New protest theme?

No, but a portion of one of 18 posters on display in late November created by graphic designers in response to the Hong Kong police force and government reaction to the pro-democracy protests. Read more on p. 4.

Community

University of Minnesota’s China Center holds 40th anniversary gala

By Greg Hugh

The China Center recently celebrated building bridges between the U.S. and China with an evening of festive food, entertainment and socializing at the McNamara Alumni Center Memorial Hall. The celebration began with a social hour with a guzheng performance by Jarrelle Barton. The UMN Chinese Culture Club also made an appearance in traditional Chinese clothing and posed for photos with guests. For those so inclined, there was an opportunity to bid on China-related items donated by generous friends of the China Center. Auction items included a curated tour of MIA with Dr. Yang Liu and a literati night with dinner, poems and traditional music at the Xiangjiang Pavilion located in Lake Phalen Regional Park in Saint Paul.

Opening remarks were then provided by present and past members of the China Center staff as dinner was served. John Holden, a University of Minnesota alumnus, delivered the keynote speech on U.S.-China relations and exchanges, “Minnesota to China: A 40-Year Reflection.” One of the first UMN students to travel to China in the 1970s before China opened to the West, Holden is Senior Director for China at McLarty Associates and former senior fellow in the Carnegie Asia Program and former president of the National Committee on United States-China Relations. He earned his bachelor’s degree in Chinese Language and Literature from the University of Minnesota. Since his first trip to Asia in 1972, Holden has studied or worked for a total of 25 years in Taipei, Hong Kong, Beijing and Kyoto. The China Center is proud to celebrate 40 years of working to build the bridge of understanding, friendship, exchange, and cooperation between the U.S. and Greater China (mainland China, Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan).

To learn more about the China Center, visit www.chinacenter.umn.edu.
Publisher’s Pronouncements

Greetings:

All of us at China Insight hope you enjoyed a great holiday season and we wish everyone a healthy and a prosperous 2020. As we resume our regular production schedule, we begin our 18th year of publishing and continue our mission of promoting cultural and business understanding between China and the U.S., along with providing a bridge between the Chinese and American communities of the Twin Cities.

The Chinese community has been busy planning for Chinese New Year (Saturday, Jan. 25). A gung hay fat choi wish to everyone as we prepare to celebrate the Year of the Rat. You can read more about the Year of the Rat on page 14, and how some in the community will be celebrating on pages 15-16, with one of the largest celebrations taking place at Mall of America over a two-day weekend.

Be sure to read the article on page 5 to learn about the latest developments regarding the Chinese American Veterans of World War II Congressional Gold Medal Project. There is still time to be involved and register family members who had served.

Also, Chang Wang, regular China Insight contributor, granted China Insight an interview where he shared his thoughts of being the Minnesota Speaker at the 2019 Town Hall, and on the current U.S.-China relations on p. 11.

In addition, we are proud to present an article on page 10 by our newest volunteer staff writer Jackson Venjohn. Venjohn is currently a senior finance and Chinese studies undergraduate at the University of Minnesota. During this past semester, he wrote a thesis looking at how Confucianism has influenced consumerism and the trade-off between the individual’s pursuit of wealth vs virtue in Chinese society. China Insight plans to publish a synopsis of his research findings over the ensuing months. We trust you will find this series informative.

We invite you to let us know how your own organization celebrated Chinese New Year by submitting a brief recap of your event along with any photos and captions. We also welcome anyone who wishes to comment and share their experience on an event they may have attended or article they read in China Insight.

To be considered and included in the February issue, please submit your information to us at ghugh@chinainsight.info no later than Jan. 19, 2020. For events occurring after this deadline, we will consider for our March issue.

As always, we appreciate your support and wish all of you a healthy and prosperous Year of the Rat.

Sincerely,

Gregory J. Hugh
President – CEO
China Insight, Inc.

---

FREE SUBSCRIPTIONS

Getting to know you ... Who are you? What articles do you enjoy reading?

China Insight would like to ensure our content matches your interests. Please take a few minutes to complete this poll so we can update our reader demographics. For your time, the first 10 respondents each month will receive a free annual subscription to China Insight. Winners will be notified.

Entry Form

☐ Please send me free China Insight for a year if I am one of the first 10 respondents this month.
The top two articles that interested me the most in this issue are:

Page ______ Article title ______
Page ______ Article title ______

I would like to see more articles on:
Employment Status _________ Student ______ Self-employed ______ Retired ______
Employment Sector ______ Education ______ Government ______ Private industry ______
Other (please specify) ______
Where did you get this issue of China Insight?

Name ______
Address ______
City ______ State ______ Zip ______
Email ______

One entry per month. Please return entry to: China Insight 750 Mainstreet, #230, Hopkins, MN 55343.

---

CHINA INSIGHT

SUBSCRIPTION ORDER FORM

YES you could run to the store and pick up a copy, but did you know you can have CHINA INSIGHT delivered directly to your mailbox? A subscription costs a mere $24 and brings a full year (10 issues) of new understanding about today’s China, from language to business opportunities.

Name ______
Address ______
City/State/Zip ______
Phone ______
Email ______
Company ______
Title ______

--

Copyright 2020 CHINA INSIGHT, Inc. All Rights Reserved.
Bad nerves

It was just a case of nerves - what this ATM robber needed!

Surveillance footage from an ATM room in a Shandong city caught an ATM robbery in progress. The robber was so nervous he temporarily forgot how to open the door! The amateur thief tried using a metal tray to bash the ATM and the door, to no avail. That only served to set off the alarms. When he finally figured out how to unlock the door and flee, the cops arrived.

Nothing like underestimating the nerves required to pull off a robbery, eh?

Bad move

A drunk at an Inner Mongolian hospital being treated for head injuries touched the butt of the woman doctor treating him. The doctor continued treating him, but when he did it a second time, another doctor slapped him!

When released from the hospital, he was detained and jailed. He served 15 days in administrative detention for molestation.

Bad karma

There was a massive forest fire in Dongyan county of Guangdong Province. Video footage showed flames shooting up the mountainside. The fire left the mountain top bare.

An investigation by authorities revealed it was started by a couple who set off firecrackers for a photo shoot! Obviously, the firecrackers did not ward off any evil spirits for them! Instead of the selves they were after, their photo shoot landed them mug shots. They are currently in administrative detention. Their fate is yet to be decided.

However, a Shenyang farmer was recently sentenced to six years in prison for starting shots. They are currently in administrative detention. Their fate is yet to be decided.

Bad “smile”

A man forked over US$142 for a large “fish” that he thought was smiling at him at a Wenzhou market. When he got home, he found out his “fish” was actually a national protected finless porpoise. He went to the police.

When the police arrived and confirmed the species was indeed a porpoise, it was released back into the wild.

Not sure if the man got his money back or what happened to the vendor.

Bad medicine

Inside the IV tubes hooked up to a boy at a Leshan, Sichuan Province, hospital was something strange.

The father noticed this small black “worm” inside the tube a few minutes after the IV had been in for a few minutes. He shot a video of it and summoned nursing help, demanding answers. The nurse “got help, demanding answers. The nurse got a video of it and summoned nursing help, demanding answers. The nurse "got a video of it and summoned nursing help, demanding answers. The nurse shot a video of it and summoned nursing help, demanding answers. The nurse "got a video of it and summoned nursing help, demanding answers. The nurse shot a video of it and summoned nursing help, demanding answers. The nurse "got a video of it and summoned nursing help, demanding answers. The nurse shot a video of it and summoned nursing help, demanding answers. The nurse "got a video of it and summoned nursing help, demanding answers. The nurse shot a video of it and summoned nursing help, demanding answers. The nurse "got" it replaced by a multimedia light show projected on the city’s skyscrapers.

“In view of the current situation in Hong Kong, we have decided to adopt a new format — the board places high importance on public safety of all events it organizes,” its email stated.

Another popular event canceled in November was the Clockenflap, one of Asia’s biggest music festivals. The April Hong Kong Football Club Rugby Section’s annual rugby 10s tournament also had been canceled.

Tourism to Hong Kong plunged 56 percent in November compared to a year ago — the largest decline in 15 years.

South China Sea code of conduct

China, accused by the international community of building up military installations in the South China Sea, signaled in the three-day ASEAN summit in November that it was “ready to work” with the 10-member ASEAN (Southeast Asian Nations) on a code of conduct within the region.

The agreement guidelines for the major global shipping route are to be completed in 2021. They will “maintain and uphold long-term peace and stability in the South China Sea.”

Starting over in Taiwan

The depressed economy and chaos brought on by the months-long pro-democracy protests in Hong Kong have made Taiwan an attractive alternative for many Hong Kongers. Applications for short-term and permanent residency in Taiwan increased by 30 percent in the first nine months of 2019 from a year earlier.

Many of these new émigrés are well-educated, and bring with them capital and entrepreneurial skills. One such ex-Hong Konger is a 41-year-old former system analyst who relocated to Kaohsiung. He opened a cat cafe in July. He said, “In Taiwan, freedom of speech is in the present tense. People can elect the president and lawmakers — rights that Hong Kongers don’t have and I don’t see any chance of ever having.”

Another, a 37-year-old businesswoman, who regularly participated in pro-democracy protests, hopes Taiwan will give her 2-year-old daughter a better education, and freedom.

But how long will the new-found freedom last? Beijing has always regarded the self-ruled Taiwan as part of its territory. It has ramped up economic and military pressure on the island and has forced many of its allies to sever diplomatic ties recently.

The displaced Hong Kongers are watching with bated breath.
Callous term by police inspired “Yellow Objects” exhibit

During Nov. 2-1-Dec. 1, 2019, a group of 18 Hong Kong graphic designers held an exhibition titled “Yellow Objects.” The theme of the 18 finish-it-yourself posters was “Yellow object is ____________” where visitors were encouraged to fill in the blanks themselves.

“Yellow object” became an internet meme after a policeman was caught on a widely circulated video kicking a pro-democracy protester in a dark alley on Sept. 21, 2019. At the police briefing the following day, the police superintendent said the officer kicked a “yellow object on the ground.” At that point, a reporter interjected, “He is a human, not an object!”

“It’s a communist tactic: You dehumanize, you demonize, you reduce your enemies to nothing and then you attack,” said one of the pro-democracy legislators.

The pro-democracy protests began as peaceful marches in March 2019 after the publication of the 2019 Hong Kong extradition bill. By October, property damage and throwing objects at police had become part of the exercise. So were street posters and graffiti. On the other hand, police also had stepped up arrests and use of force.

No warrant necessary

A video on Twitter in mid-December showed a defiant group of students at Shanghai’s Fudan University singing the school song in protest over the institution’s dropping “freedom of thought” from its charter. The school song paid homage to “academic independence and freedom of thought.”

