Global China Insights

BUSINESS CHINA
Chinese Dream: A New Window of Opportunities

FEATURE INTERVIEW
Frank-Jürgen Richter: A German Expert’s Global Vision on China
Deciphering the Myths about China

Dick Cavett: You had quite a trip. Can you, uh, tell us, uh, what was China like?
Forrest Gump: Well, in the land of China, people hardly got nothing at all.
John Lennon: No possessions?
Forrest Gump: And in China, they never go to church.
John Lennon: No religion, too?

From the 1994 film Forrest Gump

WENY AN YEARS AGO, the Hollywood blockbuster Forrest Gump’s memorable dialogue had struck a chord with many Chinese people about the West’s perception of China. The words of the somewhat mentally-challenged character Forrest Gump resonated with many superficial ideas held by some Westerners. Gump’s description of China indeed surprised and also impressed many Chinese students in the late 1990s. It reflected a humorous but uneasy commentary on China, the communist country, easily associated with a ‘myth’ created and perpetuated by Western media.

“The media are disseminating perceptions about China that the general public assumes to be true. Which of these are just that – myths – and which are indeed reflections of reality?” These were the stimulating opening questions of a panel session at the 10th Horasis Global China Business Meeting, which took place on 13-14 October 2014 in Italy. In my capacity as Editor-in-Chief of Global China Insights, I was invited and honored to chair this particular session titled Deciphering Myths about China. Amazingly, each panelist approached the topic from a very different perspective and understanding that ensured a lively discussion on a variety of points. The five panelists, business elites from Germany, Italy, Switzerland, Australia and China all had their unique story and insights to share. Yet they agreed on one point: there is a certain gap between what is depicted about China in the Western media and what they themselves have observed and experienced in the country. This naturally prompted the participants to raise key questions: why does the gap exist and how to fill this void between media reporting and the reality in an attempt to better understand China? These are persistently relevant questions in my mind. Disregarding fake content or distorted media reports (another important discussion topic in its own right) and presenting objective news remains a major challenge. Even when the media strive for objectivity, subjectivity is unavoidable—from the decision about what event to cover to choosing the angle from which to tell the story. Besides, news media reporting on the latest news and events cannot alone feed people’s need and interest in understanding a foreign culture. Assigning newsworthiness to more typical and common aspects of Chinese life may also contribute to this purpose.

This naturally prompted the participants to raise key questions: why does the gap exist and how to fill this void between media reporting and the reality in an attempt to better understand China? These are persistently relevant questions in my mind. Disregarding fake content or distorted media reports (another important discussion topic in its own right) and presenting objective news remains a major challenge. Even when the media strive for objectivity, subjectivity is unavoidable—from the decision about what event to cover to choosing the angle from which to tell the story. Besides, news media reporting on the latest news and events cannot alone feed people’s need and interest in understanding a foreign culture. Assigning newsworthiness to more typical and common aspects of Chinese life may also contribute to this purpose.

The ever-increasing worldwide curiosity to understand China definitely encourages us at Global China Insights to continue our unceasing efforts to offer a balanced coverage in sharing knowledge and revealing typical, up-to-date and multidimensional facets of China, hopefully to help close the gap and understand the real China.

Liu Jingyi
Editor-in-Chief
Confucianism and Buddhism: The Most Tolerant World Views

Let us first look what tolerance means. A good, but rather academic, definition of tolerance has been provided by Andrew Colen (2004): “An act of tolerance is an agent’s intentional and principled refraining from interfering with an opposed other concept or activity (or their behaviour, etc.) in situations of diversity, where the agent believes that she or he has the power to interfere”. In other words, tolerance is when you are in a situation that you do not like, or that is not your favourite one, but you do not take action and just let it happen, in cases where you have the possibility to interfere. In other words, tolerance is a willingness to accept actions that are not your own and are not your preferences, as long as they do not interfere with your right to have those preferences and to act on them.

Confucianism and Buddhism are perhaps not religions as defined in the Abrahamic cultures. Confucianism originated in a largely agricultural society and developed a deep feeling and worship for nature. The natural forces are often expressed as heaven (天), the structure of the universe) or the mandate of heaven (天命), and followers of Confucianism often lead an impersonal lifestyle which is based on a natural teleology. The gentle human being of high morality (贤), educated by extensive studies of the sage kings, is the ideal person to govern the country. Following Dao (道), the way of heaven, is a moral law in which morality involves one’s personal choice to live and behave according to the following major virtues:

- Impersonality. The supreme concepts, such as Dao (道) and Ren (仁), are conceived impersonally. This means that no human-like figures or objects are used to represent these concepts.
- Spirit Flitude. The supreme supernatural beings can be person-like but do not possess omnipotence and omniscience nor are any all-loving, all-good. Also there is no punitive, creator God.

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These ethical qualities are the basis of Confucian morality and involve the assumption that all people have the same good human nature, which automatically leads to considerable tolerance in dealing with other people.

Buddhism was first introduced in China in the first century BC and was well received. Shakyamuni (釋迦牟尼), the later Buddha, saw the human beings go through an endless series of lives, better and worse, depending on their karma and constantly suffering because of their attachment to everything around them. The Buddha taught people how to reach liberation from the cycle of sufferings and how to realise the ending of rebirth, called Nirvana (涅槃), the ending of rebirth, called Nirvana (涅槃), and the first Buddhist temple (白馬寺, the White Horse Temple) was built by Emperor Ming of the Eastern Han Dynasty (25-220) in AD close to the capital Luoyang (洛阳). Many Buddhist scriptures were translated into Chinese, and, particularly after the arrival of the monk Bodhidharma (菩提達摩) from India in the fifth century AD, there was a remarkable growth of Chinese Buddhism, also in the surrounding countries. The new Buddhist world-view had a tremendous influence on the entire Chinese culture, including philosophy, poetry, painting and architecture. Different schools were developed, the most popular being the Chan (禅宗) or Zen (禪宗), better known as Zen (禅宗). In the year 500 AD, there were about 80,000 Buddhist temples in China.

A poem written on a wall by a Chinese monk found in the Big Wild Goose Pagoda (大雁塔) in Xi’an (西安) expresses how Chinese and Buddhist thought influenced each other in a beautiful way (Engberts, 2010):

 climatic light of dawn is brand new. We have rephrased that into the following English interpretation:

We can see in this poem the Buddhist withdrawal into a monastery to seek enlightenment of the mind and the idea that no beings and phenomena have an intrinsic existence but are in a process of continuous change.
An important Buddhist concept is the ‘void’ (空), which is rather close to the Daoist idea of non-being, not to be understood as nihilistic but as a new state of consciousness (无, non-being), not to be understood as a continuous process of change but no integrity, which means that there is no complete rest. Everything in the universe is interrelated; that the world is governed by natural laws; and that following the Eightfold Path (八正道) leads to the end of suffering. This inspired a further development of Confucianism which was enriched in the Northern and Southern Song dynasty (960–1279) by metaphysical concepts as mainly provided by Zhu Xi (朱熹, 1130–1200) and laid down in the ‘Jinsi Lu’ (金思想錄) by Chu His & Lu Tsu-Chien, 1967; Ivanhoe, 1988), the most important Chinese philosophical text written in the second millennium. In Neo-Confucianism (新儒學), a metaphysics of process, Qi (氣) is the vital force, the dynamical principle of natural change and plurality that provides form and existence to Li (理), the great principle of order and creativity. No heaven or hell, no punitive God. Ancestor are worshipped, but there is no belief that they are alive now here or somewhere else. Cheng Hao (程頤 1032-1085), another Neo-Confucian sage said: “The laws introduced by the wise monarchs were all based on human nature and in accord with the order in the nature around us”.

In recent times, conflicts between different religions seem to be increasing, in particular the devastating attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on 9/11 have drawn worldwide attention to the severe problems of hostility and violence between the various religions and world views in our world. But looking back over the long history of mankind, it becomes clear that religious conflicts are, as it looks, almost unavoidable between different social groups with their own specific cultural values, which are most strongly expressed in their religious beliefs. But both Buddhism, Confucianism and Daoism have no supreme being like Yahweh, God, or Allah, which according to the ancient scriptures, puts disbelievers into hell, or less badly, outside the leading religious community and society.

These differences in cultural heritage can be observed in daily life. When visiting Tai Shan (泰山), one of the four holy mountains in China, I noticed that a Confucian, a Daoist and a Buddhist temple were situated close to each other. I was moved to see that Chinese visitors entered the three temples with equal respect. It remains a dear memory. Flanagan’s suggestion in his thoughtful chapter (Flanagan, 2013) looks just feeble: Confucianism and Buddhism possess the most tolerant world views.

References
Chinese Dream: A New Window of Opportunities

Xu Wenjia (徐文熹)

From 1776, generations of Americans deeply believed in the American dream, that dream of a land in which life should be better and richer and fuller for every man, with opportunity for each according to his ability or achievement.” (James Truslow Adams, *Epic of America*, 1931). Everyone deserves the opportunity for prosperity and success as long as they earn it through hard work. Just like the Statue of Liberty, the American Dream is an icon of the American spirit.

On 18 September 2014, the Alibaba Group (阿里巴巴) was floated on the New York stock market with its initial public offering (IPO) raising USD 21.8 billion for the company and its investors, making it the biggest IPO in US history. Only 15 years ago, the founder of Alibaba, Jack Ma (马云), was just an English teacher, earning 20 dollars per month, currently Forbes ranks him the 34th richest person in the world. His story sounds like a typical American story, achieving the dream through his own ability and hard work; and yet it is a Chinese story.

In November 2012, the Chinese President Xi Jinping (习近平) articulated a vision for the nation’s future: the Chinese Dream described as “national rejuvenation, improvement of people’s livelihoods, prosperity, construction of a better society and military strengthening.” The term became a hit with the Chinese media and has gained popularity. Xi inspired young people to “dare to dream, work assiduously to fulfil the dreams and contribute to the revitalization of the nation.” Having a better life than their parents is most people’s dream, and going beyond just purchasing daily necessities for everyday living is one of the many ways to improve the quality of life. Consumption preference can reflect living attitudes of the individual. Thirty years ago, even a TV was a luxurious appliance for most Chinese young people, but now in China, the sought-after objects of the younger generation are a home and a car. These priorities led to a 50 percent increase of SUV sales in China in 2013. (BrandZ*, Millward Brown Optimor, 2014). To fulfil dreams, people will take action in different areas of their lives, such as get a better education, or work harder at their present jobs. In the economic area, dreams can encourage people to consume, and they also drive the development of the economy.

Realising the power of dreams, WPP, the world’s largest communications services group, conducted research, and published a report titled *The Power and the Potential of the Chinese Dream*. After analysing the data, the WPP group gives insights about the power of the Chinese Dream and its potential impact on brands.

In the report, they compared the national dreams of China with those of the US and the UK. After comparing the answers from respondents in these countries, they found that the awareness of the national dream in China is the highest. Over half of the Chinese respondents say they are quite familiar or very familiar with their national dream, compared with 43 percent of the Americans, and only about 8 percent of the British.

The research group also compared the consumer behaviour of people from these three countries. They drew the conclusion that the Chinese are both enthusiastic customers and dreamers. Encouraged by dreams, people tend to seek higher quality of life; for instance, many Chinese are not satisfied by only travelling domestically, a substantial amount of them wishes to travel abroad. In fact, many Chinese have already done so. China is expected to rank fourth in the world in outbound travel by 2015, according to the World Tourism Organization. In 2013, two of the major international carriers in China’s flight market, Air China and China Southern Airlines, added new international routes. Air China increased the number of routes to Europe, including a flight between Chengdu (成都) and Frankfurt, the first direct flight between a southwest city of China and Europe. China Southern also expanded its flights to Europe, Australia and New Zealand. Especially in the rising middle class in China, people seek to improve their personal well-being.

Every brand has a personality. In the Chinese Dream research, customers describe every brand based on the 20 characteristics from the BrandZ research. They also use the same approach to identify the characteristics of the Chinese Dream. After analysing the data, they found that some Chinese brands share the same characteristics with the Chinese Dream.

2. Ibid
3. The British Dream is not really a familiar term. As mentioned in the report, only eight percent of British people are familiar with their own national dream. In the report, the WPP research group did not provide an official source of the British Dream, but perhaps selected these three countries on the grounds of their economic dominance in the nineteenth (Great Britain) and twentieth century (United States).
Dream. These brands come from a wide range of categories. Some brands from the area of technology, like Baidu (百度), Alibaba or Tencent (腾讯), represent the emerging industries of Chinese brands. In contrast, some brands have a long history and characterize the emerging industries of Chinese brands. In the area of technology, like Baidu (百度), Alibaba or Tencent (腾讯)), they represent the traditional Chinese brands and share the characteristics of stability with the Chinese Dream. Both of the two kinds of brands have enjoyed sustained development in the last several years, for instance, Baidu’s income in the second quarter in 2013 increased to RMB 7.6 billion (USD $1.2 billion), up 36.8 percent from the same period in 2012; Tong Ren Tang’s net profits rose 29 percent to RMB 330 million (USD $53.9 million) in 2012.

