

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear China Council friends,

Happy New Year 2024 and Best Wishes in the Year of the Dragon! I began to draft this greeting while in China during our family reunion in Dalian in December 2023. It was our first gathering with my son and family since 2019 and we finally met our nearly 4-year-old grandson Julian born in 2020 during the midst of the pandemic lockdown in China. Our 6 year-old grandson Jason visited Portland with family in 2019 and he is now a first grader and attends school near their home where my wife and I accompanied him in the snow nearly every day during our stay. We joined parents who volunteered to shovel snow off the school steps and playground on Sunday so children can easily access the grounds on Monday morning! Our 18-day stay in China was mostly in single-digit temps with light snows falling daily.

While I was in China the NWCC supported the efforts of the Milwaukie Arts Committee to celebrate the life of Ah Bing, inventor of the Bing cherry by installing a new sculpture of this cherry in the public sculpture garden in Milwaukie and organize a special New Year's Eve Cherry Ball Drop public celebration called "Bing in the New Year" (page 2). The NWCC was represented by David Kohl as well as Shireen Farrahi who joined the countdown to the New Year, which was covered by Portland news media and much enjoyed by all. It was a pleasure to send my video greetings from snowy Dalian and one of the first things I did upon my return was visit the Bing Cherry Sculpture by Tyler Fuqua, www.tylerfuquacreations.com that is now installed in the sculpture garden, pictured at right.

Looking back at our NWCC programming in 2023 I want to thank the Board of Directors, staff, volunteers, members, sponsors, and partner organizations that made the year an active and interesting one as we transitioned to more in-person programming and continued our virtual programming too. You may have attended lectures at Portland State



University, Reed College, the Architectural Heritage Center in Portland, or the Ledding Library in Milwaukie and our Chinese New Year Banquet and Annual Meeting & Dinner where The Flying Horse Award was presented for the first time since 2019. Please visit our [NWCC YouTube channel](#) to see past lectures such as the November 2023 China Business Network program that featured Keith Hu of Northwest Cherry Growers and visit the link for our program at the Ledding Library with the Milwaukie History Museum and produced by Willamette Falls Studios.

We continue to offer online Mandarin classes by Willow Zheng (page 5) and have invited the Albina Mandarin Immersion Program and Jin Ren [King School Jin Ren Group](#) and affiliated Shu Ren in Southwest Portland to attend our Chinese New Year Banquet again to tell us about the inaugural Taiwan Residency Research Trip program that we supported in 2023 and their plans for another exchange trip to Taiwan by students in 2024.

In November I attended the 50th Anniversary Celebration of the Oregon Community Foundation and was inspired by the keynote address by Lisa Mensah, OCF President and CEO. NWCC is grateful for the support we have received from OCF over the years including the grants from the Keane

family who have been involved in the NWCC for many years.

We are grateful to be part of a community that offers arts and cultural exhibitions such as those held at Portland Chinatown Museum, Lan Su Chinese Garden, Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art (JSMA) Portland State University where we enjoyed "A Question of Hu: The Narrative Art of Hung Liu" in 2023. We look forward to the 2024 ["Labor of Love"](#) exhibition that includes the art of Charlene Liu who will be part of a panel discussion on March 7,

2024 at JSMA. Hope to see you there.

I am excited to welcome author James M. Zimmerman as our first China Chat Book Talk in 2024 who will present *The Peking Express: The Bandits Who Stole a Train, Stunned the West, and Broke the Republic of China* (see page 6) and I look forward to seeing you in person at our Chinese New Year Banquet (page 3) where we will celebrate the Year of the Dragon that I hope will bring a Happy Dragon for all our activities this year.

-Jim Mockford

SUNUN SETBOONSARNG AUGUST 22, 1952 – OCTOBER 21, 2023

Editor's note: I had the pleasure of getting to know Sunun while I was interning at the Oregon Business Development Department in 2010. She was so charming and friendly, always ready for a light chat and hosting me at her home for lunch several times for her specialty of noodles with fresh vegetables, all while flashing her trademark smile. That smile is what I will remember most.

