

Australia China Friendship Society  
ACT Branch Inc



澳中友好协会

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## Bulletin

2021/8 August 2021

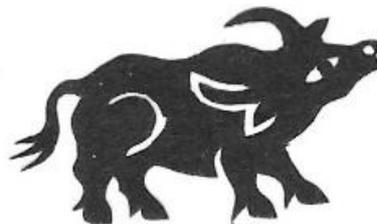
### Coming events

**Chinese Heritage Walk**

**19 Sept**

**ANU Classical Chinese Music Ensemble concert**

**early Oct**



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*Promoting friendship and understanding between the Australian and Chinese people*

## COVID update

The latest COVID news has is that we are to be in lock-down until 2 September. This means that our annual ceremony for awarding prizes to the most proficient and most improved students of mandarin at Canberra’s high schools and colleges cannot be held as planned on 29 August. It was to be our first school activity since 2019 as both the School Awards and the Panda Competition ceremonies had to be cancelled last year. We are hoping that it can be re-scheduled but it will all depend on how Canberra fares with the COVID outbreak.

At this stage our Queanbeyan Chinese Heritage walk will still be on Sunday 19 September.

**Carol Keil**



## Hidden treasures: The First Chinese – a Walk in Queanbeyan, Sunday 19 September 2021

Tony Maple from the National trust (ACT) has kindly agreed to repeat this tour for Society members on Sunday morning 19 September. It was originally run as part of the Heritage Festival.

It will be a roughly 2 hour mostly urban walk of about 3.5km, with some hilly parts and unpaved sections in a cemetery. There is also the option of having lunch in a Chinese restaurant in Queanbeyan afterwards.

If you are interested in coming on the walk and/or the lunch would you email [acfsevent@gmail.com](mailto:acfsevent@gmail.com) by 9 September. The cost will be a donation of approximately \$5, with lunch extra.

### Tour information

The tour will cover the fascinating story of one of this area’s earliest migrant populations, and visit some associated heritage sites.

Access to skilled and reliable labour was a problem in early New South Wales, and particularly so after convict transportation ended in 1840. A plan to contract Chinese mechanics and labourers was proposed as early as 1837. Some of those from the Canberra area that backed the plan were Charles Campbell, George Thomas Palmer, and Thomas McQuoid. Later, the gold rushes attracted thousands of Chinese miners. Inevitably, some Chinese men married European women, had children and settled down. They went on to run a network of gardens, stores, eating houses and boarding rooms essential to life in towns across the colony. Henry Lawson celebrated them, and Braidwood’s Quong Tart became as well regarded as the Governor. One Chinese-European family became part of the commercial, journalistic and religious fabric of Queanbeyan and Canberra. The Tankey family story will

## Fast facts from the *Beijing Review*, August 2021

- China has nearly 50,000 entertainment venues such as karaoke bars, which each have a basic music library of over 100,000 songs.
- The world’s oldest coin minting site dating back 2,500 years has been uncovered in Henan Province. Radiocarbon dating confirmed the bronzeware casting workshop began minting coins around 640-550 BC. The workshop was discovered in the ruins of Guanzhuang that was built about 800 BC.
- 150,000 residents in Yunnan Province have been evacuated at times to avoid conflict with the famous migrating elephant herd. The 14 wild Asian elephants are now nearing their traditional habitat, a nature reserve in Xishuangbanna Dai Autonomous Prefecture. The herd has been roaming Yunnan Province for nearly a year and a half. Official reported that at about 8 pm on 8<sup>th</sup> August the herd crossed the Yuanjing River and continued south. The now protected Asian elephant population of China has grown to about 300. [Do Chinese elephants think 8 is lucky?? The question is mine; it was not in the report.]

**Thanks to Neil Birch for compiling these.**

illustrate the contributions of the early Chinese to the Queanbeyan district, one of whom became the business partner of a militant Canberran that led a national political party.



