG) which encouraged the use of relatively simple and inexpensive equipment to modernise agriculture and rural industry in developing countries. Harry had a particular interest in rural electrification projects. He wrote a report for the World Council of Churches, *Rural China* 1972, and this is included as an appendix to my book.

September 1972 was a turning point, as we know now but didn't then: the Cultural Revolution's peak had just passed; Mao Zedong's chosen successor, Lin Biao, had died the previous year in a plane crash, fleeing after an apparent coup attempt; the People's Liberation Army had returned to barracks the month before, after years of



John Chinnery and Harold Dickinson
in a commune herb garden, 1972

keeping Mao's Red Guards in check; 'continuous revolution' was less popular than ever; Chinese Communist Party leaders were split between Mao loyalists and more reasonable communists derided as 'capitalist roaders'; and there were the beginnings of the more relaxed, albeit still authoritarian, regime that would emerge after Mao's death in 1976.

During the 26 days of our 3,000-mile trip by train from Guangzhou to Zhengzhou, Beijing, Nanjing, Wuxi and Shanghai we visited schools, hospitals, factories and universities as well as the usual tourist sites. We also spent a lot of time in five people's communes which we were exhorted to admire, and to some extent did. What we saw was genuine but of course these were showpiece communes.



Four generations of a family pictured at
Sino-Cuban Friendship Commune, Beijing 1972

One of the most impressive was Ho La People's Commune near Wuxi on Tai Lake (at that time relatively unpolluted). As well as feeding themselves, the commune members made their own footwear, produced exquisite embroidery, raised silkworms, harvested fish

ponds and cultivated freshwater pearls. They also had private family gardens, very productive but extremely controversial. In China 51 years ago gardening was intensely political; the argument about whether peasants should be allowed private plots, and whether they should be allowed to sell their surplus produce in local markets, was a central point of contention during the Cultural Revolution, with Mao's Red Guards accusing 'capitalist roaders' such as Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping (and even Zhou Enlai) of promoting these small family enterprises in order to undermine communal endeavour and ultimately restore capitalism. In hindsight, this analysis was perhaps less absurd than it seemed to some of us at the time.

Another showpiece commune where we had a great welcome was the 'July First' in the Shanghai suburbs. With over 16,000 inhabitants it was slightly larger than Ho La but much smaller than Da Li (63,000) outside Guangzhou. The main crops were grain and vegetables. Like all the other communes we visited, it was not far from the city and so there was a ready market for fresh produce. Here too were private plots aplenty. Our itinerary did not include any communes in more remote areas and this should be borne in mind. In some areas not far from the densely populated regions we visited there were still considerable food shortages.²

At July First, however, all seemed to be going well. We saw a bright, cheery primary school where the pupils sang for us and chorused 'Good morning!' in English. We met their parents in agricultural machinery workshops, a small factory making furniture for local use and an electric motor assembly plant. Here we saw our first Chinese dairy cattle, Friesians imported from the Netherlands. The Revolutionary Committee showed us pig, chicken and goose-rearing farms, a mushroom growing section, an ingenious underground irrigation system and rice paddies that also grew a crop of wheat in rotation. Harry Dickinson was particularly delighted by the machinery workshops and the 'low-tech' efforts to mechanise agriculture. The commune's blacksmiths and welders were making new ploughs and

² Editor's note: Rationing of grain, meat and commodities such as cotton cloth operated from the mid-1950s. Rationing finally ended in 1993.

http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/bizchina/2011-03/29/content_12246010.htm



Village Street in July 1st
Commune, Shanghai 1972

harrows, repairing old equipment and even replacing timber and stone ploughshares on traditional oxen-drawn wooden ploughs with new, steel ones. In village lanes we admired traditional timber houses. Although picturesque, these dwellings were often insanitary and always a fire hazard. Since 1972 most of them have been replaced by blocks of flats.

Back in the big city, Shanghai appeared drab but was still fascinating. There were few traces of its notoriety as Asia's most sinful city between the First and Second World Wars and no hint of the gleaming architectural extravaganza it would later

become. The Peace Hotel where we stayed still towered impressively over the Bund but the few bright lights remaining on the mostly undistinguished buildings downtown were advertising Mao, not consumer goods. In those car-free days the traffic jams were on the Huangpu, the Yangtze's winding tributary that runs through the city centre, thronged with sampans, barges, river steamers and ocean-going ships. Some of us walked along the Bund with our interpreters and through a woodland park to Suzhou Creek, where we bumped into some seafarers from the Gambia at the bar of the sailors' home. I'd especially wanted to see 'Soochow Creek' because my Uncle Peter told me he'd enjoyed a beer there on 'a run ashore' some 20 years earlier when he was a British Merchant Navy deckhand, not long after the Liberation.