According to the report Top 100 Most Valuable Chinese Brands, most of the brands that Chinese customers associated with the Chinese Dream increased their brand value in 2014. What other opportunities will the Chinese Dream bring to brands? In the second part of the report based on these findings, five possible implications for brands are provided.

Bridge the Gap

When interviewed, Chinese people expressed their concern about pollution, food safety, education, health care and the retirement system. Brands have an opportunity to help improve the quality of life of Chinese people by offering products and services focused on these concerns, or at least by not causing any further concern. The Yili Group (伊利集团), which ranked 6th in the list of Trusted Chinese Brands in China, and top of the food & dairy category (BrandZ™, Millward Brown Optimor, 2014), launched its European Research and Development Centre in cooperation with Wageningen University & Research Centre in the Netherlands. Food safety is one of the three main research priorities of the centre. Pan Gang (潘刚), the CEO of Yili, said that even though it is a huge challenge for the centre to figure out what’s the better dairy food for the world, it is still a chance they will not miss. In the Chinese Dream report, Yili is in the top 10 Chinese brands that match the Chinese Dream. For the first half of 2013, Yili’s net profit was RMB 1.7 billion (USD $285 million) and revenue was RMB 23.9 billion (USD $3.9 billion).

Believe the Dream

When interviewed, Chinese people believe that the national dream can improve their lives in practical ways, so it can have real opportunities for brands. The Yili Group (伊利集团), a leading technology company in China, in 2013, has earned a grand total of 36,511 domestic and international patents up until the end of 2013. It is now the third largest Smartphone maker in the world, after Apple and Samsung, according to the Wall Street Journal.

Many Chinese people who were interviewed by the research group believe that Chinese brands, which have influence on the global market, can contribute to their nation’s reputation and power. Brands should realise that the development of the Brand China is a part of the fulfilment of the Chinese Dream, meaning that Brand China and the Chinese Dream are positively correlated.

Dreams are like windows showing dreamers an exciting new world. In the report, 79 percent of Chinese interviewers have a belief in the idea that dreams will make life better, and over half of them said that they are familiar with their own national dream. Material wealth is correlated with personal happiness; brands can, therefore, provide the ideal products and services to help Chinese customers to fulfill their personal dreams and bridge the gap between the national dream and the personal one. For brands, the Chinese Dream is also a window showing a perpetually growing China. Opening the window is like opening China’s endless opportunities market.

Understand the Expectations

Over one-third of respondents in the research say that the US currently is the most ideal country. But this percentage changes dramatically when the question is asked which country will be ideal in ten years. Then, only 34 percent of Chinese answered the US, while 42 percent answered China. Meanwhile, the Chinese have the most optimistic view on their economic growth: 39 percent of Chinese people have the expectation that over the coming 10 years China’s economy will expand 7 percent or more annually, while only 6 percent of Americans and 7 percent of Britons expect the same growth rate for their country.

During the research, a substantial amount of respondents expressed that they expect China to become a much more powerful and flourishing country in ten years. By understanding the expectation, brands can find some opportunities from the change that China is going through.

Realise the Development

In this report, most Chinese people say that the Chinese Dream is about shifting the essence of the Brand China (品牌中国) (the overall reputation of Chinese products and services) from “Made in China” to “Created in China”. Huawei (华为), a leading technology company in China, has earned a grand total of 36,511 domestic and international patents up until the end of 2013. It is now the third largest Smartphone maker in the world, after Apple and Samsung, according to the Wall Street Journal.

Huawei: A Global Chinese Brand

Guo Xin (蔡霞)

Arriving in the Netherlands, I suddenly realised my urgent need to buy another mobile phone for my contacts both in China and in the Netherlands. In two minds as to whether I should choose an iPhone over a Samsung, I suddenly spotted the black phone that my Dutch colleague was using; its display took up 80% of the front panel with the following white letters at the bottom: HUAWEI (华为). “How do you like your mobile phone?” My interest was aroused; for she was using a Chinese brand in the Netherlands. “It recognizes your fingerprint,” she said, setting out to enumerate the features of her newly bought phone to me: “six inch screen, eight cores, 13MP lens, fingerprint,” she said, setting out to enumerate the features of her Huawei Ascend P7 which employees of Huawei Technologies in the Netherlands confirmed as Huawei’s world’s No. 1 telecommunication equipment provider.

According to Mr. Dai, the most representative feature for Huawei to attract young elites is the culture and mechanism, both of which encourage and guarantee one’s initiative. Original ideas, he added, should always be valued and rewarded; people are promoted not according to their seniority but based on their contribution to the group. Also, Huawei’s philosophy of team work is really what drives their great strength in technological innovation and in other developments: Huawei Ren always get the most cordial congratulations from their team on their success and the most sincere help from their coworkers when in difficulty.

Huawei is a young company. It was established 27 years ago with a start-up capital of only 20,000 Chinese RMB (€2,620), but this was enough for the Huawei people to work miracles. In the course of a little over two decades, they have transformed into a multi-billion company. On 31 March 2014, Huawei released its 2013 annual report, revealing another great year with sales revenue of USD 39.4 billion (€31.4bn), surpassing Ericsson’s revenue of USD 35.3 billion (€28.4bn) and making it the world’s No. 1 telecoms equipment provider.

Ever since 2010, Huawei has been making consistent efforts to build its brand recognition within the consumer’s market instead of just among industry insiders. Mr. James Dai explained the developing trace of Huawei’s strategy in the users’ market: “To ensure sales volume in the initial phase, Huawei focused on producing low-cost customised mobile phones for major operators in China. Since 2011, it has adjusted its marketing and positioning strategies for major operators in China. Since 2011, it has adjusted its marketing and positioning strategies...”

Huawei brand has been continuously stimulating the interest and passion of domestic consumers in this national brand and at the same time changing the intrinsic concept of overseas consumers of ‘Made in China’. In 2013, to promote brand awareness for Huawei mobile phones, the company conducted a series of branding campaigns worldwide, including sponsoring football games and clubs, such as Spain’s La Liga, Italy’s A.C. Milan, Germany’s Borussia Dortmund, and the Netherlands’ Ajax Amsterdam. According to the newly released smartphone market statistics by the International Data Corporation (IDC), Huawei shipped 12.7 million smartphones in the third quarter of 2013, a 4.8% share of the market, making it one of the top three smartphone makers after Samsung (31.4% of the market share) and Apple (13.1% of the market share). Those numbers prove that Huawei is no longer solely well known among telecom operators, but it has also begun to win its ‘smart’ place among individual consumers.

All these achievements stemmed from just a small sales agency established in 1987 in a residential building in the Nanyu New Village in Shenzhen (深圳南油新村) by the current CEO Ren Zhengfei (任正非), a former engineer in military’s Engineering Corps, together with five other investors who each put in 3,500 Chinese RMB (€459). Nobody expected that this humble
Mr. James Dai, the COO of Huawei Technologies in the Netherlands unveiled by Interbrand on 9 October 2014, in the 15th annual Best Global Brands Report consumers from over 170 countries and regions.

In 27 years, Huawei has grown from a humble beginner to a global leader in the ICT industry: from 6 to 150,000 employees; from a registered capital of 20,000 Chinese RMB (€2620) to a yearly revenue of USD 39.4 billion (€31.6bn); from a seller of foreign telecom equipment to the world’s biggest telecommunications company from 6 to 150,000 employees; from a registered capital of 20,000 Chinese RMB (€2620) to a yearly revenue of USD 39.4 billion (€31.6bn); from a seller of foreign telecom equipment to the world’s biggest telecommunications company serving telecom providers, enterprises and consumers from over 170 countries and regions.

In the 15th annual Best Global Brands Report unveiled by Interbrand on 9 October 2014, Huawei was listed No. 94, making it the first Chinese company to break into the top 100.

When asked about Huawei’s secret to success, Mr. James Dai said that ‘customers first’ has long been the core value of Huawei and innovation centred on customer need has been and will always be Huawei’s priority. Huawei consistently invests over 10% of its revenues on Research and Development (R&D), with its R&D employees comprising 45% of the total workforce. Thanks to its integrated services and enormous investment in customer-centric innovation, Huawei’s enterprise business, which just started in 2012 in Western Europe, has become the fastest growing section among Huawei’s three business units, namely carrier network, enterprise business and consumer business.

The success of the Huawei brand does not come by accident. Nor are people using Huawei smartphones outside of China, like my Dutch colleague, isolated examples. It is true that the company still has a long way to go in building its brand recognition, especially in the overseas markets, but its persistent efforts have paid off. In the face of new opportunities and challenges, Mr. James Dai added, Huawei is endeavouring to become a world-renowned brand leader by delivering a consistently superior customer experience.

When I think back on the trip, one of the first images coming to mind is that of Wenhua plaza in Changchun (长春) after sunset. The park then fills with people who, after spending long hours at work or at school, come to relax and have a good time. Couples take romantic strolls, groups set up boomboxes and turn various corners of the park into open-air dance floors, and some play with their dogs or electronic flying toys. As we joined the crowd one night, we saw sky lanterns (天灯) rise above the buildings surrounding the plaza.

Sky lanterns are small hot air balloons traditionally made of paper that people in China launch to wish for good fortune, adorning the night sky with bright orange dots. That night, their peaceful ascent was suddenly disrupted by a humming noise. One of the flying toys, a miniature drone with neon red lights, started circling the lanterns. Apparently, some mischievous youngsters controlling the drone were trying to take one of the glowing little paper balloons down. Skilled as they were in handling the remote operated drone, they could not land a hit for a long time, and an entire group of half a dozen lanterns disappeared into the night sky, undisturbed. As a second group was released some time later, the drone came back, ‘scored’ and sent one lantern from a slow ascent into a rapid descent amid cheering from the drone pilots.

Lights in the Sky: Observing Characteristics of Modern China

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Yet the longer I stayed in China, the more I realised that this ‘typically Chinese’ versus ‘modern’ opposition is a false one. I found many characteristics of everyday life in modern China to be as rich and interesting as those rooted in tradition. For example, I witnessed large masses of people gather in parks in the morning to practice Taijiquan (太极拳) or popular dancing under guidance in the evening. What struck me as characteristic of how the Chinese socialise is that meals play an important role. The food is always shared from bowls...
Plastic and used as dustbins! Out to town with other students, the task did not profit as much from the language Chinese than most learners in the group, I did not profit as much from the language Chinese than most learners in the group, I did not profit as much from the language Chinese than most learners in the group, I did not profit as much from the language Chinese than most learners in the group, I did not profit as much from the language Chinese than most learners in the group, I did not profit as much from the language Chinese than most learners in the group, I did not profit as much from the language Chinese than most learners in the group, I did not profit as much from the language Chinese than most learners in the group, I did not profit as much from the language Chinese than most learners in the group, I did not profit as much from the language Chinese than most learners in the group, I did not profit as much from the language Chinese than most learners in the group, I did not profit as much from the 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every culture you could think of. Although I ate a lot of Western food while I was there, I mostly liked eating Hong Kong bites. I tried pineapple buns (菠萝包) and steamed buns with red bean paste (红豆包).), which is deep fried toast with peanut butter inside, butter on top and lots of honey to top it off; Portuguese egg tarts (葡式蛋撻), steamed buns with red bean paste (红豆包), and potatoes on a stick. Delicious!

Crowded but lively
Hong Kong is a very lively city, but overwhelmingly crowded at times. At nine o’clock in the evening, thousands of people stroll down the busy streets and shop like their lives depended on it. Sometimes, you just had to go with the flow, as it felt like swimming in waves of people. I was staying in Causeway Bay (浅水湾), one of the busiest shopping areas in Hong Kong, which may have clouded my judgment a little. Of course, the fact that the streets are so packed has something to do with the limited amount of space. Although Hong Kong as a whole is quite big, the city is squeezed between the sea and forested mountains and feels crowded everywhere you go. Most buildings in the urban areas are skyscrapers or tall residential buildings. The city also felt like a 3D maze as I got constantly lost, not only in Hong Kong’s labyrinth of streets but also inside the buildings.

Colourful Hong Kong, with its masses of people, shopping malls, lit up towers at night, tropical islands and nature next door, of people, shopping malls, lit up towers at night, tropical islands and nature next door, of people, shopping malls, lit up towers at night, tropical islands and nature next door, of people, shopping malls, lit up towers at night, tropical islands and nature next door, felt like a 3D maze as I got constantly lost, not only in Hong Kong’s labyrinth of streets but also inside the buildings.