Sunun Setboonsarng passed away at age 71. She had a long career with the Oregon Business Development Department (37 years), but loved her job in international trade so she could have worked even longer, believing that the paramount way to connect people globally was through trade. However, the last few years with the Trump-era trade war with China, and the COVID pandemic that prevented international travel, convinced her that she should retire and buy a house in the suburbs with a spacious garden that she had dreamt about so that she could spend her retirement years cultivating a vegetable garden



and cooking. She did retire, got her house with a large garden, and started gardening in the Spring of 2022, which she enjoyed. Sadly, Sunun was diagnosed with Stage 4 pancreatic cancer in the Summer of 2023 and was too tired to harvest that year. Her good friends and neighbors tended the garden and her sister, Tatsanee, traveled from Thailand to help and care for Sunun who was in home hospice. At her memorial services, siblings, co-workers, colleagues, and past interns paid tribute to a woman who shaped their careers and became their caring friend.

Sunun was a long-time NW China Council member and supporter. She was involved with the China Business Network and was a board director from 1996 to 1998.

The Sunun Memorial Fund is being set up under the U.S.-China Environmental Education Foundation (UCEEF). Those who are interested in donating to the Memorial Fund, please contact Tatsanee Setboonsarng at 17900memorial@gmail.com.

BING IN THE NEW YEAR: REPORT

On Sunday, December 31, 2023, I had the pleasure of attending the Milwaukie Arts Committee's first-ever *Bing in the New Year* celebration. This free public event was held at the parking lot of SE Harrison & SE Main in downtown Milwaukie from 6:30 to 9:30 and drew robust attendance from the community and the greater Metro area. Scores of attendees of all ages milled around the venue, many of whom took advantage of the pizza and beer trucks parked on site for a satisfying meal on this cold winter evening, to the tune of a local band playing classic rock.

All throughout the evening a dazzling orb of a cherry hanging from a crane sparkled in many different color schemes, capturing the attention of eyes and cameras alike, which gradually built up widespread anticipation for the star attraction of the evening which was to come.



Right at 9pm, it occurred. A crane operator proceeded to slowly lower the cherry orb down to within a safe height off the ground, as shown by the accompanying photo. Then a lion dance troupe approached and began to dance around it and also gallop up to the crowds, which was particularly exciting for the children packed up front.

The Bing cherry drop was an original and memorable way to spend a New Year's Eve that was not only unique to Milwaukie, but also family-friendly since it was held simultaneously with East Coast festivities, thereby allowing attendees time for other NYE festivities and activities. I thoroughly enjoyed this event and hope more NWCC members will start attending in the future. It's sure to grow even bigger and better from now on.

-Shireen Farrahi

CHINESE NEW YEAR LUNCHEON

Please join the Northwest China Council for a delicious lunch to welcome in the Year of the Dragon!

Come one, come all! Come join us at the Happy Dragon to celebrate and enjoy a delicious 8-course Chinese banquet-style luncheon, free raffle for door prizes, entertainment, and more.

There is plentiful parking. Click [here](#) to see the menu. You better be there!!



Where: Happy Dragon Restaurant, 707 NE 82nd Ave, Portland OR, 97220

When: Saturday February 24, 2024, 12 noon - 2 pm

Cost: \$40/non-member, \$35/member, \$350 for a table seating of up to ten

Please register before February 21, 2024 by [clicking here](#)

DRAGONS IN CHINESE TEXTILES AND OTHER RESOURCES AT UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

As a distinctive addition to this first newsletter issue in the Year of the Dragon, let's delve into a collection of textiles housed in the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art at the University of Oregon. It comes courtesy of Gertrude Bass Warner, the founder of this museum (originally known as the Art Museum of the University of Oregon), who spent nearly 10 years living in Shanghai. Learn more about this collection here: [The Artful Fabric of Collecting](#)



NWCC welcomes you to learn more about The Center for Asian and Pacific Studies (CAPS) at the University of Oregon which is both a research and outreach center in Eugene that promotes a better understanding of the Asia-Pacific region with a programmatic focus on East Asia, South East Asia, South Asia, and the Pacific Islands. We invite you to follow the CAPS online via their [website](#) and [Facebook](#) to discover their many activities related to China and the Asia Pacific Region. You may discover some wonderful dragons such as our favorite image for this year from the Gertrude Bass Warner Collection.

