

# Taiwan Updates



This year abroad has been a year not quite like any other. Not only were we the first cohort to be sent to Taiwan but the Taiwanese government even broke their own visa rules to let us in.

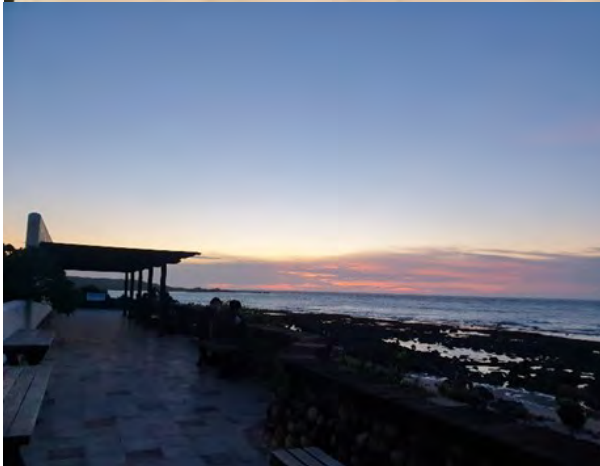
Even upon arrival at Heathrow, we were treated as a special case and the next 8 months followed in a similar vein. Secretive classes, four visa applications, meeting the Deputy Minister of Education and then being told we couldn't tell anyone about our meeting and digital Alien Residency Certificates that probably weren't valid were all examples of the bizarreness of our year abroad. Despite this, we consider ourselves extremely lucky to have been abroad at all and to experience a virus-free life until the closing weeks of our time in Taiwan.

It turned out several other international people had decided to also escape to the hermit-like kingdom of Taiwan and seek COVID refugee status. This made making friends with

locals and expats very fluid creating many language-learning opportunities and chances to speak Chinese. The most common topic, of course, was food and no doubt many of us who have now flown back to the UK are missing the delicious array of local Taiwanese food and East Asian cuisine readily available.

Perhaps one benefit of not being allowed to leave the country was that we fully explored the island and came across some truly hidden gems. These photos are just a small glimpse into what Taiwan has to offer in terms of food, scenery, people, culture and rich socio-political diversity. We can only hope that those studying East Asia will have a chance to visit "Formosa" as it was known (literally meaning beautiful island)."

- Oliver Harris  
3<sup>rd</sup> Year Chinese



Writing this as I quarantine in the UK, I don't think I'm alone when I say somehow the entire year abroad experience feels like a strange extended dream. This time last year there were doubts about being able to leave the UK and the gloomy possibility of a 'virtual' year abroad, a once unthinkable prospect, was suddenly a very real option on the table. We were extremely lucky and were smuggled into Taiwan in a top-secret operation masterminded by the upper echelons of the Taiwanese Ministry of Education. We were quarantined in a lovely hotel located in the hot-spring centre of Taipei, Beitou, and passed the two weeks swinging between relative peace and near-death experiences as food allergies were forgotten by kitchen staff.

Nonetheless, having spent the summer of our first year in Taiwan already, there was a comfortable familiarity with Taipei that meant our transition period after quarantine was much smoother than could be expected in Beijing – a saving grace considering we started classes a day after quarantine ended.

We were soon paired up with local students at NTNU as 学伴, providing us with opportunities to not only speak Chinese but also make friends and learn about Taiwan through the perspective of the youth. Friendly old people, flatmates, language exchange partners, 学伴 and other foreign students – there was an exciting mix of people in Taipei. After approximately six months in lockdown in the UK beforehand, being able to meet new people and interact with friends without needing to social distance or wear a mask was a huge relief.

Although during our final few weeks the covid situation worsened and we spent most of our time inside, we had more than enough time to really enjoy our time away.

- Asma Ibrahim  
3<sup>rd</sup> Year Chinese

## First-Year Updates

After a long Christmas break, we were all excited to come back to Cambridge with the hope of attending a few in-person classes, just as we had done during Michaelmas. Little did we know that right before most of the class returned to their respective Colleges, we would be told that we would have to stay at home. At that point we were scattered across the United Kingdom and Europe. Some of us had managed to return to the University, while others were stuck at home. Zoom backgrounds changed (special shout out to **Wu Laoshi's** Pokemon posters), and we started our first Literary Chinese lessons. Turns out that translating passages of the *Analects*, albeit a staple of Chinese culture, is not a remarkable party trick (trust me, I've tried, even my grandparents weren't impressed...)

Despite the physical distance, we tried our best to bridge the gap between ourselves and the screens, organising weekly Sunday revision sessions and even doing a Chinese-themed pub quiz with the Second-year students. However, we ended Lent term on a high note with the showcase of our EASI video projects to the rest of the class. We will never forget the insanely good "Invented Traditions™" advertisement by Tabby, and everyone else's creative and enthusiastic performances!

