

NEWSLETTER MAY 2006
NZ CHINA FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY
HAMILTON BRANCH

Saturday May 27th 2006

POT LUCK LUNCHEON

Venue **Waikato Chinese Association Community Hall**
Lewis Street Glenview

Time **12.00pm**

Speaker **Professor Bill Willmott**

.. FROM WILD SWANS TO MAO THE UNKNOWN STORY

Author Jung Chang wrote best-seller *Wild Swans* about the experience of three generations of Chinese women during the Chinese revolution. Now she has followed it up with a meticulously researched biography of Mao (written with her husband Jon Halliday.)

Bill Willmott, former National President of NZCFS and Emeritus Professor of Sociology, University of Canterbury will analyse the book and the mixed reviews it has received

Editor's Comments.

An appreciative audience of members and friends at last month's General Meeting thoroughly enjoyed Peter Calvert's talk on his experiences while teaching in Jilin. His effective use of large photographs which were passed around added to his presentation. We extend our thanks to him.

Bill Willmott has addressed many a meeting of the Society in Hamilton and his talks are always stimulating and thought provoking. While *Mao the Unknown Story* may still be on the required reading list for members, *Wild Swans* will be familiar to most. We look forward to a good muster of members and Friends.

**POT LUCK DINNER. Please bring a plate to share and your own utensils. **

Stories of maritime exploration are always fascinating, and recent conjecture that Chinese explorers may have visited our country before its accepted date of discovery, was highlighted by the news that the University of Waikato had been asked to carbon date a segment of a map indicating Chinese voyaging in the South Pacific. Although no definitive result came from the test, the accounts of Chinese maritime exploration and ventures during the fifteenth century are most interesting. Accordingly I include in this newsletter an article on Zheng He, a sailor of the Ming Dynasty (AD 1368 – 1664)

Something Really Unusual. Thanks to David and Anne Sayers we have following some archival material of great interest.

Stan Boyle



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Historic photographs of Kathleen Hall

Following the article about the life of Kathleen Hall written for the fund-raising dinner and published in last month's newsletter, Dean Chandler's son, Ken Chandler kindly supplied these two photographs. They were taken on the visit by Charles Chandler and Kathleen Hall to Beijing for the eleventh National Day Celebrations on 1 October 1960. In the photograph taken at Sydney Airport those in the party with Kathleen Hall and the Very Reverend Chandler Dean of the Diocese of Waikato were W. Monrow, David C Allen & Doug Howitt but we do not know the order in which they are seated. In Tiananmen Square the interpreter on Kathleen Hall's right bears a very strong resemblance to a young Lu Wanru. We have written to her in Beijing enclosing a copy of our article and these photographs. We will keep you posted. – Anne & David Sayers



Kathleen Hall and Dean Chandler waiting in Sydney airport on route to Beijing



Kathleen Hall and Dean Chandler (extreme right) in Tiananmen Square on the Eleventh National Day Celebrations October 1960.

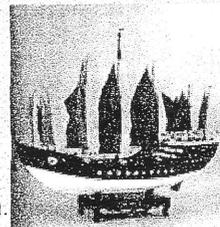
People : Zheng He and His voyages



In the early days of the Ming Dynasty, that is, early in the 15th century, China was, in economic progress, an advanced country in the world. At the orders of the then emperor, Cheng Zu, whose name was Zhu Di, a vast fleet set sail in July, 1405 from Liujia Harbour near Suzhou on a distant voyage. The purpose was to establish relations with foreign countries, to expand trade contacts and to look for treasures to satisfy the desire of the sovereign for luxuries. The man who was given charge of the fleet was Zheng He, a eunuch also known as San Bao. Under his command was a vast fleet of 62 ships manned by more than 27, 800 men, including sailors, clerks, interpreters, officers and soldiers, artisans, medical men and meteorologists. On board the ships were large quantities of cargo that could be broken down into over 40 different categories, including silk goods, porcelain, gold and silver ware, copper utensils, iron implements, cotton goods, mercury, umbrellas and straw mats. The fleet sailed a-long the coast of Fujian, down south to Zhancheng and, after crossing the South China Sea, reached such places as Java and Sri Lanka. On the way back, it sailed along the west coast of India and triumphantly returned to the home port in 1407. Emperor Cheng Zu was very pleased with Zheng He's extraordinary feats as an envoy in making visits to various foreign countries.