Not only was “freedom of thought” removed, “arming the minds of teachers and students with Xi Jinping’s new era of socialist ideology with Chinese characters” was added. This addition compels faculty and students to abide by core socialist values within a “harmonious” campus (read: elimination of anti-government sentiment).

Fudan was one of three universities where changes to their charters were altered. The other two are Shaaxi Normal University and Nanjing University.

Fudan University, one of the most prominent and selective institutions of higher education, was founded in 1905, renowned for its liberal atmosphere. It is recognized as one of the “best global universities” by U.S. News and World Report. It is also a member of University 21, an association of leading universities worldwide.

“A video on Twitter in mid-December showed a defiant group of students at Shanghai’s Fudan University singing the school song in protest over the institution’s dropping “freedom of thought” from its charter. The school song paid homage to “academic independence and freedom of thought.”

Not only was “freedom of thought” removed, “arming the minds of teachers and students with Xi Jinping’s new era of socialist ideology with Chinese characters” was added. This addition compels faculty and students to abide by core socialist values within a “harmonious” campus (read: elimination of anti-government sentiment).

Fudan was one of three universities where changes to their charters were altered. The other two are Shaaxi Normal University and Nanjing University.

Fudan University, one of the most prominent and selective institutions of higher education, was founded in 1905, renowned for its liberal atmosphere. It is recognized as one of the “best global universities” by U.S. News and World Report. It is also a member of University 21, an association of leading universities worldwide.

“If I may dare to ask those who initiated the amendment of the Fudan University charter, how do you expect our generation of Fudan people to face our ancestors?” said one Weibo user.

Social media discussion of the charter change, which was announced online by the Ministry of Education on Dec. 17, was quickly deleted and blocked, including the comment above. However, resourceful netizens continue the discussion in private WeChat groups.

A Japan Times article pointed out that “Universities in China have long operated without full academic independence. Curricula are bound by Communist Party diktats and political norms that render certain topics or positions off limits.”

Since coming to power, Xi had sought to boost the Chinese Communist Party’s role and deepen its influence across society. The revised charters certainly are a step in strengthening the party’s influence at universities.

Updating civil code

A spokesperson of the Legislative Affairs Commission announced late December the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress will deliberate various legal documents and draft of the updated civil code.

The “code” covers marriage, family, including scope of close relatives, joint marital debt and same-sex marriage. There will be “changes in the general provisions and six other sections of the draft, such as improvement on the system of the right of habitation, the provisions on sexual harassment, the definition of privacy and new rules on handling cyberspace torts.”

A woman who suffered a ruptured eye-ball at the hands of the police during a pro-democracy protest in summer lost a legal challenge in court over the police’s refusal to show a search warrant in obtaining her medical records.

A High Court judge backed the police. The 30-page judgment ruled the police is not obligated to present the search warrant to the woman, even though her privacy was affected by the police search. It also stated that, “a person does not have a ‘freestanding right’ to ask the police to show a warrant, otherwise, any potential criminal suspect could demand to see search documents related to an investigation into him or her.”

“Freedom of thought” struck from Chinese university charter

A video on Twitter in mid-December showed a defiant group of students at Shanghai’s Fudan University singing the school song in protest over the institution’s dropping “freedom of thought” from its charter. The school song paid homage to “academic independence and freedom of thought.”

Not only was “freedom of thought” removed, “arming the minds of teachers and students with Xi Jinping’s new era of socialist ideology with Chinese characters” was added. This addition compels faculty and students to abide by core socialist values within a “harmonious” campus (read: elimination of anti-government sentiment).

Fudan was one of three universities where changes to their charters were altered. The other two are Shaaxi Normal University and Nanjing University.

Fudan University, one of the most prominent and selective institutions of higher education, was founded in 1905, renowned for its liberal atmosphere. It is recognized as one of the “best global universities” by U.S. News and World Report. It is also a member of University 21, an association of leading universities worldwide.

“If I may dare to ask those who initiated the amendment of the Fudan University charter, how do you expect our generation of Fudan people to face our ancestors?” said one Weibo user.

Social media discussion of the charter change, which was announced online by the Ministry of Education on Dec. 17, was quickly deleted and blocked, including the comment above. However, resourceful netizens continue the discussion in private WeChat groups.

A Japan Times article pointed out that “Universities in China have long operated without full academic independence. Curricula are bound by Communist Party diktats and political norms that render certain topics or positions off limits.”

Since coming to power, Xi had sought to boost the Chinese Communist Party’s role and deepen its influence across society. The revised charters certainly are a step in strengthening the party’s influence at universities.

No warrant necessary

A video on Twitter in mid-December showed a defiant group of students at Shanghai’s Fudan University singing the school song in protest over the institution’s dropping “freedom of thought” from its charter. The school song paid homage to “academic independence and freedom of thought.”

Not only was “freedom of thought” removed, “arming the minds of teachers and students with Xi Jinping’s new era of socialist ideology with Chinese characters” was added. This addition compels faculty and students to abide by core socialist values within a “harmonious” campus (read: elimination of anti-government sentiment).

Fudan was one of three universities where changes to their charters were altered. The other two are Shaaxi Normal University and Nanjing University.

Fudan University, one of the most prominent and selective institutions of higher education, was founded in 1905, renowned for its liberal atmosphere. It is recognized as one of the “best global universities” by U.S. News and World Report. It is also a member of University 21, an association of leading universities worldwide.

“If I may dare to ask those who initiated the amendment of the Fudan University charter, how do you expect our generation of Fudan people to face our ancestors?” said one Weibo user.

Social media discussion of the charter change, which was announced online by the Ministry of Education on Dec. 17, was quickly deleted and blocked, including the comment above. However, resourceful netizens continue the discussion in private WeChat groups.

A Japan Times article pointed out that “Universities in China have long operated without full academic independence. Curricula are bound by Communist Party diktats and political norms that render certain topics or positions off limits.”

Since coming to power, Xi had sought to boost the Chinese Communist Party’s role and deepen its influence across society. The revised charters certainly are a step in strengthening the party’s influence at universities.

No warrant necessary

A video on Twitter in mid-December showed a defiant group of students at Shanghai’s Fudan University singing the school song in protest over the institution’s dropping “freedom of thought” from its charter. The school song paid homage to “academic independence and freedom of thought.”

Not only was “freedom of thought” removed, “arming the minds of teachers and students with Xi Jinping’s new era of socialist ideology with Chinese characters” was added. This addition compels faculty and students to abide by core socialist values within a “harmonious” campus (read: elimination of anti-government sentiment).

Fudan was one of three universities where changes to their charters were altered. The other two are Shaaxi Normal University and Nanjing University.

Fudan University, one of the most prominent and selective institutions of higher education, was founded in 1905, renowned for its liberal atmosphere. It is recognized as one of the “best global universities” by U.S. News and World Report. It is also a member of University 21, an association of leading universities worldwide.

“If I may dare to ask those who initiated the amendment of the Fudan University charter, how do you expect our generation of Fudan people to face our ancestors?” said one Weibo user.

Social media discussion of the charter change, which was announced online by the Ministry of Education on Dec. 17, was quickly deleted and blocked, including the comment above. However, resourceful netizens continue the discussion in private WeChat groups.

A Japan Times article pointed out that “Universities in China have long operated without full academic independence. Curricula are bound by Communist Party diktats and political norms that render certain topics or positions off limits.”

Since coming to power, Xi had sought to boost the Chinese Communist Party’s role and deepen its influence across society. The revised charters certainly are a step in strengthening the party’s influence at universities.

No warrant necessary

A video on Twitter in mid-December showed a defiant group of students at Shanghai’s Fudan University singing the school song in protest over the institution’s dropping “freedom of thought” from its charter. The school song paid homage to “academic independence and freedom of thought.”

Not only was “freedom of thought” removed, “arming the minds of teachers and students with Xi Jinping’s new era of socialist ideology with Chinese characters” was added. This addition compels faculty and students to abide by core socialist values within a “harmonious” campus (read: elimination of anti-government sentiment).

Fudan was one of three universities where changes to their charters were altered. The other two are Shaaxi Normal University and Nanjing University.

Fudan University, one of the most prominent and selective institutions of higher education, was founded in 1905, renowned for its liberal atmosphere. It is recognized as one of the “best global universities” by U.S. News and World Report. It is also a member of University 21, an association of leading universities worldwide.

“If I may dare to ask those who initiated the amendment of the Fudan University charter, how do you expect our generation of Fudan people to face our ancestors?” said one Weibo user.

Social media discussion of the charter change, which was announced online by the Ministry of Education on Dec. 17, was quickly deleted and blocked, including the comment above. However, resourceful netizens continue the discussion in private WeChat groups.

A Japan Times article pointed out that “Universities in China have long operated without full academic independence. Curricula are bound by Communist Party diktats and political norms that render certain topics or positions off limits.”

Since coming to power, Xi had sought to boost the Chinese Communist Party’s role and deepen its influence across society. The revised charters certainly are a step in strengthening the party’s influence at universities.
126th Canton Fair showcased technological breakthroughs

By Elaine Dunn

In line with the event’s call for advanced research and development, Chinese companies at the 126th Canton Fair (Oct. 15-Nov. 4, 2019) showcased innovative products with multiple science-fiction-style functions developed in the digital age.

“A flagship trade event in China and window to Chinese economic development, Canton Fair echoes the vitality of international trade in China despite current uncertainty,” said the deputy Director General of the Foreign Affairs Office at Canton Fair. “We are happy to contribute to the global supply chain, manufacturing chain with China’s growing competitiveness in smart and high-end production.”

Some cross-functional products include:
• A refrigerator that can maintain humidity and temperatures consistently at around 5°C, an ideal environment for storing cosmetics as well.
• New baby care products that integrates playful toy features
• A cutting-edge patented ‘smart’ wind and cloud control system that creates a healthy and clean lifestyle.

Kitchen supplies with green design in mind

Despite trade uncertainties, kitchen utensil exports had reached US$18.79B for the first eight months of 2019, representing a year-on-year increase of 8.2 percent. A line-up of smart houseware included a pedal trash can featuring an antibacterial function that enables ease in changing garbage bags as well as a voice-controlled trash can sorts garbage.

Products emphasized the use of environmentally responsible material in daily use.

The item that won the Gold Design Award is an off-road rally motorcycle equipped with an original steel pipe frame, an aluminum alloy integrated rear rack, an original aluminum alloy handle bar and professional off-road footrest, a large electric windshield, and three add-on aluminum alloy off-road cases.

The product that won the Best of the Best Award was a 20mm-thin OLED TV that comes equipped with an AI function that enables real-time interaction.