Following what seemed like a very short Easter vacation, our final term started, and we were all able to return to Cambridge. Our entire class had not met up since Michaelmas for a drink and a chat, and we had a great time catching up. Even though all our classes remained online, this did not deter us from finally meeting **Wu Laoshi** in person and saying goodbye to **Hong Laoshi** (after listening to the very sad 言不由



**Chinese Studies students at the AMES Garden Party from the First, Second, and Fourth years as well as MPhil student James Kinsella-Brown and PhD students Jing Feng and Junfu Wong**

衷 by Lala Tsu). Two days later, our exams started, and although it was a stressful period, we were happy to see one another in the exam hall knowing that we were all in this together.

These past two terms were riddled with uncertainty and social isolation, but with the help of all our professors and supervisors who did their absolute best to make their lessons as interesting and engaging as possible, we were able to get through a challenging year. We are incredibly grateful for their help and support throughout the course of the academic year. As 班长, I would also like to extend my thanks to my wonderful classmates. Without you, all the achievements mentioned in this report (and many more) would not have been possible, and I think that we can collectively give ourselves an enormous pat on the back for surviving a very bizarre first year of university.

We hope that we can get back to the classroom in Michaelmas, but for now, 暑假快乐!

- Romano Tucci

Undergraduate Class of 2020

## Graduate Student Updates



蔣經國國際學術交流基金會  
Chiang Ching-kuo Foundation for International Scholarly Exchange

Firstly, congratulations to **Flavia Xi Fang**, **Kelsey Granger**, and **Rong Wu** who all received Chiang Ching-kuo Foundation Doctoral Fellowships for their ongoing research!



We would also like to congratulate **Zhenru Jacqueline Lin** who will be receiving her PhD this July. Her doctoral thesis examines volunteer and charity practices in contemporary China surrounding the support for elderly veterans and the commemoration of fallen soldiers of the former-Nationalist Revolutionary Army (Guomintang or KMT Army) who fought the Japanese Imperial Army during the Sino-Japanese War (1937-45). In August 2021, she will start her new academic journey in the Centre of China Studies at the Chinese University of Hong Kong as a Research Assistant Professor and we wish her every success in her future academic career! You can read her interview in this issue for more information about her doctoral project!

Third-year PhD student **Junfu Wong's** doctoral project seeks to reconstruct the ritual practices of lay people in the Guanzhong region during the late fifth and sixth centuries CE through examining stone stele inscriptions. One of his papers entitled "Paintings of

Ports and Ships at Canton of the Qing Dynasty China during the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries" will be published as a chapter in an edited book *Art and the Sea* (Liverpool University Press). He is now working on an edited volume in Chinese on Kucha clay sculptures kept in museums in the West, namely, in Germany and France.



**Kelsey Granger** has had her first article "Three Curious Dogs in a Dunhuang Manuscript" published in the *Bulletin of SOAS*, available to read [online here](#). One of these lapdogs can be seen in the line-drawing above. She will also be making her Youtube debut with a video essay on early medieval dog burials for Trinity College, Dublin entitled "Burying Bones." She will also be presenting on intercultural marriage in the Tang period at the upcoming European Association of Chinese Studies Conference, to be held online 24-28 August 2021. Hoping to finish her PhD in the coming academic year with the assistance of her CCK Foundation Doctoral Fellowship, she has been writing her thesis while also managing to make time for her favourite spectator sports: Formula One and Eurovision.

We also have an interview in this issue with doctoral student **James Dawson** about how Covid affected his fieldwork in China while researching the legacy of Third Front Construction.

## Meet a Graduate Student



In this issue, we speak to Zhenru Jacqueline Lin on her recently-completed doctoral thesis centred on a historical redress movement which aims to assist and honour the Kuomintang (KMT) veterans who fought in the War of Resistance against Japan (1937-45) but, due to contemporary politics, have lived in straitened circumstances in China since 1949.

***Hi Jacqueline, can you summarise the aims of your thesis?***

My doctoral thesis examines volunteer and charity practices in contemporary China surrounding the support for a group of veterans. Unlike the World War II veterans of other countries who receive support and recognition for their service, Chinese veterans suffered great injustices for their political identities during the communist period. The majority of surviving veterans—who usually live in impoverished rural areas—continue to struggle through abject poverty. To right those perceived historical wrongs, in the late 1990s local activists from different regions began to conduct peer-to-peer caregiving programmes. The last decade has seen further development by charitable NGOs which brand the KMT veterans as ‘national heroes’ through online platforms. These organisations transform early scattered grassroots activities into a charity project that receives political support, financial resources, and societal recognition. Foregrounding the institutional production and social networking among different stakeholders, my doctoral thesis interrogates a new modality of doing good as featured in the digital turn of Chinese society: the e-commercialised charity.