Do explore this fabulous collection at the JSMA [here](#). Teachers will enjoy resources such as the Chinese Art and Culture Outreach Kit at [Teacher Resource Center | Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art](#) with a curriculum guide that includes the Dragon Parade Project!



Barry Naughton

As part of Reed College's four-part lecture series on China last fall, Prof. Barry Naughton gave a talk on Tuesday evening, Nov. 28, 2023, at Vollum Lecture Hall, entitled *The Government-Guided Market Economy*. Prof. Naughton is an engaging speaker and gave an informative talk on China's economic policies. Below are highlights:

China's Growth Engine Sputters: Why?

China's economic miracle seems to be losing its shine. After decades of breakneck growth, the engine has been sputtering the last few years, and it's not all due to COVID or a trade war with the U.S. Experts blame both long-term issues like a shrinking population and short-term woes like a burst real estate bubble. But the real problem might run deeper, rooted in changes to how China makes economic decisions under President Xi Jinping.

Shifting Gears: From Growth Machine to Self-Reliance

Since 1979, China's economic power was determined mainly at the local level, and the country was focused on one thing: growth. Now, Xi has tightened his grip, pushing new goals like "common prosperity", building its own tech industry to become independent, and to establish artificial intelligence supremacy. The problem? There aren't clear plans for how to achieve these goals, compounded by changing incentive systems. Local governments, big businesses, and small startups are often confused about what's expected of them, causing less eagerness to invest or act.

Ambition Without the Toolbox:

China's new industrial policy is a good example. Instead of focusing on what has worked, they are trying to rebuild the entire high-tech sector from top down, aiming to be self-sufficient in everything, with no gaps. This new approach, while ambitious, isn't designed for immediate growth. In

the short run, it's led to problems like high unemployment among young people and weak consumer spending.

The Long Road Ahead:

Despite these challenges, China still has a strong foundation: a vibrant market economy and a massive, well-educated, motivated workforce. But the mismatched incentives and lack of clear policies point towards a slowdown that could last 5-10 years.

Fundamental Flaws:

The deeper issues haven't been addressed. Local governments are still on the hook for the failing real estate market, and there's no plan for tax reforms or new ways to bring in revenue. There's reluctance to push back against central authority.

The Verdict:

China has the potential to be an economic powerhouse, but its own choices are holding it back. The current problems are likely just the beginning, and adjusting to slower growth will be tough, similar to what Japan faced in the 1990s. In short, China's engine needs a tune-up, and it will be a challenge.

Key Takeaways

- China's economic growth is slowing down.
- This is due to both long-term trends and policy changes under Xi Jinping.
- The new policy goals are good in theory but lack clear implementation plans.
- This is causing problems like unemployment and weak consumer spending.
- China's fundamental strengths remain, but it needs to fix its policies to get back on track.

Bio: Barry Naughton did his dissertation research in China in 1982 and received his PhD in economics from Yale University in 1986. His popular survey and textbook: *The Chinese Economy: Adaptation and Growth*, was published in 2018. His most recent book is *The Rise of Chinese Industrial Policy, 1978–2020*. He is currently coordinator of UCSD's master's in Chinese economic and political affairs program.

- John M. Wong

DRAGONS ON POSTAGE STAMPS

Like so many other themes, dragons have been showcased on postage stamps in the world through the years. The previous Year of the Dragon was 2012. Dragons are known in Chinese folklore for their bravery, creativity, and innovation; and, being associated with the Emperor of China, were used historically to symbolize imperial power. In this brief survey of the topic, we'll take a look at American, Chinese, and Canadian stamps featuring the lunar animal of 2024.

The United States Postal Service is now releasing its fifth issuance of their Lunar New Year series. "Imbued with symbolic meaning, the dragon features the color gold for prosperity and red for luck" is part of the description of this elegant dragon stamp, which is now available for purchase on their [website](#). It was issued on January 25, 2024 and is a Forever stamp.