Chinese smart technologies appear in world markets

The technologies demonstrated at the Canton Fair not only deliver to developed markets, but also emerging markets, enabling better living conditions. Chigo’s split air conditioning units have differentiated themselves from others by offering energy-saving products with low noise output and are proving popular in Africa, Europe, the Middle East, North America and Southeast Asia.

Sadik Reyepov, a buyer from Turkmenistan, is impressed by many Chinese-developed premium products at the Fair, such as washing machines and IoT central air-conditioning systems that can connect to up to 1,500 pieces of equipment, and refrigerators with body fat scales that can recommend recipes. He said that Chinese companies had brought many intelligent products from a range of categories to the world.

Jessie from China Electronics Import & Export Zhuhai Limited Co., which provides payment equipment to several countries, instruments are well received in many international markets as their mobile and barcode payment solutions fill the market gap in fintech payments.

In Africa, a portable fan from Guangzhou Domestic Electronic Technology Co., Ltd, which includes a flashlight, solar panel and doubles up as a portable battery, ensures utmost versatility while staying cool.

Many companies at the Canton Fair have signed strategic partnership deals with local agencies and retailers, a huge benefit to emerging markets such as countries along the Belt and Road Initiative and in Africa.

Thousand of home appliance companies exhibited at the Guangzhou fair complex. Home appliances is one of China’s key export sectors – US$46.75B in export from the first seven months of 2019, an increase of 4.4 percent from the year before – according to the China Electromechanical Chamber of Commerce.

The fair was attended by 186,015 from 214 countries. Buyers from “Belt and Road” countries stood at 85,445, an increase of 1.03 percent over the same period of last year.

The top 10 countries and regions in terms of buyer attendance are Hong Kong SAR, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Russia, South Korea, Thailand, Taiwan and the United States.

Buyer attendance proportion in terms of industries is: electronics and household electrical appliances accounting for 40.71 percent of the total; daily consumer goods, 51.93; home appliances and the U.K. 26.48 percent; gifts, 27.23 percent; machinery, 26.48. Machinery and electrical products contributed to the highest transaction (US$15.941B, accounting for 54.43 percent); transaction volume of light industrial products stood at US$7.22B, 24.65 percent of total; textile and garment, US$1.683B, 5.75 percent.

The transaction volume of the private enterprises reached US$22.164B, an increase of 0.28 percent, accounting for 75.67 percent of the total.

The spring 2020 fair (127th China Import and Export Fair) will take place April 15- May 5. The fall fair (128th) will take place Oct. 15-Nov. 4, 2020. Venue is the Pazhou Complex ion Yuejiang Zhong Road in Guangzhou. •

State exports drop 2 percent in third quarter

• Minnesota exports of goods (including agricultural, mining and manufactured products) were valued at $5.6 billion in the third quarter of 2019. The state’s exports dipped 2.2 percent, while U.S. exports fell 1.7 percent between the third quarters of 2018 and 2019.
• Minnesota manufactured exports fell 2.4 percent, to $5.3 billion, in the third quarter of 2019, while U.S. exports fell 2.3 percent.
• Between the first nine months of 2018 and 2019, Minnesota exports shrunk 1.8 percent, while U.S. exports decreased 1.2 percent.

Selected growth markets bolster exports in midst of widespread declines
• Countermeasures on U.S. exports by trading partners (including by China, the EU and India), in retaliation to current U.S. trade policies, continued to create uncertainty and influence total flows.
• Exports weakened the most in Asia (down 4 percent to $2 billion; largely due to declines in China, Taiwan, the Philippines and India) and in Central & South America (down 21 percent to $246 million; largely due to declines to Brazil, Chile and Colombia). Sales to Canada, the U.K., Poland and Australia also struggled.

• Exports to Mexico (up $49 million), Thailand (up $22 million), Indonesia (up $18 million), France (up $16 million), the Netherlands (up $11 million) and Costa Rica (up $11 million) grew over $10 million.
• High-growth emerging markets included Uzbekistan (up $6.6 million), Kazakhstan (up $4.4 million), Ethiopia (up $4.1 million), Morocco (up $3.9 million) and Cote d’Ivoire (up $3.1 million).

Upward trends in sales of optics/medical, pharmaceuticals, fertilizers, and ores

• In agriculture and food areas, gains in meat, fats/oils, food by-products and other edible preparations countered declines in cereals, prepared vegetables, oil seeds and prepared cereal/flour goods. Demand strengthened in Thailand, Mexico and Canada but weakened in Chile, China, and the Philippines.
• Demand for electrical equipment and machinery plummeted in markets such as in Japan, China, Japan, the Philippines and the U.K. Most impacted were centrifugals/filters, taps/valves and computers for machinery; and integrated circuits, diodes/transistors and electrical capacitors for electrical equipment.
• Indonesia (up $18 million) and India (down $8 million) most influenced sales of wood pulp (up 21 percent).
• Glass (up $25 million, up 30 percent) export growth was steered by Mexico (up $24.6 percent) and Germany (up 148 percent); and by multi-walled insulated glass (up 27 percent) and glass fibers (up 36 percent).
• Sales of plastics faltered in larger (e.g. Mexico, China) and smaller (e.g. Poland, Brazil) markets. Affected products included self-adhesive plates/sheets, miscellaneous plastics and vinyl chloride polymers.
• Mineral fuels exports dropped 39 percent, as petroleum- and coal-related fuels sales plunged to Canada.
History in the making: recognize, honor and celebrate WWII Chinese veterans in 2020

By Elaine Dunn

Anyone who has studied a foreign language knows that studying is only half the battle. The other half—that’s key to success—is practice, practice, practice. But it’s not always easy to find someone to practice with. Local Mandarin learners have run into this problem, especially immersion school graduates. And for the large contingent of Chinese students from the mainland at the University of Minnesota, finding classmates to practice their English is equally challenging.

Even though there is a relatively large Chinese community in the Twin Cities, there are currently eight* Chinese immersion schools in Minnesota (according to Minnesota Public Radio), none of which are high schools. However, the University of Minnesota’s Department of Asian & Middle Eastern Studies (AMES) and the CLA Language Center at the University of Minnesota started a Culture and Language Integration in Chinese and English (CLIC) program in fall 2017. This program brings together Twin Cities high school students and graduates with international students from China in weekly 90-minute conversation sessions.

The coordinator and instructor of this program, Dr. Zhen Zou, earned a B.A. in English and M.A. in Comparative Literature from universities in China. He then completed his Ph.D. in Culture Studies from Purdue University. The conversation sessions are structured in two ways. First, Zou developed 20 topics such as family, friends, holidays, music, sports, to animal protection, environmental protection, global warming, pets and travel for student discussion. Secondly, in order to allow the discussion to delve into more depth, Zou also created about 10 open-ended questions for each topic, ranging from ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) Standard Intermediate to Advanced level.

He assigns the discussion topic each week. Should a group feel it has exhausted the topic (a very rare occurrence, according to Zou), he gives them question sheets on another topic. Participating students are very enthusiastic about this program and the feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. In the first five semesters, more than 280 students have benefited from this program, and more have expressed their hope to join in the coming semester.

MPR sent a reporter and photographer to sit in on one of the sessions last November. The program, which included interviews with program participants and parents of participants, aired on MPR’s “Morning Edition” early December 2019. According to the MPR program, “University leaders noticed that there were always more international students from China than Chinese learners to partner with. That’s why they created this weekly face-to-face conversation program two years ago and invited Chinese immersion students to share their native English skills and stretch their Mandarin muscles at the same time.

“They say, during this session, they speak more Chinese than the whole week of Chinese classes of high school,” one of the parents wrote in her email. “So, they’ve got a lot of opportunities to practice.”

Jill Griffiths, mother of a Jiang, current sophomore at DeLaSalle High School and graduate of Yinghua Academy, was one of the parents interviewed during the program. Griffiths adopted Jia from China as a toddler.

She was eager to have Jia retain her Mandarin language skills as it is an important link to her birth culture. Jia attended Yinghua Academy, the country’s first public charter Chinese immersion school, from K-8. Participating in the U’s program allows her to meet up with some of her classmates from Yinghua. They enjoy that opportunity as well as the chance to practice Mandarin fluency and chat with the university students.

Griffiths believes “young people who adapt to another language will be better prepared as members in a global community.”

Through these weekly conversations, participants are exposed to bits of cultural exchange as well as use of everyday idioms. Half the time of these conversation sessions is spent on practicing Mandarin and the other half, English.

Program coordinator Zou says it’s difficult to end the sessions as the participants are reluctant to end their conversations! To find out more about the program, contact Dr. Zhen Zou at zouxx009@umn.edu.

* According to Zou and other sources, Minnesota has a proportionately large number of Chinese immersion schools/programs as most states do not have a single Chinese immersion school. To clarify, a Chinese immersion school means all classes are taught in Chinese with the exception of English class.

Gold Medal Circle

With a contribution of $10,000 or more, supporters can become part of Gold Medal Circle. Members receive the listing in materials, invitation to all events, and have the option to present a Congressional Gold Medal at a medal ceremony. Benefits for the Washington DC Ceremony include:

• Four reserved seats at the Congressio nal Gold Medal Ceremony at Emancipation Hall in Washington, D.C.
• One table (10 seats) at the D.C. Gala Dinner; and
• One-page ad in program book.

Founders Circle

With a contribution of $5,000 or more, supporters can become part of the Founders Circle. Members receive the listing in materials and have the opportunity to attend our Chinese American World War II Veterans ceremony and other events. Benefits for the Washington Ceremony include:

• Two reserved seats at the Congressio nal Gold Medal Ceremony at Emancipation Hall in Washington
• Half-table (five seats) at the D.C. Gala Dinner; and
• One-page ad in program book.

To learn more about all Recognition Circle opportunities or to make a general donation, please email us at CGMCommittee@CAWW2.org.
In this lesson we will name places in the home and city.

Some of the vocabulary we will use:

- 个 gè (ge) a general measure word
- 几 jǐ several, a few
- 间 jiān a measure word for rooms. Occasionally one might hear "家" used instead.
- 套 tào a measure word for apartments and sets of things
- 家 jiā a measure word for most stores
- 几 jǐ several, a few
- 个 gé used instead.

Classifiers follow numbers and the words zhè (this), nà (that) and nă (which). Note however that these and other classifiers do not follow the words “zhèxiē” (these), nàxiē (that) and năxiē (which) respectively. In Beijing and elsewhere, The words for “this,” “that” or “which” may be heard as zhěi, nèi and nĕi respectively.