Chinese President Xi Jinping and wife Peng Liyuan with Belgium’s King Philippe and Queen Mathilde at Pairi Daiza zoo in Brugelette

Panda Diplomacy
Away from the intense negotiations at the recent G20 summit in the Australian city of Brisbane, a handful of leaders’ spouses were taken on a trip to a wildlife sanctuary. On the two-hour visit around the sanctuary, the spouse of the Chinese president, Peng Liyuan (彭丽媛), was pictured holding an animal synonymous with Australia: the koala bear. The world’s media spoke of ‘koala diplomacy’, the use of this cuddly marsupial to strike up a friendship with others. But it is not just Australia that practices diplomacy using cuddly animals native to their country. China has long been engaged in this fine diplomatic art with carnivores native to south central China: the giant panda.

Panda diplomacy, as it is known in diplomatic circles, is China’s way of striking that friendship chord with other nation states. The gift of a panda has gained diplomatic credence since the formation of the People’s Republic of China, but where did this tradition come from? How has panda diplomacy evolved over time? And where does panda diplomacy go next? Such questions have interested me, as a wannabe diplomat, ever since the giant pandas Tian Tian (田田) and Yang Guang arrived in my native Britain in 2011 to rolling live TV coverage and widespread public attention. You have to go back over 1300 years, though, to what is thought to be the first recorded instance in Chinese history of panda diplomacy. Two bears and seventy pieces of fur were sent by the Empress Wu Zetian (武则天) of the Tang Dynasty (618-907) to the 40th Japanese emperor in 685 AD. It is generally agreed today that these two bears in question were, indeed, pandas; and with it, the first known instance in Chinese political history of these creatures being used as a diplomatic gift. In more recent times, Japan—not necessarily known for its strong ties with China—received two pandas from China in 2008. On a state visit to Japan three months before the start of the Beijing Olympic Games, the former Chinese president, Hu Jintao (胡锦涛), was quoted as saying: “Giant pandas are very popular among the Japanese, and they are a symbol of the friendly ties between Japan and China.”

But is there perhaps a bit more to modern day panda diplomacy than just popularity and symbolism? The author of The Way of the Panda: The Curious History of China’s Political Animal (Profile Books, 2010), Henry Nicholls, seems to think so: “China’s expansion across the globe—and its use of pandas—has become more obvious and the motivation for the loans has become muddier,” he said. “They are no longer just about conservation, but become increasingly bound up with political and economic ambitions.” It would appear more than a coincidence that shortly after Tian and Yang Guang arrived at Edinburgh Zoo in 2011 numerous billion-dollar trade deals were signed by China and Scottish firms, including for Land Rover vehicles, Scottish fish and green technology. A year later, in 2012, two giant pandas were on
their way to Canada after multibillion-dollar deals to export uranium to China were secured. And most recently in spring of this year, the new Chinese president, Xi Jinping (习近平) and his wife visited Belgium to inspect the giant pandas Xing Hui (兴辉) and Hao Hao (浩浩) during an EU-wide tour focusing on trade deals in France and Germany.

Very much linked with improved trade relations, post-2008 panda diplomacy has been deemed by some political and diplomatic commentators as a type of ‘guanxi’ (关系), a term that individuals doing business in China are most likely to encounter. It refers to a personalised network of influence, loyalty and commonality. Interestingly enough, since 2008, pandas have been received by some of China’s main trading partners, predominantly members of the G8 – now G7 – leading industrialised nations. Pandas are, therefore, bestowed on countries based on mutual need, providing China with much-needed technology and resources to fuel its expanding economy.

The first two countries to be presented with a pair of pandas were Russia in 1957 and North Korea in 1965. Although economic and trade considerations may have played a role in motivating Chairman Mao (毛泽东) to send these ‘goodwill ambassadors’ to these respective countries, it is more likely to have been an expression of political solidarity, not least because Russia and North Korea shared many of China’s own communist principles at the time and also belonged to the same sphere of influence.

It was not until the early seventies, however, when pairs of pandas were sent to the West, doing much to bridge the East-West divide at the time. In 1972, US president Richard Nixon became the first president to visit the People’s Republic of China. Soon after that visit, Ling Ling (玲玲) and Xing Xing (兴兴) arrived in Washington D.C. with more than three million visitors coming to view the pandas in the Smithsonian’s National Zoo every year thereafter. Within a two-year period, Japan, France, Germany and Great Britain all received pairs of pandas, proving to be an instant hit among the zoo-going public in those respective countries. For the Chinese, they had hit upon a means of extending the hand of friendship at the height of the Cold War through an animal native to its wild, with endearing looks and behaviour. For the recipient nations and the zoos in which the pandas were housed, it meant bringing a symbol of the Chinese nation to the West, widening understanding and awareness of China and its animal culture.

China is known for its ancient traditions and customs and even something such as the exchange of pandas as a diplomatic gift goes back more than 1300 years. But it was soon after the founding of the People’s Republic of China that pandas were deployed on the global stage for China’s own diplomatic ends. From a political and diplomatic gift in the mid-twentieth century to a type of symbolic trade gift at the start of the twenty-first, the differing use of the panda as a diplomatic tool is a true reflection of China’s shifting international priorities over the past 60 years. Given China’s current proactive approach of establishing new trade ties, it goes without saying that Xi Jinping and Peng Liyuan will be visiting many pandas gifted to strategically important foreign trade partners in the months and years to come.

Smart Sourcing in China

Lijuan van der Harst-Yi (衣丽娟)

In the past decades, ‘Made in China’ products are becoming a commonly accepted and preferred choice of purchase. Nowadays, China sourcing—meaning to purchase materials or products from China for production needs and sales on the domestic or global market—is an almost unavoidable trend in all different kinds of industries and business sectors. Smart and effective sourcing in China could generate the opportunity for direct cost savings, which becomes visible in a bottom line improvement for Western companies who follow this sourcing strategy. It is important to be well aware of this trend. In business reality, the truly amazing fact is not necessarily how big China has become, but how little it is understood.

Every year, tens of thousands of new businesses start purchasing directly in China. Significant numbers of big-scale international companies incorporate a ‘low cost country (China) sourcing percentage’ in the set of key performance indicators. However, many of them have an initial bad experience. The key to successful China sourcing is not a black-and-white list of rules or set of tools; it is primarily an adaptation of mental models. Textbooks can elaborate on Chinese culture: how to bow; how to pass on business cards; an adaptation of mental models.

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Every year, tens of thousands of new businesses start purchasing directly in China. Significant numbers of big-scale international companies incorporate a ‘low cost country (China) sourcing percentage’ in the set of key performance indicators. However, many of them have an initial bad experience. The key to successful China sourcing is not a black-and-white list of rules or set of tools; it is primarily an adaptation of mental models. Textbooks can elaborate on Chinese culture: how to bow; how to pass on business cards;
Smart sourcing in China requires a basic understanding of representative business behaviour in China. Therefore, the general principles of doing business with China are also applicable for Western companies’ sourcing activities and for their dealings with Chinese suppliers in China. Meanwhile, there are also some practical and operational concerns in choosing the right Chinese supplier. Finding a suitable Chinese supplier is an art more than a science.

The Bund in Shanghai © Wenyi Sun

Most Western business people may encounter the following business behaviour traits in their Chinese counterparts at the other end of the negotiating table:

- **Personal Connections**
  Personal connections in China have a different meaning compared to ‘networking’ in the Western world. Western business relies heavily on the internet, information and systems. The Chinese focus more on friends, relatives, partners and so-called “social capital”.
  Personal connections are also determined by creating win-win mechanisms in business. Chinese mentality is as such that the ‘benefit’ created is not necessarily immediately exchanged. Western negotiators normally have a list of negotiation factors in hand and expect that when taking a step back, the Chinese counterpart should also take a step back at the same place for exchange. However, the return could actually come at a later phase if the Western negotiators allow more time for further discussion and keep encouraging their Chinese counterparts by emphasising the different benefits through cooperation.
  A long-term win-win mechanism is the lasting cornerstone for personal connections.

- **The Intermediary**
  A capable Chinese intermediary who has good personal connections with the Chinese business partner is essential in the trust-winning process and business success. Chinese businessmen normally would not directly express their opinion; instead, they would change subject or remain silent, or give subtle hints, such as “seems not bad”, “seems fairly all right”, or “let us study it”. Only Chinese embodying Chinese values could interpret this mood, tone, facial and body language. Normally, the intermediary determines the process of the business in question. It is rather the intermediary instead of the negotiators, who first raises the business issues that need to be discussed. The intermediary rather than the interpreter of the language is actually the interpreter of culture, bridging the differences between the parties involved.

- **Social Status**
  Social status plays a very important role in Chinese business culture. Prior to negotiations, the rank and position of the Chinese counterpart needs to be investigated with equivalent personnel sent to the negotiations. A Chinese manager would have negative feelings, even ones of shame, while seating with a relatively young and lower ranking sales representative on the other end.

The intermediary rather than the interpreter of the language is actually the interpreter of culture, bridging the differences between the parties involved.

- **Communication University of China subway station, Beijing © Jin Shan**
Being patient plays a key role in building a long-term business relationship with the Chinese partner.

When negotiating with Chinese, preparations need to be made to discuss all of the issues simultaneously, and sometimes, even repetitively. The Chinese tend to ‘forget’ the pre-defined discussion sequence in the perception of Western negotiators. Nothing is solved until everything is solved. This holistic way of thinking is a challenge to the Western way of thinking, which is more focused on sequences and individuals. Signals for good progress can be, for example, asking the same question on different occasions to find out the weakness in the opponent’s argument, or bringing research results into the discussion and carefully presenting the competitor’s situation to the Chinese opponent.

Being patient plays a key role in building a long-term business relationship with the Chinese partner. It is hard for Chinese to make immediate compromises due to the collective decision-making process and the social status background. Chinese are good at using procrastination as convincing tactics. On top of business behaviour in the negotiation phase, Western companies should also focus on the challenges in the operational phase.

FINDING A SUITABLE CHINESE SUPPLIER IS AN ART MORE THAN SCIENCE

A number of considerations should guide the search for a suitable Chinese supplier:

- Significance
  If your orders take up only one percent of the factory’s capacity, you will normally be the last priority. You will suffer delays as soon as another customer pushes for a quicker delivery. Therefore, knowing your relative significance is one of the key research points at the initial phase. Continuous monitoring on changes in significance is a must.

- Internal competencies
  Professional Western companies usually have standard audit checklists. However, in order to get a better understanding of the internal competencies of the Chinese supplier, reliance should not just be placed on the checklist; instead, more concrete questions need to be raised and decisions made on whether there is a need to outsource a certain competence, for example, checking 100% of the products in a third party warehouse before packing.

- Seasonality
  Production patterns at the Chinese supplier should be investigated and the ordering pattern at the Western buyer side should be adapted accordingly, if possible. Some Chinese suppliers run their production only at limited occasions during the year. Time pressure leads to poor quality and frequent delays.

- Intellectual Property (IP) risks
  Large manufacturers tend to be better at protecting their client’s IP. However, they might already be present on your market. Trust and interpersonal harmony are essential on tackling IP-related issues. For Western companies on the Chinese market, enhancing overall competitiveness is very necessary. Although facing the challenge on IP, competitive advantage comes from deeper understanding of the market and risk mitigation, not risk escape.

- Thorough understanding of the business strategy of your Chinese supplier
  Third party auditors generally do not have in-depth experience in the production of your product. They would not necessarily be aware if the machinery is adapted to your production; if the operators are precise enough for your quality expectations; or if your standard is different from that of the factory’s current customers. In order to gain a complete insight into your Chinese supplier’s business operation, purchasing personnel and supplier quality assurance or technical personnel are recommended to join the supplier audit.

- Nature of the Chinese supplier
  Finding a suitable Chinese supplier also involves some questions about the nature of the supplier company. There are plenty of trading companies dealing with similar products from different manufacturers. The Western buyer could benefit from price competitiveness through direct contact with the Chinese manufacturer. However, does this manufacturer possess export rights? What suits your company’s goal: the best? Different companies may have different preferences because of their own past experiences.

The potential of China sourcing for optimised cost structure remains huge. The economic benefit through cost optimisation and business globalization is infinite. Though there are quite some challenges on understanding suppliers bearing a different cultural background, smart sourcing in China is often a rewarding experience as long as Western buyers overcome obstacles and adapt to the rules of the game. Both the Western buyer and the Chinese supplier could learn from each other’s business practices and different ways of thinking, leading to mutually desirable outcomes. With a well-selected Chinese supplier and a steadily formed business relation, the Western buyer could obtain a stronger competitive advantage along the value chain as well as an easier entry on to the global market. The efforts required for smart sourcing in the Chinese market should not be regarded as light-hearted; thorough preparation, flexibility and especially adaptation of mental models are really needed. Moreover, it is vital to possess an open-minded attitude towards understanding what makes the Chinese different, learning their culture and corresponding business behaviour. Aim high and adapt quickly!