Between 1405 and 1433, Zheng He had, over a period of 28 years, eight times been ordered to act as envoy to countries lying to the west of China. Each time he had under his command a big fleet and a staff of more than 20,000 men. His fleets had sailed in the South China Sea and the Indian Ocean. They had gone further south to Java in today's Indonesia. Sailing then in a northwest direction, they had visited Yemen, Iran and the Holy City of Islam Mecca and further west to today's Somalia in East Africa. In all, he had made calls at more than 30 countries and territories. All this had taken place about half a century before the famous European sailor Columbus's voyage to America. For this reason, Zhen He's expeditions could rightfully be called "an unprecedented feat in the history of navigation of mankind."

On each voyage Zheng He was acting as the envoy and commercial representative of the Ming court. No matter what country he visited, he called on the ruler of the land, presenting to him valuable gifts in token of China's sincere desire to develop friendly relations and inviting the host sovereign to send emissaries to China. Wherever he was, he made a careful study of the customs and habits of local residents. Showing them due



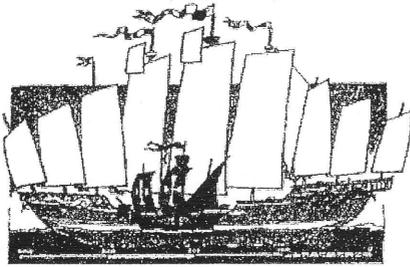
respect, he bartered or dealt with them through consultation and negotiation on the basis of equality and mutual benefit. In this way, he obtained large quantities of pearls and precious stones, coral, ivory and dyestuffs for the Chinese emperor. He also brought back several kinds of rare and precious animals such as giraffe, lion, ostrich and leopard. In ancient India, Chinese sailors made a good impression on the local people by observing local trading customs and practices such as clapping hands to clinch a deal in full view of others and never going back on it. When he visited Sri Lanka on his third voyage, Zheng He offered a quantity of gold and silver Buddhist ceremonial vessels and silk-knit religious pennants to local temples on whose ground steles were set up to mark the occasion of his visit. Wherever he went, he

was warmly received. At Zhancheng, the king of the land, in full royal regalia, came in person on elephantback with 500 cavalymen to meet him at the wharf and then take him back to the palace. On the way they were greeted by local inhabitants who blew trumpets made of coconut shells and performed national dances at a solemn and joyous ceremony. Even today, people in Somalia and Tanzania look upon Ming China unearthed today as a symbol of the traditional friendship between their own country and China. In Thailand today, there are places named after Zheng He's childhood name Sanbao (three treasures) such as Sanbao Harbour and Sanbao Pagoda. Malacca of Malaysia is known also as the City of Sanbao. At Java in Indonesia, there is the Sanbao Temple. In Calicut (Kozhikode today) of India, there is an inscribed tablet set up in Zheng He's memory. In China itself, Zheng He's voyages are now household tales.

The countries Zheng He had visited later sent their emissaries and trade representatives to China from time to time. In 1419 when Zheng He was sailing back on his fifth voyage, 17 countries sent their envoys to China, including Philippines and Malaysia. While in China, these foreign emissaries were shown great hospitality by Emperor Chengzu of Ming. The voyages by Zheng He strengthened the friendly relations between China and other countries in Asia and Africa and gave an impetus to cultural and economic exchange between them.