## ANU Centre for China in the World Events



### Chinese Heritage in the Indian Ocean: A Cultural Anthropological Perspective

12:00pm–1:00pm, Friday 13 August 2021

Presenter: Xuefei Shi

Location: Online

This talk will unveil with anthropological evidence how during the late 19th and early 20th centuries Chinese migrants established themselves along the western coast of the Indian Ocean and how varieties of Chinese heritage in this particular region are being rediscovered and re-evaluated for the present-day political and economic needs.

### Guided tour — *Wayfaring: Photography in 1970s–80s Taiwan*

10:30am–11:00am, Saturday 28 August 2021

Join Chin-Jie Melodie Liu on a guided tour exploring the *Wayfaring* exhibition themes and context, with more background into some of the individual artworks and trends at the time.



### Special Screening: *A Brighter Summer Day* 牯嶺街少年殺人事件

10:30am–3:00pm, 11 September 2021, Kambri Cinema

237mins, 1991 (M)

Directed by Edward Yang 楊德昌

A classic of the Taiwan New Wave, this film explores social and cultural conflict in 1960s Taiwan through a period teen drama. "This film is so uncommonly good that Yang's other very impressive works pale beside it" — *Chicago Reader*



The experiences, images and **voices of Chinese Australians** are the subject of a collecting project by the **National Library of Australia** throughout 2021 and 2022. If you are a part of the Chinese community in Australia and would like to share your story, please register **on** the CIW website..



## Talk by Robert Macklin

Some 39 members and friends of ACFS attended the talk by Robert Macklin on 3 August 2021 on the Australia – China relationship.

Robert Macklin is the author of 29 books, two of which relate specifically to China: ***Dragon and Kangaroo – a shared history*** (published in 2017) and ***The Life and Adventures of Morrison of China*** (published in 2007). He has visited China a dozen times, and knows the country well.

Mr Macklin described the historical ties between the two countries, and discussed the current difficulties. He then took questions from the audience. It was an interesting and informative talk which everyone enjoyed.

**Alex Olah** [And thanks to Alex for organising the evening.]



## **Farewell to Teck Lee from the Committee**

Teck Lee has decided it's time to hang up his Committee Member shoes and, as such, it is with great regret that I have accepted Teck's resignation. Teck joined the Society in 1994 and the committee in 1995. He became tour secretary in 2006 and organised as well as lead several tours to China, raising over \$12,500 for the Society, which enabled us to support 21 Project Hope students at the time – the most we have ever been able to fund. For many years, before PCs and personal emails became a common thing, Teck mailed out the newsletter each month. Teck has been functions co-ordinator since 2007 – booking venues and equipment and taking bookings for each event. Committee meetings and the meals afterwards were regularly enhanced by his observations on the use of grammar and the meanings of words. Teck has been a valuable member of the committee for more than 25 years always volunteering his time to help out at events. Teck, we thank you most sincerely and we will miss you and your candour at the committee meeting table, and your dedication to help out wherever the help is needed. We wish you all the very best, and will continue to choose a duck dish.

**Carol Keil** (with Tanja Naeher and Jean Norman)



## **A Call to Words and Melody**

We are swallowed by smoke and darkness as we enter the warehouse. There is a little bit of cigarette smoke but most of it curls around us from a smoke machine on stage. The crowd, milling around the stage waiting for the band to come on, are watching something we can't see at first. We edge our way through the audience and see a dancer with shaved head and an elegant thick line tattoo down the back of her neck, moving around the space in a slow wide arc. In a few minutes the band amble out and we are buried in a wall of fresh punk sound. This is Shanghai 2006.