On a visit to a Shanghai housing estate we were shown a 'housewives lightbulb factory' that employed a few dozen married women. Here the Maoist principle of decentralisation and local self-sufficiency brought a contradiction, straight out of the 'bourgeois' economist Adam Smith's 'pin theory': the lightbulbs they produced so laboriously and inefficiently in the tiny factory (of which they were so proud) were obviously never going to

be able to compete with large, modern lightbulb factories producing much greater quantities of higher quality goods for sale over a vastly greater area. In 1972 the Shanghai housewives didn't have to compete. Mao had seen to that, but I doubt if this little social enterprise survived Deng's reforms and the unleashing of the market economy.

We had our own 'bourgeois economist' with us, the late Professor Radha Sinha of Glasgow University, and these points did not escape his notice. Radha believed in basing research on solid data. Early in our tour he had realised that some of the statistics we were given by Revolutionary Committees were inflated or imaginary, particularly when talking about crop yields. So, while other members of the party visited a hospital, Radha and Harry spent an afternoon on one of Shanghai's main shopping streets, collecting raw, reliable data on the prices of food, clothing, shoes and consumer goods such as thermos flasks, alarm clocks, radios and bicycles. But, as with most economists (including his Chinese contemporaries) Radha's attempts to put his local findings into a broader national picture were hampered by the Chinese Communist Party's approach to collecting, analysing and publishing accurate facts and figures. Like history, facts and figures were primarily tools for propaganda.

Back at our hotel the China Travel Service, which had our passports in its possession, informed us that there'd been a miscalculation in the office and we'd now have to pay twice the agreed price for the trip. I felt a twinge of panic. There was no way I could possibly find such a sum. How many years in a re-education camp would I get if I didn't cough up? Somehow this was all sorted out, shortly after Harry Dickinson and I had been arrested. I believe some of our party paid up later on. I didn't because I couldn't. But I did get my passport back.

It was while we were at a performance by the astonishingly skilful Shanghai Acrobatic Troupe that evening that Harry was delighted to bump into an old acquaintance, the British engineering trade union leader Hugh Scanlon, sitting in the row behind us with none other than the celebrated Canadian-born economist J. K. Galbraith, who invited us to come back to his hotel for a drink after the show, to compare notes on our respective

itineraries and impressions so far. We agreed and later that evening, as Harry and I left the Peace Hotel³, strolled up the Nanjing Road and entered the Beautiful River Hotel, I was thinking of where I might sell an exclusive interview with the world-famous Professor Galbraith, sharing his thoughts on China's communist experiment. In the lobby of the Beautiful River Hotel Professor Galbraith was waiting and greeted us warmly. But, before our order for drinks could be taken, armed police intercepted us and, ignoring the pleas of the celebrated author of *The Age of Uncertainty* and other learned works, cancelled our planned soiree and firmly escorted us to a police van. Again I had visions of a decade or so in the slammer but fortunately the van took us straight back to our own hotel, not to the jail. In *A China Passage*, his book about his visit, Galbraith mentioned our brief encounter at the theatre, but not the detail of the police involvement. Disappointingly, in this amusing little volume (much of which he seems to have written on the plane home) Galbraith would join the ranks of Westerners who gave generous praise to Mao Zedong's achievements in agriculture and industry, despite remarking that Chinese Government economic statistics were either unreliable or unavailable to scholars (including Chinese scholars) or even non-existent. Like me and most of our Scottish delegation, he was too ignorant and too polite to inquire closely about the 1958-62 famine which was caused, not by bad weather as Mao claimed, but by the forced collectivisation of farming and his 'Great Leap Forward'. In fairness to the professor, even as late as 1972 very few people outside China were aware of the scale of that catastrophe a decade earlier. I certainly wasn't.

Nor did Galbraith dwell on the economic and personal calamities of the Cultural Revolution. It had destroyed the careers, and in many cases the lives, of Chinese intellectuals who no doubt wished to enjoy the same academic freedoms as the famous Harvard professor of economics. After

³ Author's note: Now the Fairmont Peace Hotel. Many Shanghai hotels have changed their names since 1972. The hotel where Galbraith stayed was off the Nanjing Road and was probably the luxurious palace now known as the Grand Central Hotel, greatly altered and refurbished.

visiting only two of them, he acclaimed China's 78,000 People's Communes – almost all of which were closed down, by popular demand and Communist Party fiat, just 10 years later, making way for the revival of Chinese agricultural production after Mao's experiments in social engineering. But hindsight is a wonderful thing...