***Your research must have involved a great deal of fieldwork—can you talk us through how you carried this out?***

Methodologically speaking, this anthropological study is primarily based on my long-term fieldwork on redress activist communities and the NGOs that work with them. My fieldwork was made up of two parts: intensive in-person fieldwork and continued online engagement. I conducted fieldwork with redress activist communities from June to September in 2015 and again from January 2018 to March 2019. As a voluntary member of the redress activist community in 2015, I worked with activists to locate KMT veterans, exhume the remains of the war dead, and perform commemorative rituals for fallen KMT members. During my fieldwork from 2018-19, I interned full-time at an NGO sponsoring the redress movement. I was assigned to a position within the communication department of this NGO based in Shenzhen. In addition to my work in mainland China, I joined commemoration events organised by the NGO in Taiwan, Burma, and Thailand during business trips.

The second part of my fieldwork was a continued engagement with the redress activists’ online communities from 2015 until March 2019. The popularisation of the internet and social media in



**In an exhumation project in Hunan province**

China provides the “infrastructure” of the redress movement. Pioneering redress activists were motivated to participate because of historical accounts about KMT soldiers’ participation in World War II that were circulating online, outside of the absolute control of the state in late-1990s China. Moreover, the local communities were connected via online forums, chatrooms, and social media.

**Why was the second part of your fieldwork, i.e. a sustained presence in online communities, so crucial in this research?**

The most critical element for the sustainability of these redress programmes, i.e. financial backing, was provided by the general public via online platforms. As Christine Hine argues in her deft meditation on digital ethnography, rather than being separate from “real life,” the internet is embedded in various aspects of social practices, with considerable continuity between online and offline spaces. She notes that “In popular discourse and everyday experience...the internet has become much more routinely a place to express an embodied self rather than a place to leave the body behind” (Hine 2015:43).

The “embedded, embodied, and everyday” characteristics of the internet require a new strategy to conduct fieldwork. Not only are the physical spaces of the commemorative rituals real, but virtual communities are also connected to reality. By combining participant observation, virtual ethnography, oral history, in-depth interviews, archival research, and discourse analysis, this dissertation maps the development of this redress movement, the expansion of the redress activists’ networks, and the dynamics involved in the re-writing of Chinese history.

**What other research have you been involved in during your doctoral studies?**

I have also published two articles on Second World War commemoration in *Memory Studies* and the *Journal of Contemporary Religion*. I am now working on my first monograph based on my masters dissertation on gendered nationalism in Asia alongside a co-authored book with her supervisor **Dr Adam Yuet Chau** on the constitution of modern China Polity. I have also been invited to contribute as a reviewer by editors from *Memory Studies* since 2019.



**Delivering materials to veterans as a volunteer**

## A Change of Plans...

The Covid pandemic has affected all facets of our life this past year, and has also impacted the kind of research we are able to carry out. In this issue, we hear from PhD student James Dawson about being in lockdown during his fieldwork in China and how the pandemic has meant a change in approach to his thesis on contemporary China.



**James, your thesis is focused on the Third Front Construction, can you summarise your research aims?**

I began my PhD with the intention of researching the Cold War-era industrialisation of China's interior (the region christened the 'Third Front' in 1964) by writing a mostly-oral history of a coal and steel producing city hidden deep in the mountains. The city, Liupanshui, was born out of Mao's secret project to create a self-sufficient military-industrial complex in preparation for war with either the US or the USSR and, in 2013, became the host of the PRC's first museum dedicated to the commemoration of the scheme. I happened to visit the museum a within a few months of its opening and was immediately struck by its positive portrayal of a period (the 1960s and 1970s) usually associated with the 'chaos' of the Cultural Revolution.

Instead, the museum displays heralded that era as one that brought industrial development to not only that isolated corner of Guizhou, but to numerous other parts of southwest and northwest China as well. After doing some research, I realised that the literature on the Third Front was sparse, and what little that existed was, on the whole, highly critical of the 'wasteful' and 'irrational' strategy – in stark contrast to what the new museum claimed. Absent from these hegemonic discourses, however, was the voices of the workers who actually participated in the scheme, 4 million of whom

were relocated to the hinterland from China's traditional industrial centres and coastal cities. It was their 'version' of Third Front history, in all its subjectivity, that I wanted to explore in depth in my PhD dissertation.