Back further, to Huai'an (Jiangsu province) 2001. A remote city with seven foreigners and many of the population still in 'Mao suits' on masses of bicycles flowing down icy streets. I am asked repeatedly if I am an American and I have to explain where I am from. When they talk about America it is about big houses and cars, about 'world class' universities and the freedom to live and work where you want. It's an image of a kind of nirvana free of class, and free of poverty. I spend the rest of my two years there trying to disavow my friends, and a few taxi drivers, of their utopian fantasies. It's not that I am anti-American, but I feel like there is a story to complete they weren't hearing; a story of gun violence and working poor, massive spiraling health costs and the death of meritocracy. But I make no progress – the deluge of American culture is so strong it swamps all rational debate. Every roadside DVD shop has boxes full of this glitzy American dream on sale in beautiful plastic packages for prices even workers can afford. I didn't know a

family who didn't want to send their child to America, or to tour there and make the pilgrimage to the holy land. China was the only country I have ever travelled to that was so wrapped in this heavenly vision. It sometimes felt like America was the closest thing some people came to a religion.

Since moving to Australia in 2013 the only images I have seen of China are of jack booted soldiers, reporters standing with cold grey cityscapes behind them, or stills of 'iconic' buildings. I see a foreign country reflected at me in Australian media, an eerie 'other' place that has little connection to the country I know. It is a fiction – all good fiction has a grain of truth to it, but that doesn't make it real.

What allows this fiction to dominate our thinking and our imagination is a culture chasm that lies between us and our Asian neighbours. The image we started with in a warehouse in Shanghai would seem strange to most Australians. It would rub up against other images of China that are so deeply ingrained in their minds they would reject it. Not recognise it. Most Australians are more comfortable with jack boots and red flags, stiff backed politicians and hammer and sickles. It's all easier to hate, to dismiss. They can't be 'like us' then, and remain the 'other'.

Culture is more powerful than bombs, planes or bullets. We have many examples, the most recent of which is Afghanistan, to see the failure of violence. Trump's (and now Biden's) threat of economic and physical violence directed at China has, ironically, alienated and undone much of the soft power but not all of it. The Chinese people still have a face to put to America, a sense of their melodies and images of how they live. However ugly one side of America is, they still see them as people. Their cultural contact with America has still created a powerful, but one-sided, connection that I think will survive the current moment.

Culture endures where violence fails. It enables one to see the humanity of the 'other', to understand their fears, their triumphs, their quirks, and their human frailties. Most importantly, and most subversively, it enables this- to see the things we have in common. Giving people a face and real feelings is the most dangerous thing of all.

We need to open the cultural floodgates with China if we are to have a positive relationship with the country and its people. We need to hear the punk music coming from Wuhan from bands like 'SMZB' and 'Braindead'. From Chengdu, the rap capital of China, we should be playing the sounds of Harikiri, J Mag and A.T.M. The sublime indie band 'Hiperson' from Chengdu have started to produce some amazing sounds, and there are dozens of others like them. A trickle of very good contemporary Chinese literature is freely available in Australia through online book stores, with works from authors like Wang Shuo, known as "the idol of rebellion for the youth"; Mian Mian with her focus on young Chinese women and their experience; Sheng Keyis' "Northern Girls"; and the wonderful Murong Xuecun with works like "Leave me Alone" that give us insight into city life. The recent television series "The Bad Kids" has made waves inside and outside China.

So this is my "call to arms" – not the ones that hurt, but ammunition that brings us together and makes us heal. Culture is the key. It's the glue that binds us together, and helps us understand the stuff that keeps us apart. It endures where war fails, and if it is two-sided we all benefit from the richness of the other culture and the creation of culture that can be unleashed. Words and melody can save us and connect us to our region at a time when our

leaders are failing us and dragging us further apart. Culture can truly connect us to the Chinese people, to understand the country, warts and all, and to share in our common humanity. Words and melody could save us all.

We can start the ball rolling. If you are interested in starting a Chinese fiction reading club I'd be delighted to hear from you at gbaines172@gmail.com

**Greg Baines** is a writer and teacher in Canberra. He is the author of *The Nail House*, published by Fairlight Books, and dreams of writing a trilingual TV mini series set in China, Australia and Indonesia.