Our interpreters had not long been released from detention during the Cultural Revolution (which, we now know, did not really end until Mao died, four years after our trip) – their crime was being 'intellectuals' who could speak English. One of them appeared terrified that he might end up back in a punishment brigade. He was dreadfully upset by our unauthorised excursion to meet J. K. Galbraith and I felt ashamed for letting him down. I also now feel ashamed for having been 'taken in' by some of the CCP propaganda to which I was exposed half a century ago. Paradoxically, those Chinese principles of horticultural self-sufficiency and community enterprise have continued to inspire my own life here in a Shetland island. But then I have always been a volunteer gardener, not a conscript.

To Beijing after Nixon – a grand tour of China in 1972, by Jonathan Wills, is published at Amazon Books. ISBN: 9798390681152.

Obituary

Frank Whaling, 1934–2022

The Rev. Prof. Frank Whaling, who died in November 2022, was a renowned scholar of Religious Studies at Edinburgh University who developed the study of world religions beyond their theological roots and beliefs to encompass the humane as well as social sciences and to include primitive and archaic religions and world views such as Marxism. His courses at New College were attended not only by students of Theology but by Buddhists, Jews, and Muslims as well as by students of other departments in the university. He described those attending his classes as being both religiously and culturally diverse.

Frank studied history and theology at Cambridge, where he obtained an M.A. and then a Ph.D. (in Philosophy), followed by a second Ph.D. in Theology at Harvard University. He then served as a Methodist minister in both the UK and India, which was the focus of many of his writings, before coming to Edinburgh University in 1973.

Perhaps his greatest achievement, for Edinburgh, was the founding of the Edinburgh Inter-Faith Association in 1988, which he served as its first Honorary President. EIFA's purpose is to bring together those of all faiths and none to work in harmony and to make Edinburgh a better place to live and work. EIFA still flourishes and is the oldest continuously operating interfaith association in Scotland.

Frank also had a deep and scholarly interest in the religions of China and made two official visits to China. He was chairman of the Scottish Churches China Group from 1986-1992. He joined the Scotland China Association in 1988 and was a very supportive member until his death. He spoke to both the Edinburgh and the Glasgow branches of the SCA on Chinese religions, particularly after 1949. Between September 2006 and September 2008 he wrote a four-part series for *Sine* on early religious traditions, the development of Buddhism, religion during the Han to the Qing dynasty, and from the founding of the Qing dynasty until 1949. Subsequently, in 2009-10, he wrote two articles on religion in China after

1949, the first up to 1981, when he made his first visit to China as an Exchange Fellow of the British Academy, the second covering what he called 'the most exacting and exciting period of all' from 1981-2009, including a subsequent visit to China in 1986.

It was a great privilege for the SCA to have Frank as a member for so many years. He contributed greatly to the study of world religions and through EIFA promoted the idea that people of different faiths and none could work in harmony together. He will be missed.



Frank Whaling

An Exchange Fellow in China

An excerpt from "Religion in China after 1949: Part I", Sine 2: September 2009.

Frank Whaling

I had become interested in China as Chairperson of the Scottish Churches China Group and also as a scholar. In 1981 I spent 31 days in China as an Exchange Fellow of the British Academy in a programme whereby some British scholars were nominated to visit China and some Chinese scholars visited Britain in return. I was there to 'study religion', but there was very little religion to study in the aftermath of the Cultural Revolution. It was a unique opportunity to review the situation of religion in China at that time.

As I went to meetings, spoke in different venues, and had conversations with different people, I came across an unforeseen problem. I was a guest of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in Beijing from the British Academy in London, and strictly speaking, that made me a guest of the Chinese government. For that reason I was sometimes initially suspect as the guest of a government that, at this point in time, was not particularly well liked and trusted. My whole tour was very well planned – by the government! However, there was always a breakthrough of some sort to a personal relationship with people that brought out a reasonable approximation to the truth. In fact, I was only the third western scholar of religion to visit the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, the other two being experts in Chinese religion from Paris and Toronto. I had an interest in all religions, and each conversation was an exciting new adventure on both sides.

