

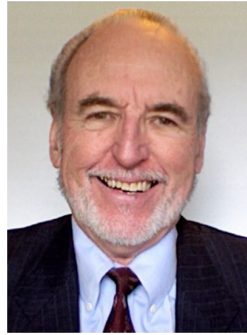


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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear China Council members:

The New Year is well-started. We look forward to another year of exciting events, interesting and informative programs, and new approaches to keeping the Northwest China Council thriving as well as fiscally and organizationally sound.



Most immediately, our Annual Chinese New Year Banquet and Auction Gala will be held on Saturday, March 7, at Wong's King Restaurant. This year we have the help of Sara Tam, an experienced Auction Manager, helping to pull together the myriad details for a successful event. A successful auction requires that we have an interesting array of items for our guests to bid on. Be creative in thinking of things you can donate to the live and silent auctions... a week or weekend at the house at the beach, or the condo at Black Butte; ...the nice artwork that you can't find a place to hang; a gift certificate from your favorite restaurant or spa; ...those Blazers or Timbers tickets that you won't use... Grandma's tchotchkes from the trunk in the basement...and the list goes on.

While the auction provides a large chunk of our budget, it does not do the job by itself. The bulk still comes from membership dues and donations. Over the next few weeks, our revitalized Membership Committee will reach out to our long list of former members and other non-member supporters to renew memberships and otherwise support the Council financially. We run a very tight financial ship, but need to come up with an additional \$10,000-\$15,000 each year to cover normal operating costs. Not-for-profit does not mean no operating costs at all.

We will continue to collaborate with other China and international-related organizations in the area: the Sister City and State organizations, the CCBA, the China and Asia-related departments at PSU, U of O, and local academic programs, the U.S. Foreign Commercial Service, and our corporate partners.

Willow Zheng's Mandarin classes continue to be well-attended. Our Chinese Movie Nights also continue to draw a loyal following on the second Tuesdays of each month.

The Book Club draws interested readers for discussions of current topics.

Among the new programs this year will be Chinese cooking classes offered in conjunction with Portland Culinary Workshop. The plan is for quarterly classes on Sunday afternoons, starting in the spring. Watch your inbox for details.

The Business Network is planning a "Doing Business in Taiwan" event, in conjunction with local Taiwan-related businesses and organizations, and Business Oregon. Look for particulars as we develop the program.

Our program to hire an Executive Director is in the planning stages. We sent preliminary Letters of Interest to selected local grant funders for funds to cover an ED's salary and costs for three years. We are awaiting responses.

All in all, 2015 will be a challenging and exciting year for the Northwest China Council. I look forward to working with all of you, our friends and supporters, to make it a rousing success.

-Paul Millius

MOVIE NIGHT PROGRAM

The Movie Night Program continues into this new year with its signature splendid array of cinematic selections. Come join us every second Tuesday at Red Robe Teahouse in Chinatown for relaxing yet thought-provoking evenings of food, tea, films, and post-film discussions. Arriving at 6pm allows time to order food before the 6:30 start time. February's film is described below. Hope to see you there!

For the Children (2003), aka "Meili de dajiao!" After her husband and child died, the peasant Meili Zhang founded a school for the children in her isolated, parched village in northwest China, "so that the kids may have hope." Xia Yu, a gorgeous young woman from Beijing, and a "real" teacher, comes to help at the school. She corrects their pronunciation, teaches them some English, and encourages Meili to obtain a computer. Of course, mutual culture shock sets in, but what transpires is an unfolding friendship of two women from radically different socio-economic and cultural contexts. Late in the film a turnabout is fair play when Xia takes the entire class of peasant kids to Beijing.

-Shireen Farrahi, Chair, Movie Night Program

Life and death is the biggest and most enduring mystery for humanity. It is not just a philosophical issue but a practical one of everyday concern. People often speak of the twins in the same breath, but it actually boils down to one concern, that is, death. Are there ways to prolong life and delay death for as long as we wish? Is there such a thing as longevity or even immortality? The ancient sage Laozi has much to say about these questions in his Daoist classic, *Dao De Jing*.

Laozi mentions the word 死 (si) “die” or “death” for the first time in Chapter 6, where he says,

*The spirit of the valley never dies;
It is called the profound female.*

In Chapter 7 he invokes the concept of 生 (sheng) meaning “life” or “live.”

