

THE CAPITAL CHINA LETTER



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NEW ZEALAND CHINA FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY WELLINGTON BRANCH NEWSLETTER
12 Colchester Cres, Newlands, Wellington 6037. Website: www.nzchinasociety.org.nz

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NEXT BRANCH MEETING

Ms Wen Chin Powles

will speak on

“Reflections on a Shanghai Assignment”



Wen recently returned to Wellington after three years in Shanghai as New Zealand’s Consul-General. Her first overseas posting after joining the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) in 1988, was as First Secretary in the New Zealand Embassy, Beijing. Later, while in that city Wen worked at the Ford Foundation.

Wen moved to New York in 1996 as First Secretary in the New Zealand Permanent Mission to the United Nations. During periods back in Wellington Wen was Deputy Director in MFAT’s Americas, Environment and the UN and Commonwealth Divisions. She is now working on APEC issues in MFAT’s Asia Division.

Born in Malaysia, Wen has an MA Hons degree from Victoria University of Wellington. She is married to Michael Powles and they have a daughter, Nina Mingya. Wen’s interests include Chinese history, the Arts and natural history.

Connolly Hall

Guildford Terrace, off Hill Street, Thorndon, Wellington.

Wednesday, 19 August 2009, at 5.45 pm

An optional Chinese buffet meal, supplied by the Fujiyama Café, will follow the meeting at 7 pm. **Orders for the \$9.00 meal (please pay at the door) will be taken up till 6 pm.** If you think you may be late arriving, please let the Secretary know in advance.

The New Letterhead

Douglas Day urged a change and sent examples of letterheads of other organizations to members of the Editorial Group. The idea for the present format originated with Allan Levett, and received input from Christine Strickland, Anna Adams, Albert Wong and Stan Chan. Stan drew the characters for the new title. Further refinements were made during discussion among Group members: Christine Strickland, Douglas Day, Ray Brownrigg and Allan Levett.

LAST MEETING, 19 JULY

Alistair Shaw introduced three Chinese students with varying experiences on coming to New Zealand to study. He said it would be useful to hear their stories, and indeed it turned out to be so.

Tim Wang arrived in Wellington at the age of 3 years so had all his schooling here and speaks fluent Kiwi English. He was as much influenced by his New Zealand peers as by his parents in his choice of subjects to study. Nevertheless Tim has had feelings of being an outsider in New Zealand society. When at university he became interested in International Affairs, has been active in student politics and is among those assisting newly arrived Chinese students in such ordinary matters as opening a bank account.

Yana Zhong came to Wellington in 2007 with a Chinese degree and a long background of studying the English language in China, which was apparent as she spoke. As well Yana had good expectations before coming and has been very satisfied with her experiences here. She has stayed with Kiwi families and made friends here. Yana reckons that women have more power in New Zealand. With a degree in Tourism Management Yana has got a part-time job in the tourist industry, though she is aware that appropriate part-time work is not easy to obtain by international students. Yana will be returning to Sichuan to develop a career in tourism, using as much as possible her knowledge and contacts gained while living in Wellington.

Though William Wu has been three years in New Zealand his social life has been mostly among other Chinese students and he is less fluent in English. He said that "to make friends with Kiwis you need to know Kiwi English." Yet he is articulate with a keen mind, is active in student politics at the university and is interested in national politics. He thinks the New Zealand government, and the university, treat international students as "cash cows", providing less support than is required. William's greatest concern however is the lack of post-study employment opportunities in New Zealand which would enable international students to consolidate and apply their locally-earned knowledge.

Deputy Mayor Ian McKinnon, who is also Pro-Chancellor at Victoria University of Wellington, explained why there is some truth in William's remarks. New Zealand universities are not subsidized for international students to the same extent as domestic students. Furthermore, the work visa for international students in New Zealand is only one year after graduation, compared with two years in Australia.

There was a lively discussion with many queries, comments and additions from members of the audience which included other Chinese international students.

