

Australia China Friendship Society
ACT Branch Inc



澳中友好协会

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Bulletin

2022/2 February 2022

Coming events

Annual General Meeting

16 March

Film evening

April

Chinese Heritage walk

May

Memberships are now due. See the back page for details.



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Promoting friendship and understanding between the Australian and Chinese people

Annual General Meeting

The next function will be the Annual General Meeting, to be held on Wednesday 16 March at the Golden King restaurant, Phillip, at 7.00pm, followed by a banquet (cost \$30).

The Committee is always welcoming of new energy and ideas. Please consider joining. Meetings are held monthly, followed by dinner. A nomination form is included below.



Memberships

Membership of the Society was due for renewal on 1 January. We are an apolitical Society and it is important that we keep promoting friendship between our two peoples, especially in these times when the relationship between our two countries is at a low ebb. A membership form is included at the end of the newsletter and we look forward to having you continue as a member.



National Library of Australia

Story collecting project

Di Ouyang from the Curatorial and Collection Research Team at the National Library of Australia has written to request assistance with the [Collecting Chinese Australian stories](#) project and is calling out to Australians with Chinese heritage around Australia, inviting them to share their story for the library's oral history project. We would love to record more oral histories from the Chinese-Australian community. The express of interest form is online. There is some information online here:

<https://www.nla.gov.au/stories/blog/collecting-chinese-australian-stories>

The library also holds many digital resources in Chinese, including a range of subscriptions to databases and digitised collections.

Fast facts from the *Beijing Review*, February 2022

- In 2021 China's ship builders' output was 39.7 million deadweight tons, up 3% year on year, this is about 47% of the world's total. New orders surged to 67 million tons in 2021.
- China's fiscal revenue rose 10.7% to 20.25 trillion yuan in 2021, nearly twice the 2012 amount. The central government collected roughly 9.15 trillion while local governments had revenue of 11.1 trillion yuan.
- According to the Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication (SWIFT), the Chinese yuan climbed one position in December to become the fourth most active currency for global payments by value, with a share of 2.7%.
- China's transport plan (2021–25). By 2025 there will be 50,000 km of high-speed railway up from 38,000 in 2020. 165,000 km of railway up from 146,000km; 10,000 km of subway lines up from 6,600 km; 270 civil airports up from 241; 190,000 km of express ways up from 161,000 km.

Thanks to Neil Birch for compiling these.

ACFS Nomination form

I, _____ wish to nominate _____

for the position of President / Vice President / Secretary / Treasurer / Committee Member

Signed _____ Seconded _____

I, _____ agree to the above nomination

Signed _____ Date _____

Chinese Heritage walk

The Chinese Heritage walk in Queanbeyan, scheduled for last September, will be held in late May. More details in later Bulletins.



Chinese New Year dinner

The dinner at the China Tea Club, attended by 23 members and friends, was a suitable celebration of the beginning of the Year of the Tiger. A great variety of dishes were served and enjoyed.



Committee News – January 2022 meeting

Firstly, wishing you all a happy New Year (Lunar and not!) – know we are all hoping for a less Covid focused time.

Your committee held its first meeting for 2022 at the 'China Tea Club' in North Lyneham – still our stalwart for committee meetings as the Covid Pandemic continues – groan!

Key to our meeting was discussing whether the Lantern Festival celebrations would go ahead for 2022, considering the Covid situation. Safety logistics and duty of care to our performers, volunteers and the public in general weighed heavily in our decision-making and we have cancelled the event for 2022. We are however, very hopeful and looking forward to a great 2023.

It was such a shame that we missed out on catching up with you all at the Christmas Dinner – due to an electrical storm which caused a power outage in Dickson and for the restaurant!

We are now looking forward to catching up with you at the Chinese New Year dinner (will have happened by the time you read this!) and are planning the Annual General Meeting for 16 March 2022. Please keep an eye out for details on this.

Another function we talked about for the future is a heritage walk in Queanbeyan hosted by the National Trust and titled 'The first Chinese'. Again, please keep an eye out in future newsletter for further details on this.

We finished our dinner with a delicious meal – couldn't decide on a favourite this time!

Wishing you all good health and happiness in the year of the Tiger.

Your Secretary, Tanja



Letters from Project Hope students

Project Hope student Xin Miao, age 14.