*Heaven lives long and Earth is lasting.
The reason why Heaven and Earth are long-lasting
Is because they do not will their own existence.
That is why they live long.*

In both quotations, the sage gives an affirmative answer to the question about longevity and immortality, but with a contingency. Embrace the spirit of the valley, and you will never die. The valley is Laozi’s favorite symbol for Dao as it embodies the spirit of humble inclusiveness and therefore enjoys as well as provides an inexhaustible source of energy. If you give up all your willful efforts to achieve longevity, you will be content and happy and therefore live a long life. Laozi comes back to these points again and again throughout his book, but he sets out high on a cosmic level. Here are a few more examples:

In Chapter 33, Laozi says,

*He who does not lose his foundation endures.
He who dies but never vanishes enjoys longevity.*

The second line may also be translated as, “He who dies but is not forgotten enjoys longevity” because the character 亡 (wang) for “vanish” could also be a homonym for the character 忘 meaning “forget.” The key word here is the Chinese character 壽 (shou) for longevity. It is a cultural icon found on bronze or ceramic utensils and in calligraphy for birthday celebrations. Laozi is saying that longevity and death do not have to be mutually exclusive. As long as your life embodies the foundational values of Dao, you will not vanish when you pass away.

In our earlier quote about “the spirit of the valley” Laozi also calls it “the profound female.” Why female? What has it to do with immortality? Here’s a quote from chapter 76:

*When alive humans are soft and weak,
When dead they are hard and stiff.
Grass and trees are soft and fresh when alive;
When dead they dry up and wither away.*

By observing the behavioral patterns of all things, Laozi notices that things alive tend to be soft and weak, which is characteristically female, while things dead tend to be stiff and brittle, which is characteristically male. That is why Laozi calls that which never dies “the profound female.” Elsewhere Laozi also points out that it is the female that gives birth to all things and nurtures them throughout their lives. That is also why he considers the Dao the Mother rather than Father of all things.

Now let us turn our attention to two nodules of profound thinking where Laozi takes a hard look at the phenomena of life and death. The first nodule occurs in Chapter 50:

*Of all who go from birth to death,
Those who live long
Are three out of ten;
Those who die young
Are three out of ten;
Those who are alive
But mill around in the field of death –
Are also three out of ten.
Now why is that?
It is because they take too good care of their lives.*

What is most striking about this passage is that, though Laozi lived before the modern science of demography, he was able to speak in demographic terms about the life spans of different kinds of people grouped according to their different genealogies and lifestyles. Through close observation, he saw three kinds of people: those born to live long, those destined to die young, and those who are still alive but get lost in the field of death. The first two categories are already taken care of. It is the last category that Laozi is most concerned about. He thinks these people need to know what is wrong and how to get out of their dead-end search for immortality, which he calls “field of death.” His diagnosis of their problem is simple: “It is because they take too good care of themselves.” The solution is self-evident: Just follow the example of Heaven and Earth and let go of their willful efforts and they will be duly rewarded.

NOTES ON LAOZI: LIFE AND DEATH & AGE OF AMBITION

Another concentrated dose of wise thinking on life and death is found in the synthesis of three chapters, Chapters 72, 74 and 75, with 74 as the centerpiece, 72 as the prelude, and 75 as a rondo. It all begins with the much misread first sentence of Chapter 74:

*If the common people do not fear death,
Why scare them with death?*

In our own era of revolution, people were led to think of these two lines as a eulogy for revolutionary heroism that knows no fear of death. The late Chairman Mao was one such reader (See his essay, "Farewell, Leighton Stuart"). He used this quote from Laozi to declare to his enemies that the Chinese people are not afraid of death and that it is therefore useless to threaten them with death. He also famously called on his subjects to "fear no death and fear no hardships." But that is not what Laozi is saying. Judging by the context of the three chapters I mentioned, Laozi does not believe that fearing no death is a good thing. As he puts it in Chapter 72,

*When the common people no longer fear terror,
A great terror is imminent.*

Laozi argues that having no fear of death means finding life no longer worth living because life is too harsh under severe oppression. And when people find life not worth living, they become desperate to such an extent that even the severest punishment cannot deter them from violence and crimes. This conclusion is clearly stated in Chapter 75 where Laozi laments,

*The common people take death lightly
Because those above care too much for their own life.
That is why they take death lightly.*

For that very reason, Laozi admonishes the rulers of his time to change the way they treat the common people,

*Do not constrict their living space;
Do not oppress their livelihood.
Only when there is no oppression,
Will people not feel tired of living.*

There is no historical evidence who Laozi's audience was in his own time. But since the vast majority of the populace were illiterate farmers and artisans, he had to address his teachings mainly to the literate elite, especially the ruling circles of the feudal states. Nonetheless, the text he left behind shows all the advice

he gave the rulers were for the good of the common people as well as for the rulers' own interest.