**Your research has been greatly impacted by Covid—what have some of the more obvious impacts been?**

Yes, it has. I began my field work in China in December 2019 and had been collecting data for nearly a month when COVID-19 restrictions put an end to all activities (except the regular ordering of food delivery). After being locked-down for a couple of weeks, and with no foreseeable end to that situation on the horizon, I decided to take one of the last available flights out of China in mid-February. My plan to spend a total of eight months doing research 'in the field' was thus over before it had really begun. Originally, I had expected to interview between 40 and 60 'Third Fronters' for my oral history, but had only managed to complete nine interviews in Liupanshui before my departure.

Not long after coming home it became apparent that a swift return to China was going to be impossible. I soon realised that my research plan would need to be scrapped and a new one that could be



盘江矿务局汽修厂 1977 年研制生产的“盘江牌”630 轻便旅行汽车



undertaken outside of China formulated. In consultation with my supervisor, **Prof. Hans van de Ven**, I switched the focus of the project away from recounting Liupanshui's history through the memories of its builders to examining the broader cultural memory of Third Front construction and its reintegration into the CCP's master narrative of national history. Today, my research looks to trace the afterlife of Third Front construction from much-criticised state secret in the early post-Mao era, through becoming a new rustbelt and 'site of forgetting' during three decades of reform, before being reimagined in the present as part of the Xi administration's effort to Make the Mao Era Great Again.

#### ***What about the less obvious impacts of Covid?***

Something unexpected has been the lingering sense of detachment from my colleagues and the scholarly environment in general, and how that has dampened my motivation. I now realise that before COVID-19 I had taken many elements of academic life – chats in the common room over bad Buttery coffee and engagement with the wider university community at seminars (and pubs) – for granted, and not appreciated how they contribute to keeping me motivated and productive. It has been a challenge on occasion to remember that I am even supposed to be at the university at all. Having spoken with numerous colleagues, though, it seems that I am not the only one to have felt like this during the last year or so! That is why it has been great to get back in the FAMES library again.

#### ***How have you managed to navigate the new online and socially-distant research environment?***

As it apparently has for nearly everyone, it has already become second nature to engage online with colleagues and students. And from the perspective of my own research, the opportunities presented by the new online learning environment have definitely prevented me from succumbing too often to the low-key sense of alienation mentioned above. For example, and as a part of his small group of supervisees, I have been fortunate that Prof. van de Ven has offered us continued support by hosting a weekly get-together on Teams in which we have the opportunity to discuss both our own work and the China studies field more broadly.

#### ***And finally, having been based in England for much longer than previously anticipated, what has been a surprising discovery you've made working and researching in Cambridge?***

Like most people, I have spent lots of time out walking and exploring many parts of the city and surrounding area I might not have seen without the pandemic. One place I can recommend is the Cherry Hinton chalk pits, which can be reached on foot from the city centre in about thirty minutes. I was taken there for the first time by friends and have been back a few times since. The chalk from the quarries was used to build some of the university colleges and provide lime for cement. Today they provide a peaceful and natural habitat for a variety of wildlife or a procrastinating PhD candidate looking for a quiet spot to read.



## Staff Updates

First and foremost, we would like to welcome **Dr Lucy Zhao** who will be joining us from the University of Sheffield to our post in Chinese Language and Linguistics.



Of course, we must also thank **Dr Boping Yuan**, Reader in Chinese Language and Linguistics, for his decades of service since first teaching at Cambridge in 1992. As the director of the undergraduate Chinese language programme, Dr Yuan has been an integral part of Cambridge's Chinese Studies course for almost thirty years. In that time, not only has he advanced his own research in second-language acquisition and linguistics but he has also supervised and fostered countless students who have since moved into careers in China using the language skills he taught them. His visits to those on their year-abroad were always a source of great excitement, particularly for students studying in Qingdao as Dr Yuan knew all the very best local restaurants! We wish him every success in the future, and once again sincerely thank him for his time and energy over these past 29 years here.



We would also like to extend our congratulations to **Emma Wu** on her promotion to Senior Language Teaching Officer. Please see our previous issue for an interview on her time in Cambridge, her latest book *Practical Chinese Usage*, and her experiences teaching language in lockdown.

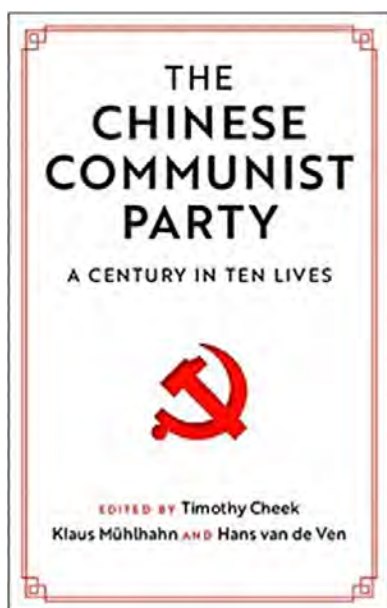
**Dr Noga Ganany** has been focusing on her ongoing book project, tentatively titled *Reading and Reverence: Hagiographic Literature and Religious Practice in Late-Ming China*. Her review of Li and Hegel's translation of *Xiyoubu*, "Further Adventures on the Journey to the West," will be published in *Bulletin of SOAS* (84/2). Her article "Journeys Through the Netherworld in Late-Ming Hagiographic Narratives" will be published in the December 2021 volume of *Late Imperial China*. She is currently writing an article, "Literature, Religion, and late-Ming Print Culture in Deng Zhimo's *Saints Trilogy*," for a special issue of *Religions* on literature and religion in China.