XX

## Letter from Zhanjiang – Roger Arnold

### The Bad Kids ... turned good

There is often an innate thrill in seeing one's own familiar stomping ground portrayed on the 'big screen', even if the 'big screen' isn't actually all that big and is just your own TV, tablet computer or mobile phone. So, over a couple of months earlier this year my wife and I were somewhat besotted after finding an online source (that provided English subtitles) for streaming a new Chinese TV series that was filmed in our home town.



This series – **The Bad Kids** 隐秘的角落; *Yīnmì De Jiǎoluò* – was mostly filmed in the alluring old streets and around the harbour of our city of Zhanjiang. To us it has been particularly intriguing that its cinematography used the atmospheric old town and run-down harbourside parts of our city with amazing sensitivity, and in a way that has let us view these areas with new appreciation.

A couple of years back we'd often run into them filming this series on location during our regular weekend sojourns through Zhanjiang's old streets. Their filming activities were kept low key and sometimes we nearly strolled into the middle of a filming scene unaware of what was happening around us. Now, having seen the finished product, it has been particularly pleasing to see how realistic and true to life the filming locations have been portrayed.

The plot of **The Bad Kids** dwells on social issues, with a focus on three school age kids who develop a special bond because they were lonely and largely neglected by adults. These kids unintentionally film a murder scene and then become involved with the main murder suspect. But, as more families become involved in the case, the mystery goes further and deeper than most viewers will have initially anticipated.



Other than just the special local appeal that **The Bad Kids** present to us Zhanjiang people, it has been wonderful to see how the series has become highly acclaimed in China and elsewhere, gaining countless favourable reviews for its storytelling, cinematography, acting and even its soundtrack. One critic writing in the *Beijing Times* noted:

"Some people say that [*The Bad Kids*] raises the standard of [Chinese] domestic suspense dramas. From narrative, art, photography to performance, it has truly improved the standard."

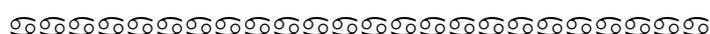
On Chinese entertainment review site Douban, this series has already attracted over 900,000 reviews, with a really impressive average score of 8.8 (out of 10). And it has attracted two nominations in *The Actors of China* awards and already won over 30 other Chinese and international awards.

Among Chinese TV drama series, **The Bad Kids** stands out for its relative brevity – this well-paced series involves just 12 episodes (each about 50 minutes). In China it is most unusual for a drama series to be this short. Over recent years, most Chinese TV dramas have become notoriously long affairs, often stretching to more than 50 episodes a season necessitating many unnecessary plot twists to pad out a series' length and with endless product placements to help the financing such lengthy productions. Not surprisingly, many Chinese 'netizens' say they've found **The Bad Kids** to be highly compelling because it's both short and presents some really high-quality drama.

Then just a couple of weeks back I was fascinated to receive an email led by the title "Watchlist | A gripping new mystery drama" from **SBS On Demand**. This email told me I should "Prepare to be gripped by the suspenseful tale of three children who accidentally film a murder" – it was announcing the availability of **The Bad Kids** on **SBS On Demand**. So now this wonderful, Zhanjiang set drama series is also available for our Australian friends to enjoy (and like most SBS content, it's free to watch).

**See it now at:** <https://www.sbs.com.au/ondemand/program/the-bad-kids>

[Editor: I have now watched four episodes of *The Bad Kids* and will certainly watch the rest.]





中国文化中心  
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## The Beauty of Chinese Drama

### Online Exhibition of Chinese Stage Art Boutique Repertoires

This online exhibition features three Chinese stage art fine works, including the large-scale original folk dance drama **"Forbidden Fruit under the Great Wall"** by Huajin Dance Drama Ensemble Shanxi Vocational Art College, Peking opera **"The King of Lanling"** by Zhejiang Peking Opera Troupe, Large-Scale Song and Dance Poetry **"Multinational Musical Feast"** by Guizhou Opera and Dance Theater.

