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Australia-China Friendship Society

Victorian Branch (Inc).ABN 39 746 574 225

Newsletter

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President's Report

Our last newsletter commented on the election of Donald Trump, a devoutly anti-Chinese person, to the Presidency of the United States, comparing the political system used there, with all its plutocracy and demagoguery, to that used in China with its basic level of participatory democracy, a middle level of experimentation, and top-level of meritocracy.

That report has become unfortunately prescient and, if anything, under-estimated the wreckage that has followed. We are, of course, referring to the most powerful country in the world at least in nominal terms for their economy, and certainly in the case of military force. Trump's economic policy of erecting tariff walls (a rate of 245% is being applied to Chinese goods) is extremely disruptive to world trade.

China is the largest exporter in the world and the United States is the largest importer. China is also the top exporter to the United States, accounting for 16.5% of the total value of goods to the U.S. The assumption of the Trump administration is that China will continue to supply and the U.S. population will simply tighten their belts and continue to purchase the goods, providing the U.S. government with a revenue stream that is akin to a sales tax. Of course, this is not going to happen.

Instead, it will be devastating for working people of the United States, who will face significantly higher prices for manufactured goods and loss of employment as demand dries up both at home and in export goods. The only people who will benefit will be local rent-seekers within the United States itself who will be able to extract a greater slice from a smaller pie, further empowering their already parasitical qualities.

For their own part, China has opportunities to adjust. The United States exports primarily agricultural products to China, which can be easily sourced elsewhere. For example, Australian beef is already filling the shortfall in the \$2.5bn trade that the U.S. had with China. For exports of manufactured goods, China's long commitment to the Belt-and-Road-Initiative is providing ever-increasing opportunities in the "Global South" as such countries are raised out of impoverished states and have the disposable income to purchase such items.

Critically, China holds the important resources for rare earth minerals, essential for the creation of superior magnets and conductive material used in robotics and electric vehicles, various renewable technologies, and especially aviation and aerospace. If the United States wanted to destroy its own local high-tech industries of the future and hand that over to China to dominate, they certainly have established a path to do so.

All this said, it must be acknowledged that there are no winners in a trade war and especially not of this proportion. Whilst the Australia-China Friendship Society, like pretty much every economist in the world, opposes the imposition of these tariffs and the damage that they are already causing, we can also recognise that it is just a reality that the Chinese economy is more resilient than the U.S. economy

in these matters. It is also just a reality that there are opportunities for strengthening Australia and Chinese trading relationships as a result of the immature petulance on the other side of the Pacific.

Moving to matters more local the Australia-China Friendship Society has a number of upcoming events to which we wish to alert our members. We are indeed a very busy organisation in 2025 and there is no time like the present to get involved. Have a look at the list that follows this report.

In the meantime, we urge you all to do your utmost, especially in the coming weeks to discuss the importance of friendly relations between Australia and China. China is our biggest trading partner, both in terms of imports and exports, and the attendance of Chinese students in our university sector provides enormous cultural and educational benefits. It would be the height of foolishness if we were to do anything that would weaken the strength of this relationship

All the best,

Lev Lafayette

President, Australia-China Friendship Society (Victorian branch)

Australia-China Friendship Society Events for May

May 08: ACFS May Social Dinner. The beginning of a regular event where we get together and enjoy each other's company over a meal, the ACFS is hosting a dinner at David's Hotpot City at 279 La Trobe Street. Starting at 6pm and running to (at least) 9pm, the inclusive price is \$40.

Book tickets at the following URL:

<https://www.trybooking.com/events/landing/1390259>

May 11: The Sichuan Friendship Society. The Society is visiting Melbourne and will be hosting an event at RMIT University from 2:00 PM to 5:30 PM. The event aims to showcase the economic and social development of Sichuan Province, Luzhou City, and Liangshan Prefecture, as well as highlight our unique local products and intangible cultural heritage, thereby deepening Australians' understanding of Sichuan. All ACFS members can attend, please contact the committee.

(president@acfs-vic.org) if you wish to attend.