CHINA NATIONAL DAY BANQUET – DATE CHANGE

Please note that the banquet date has been changed from Sunday 27th September to **Sunday, 20 September**. It will be held at the Dragons Restaurant, 25 Tory St, at 6.30 pm. Cost of dinner is \$32 per person and includes wine and juice. To book, please send the attached form to the Treasurer **by Friday, 12 September**. Ambassador Zhang and Mayor Prendergast will be attending.

MEETING DATES FOR THE REST OF 2009

September 20, Sunday 6.30pm. China National Day Banquet at Dragons Chinese Restaurant, Wellington.

October 21, Wednesday 5.45pm. HE Ambassador Zhang Limin (TBC).

November 18, Wednesday 5.45pm. Paul Clark, Professor of Chinese at the University of Auckland: "Re-thinking the Cultural Revolution".

NEW MEMBERS: Warm welcome to Lynne Deng Lin, Diwen Cao and Graham Hill.

MANDARIN CORNER – every Saturday excluding school holidays, 3.15-4.30 pm at Victoria University, Seminar Room, 20 Kelburn Parade. Gold coin appreciated.

Ellen Yang, organizer of Mandarin Corner, writes as follows:

On August 1 we had 25 people in total. At each session a theme is chosen with relevant materials and information for back up. The topic for last Saturday was Chinese food. Next time will be weather, seasons or something like colour.

More volunteers are joining our team. In addition to the regular briefing and educational information, team building is under way. The volunteer team will have a shared dinner at my home after every MC (say \$5.00 per person). Also, we welcome learners to join us.

Special activity - Mandarin Corner will be held in the foyer before the Chinese film on 12 August! Time: 6-7 pm. Tea and juice provided. Please feel free to bring your own food.

CHINESE FEATURE FILM – Chinese Language Association, Wellington Branch
Wednesday, 12 August at 7.30 pm at Committee Room No 1, Wellington City Council, 101 Wakefield St. (Please note that the door closes at 7.45 pm.)

“Light Rail #3” (Ditie san hao xian)

Zhang Yan and Zheng Siji buy a house in the suburbs of Beijing, which necessitates daily travel to work in the city by Light Rail No. 3. They work very hard to pay off the mortgage and create good conditions for their son. However the resultant pressures of life cause their relationship to deteriorate and they become increasingly estranged. Finally, owing to a crisis, their feelings of duty to their son rekindles their love for each other and reunites the family. Director: She Yan; starring Wu Yuqiao, Liu Jun, Xiao Zishan and Mo Yang. DVD 95 minutes. In modern standard Chinese with English sub-titles.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND INVESTMENT FAIR, XIAMEN, SEPTEMBER 2009

As a wind vane and barometer of world investment, CIFIT is widely regarded as an ideal platform to test the global and regional investment climate and share up to date investment related information. Last year's 12th annual CIFIT attracted almost 14,000 overseas visitors from 126 countries and regions, and provided a showcase for over 2,500 exhibitors.

The House of Travel, Hastings is arranging an 8-day fully inclusive tour to the Trade and Investment Fair in Xiamen with day tours in Beijing and Shanghai. The costs start from \$4,999 per person including return flights from Auckland, most meals, city tours and hotel room share. The host in Xiamen and instigator of the tour is Chris Lipscombe, Deputy Chair of the Wellington Xiamen Association and Derek Brownrigg is the tour escort. Contact Debby at the Hastings House of Travel, 0800 838 858, or email: debbym@hotmail.co.nz.

NEW ZEALAND DIVERSITY FORUM 2009 PROGRAMME.

The theme this year is “Keeping our International Students and Diverse Communities Safe”. There will be lecture meetings in three cities. The Wellington meeting: **Monday 24 August 1-3 pm in Victoria University Law School, Old Government Building (at rear), Wellington.** The speaker is Professor Rob Rabel, Pro Vice-Chancellor International.

THE QUAKER CENTENNIAL LECTURE - 9 July

This was given at the Iloft Theatre Wellington by Professor Bill Willmott, former President of the New Zealand China Friendship Society, under the title **“Kiwi Dragon: The Chinese in Aotearoa New Zealand – History, Culture Hope”**. There were four parts to the lecture.