- Charles Q. Wu

Charles Q. Wu is Professor Emeritus of Chinese and Humanities at Reed College, where he taught from 1988-2002. All quotations from *Dao De Jing* are from his book titled, *Thus Spoke Laozi: A New Translation with Commentaries* - Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, 2013.

BOOK REVIEW: AGE OF AMBITION



Age of Ambition, by Evan Osnos

The Chinese word for ambition is 野心 "ye xin" or literally "wild heart". The *Economist* review of the book is titled *Wild at Heart* which is evocative but perhaps too romantic. The Chinese term often has a darker connotation of unscrupulousness and ruthlessness, which matches the undertones of "ambition" in English. The subtitle of the book is descriptive - *Chasing Fortune, Truth and Faith* which loosely divides and organizes the book into three main sections, and is based on articles Evan Osnos wrote during the eight years he spent in China.

As posed by the *Guardian* review of the book, "How does one criticize China without appearing to have a liberal pro-western agenda, and how does one write positively about China without sounding like a naive apologist? Is it even possible to write convincingly about a country of China's size and history without condensing its complexities into a single version of the truth?" Osnos's answer was to provide portraits of individuals in many walks of life, and let these subjects

and situations speak for themselves. Osnos wrote about the rich as well as the poor, the dissenters as well as the true believers, the muckrakers and the staunch supporters of the regime. Mostly he steered clear of party officials, and focused on strivers. Some of these individuals appeared chronologically in the three evolving sections, thereby providing a picture of China as it progressed from its earlier days of economic liberation and pursuit of fortune, through the partial liberation of information and availability of the Internet in pursuit of truth, to the near-the-present-day exposures of massive corruption, disillusionment and revival of the pursuit of faith.

During the Great Leap Forward and Cultural Revolution, upheavals initiated by Mao, the foundations of Chinese society, everything from fundamental beliefs and moral values to family attachments were overturned in favor of support for communism. Then with the economic reforms initiated by Deng Xiaoping, the party gave up Marxist doctrine in favor of free market forces. The pent up energy from the long years of repression took off with a vengeance with the rapid growth and development in China that most of us are now familiar with. This transformation was one hundred times the scale, and ten times the speed, of the first Industrial Revolution, which created modern Britain.

According to Osnos, for a time the party actually talked about eliminating propaganda. But instead they doubled down and expanded the Department of Propaganda; more recently renamed the Department of Publicity, an Orwellian "Ministry of Truth" that officially does not exist. They studied the most effective western PR techniques such as those employed by Coca-Cola as well as successful political operatives. As the Internet chatter was getting out of control, the Great Firewall of China was erected and many social media sites such as Facebook were banned.

Forty years ago, the Chinese people had none of the three "fortune, truth or faith" due to its political and economic situation. Now they have at least some of all three things and they want more. The bargain that the Communist Party of China (CPC) offered was and is to let it stay in power, and the people are allowed to get rich. But increasingly there is a growing sense that the ones who profit most and the way to get ahead are to be born into the right family, to have the right connections, or to pay the right bribes. It is telling when a child was asked what he aspired to be, and his response was to

become "a corrupt official" – they are the ones with the most goodies: staggering fortunes, beautiful mistresses, and even cleaner air and food.

Every so many years, the CPC leaders would call for a fight against corruption. Since the CPC had become more of a professional organization as a place to make connections or a path to government positions, as the government cracks down on corruption, they are hurting the beneficiaries of that corruption, namely Party members, thus eroding the very base of Party support. The current president's family is reported to have several hundreds of millions in assets. As more people took the government at its word on anti-corruption, they began to propose legal reforms, like income disclosures that would require local officials to report how much money they were earning. When this happened, the Party realized that they were losing control of the anti-corruption effort that they had created, and so they had to rein it in. The crusade to root out corruption had to be scaled back. The Party which had launched the anti-corruption campaign started to arrest some of the people who were trying to root out corruption.