May 14: Guizhou Provincial Delegation. An important delegation is visiting Melbourne on May 14th, with an aim to discuss enhancing exchanges and cooperation between the state and Guizhou, especially in the fields of culture and education. The Guizhou delegation includes leaders of the provincial education department, foreign affairs office, tourism and culture, and information office. Given the high-level of the delegation, it is imperative that attendees have existing connections and history in these areas. Again, please contact the committee (president@acfs-vic.org) if you wish to attend.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

I read with interest Joe Montero's article on the BRI and the effects on the economies of emerging nations, specifically in terms of what the BRI wishes to achieve and the great gains it has made to date. However, I was dismayed to note the author had omitted 25% of the Earth's area, the Pacific region, as being one of the most ardent supporters and beneficiaries of the BRI.

As one who has worked with Pacific nations for well over a decade in the interests of China-Pacific friendship and cooperation, I have seen first-hand the importance China places on Pacific nations in terms of produce, education, research and development, aquaculture sustainability, cultural and historical exchanges, infrastructure enhancement and improvement and economic trading stability. The Pacific nations have embraced with enthusiasm the chance given by the BRI to exchange ideas, goods and services and cultural education, culminating in research into Austronesian origins and establishment of a group to explore further the beginnings and devolution into the nations we now have in the region.

While it is absolutely correct other parts of the globe have joined and benefited from the BRI, specifically the Americas, Caribbean nations and the African sub-continent, the Pacific is uniquely based as a pristine region almost unsullied by superpower pollutants and rampant exploitation. Learning from history, China understands the vital need to protect the region and nurture the nations which will eventually fall prey to global warming and pernicious climate change, with rising waters and salination of potable water. China notes that raising the standard of living for any region leads to a flow of commerce and prosperity overall - 'a rising tide carrying all boats'. Slowly but steadily, Pacific nations are seeing the advantages of the BRI, with more nations joining as they note tangible benefits.

As Australia attempts to take stock of allies and foes, if the present and future federal governments do not learn from the colonial, white failures of the past, Australia will forever be an outlier in this region, a last bastion of the Anglosphere in the Asia/Pacific quadrant. The BRI brings nations together through cooperation rather than rampant capitalist competition, which is where the World Trade Organisation and other international Western bodies will always fail, using an outdated, adversarial model of geo-political economics. The so-called 'threat' of China is not military, but one of overtaking the Western model of commerce with a fairer, equitable and transparent form of trade and exchange. This 'threat' is of superseding an elderly, failing economic set of values with a far more level field, where might is not necessarily right.

My years in the Pacific have shown me the BRI works for all and fosters good will and understanding, and after all, is that not what we all should be about?

Yours truly,

Anthony Leong.

Cultural Notes by Lia Cross- Cultural Scout

Dear ACFS Members,

I hope you managed to catch some of the Melbourne Comedy Festival events. There were lots of laughs available from both local Chinese comedians and from the Chinese diaspora.

Two exceptional acts were those of young Singaporean Jin Hao Li's "Swimming in a Submarine", which was given a five star rating by various reviewers, and took place at the Chinese Museum over several weeks. Great to see the Museum making itself available as a Melbourne Comedy Festival venue!

The second special event hosted by RMIT's Storey Hall, was that of Comedy duo from China "Zhen and Hao", presenting a "Cross Talk Show". For those not familiar with this form of comedy, it refers to the comedians deliberately mispronouncing Chinese words (by using the wrong tones), thus resulting in hilarious, nonsensical conversations with lots of repetitions as the two comedians try to understand what each other is saying!

This form of very clever comedy was always the most popular act at the annual Entertainment Gala held in Beijing when I lived there, and it must still be the case - hence this cultural visit by Zhen and Hao, two very funny Cross Talk comedians.

Coming events include the film by director Lou Ye titled "An Unfinished Film", starring Qin Hao, Mao Xiaorui, Qi Xi and Huang Xuan. Filmed near Wuhan, and described as "A riveting highly inventive, mid-career oeuvre masterpiece" by *Loncinema Magazine*, it begins on May 1st at Nova cinema in Carlton. Tickets available online now or visit the cinema.

And to finish off, talented pianist Lang Lang will be returning to Melbourne for a concert at Hamer Hall in June. Tickets for his concert will sell out fast, so jump on the Arts Centre website now and book a ticket early or you'll miss out!

The Difference Between Chinese and Western Sport

This month we are going to look at the difference between Chinese and Western sport. We will look at ancient and modern Chinese sport and then ancient and modern western sport. Also touch on Chinese sports and Western sports culture. Then conclude with examining the convergence of Western and Chinese sport.