Lijuan van der Harst-Yi (MBA) is the owner of OrienTide, a dynamic consultancy bureau specialised in purchasing and procurement management as well as Sino-Dutch and Eurasian business support. Lijuan is a skilful executive with years of Sino-European professional experience at Philips, Johnson & Johnson and DSM. Contact Information: lijany99@gmail.com

Global China Insights
Issue 4 January 2015

DOBUSINESSWITHCHINA
Travel, a New Lifestyle for Chinese People

As the 2015 Spring Festival ( newNode) is approaching, also known as Chinese New Year, 38-year-old Mr. Qin from Beijing ( newNode) is making plans for the upcoming seven-day holiday. He finally decided to take his family to visit Thailand, after longing to visit that country for some time, the upcoming seven-day holiday. He finally decided to take his family Festival there and had a wonderful time.

The Spring Festival, also called the Chinese New Year, is one of the world’s most attractive and hottest inbound and outbound tourist markets. Many countries hosted abundant celebration activities, thanks to local Chinese communities. Some even created better festival atmospheres and visiting neighbours and relatives. Even more interestingly, travelling abroad during the Spring Festival is increasingly popular. A record 4.5 million Chinese people were estimated to have travelled overseas during the 2014 Spring Festival, a rise of 12.5 percent on 2013. South East Asia and North America were among the most popular destinations for outbound trips. Many countries hosted abundant celebration activities, thanks to local Chinese communities. Some even created better festival atmospheres than in China. No doubt experiencing different customs overseas is also a fashionably attractive way to celebrate the Chinese New Year.

Surprisingly, travel was not on the mind of most Chinese people prior to the 1978 economic reform and opening-up policy. Up until then, China had been tackling essential needs like food and clothing. But during the 1980s, people in China became increasingly aware of travelling possibilities with the rise of tourism and as living conditions improved. As American psychologist Abraham Maslow suggests in his hierarchy of needs theory, when people’s basic material needs are satisfied, they seek to achieve spiritual needs.

After more than three decades, on account of the fast economic growth and rapidly rising incomes, China has now become one of the world’s most attractive and hottest inbound and outbound tourist markets. Chinese people consider henceforth travel as a new lifestyle. Today, China’s soaring population faces steadily more pressures from work, family and society. Travelling can offer a temporary escape, a welcome relief to a stressful environment in order to refresh tired souls. There is also an old saying in Chinese, ‘Travelling thousands of miles is better than reading thousands of books’. Travelling can help acquire the knowledge that one cannot get from books, so it is another method of learning. These are the reasons why Chinese people are so keen on travelling.

The Spring Festival and The National Day ( newNode), also called Golden Weeks, are the two longest public holidays in China. People enjoy seven-day breaks for each of these two holidays. There are some other official holidays such as May Day ( newNode), Mid-Autumn Festival ( newNode), and Dragon Boat Festival ( newNode), during which Chinese people can have three days off work. Since the opportunity to travel is limited to these official holiday periods for a majority of Chinese people, most famous scenic spots become very crowded during the holiday seasons. In 2014 National Day Golden Week (1-7 October) ended, Chinese media reported that domestic travel had declined

However, Mr. Qin is not only one of many taking part in the Spring Festival travel rush. According to a report by the China National Tourism Administration, there were 231 million tourists during the 2014 Spring Festival, an increase of 14 percent on the previous year. Travel has become a new trend for Chinese people during the Spring Festival holiday in addition to the traditional family reunion dinner, purchasing festival items, watching the Spring Festival Gala ( newNode) on television and visiting neighbours and relatives. Even more interestingly, travelling abroad during the Spring Festival is increasingly popular. A record 4.5 million Chinese people were estimated to have travelled overseas during the 2014 Spring Festival, a rise of 12.5 percent on 2013. South East Asia and North America were among the most popular destinations for outbound trips. Many countries hosted abundant celebration activities, thanks to local Chinese communities. Some even created better festival atmospheres than in China. No doubt experiencing different customs overseas is also a fashionably attractive way to celebrate the Chinese New Year.

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The Cheongsam - the Mirror of Beauty

Zou Ying (邹颖)

In May 2010, the famous Chinese actress Fan Bingbing (范冰冰) appeared at the 53rd Cannes International Film Festival in her fascinating cheongsam, which is a body-hugging one-piece Chinese dress for women, also known as Qi Pao (旗袍). There was a dragon and auspicious clouds on her dress. The main colour, golden yellow, was the colour of Chinese royalty in Imperial China. After this news was reported, a growing number of female Chinese stars have shown greater interest in the cheongsam.

The world famous Hilton Hotels group has its Huanying (Welcome) in Chinese hospitality programme, proposing front desk team members fluent in Chinese, hotel room amenities and traditional Chinese breakfast items. The Galeries Lafayette in Paris, one of Chinese travellers’ favourite department stores, not only offers store maps in Chinese but also Chinese-speaking guides to assist Chinese shoppers. With people’s enhanced travel awareness and the development of technology, new travel trends and behaviours have emerged. The CITM reported that Chinese travellers used many online sources, particularly mobile devices, throughout their travels to research and book their trip and share photos and experiences via social media. Hoteliers around the world confirmed that young Chinese guests are particularly more self-assured and worldly-wise, with improved linguistic skills, either in the local language or in English. Two-thirds of the Chinese consumers questioned for the report prefer independent travel rather than group travel. However, the reality is much more complex than that. Many Chinese tourists wish to add a deeper meaning to their travels. They have abandoned the traditional hop-on hop-off sightseeing tours for new self-service travel models like backpacking, self-drive tours and RV (Recreational Vehicle) travel, in search of more significant travel and life experiences.

In addition, many themed leisure vacations are being developed, such as rural tours, forest tours, and that they spent the most money on shopping. In fact, China became the largest spender in international tourism globally in 2012. The sky-high luxury taxes at home impelled Chinese tourists to shop overseas more than others. Many businesses introduced specially designed services and products for their Chinese guests, a non-negligible consumer group. For example, while outbound travel had grown eightfold. The huge growth of outbound tourism over the past few years has had an impact on the global travel industry. It was estimated that the number of outbound tourists from mainland China would exceed 115 million people in 2014.

A leading provider of hotel accommodation worldwide, Hotels.com has launched in 2012 the Chinese International Travel Monitor (CITM) to examine the enormous increase in outbound tourism by Chinese travellers and its impact on the global hotel industry. According to the third report published in 2014, the majority of overseas Chinese travel has been for leisure reasons, while business or education purposes ranked second. Travelling with family or friends remained the most popular choices amongst Chinese international travellers. The report listed Asian countries including Hong Kong (中国香港) and Taiwan (中国台湾) in China, Japan, South Korea, Thailand and Malaysia, European countries like France, Italy, the UK, and also the USA as the top 10 international destinations chosen by Chinese travellers in 2013. A survey in the report showed that Chinese tourists’ favourite activities when abroad were sightseeing, dining and shopping, and that they spent the most money on shopping. In fact, China became the largest spender in international tourism globally in 2012. The sky-high luxury taxes at home impelled Chinese tourists to shop overseas more than others. Many businesses introduced specially designed services and products for their Chinese guests, a non-negligible consumer group. For example,
The Beauty of Kunqu Opera

I
N 2004, THE YOUTH VERSION Kunqu opera (顾永宁 The Peony Pavilion (1594)), and The Grandmaster (2013 舞台)。The heroines in these movies have the chance to wear delicate cheongsams. Besides the movies, we can also see some airline stewardesses wearing cheongsams, such as Sichuan Airlines (川航), Hebei Airlines (河北航空), Kunming Airlines (昆明航空) and West Air (西部航空).

The cheongsam is like a mirror: it reflects the mysterious beauty of the Chinese woman and witnesses the vicissitudes of recent Chinese history. A woman’s pride, confidence, sorrow, or regret—all of these are part of the emotion closely connected with their cheongsams. Secrets are concealed under the dress; it drives you to seek inward into a woman’s heart. The cheongsam not only shows their beauty, but more importantly, it also enables exquisitely women to express every emotion. Besides reflecting the beauty of woman, the cheongsam witnesses the recent history and reflects its own development. From a dress for the Manchu, an ethnic minority, to a popular dress throughout contemporary China, the cheongsam experienced many changes over the years. From a conservative gown to a formal dress or even modern dress for daily wear, it enables innuemerable women to enjoy the beauty of the cheongsam.

Zou Ying (邹颖) is currently studying International Economics and Business as a pre-master student at Groningen University. For her bachelor’s studies, she enrolled in a double degree programme offered in collaboration between Jiang Han University (江汉大学) in Wuhan (武汉), Hebei (河北), China and Groningen Hanze University, the Netherlands.

There is a long history of one hundred years behind the Chinese cheongsam. It has evolved with the times while keeping its original beauty. Nowadays, people would put on their favourite cheongsam to attend pageants or other important events. During a wedding, Chinese women always first wear the Western white wedding dress. After the ceremony, the bride will put on the beautiful captivating red cheongsam and propose a toast with the bridegroom to their families and friends. In Figure 3, my friend is wearing the red cheongsam on her wedding day. As a little girl, I would always long for my mother’s cheongsam. Many times I havefurtively dressed up in her cheongsam with matching high heels. I was one of the girls who always dreamed of wearing the pretty cheongsam at my own wedding. Since Fan Bingbing’s appearance in Cannes that summer of 2010, I remember the cheongsam reaching another high point. Chinese women, young girls as well as middle-aged women, started to wear this traditional dress in daily life. Instead of the exquisite cichil, designers have developed different kinds of reformative modern cheongsam for these trendy women. They made it conveniently shorter and tighter to wear. As a result, women enjoyed the new cheongsam which could make them look more charming, even sexier. Cheongsams are frequently presented in contemporary movies, such as Lust, Caution (2007, 归), The Message (2009 汇), In the Mood for Love (2000 意乱), The Flowers of War (2011 花) and The Grandmaster (2013 舞台)。The heroines in these movies have the chance to wear delicate cheongsams. Besides the movies, we can also see some airline stewardesses wearing cheongsams, such as Sichuan Airlines (川航), Hebei Airlines (河北航空), Kunming Airlines (昆明航空) and West Air (西部航空).

The cheongsam is like a mirror: it reflects the mysterious beauty of the Chinese woman and witnesses the vicissitudes of recent Chinese history. A woman’s pride, confidence, sorrow, or regret—all of these are part of the emotion closely connected with their cheongsams. Secrets are concealed under the dress; it drives you to seek inward into a woman’s heart. The cheongsam not only shows their beauty, but more importantly, it also enables exquisitely women to express every emotion. Besides reflecting the beauty of woman, the cheongsam witnesses the recent history and reflects its own development. From a dress for the Manchu, an ethnic minority, to a popular dress throughout contemporary China, the cheongsam experienced many changes over the years. From a conservative gown to a formal dress or even modern dress for daily wear, it enables innuemerable women to enjoy the beauty of the cheongsam.
The classic Chinese poems experienced the world with a sensitive soul and a substantial character, carrying on the beauty and charm of Chinese ancient poetry. Ancient Chinese poems are always full of wisdom and philosophy that prove enlightening. The aim is to protect Kunqu opera, bring in performances, exhibitions and lectures. Succession Planning was officially launched to deliver in the next five years a Kunqu opera festival. The Kunqu opera festival will help protect Kunqu opera, bringing in performances, exhibitions and lectures. The aim is to protect Kunqu opera, bring in performances, exhibitions and lectures. Succession Planning was officially launched to deliver in the next five years a Kunqu opera festival. The Kunqu opera festival will help protect Kunqu opera, bringing in performances, exhibitions and lectures. The aim is to protect Kunqu opera, bring in performances, exhibitions and lectures. Succession Planning was officially launched to deliver in the next five years a Kunqu opera festival. The Kunqu opera festival will help protect Kunqu opera, bringing in performances, exhibitions and lectures. The aim is to protect Kunqu opera, bring in performances, exhibitions and lectures. Succession Planning was officially launched to deliver in the next five years a Kunqu opera festival. The Kunqu opera festival will help protect Kunqu opera, bringing in performances, exhibitions and lectures. The aim is to protect Kunqu opera, bring in performances, exhibitions and lectures. Succession Planning was officially launched to deliver in the next five years a Kunqu opera festival. The Kunqu opera festival will help protect Kunqu opera, bringing in performances, exhibitions and lectures. The aim is to protect Kunqu opera, bring in performances, exhibitions and lectures. Succession Planning was officially launched to deliver in the next five years a Kunqu opera festival. The Kunqu opera festival will help protect Kunqu opera, bringing in performances, exhibitions and lectures. The aim is to protect Kunqu opera, bring in performances, exhibitions and lectures. Succession Planning was officially launched to deliver in the next five years a Kunqu opera festival. The Kunqu opera festival will help protect Kunqu opera, bringing in performances, exhibitions and lectures. The aim is to protect Kunqu opera, bring in performances, exhibitions and lectures. Succession Planning was officially launched to deliver in the next five years a Kunqu opera festival. The Kunqu opera festival will help protect Kunqu opera, bringing in performances, exhibitions and lectures. The aim is to protect Kunqu opera, bring in performances, exhibitions and lectures. Succession Planning was officially launched to deliver in the next five years a Kunqu opera festival. The Kunqu opera festival will help protect Kunqu opera, bringing in performances, exhibitions and lectures. The aim is to protect Kunqu opera, bring in performances, exhibitions and lectures. Succession Planning was officially launched to deliver in the next five years a Kunqu opera festival. The Kunqu opera festival will help protect Kunqu opera, bringing in performances, exhibitions and lectures. The aim is to protect Kunqu opera, bring in performances, exhibitions and lectures. Succession Planning was officially launched to deliver in the next five years a Kunqu opera festival. The Kunqu opera festival will help protect Kunqu opera, bringing in performances, exhibitions and lectures. The aim is to protect Kunqu opera, bring in performances, exhibitions and lectures. Succession Planning was officially launched to deliver in the next five years a Kunqu opera festival. The Kunqu opera festival will help protect Kunqu opera, bringing in performances, exhibitions and lectures. The aim is to protect Kunqu opera, bring in performances, exhibitions and lectures. Succession Planning was officially launched to deliver in the next five years a Kunqu opera festival. The Kunqu opera festival will help protect Kunqu opera, bringing in performances, exhibitions and lectures. The aim is to protect Kunqu opera, bring in performances, exhibitions and lectures.
THINKING OF MY DEAR DEPARTED

(THREE OF FIVE POEMS)

No water's spectacular enough when you have seen the Sea Cang;
No clouds majestic enough after seeing that crown, the Mt. Wu's peak.
I pass by the flowers without deigning to look back,
Partly for Tao I seek, partly for the sake of thee.