He has a very out-going personality. He talks and laughs a lot. He studies well but is not the top student yet. His father is unemployed and stays at home to take care of his mother. His mother is blind and suffers kidney failure and is unemployed. His brother studies at primary school. The family is supported by social subsistence allowance.

Letter of Gratitude

Dear respectful uncles and aunties:

Hello!

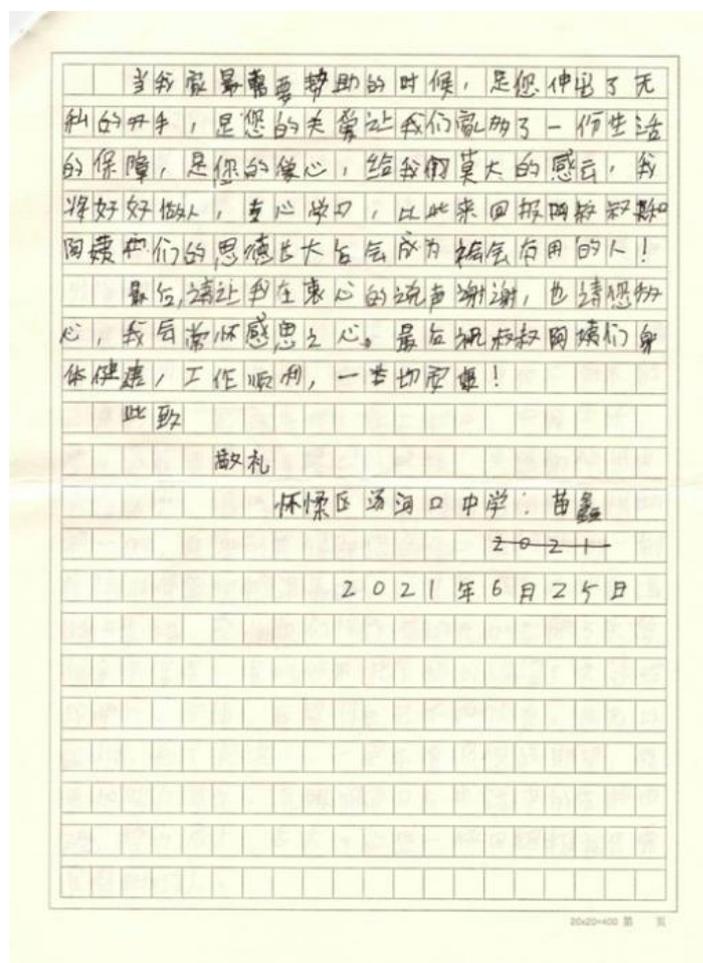
I am Xin Miao from TangheKou Middle School in Huairou District, Beijing. Words cannot describe my feelings now. Apart from appreciation, I also feel extremely grateful. Thank you for your kindness and support at the most difficult time of my life.

While I am attending middle school, my mum is completely blind and paralysed now, and my father cannot go to work all the time due to health problems. At the time when I needed love and help the most, you have reached out with your loving and warm hands. When I received your donation, I was so excited that I broke down into tears. My heart was filled with love and happiness. Thank you for your generous contribution. Thank you for saving up your hard earned money to support my study and life. I feel I am not alone anymore. I don't know how to repay you. But I am determined not to let you down. I will study hard and overcome all difficulties in school and life, to become a useful human being when I grow up, to help others in need like you did to me.

Your support at my family's most difficult time has provided a safeguard for our life. I am moved and touched by your kindness. I will be a good person, study hard and will repay your good wills.

Finally, I want to say thank you sincerely. Please trust me that I won't take your support for granted. I will always be grateful. Wish you all a good health, all the best with work and life.

Salute!



Letter of Gratitude from Xianzi Ge, age 16

Her mother is in poor health and has no job. Her father works as a farmer and takes some odd jobs occasionally

Dear respectful kind people:

Hello! Firstly, I would like to express my sincere respect and gratitude to you. Money has a number, but love is priceless. Please believe me that all the students who have received your support will not let you down. We will turn your love into the best contribution to the community in the future. Wish you a good health and all the best with work! Thank you for helping me!

Xianzi Ge



Year of the Tiger

Tiger Personality

These are powerful individuals:
authoritative, brave, and self assured
with a strong moral compass and belief
system.

They enjoy competition, or even
fighting for a cause, but can sometimes
struggle with their emotional and
sensitive natures that allow them to be
so passionate—sometimes becoming moody or intense.