The CPC is deathly afraid of what happened in Russia and vowed to never let that happen in China. As indicated by the impasse in Hong Kong, if the Party is unwilling to test out democratic experiments in an isolated enclave, chances of real reform are remote in China proper. The Party, in being so determined to avoid undertaking the kinds of reforms that it believes led to the collapse of the Soviet Union, has also closed off substantive beneficial reforms and so runs the risk of increasing the pressure that eventually will become impossible for them to manage.

- Gabe Zee

Age of Ambition: Chasing Fortune, Truth, and Faith in the New China by Evan Osnos. Farrar, Straus & Giroux. May, 2014. 416 pages.

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DRINK IN CHINA: JANIS MIGLAVS

On Wednesday, November 19, Oregon photographer Janis Miglavs spoke at the University of Oregon White Stag Building in downtown Portland for the final event in the China Council's 'Drink in China' series. His presentation 'China: The New Wine Frontier' explored the burgeoning development of China's wine industry for what will soon be the world's largest wine market.

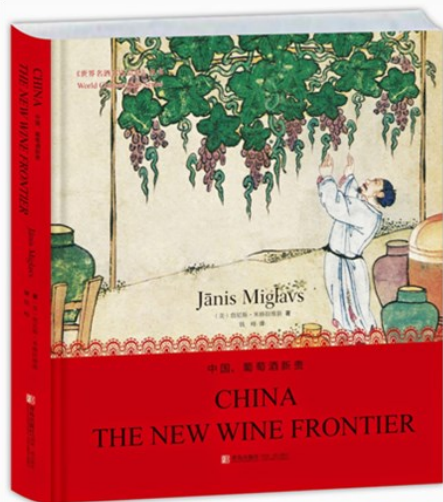
Janis Miglavs, named one of the world's best photographers of food and wine by *Gourmand Magazine*, is author of three books on wine: *Oregon: The Taste of Wine*; *Pacific Northwest: The Ultimate Winery Guide*; and the recently-published *China: The New Wine Frontier*. There were copies of this book for sale at the event.

Beginning in 2009, Miglavs traveled to China to document the development of the Chinese wine industry. The consumption of French wine - Bordeaux in particular - has become a symbol of wealth and luxury for the Chinese nouveau riche. One of the challenges facing wineries in China is educating the public on what constitutes a good wine. Chinese wineries often hire European vintners to consult and train their winemakers. Recognizing the potential of the Chinese market, the French winemaker Chateau Lafite has entered a joint venture with a vineyard in Shandong Province.

Miglavs' fascinating presentation, illustrated with his outstanding photographs, explored diverse wineries in widely varying climates across China. The first winery discussed was Shangri-La Winery which is located in a remote region in Yunnan Province near the border with Tibet. Clinging to the terraced slopes at 9000 ft. above the Lancang River, this unlikely winery has a surprising history: the vines were planted in the 19th century by French Catholic missionaries who established a church here and made wine for sacramental use. Local men and women tend and pick the grapes, carrying loads of up to 120 lbs. at a time up the steep hills that are impassable by carts.

The Citic Guoan Winery, founded in 1996 in arid Xinjiang Province near the Tian Shan Mountains, produces wine on an enormous scale. The chief winemaker, who is French, has to wear a special climbing harness on the catwalk 75 feet above the floor

to check on the huge stainless wine vats. This is a difficult climate in which to grow grapes - the vines must be irrigated in the summer due to the extreme dryness and are also buried under mounds of soil in the winter to protect them from the -18 degree temperatures.



Some of the best wines, intended for the fine wine market, are produced in small vineyards in the Ningxia Autonomous Region in north-central China, where the soil and weather conditions led to its designation as the 'Top Wine Region' in China. These wines are achieving international recognition and indicate the sophistication and quality of Chinese wines. Winemaker Emma Gao and her family produce award-winning wine at the Silver Heights Winery, and Chateau Helan Qingxue's 2009 production beat out competition from France and the U.S. to win the Best Bordeaux Varietal prize at the 2011 Decanter World Wine Award.