**Dr Adam Chau** published two articles: 'Daoist on Top or Host on Top?: The Relationship Between the Daoist Liturgical Framework and Local Cults in the Jiao 醮'. In *Daoism and Local Cults*, edited by Philip Clart (Taipei: Chinese Cultural Centre, Taiwan National Library) and 'Ritual Terroir: The Generation of Site-Specific Vitality'. *Archives des Sciences Sociales des Religions* 193 (Jan-Mar 2021) (Special Issue 'Regulating Religious Pluralities: Comparing the Indian and Chinese Worlds', edited by Vincent Goossaert and Peter van der Veer). Amongst his many projects, he is co-authoring a book on 'spheres' (jie 界) in modern and contemporary China.

Since his book *Dunhuang Manuscript Culture, End of the First Millennium* was published last December, **Dr Imre Galambos** has had two further publications: "Premodern Punctuation and Layout", in Jack W. Chen et al., eds., *Literary Information in China: A History*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2021, and "Untying the Bonds of Hatred: Manuscripts of a Dhāraṇī from Dunhuang", in the *International Journal of Buddhist Thought & Culture* 30.2 (2020), 161–191.

## Staff Updates

The latter of these was the subject of his recent talk as part of the “2021 DIRI Buddhist Academy Zoominar Series.” In August, he will give a lecture series titled “Buddhist texts across languages: The manuscripts of Central Asia” at the 2021 Glorison International Intensive Program on Buddhism, hosted by Harvard FAS CAMLab.



**Prof. Hans van de Ven** writes: “The most significant thing I have done is to publish *The Chinese Communist Party: A Century in Ten Lives*. It’s received good reviews, and I have given virtual book talks with my co-editors at the UBC in Canada, Heidelberg in Germany, the Beijing Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, and the Foreign Correspondents Club in Hong Kong.”

“I have also been busy with developing the School’s Global Humanities Programme, which involves building relations with Nanjing University, Fudan, the Chinese University of Hong Kong, Ashoka University in India, the American University of Beirut, and Universidad Diego Portales in Chile. **Dr Shruti Kapila** from History and I joined the VC, **Stephen Toope**, in a *Cambridge Conversations* about Global Humanities.” This video, entitled *Cambridge Conversations: China, India and the echoes of the past on the world of tomorrow*, can be watched on Youtube [here](#).

**Prof. Roel Sterckx** delivered a keynote at the conference “Other Bodies: Disability and Bodily Impairment in Early and Medieval China”, organised by **Dr Avital Rom** (FAMES & Needham Research Institute) and gave a lecture in the “Culture in Perspective Series” at the University of Ghent. He published an essay for Engelsberg Ideas and has been appointed to the International Scientific Advisory Board (Fachbeirat) of the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science in Berlin.



Finally, we would also like to thank **Shen-hsing Hong** for her wonderful contribution to the language teaching team over the past few years. Particularly in these unprecedented times, her energy and enthusiasm have been of such benefit to the undergraduate students learning Chinese in lockdown. We wish her all the best as she returns to Taiwan! Here she is with Chinese students from all four years at the FAMES Garden Party!



## Current NRI Scholars



**Dr Jingyi Jenny Zhao, ISF Research Fellow writes:**

In February 2021, I began my position at the NRI as ISF Research Fellow, a post jointly held with the Needham Research Fellowship at Clare Hall. I have been in Cambridge for a number of years prior to this fellowship, having studied for my BA, MPhil and PhD degrees at the Faculty of Classics, and having held the Lloyd-Dan David Research Fellowship at the NRI and Darwin College.

My research concerns the comparative study of ancient Greek and early Chinese philosophy, focusing in particular on the emotions, moral psychology, and notions of the good life. More recently, I have developed an interest in representations of infancy and childhood in ancient Chinese and Greek thought, exploring the ways in which children are used as paradigms in thinking about a range of issues that are fundamental to living a good life. This work perfectly bridges my interest in the classics and my fascination for developmental psychology and children's education in a contemporary context.