In addition to 12 days spent in Beijing, I also visited six other Chinese cities containing important religious sites, museums, communities and scholars, namely Datong, Taiyuan, Xi'an, Luoyang, Zhengzhou and Guangzhou. I was accompanied on this expedition by an interpreter who was Lecturer in Christianity at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in Beijing. He also turned out to be a Communist cadre. In the two and a half weeks we spent together, we became great friends. He helped me in innumerable ways and we had great adventures together travelling around China.

During our journeys I was able to attend a Catholic mass (in Latin), a set of Muslim prayers, and events in one Daoist and three Buddhist temples. In addition, I visited five other churches, four mosques, and 13 Buddhist temples including the cradle of Pure Land Buddhism near Taiyuan, the centre of Chan (Zen) Buddhism at Shaolin, and the reputed first Buddhist temple in China at Luoyang. Meetings were also arranged with the Vice President of the Chinese Buddhist Association in Beijing and Buddhist leaders in two of the provinces, with the Vice President of the Chinese Islamic Association in Beijing and Muslim leaders in three provinces, and with three Roman Catholic bishops and two sets of Protestant leaders. The hectic schedule also included sightseeing visits to famous places including the Great Wall, the Ming Tombs, the Forbidden City and other wonders of Beijing, the Terracotta Warriors in Xi'an, and the Longmen Caves at Luoyang – all of which had some indirect or direct religious relevance.

It is difficult to summarise concisely the situation of religion immediately after the Cultural Revolution and the death of Mao. There was still control over religion. At my first interview, in a Beijing monastery, with a Chan (Zen) Master who was Vice President of the Chinese Buddhist Association, I had two post-graduate interpreters with me, together with two other people, one of whom was the head monk of the monastery and another gentleman who was somewhat mysterious. In response to my smile and wave, he pretended not to notice. I was therefore cautious and pragmatic in what I said to the Master and he was diplomatic in his replies to me. The 'interloper' took a lot of notes and it later transpired that he was a communist cadre. Whether he came by chance or to vet the Master and me was not clear, and nothing like this happened again. My second Beijing interview was with the Vice President of the Chinese Islamic Association, who was white-haired, had a glass eye, and was a lovely person who had clearly suffered. At first we fenced, as it were, asking and answering obvious questions about how many mosques were open, how many Muslims there were in China, and so on. It transpired that he had heard of my Edinburgh colleague, Professor William Montgomery Watt, who was internationally known as an Islamic scholar, and my stock improved. I was no longer suspected as being a lackey of the government! He then suddenly asked me how old I was, and I told him. He then asked me to guess how

old he was. I had no idea. I thought 75 and I said 65. I was absolutely right, and now we were friends and could talk freely! However, generally there was caution that usually lessened but did not disappear completely as academic and personal friendships grew.

In a Buddhist temple in the countryside my travelling companion and I talked for half an hour with the local Buddhist monk. It was near lunchtime, and I asked a final question: ‘What do you think is the main Buddhist message for the world?’ I expected an answer such as ‘Buddhist dharma’ and then we could go for lunch. The monk forgot about me and launched into a sermon in Chinese, and my cadre friend whispered, ‘He is trying to convert us!’ Along with caution there was also evidence of more confidence and a revival of faith.

My programme was tightly controlled but there was flexibility. I had been asked where I would like to visit and my requests were granted except for Tibet, Inner Mongolia and Xinjiang, which I didn’t expect to get to anyway. My friend and I got on very well, even though he was a cadre and I was a Christian minister, and everywhere but in Chongqing we were treated with respect and helpfulness. Our communist guide in Chongqing was a throwback to the old regime who went to meet us at the airport instead of the train station, leaving us lost in a strange city neither of us knew, and when he finally found us, his service was perfunctory.

In Beijing it had been arranged for me to visit the Great Wall and the Ming Tombs on a Sunday. I suggested that I would like to visit a church, any church, if that was possible. My hosts rang round and discovered that one of the two Protestant churches that had been reopened had become so full on Sundays it had opened a Saturday service as well, and I was able to go to that service. In Xi’an we finished one set of visits early and I had heard that there was a mosque in the city, so our hosts took us to it. We arrived without notice as the Imam was waiting to take the 4:30pm prayers, which unlike the Friday midday prayer is sparsely attended. I was invited to watch the prayers, then the Imam and I could talk. I counted 125 people present, giving the lie to stories I had heard of visits to religious buildings being hosted by communist functionaries dressed in religious robes.