Vocabulary for places in the home

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Chinese characters</th>
<th>Mandarin Pinyin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a house</td>
<td>一座房子</td>
<td>yī-zuò fáng-zi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>an apartment</td>
<td>一套公寓</td>
<td>yī-tào gōng-yù</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My house has several rooms.</td>
<td>一间有几间房</td>
<td>yī-jiān yǒu jǐ-jiān fáng-jiān.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a living room</td>
<td>一个客厅</td>
<td>yī-ge kè-tīng.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a dining room</td>
<td>一个餐厅</td>
<td>yī-ge cān-tīng.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a kitchen</td>
<td>一个厨房</td>
<td>yī-ge cháng-fáng.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>two bathrooms</td>
<td>两间卫生间</td>
<td>liǎng-jiān wèi-shān-jiān.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>three bedrooms</td>
<td>三间卧室</td>
<td>sān-jiān wò-shì.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a garage</td>
<td>一间车库</td>
<td>yī-jiān ché-guǎn.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Names of places

(The characters in parenthesis are the measure words for each vocabulary item.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Chinese characters</th>
<th>Mandarin Pinyin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>the countryside</td>
<td>乡下</td>
<td>xiāng-xiá.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the village</td>
<td>村庄(个)</td>
<td>cūn-zhāng (ge)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the city</td>
<td>城市(个)</td>
<td>chéng-shì (ge)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gas station</td>
<td>加油站(家)</td>
<td>jiā-yóu-zhàn (jiā)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>restaurant</td>
<td>餐厅(家)</td>
<td>cān-tīng (jiā)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bank</td>
<td>银行(家)</td>
<td>yín-háng (jiā)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>church</td>
<td>教堂(座)</td>
<td>jiào-táng (zuò)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>synagogue</td>
<td>五大教堂(座)</td>
<td>wǔ-dà jiào-táng (zuò)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>temple</td>
<td>寺庙(座)</td>
<td>sì(miào (zuò)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>grocery store</td>
<td>杂货铺(家)</td>
<td>zhá-guò-pù (jiā)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hardware store</td>
<td>五金商店(家)</td>
<td>wǔ-jīn shāng-dìng (jiā)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>drug store, pharmacy</td>
<td>药店(家)</td>
<td>yào-diàn (jiā), (ge)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>school</td>
<td>学校(所)</td>
<td>xué-xiào (suò), (ge)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>store</td>
<td>商店(家)</td>
<td>shāng-dìng (jiā)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>park</td>
<td>公园(个)</td>
<td>gōng-diàn (ge)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To say that you are in a place, you can use the construction: zài + place + lǐ (在...里). If the word 里 lǐ is omitted, the meaning shifts to being “at the...”.

English characters | Mandarin Pinyin
--- | ---
是 in the house | 在房子里 zài fáng-zi lǐ
是 in the kitchen | 在厨房里 zài chú-fáng lǐ
是 in the living room | 在客厅里 zài kè-tīng lǐ
He is in the pharmacy. | 他在药店 zài yào-diàn lǐ.
She is in the bank. | 她在银行里 tā zài gōng-yù lǐ.
I am at the pharmacy. | 我在药店 wǒ zài yào-diàn lǐ.
She is at the bank. | 她在银行 tā zài yín-gāng lǐ.

Pronunciation reminders

This system follows Chinese Pinyin with the exception that the letter “ü” which has two pronunciations. Sometimes it has the value of “u” (as in see) as well as rounded lips.

At those times we use the symbol “ü” instead of Pinyin “u.” In making this sound, it is somewhat like the “oo” in “moon.” The tongue is retracted and lightly curled.

The "o" here sounds much like the "oo" in "ozone" or "spoon." Sounds like "tchee-ehn" (ehn rhymes with "hen").

Sounds like “ee-ehn” or “yen” (Here “ehn” and “en” almost sounds like the word “yen”.)

This is an unaspirated “ch” with the tongue retracted and lightly curled. For example “zhu” almost sounds like “drew.”

Sounds almost like “dja.” It almost rhymes with “fuh.”

Tones

Using numbers: 5 = your normal high 4 = mid-high 3 = your normal mid pitch 2 = mid low 1 = your normal low pitch

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tone</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ǎ</td>
<td>High level pitch (55)</td>
<td>Regarding Tone ā when occurring directly before another dipping tone, tone ǎ becomes tone à. Thus, “hèn hão” (very good) changes to “hén hăo.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>à</td>
<td>Mid-Rising Tone (35)</td>
<td>2. When occurring directly before any other tone, Tone à will change to a mid-falling tone (31)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>á</td>
<td>Dipping (213)</td>
<td>2. When occurring directly before any other tone, Tone à will change to a mid-falling tone (31)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>High falling pitch (51)</td>
<td>1. When occurring after another á tone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ä</td>
<td>An unstressed neutral tone. Following other syllables, syllables in this tone tend to be somewhat lower that the previous syllable. The tone is sometimes missing, too. The neutral tone is often slightly higher in pitch</td>
<td>2. The first tone à reduces its fall to 31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Next month, we will deal with simple descriptions of people and things.

About Pat Welsh

In 2009 while teaching English at Sichuan University, Welsh was asked to give a speech where he was introduced to the audience as a “pioneer of Chinese American relations” as a result of his cooperative work in international banking during the Deng Xiaoping era. For more than 65 years, Welsh has been learning Chinese and has used this knowledge both professionally and personally to enhance his understanding of Chinese and US affairs. He uses Beijing Mandarin most frequently when meeting with senior Chinese government officials when conducting business in China.

For 17 years, Welsh taught Chinese, German and Spanish in two local high schools. Now fully retired, he currently resides in Georgia where he used to lecture on China to a number of classes at Dunwoody High School.

Send resumes to Greg Hugh at gugh@guides.chinainsight.info or call 612-723-4872.

The right candidate must know In Design Creative Suite and have graphics background: reliability and ability to meet deadlines are also critical. A strong interest in Chinese culture and business matters will be an asset. Must be willing to take creative initiative and be a team player.

This will be classified as a volunteer position, but a small stipend will be provided to the right individual who demonstrates a strong passion for our mission and can work with minimal supervision.
Ruth Stricker Dayton honored at CHF’s 15th annual Open House

By Pearl Bergad, CHF board member

On the crisp morning last Nov.17, the Chinese Heritage Foundation held its 15th anniversary open house, again at the party room of the Gramercy Co-op Building in Richfield. Amid the excited buzz about this year’s honoree, Ruth Stricker Dayton, volunteers were busy decorating the room and preparing a veritable feast under the watchful eye of Yin Simpson.

Shortly after noon, a capacity crowd had gathered, including friends of Dayton and members of the staff at The Marsh. Everyone was in a festive mood, enjoying a delicious lunch of smoked salmon, crab puffs, seafood curry noodles, and tealife eggs. For the vegetarians, there were vegetarian and yam noodles, fresh fruit and kale salads; and CHF’s signature almond and ginger cookies, as well as cream puffs and chocolate truffles. While everyone was settling back with tea and dessert, Margaret Wong, chair of CHF Friends, began our program. After welcome remarks, Ida Lano showcased some of CHF grant recipients. Two theatre companies, History Theatre and Theater Mu talked about their theater classes in three Chinese language schools: YuCai, MN International Chinese School and Minhua Central Chinese School. This venture is in collaboration with CHF on its initiative to increase interest and participation of young Chinese families in theatre. Daniel Wang, a two-year participant at YuCai gave a short speech in which he mentioned some of the benefits of the classes: such as learning how to speak in public, how to listen to others, developing self-confidence and finding one’s own voice. Wang felt these skills are central for living a meaningful life.

Minhua Chorus, a long-time champion of Chinese music in our community, received a grant for its annual concert and offered two samples from its program: Oliver Tao’s recitation of a famous poem by Si Shi and a vocal performance of a song by Josh McCallister. The poem, “Sharing the Beautiful Moonlight Far from East to West” describes the loneliness of the poet who, on a clear, chilly evening with a full moon, dances with his shadow on a clear, chilly evening with a full moon. Contemplating on the endless cycle of the waxing and waning of the moon, he hopes that he will soon be reunited with his loved ones that likewise, humanity will endure, and that waxing and waning of the moon, he hopes...

Margaret Wong then returned to the podium and bountifully recounted the activities of CHF Friends in the past year. Accompanied by slides, she captured the highlights of four events: Decoding Chinese Opera, Crazy Rich Asians discussion, All the Tea in China presented by Bill Waddington, and a presentation by photographer Wing Young Huie.

Next, Pearl Bergad introduced our Honorary Chinese Minnesotan of Note, Ruth Stricker Dayton. She described Dayton’s triumph over lupus, using a comprehensive approach to wellness that engages the mental, spiritual and emotional, as well as the physical fitness in her life. She developed her personal philosophy of the mind-body connection, incorporating the Chinese concept of balance, that of yin and yang, and expanded it in her joint venture with her husband, Bruce Dayton, in The Marsh, A Center for Balance and Fitness. It is an inclusive place for wellness – physical, mental and emotional. It combines the allopathic philosophy of western medicine with holistic or complementary practices or (integrative therapies as they are now called) such as massages and Chinese acupuncture. Thirty-five years later, the Marsh is considered the premier center for integrated mind-body fitness in the U.S., and is a model in both Europe and Asia.

The Chinese Heritage Foundation honors Ruth Stricker Dayton for her big heart, altruism, humility, infectious joy, deep compassion, generous philanthropy, positive outlook, and abiding desire to serve the greater good. We celebrate her pioneering role in incorporating the Chinese philosophy of balance into the mind-body connection and integrative medicine. She is our role model for how to lead a purposeful, all-embracing and rewarding life.

One of Dayton’s lifelong mentors is tai chi master Chung Liang Al Huang, who flew in especially to honor her. He spoke warmly of his admiration and respect for her, and when Dayton joined him at the podium, the entire audience stood up to honor one of the most remarkable ladies in Minnesota.

The open house ended on a high note. Attendees left with warm hearts and a new resolve to lead more purposeful lives.

Later in the day, local artists and friends of Dayton, Pat Hui and Paul Kwok, hosted a banquet in her honor at the Peking Garden Restaurant in Saint Paul. It was attended by a few dozens of close friends, family and staff of The Marsh, the health spa founded by Dayton in 1985. •
World in Miniature: Chinese Snuff Bottles

Date: Through June 7, 2020
Location: Minneapolis Institute of Art, Gallery 216, 2400 Third Ave. So., Minneapolis

Snuff is powdered tobacco, which users inhale through their noses. It was introduced into China from Europe in the early 1700s and became widely popular. Storage bottles, often with stoppers ending with spoons to extract the snuff within, soon caught on throughout Chinese society.

Small enough to fit in the palm of the hand, yet often incredibly ornate, Chinese snuff bottles can be marvels of artistic skill. Appearance and materials of snuff bottles often invoke themes and ideas meant to bring wealth, health, good luck, longevity, and even immortality to their owners—and also communicate their wealth and status. Many bottles are made from materials such as ivory, gold, rhinoceros horn, coral, or semiprecious stones. Many designs are original and compelling, while some draw upon familiar imagery from other genres of art, like painting.