Currently, I am working on my book manuscript *Aristotle and Xunzi on Shame, Moral Education and the Good Life* which is based on my doctoral thesis and under contract with OUP. In this work, I map out shame-related conceptual clusters in the ancient Greek and early Chinese traditions and use Aristotle and Xunzi to illustrate how studying the past can effectively illuminate contemporary discussions on the emotions and their role in individual development and social integration.

One unique aspect of my fellowship involves a partnership with the ISF school in Hong Kong, whereby I supervise school pupils on their annual summer programme at the NRI. Due to the pandemic, this year's programme has been held exclusively online. It has been a rewarding experience guiding the students on their individual research projects on Chinese history and civilisation, with topics ranging from Jing Ke and the Qin emperor, to the Chinese sun and moon mirrors (*yangsui* and *fangzhu*), to the history of  $\pi$  and the relevance of the Manchurian Plague to the current pandemic.

Alongside academic work, I am passionate about public outreach and especially philosophy for children. I have been conducting interviews with distinguished academics from a variety of disciplines since 2018 and publishing them on WeChat (scan QR code) as well as in academic journals. For an interview on my research and interests, please see the [Clare Hall blog](#).



**Dr Avital Rom, Ho Peng Yoke Fellow writes:**

The news on receiving the three-month long Ho Peng Yoke Fellowship at the Needham Research Institute found me at the hospital in May 2020, having just given birth to my daughter. After studying at FAMES under the supervision of **Professor Roel Sterckx**, I received my PhD from the University of Cambridge in February 2020. My fellowship at the NRI, which I took on between February



and May this year, was dedicated to working on my research project titled *A Mind That Cannot Hear: Perceptions of Deafness in Early China*, which aims to propose the first comprehensive study of deafness in early Chinese textual accounts. *A Mind That Cannot Hear* in a way derives from my doctoral research, which examines the political role of music and the sense of hearing in early China. In early Chinese society, where the concept of hearing (*wen* 聞) was virtuously synonymous with knowing, I argue in my work, deafness was perceived of above all as the lack of ability to access and process knowledge. This raises questions regarding both the life of the deaf in early China, and the usage of deafness as a metaphorical and rhetorical tool in early Chinese texts.

This project, in turn, became part of a larger collaborative project I've been running, which explores notions of disability and bodily impairment in early China. Much of my time at the NRI was dedicated to organising an international workshop on the subject titled 'Other Bodies: Disability and Bodily Impairment in Early and Medieval China.' I had the pleasure of hosting (online!) eight speakers from around the world, who delivered fascinating presentations.

Together with **Dr Jenny Zhao**, I organised the NRI seminar series for the 2021 Lent and Easter terms. We felt it important to continue the Institute's long-lasting tradition iconic Friday afternoon seminars, which was halted for the first time since the 1990s due to the Covid-19 outbreak. It was lovely to see people gather in the virtual space to exchange ideas, or even just to vent about academic life under lockdown.

In a globally challenging year, it has been wonderful to be able to work with and at the Needham Research Institute. Currently, I am finalising a manuscript based on my doctoral dissertation, *Polyphonic Thinking: Music and Authority in Early China*. This autumn I will be taking up a one-semester postdoctoral fellowship at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, dedicated mostly to working on the edited volume for 'Other Bodies' in addition to teaching an MA course on music in ancient China. Upon return to Cambridge in January, I will continue to supervise courses for FAMES. It is my hope to continue working in academia, teaching and conducting research related to early Chinese history in the years to come.

## Where Are They Now?

In this issue, we hear from recent graduates and alumni about their journeys, experiences, and their next steps after Cambridge.



**Undergraduate alumnus Aron White, Class of '13, writes that:**

I applied to study Chinese because I thought it was the language most likely to open doors to an exciting career, without any idea what that might be. Knowing no Chinese when I started in 2009, the course was very much jumping in at the deep end, but I really enjoyed language

classes and the inimitable flair of **Emma Wu**.

On graduating in 2013, I had little sense of what I wanted to do beyond trying to protect the natural environment. Happily, I quickly found that knowing Chinese opened doors - a few months volunteering with local NGOs in Taiwan was followed by a paid internship with Save the Rhino in London. After this, I joined the Environmental Investigation Agency, a London-based NGO which campaigns against environmental crime and abuse, including illegal and unsustainable wildlife trade, the focus of my role. I used my knowledge of Chinese every day at EIA, whether researching use of threatened species in traditional Chinese medicine, coordinating with amazing conservationists in China or taking part in summits where international wildlife policy was decided.

Earlier this year, I moved to China Dialogue, an organisation I've long admired for their commitment to constructive, collaborative conversations on the environment between experts and journalists in China and around the world. Also working on their sister site The Third Pole, which focuses on the Himalayas and Central and South Asia, I have the privilege of working with reporters across Asia on stories about the impacts of climate change, biodiversity loss and injustice. The work can be challenging and distressing, but I am immensely privileged to be working with amazing people on issues that I really care about, and my degree in Chinese has made this possible.