It was clear that I had arrived during a time of transition. Marxism was still very important. At my base in the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, I was attached to the Institute for the Study of World Religions, which contained six departments dealing with Buddhism, Daoism, Christianity, Islam, Confucianism and Marxism. It had been envisaged in 1964 and founded in 1966 but had effectively been closed for two years during the Cultural Revolution. Everyone had to study Marxism and then they could go on to study at least one other tradition. Therefore the framework within which religion was studied was still a Marxist one. However, there was also real interest in the wider study of religion.

I had been invited to deliver two lectures on wide subjects, as there was a propensity for Chinese scholars to be expert in one particular field. I spoke on a 'Global History of Religion' and 'Contemporary Approaches to the Study of Religions'. They were marathon three-hour sessions, including the lecture, questions and answers, and interpretation, but they were received with rapt attention and it was clear that my colleagues were eager to pursue knowledge to the uttermost, having been deprived of it for so long. I later discovered that some of my articles had been translated into Chinese and printed without my knowing, though I was glad to help in their pursuit of wider knowledge. I investigated the possibility of a future study conference in China on behalf of the International Association of the History of Religion, and though it was too early at that time, it did happen later.

General life in China was still reflective of a Marxist state. Most men wore black or dark blue uniforms. Telephone calls were made back to Beijing for guidance in answering certain questions. Law and order was rigidly enforced. I became lost one night in Beijing but felt no apprehension and was guided back to my hotel by a soldier. The military were very evident. The One Child Policy was rigidly enforced. My cadre colleague, who was a liberal about religion, was offended by a novel being read in a train by a member of an American Kodak group on a sponsored visit. It had an innocuous picture of a western woman on its cover but he thought it obscene. Occasionally people would look at me open-mouthed, apparently never having seen a white person before. One had to shop mainly in state shops and spend time obtaining Chinese currency to spend

in those shops. Near the Great Wall I bought some beautiful cloisonné ware from a brave man who was the only person I met who was attempting to break away from state monopoly.

Although my visit was that of a scholar concerned with all religions, it was interesting to talk to Christians about their sense of things. The Protestants especially, indeed religious people generally, were more optimistic. The situation was still uncertain and few religious buildings were open and available for worship. There was still state regulation. But there were new possibilities, and religious groups, all of which had been affected by the Cultural Revolution, were anxious to help in regenerating China, not just in furthering their own cause. Inter-faith dialogue was opening up new opportunities for religious cooperation that had not existed before. Movements such as the Amity Foundation emerging through the China Christian Council enabled Christians and non-Christians, Chinese and foreigners, to work together on social projects. The Scottish Churches China Group, involving all Christian groups in Scotland, was inspired to offer a training course for European Amity volunteers to serve in China. Perhaps above all, questions were beginning to be asked about Marxism, but not in the sense that it was doomed to suffer demise. Was it a substitute for religion, and if not, what would its future role be and what would be the future role of religion?

Copies of this article, and others by Frank, are available from the editor or from Dale Finlayson.

Pailou - the Chinese arch

Contributors: Ian Cameron, Walter Fung, Valerie Pellatt

Almost every Chinatown has a pailou (牌楼) or paifang (牌坊) arch, symbolically marking the entrance to the community – in some interpretations marking the separation of the territory. The structure and the term have a long history, at least from the Tang dynasty.

The word was an administrative term for an area of a Chinese city. The largest division within the city was the fang (坊), itself divided into paifang (牌坊), each of which contained several hutong or alleys (胡同). The larger divisions have been replaced by more revolutionary or convenient entities, while the familiar hutong remains, now in small numbers, historic and protected. All the traditional sections of a city were protected by walls and marked at their entrance by an arch, and were guarded. During the Ming dynasty Beijing consisted of thirty-six fang. Over time, the function of the arch changed, and it gradually became a decorative feature, still, however, marking an entrance, and becoming pailou – a ‘marker pavilion’.

The pailou itself varies in size and complexity: those which front a building of state or religious importance may have one, three or five arches (odd numbers are yang, or strong, in Chinese numerology), and two or three storeys. There are modern variations on the theme, such as the camel depicted below.

There is usually a central inscription over a pailou, which may simply name the area, temple, garden, etc., to which it leads. Occasionally an uplifting chengyu or four character phrase (成语), may be inscribed, sometimes in the calligraphy of a historic or leadership figure. In China many pailou have been destroyed to make way for roads and housing developments, but some remain, and new ones are built to mark, for example, tourist attractions.