Chinese and Western sport grew from two different social systems. The idea of physical activity would be based on inherited culture. (Zhu & Du 2024) suggest, "In Chinese culture, sports are often closely associated with Taoist and Confucian philosophies, and physical exercise is regarded as a means of harmonizing body and mind." The same idea can probably be traced back to ancient Greece and the association with Olympic sports. (Zhu & Du 2014) also suggest, "Olympic sports demonstrate individual honour, strength and courage through physical exercise."

Sport in China has existed for many hundreds of years if not thousands of years. Notable Ancient Chinese sports include:

Swordplay (Jiànshù 击剑)

- Wrestling (Shuāijǎo 摔跤)
- Archery (Shèjiàn 射箭)
- Ancient Football (Cùjū 蹴鞠) Eastern Han dynasty (25–220 CE)
- Polo (Mǎqiú 马球)
- Chinese golf (Gǔlǎo Gāoěrfū 古老高尔夫)
- Ice-skating (Huábīng 滑冰)



In modern China in addition to Table Tennis, sports such as Tennis, Soccer and particularly Basketball are becoming more popular.

Notable Chinese sports include:

- Table Tennis (Pīngpāngqiú 乒乓球)
- Badminton (Yǔmáoqiú 羽毛球)
- Dragon Boat Racing (Lóngzhōu bǐsài 龙舟)
- Basketball (Lánqiú 篮球)
- Volleyball (Páiqiú 排球)



As with Chinese sport it is difficult to identify when playing sport began in western societies. Archaeological evidence suggest ball games were played by the ancient Greeks and Aztecs.

Evidence also exists that Greeks and Romans enjoyed playing ball games
 In North Africa a game called 'ta kurt om el mahag' resembled baseball was played
 Evidence of wrestling in Nuba and Southern Sudan
 African Tutsi and Hutu staged wrestling matches between females
 Contests for running and jumping were found right across Africa
 Competitions involving bow and arrow were found throughout the world
 Polo was played as far back as 271-273 BCE and spread throughout the Indian subcontinent and eventually reached China
 The Romans disliked running and preferred sports such as boxing, wrestling and hurling
 Rome also had Gladiators and Chariot races
 The Olympic Games as we know them began in ancient Greece around 776 BCE

Modern Western Sports vary from country to country, e.g. Aussie rules football while some sports are found in multiple countries:

- Tennis
- Soccer

- Track and field
- Hockey
- Cricket
- Baseball
- Golf
- Table Tennis
- Basketball



Sports can be played as an amateur professional or semi-professional. Amateur participation in sport at lower levels is often called "grass-roots sport". The popularity

of sport as a recreation for spectators has led to sports becoming a major business. A culture of high paying professional sports where highly performing participants are rewarded with money which can run into millions of dollars. Some sports have a policy of allowing only amateur competitors, e.g., The Olympic Games started with a principle of amateur competition. In 1986 the International Olympic Committee (IOC) decided to make all professional athletes eligible for the Olympics.



Zhu & Du suggest as part of human culture, sports mainly point to people, thus we can conclude the form of sport points to 'peoples' cultural form. Chinese sport involves a focus on fitness that cultivates both body and spirit. Whereas western sports focuses on self-expression and individuality.

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THE AUSTRALIA-CHINA FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY'S AIMS

Cultivate friendly relations with the people of China by fostering the study of China's history, language, culture, social and political structure.

Promote mutual understanding through friendly exchanges between the people of China and Australia. Strengthening ties with travel, the exchange of ideas, information and trade between the two countries.

To seek to clarify misunderstandings between the peoples of China and Australia, which may arise from the misrepresentation of information.

THE ACFS VICTORIAN BRANCH

PRESIDENT: Lev Lafayette
VICE PRESIDENT: Tower Liu
SECRETARY: Edith Wilson
TREASURER: Ian Parker
COMMITTEE: Lia Cross, Joe Montero, James Doery, Charlotte Hall

We are always looking for interesting stories and articles to share with our members. Any members who have great stories to tell please contact ACFS office or e-mail to secretary@acfs-vic.org

ACFS (VICTORIA) Inc. A0038007M ABN NO. 39 746 574 225

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Promoting Friendship and Understanding Between the Australian and Chinese People