

New Zealand China Friendship Society Inc. – Nelson Branch

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No. 6 – October, 2013

~ Next meeting Friday 11 October ~

Mark Soper with Tea Tales

We welcome Mark Soper (aka Mr Tea) to our October meeting to share his knowledge and insights regarding the nutritional and health values of Chinese teas. Mark explains his personal and professional fascination with his topic:

Camelia sinensis, street name 'Tea'.

Camellia denotes a prodigiously flowering shrubby plant genus with members found throughout south and east Asia; *sinensis* declares its Chinese origin. Tea is guesstimated to be found in more homes around the world than any other edible plant matter of flowering, shrubby characteristics.

Mark Soper, (aka Mr Tea), has done a lot of tea drinking in a great variety of tea shops and private parlours around the world. Even so, he finds it difficult to explain why tea is so commercially popular and how it could possibly trade at such low prices. He believes that such questions are best left to be answered by accountants and economists, marketeers and media types.

Mr Tea favours a health-based approach to the subject, inspired by Traditional Chinese Nutrition Theory. With a blend of empirical facts about global tea history and a pinch of contemporary food industry analysis, Mr Tea promises to inform and entertain even the most ardent coffee drinker with his 'Tea Tales'.



Tea Tales will begin at 5.30 pm (instead of the usual business meeting) and continue after the meal. We will, once again, be seated at tables for the evening to assist the demonstrations.

Friday 11 October .. Hearing House .. 5:30 pm

To arrange catering, please contact **Sally Warren** or leave a message
 phone: **546 6637** or email **sallywarren@hotmail.co.nz**

by Tuesday 8 October

Please ensure you make a booking if you require a meal, brought in from
 Nelson Oriental Restaurant. Vegetarian options can be arranged.

Do not contact Barbara Markland this time, as she is in China!



LAST MEETING, AUGUST 16



The Night of Chattering Sparrows was certainly noisy and enjoyable. More than 50 Mahjong-players, ranging from the experienced to merely hopeful, squeezed around nine tables to demonstrate and learn this time-honoured Chinese pastime. Members were joined by Nelson friends, 14 teachers from Beijing along with their homestay hosts, and our two Appo Hocton Scholars from Huangshi. Kathy Beatson earned a huge vote of thanks for managing the overcrowded classroom of multi-level learners. Our thanks also to Lori for inviting her experts, and to those who lent their Mahjong sets. The Beijing teachers have donated two sets of tiles, which will be in our library for future use of members.

It was our pleasure that evening to officially welcome our lovely students from Huangshi and to present them with our 'Welcome-to-Nelson' red envelopes with some proceeds from Appo Hocton book sales to help them settle into their new life here. We were also able to enjoy some singing from the Beijing teachers. Many members said it was a challenging, enjoyable and memorable evening.

NEW EMBASSY REPS VISIT NELSON

Earlier in August, the new political counsellor to Wellington, Mr Fang Qui accompanied by secretary Gu made an official visit to Nelson. NZCFS executive committee hosted them for dinner at the Nelson Oriental Restaurant where Mr Fang entertained us with stories from his various postings and his observations of life in Wellington. His arrival there was the week of the worst wind storm for half a century, followed by the 6.6 Cook Strait earthquake. At the same time the difficulties with NZ meat products and milk powder were causing diplomatic crises, and he was wondering, with a twinkle in his eye, what he had done to deserve this posting.



HUANGSHI SCHOLARS

Sun Xueqin, Sucy, and Gong Xiaomin, Sandie, seem to have settled well into their new lives in Nelson. Both are studying hard at NMIT and Sucy received pass marks for her first assignments, although she is not telling what her grades were. They are good friends and have now moved into a homestay where they can be together.



The girls have enjoyed a few outings with the Markland family. A marae visit, hosted by Sunny Alesana and including Christine's Chinese teachers was a great success with the girls enjoying watching kapahaka practice, learning to twirl the poi, and singing action songs. Marilyn and Colin Gibbs were again great hosts when we went out to the farm to see the lambs, and have a ride on the farm-bike trailer. Rabbit Island really impressed as it was a beautiful day when we went there, and the girls had their first experience of the wide spaces of a Nelson beach. A third outing was to Mapua, Kaiteriteri, the Riwaka resurgence and then to feed the eels at Jester House. Bryce and June Wild joined us for that trip, and it was good to get to know Sucy and Sandie a little better. We all look forward to meeting their parents when we go to Huangshi. Perhaps other members can arrange an outing while we're away?

MEMBERS TRAVELLING INCLUDE:

The Marklands, the Wilds, Lori Brudvik-Lindner, and Ruth Copeland on a friendship delegation to Huangshi, and Treasurer Royden, studying Turkey. Bon voyage all! We look forward to hearing all about it.