When crossed, the combination of sensitivity and authority can make for a terrifying
combination! They can sometimes find the more lighthearted or fickle animals of the
zodiac silly or tiresome.

Compatible with: [Rooster](#) or [Dog](#) but [Dragon](#), [Horse](#), or [Pig](#) are best

Be careful around: [Snake](#), [Monkey](#)



What to Expect in 2022, the Year of the Water Tiger: The year of the water tiger has different things in store for each of the Chinese zodiac signs and people of different elements. Either way, it won't be a dull year. The tiger's go big or go home mentality may influence many of us, creating drama and ups and downs.

Generally, however, this will be a year for gaining back some strength and vitality after a hard-working and often tiring 2021 (year of the metal ox).

Chinese Zodiac Elements

Chinese astrology assigns each year with one of the five elements (Metal, Water, Wood, Earth, and Fire). When you combine these five elements with the 12-year cycle of animal signs, you get a 60-year cycle.

Each of those elements have associated meanings. Here they are on a rather simplistic level:

- **Wood:** creativity, imagination
- **Fire:** passion, adventure
- **Metal:** persistence, ambition
- **Water:** agility, eloquence
- **Earth:** patience, stability

To find your Chinese element, look at the last number of your birth year:

- For birth years ending in 0 or 1, your element is metal.
- For birth years ending 2 or 3, your element is water.
- For birth years ending in 4 or 5, your element is wood.
- For birth years ending in 6 or 7, your element is fire.
- For birth years ending in 8 or 9, your element is earth.

Again, though, remember that the Chinese calendar and the regular Gregorian calendar do not line up perfectly. If you were born in January or February, check to see which Chinese year you were actually born in!



The Art of Sculpting in Fire

Source : China Today, Author : DENG DI

"COLORED glassware is as crystal as ice, so pure that it never gets stained with dust." The beauty of glassware products is revealed in this poem by Yuan Zhen (779-831) "Ode to Glassware." Glassware products are traditional Chinese handicrafts that have maintained a fine reputation for many generations. They have existed as decorations since the day they were born. Today, in the Palace Museum in Beijing, potted flowers made of glassware from the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) can still be seen on display.

From the Qing Dynasty to the Republic of China (1912-1949), the most common glassware handicrafts were potted flowers, snuff bottles, and various kinds of small decorations. After the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, buttons, corsages, cap flowers, cigarette holders, and other more practical glassware products were born.



The dragon-shaped glassware is one of the most classical works of Beijing glassware. It is revered for its exquisite craftsmanship and beautiful lines.

Among all the glassware handicrafts nationwide, Beijing glassware, with its gorgeous colours, ingenious modelling, and pureness, stands out and is favoured by handicraft lovers from both home and abroad.

After more than 600 years of development, the handcraft of Beijing glassware has been passed down to the seventh generation. In 2008, Beijing glassware was added to the national intangible cultural heritage list.

Liu Yu, the seventh-generation inheritor of Beijing glassware, learned this craft from his mother, Xing Lanxiang, who is the only glassware craft master alive today. For more than 10 years, Liu Yu has been working in his studio at Baigongfang Handicrafts Museum in Dongcheng District, Beijing, devoting himself to his beloved career. He makes a living from the 1,000 beautiful pieces he produces each year, and guards the time-honoured craft with great enthusiasm.

A Long History

The history of Beijing glassware can be traced back to the early Ming Dynasty (1368-1644). It is said that when people smelted bronze and elixir, they found that some waste materials could form beautiful colours. So, they began to use these materials to make handicrafts, which then became the earliest forms of glassware.

During the Ming and Qing dynasties, glassware handicrafts were mainly used as decorations for royalty and nobles. Besides, in the Qing Dynasty, they were also made into beads for the hats of officials, having different colours according to different titles. During the reign of Emperor Kangxi (1661-1722) in the Qing Dynasty, the emperor ordered the Ministry of Engineering and Industries to set up an imperial workshop inside the then Beijing glassware factory to make glassware

products specially for the royal family, thus earning glassware the two nicknames of "imperial material" and "royal glassware."

After the decline of the Qing Dynasty, the craft of making glassware went from exclusively making decorations for the royal palace to serving the common folk in society. Four big families got renowned for their glassware crafts with distinct Beijing styles. There were thousands of kinds of Beijing glassware handicrafts, ranging from daily ornaments such as jewellery to ornamental handicrafts in the shapes of birds, animals, flowers, fruits, and human figures. Among them jade-imitating glassware handicrafts could hardly be distinguished from genuine jade.