The poem depicts the poet's unwavering loyalty to his wife, with whom nobody can be comparable in his heart. His love for her was as deep as the water of vast Sea Cang, as impressive as the clouds which crown the lofty Mount Wu's peak, a mountain in which the immortal dwells according to Chinese ancient legend. So heartbroken was the poet after his wife's death that he retired from the world in accordance with the principle of Taoism, which emphasises on moderation and less desires, so the poet was no longer attracted by beautiful flowers, metaphors for charming women.

As a glimpse of these poems indicates, the classic Chinese poets sensitively experienced the world and they translated the expression of their observations, insights and feelings into poetical language. The perceptions and intuitions of them about human feeling of love were so fascinating and inspiring that their poems evoked beauty, sympathy and deep meaning over the ages.

A German Expert’s Global Vision on China

Dr. Frank-Jürgen Richter is Chairman of Horasis: The Global Visions Community, an independent international organisation committed to enacting visions for a sustainable future. Prior to founding Horasis, Dr. Richter was Director of Asian Affairs of the World Economic Forum. As a leading analyst of international business and emerging markets, he speaks globally and influences major business and governmental decisions. Dr. Richter is also an active scholar and has authored and edited numerous bestselling books on global strategy and Asian business, including Six Billion Minds: Managing Outsourcing in the Global Knowledge Economy; Global Future: The Next Challenge for Asian Business; and Asia’s New Crisis: Renewal through Total Ethical Management.

Dr. Richter, you thank you for granting us this interview. As for previous issues of our GCI journal, we are always looking for people who have a connection, a story with China, an extensive experience, influence or insights to share with us. We are thrilled to have you as a guest for this Feature Interview. Could you share with our readers your very first story with China?

Richter: I travelled on the Silk Road for a few months during the early 1990s, after having lived and studied for my PhD in Japan, a period during which I learned to speak Japanese. Towards the end of my trip, I spent three months in China and explored the Chinese western provinces. I couldn’t speak one word of Chinese, but I was able to communicate by writing down
Horasis mean? What is behind your initiative to organise the Horasis Global China Business Meeting?
Richter: Horasis in Chinese is ‘mirror’. The China Federation of Industrial Economics approached me and asked if I could organise a meeting similar to the World Economic Forum’s China meeting by using a mirror-image format. The gathering was not intended as a service for foreign firms entering China to invest or to understand the Chinese regulatory and business environment, but rather as a service for Chinese firms wanting to enter Europe, to understand what’s happening here, and to start investing in Europe. This gave birth to Horasis and its guiding principle of exchanging knowledge. Our first Global China Business Meeting was held in Geneva in 2005. It was an immediate success.

On 13-14 October 2014, you held the tenth Horasis Global China Business Meeting in Italy. Was this annual meeting fruitful? What was the outcome of this meeting?
Richter: I think that my overarching impression after this meeting is that China knows where it is going. The delegates were not dismissive of the media’s remarks about border skirmishes, but confident that these aspects would be resolved. Importantly, it was observed that China had spent huge sums on infrastructures over the past years – new safer roads, high speed passenger railways – and had not ignored its freight routes by rail and river. The delegates came to an overall unanimous conclusion that China’s economic growth is robust, but slowing down. This, in a sense, echoes the recent International Monetary Fund (IMF) global meeting, which downgraded most of the world economies except China (and as they stated: ‘not yet’!). Clearly, China is entering a new phase of its development towards greater internal consumption while currently, the rest of the world is demanding less Chinese goods. It is also clear that China is looking to innovate more, focusing on a faster economic development pattern while looking for social stability.

Looking back over 10 years of development, how do you describe the changes in China?
Richter: In essence, the last ten years have seen a transition from headlong growth to a more nuanced development promoted by the Chinese government and its many ministries, as well as regional development fora. If we look at how many people travel by rail during national holidays, it is a massive number. Most people seem to make their journey unscathed; yet in the winter there are delays of course, and the press considers this newsworthy. But now China has well over 10,000 kilometres of very high-speed rail lines able to transport passengers across the country in twelve hours – an unimaginable feat a few years ago. China has also increased the construction and renovation of roads on a similar scale, making these journeys both faster and safer by separating the traffic into different lanes, and even in some cases creating unique roads solely for coal transport. The great social experiment is yet to come, I think. Across the world there is a natural urge by people to move from the countryside to the city. There are more attractions in the city for the young and more social care available for the elderly. The government has noted this transition phase and built many new cities, often close to the new rail and road links, and is confident about its ability to manage a shift of 400 million people from their rural abodes to cities within the next 20 years. There is a confidence in their infrastructure development that will absorb population growth and give people a new meaningful life.

At the same time, the government has seen the need to promote growth through port activity. Not only in the coastal regions that are now better connected by new port structures to the rest of the world, but also inland using river and rail links to move raw materials and finished goods effectively to these new ports. In this way, the massive holiday traffic flows will be reduced, costs and travel hardships will be reduced, and many more people will live in far better accommodation than before. It’s about uplifting the quality of life in China. I don’t need to say more!

Every year you choose a different venue for the meeting outside China. Why not organise the meeting in China?
Richter: We usually receive an invitation from a host government to stage the event. We then decide on the location in close coordination with the China Federation of Industrial Economics. It is well known that our Chinese participants want to travel and explore the world, and for many reasons. If the meeting was held in Beijing or Shanghai, the gathering would have a different character. Many Chinese entrepreneurs

“China is looking to innovate more, focusing on a faster economic development pattern while looking for social stability.”
regard the Global China Business Meeting as an important activity in their annual schedule, and many participants come back year after year. One of the primary reasons for choosing a place outside the focus country is that participants can discuss more freely issues from ‘back home’. And this provides a neutral ground for others to discuss the potential for joint operations, such as a Brazilian discussing with a Chinese manager in Lake Como (Italy) some form of joint cooperation. What is more natural and easier than that? This is psychology that is very humbly oriented; we all talk more freely to a stranger, even a computer, than to a family member if we wish to discuss personal matters. It is the same with these China-oriented meetings. In fact I use the same rationale in organising my other meetings concerning the Russian and Indian groups: travelling not only broadens the mind, it seems to open discussions in conference panels, during coffee and dinner, even in nearby bars and cafes as people take little discussion trips.

I attended the Horasis Global China Business Meeting in The Hague (2013) and the one in Lake Como Italy (2014) and each year I found that the topics were really cutting edge and challenging for the participants, along with a great balance and wide coverage of different fields and aspects. How do you come up with such wonderful programmes every year?

Richter: Well a lot of brainstorming goes into the programme. I travel to China several times per year, asking our members and participants about the next hot topics. Likewise, I ask our members to discuss one of the many raised issues from ‘back home’. And this provides a neutral ground for others to discuss the potential for joint operations, such as a Brazilian discussing with a Chinese manager in Lake Como (Italy) some form of joint cooperation. What is more natural and easier than that? This is psychology that is very humbly oriented; we all talk more freely to a stranger, even a computer, than to a family member if we wish to discuss personal matters. It is the same with these China-oriented meetings. In fact I use the same rationale in organising my other meetings concerning the Russian and Indian groups: travelling not only broadens the mind, it seems to open discussions in conference panels, during coffee and dinner, even in nearby bars and cafes as people take little discussion trips.

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Richter: Well a lot of brainstorming goes into the programme. I travel to China several times per year, asking our members and participants about the next hot topics. Likewise, I ask our foreign participants about their views. So making the programme is a year-long process. But it can’t be finalised until just before the meeting, as I invite past and future delegates to suggest new aspects for discussion and to help me gather a panel of discussants. Yes, it is a long process to create the topics for a new conference. Thank you for your observation that the topics were ‘cutting edge’.

Speaking of education, I’m very interested in your training background. You also speak German, French, English, Japanese and Mandarin Chinese, which is impressive in my view. Can you share more stories?

Richter: Actually, I speak Spanish and Portuguese too. My formative education took place in several countries. I am German, so my early schooling was at home in German schools and universities. I studied for a Master’s programme in France and Mexico, then pursued doctoral studies in Japan. I have learned to always observe people’s body language and to listen to their voices – the sounds and intonations of friendship, enquiry, uncertainty or anger – even without knowing the words. This facility has stood me in good stead over the years, especially in my early days in Beijing where I had to really learn Chinese, its nuances and the gestures. I was always convinced that dialogue (and business) starts with communication, and that the mastering of the language of the country I am living in is thus a prerequisite. That’s the reason I speak several languages; I lived in many countries and I enjoy absorbing the local culture.

In terms of global vision, what do you expect from China in the next ten years?

Richter: I have already hinted at some of the future developments that may occur in China: further consolidation of the transport infrastructures to open up the more distant regions. This is in keeping with my understanding of the need to bring more work to the inland regions and thus raise those regions’ economic conditions. But also, such changes better align with a more sustainable future as goods and people have to move less far to link fuels, raw materials, manufacturing transformations into finished goods using local people. The new towns are largely placed near raw resources thus minimise transportation of goods and people. At the same time, both Chinese firms and European firms are increasingly using rail links between China and Europe rather than shifting finished goods thousands of kilometres to the Pacific ports. Sending goods in rail containers makes more sense for speed to market and for sustainability reasons.

What are the challenges that China must face and what are the opportunities for a sustainable development in China?

Richter: A great issue for China – and not only China but for all nations, though more especially developing nations – is to raise education standards of rural students. In fact, all aspects of the rural world need lifting. It is a well-known moan within the professions that their members are getting older faster in the countryside than in towns. By this they mean that more and more attractive professional dentists, doctors, teachers, lawyers who all resist rural placement. As a result, the country, the people and their children lose out. This is as true in rural China as in rural France or rural America. So perhaps the new larger towns in China will cure this effect by creating a focus and a metropolitan area that will attract young professionals who will still perform a great service to the community without having to reside in a remote town of 20,000 people.

Because of China’s rapid growth in recent years, it has accrued vast wealth. These funds are being used to buy the latest equipment for China’s developing industries, which will perform with well respect to environmental protection. Again, because of China’s large demand for energy, its need to transform raw materials into semi-finished goods and subsequently to finished goods using local people. The new towns are largely placed near raw resources thus minimise transportation of goods and people. At the same time, both Chinese firms and European firms are increasingly using rail links between China and Europe rather than shifting finished goods thousands of kilometres to the Pacific ports. Sending goods in rail containers makes more sense for speed to market and for sustainability reasons.

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Chibei: An Irresistible City at the Foot of Changbai Mountain

Wang Jing (危景)

Changbai Mountain (长白山) has been a mystery since ancient times. The mountain is located in the south-eastern part of the Jilin Province (吉林), China. The mountain range contains the highest peak in the east of the Eurasia Continent. The three major rivers in the north-east of mainland China, Songhua River (松花江), Tumen River (图们江) and Yalu River (鸭绿江), have their source in this region. And it has been the home to many Chinese ancestors since the later Paleolithic age. During the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), Changbai Mountain was venerated as the Holy Mountain—a birthplace of kings and home of dragons. It was referred to as the Forbidden Holy Mountain, ruled by kings and home of dragons. It was referred to as the Forbidden Holy Mountain, ruled by

The political, economic and cultural centre of Changbai Mountain is Chibei (池北), an appealing ecological city that is livable and an ideal tourist destination. The charming and unique city is packed with the history and culture of this mountainous region. Chibei is 34km away from the North Changbai Mountains Scenic Area (长白山北景区). With convenient transportation, Chibei serves as the gateway to Changbai Mountain, and is an important tourist hub in north-east China. As a crucial ecological tourist city in the Changbai Mountain Characteristic Economic Circle (长白山区域经济带), Chibei embraces tourists from every corner of the world.