Chinese communities outside China have seen to it that this all-important symbol is kept alive, as most established ‘Chinatowns’ have one. Some Chinatown pailou are inscribed with the expression ‘Chinatown,’ but this

is not always the same in Chinese. There are at least three variants. The Mandarin version is 中国城, (Zhongguo cheng), or China City, while the Cantonese versions are 华人街 (Huarenjie) and 唐人街 (Tang renjie), both meaning ‘Chinese People’s Street.’ While Chinatowns are now often inhabited by mainland Chinese who read and write simplified characters, inscriptions are almost always in traditional characters – they are considered aesthetically and culturally preferable.

The pailou pictured here mark the entrances to just a few of the Chinatowns around the world, and also to temples, a theme park and a main road.



Lima Chinatown



Liverpool Chinatown pailou is said to be the biggest in Europe, as befits one of the oldest Chinese communities. It is inscribed 中國城 (中国城 in simplified characters) literally ‘China City.’



Havana arch is inscribed 華人街 (华人街 in simplified characters), literally ‘Chinese people’s street’



Bendigo Chinatown pailou, Australia. Bendigo's Chinatown goes back to the middle of the 19th century, during the Victorian gold rush, hence the inscription 'Gate to the Gold Mountain.'



Meinong Dongmen lou – the entrance to the Meinong area of Kaohsiung city in Taiwan, dating from the Qing dynasty. Damaged by the Japanese in the war of 1895.
Rebuilt in 1937 using reinforced steel and concrete.



The pailou of Boston Chinatown (Massachusetts) has an inscription on both sides. Rather than the name of the community, it has uplifting mottos on each side: on this side, 禮儀廉恥 (礼仪廉耻 in simplified characters) encouraging etiquette and integrity. The other side is inscribed 天下為公 (天下为公 in simplified characters) noting that the universe (or the empire!) is for all.



A modern departure from the traditional norm, marking the entrance to Kumtag Desert Scenic Area in Xinjiang.



Montreal pailou is inscribed 踵事增華 (踵事增华 in simplified characters). This means ‘continue the good works of those who have gone before, and make them even more complete and perfect.’



Manchester pailou is inscribed 中國城 (中国城 in simplified characters), but with a helpful English translation.



This pailou marks the entry to the Taroko Gorge National Park, a geological feature near the city of Hualien in Taiwan. It is inscribed 東西橫貫公路 (东西横贯公路 in simplified characters) or East-West transverse road.



A temple entrance inscribed 歡迎光臨 (欢迎光临 in simplified characters), meaning ‘welcome.’ If you have ever been inside a 7/11 shop in any Chinese-speaking area, you will have heard a robotic voice welcoming you with this expression.



This arch, inscribed 日光寺廟 (Temple of Daylight) marks the entrance to a high viewing point in a small temple on Gulangyu (鼓浪嶼), an island off Xiamen. The island is known for its music.



Newcastle pailou is inscribed 中國城 (中国城 in simplified characters), 'China City.'
The black tablets down each column list sponsors.

Theatre review: The Singer of Shanghai

Valerie Pellatt

In a recent issue of Sine, Joe Goldblatt wrote of the action of Chinese diplomat Ho Feng Shan, who saved the lives of around 20,000 Jewish refugees following the 1938 Anschluss in Austria, by giving them refuge in China. The Singer of Shanghai is a new play which gives us some insight into the thoughts and feelings of those refugees through the dramatized memories of one of them, Harold Abrahams.

Harry, born in 1938, spent his early years in Shanghai with his parents. His mother was an expert tailor, making clothes from disused parachutes during those hard times on a Singer sewing machine. Now resident in the USA, Harry is interviewed about his childhood. He reminisces about his time in Shanghai, his excitement at going to America, and his attachment to the sewing machine, which, miraculously, accompanied his family to America and is still with him 80 years later.

The creation of the play was a collaboration between Professor Kevin Ostoyich of Valparaiso University and his students of Historical Theatre. The play reflects history and tragedy, but as a product of young people, it speaks with youthful idealism. The main ideas that come through are ‘Why do you care?’ and ‘Something like Kristallnacht should never happen again.’

The play was beautifully and sensitively read by a cast of Broughton High School senior students. The production at Broughton High on January 31st 2023 was the play’s premiere in Scotland. If you missed it, look out for further performances: Professor Ostoyich plans to take it to Europe and to Shanghai, working with local students in those locations.

The production was sponsored by Edinburgh Interfaith Association, the Edinburgh Jewish Cultural Centre and an individual family.



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Tiger	1914	1926	1938	1950	1962	1974	1986	1998	2010	2022
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