The function of a Chinese snuff bottle was twofold: to contain snuff in a convenient manner, and to be a beautiful handheld object. Chinese artists and snuff bottle users alike saw these bottles as fertile ground for artistic and personal expression, and borrowed motifs, themes, and techniques from traditional Chinese art practices (painting, porcelain, lacquerware, and so on). Because of this, the world of snuff bottles can be fittingly described as Chinese art in miniature.

The International Chinese Snuff Bottle Society (snuffbottlesociety.org) held its annual convention at the Minneapolis Institute of Art (Mia) last September. Mia’s large collection of more than 300 Chinese snuff bottles made it an ideal location for such an event. An installation of 100-plus of the very best bottles are on display, curated by Dr Liu Yang, Mia’s curator of Chinese art. Most of the collection was gifted to the museum by Mr and Mrs Augustus L. Searle in the first half of the 20th century, and captures the huge range of decorations used to turn these bottles from simply functional to tiny works of art. Some are carved from ivory, others are shaped like fruits and flowers, some hand painted with dramatic battle scenes, some inlaid with precious stones and mother-of-pearl, some have Buddhist or Daoist inspired imagery. One can imagine a snuff-user pulling one out of his pocket during the Qing dynasty, and allowing the bottle to say something about his character and taste.

The installation includes a group devoted to snuff bottles depicting landscapes (Fig 1), which are a major genre in traditional Chinese painting, and are typically monumental in scale and rendered in ink on paper, meant to depict the vastness and wildness of nature while simultaneously portraying the artist’s inner self expression. While these tiny bottles are far from monumental, they still manage to express that vastness of the natural world. The one pictured here is ivory and etched with a rocky, mountainous scene scattered with trees and tiny temples with a river flowing in the background. Interestingly, the artist seems to have mimicked the spontaneous style of ink landscapes, using brushstroke-like lines to render the leaves on the trees and the outlines of the mountains.

Another group is called ‘Crystals and Stones,’ and features bottles that were carved out of rocks to showcase their natural colouring and distinct patterns (Fig 2). The artists expertly shaped different types of stone – jade, agate, quartz, malachite – into smooth, handheld bottles, hollow inside with tiny openings. In these bottles, the purity of the stone is not emphasized.

The International Chinese Snuff Bottle Society (snuffbottlesociety.org) held its annual convention at the Minneapolis Institute of Art (Mia) last September. Mia's large collection of more than 300 Chinese snuff bottles made it an ideal location for such an event. An installation of 100-plus of the very best bottles are on display, curated by Dr Liu Yang, Mia's curator of Chinese art. Most of the collection was gifted to the museum by Mr and Mrs Augustus L. Searle in the first half of the 20th century, and captures the huge range of decorations used to turn these bottles from simply functional to tiny works of art. Some are carved from ivory, others are shaped like fruits and flowers, some hand painted with dramatic battle scenes, some inlaid with precious stones and mother-of-pearl, some have Buddhist or Daoist inspired imagery. One can imagine a snuff-user pulling one out of his pocket during the Qing dynasty, and allowing the bottle to say something about his character and taste.

The installation includes a group devoted to snuff bottles depicting landscapes (Fig 1), which are a major genre in traditional Chinese painting, and are typically monumental in scale and rendered in ink on paper, meant to depict the vastness and wildness of nature while simultaneously portraying the artist’s inner self expression. While these tiny bottles are far from monumental, they still manage to express that vastness of the natural world. The one pictured here is ivory and etched with a rocky, mountainous scene scattered with trees and tiny temples with a river flowing in the background. Interestingly, the artist seems to have mimicked the spontaneous style of ink landscapes, using brushstroke-like lines to render the leaves on the trees and the outlines of the mountains.

Another group is called ‘Crystals and Stones,’ and features bottles that were carved out of rocks to showcase their natural colouring and distinct patterns (Fig 2). The artists expertly shaped different types of stone – jade, agate, quartz, malachite – into smooth, handheld bottles, hollow inside with tiny openings. In these bottles, the purity of the stone is not emphasized.

The function of a Chinese snuff bottle was twofold: to contain snuff in a convenient manner, and to be a beautiful handheld object. Chinese artists and snuff bottle users alike saw these bottles as fertile ground for artistic and personal expression, and borrowed motifs, themes, and techniques from traditional Chinese art practices (painting, porcelain, lacquerware, and so on). Because of this, the world of snuff bottles can be fittingly described as Chinese art in miniature.

The International Chinese Snuff Bottle Society (snuffbottlesociety.org) held its annual convention at the Minneapolis Institute of Art (Mia) last September. Mia’s large collection of more than 300 Chinese snuff bottles made it an ideal location for such an event. An installation of 100-plus of the very best bottles are on display, curated by Dr Liu Yang, Mia’s curator of Chinese art. Most of the collection was gifted to the museum by Mr and Mrs Augustus L. Searle in the first half of the 20th century, and captures the huge range of decorations used to turn these bottles from simply functional to tiny works of art. Some are carved from ivory, others are shaped like fruits and flowers, some hand painted with dramatic battle scenes, some inlaid with precious stones and mother-of-pearl, some have Buddhist or Daoist inspired imagery. One can imagine a snuff-user pulling one out of his pocket during the Qing dynasty, and allowing the bottle to say something about his character and taste.

The installation includes a group devoted to snuff bottles depicting landscapes (Fig 1), which are a major genre in traditional Chinese painting, and are typically monumental in scale and rendered in ink on paper, meant to depict the vastness and wildness of nature while simultaneously portraying the artist’s inner self expression. While these tiny bottles are far from monumental, they still manage to express that vastness of the natural world. The one pictured here is ivory and etched with a rocky, mountainous scene scattered with trees and tiny temples with a river flowing in the background. Interestingly, the artist seems to have mimicked the spontaneous style of ink landscapes, using brushstroke-like lines to render the leaves on the trees and the outlines of the mountains.

Another group is called ‘Crystals and Stones,’ and features bottles that were carved out of rocks to showcase their natural colouring and distinct patterns (Fig 2). The artists expertly shaped different types of stone – jade, agate, quartz, malachite – into smooth, handheld bottles, hollow inside with tiny openings. In these bottles, the purity of the stone is not emphasized.

The function of a Chinese snuff bottle was twofold: to contain snuff in a convenient manner, and to be a beautiful handheld object. Chinese artists and snuff bottle users alike saw these bottles as fertile ground for artistic and personal expression, and borrowed motifs, themes, and techniques from traditional Chinese art practices (painting, porcelain, lacquerware, and so on). Because of this, the world of snuff bottles can be fittingly described as Chinese art in miniature.

Another group is called ‘Crystals and Stones,’ and features bottles that were carved out of rocks to showcase their natural colouring and distinct patterns (Fig 2). The artists expertly shaped different types of stone – jade, agate, quartz, malachite – into smooth, handheld bottles, hollow inside with tiny openings. In these bottles, the purity of the stone is not emphasized.

The function of a Chinese snuff bottle was twofold: to contain snuff in a convenient manner, and to be a beautiful handheld object. Chinese artists and snuff bottle users alike saw these bottles as fertile ground for artistic and personal expression, and borrowed motifs, themes, and techniques from traditional Chinese art practices (painting, porcelain, lacquerware, and so on). Because of this, the world of snuff bottles can be fittingly described as Chinese art in miniature.

The International Chinese Snuff Bottle Society (snuffbottlesociety.org) held its annual convention at the Minneapolis Institute of Art (Mia) last September. Mia’s large collection of more than 300 Chinese snuff bottles made it an ideal location for such an event. An installation of 100-plus of the very best bottles are on display, curated by Dr Liu Yang, Mia’s curator of Chinese art. Most of the collection was gifted to the museum by Mr and Mrs Augustus L. Searle in the first half of the 20th century, and captures the huge range of decorations used to turn these bottles from simply functional to tiny works of art. Some are carved from ivory, others are shaped like fruits and flowers, some hand painted with dramatic battle scenes, some inlaid with precious stones and mother-of-pearl, some have Buddhist or Daoist inspired imagery. One can imagine a snuff-user pulling one out of his pocket during the Qing dynasty, and allowing the bottle to say something about his character and taste.

The installation includes a group devoted to snuff bottles depicting landscapes (Fig 1), which are a major genre in traditional Chinese painting, and are typically monumental in scale and rendered in ink on paper, meant to depict the vastness and wildness of nature while simultaneously portraying the artist’s inner self expression. While these tiny bottles are far from monumental, they still manage to express that vastness of the natural world. The one pictured here is ivory and etched with a rocky, mountainous scene scattered with trees and tiny temples with a river flowing in the background. Interestingly, the artist seems to have mimicked the spontaneous style of ink landscapes, using brushstroke-like lines to render the leaves on the trees and the outlines of the mountains.

Another group is called ‘Crystals and Stones,’ and features bottles that were carved out of rocks to showcase their natural colouring and distinct patterns (Fig 2). The artists expertly shaped different types of stone – jade, agate, quartz, malachite – into smooth, handheld bottles, hollow inside with tiny openings. In these bottles, the purity of the stone is not emphasized.

The function of a Chinese snuff bottle was twofold: to contain snuff in a convenient manner, and to be a beautiful handheld object. Chinese artists and snuff bottle users alike saw these bottles as fertile ground for artistic and personal expression, and borrowed motifs, themes, and techniques from traditional Chinese art practices (painting, porcelain, lacquerware, and so on). Because of this, the world of snuff bottles can be fittingly described as Chinese art in miniature.

Another group is called ‘Crystals and Stones,’ and features bottles that were carved out of rocks to showcase their natural colouring and distinct patterns (Fig 2). The artists expertly shaped different types of stone – jade, agate, quartz, malachite – into smooth, handheld bottles, hollow inside with tiny openings. In these bottles, the purity of the stone is not emphasized.

The function of a Chinese snuff bottle was twofold: to contain snuff in a convenient manner, and to be a beautiful handheld object. Chinese artists and snuff bottle users alike saw these bottles as fertile ground for artistic and personal expression, and borrowed motifs, themes, and techniques from traditional Chinese art practices (painting, porcelain, lacquerware, and so on). Because of this, the world of snuff bottles can be fittingly described as Chinese art in miniature.

Another group is called ‘Crystals and Stones,’ and features bottles that were carved out of rocks to showcase their natural colouring and distinct patterns (Fig 2). The artists expertly shaped different types of stone – jade, agate, quartz, malachite – into smooth, handheld bottles, hollow inside with tiny openings. In these bottles, the purity of the stone is not emphasized.
Confucianism, consumerism, and the pursuit of wealth in a changing China

By Jackson Venjohn

Editor’s note: This is the first of a series of articles based on a thesis by Venjohn on how Confucianism has impacted consumerism in China, and the trade-off between the individual’s pursuit of wealth vs virtue in China. Contemporary figures mentioned are in U.S. dollars.