It presents the innovative charm of large-scale dance drama, Peking Opera, song and dance poetry and other contemporary stage performing arts in China, showcasing original Chinese works to the world. **Watch** at [cccsydney/chinese-stage-art-boutique-repertoires?e=19cad14a55](https://cccsydney/chinese-stage-art-boutique-repertoires?e=19cad14a55)



**"Forbidden Fruit under the Great Wall"** depicts the tragic love story of a young couple under the background of Shanxi merchants in the late Qing dynasty and the early Republic of China.

**"The King of Lanling"** tells the legendary story of a famous general of the Northern Qi Dynasty, The King of Lanling, who endured humiliation and reborn after his father was killed and his mother was taken from him.



**"Multinational Musical Feast"** brings songs, dances and music of the five ethnic minorities, as well as the skills, languages and customs of Guizhou intangible cultural heritage.

# USA & China: Geography and People & Society

**Source:** CIA World Factbook, accessed 19 August 2021

All \$ are US dollars; est. = estimate

	USA	China
<b>GEOGRAPHY</b>		
Area, total, of which	9.83 M sq km	9.6 Million sq km
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Land</li> <li>Water</li> </ul>	9.15 M sq km 0.68 M sq km	9.33 M sq km 0.27 M sq km
Land borders	12,002 km	22,457 km
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of neighbors</li> </ul>	2	14
Coastline	19,924 km	14,500 km
<b>PEOPLE &amp; SOCIETY</b>		
Race	Mainly Caucasian	Asian
Ethnic groups	White 56.1% Hispanic 16.3% Black 12.6% Asian 4.8% Other 10.2%	Han 92% 55 minorities 8%
Total population (July 2021 est.)	335 Million	1,398 Million
Age structure:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>0–14 years</li> <li>15–64 years</li> <li>65+ years</li> </ul>	19% 64% 17%	17% 71% 12%
Median age (2020 est.)	38.5 years	38.4 years
Sex ratio, total population (2020 est.)	0.97 male/female	1.06 male/female
Population growth rate, annual (2021 est.)	0.7%	0.26%
Net migration rate, annual (2021 est.)	3.03 / 1000 pop.	0.43 / 1000 pop.
Urban population (2021 est.)	82.9%	62.5%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rate of urbanization, annual</li> </ul>	0.96%	1.78%
Unemployment rate (2018 est.)	3.9%	3.6% (urban)
Population below the poverty line (2010)	15.1%	0.6%
GINI Index Coefficient (ranks income inequality; the higher the GINI Coefficient the more unequal the income distribution) (2016 est.)	41.1	38,5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>World ranking</li> </ul>	54 of 174 countries	73 of 174 countries
Obesity, adult prevalence rate (2016 est.)	36.2%	6.2%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>World ranking</li> </ul>	12th of 192 countries	169 <sup>th</sup> of 192 countries
Life expectancy at birth, total (2021 est.)	80.4 years	76.3 years
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Male</li> <li>Female</li> </ul>	78.2 years 82.3 years	74.2 years 78.6 years
Literacy rate (2018 est.)	99%	96.8%
Religion, top groupings (2014 est.)	Protestant 47% Catholic 21% Jewish 1.9% Mormon 1.6% Unaffiliated 23%	Folk 22% Buddhist 18% Christian 5% Muslim 2% Unaffiliated 52%

Compiled by member **Alex Olah**. Look for more, similar, tables in coming issues.

# Australia China Friendship Society ACT Branch — membership application form

Annual subscriptions are due on 1 January and are current until 31 December of the same year. The monthly Bulletin is included in the subscription and is distributed by email.

Subscription rates, payable to **the Treasurer, PO Box 530, Civic Square ACT 2608** are:  
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