On his first voyage overseas, the largest ship in the fleet had a length of 440 Chinese feet and a width of 180. Manned by more than 200 sailors and able to accommodate 1,000 passengers, it was equipped with nine masts which flew 12 big sails. This was probably the largest sea-going vessel of the day. Other vessels might not be of the same size but on an average each one was able to carry aboard four to five hundred passengers. Many of the navigational problems encountered were solved in a rational, scientific way. For instance, the way fresh water was collected and stored, the stability of the hull and its buoyancy, the making of sea charts and the use of navigational apparatuses like the compass. This accounted for the fact that in spite of terrible storms, this fleet of friendship had ploughed the waves day and night in full sail. It is generally believed that Zheng He had the

largest, most advanced fleet in the world in the 15th century. On each of his 8 voyages, Zheng He kept a detailed logbook and made many nautical charts which were later collected in what was called Zheng He's Nautical Charts, which was the first of its kind in the world. From this we can say that China in those days probably led the world in the technology of ship-building and the science of navigation.



Zheng He and Columbus

China prepares for fourth baby boom

Page 1 of 1



CHINA / National

China prepares for fourth baby boom

(Xinhua)

Updated: 2006-05-03 08:31

Chinese population experts are predicting a mini-baby boom before 2010 as a result of the country's family planning laws.

However, Zhang Weiqing, Minister in charge of the National Population and Family Planning Commission, stressed that family planning laws would remain to stabilize the low birth rate.

The expected boom would be small compared to the previous ones in the early 1950s and 1960s and the late 1980s, he said.

Almost 100 million single children had been born since the initiation of the one-child policy in 1973. Most had reached the age of marriage and childbirth, he said in an interview with "Qiushi" (Seeking Truth From Facts) magazine.

Meanwhile, rural couples had been allowed to have a second child if the first was a girl since 1984. These children were also entering adulthood.

Experts estimate that China's 1.3 billion population would be more than 1.7 billion now without the family planning policy.

Government statistics show that the average family birth rate is 1.8 at present, compared to 5.8 in the early 1970s when the policy was introduced.

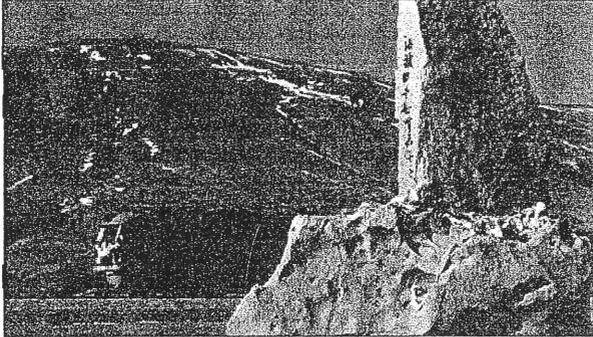
CHINA / Regional

"Roof of the world" glaciers melting fast

(Reuters)

Updated: 2006-05-03 09:00

BEIJING, May 2 - Glaciers covering China's Qinghai-Tibet plateau are shrinking by 7 percent a year due to global warming and the environmental consequences may be dire, Xinhua news agency reported on Tuesday.



A train runs across the pass of Tanglha Mountain on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau on April 2, 2006. [Xinhua]

Rising temperatures that have accelerated the melting of glaciers across the "roof of the world" will eventually turn tundra that spans Tibet and surrounding high country into desert, the agency quoted Professor Dong Guangrong with the Chinese Academy of Sciences as saying.

Dong warned the deterioration of the plateau may trigger more droughts and increase sandstorms that lash western and northern China. He reached his conclusions after analysing four decades of data from China's 681 weather stations.

Han Yongxiang of China's National Meteorological Bureau said average temperatures in Tibet had risen 0.9 centigrade since the 1980s, accelerating the melting of glaciers and frozen tundra across the plateau.

The Qinghai-Tibet plateau covers 2.5 million square km (0.96 million square miles) -- about a quarter of China's land surface -- at an average altitude of 4,000 metres (13,000 ft) above sea level.

Dust and sandstorms are a growing problem, particularly in North China, due to deforestation, drought and the environmental depredations of China's breakneck economic growth.

A strong sandstorm swept across one eighth of China's territory on April 16 and 17, dumping 330,000 tonnes of dust on Beijing and reaching as far as Korea and Japan.

China's weathermen might soon launch a "dust forecast" in their bulletins, Xinhua quoted a China Meteorological Administration official as saying.