According to leading perspectives in business and politics, the relationship between the United States and China will be the most influential relationship of the next century.1 Comparing the measurements of economic output adjusted for population, the United States’ GDP per capita is $59,521 compared to China’s $8,826.2 Despite this disparity, China’s consumption growth has grown at a rate 34 percent faster than the United States from 2015-2020 (predicted).3

Behind Nicaragua, Honduras, and Bolivia, China has a Gini coefficient – a common index for measuring a nation’s wealth distribution among its residents – of 46.5, making China the 29th most unequal country in the world in terms of distribution of family incomes.4 For a country with such high income inequality, the ability to grow consumption at a 55 percent 5-year rate is astonishing, noteworthy, and worth exploring further because it directly affects the United States’ future world market share. In the following several articles, we will investigate what literature tells us about why China’s consumption is growing at such a fast rate despite China’s wealth inequality and low GDP per capita.

Confucianism and related theory

Confucius, a Chinese philosopher (551-479 B.C.) is known for his school of thought, Confucianism. His most famous text, “The Analects,” was composed by his followers and was finalized in the Han Dynasty several hundred years after Confucius’ death. Although often considered a religion, Confucianism is a system or framework of philosophical and ethical teachings. Confucius has often been referred to as the greatest Chinese teacher that ever lived or “the Teacher of the Ten Thousand Generations, and he is the most influential person since the Han Dynasty for the past two millennia.”

Contemporary beliefs form the foundation for Confucian thought and are relevant in ancient, Classical Chinese and modern Chinese literature alike. These values include benevolence (仁 ren), righteousness (義 yi), correct behavior or propriety (禮 li), knowledge (智 zhi), and faithfulness or integrity (信 xin). The way, or the most upright path (中 zhong), is commonly associated with Confucian ideology and is an integral part to the understanding of Classical Chinese. The term and idea of the dao is also the namesake for Daoism (Taoism). These values and terms are most commonly used in traditional examples of Classical Chinese, but are also found throughout the modern era.

Classical Chinese and Confucius’ view on the pursuit of profit

Classical Chinese, also referred to as Literary Chinese, was the language of literature from the Spring and Autumn periods (771-476 B.C.) to the end of the Han Dynasty (206 B.C.-A.D. 220). It is the traditional style of written Chinese that evolved from the ancient Chinese language and is difficult to translate because of its ambiguity, brevity and usage of traditional characters (different from modern simplified Chinese). A familiarity of Classical Chinese is important in the context of comparing traditional Confucian views with modern society because Confucius’ most influential composition of works, “The Analects,” is written in Classical Chinese. Understanding Confucius’ view by analyzing “The Analects” may allow one to develop greater understanding of contemporary Chinese society. In book 4, line 16 of “The Analects” Confucius discussed his views toward profits, writing the following:

君子喻於義，小人喻於利.

Literally translated, character by character, it means: a nobleman (君子, junzi) understands (喻 yu) righteousness (義 yi), one of the character (仁 ren), righteousness or benevolence (仁 ren), advantage (利 li) advantage. A. Charles Muller translated the same sentence as “The noble man is aware of fairness; the inferior man is aware of advantage.” Another translation is:” the man of moral character pursues virtue; the lesser man pursues wealth. If profit is accepted as a translation for it, here Confucius is suggesting that one should pursue morality, righteousness and justice before profits.

In “The Analects” book 11, line 18, Confucius compares two of his closest disciples Hui and Si, clarifying his stance on the pursuit of wealth saying:

Hui is completely full, yet always possession-less. Si is not wealthy by fate, so he has to contrive in order to enrich himself and is usually on the mark.

This example is likely Confucius’ most favorable view toward the pursuit of profit. Si was not naturally a rich person, but through enriching himself and working hard, he was able to achieve wealth through moral means. What is important to point out is that Confucius is more favorable on Hui, noting that he is completely full and satisfied without any possession. Hui’s example comes first and further represents Confucius’ overall view that living morally in the way of the dao is paramount to pursuing profits. However, pursuing profits are admirable and supported by Confucius if done through moral means like Si.

Xu Xueye of Heilon Jin University compared Greed (Aristotle) and Confucian philosophies and found where the differences lie is that Aristotle subordinates virtue to happiness, viewing the achievement of happiness being the ultimate goal of life. Conversely, Xu states Confucius’ view would be the pursuit of the most upright way of life (dao), is far more important than the pursuit of material wealth. The cultivation of a man’s internal and external moral and benevolence (ren) is what it means to achieve true happiness and the highest ideal of life for Confucius.5 According to Xu, these cultural and philosophical differences directly open different thought approaches for the reconstruction of ethical spirit for the following 2,000 years. In the next articles, will take a further look into examples of how this has played out in modern China.

3. Economist Intelligence Unit, BCG Research
4. 2016 Est., cia.gov
6. The Analects of Confucius 语录 Translated by A. Charles Muller.

Call for Articles...

CHINAINSIGHT is a local newspaper fostering U.S.-China cultural and business harmony. We are interested in publishing articles that engage audiences in America. Potential topics range from understanding daily life in China (or for Chinese in America) to discussions of business markets from both an American or Chinese viewpoint.

If you would like to contribute an article, contact Greg Hugh at 952-472-4757 or ghugh@chinainsight.info.
China expert and China Insight contributor Chang Wang shares his thoughts

Chang Wang: The Town Hall was an opportunity for Americans across the country to discuss issues in the relationship with leading experts. I was honored to be invited by Ms. Joan Brzezinski, executive director of the China Center, and Secretary Mark Ritchie, president of Global Minnesota, to serve as this year’s Minnesota speaker.

China Insight (CI): Please tell us about the 2019 China Town Hall in Minneapolis where you were the Minnesota speaker.

Chang Wang: China Town Hall helps participants synthesize and reflect on the current affairs and focuses on how the current state of U.S.-China relations affects the attendees, their families, their jobs, their educational institutions, etc.

I started my remarks by commenting on the national panel discussion moderated by George Stephanopoulos, chief anchor of ABC News. What struck me most was, even though all panelists were fair-minded and well-informed, they made a presumption that there were a uniformed China and a homogenous Chinese culture/people to deal with. There isn’t. Same as there is no one America, nor one homogeneous American culture or American people.

The panelists, as well as many China watchers, assume there is a truth about China to be discovered, and there are more common features and similarities shared by all Chinese than common features and similarities shared by both the Chinese and Americans. Following the same logic, they assume that there must be more differences between the Chinese and the Americans than among the Chinese themselves or the Americans themselves. However, just as it is fictitious to say what a “typical” American is, there is no “typical” Chinese either.

America is more divided than we are willing to admit. Chinese are more diverse than we think. One of my favorite stories about China is about a British missionary. He lived in Shanghai for 11 years at the beginning of the 20th century before he returned to England to retire. In his memoir, he said something about his China experience. He confessed, “Everybody goes to China and wants to find the truth about China; there is no truth about China; there are only facts.”

Nevertheless, the China Town Hall provided neutral, yet critical, analysis of China and U.S.-China relations. Different arguments were presented to the audience for them to hear and evaluate. These conversations are about facts, evidence, communication, and persuasion; these conversations are not about doctrine, principle, ideology or truth.

CI: It is great the China Center and Global Minnesota invited you, a Chinese American, to be the local speaker for China Town Hall. In the past year, there have been increasing tensions in the U.S.-China relationship. Do you personally feel the impact of this? If so, in what ways?

Wang: Chinese Americans are often viewed as “forever outsiders” of both universes - too American to be Chinese, and too Chinese to be American. In the current polarized environment, Chinese Americans are often unfairly targeted, and our loyalty to the Constitution questioned.

However, in the time of distrust and miscommunication, we particularly need people who can think like a Chinese in deciphering the often vague and confusing messages from the Chinese authority. We also need realists advocates of equal protection, individual due process, rebuild the confidence in the rule of law and justice.

As a Chinese American living in parallel universes in China and the U.S., I honestly don’t know the truth about China, nor the United States. I thought I knew the United States; that confidence ended on Nov. 8, 2016, when I realized I did not. But I do know the Chinese American and Chinese people appreciate Chinese cultural traditions, but, at the same time, function in the American system of fundamental fairness.

CI: U.S. and China finally agreed to a limited deal to halt the trade war. President Donald Trump removed the threat of new tariffs as Beijing agreed to purchases of farm goods and other products. Do you feel optimistic about the future of the bilateral relationship?

Wang: Unfortunately, I don’t. I believe we are witnessing the end of decades of U.S.-China engagement and trust, and entering an era of disengagement and distrust, which may also last decades. History taught us that there were a uniformed China and a homogeneous Chinese culture/people to deal with. There isn’t. Same as there is no one America, nor one homogeneous American culture or American people.

There are arguments that the trade war will change China’s behavior, weaken China’s authoritarian regime, and strengthen the U.S. This type of argument underestimates the Communist Party’s tremendous popular support in China; 2) Technology, artificial intelligence, in particular, significantly strengthens the CPC’s control over the population; and 3) Inconsistency of the U.S. trade and foreign policy, and the chaos in the U.S. domestic politics helps CPC’s narrative at home (“Western-style democracy does not work.”) and also helps CPC’s narrative abroad (“Be friends with China, more reliable than America.”) In any regard, the trade war hurts the U.S. more than it hurts China.

CI: Do you think that conflict is inevitable between a rising China and the United States?

Wang: With the departure of Steve Bannon and John Bolton, a military conflict with China is unlikely. The current China policy-makers in the White House are hostile to China, but they are not capable of starting a war. The CPC’s top priorities are “order and control” of the Chinese society and Chinese people. They are not in the position of seizing leadership in the world stage unless the U.S. abandons the leadership. China presents a real challenge, but not a fatal threat. We should have confidence in ourselves; external power and forces cannot hurt the U.S. as bad as what domestic enemies can do.

CI: You have edited “New Chinese American Reader,” to be published in a few months. What is it about?

Wang: This book (in both Chinese and English) is a basic guide to American law, history, and politics for new Chinese immigrants. This book aims to help the readers understand the history, politics, and law of the United States.

Ronald Reagan said in 1988, “America represents something universal in the human spirit. I received a letter not long ago from a man who said, ‘You can go to Japan to live, but you cannot become Japanese. You can go to France to live and not become a Frenchman. You can go to live in Germany, or Turkey, and you won’t become a German or a Turk.’ But then he added, ‘Anybody from any corner of the world can come to America to live and become an American.’”