After the founding of the PRC, the central government invested enormously in Beijing glassware. Old glassware artisans were brought together and a Beijing glassware factory was set up to make decorative glassware handicrafts. Those handicrafts became leading export products at the time.

Liu Yu's studio in Baigongfang Handicrafts Museum is the original site of the Beijing glassware factory. His mother, Xing Lanxiang, used to be the youngest artisan in the technical department of the factory at that time. He recalled that when his mother started working there, freight cars lined up outside the factory to buy glassware handicrafts. At that time, the factory earned a lot of money for the country, so much so that the central government attached great importance to it. The then Premier Zhou Enlai visited the factory many times and asked workers there to make exquisite products which could be used to show the world Chinese glassware crafts.

However, due to various reasons including the shortage of raw materials, the factory's internal reform, as well as changes of consumers' tastes, like lots of other intangible cultural heritage, Beijing glassware making craft gradually declined. Only a few artisans today have a mastery of the craft.

Exquisite Workmanship

Beijing glassware is made by sculpting glass in fire. A product is finished in one go, therefore the skills of the artisan are all that are needed. This makes it necessary for him or her to be fully-prepared in advance. The image of the product to be made, the temperature of the fire..., everything in the whole process relies heavily on the artisan's skills.

The main material is the glassware stick, or low-temperature lead glaze. To get it, workers first break rocks taken from mountains into pieces, and then burn the silicate in the smashed rocks in order to melt and remove impurities, then add different oxide metals to form a variety of colours.

There are no moulds used throughout the process of making glassware products. The artisan uses scissors and tweezers to sculpt or twine the glassware sticks which are melting in fire to what they want. In the twinkling of an eye, a lovely handicraft is made. In the process, pressing, stretching, printing, dotting, and pulling are key techniques used.

In Liu Yu's eyes, those seemingly easy steps are very energy-consuming. The designing of a good image requires that the artisan has rich experience and a good cultural background. In formal production, when the fire ignites and the stick melts, the glassware must be moulded within 40 minutes, or the material will become unusable. Behind the simple steps is the meticulous, decades-long practice of the inheritor.

Passing on a Cultural Inheritance

For Liu Yu, as the inheritor of Beijing glassware, the most important thing is to pass on the original craftsmanship of the previous generations to future ones. Being the only full-time practitioner of this craft today constantly makes him feel anxious about the mission he carries on his shoulders.

“At present, Beijing glassware has three inheritors: my mother, me, and my younger brother. However, my mother is in her 70s and has retired, and my brother has a job in another field and hardly makes glassware products any more. So technically, I’m the only one dedicated to the craft,” Liu said.

Liu Yu said that although Beijing glassware is declining, his studio still receives many orders for customized products every year. Therefore, compared with many other intangible cultural products that can hardly find buyers and make profits, Beijing glassware is quite a success.

Despite all this, Liu Yu is worried and pessimistic about the future of Beijing glassware. The shortage of inheritors is his biggest concern. Besides, the glassware sticks are no longer produced, especially those with special colours. These factors greatly restrict the development and become the barriers for passing on the cultural inheritance of Beijing glassware.

In addition, due to the difficulty of the craft, the long time required to master it, and an unstable income, few young men choose to be an inheritor. This traditional folk craft urgently needs to be protected and revitalized by the government and people who love it.

Every year Liu Yu sells his works made during the previous year at temple fairs during the Chinese New Year. In recent years, temple fairs have attached great importance to the promotion of folk customs and intangible cultural heritage, making them a major source of income for craftsmen like him.

In Liu Yu’s eyes, the government’s protection of intangible cultural heritage has made great progress, providing Beijing glassware with many market opportunities.

In order to better pass on the skill of Beijing glassware to the next generation, Liu Yu has taught many apprentices including his daughter. At the same time, he also invites netizens who are interested in traditional handicrafts to visit his studio, and gives them the chance to make simple accessories with their own hands.

Behind each intangible cultural heritage lies rich historical stories. Since its birth as an ornament, Beijing glassware has witnessed the rise and fall of dynasties and the change of tastes of society. All these are precious historical fragments which together constitute the uniqueness of Beijing glassware.



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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