**Doctoral alumnus 2002-2007 Prof. Sungwu Cho writes that:**

Looking back on my time in AMES, I always feel it was too short, probably because I was (and still am) not very happy with the amount and quality of work I did during my PhD days. But really I spent quite a few years in Cambridge, including a post-doctoral research fellowship. I spent five years on my PhD dissertation on Daoist death rituals



in medieval China, then spent another two years on my post-doctoral research also centred on Daoist rituals.

Upon my return to Korea, I became interested in Buddhism in medieval China, partly because I realised that certain aspects of Daoism are difficult to fully appreciate without a good knowledge of Buddhism, and also because I felt that the study of Buddhism is essential in understanding medieval China in a broader sense. Fortunately, I found a position in the Asian History Department, Seoul National University in 2012, and was able to start working on Buddhism more seriously. This transition or expansion in academic interest was further facilitated during my research leave at Kyoto University, where I joined a Buddhist text reading group of Japanese scholars. I am still studying Buddhism in the Northern Dynasties, and it feels like I'm in another PhD course that will continue forever!

Speaking of which, my first memory as a PhD student was a text reading seminar with my supervisor, **Prof. David McMullen**. The first couple of texts he prepared for me were *muzhiming*, tomb inscriptions, from the Tang dynasty. As is well known, *muzhiming* are not a very easy source in every sense, and reading them usually involves an intense struggle with all kind of dictionaries. As we did not always have access to the digitised version of *Hanyu da cidian* and other references in classical Chinese back then, it was literally a laborious job to handle those heavy books to decipher almost every single phrase. I had a rather hard time in the first few weeks with *muzhiming*, but I learned many things about how to deal with Chinese sources and it academically moulded me in many ways. I have even been reading some newly discovered *muzhiming* with my own students, since I believe they will benefit from this experience. Is history really repeating itself!

# Life Beyond the Library: Flexible

## Thinking



**Zhenru Jacqueline Lin**, who will be receiving her PhD this July, has been keeping busy as an advanced pole dancer, an aerial yogi, and a self-confessed gym junkie alongside her studies. Jacqueline has also been a member of the Cambridge University Pole Sports (CUPS), the official pole dancing and fitness society of our university. She says these sports are the reason why she lives in West Cambridge where the largest gym in town is located!

This issue, she takes some time out to speak about her experiences as a woman in sport and how she balances fitness and research.

**Hi Jacqueline! How did you first get into aerial yoga and pole fitness?**

When I was a child, I always dreamed of being a performance artist who was able to master using her body as a medium to express herself and to communicate with the world.

I did my first pole dancing class with one of my colleagues from the NGO I did my doctoral fieldwork in China with. I immediately fell in love with this sport which combines well-rounded physical strength with sensational

dance moves. Like pole fitness, aerial sports are creative ways to improve spinal flexibility, muscle stamina, and mental health.

***Is fitness for you a way to clear your mind or is it a tool to help you with your research?***

It is like an adult playground where I can not only let off steam after work but also build a positive body-mind connection. I consider doing these sports as a serious leisure activity that requires both a systematic study of theory and an innovative application of these theories in practice, which is the same as in academic work!

***And finally, have you faced any adversity being a gym junkie as a woman?***

Women always face judgement when they attempt to take control of their own bodies. I am always amused by comments like “you make your body look like a man!” or “pole dancing is not for women like you.” As a feminist researcher, these comments affirm how the sports I have done for years challenge some stereotypes regarding female bodies and the stigmatisation of the expression of female sexuality.

# Life Beyond the Library: Artists in Residence

Third-year PhD student **Junfu Wong** has been keeping busy painting, with two works titled ‘远山无舟’ and ‘Wolfson College’:



Another third-year PhD student, **Flavia Xi Fang**, completed this illustration for the cover of her recent book and has also dabbled in calligraphy:



And finally, the most exciting and anticipated artwork sent in is a video made by our First-Year Students and **Emma Wu** celebrating **Hong laoshi** with a recording of the classic “对不起我的中文不好” - a staple at the First Year Poetry Recital all the way back to 2013 and the Class of ‘16!



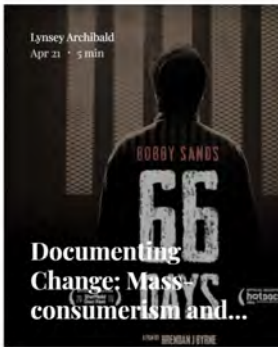
# Advertisement: Panoramic Magazine

Panoramic is a global magazine and society run by Cambridge students which has featured students from almost 30 different countries across five issues with the core aim of providing a space for young people across the world to discuss prominent topics from perspectives less highlighted in mainstream media.