The reason Chibei attracts so many tourists is because it is a city with a rich culture. Dating all the way back to the Tang (唐朝 618-907), Liao (辽朝 916-1125) and Jin (金朝 1115-1234) Dynasties, people started living there, which is proved by the ruins of the ancient city Baoma (白马) from the Tang Dynasty found in the north-west part of the city. Chibei today remains home to many ethnic groups, such as Han (汉族), Korean (朝鲜族), Manchu (满族) and other nationalities. Different ethnic cultures met and blended with one another, giving birth to the distinct regional characteristics. Here you can get to know agricultural culture, fishing and hunting culture, wood torch culture and nomadic culture and experience the outgoing and passionate personalities of the people in north-east China. You can even feel the regional culture from the names of the streets, such as ‘Changbai Mountain Street’ (长白山大街), ‘Heaven Lake Street’ (天池大街), ‘Beauty Pine Road’ (美人松路) and ‘Yangxing Bridge’ (仰星桥) while walking around the streets and squares of the city.

Today, the culturally diversified Chibei continues to enrich itself, seeing the establishments of over 30 associations and organisations, including the Changbai Mountain Literary Federation, Photographers’ Association, Artists’ Association and Calligraphers’ Association, which have attracted all kinds of artists to gather in this city. The Changbai Mountain Goddess of Mercy Temple (吉林山门), which echoes the Shaolin Temple (少林寺) in remote Songshan (嵩山), is under construction. In addition, over ten world-renowned universities, domestic and foreign, are planning to build branch institutions in Chibei, e.g. Repin College in Russia and the Academy of Art & Design from Tsinghua University (清华大学). These establishments recognize educational advantages in Chibei for its high-end tourism management, culture, arts and history. This unique city, blending traditional and modern cultures well, is poised to usher in its brighter future. Chibei is unequalled in terms of culture.

In addition to its unique cultural aspects, Chibei is also a city that respects nature. To counter the increasingly severe ecological problems in mainland China, Chibei has abandoned the development pattern in pursuit of economic growth rather than ecological health. It attaches the highest priority to protecting the environment and has paved the way for the development of unique urbanisation processes, developing itself into an ecologically friendly city embraced by the green of the Changbai Mountain Range.

As a result, what you can see in Chibei is blue sky, clear water and green mountains instead of the common factories in north-east China. Changbai Mountain, the Alps and the Caucasus are the three best-quality water sources in the world. Therefore, the water quality of Chibei has reached national top class status. Besides the water, the air quality there has also reached national top class level, making Chibei a natural oxygen bar far from smoggy cities, where you can enjoy the clean and pure air as much as you like. Chibei is worthy of the name ‘a land of idyll beauty’ in modern China. Do not be surprised if you see high trees in the middle of a street, the direction of which having been modified for the purpose of making room for the trees, since respect for and protection of nature is one of the characteristics and a mindset of this city.

Because of these positive attitudes towards nature, Chibei has an incomparable natural charm. Tianchi water (天池) crosses the city through the Erhulai River (二道白河), and you can see people and wild animals getting along well with each other in the unique landscape belts along the river banks. When you watch mallards and mandarin ducks joyfully swimming...
in the river, you might also spot the national Class I protected sea-duck, the Chinese merganser. In the Changbai region you will also find the rare tree species of ‘Beauty Pines’ growing in the city, which has, therefore, acquired the nickname ‘Hometown of Beauty Pines’. Each pine is given a unique identity number and is specially taken care of for the purpose of protecting these tall, elegant and rare trees. Changbai Mountain Museum of Natural History in the south of Chibei and Changbai Mountain Wetland Park, which is currently still under construction, will show you the natural beauty of this city and the mountain behind it in a more concentrated and vivid manner.

Chibei city boasts about having the only car-free road system of Jilin Province. This road system is made up of promenades and bicycle lanes around the city with a total length of 50km, connecting important natural and cultural spots within the city. When you walk or ride slowly through the city’s streets, you can even feel time slowing down. All the pressure from high-intensity work and rapid-paced life will fade away. Walking freely in nature, you can unload your burden and roam across the green and enjoy the clean forest and water. When you taste the happiness of ‘slow life’, you will find that the city is brimming with the smell of delicious food. Chibei District is a convergence of multi-ethnic food and catering businesses are highly developed. You can have a taste of Korean food, such as delicate and cool cold noodles, spicy cabbage and glutinous rice cakes; steaming hot food of north-east China, such as All in One Pot (一锅出), Dish Pig (杀猪菜) and Braised Dish (乱炖); and gorgeous and rich Manchu dishes, such as Eight Bowls (八大碗) and rich Manchu dishes, such as Eight Bowls (八大碗) made up of mustard fried tofu, brine shrimp egg tofu, grilled pork, burning frog, chicken mushroom vermicelli, pork with braised vegetables, imperial fish in toona sauce, sinensis and Nurhaci Golden Meat (天麻). Chibei is worthy of the title ‘food paradise’. Chibei city offers an unequalled combination of traditional and modern cultures and its deep respect for nature make the city a worthwhile tourist destination.

Chibei is a unique ecological city with rich, diverse cultural influences. Its unique combination of traditional and modern cultures and its deep respect for nature make the city a worthwhile tourist destination. At the same time, because of its continuous development and growth potential, the city is also very attractive to entrepreneurs. Chibei city offers an unequalled combination of natural charm and economic potential.

In the Changbai region you will also find the rare tree species of ‘Beauty Pines’ growing in the city, which has, therefore, acquired the nickname ‘Hometown of Beauty Pines’. Each pine is given a unique identity number and is specially taken care of for the purpose of protecting these tall, elegant and rare trees. Changbai Mountain Museum of Natural History in the south of Chibei and Changbai Mountain Wetland Park, which is currently still under construction, will show you the natural beauty of this city and the mountain behind it in a more concentrated and vivid manner.
innovative programme design, controversial topics and new hosting style. It lets the female and male guests choose their dating partner after brief verbal account of their life and personal thoughts in the show are just like her own.14 The last and the most important reason for the show’s popularity is that it reflects today’s Chinese young people’s ideas and values. It is not an overstatement to say that If You Are the One is a mirror of Chinese contemporary society. Looking into this mirror, a lot of big changes in people’s thinking become apparent. Traditionally, Chinese people attached great importance to marriage. In ancient times, the six rites (lù lǐ 六禮) included decision making, asking the girl’s name and birthday, proposing the marriage, sending marriage presents, selecting the auspicious day for the wedding itself (rén wén 穩婚), and the sports champion Xu Yaping (徐 萍) 来自 (来自). These girls ask direct questions, make pungent comments, and even argue violently with the host and observers, all of which make the programme more interesting and entertaining. This greatly satisfies the audience’s various aesthetic standards and psychological needs. People feel pleasantly entertained. The contrast between delicate and charming women and their sharp and pungent comments provides visual, auditory and psychological enjoyment to a wide audience.

The second reason why If You Are the One is welcomed by so many people from different social classes is the grace and sensible talking style of the host and commentators. The show’s host Meng Fei is a long-time news anchor. His previous career dealt with serious social issues and people’s livelihood, giving him a broad knowledge base but also a comprehensive understanding of life experiences. His outstanding control ability always enables him to catch the audience’s excitement at appropriate times, which he uses to maximum effect. Furthermore, the programme invites China’s renowned psychological expert and colour character analysis inventor Le Jia (李佳) and Professor of Social Psychology Huang Han (黄Han) from Nanjing University (南京大学) as observers and commentators on the show. Le Jia is well known for his sharp tongue and his direct criticism and appraisal. He often pierces into the heart of the matter and his straight comments of the guests usually make them feel embarrassed, which the audience loves. This, along with Professor Huang’s sensibility and intelligence, adds a psychological dimension to the programme rather than being just shallow entertainment. In this way, If You Are the One successfully distinguishes itself from the usual programmes that centre on love and marriage, but also explores the deeper underlying social issues. It further breaks down the topics into a number of subtopics, e.g. how to distribute money after marriage; how to raise children and support parents; how to deal with the gap of different social classes and different educational levels; and whether the female should work after marriage. As individuals have to face and deal with these issues at some point in their lives, they can get some inspiration and advice from this reality show. All in all, with its popular theme, innovative programme design, controversial topics and new hosting style, the TV programme If You Are the One has successfully gained mass popularity in China. The high audience ratings show that it is one of the most watched TV programme over the last few years, with its host Meng Fei winning the best TV host of the year in 2012. Apart from that, many interesting issues are raised in the programme, serving as a form of entertainment, with people identifying themselves with the participants in the show. Their values, concerns, and expectations are reflected in this programme. But in this fast-changing modern world, where people are used to always chasing the newest things, the question remains: Will If You Are the One still keep its edge and survive in the competitive market? Can this programme beat another TV record rating in the future? In order to keep its attractiveness, more thought and effort would be required to sustain the popularity and success of the programme in the long run.
In 1492, Columbus sailed the ocean blue... but Columbus wasn’t the only one who sailed to the East away from the sun, The Son of Heaven sailed that way too... in 1421.

As a naval expert, a great deal of Menzies’s claim is founded upon nautical evidence. Having joined the British Royal Navy in 1953, Menzies served on HMS Newfoundland on a voyage from Singapore to Africa around the Cape of Good Hope and then north to the Cape Verde Islands docking finally in the UK. This voyage mirrors with significant accuracy part of one of the voyages discussed in the book 2421. Menzies uses expertise of sailing winds gained during this expedition to analyse historical charts to substantiate his claim. In particular, this journey would have made use of the southeast trade winds which Menzies suggests propelled the Chinese fleets northwards along the western Coast of Africa. He substantiates this claim with pictorial references depicting unidentified stone carvings found on the Cape Verde Islands. Also, a shipwreck supposedly containing artefacts from the early Ming era and a picture of the remains of a road of flat stones submerged in The Bahamas also appear in the book. Popular theory attributes this construct as a remnant of the ‘lost city of Atlantis’, although Menzies suggests it was built to assist the Chinese sailors haul their gigantic vessels (the size of modern super-cruisers) onto land for repair.

As shipbuilders, the Chinese possessed an engineering savvy in excess of contemporary Europeans which Menzies suggests facilitated this momentous journey. They also had knowledge of astronomy which allowed them to develop an accurate measurement of latitude in the Northern Hemisphere by following the star Polaris. To achieve a measurement of longitude, Ming astronomers built 25-foot-square observation platforms for the measurement of the movement of the moon’s shadow during an eclipse. Menzies suggests relics of such platforms are located along the East Coast of America and Australasia and offers diagrams to illustrate their shape and size. Measurements taken using these observation platforms in conjunction with sophisticated methods of determining time enabled Admiral Zheng He and his fleet to create accurate charts of the territories they discovered, leading the Pizzigano.

In the early 1990s, former British Naval Officer and Commander of HMS Rorqual Gavin Menzies came across a map in the James Ford Bell Library at the University of Minnesota which aroused his curiosity. Signed and dated 1424 in the name of Venetian cartographer Zuane Pizzigano, the map illustrates the coastslines of Europe and Africa with surprising accuracy for that period. Particularly clearly displayed on the map are four islands in the Western Atlantic Ocean bearing the names Satanazes, Antilia, Saya and Ymana. Upon comparison with modern maps, Menzies was unable to locate any islands at that longitude. Could Antilia possibly be the leeward island of Puerto Rico and Satanazes represent the windward island of Puerto Rico and Africa around the Cape of Good Hope? And then north to the Cape Verde Islands decking finally in the UK. This voyage mirrors with significant accuracy part of one of the voyages discussed in the book 2421. Menzies uses expertise of sailing winds gained during this expedition to analyse historical charts to substantiate his claim. In particular, this journey would have made use of the southeast trade winds which Menzies suggests propelled the Chinese fleets northwards along the western Coast of Africa. He substantiates this claim with pictorial references depicting unidentified stone carvings found on the Cape Verde Islands. Also, a shipwreck supposedly containing artefacts from the early Ming era and a picture of the remains of a road of flat stones submerged in The Bahamas also appear in the book. Popular theory attributes this construct as a remnant of the ‘lost city of Atlantis’, although Menzies suggests it was built to assist the Chinese sailors haul their gigantic vessels (the size of modern super-cruisers) onto land for repair.

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chart cartographer to develop the map which encouraged Menzies to research this subject.