1. Dealt with early settlement, the difficulties and vigorous discrimination which the settlers experienced. But what was called “political docility” was explained as much by Chinese culture as by the NZ reception. Numbers of Chinese immigrants remained small until the 1970s.
2. Changes in New Zealand legislation transformed the immigration pattern. The Citizenship Act 1876 recognized only “New Zealand” and “Other” abolishing Commonwealth preference. The 1986 White Paper introduced a new universalistic philosophy of immigration – the purpose was to enrich the social fabric of the society based on personal contribution – and resulted in a rapid increase in the number of immigrants from Asia, including students. The Chinese population rose from 26,541 in 1986 to 147,567 in 2006. It was pointed out that neither the Chinese nor other Asians comprise homogeneous groups.
3. This section dealt with aspects of traditional Chinese culture, both to explain Chinese immigrant behaviour and on the grounds that knowledge of other cultures reduces attitudes of racism which continues to exist in our society.
4. The lecture concluded with a plea for the recognition of cultural diversity. It claimed that the answer to racist attitudes “lies in encouraging a shift in our New Zealand identity from an ethnic one to one of citizenship. All citizens are Kiwis; hence “Kiwi Dragon”.

BOOK CORNER

In future Capital China Letters we plan to run a regular column of notices about books, films and websites, to which members are invited to contribute. Former President and Editorial Group member, Douglas Day has promised us a series. Here is his first contribution.

SOME BOOKS ON CHINA (No. 1 of a series). There is no order of merit.

(a) Non Fiction

Wild Swans: Three Daughters of China by Jung Chang - The story of how three generations of women fared in the political maelstrom of China during the 20th century.

Last Moments of a World, by Margaret Gaan - The true story of one girl's coming-of-age in pre-war Shanghai.

River Town : Two Years on the Yangtze by Peter Hessler - A former Peace Corps volunteer writes about his experiences in China.

Son of the Revolution, by Liang Heng - Three stories in one: first, a graphic, I-was-there account of the Cultural Revolution; second a cliffhanger love story; and third a poignant analysis of how Chinese have tried to break with their past.

1421 : The Year China Discovered America, by Gavin Menzies - Menzies makes the argument that the Chinese not only discovered America 70 years before Columbus, but that the Chinese also circumnavigated the globe. desalinated water, and perfected the art of cartography.

(b) Fiction

The Good Earth, by Pearl Buck - Wang Lung, a Chinese peasant, rises from poverty to become a rich landowner with the aid of his patient wife.

The Court of the Lion, by Eleanor Cooney - Lady Wu plots the death of the prince, but when her son rejects the throne, she commits suicide, and her husband grieves while Lin Lin-fu, the chief minister, begins a reign of terror.

Soul Mountain, by Gao Xingjian - Threatened with time on a prison farm for defying his country's laws of cultural conformity, artist/writer Gao embarked on an epic search for his inner self and his freedom. The author's journey through southern China's ancient mountains and forests inspired this story.

Waiting, by Jin Ha - An ambitious and dedicated Chinese doctor, Lin Kong, finds himself torn between two very different women - the educated and dynamic nurse with whom he has fallen in love and the traditional, humble woman to whom his family married him when they were both very young.

China Boy, by Gus Lee - In the 1950s , Kai Tin and his family come to San Francisco, but his mother dies shortly thereafter, and his new stepmother wants to erase everything Chinese from his life.

SOME CHINA WEBSITES (No 1 of a series)

Here are some official websites. A variety of other types of websites will be included in subsequent issues of The Capital China Letter.

<http://english.gov.cn> - the Chinese Government website

<http://www.chinaview.cn> - the Xinhua News Agency website

<http://www.chinanews.com>- the China News Agency website

<http://english.peopledaily.com.cn> - the "Peoples' Daily" website

<http://chinadaily.com.cn> - the "China Daily" website

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