The most striking winery in Miglavs' talk is also one of the largest and oldest. Changyu Pioneer Wine Company, first founded in the 19th century, now has three locations across China. Chateau Changyu Beijing is a destination winery/resort - a huge complex that Miglavs describes as 'Disney-esque.' This winery features a Franco-Flemish style castle, replete with blue-glazed towers, which seem to come right out of the 15-16th century, and a European-style village with amenities for the entire family. This includes hotels, restaurants, a church (a site for lots of weddings), an indoor pool, bowling alley, arcade games and drop in child-care, along with archery and an indoor shooting range. Clearly Chateau Changyu seeks to build their future wine market.

-Ann Wetherell

The logo for sinotech, featuring a stylized blue wave above the word 'sinotech' in a bold, lowercase, sans-serif font.



Michael Bloom
President

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Northwest China Council Chinese New Year Gala

Sponsored by Miller Nash Graham & Dunn LLP

乙未年2015
Happy New Year



Year of the Sheep Auction Gala - 5pm-9pm, Saturday, March 7, 2015

\$65/individual ticket, \$600/table for ten (one payment please), \$700/Patron Table + amenities

Please register at www.nwchina.org

OREGON SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL: FAMOUS TAIWANESE PLAY

The town of Ashland in southern Oregon is well-known for its annual Shakespeare Festival, which runs from February through early November. Among this year's lineup of plays is a work by internationally acclaimed Taiwanese playwright and director Stan Lai, who will also be directing these performances at the OSF. Originally written for his theatre company in 1986, *Secret Love in Peach Blossom Land* has since gone on to become, in his words, "...probably the best-known play in the modern Chinese language."

Lai was inspired to write this play following an incident while attending the dress rehearsal of a friend who was a theatre artist. She was trying to finish the rehearsal by 5:00pm, but suddenly people who weren't part of her cast started coming on stage, moving a piano on and putting up a banner for a kindergarten graduation ceremony. The parents and kids started coming in as well. The friend started shouting that the stage was hers till 5:00. All this commotion had Lai wondering what was going on, but it ultimately led



Stan Lai

to the birth of *Secret Love in Peach Blossom Land*. It tells a tale of two plays when the same stage is accidentally booked for both their rehearsals. Their plots at first seem completely different, as one involves the

bawdy retelling of a classic Chinese fable and the other a tragic post-1949 love story; but the initial chaos, squabbles, and comical jabs at theatre life eventually yield to an unexpected but profound intertwining of epic themes - love, loss, and memory - across the centuries, in a blend of modern realism and Peking Opera. It is "regarded as a masterwork of modern theatre in China." Lai's theatre company began performing the play in mainland China in 2006 with some known stars in the cast and continues to do an annual 10-city

tour of it. In Taiwan, according to Lai, the play has "iconic status."

Secret Love in Peach Blossom Land runs from April 15 through October 31 at the Angus Bowmer Theatre. For more information, please visit www.osfashland.org.

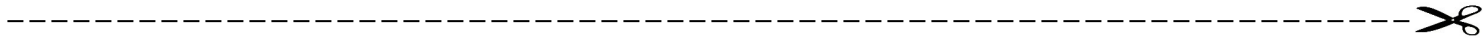
CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Movie Night: "For the Children" (2003), aka "Meili de dajiao"
Tuesday, Feb. 10, 2015, 6:00 - 9:00pm
 Red Robe Tea House, 310 NW Davis St, Portland, OR 97209
 Movie is free (food and drink available for purchase).

2015 Chinese New Year Auction Gala - Saturday, March. 7, 2015
Celebrate the Year of the Sheep with the Northwest China Council!
Silent auction, live auction, delicious food, drink, fun, and friends.
5:00pm to 9pm
 Wong's King Restaurant
 8733 S.E. Division St.
 Portland, Oregon 97266
 Register at www.nwchina.org

Hong Kong Trade Development Council Networking Luncheon
Save the Date: Wednesday, Feb. 25, 2015, 12 noon - 1:30pm
 Embassy Suites, 319 SW Pine St., Portland, OR 97204
 Details to follow via website, and email distribution.

*For more information on these, and other programs,
 Please visit: www.nwchina.org*



Northwest China Council Membership Application Form

Northwest China Council Members receive invitations to China Council events, a subscription to the quarterly newsletter and discounts on admissions fees and books.

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