Conversely, Menzies provides DNA evidence indicating many Chinese voyagers settled in North and South America as well as Australia. He also cites Aboriginal and Native American Indian folklore dating from this period, and particularly cultural peculiarities noticed around the Strait of Magellan. The prominence of traditional Chinese methods of varnishing and decorating trinket and storage boxes as well as techniques for grinding grain which have been assimilated into the culture in the Americas. Menzies presents the conventional world history purported in history books. Equally as important to note is Menzies’s professional background: As a formal British Naval Admiral, he has the expertise and personal experience necessary to corroborate that it would have been possible for a fleet of Chinese junks, the size of modern day super-cruisers, to follow nautical currents and winds which continue to propel sailors across the globe today. The evidence he presents based on the Chinese superior techniques of measuring latitude support that the Chinese would have been able to chart their progress along the journey. This then reinforces that it was possible for fifteenth-century cartographers to copy nautical maps produced by Chinese sailors during this journey.

Nevertheless, Menzies has been heavily criticized within the academic community for this alternative and controversial record of history. It does bare consequences for international relations and begs the questions: Why has this history remained silent for so long? How has the conventional theory that Columbus discovered the Americas become the dominant history? Similarly, 1424 is not an academic text and the evidence is not presented in a clear manner to suggest the type of writing expected of an academic. The novel does present a great deal of evidence to suggest that the Chinese discovered the New World before Columbus and the Europeans. However, this unconventional view is yet unaccepted throughout the academic community and is not widely corroborated.


Alicia Kern is a graduate of English Language and Linguistics from the University of Lancaster, UK. Currently based in Hamburg, she works as an English Language Consultant and Teaching Fellow at a number of institutions, including the European School of Economics and Management and the Europäische Medien- und Business-Akademie (EMBA).

Groningen Confucius Institute

The Groningen Confucius Institute (GCI, 格罗宁根孔子学院) is a partnership between the Communication University of China (中国传媒大学) and the Groningen Confucius Institute Foundation, which consists of the Hanze University of Applied Sciences Groningen, the University of Groningen and the City of Groningen. GCI is part of a wide network of Confucius Institutes all over the world and is supported by Hanban (国 Au China. Our goal is to strengthen mutual ties between China and The Netherlands and west Germany. By combining our strengths and knowledge at GCI, we offer services in the areas of language (Chinese courses, HSK Tests and English/Dutch-Chinese translations), culture (cultural courses, tailor-made training and cultural events) as well as business (business training, networking activities and consultancy).

Chinese courses

GCI offers various levels Chinese courses which will start from 26 January and 24 April 2015. Each unit consists of 12 weeks. Please visit our website www.confuciusgroningen.nl for detailed information.

HSK Tests

GCI will organise five HSK tests (Chinese Proficiency Test) and two HSK tests (Chinese Proficiency Oral Test) in 2015:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exam</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Deadline registration</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HSK</td>
<td>18 April</td>
<td>21 March</td>
<td>Amsterdam</td>
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<tr>
<td>HSK(K)</td>
<td>16 May</td>
<td>19 April</td>
<td>Zwolle</td>
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<tr>
<td>HSK</td>
<td>14 June</td>
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<td>HSK(K)</td>
<td>6 December</td>
<td>9 November</td>
<td>Groningen</td>
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Chinese Ambassador Visited Groningen Confucius Institute

In the morning of 28 May 2014, H.E. Mr. Chen Xu (陈旭), Ambassador of the People’s Republic of China to the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Mr. Fang Qinghao (方青昊), Counsellor of Education of the Chinese Embassy in the Netherlands, and Mr. Wang Yawei (王晓伟), Second Secretary of the Education Section visited GCI to cordially exchange views with GCI’s directors and teachers.

Mr. Liu Jingyi (刘京义), Chinese Director of GCI, gave the honoured guests a warm welcome and introduced Mr. Ad Geerts, the Advisory Board Member of GCI, GCI’s management team and teachers. Mrs. Xuelfi Knoester-Cao, Dutch Director of GCI, introduced GCI’s organisational structure and explained the cooperation between GCI and the University of Groningen. Mr. Jan Klerken, Vice Director of GCI, reported GCI’s various efforts in business communication between China and the Netherlands and introduced
the ongoing programmes. During the meeting, GCI directors also shared GCI’s achievements in Chinese teacher training, the establishment of Confucius Classrooms, and the publication of the English-language journal Global China Insights, and gave an overview of upcoming large-scale events: the Chinese advertising exhibition and the Business Forum Programme in the Netherlands. Ms. Hao Cui (郝翠), on behalf of GCI’s teachers, shared her work experiences at GCI with the guests from the embassy. Ambassador H.E. Mr. Chen Xu congratulated GCI on its achievements in the past three years and expressed his gratitude for GCI’s contribution in promoting Chinese language and culture as well as in business exchange. Impressed by GCI’s achievements, the ambassador also gave supporting advice on the further development of GCI.

Chinese Language Teacher Training Programme
From 19 to 22 June 2014, GCI, sponsored by Hanban, organised its first Chinese Language Teacher Training Programme in The Hague. The charge d'affaires of the Chinese Embassy in the Netherlands, Mr. Liu Chun (刘春), opened this event and Counsellor of Education of the Chinese Embassy in the Netherlands, Mr. Fang Qingchao (方庆朝), closed it by awarding certificates to the 28 participants for satisfactory completion of the entire training programme. Professor Jiang Liping (姜丽萍), a senior expert at Hanban, and Zhao Lin (赵琳), Associate Professor at Communication University of China (中国传媒大学) who has presented on Chinese national TV, were invited from China to give lectures entitled How to Design Your

Teaching and The Art of Chinese Presentation and Practice Skills respectively. Yin Wenying (尹文英), Inspector of Chinese Language Teaching at the Ministry of National Education in Paris, introduced the teaching principles and techniques in teaching Chinese as a second language in secondary school in the perspective of students’ development from knowledge to competence. Mrs. Ardi Bouwers, sinologist and owner of the China Circle, gave a lecture on cross-cultural communication. Dr. Liu Jingyi (刘婧一), Chinese Director of GCI, offered a philosophical annotation of Chinese culture from belief to behaviour and provided guidance on how to use culture to help or strengthen language learning. In addition to the lectures on language teaching and culture, there was also a seminar dialogue centered around the theme of The Challenge, Expectation and Opportunities for Chinese Teaching shared by GCI Chinese instructors Hao Cui (郝翠) and Boi Boi Huong (香佩佩). At the end of this event, a tea workshop was given by GCI Chinese instructors Teng Jiaqi (滕嘉琪) and Li Yunxuan (李韵譞), allowing the participants to experience Chinese tea culture.

The Second Summer Camp
From 11-25 July 2014, GCI organised the second Summer Camp to China in cooperation with the Communication University of China and sponsored by the Headquarters of Confucius Institutes, Hanban. The Summer Camp was designed to get Dutch learners of Chinese in closer contact with the country, its language and its culture. 18 students from GCI and its Confucius Classrooms participated in this event. The students were provided with a variety of both Chinese

language and Chinese culture courses. They experienced the art of calligraphy and Chinese knotting and appreciated Chinese films and Chinese classical and popular music. On their cultural tours, they visited the main attractions of Beijing (北京) and Tianjin (天津) city to get a taste of Chinese history and culture. They also had a chance
to exchange ideas with college students from the Communication University of China (中国传媒大学) and Tianjin Normal University (天津师范大学).

Confucius Institute Scholarship

To be more supportive of the development of Chinese teaching and learning and to promote language and cultural exchanges between China and overseas countries, GCI is actively encouraging qualified Chinese language teachers and outstanding Chinese language learners to study in China with the help of a Confucius Institute Scholarship. The Confucius Institute Scholarship programme was launched by the Confucius Institute Headquarters, Hanban, to sponsor foreign students, scholars and Chinese language teachers to study Chinese in relevant universities in China. On 22 August 2014, GCI organized a Farewell Meeting for five 2014 Confucius Institute Scholarship winners, who are going to study in China for the 2014-15 academic year. He studied Human Geography at the University of Utrecht and Chinese Language at the Dalian University of Foreign Languages (大连外国语大学).

During his time in Xiamen (厦门), he hopes to further improve his spoken Mandarin and his knowledge of classical Chinese. He is very grateful to GCI for their active support in getting a scholarship, and cannot wait to go back to China once again to indulge himself in experiencing more of this thrillingly interesting language and culture.

Florine van Meer

After graduating from grammar school at the Stedelijk Gymnasium Breda, 18-year-old Florine van Meer wanted to do something extraordinary. That is the reason she applied for a Confucius Institute Scholarship to study at Xiamen University for one semester. After waiting for the outcome for a long time, she finally received the news that she won the scholarship. Florine will depart to Xiamen on 9 September 2014 and in addition to feeling honoured that she won the scholarship, she is also really curious about what this new experience of living in China will bring her.

Gineke ten Holt

Gineke ten Holt is a researcher in Artificial Intelligence and Pattern Recognition, working at the research institute INeCAs3 in Assen. She received her Master's degree from the University of Groningen in 2004 and her Doctoral degree from Delft University of Technology in 2010. Her interest in Chinese started when sharing a room with a Chinese colleague in Delft. She has been studying Chinese as a hobby since 2009, developing a great interest in both the Mandarin language and Chinese culture and history. In 2014, she passed the HSK 4 exam. With the help of the Groningen Confucius Institute, she applied for a Confucius Institute Scholarship in 2014 and was awarded a full scholarship. She will spend one academic year at Lanzhong Normal University (滇南师范大学) in Dali (大理).

Bert Oostdijk

Bert Oostdijk is a freelance urban designer and researcher into urban affairs. What fascinates him about cities is that their growth reflects both the grand designs of their rulers as well as the aspirations of ordinary citizens. This interest has resulted in two Master’s degrees: Urban Planning from the University of Amsterdam and Urban Design from the Delft University of Technology. During his time in Delft, Chinese classmates roused his interest in China and its language, culture and design. He is currently studying the Chinese language on a one semester Confucius Scholarship at the Communication University of China (中国传媒大学) in one of the world’s greatest cities: Beijing (北京). He enjoys riding his bicycle up and down Chaoyang Road (潮阳路).

Daniel Kenyon-Jackson

Daniel Kenyon-Jackson recently obtained his bilingual school diploma (HAVO) from Kandinsky College, Nijmegen. His passion for Chinese comes from master classes at school, which this year opened the first Confucius Classroom in the Netherlands. During a ten-day visit to Beijing last year with an organisation called JiaJie, Daniel made a lot of new friends. Now, he has settled in at the Communication University of China with students from all over the world. During a recent conference in The Hague to encourage schools to offer Chinese, he urged teachers to challenge pupils more beyond the compulsory curriculum. At the youngest CIS scholarship winner (17), Daniel is keen to use his four-and-a-half months in Beijing to improve his Chinese and learn more about the fascinating Chinese culture he was introduced to during his first visit. When he returns to the Netherlands in January, he will start his Bachelor’s degree in International Business and Management Studies at the internationally renowned Arnhem Business School of HAN University of Applied Sciences. But for now, he is making the most of this amazing opportunity to study Chinese at CUC.

China Workshop

On Tuesday 16 September 2014, GCI, the Centre for East Asian Studies Groningen (CEASG) and Globalization Studies Groningen jointly organized a workshop on China’s foreign policy and China-EU relations at the University of Groningen. Academic Director of the CEASG Professor Jan van der Harst, an expert on China-EU relations, opened this event. CEASG Director Professor Tjalling Halbertsma and Chinese Director of GCI Dr. Liu Jingyi (刘婧一) respectively chaired the two sessions of presentations and discussions. The speakers, Professor Shi Zhiqian (史齐贤), Professor Zhang Lilian (张莉兰) and Dr. Lai Su-yi (蔡士宜) from Tsinghua University (清华大学); Dr. Naiil Duggan from Goettingen University in Germany; Assistant Professor Jay Huang and Mr. Chen Bo (陈博) from Leiden University; Senior Research Associate Ingrid d’Hooge from Clingendael; Assistant Professor Frank Gaenssmantel from the University of Groningen and Senior Policy Officer at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, Ms. Wu Xiaoling (吴晓玲) shared their insights on the themes Traditions and Cultural Foundations of China’s Foreign Policy, Cooperation Between China and the EU in Global Security Governance, Past Debt-crisis China-EU Relations, Mutual Perceptions of China as Energy-Actors. More than 40 university students and scholars interested in China-EU relations attended this meeting.
Chinese Festival 2014

On Saturday 27 September 2014, GCI organised its second Chinese Festival in the Chinese garden in the Hortus in Haren. During the day, we celebrated the tenth anniversary of Confucius Institutes worldwide. This special day was opened with a spectacular Liang Dance performed by students from the Groningen Bao Trieu martial arts school, followed by a welcoming word from Professor Sibrandes Poppema, President of the University of Groningen.