Our committee applications for the coming year are now open, with openings for two editors, a

digital editor, an interview correspondent and a website technician. Role descriptors and in-depth application info can be found at: <https://forms.gle/5keCZEyvNJEQRyaj9> with a July 31<sup>st</sup> deadline. This is a great way to gain experience relevant to journalism, media, design or in a tech role, working with our core team of like-minded individuals, and we welcome applications from anyone with an interest in global politics and culture!

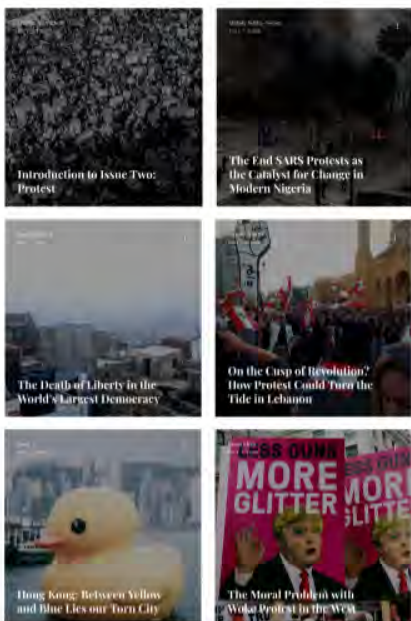
- Laura Dionysio-Li



## panoramic

global issues, local voices

some of the pieces from issue 02: protest



An international magazine in association with



### the magazine

Panoramic is an international magazine and student society at the University of Cambridge. Each month we focus on a single global issue, publishing pieces that all address it, but from very different locations and perspectives.

### the writer

Our writers are students from universities across the world. With the release of issue 05, we will have featured students from almost 30 different countries in under six months. Their pieces merge the personal with the political, so that each writer's regional exploration becomes a means to reflect with nuance on the broader relevance of the topic.

### the reader

So far, we have attracted readers from more than 60 countries across the globe. We have received overwhelmingly positive feedback from readers, who have expressed pleasure at the quality, novelty and depth of our pieces.

some of our partners:



# Advertisements and Further Information

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STUDIES, CAMBRIDGE



UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE  
**ALUMNI**  
THOMAS WADE SOCIETY

The Thomas Wade Society was founded in 2009 as the University of Cambridge Chinese Studies Alumni Society. Until 2016 the society was dormant, when the Class of 2016 decided to rebuild the society

into something new that could bring faculty members, alumni and friends of the faculty together.

If you would like to join the TWS network, please complete the sign-up form at <http://tinyurl.com/twssignupform> and/or join the society's social media groups on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/groups/553636164826475/> and LinkedIn <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/8577879>. If you have any questions, would like to find out more or even help out, please do not hesitate to get in touch with the committee at [thewadesociety@gmail.com](mailto:thewadesociety@gmail.com).



Founded by our current second-year students, the Cambridge University China Forum (CUCF) hosts a range of exciting events relating to China. To find out more, please join our Facebook page [@camchina](https://www.facebook.com/camchina), or go to our website [www.camchina.org](http://www.camchina.org) to join our mailing list.

Daniel Crouch Rare Books (4 Bury Street, St James's, London SW1Y 6AB) is a specialist dealer in antique atlases, maps, plans, sea charts and voyages dating from the fifteenth to the nineteenth centuries. Please scan the QR code to access our WeChat account where we post articles on our pieces in Chinese, or contact Miss Qi Sun [qi@crouchrarebooks.com](mailto:qi@crouchrarebooks.com)



Looking to join our seminar series mailing lists? Please email [kl394@cam.ac.uk](mailto:kl394@cam.ac.uk) (Kelsey Granger) to be added to the Dunhuang and Silk Road Seminar series mailing list and [ayc25@cam.ac.uk](mailto:ayc25@cam.ac.uk) (Dr Adam Chau) to be added to the China Research Seminar series mailing list.

Is there something you would like to be included in our next issue? Don't hesitate to contact the editor by email at [kl394@cam.ac.uk](mailto:kl394@cam.ac.uk) whether it be with regards to an event, advertisement, interview idea, general suggestion, or an article contribution. Alumni 'where are they now' suggestions, vintage photos of the Faculty, and class (virtual) reunions are especially welcomed!

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[www.ames.cam.ac.uk](http://www.ames.cam.ac.uk)

For more information and updates, check the Cambridge Chinese Studies twitter account: <https://twitter.com/ChinaCambridge>

Plus, check our library's twitter account for events and information: [https://twitter.com/ames\\_library](https://twitter.com/ames_library)