CHINESE GARDEN SPRING CELEBRATION

In spite of some doubtful weather forecasts, our annual Chinese Garden Party to combine Chinese Mid-Autumn Festival (nearly) with New Zealand Daylight Saving was largely a sunny affair in our lovely Scholars' Garden. Rebecca Wu entertained with her gu zheng and Chinese Society President Li sang some modern Chinese lyrics in traditional style. Kathy Beatson and June Wild served a range of Chinese teas for sampling, and there were some Chinese cookies in place of mooncakes this time. As you can see from the photos, the garden looked stunning with lanterns and the members enjoyed meeting friends new and old.



DENG FUND AWARD PROGRESS

Exec members gathered on August 27 to prepare the distribution of free copies of the Appo Hocton reprint to 392 high schools and 20 NZCFS branches and officials. Free copies have also gone to the embassy and consulates and to the original researchers, authors and designers. There has been enthusiastic feedback from recipients and further orders for bulk copies are being received and dispatched. We have been congratulated by many for engaging in this innovative project which is increasing friendship and understanding between Chinese and NZers, especially as it focuses on the future through the education of children and young people.

NEWS FROM HEXI COLLEGE: STEP BY STEP

Ferry and Aukje, are back at work for the first term of the academic year: September 2013, musing on the steps encountered in day-to-day life and their in-tourist holiday experiences:

Our six floor apartment block does not have an elevator as no building of six floors or less is allowed one in China. We live on the fifth floor and teach on the fifth floor and thus there are many steps we negotiate every day. Tough? You get used to it and it is good exercise. Imagine the water-courier though. We buy our drinking water, ordering two 20 liter bottles at a time and they are delivered at our front door. After the holidays a new water-carrier came up. Not the strappy young man who lugged two containers up at the same time, but a much older man, who could only manage one, and took a lot longer to get up the stairs. Then he had to go down again to get us the next container. It's his job. Downstairs in front of the apartment he had parked his three wheel electrical motorbike packed with more bottles to deliver. He is lucky, he has electrical transport. We have seen men on pushbikes delivering as many as eight full bottles of water or gas.

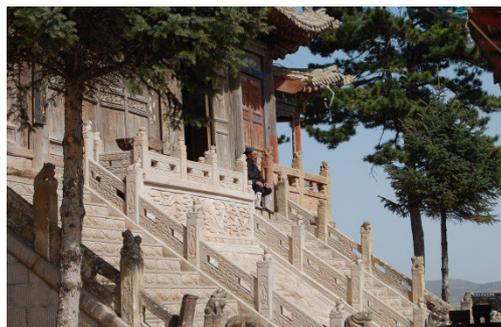
China is the land of steps. There are many places where you have to go down some steps first, just to get up some others later. The mountains too are adorned with gigantic flights of stairs. During our short mid-autumn break we had a day out to Mount Yanzhi near Shandan, and it made us stand still – to admire the view and catch our breath at nearly 2800 meters – by the fact that all these steps were made by men and women, carrying huge amounts of concrete and stone slabs up this steep mountain.



In New Zealand, tracks through the bush are mostly nice and soft underfoot. Here in China your feet usually meet concrete, rock, or the occasional wooden boardwalk. The sheer volume of people using these paths would probably leave trails muddy and worn if it were not for the solid surfaces underfoot. Also the most direct way to the top is straight up, so there are few meandering paths with a slowly ascending gradient.



Traveling in our free time has seen us climb many steps; under-or overpasses in busy cities, up and down mountains, up to temples, and up inside pagodas.



This summer we visited Lushan National Park, a good 1200 meters above the city of Jiujiang. It was a popular summer resort for western missionaries and visited by people like Mao Zedong and Chiang Kai-shek, to escape the hot humid summers at lower altitudes. With every 100 meters up, the temperature seemed to drop one degree Celsius. We enjoyed a pleasant couple of days with temperatures just below 30°C for a change.

On the mountain you can take buses to different beautiful sites in the area, one of them the “three-step waterfall”. After a fifteen minute walk from the bus stop on a path made of boulders laid in concrete to get on a cable car that would cover a rough section of the mountain, there was sign that it would be another kilometer and a half to the waterfall. It was straight down on steep steps only wide enough to accommodate small Chinese feet, large sections without a handrail. On the way down with wobbly knees, we could see on the faces of the people on their way up that the return trip was going to be hard work. Some of



them chose being carried in a chair, but most, many of them of an age where you would not have been surprised to see them shuffle around with a Zimmer-frame, did it under their own steam. A grandfather and his grandson were counting the steps as they hauled themselves up the steep steps. 1417, give or take a few, as I lost count a few times saying hello to people as more poured down to the waterfall as we made our way back up.



These steps need to be maintained and it is humbling when you take a break and you see a man doing the same, resting against a large flat rock he is carrying on his back to do some repair work further up the mountain.

We saw the Longsheng rice terraces near Guilin and the Zhuanglang terraced fields in Gansu, all man-made, uncountable hours of manpower to shift and tame mountains, one step at the time.