The entire day was filled with all kinds of Chinese activities. GCI’s teacher from Professor Hu Zhengrong (中国传媒大学), one of GCI’s founding members. The delegation was led by CUC’s Vice President, Professor Liu Jingyi (中国传媒大学), who is also a board member. The Chinese Director of GCI, Dr. Liu Jingyi, introduced GCI’s main programmes and upcoming events. Professor Hu Zhengrong and Professor Fang Zengyu introduced GCI’s achievements and provided some advice on development for the future. GCI’s Chinese language teachers shared their work and life experiences in the Netherlands, deeply impressing the CUC board member. The Dutch Ministry of Education announced Chinese to be an official University Preparatory Education final exam subject has generated considerable interest among school leaders. Cooperation between GCI and Dutch secondary schools has also improved greatly. In September 2013, GCI established the first three Confucius Classrooms in the Netherlands with three representatives of the Hanze University of Groningen as well as with representatives of the Hanze University of Applied Sciences to discuss possible areas of cooperation.

Five New Confucius Classrooms of GCI Approved by Hanban

Ever since the Dutch Ministry of Education announced Chinese to be an official University Preparatory Education final exam course (VWO) in Dutch secondary schools in 2013, Chinese language and culture as either a potential or an existing school subject has generated considerable interest among school leaders. Cooperation between GCI and Dutch secondary schools has also improved greatly. In September 2013, GCI established the first three Confucius Classrooms in the Netherlands with three outstanding secondary schools (Kandinsky College in Nijmegen, CS Vincent Van Gogh in Assen and Theravadyzoom in Tilburg). After just one year, these three Confucius Classrooms are now fully operational. In 2014, cooperation between Dutch schools and GCI has increased even further and has become more extensive. Five schools submitted an application to collaboratively establish a Confucius Classroom together with GCI. And in November 2014 the exciting news came from Hanban that all five applicant schools have been approved, totalling eight Confucius Classrooms across the Netherlands. These five new Confucius Classrooms are Wolfert Tweetalig in Rotterdam, Scholengemeenschap De Goudse Waarden in Gouda, Lorentz Lyceum in Arnhem, Cals College in Nieuwegein and Kastanjeport DeBS in Eerhalm.

Lecture: The Water Kingdom

Date: Thursday 9 April 2015
Time: 18:00-19:30
Location: Zernikezaal (Academy Building, University of Groningen)
Lecturer: Dr. Philip Ball

GCI has honourably invited Dr. Ball to give a lecture to share his insights about the role of water, one of the most constant, significant and illuminating themes among the turbulent and often confusing currents of Chinese history and culture. Not only does water play a central part in Chinese philosophy, history, politics, administration, economics and art; but these roles are intimately connected to a degree unmatched anywhere else in the world. For this reason, it is not simply the case that all these facets of Chinese culture become easier to understand when the role of water is recognised. Rather, it can be concluded that many of them are likely to remain strange, opaque or alien unless their connection with water is understood.

Philip Ball is an author and science writer, and former editor for the science journal Nature. He has written for many publications, including the Guardian, The New York Times, Prospect magazine, New Scientist and The Times. His books include H2O: A Biography of Water; Critical Mass (which won the 2005 Aventis Prize for Science books), The Music Instinct and most recently, Invisible. He graduated in Chemistry from the University of Oxford, and has a PhD in Physics from the University of Bristol.
"Chinese Bridge" Chinese Proficiency Competition

Date: 19 April 2015
Location: Amsterdam

De 19 April 2015, GCI will hold the preliminary round of the eighth "Chinese Bridge" Chinese Proficiency Competition, a seven-day summer camp for Dutch secondary school students in Utrecht. The competition consists of three parts: writing, speaking, and a talent show. The competition covers Chinese language proficiency, Chinese cultural skills and knowledge of contemporary China. To allow the audience to fully experience Chinese culture, the competition will be followed by a 45-minute performance of Chinese music and art. The winners of the preliminary round will have the opportunity to participate in the "Chinese Bridge" final competition in China, organised by Hanban, where secondary students from all over the world will compete for first prize.

Summer Camp

Dates: 11-25 July 2015
Location: Beijing (北京), China

GCI is planning its third Summer Camp to China in cooperation with the Communication University of China and sponsored by Hanban. We will invite 10 principals from Dutch secondary schools who have an interest in developing a Chinese Language and Culture programme in their school. During the trip, the principals will have the chance to visit Chinese universities, secondary schools, China mainstream media and Confucius Institute Headquarters Hanban. In addition, they will attend lectures and meetings and participate in cultural experience activities. The purpose of this trip is to enhance the Dutch principals’ understanding of Chinese culture and education, so as to further promote Chinese language and culture in the Netherlands.

Course: Intensive 1 to Intensive 6
Method: Great Wall Chinese

The goal of Great Wall Chinese is to develop the communicative competence of Chinese learners. This method has six textbooks corresponding to six levels with each level containing ten units and each unit comprised of three lessons. The content covers personal information, daily life, learning and working, social activities, with a focus on satisfying the basic communication needs in everyday life. The six textbooks cover 976 Chinese characters, more than 1300 words, 163 grammar points, 219 communicative scenes and 258 communication skills. With weekly two-hour classroom sessions and two hours self-study, each level can be achieved in three months. Each textbook comes with a CD, CD-ROM, online multimedia coursework as well as a workbook.

Course: Language Centre University of Groningen
Method: Contemporary Chinese

This course is suitable for adult beginners (students) and is divided over three semesters. The course consists of 26 hours per semester (78 hours in total) and uses the textbook Contemporary Chinese. You will learn more than 700 words and reach HSK Level 3 after finishing the course. Two hours self-study per week before or after class is recommended to achieve better results. The language acquired on the course includes a range of topics, including self-introduction, greetings, expressing numbers and time, making phone calls, shopping, seeing the doctor, asking directions, transportation, light conversation (about the weather, interests and hobbies, experiences), making arrangements and appointments. The teacher will combine Chinese language learning with Chinese culture, and will integrate interesting activities and games to make sure the learner has fun learning Chinese.

Course: HSK Standard Course / HSK Training Course

HSK Standard Courses 1 to 3 are designed for beginners who would like to learn the Chinese language systematically and who also have the desire to attend HSK test Level 1 to 3. We use the textbook series HSK Standard Course, which highly match the HSK tests from the content and form to the levels. The courses focus on training students’ integrated language abilities including listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. The essential ideas of the communicative approach and task-based language teaching will be used in the courses.

HSK Training 4 to 6 are designed for those who would like to have an intensive training for preparing HSK test Level 4 to 6. The syllabuses of HSK tests, old official examination papers and other related materials will be used in the courses. The learning, reading and writing skills will be practiced according to the requirements of HSK tests.

GCI CALENDAR

Course Name | Objective | Vocabulary | Class Hours
--- | --- | --- | ---
HSK Standard Course 1 | HSK (Level 1) | 150 | 160 | 20
HSK Standard Course 2 | HSK (Level 2) | 300 | 320 | 20
HSK Standard Course 3 | HSK (Level 3) | 600 | 600 | 36
HSK Training Course 4 | HSK (Level 4) | 1,200 | 1,200 | 20
HSK Training Course 5 | HSK (Level 5) | 2,550 | 2,550 | 20
HSK Training Course 6 | HSK (Level 6) | 5,000 and above | 5,000 and above | 20

GCI CALENDAR

Course: HSK Standard Course / HSK Training Course

Method: HSK Standard Course

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Course: Children Playful Chinese
Method: Chinese Paradise

Chinese Paradise is a method for children fused all around the world opening the door to the Chinese language, leading children on a pleasant and exciting journey to interesting and enjoyable places in the world of Chinese. It has six textbooks and six workbooks corresponding to three levels with each level containing six units and each unit two lessons. Its abundant and vivid content not only includes a brief introduction to Chinese culture, descriptions of Chinese characters and short stories; but also has games, handicrafts, popular children’s folk songs. Each level can be attained in six months with intensive training, with hourly classroom sessions once per week, focusing on one or two characters, ten new words and one basic sentence pattern. After completing three levels, students will have mastered approximately 50 Chinese characters and 300 new words; will be able to formulate simple sentences, recite popular children’s songs and poems, and have a preliminary understanding of Chinese culture.

Teng Jiaqi (滕嘉琪) worked as a Chinese teacher and Editorial Assistant of Global China Insights for GCI from March 2012 to August 2014. She has been a devoted member of the GCI team, teaching Chinese language courses, managing Chinese proficiency tests and organising GCI’s monthly events. GCI really appreciates her intelligent and assiduous work. We would like to wish Ms. Teng Jiaqi all the best in her Master’s study and in her future career.

Li Yunxuan (李韵萱) worked as a multimedia designer specialising in graphic design, interface design and video editing. She received her Bachelor’s degree in Fashion Design and Literature from Shaanxi Normal University (陕西师范大学) in 2000, a Master of Science degree in E. Media from Quinnipiac University in Connecticut, USA in 2006, and a Master of Arts degree in Design & Technology from Parsons School for Design in New York City, USA in 2008. She was a graphic designer at the Tsinghua University Publishing Company (清华大学出版社) between 2000 and 2003. Jing currently lives in Groningen. She has a design studio and is also a project assistant for Asian affairs in the International Relations Office at the University of Groningen.

Zheng Jing (郑晶) is a multimedia designer specialising in graphic design, interface design and video editing. She received her Bachelor’s degree in Fashion Design and Literature from Shaanxi Normal University in 2000, a Master of Science degree in E. Media from Quinnipiac University in Connecticut, USA in 2006, and a Master of Arts degree in Design & Technology from Parsons School for Design in New York City, USA in 2008. She was a graphic designer at the Tsinghua University Publishing Company (清华大学出版社) between 2000 and 2003. Jing currently lives in Groningen. She has a design studio and is also a project assistant for Asian affairs in the International Relations Office at the University of Groningen.

Ding Xiyan (丁希艳) worked as a volunteer Chinese teacher and Editorial Assistant of Global China Insights for GCI from January 2014 to November 2014. She has been involved in teaching Chinese language courses, organising the Teacher Training Programme, recommending Confucius Institute Scholarship Winners and working on all of GCI’s cultural activities. GCI really appreciates the high quality of her work and her professional attitude. We would like to wish Ms. Ding Xiyan all the very best for the future.

Sylvie Poirier, MFA, Editor of Groningen Confucius Institute’s Global China Insights. After working as Publications Editor for The European Research Centre on Migration and Ethnic Relations (ERCOMER) within Utrecht University’s Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences, she is currently Director of SP Language Solutions, a language agency offering editing and translation services as well as language coaching in English and French. She received her Bachelor’s degree in Communication from Ottawa University, Canada, and a Master of Fine Arts in Visual Studies from the State University of New York (SUNY) at Buffalo in the United States of America.

Course: Chinese (Dutch)
Method: Eigentijds Chinees

These courses are suitable for adult beginners who prefer to be taught in the Dutch language. In this course, the Dutch version of the method ‘Contemporary Chinese’, Eigentijds Chinees is used. The language used in this course includes the following topics: self-introduction, greetings, expressing numbers and time, making phone calls, shopping, seeing the doctor, asking directions, transportation, light conversation (about the weather, interests and hobbies, experiences), making arrangements and appointments. The teacher will combine Chinese language learning with Chinese culture, and will integrate interesting activities and games to make sure that the learner has fun learning Chinese.

Zhu Qihan (朱奇涵) worked as a volunteer Chinese teacher at Xi’an International University (西安外国语大学) between 2000 and 2003. She received her Master’s degree in Chinese Language and Literature from Shaanxi Normal University (陕西师范大学) in 2009. Her academic research is mainly in the fields of Chinese grammar and vocabulary teaching. She teaches Contemporary Chinese to Chinese undergraduate students and Basic to Advanced Chinese to international students, including intensive reading and writing, Chinese Culture as well as HSK courses. She has obtained first prize in the Teachers’ Speech Competition of Shaanxi Province universities in 2005. As recipient of the title Excellent and Outstanding Teacher of the Year in 2010 at Xi’an International University, she has been involved in conducting several research studies.
Contemporary Chinese Advertising Exhibition 1979-2015

5-19 March 2015 at WTC The Hague
2-30 April 2015 at Hanze University of Applied Sciences Groningen

The exhibition aims at revealing the transformation of China’s consumer and social culture through Chinese advertising from the 1970s until the present day. An array of nearly 600 print, film and broadcast ads will be on display, showing the development and change in the life of Chinese people over the past 35 years. The exhibits are structured around five themes: clothing, food, living, travel and daily use. From a marketing perspective, the exhibition provides information and context to European entrepreneurs and researchers about Chinese consumer behaviour, and the development of international and Chinese brands in China during that period. Visitors also get the chance to find out about policy changes and their impact on Chinese people’s lifestyles, and how these changes influenced various industries.

5 March 2015 Grand Opening at WTC The Hague

The exhibition’s Grand Opening will take place in WTC The Hague on 5 March 2015, consisting of keynote speeches from culture and communication experts and governmental officials, Chinese music performances, followed by a networking reception.

Five Themes of the Exhibition:

- The Landmarks of Fashion – Clothing
- The Demarcations of Affluence – Food
- The Thermometer of Living – Housing
- The Coordinates of Travelling – Transportation
- The Compass of Wellbeing – Daily Appliances