Chang Wang is a Senior Associate Professor of Law and Academic Advisor to graduate students at the College of Comparative Law, China University of Political Science and Law (CULP), the top law school in China. He is also an attorney with Kingfield Law Office and a member of the University of Minnesota Chinese Center Advisory Board. He holds multiple adjunct professorships at law schools and business schools in the U.S., China, Europe, Australia, and Brazil. He specializes in immigration law and business law.
There’s no better time than a Minnesota winter to sit by the fire and read. With Hong Kong pro-democracy protests going on for six months (and counting), perhaps this is a good time to catch up on understanding Hong Kong’s past, present, and future.

A Borrowed Place: The History of Hong Kong
By Frank Welsh, 1996, paperback, 624 pages

In this deeply researched but sterile history of the British crown colony, Welsh describes how Hong Kong became a trading and commercial center after its inception during the 1839-1842 Opium War and gives a straightforward account of the British entrepreneurs and their accumulation of wealth. The narrative is focused almost entirely on British rather than Chinese interests. Welsh chronicles periodic scandals involving the opium trade, prostitution, gambling and corruption that often led to quarrels between colonial governors, civil servants, government departments and the community. He describes conditions in the colony during the WW II Japanese military occupation and the postwar disaster of Mao Zedong’s Great Leap Forward, the Cultural Revolution and the 1989 massacre in Beijing’s Tiananmen Square. Welsh predicts that the handover of Hong Kong to Beijing in 1997 will be accomplished without a serious hitch. “To any British government,” he concludes, “Hong Kong will remain a peripheral concern.” A former international banker, Welsh is the author of building a Trireme. — Publishers Weekly

Hong Kong: Culture and the Politics of Disappearance (Public World)
By Ackbar Abbas, 1997, paperback, 168 pages

A consideration of what the culture of Hong Kong tells us about the state of the world at the fin-de-siècle. In this intriguing and profoundly thought-provoking exploration of its cinema, architecture, photography, and literature, Ackbar Abbas considers what Hong Kong, with its unique relations to decolonization and disappearance, can teach us about the future of both the colonial city and the global city.

The culture of Hong Kong encompasses Jackie Chan and John Woo, British colonial architecture and postmodern skyscrapers. Ironically, it was not until they were faced with the imposition of Mainland power — 1984 — that the denizens of the colony began to search for a Hong Kong identity. According to Abbas, Hong Kong’s peculiar lack of identity is due to its status as “not so much a place as a space of transit”, whose residents think of themselves as transients and migrants on their way from China to somewhere else. — Goodreads

No City for Slow Men: Hong Kong’s Duikers and Quandaries Laid Bare
By Jason Y. Ng, 2015, paperback, 272 pages

In this collection of 36 essays, Ng examines some of the pressing social, cultural and existential issues facing Hong Kong. It takes us on a tour de force from the gravity-defying property market to the plunging depths of old age poverty, from the storied streets of Sheung Wan to the beckoning island of Cheung Chau, from the culture-shocked Western domestic worker to the misunderstood Mainland Chinese and the disenfranchised foreign domestic worker. The result is a treatise on Hong Kong life that is thought-provoking, touching and immensely entertaining. — Goodreads

City of Protest: A Recent History of Dissent in Hong Kong (Penguin Specials: The Hong Kong Series)
By Anthony Dapiran, 2017, paperback, 100 pages

Dapiran provides an excellent background in understanding what is going on in the streets, and that the protests and their motivations may not necessarily be about what they are protesting about but a way for the population to express their frustrations about how society is constructed. In a democratic society they “vote the bum out” but here they can’t and can only do it through protests.

“Hong Kong is caught between China and an increasingly uncertain world. City of Protest is both an impressive piece of the Umbrella Movement and an important record of Hong Kong’s history of protest.” — Al Weiwei

“Required reading for those on both sides of the political spectrum. ... Dapiran achieves a clear-headedness lacking in much Hong Kong political debate.” — South China Morning Post

Comparative Hong Kong Politics: A Guidebook for Students and Researchers
By Matthew Y. H. Wong, 2017, hardcover, 300 pages

This guidebook for students offers a survey of comparative politics intended for use in Hong Kong. “Hong Kong is one of the world’s great cities, but its political future has hitherto been a hallowed ground. Mass protests, contested elections, a 2003 transition causing uncertainty in financial and business elites - for Hong Kong, it is the best of times as well as the worst of times. Hong Kong University politics scholar Matthew W. Wong brings a close-knit and facts-based approach, introducing Hong Kong to scholars of comparative politics even as he introduces comparative politics to students in Hong Kong, with his new area-specific reference work, a mix of theory and insights into how political theory can be of value in understanding the case of Hong Kong, complete with datasets and quantitative information that helps to disentangle fact from myth. For Hong Kong residents, scholars, students, and members of civil society, this book will be a breath of fresh air.

Tea Before the Rain
By Paul Loong, 2019, paperback, 241 pages

Loong connects his story with personal conflicted-background Chinese in British-rulled Hong Kong. It revolves around the ideas and emotions that welled up on a day that put his whole life into perspective — the day in 1997 when Britain handed the colony back to China. With a career in international journalism, the author interviewed key figures at the time of the transition and attended the Handover Ceremony. The book looks at the seemingly irreconcilable differences over the territory's future from the perspective of ordinary Hong Kong people who are most affected by the outcome. Tea Before the Rain is written for general readers who might have an interest in popular history. It presents the pivotal day in layman's terms beyond the beginnings of a collective memoir for a vanished generation of Hong Kong “belongers.” — Goodreads

Take Back Our Future: An Eventful Sociology of the Hong Kong Umbrella Movement
By Ching Kwan Lee (editor), Ming Sing (editor), 2019, paperback. 270 pages

The essays contributed by a team of experts unveil the causes, processes and implications of the 2014 seventy-nine-day occupation movement in Hong Kong known as the Umbrella Movement. They outline how this historic transformation movement formulated new cultural categories and narratives, fueled the formation and expansion of civil society organizations and networks both for and against the regime, and spurred the regime’s turn to repression and structural closure of dissent and question how and why a world financial center known for its free-wheeling capitalist practices is threatened by a horizon of mass defiance and civic disobedience.

“Take Back Our Future” argues that the Umbrella Movement was a response to China’s internal colonization strategies — political disenfranchisement, economic subsumption, and identity reengineering — in post-handover Hong Kong.

“Take Back Our Future is an exception-ally strong and convincing edited volume that does an excellent job of situating the struggle in the literature on social movements and contributes to the development of theory.” — Jeffrey Wasserstrom, University of California, Irvine, coauthor of “China in the 21st Century”

Vigil: Hong Kong on the Brink
By Jeffrey Wasserstrom, Brink, 2020, paperback, 112 pages

The unrav-eling of one of the great finan-cial centers of the world shat-ters the grand illusion of Chi-na ever having the intention of allowing demo-cratic norms to take root in-side its borders. Hong Kong’s people were subjects of the British Empire for more than 100 years, and now seem destined to remain the sub-ordinates of today’s greatest rising power.

But although we are witnessing the death of Hong Kong as we know it, this is also the story of the biggest challenge to China’s authoritarianism in 30 years. Activists who are passionately committed to defending the special qualities of a home they love are fighting against Beijing’s crafty efforts to bring the city into its fold — of making it a centerpiece of its “Greater Bay Area” megalopolis.

Wasserstrom, one of America’s leading China specialists, draws on his many visits to the city, and knowledge of the history of repression and resistance, to help us understand the deep roots and the broad signifi-cance of the events we see unfolding every day in Hong Kong. The result is a riveting tale of tragedy but also heroism — one of the great David-versus-Goliath battles of our time, a determined street protest against the intrusiveness of Xi Jinping, the most ambitious leader of China since the days of Mao. ♦
Some books are next to impossible to review. “Silk Roads” is one: encyclopedic in scope and structure, made up of several dozen short essays by almost as many different authors, each lavishly illustrated with indescribable photos of objects and places. The Silk Road is, as a term, a modern (late 19th-century) construction. Like the Holy Roman Empire, which was famously neither holy, nor Roman, nor an empire, the Silk Road, was not a road, not unitary and not confined to or even focused on silk. Editor Susan Whitfield, who has passed this way before, uses (as do others) the plural, which is somewhat less inaccurate if not much less amorphous.

However, like such other anachronistic nomenclature as the “Middle Ages” and “Byzantine Empire,” the Silk Road(s) has proven useful. For all its drawbacks and fuzzy edges, it is usually clear what is being referred to: the places between the classical civilizations and a focus on what connects rather than what separates.

The boundaries drawn in “Silk Roads” seem more or less the conventional ones. Chronologically, the time span of the Silk Road is trade, so it starts up in last few centuries BCE, and winds down with the advent of the early modern world and the advent of Europe’s dominance in truly global trade. Geographically, the book includes the endpoints (China and Rome), and has added the ocean routes, India, the Arabian peninsula and the East African coast: indeed, so-called “Old World”) is said to map onto the Silk Road. The problem of running out of superlatives aside, the relatively easy part of this review is the discussion of the illustrations, which make up perhaps two-thirds of the book. The photographs range from full-page coffee-table book spreads to fully annotated illustrations; they date from the 19th century to the present day. They range from close-ups of intricate jewelry measured in inches to limitless landscapes. Architecture, textiles, ceramics, frescoes, sculpture, metalwork, coins, documents all feature. Some pieces are reasonably well-known; others revelatory. Some are of things that have since been destroyed. All are well-chosen (the selection of period maps deserves particular mention); the reproduction quality is uniformly excellent, the layout attractive.

The advantage of having multiple short articles is that widely diverse coverage is presented in bite-sized pieces: the result is much like an old-fashioned, albeit much better-illustrated and much better-written, encyclopedia. The editorial control is excellent: the various essays cross-reference each other and there is minimal repetition. The contributors are wide-ranging and accomplished; there is even a foreword by Peter Sellars: yes, that Peter Sellars, the acclaimed director (who, in full disclosure, was a classmate of mine). Despite the diversity of authors and subject matter, the book nevertheless manages cohesion and a commonality of voice and tone.

The disadvantage, however, of having multiple short articles is that widely diverse coverage is presented in bite-sized pieces. Some subjects are just too broad for treatments of 1000 words or fewer and can jump from one end of the continent to the other and in millennium-sized bounds. An article on the steppe is illustrated mostly by examples of the more manageable subject of walls. The essays that work best are those on narrower, more specific subjects such as coins, glass, the calash, stringed instruments or Manichaeanism. Coins and glass, like religions, could travel extremely far from their origins: Hellenistic glass has turned up Chinese tombs, and Roman coins in Korea. The book is structured into sections which are geographical: “Steppes,” “Mountains and Highlands,” “Seas and Skies,” etc. Non-geographical topics — the various religions, physical culture, such societal questions as slavery, etc. — are dispersed among these sections; the allocation doesn’t always seem organic.

The whole, however, is at the very least the sum of its many tantalizing and thought-provoking parts, from repeating images of three hares or rabbits joined by sharing an ear to an essay on “Slavery and servitude in the Indian Ocean,” which suggests the “slavery needs to be understood within the local context” and that “slavery across the Indian Ocean is more accurately understood as a form of dependency,” a perspective which, however reasonable, is hard to fit into contemporary discussions on slavery and its contemporary legacy. “Silk Roads” is a book to experience rather than read. And it is hard to experience it without comparing Christoph Baumer’s four-volume magnum opus on “The History of Central Asia.” Both are beautiful, fascinating large-format publications, simultaneously erudite and accessible. Baumer takes a more traditional historical approach — his divisions are chronological and political with topics in sidebars — and although Baumer strays well beyond what one might consider the normal boundaries of Central Asia, his focus remains the region rather than the topic. The books complement each other rather than compete. Picking up one increases rather than diminishes the appetite for the other.

One may, as some do, consider the term “Silk Road(s)” an example of egregious intelectual or political branding, but if it catalyzes marvelous books such as this — to say nothing of resulting in an increased focus on relatively understudied areas, peoples and subjects that call current worldviews and conventional wisdom into question — we should nevertheless be grateful.
How did the rat get to be the first animal in the Chinese zodiac? According to Chinese myth, the Jade Emperor said the order on the zodiac said that it would be decided by the order in which the animals arrived at his party. The rat tricked the ox into giving him a ride. Then, just as they arrived at the finish line, the rat jumped down and landed ahead of the ox, earning him the first spot.

As the myth showed, rats are clever and quick-thinking. They are also supposed to be successful and content with living a peaceful life. Chinese see the rat as a sign of wealth and surplus. And, because of their prolific reproduction rate, married couples often pray to them for children!

Personality and characteristics

Optimistic and energetic, people born in a rat year are likable. They are stubborn even though they may be sensitive to other’s emotions. They are kind. However, owing to weak communication skills, they may come across as impolite and rude.

On the financial side, they like saving, and border on being stingy. However, their love for hoarding will sometimes cause them to waste money on unnecessary things.

Men born in Year of the Rat are clever and adapt quickly to new environments. They are creative and great at taking advantage of opportunities. However, they sometimes lack the courage to do so. Although they have great ideas, they may not be suitable for leadership positions.

Women born in the Year of the Rat are traditional. They love keeping things organized and place great value on the family. They take care of everything. Outside of the home, they’re also responsible and able.

Most compatible with Rat: Ox, Dragon, Monkey

Rat’s fixed Earthly Branch is water, while Ox is earth. They complement and help one another in both work and life. Couples formed from Rat and Dragon will be able to understand each other well, and enjoy success together.

Similar to Dragons, Monkeys get along great with Rats, and tend to live happily ever after like a fairytale.

Least compatible with Rat: Horse, Goat and Rabbit

The Earthly Branches of Rat and Horse clash strongly. No matter what a Rat does, it won’t be enough for the Horse.

Goats are attracted to Rat’s wealth and hope to control it, making it a rocky relationship.

Health and lifestyle

Rats are frail. They have energetic personalities, but tire quickly. They catch colds often, but thankfully do not have serious illnesses.

They are sensitive to change in temperature. Not only is cold weather unbearable for them, they also can’t stand hot weather. But despite seeming weak and not being able to perform hard physical work, they enjoy longevity.

Rats can eat anything, whether they are delicacies or plain food. However, they should pay attention to their diet. They tend to get too engrossed with work and forget to eat. Going long periods without food and suddenly binging causes problems with their digestive system. Enemies of their health also include smoking and drinking habits.

For a healthy life, Rats must remember to eat breakfast, do moderate exercise and remain cheerful.

The year 2020 will bring successes and failures to Rats, but their careers will flourish, yielding benefits of all kinds. Hard work will be rewarded; quick-thinking and optimism will propel Rats forward. Exclusive bonuses will come to those born in the first half of the year. Rats born in latter half of the year will have to push a bit harder for their goals.

Finances will be booming for the entire year! Income might even double. Try to avoid spending all on luxurious items and vacations! Instead, splurge on little experiences here and there. Lucky months will be March, September and November. But look out for the unlucky ones: April, July and October.

World in Miniature: Chinese Snuff Bottles

so much as the naturally occurring flaws. In some cases, the artist took inspiration from the shapes of those flaws and incorporated them into an image. For example, the snuff bottle shown here is decorated with two fish (an auspicious symbol for marital happiness) created using the imperfections in the outer layer of rock.

Several snuff bottles in the installation show the ‘Children at Play’ or ‘One Hundred Boys’ motif (Fig. 3). Children – usually boys – are common, auspicious motifs in Chinese art that signify a happy, flourishing family, which was and remains an important value in Chinese society. The children on these snuff bottles are engaged in a variety of activities: playing blind man’s bluff, fishing, dancing, picking flowers, or climbing trees. Children also tend to draw up ideas of innocence, purity, and optimism. A snuff bottle with this motif might be an auspicious object for the user to carry around, sparking notions of happiness and prosperity.

In Qing Dynasty China, these bottles were used frequently enough throughout the day that their decoration was significant, and transformed snuff tobacco from merely a drug into an art of expressing one’s character, values, and social standing. The motifs mentioned here are only a fraction of the countless symbols and motifs that can be found on snuff bottles. The techniques used in snuff bottle production were often extremely time-consuming and required a great amount of skill, and the materials – including gold, jade, horn, ivory, and even bean pods – were usually of great value as well. These objects were clearly created with the intention of being treasured by their users.

Today, snuff has become almost completely obsolete, and therefore, the production of snuff bottles has as well. However, these bottles are still highly valued by collectors, precisely because of their valuable materials and the endless types of decorations and concepts. Because of the endless variants of different types of bottles, collectors can find their favourite motifs and materials to hunt for. These bottles provide a glimpse into the visual language of Qing Dynasty China, and the study of these bottles allow for a better understanding of not only Chinese art and tradition, but different preferences of individuals as well.

Visitors can explore these fascinating concepts. Each snuff bottle is very different from the last, and with more than 100 on view, viewers will be able to immerse themselves in different aspects of Chinese art, tradition, and culture, while learning about different religions, symbols, and techniques – all contained on the surface of tiny handheld bottles.
Journey to DunHuang: CAAM Chinese Dance Theater's 2020 Chinese New Year presentation

CAAM Chinese Dance Theater, known for its resplendent display of theatrical Chinese dance during the Chinese New Year season, will perform its world premiere of “Journey to DunHuang.” There will be two performances: Saturday Jan. 25 at 7:30 p.m. and Sunday, Jan. 26 at 2 p.m. at the O'Shaughnessy Auditorium, St. Catherine University, 2004 Randolph Ave., Saint Paul. “Journey” will kick off the Year of the Rat by exploring the mysteries and magic of DunHuang, a fabled place on the Silk Road in northwest China, through the eyes of American teenagers experiencing it for the first time. This multifaceted expedition of place and people will captivate all with unique spirited and graceful dances from distinctive cultures across China, performed by almost 100 CAAM Chinese Dance Theater dancers. The dances represent the exuberance of herders while milking fragrant milk in the Steppe of Inner Mongolia that has the American visitors jumping and singing along. The beating of golden waist drums and red and white silk scarves swirling send our travelers into a fierce and bold dance to share in the joys of heaven, earth and life on the banks of the Yellow River. As the young American travelers meet teenagers like themselves from the Hui group on the banks of Yangtze River, they share an elegant dance revealing the beauty of their local flowers.

Finally arriving in the DunHuang region, our main characters first experience the Singing Sand Dunes, as winds blow across the sands of Mingsha Mountain surrounding Crescent Lake and absorb the fiery and bold dances of the locals, deeply touching everyone’s hearts. Dunhuang, the ancient site of Buddhist religious activity, with its vast Mogao Caves, leaves our young travelers speechless as they wonder in the golden magnificence of the Thousand Hands and Eyes Buddha.

The young travelers reflect on the profound impact of all their encounters at their final destination. CAAM Chinese Theater dancers’ perspectives and views are changed for a lifetime.

Interested in attending? Tickets are $25 at the door or $20 purchased in advance at https://iDreamTV/YinghuaCNY2020. 

825 Yinghua Academy students celebrate Chinese New Year in song and dance

The students of Yinghua Academy, a public charter school in north Minneapolis, will welcome the Lunar New Year in two performances in Benson Great Hall, Bethel University, 3900 Bethel Drive, Saint Paul, on Saturday, Jan. 25, at 11:30 a.m. and, also, at 4:30 p.m.

Shows will be livestreamed. Watch at: https://livestream.com/iDreamTV/YinghuaCNY2020. Yinghua’s Year of the Mouse performance tells a story about true friendship and screen designs.

Yinghua students will perform songs, dances, and dramatic sequences in Mandarin (with English supertitles).

Yinghua Academy enrolls 825 students in kindergarten through eighth grade. Half of the school’s students perform in the 11:30 a.m. show and the other half in the 4:30 p.m. show. Included are adorable kindergarten mice, kung fu, a ribbon dance, a lion dance, a dragon dance, and heartwarming songs and stories.

The mission of Yinghua Academy is to prepare its students to be engaged and productive global citizens by providing a research-based educational program that immerses in Chinese language and culture, and a nurturing and supportive school environment. Founded in 2006, Yinghua Academy became the first Chinese immersion charter public school in the United States. That fall, 79 students walked through the doors of Yinghua Academy.

Video production is by iDreamTV.

Midtown Global Market celebrates Lunar New Year

Midtown Global Market is a diverse marketplace in the Powderhorn area. This market offers ethnic food from all over the world, including Sweden, Italy, Africa, Mexico and more. In addition to the food, there are also eat-in restaurants and unique gift shops that celebrate a myriad of vibrant cultures.

Website: midtownglobalmarket.org
Advanced tickets are available, before 1/25/20, at the Twin Cities Chinese Language School on Saturdays (1030 W. University Ave., St. Paul, MN 55104), or from ticket-sales volunteers. For further ticket information, please contact chenfu@comcast.net or call 763-639-5202.

Or register online: https://infomccsc.wixsite.com/mysite/events

Organized by:
Minnesota Chinese Cultural Services Center (MCCSC)
Chinese American Academic & Professional Association in Minnesota (CAAPAM)
Minnesota Chinese Veterans Association (MCVA)
Minnesota Chinese Student Association (MCSA)

Chinese New Year is January 25, 2020