China has of course also issued its own dragon stamps many times through the years. This set of three, known as the "Large Dragons" are actually China's very first postage stamps, issued in 1878, during the fourth year of the Emperor Guangxu. You'll notice the word "candarins" which is the obsolete name for "fen", which is the modern name for 1/100 of a Chinese yuan. Green denotes 1 candarin, red is 3 candarins, and yellow is 5 candarins. The dragon in these stamps stands against a background of clouds and waves.

Now we turn to a more modern stamp, issued in 2012, also Chinese. This dragon, in gold and red, is shown baring its teeth and claws as it flies across the heavens, derived from the patterns on robes worn by emperors throughout history. The stamp's designer, Chen Shao-hua, chose this *panlong* image after reviewing numerous dragons from Chinese history. This stamp generated some controversy upon its issuance due to the dragon's fierce expression, which flew in the face of the modest and friendly image that the Chinese public wanted its country to present to the world. But Chen and his supporters emphasized that this kind of dragon instead conveyed confidence, vitality, dignity, and integrity; warding off evil, preventing disasters and bringing good luck to the people.



Finally, here is this beautiful golden Canadian stamp issued in the year 2000 by Canada Post. It features a spindly dragon against a background of "embroidery" which is the result of the fusion of traditional Chinese aesthetics with modern computer-design ability. The designers state that embroidery was chosen as the background because it's been used for thousands of years to showcase the dragon with its trademark personality and characteristics. Also, gold was selected as the main color since it's often used during Chinese New Year due to its associations with wealth, fortune and sovereignty. Other elements include clouds and the sea, plus it is embossed to highlight the embroidery element.



Hopefully this article will inspire you to start exploring the vast world of dragons in postage stamps further, in 2024.

WINTER 2024 MANDARIN CLASSES BEGAN THE WEEK OF JANUARY 11, 2024

Foundations of Mandarin Beginning Mandarin I Beginning Mandarin II

Intermediate Mandarin Reading, Writing and Speaking at Intermediate Level

10 weeks of these Mandarin Chinese language classes are being taught this winter by Willow Zheng, a native Mandarin speaker with 24 years' experience teaching Mandarin as a second language. Classes are being held online via Zoom teleconference. If you haven't done so already, warm up your winter by joining one of these classes! More info [here](#).



CHINA CHAT: PEKING EXPRESS BY JAMES ZIMMERMAN

Now for our first China Chat of 2024! You won't want to miss this fascinating conversation with James Zimmerman, author of *The Peking Express: The Bandits Who Stole a Train, Stunned the West, and Broke the Republic of China*.

The Peking Express tells the true story about China's great train robbery of 1923, in which the bandits moved the hostages across the Shandong countryside with the Chinese army in pursuit. This crisis, which lasted for six weeks, took place during the Warlord Era; known for being a time of excesses in 20th-century China.

During the Chat we'll be graced with the presence of several descendants of the hostages and rescuers living in the Portland area who will share their own family lore stemming from this remarkable story.

The Peking Express has been recognized as: New York Times Editors' Choice, Fortune Magazine's Best Non-Fiction Books of 2023, and China Books Review's Best China Books of 2023, plus has received numerous positive

reviews from other prominent media the world over. What a terrific Chat to start off the 2024 lineup. See you there!

Learn more about the book at the website [here](#). Event details are as follows:

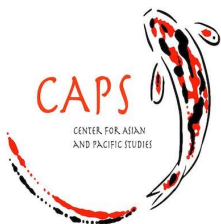
Wednesday, March 13, 2024 7 pm PDT,
Zoom webinar

Free, and open to the public. Please register [here](#)

James Zimmerman is a Beijing-based lawyer who has lived and worked in China for over 25 years. He is among China's leading foreign lawyers and represents companies and individuals confronted with the political and legal complexities of doing business in Mainland China. He is the author of the China Law Deskbook, published by the American Bar Association, and is frequently featured as a political commentator on US-

China relations in various print and broadcast media around the globe. He is the former four-term Chairman of the American Chamber of Commerce in China. In addition to Beijing, he maintains a home in San Diego, California.

THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS



MOVIE CHATS

It's a whole new year, including for the Movie Chat program! The lineup for our Movie Chat series for the first quarter of 2024 is below. Please visit the NWCC website for more event details, including movie links. See you at the Chats!

January 29: *Everything Everywhere All At Once* (2022, Kanopy) - We enjoyed examining this wild, exhilarating "Joy" ride through a stunningly diverse range of realities in the multiverse as an overworked mother unleashes newly-discovered inner powers to save her relationship with her anguished daughter as well as revive her failing marriage.

February 26: *Don't Change Your Husband* (1929, YouTube) - This silent black-and-white gem tells the tale of a fickle young wife who abandons her hard-working husband for a wealthy college playboy. Her poor husband grudgingly agrees to a divorce while she herself starts having second thoughts about her behavior.

March 25: *Paradise in Service* (2016, Kanopy) - Set in Taiwan's most dangerous military base in the 1960s-70s, this historical period film centers on a young officer who struggles to maintain his purity while stationed next to a brothel while grappling with the greater reality of his nation on the brink of war.

Then, please save the dates for the following chats in Spring 2024:

April 29: *The Farewell*

May 20: *A Touch of Zen*

June 24: *Garden in Heaven*



As one of the NWCC's educational programs, the objective of the Movie Chat program is to facilitate further understanding of China-oriented affairs from the perspective of cinematic expression. Join us at 7pm on usually the last Monday of each month on Zoom video to discuss the movie of the month. Please view the movie beforehand. They are available on Kanopy and YouTube as noted.

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.

Name _____
 Address _____
 City/State/zip _____
 Home Phone _____ Work Phone _____
 Email _____
 Occupation _____
 Special Interest in China _____

I would like to volunteer to help the China Council with:

_____ Assisting at events
 _____ Publicity
 _____ Hosting/Escorting speakers/Chinese visitors
 _____ Office Work
 _____ Fund-raising
 _____ Recruiting members
 _____ Research

Membership Category — Please check the category you wish:

Individual	_____ \$50	Sponsor	_____ \$150
Family	_____ \$75	Major Donor	_____ \$250
Senior (65+)	_____ \$25	Patron	_____ \$500
Student (Full-time)	_____ \$10	Phoenix Circle	_____ \$1,000

Please detach and return with a check payable to the Northwest China Council, 4410 SE Hawthorne Blvd. #128 Portland, OR 97214 .

To join or renew membership online, please go to: <https://nwchina.org/membership>

Established in 1980, the Northwest China Council is a non-profit, non-partisan, dues-based educational organization. Our mission is to promote greater understanding of Chinese history, culture, business, contemporary affairs, and US-China relations in the Portland, Oregon metropolitan area. And to build a bridge between the peoples of Oregon and China.



Northwest China Council
4110 SE Hawthorne Blvd. #128
Portland, OR 97214

Please place
US First Class
Postage
here

MAJOR CONTRIBUTORS TO THE NORTHWEST CHINA COUNCIL

Corporate Phoenix (\$1,000+)

Sinotech

Corporate Sponsor (\$500+)

Kumquat Kids Productions

Corporate Member (\$250+)

PSU Institute for Asian Studies

Non-Profit or Educational (\$150+)

Lan Su Chinese Garden, UO Center for Asian and Pacific Studies (CAPS),
Wave Elements Global Music

Phoenix Circle (\$1,000+)

Gordon and Katherine Keane

Patron (\$500+)

Kathryn & Thomas Albert, M.D., Homer L. Chin, M.D., Mike Hoffman & Sue
Pickgrobe, Laura Schlafly, Joanne C. Wakeland

Major Donors (\$250+)

Marilyn Beach, Ph.D, Margaret S. Davis, Jane Larson

Sponsor Members (\$150+)

Joanne Jene, M.D., Merrill Keane, Jeffrey Kinkley, Ph.D, Jeffrey Lang, Shandie
Morrison, Andrew Vetterlein, Linda Walton, Ph.D, Grace Warren, John M. Wong

Board of Directors

Jim Mockford, President

Joanne Wakeland, Secretary

Michael Bloom, Treasurer

Hong Chou, Director

Jeffrey Kinkley, Ph.D, Director

David W. Kohl, Director

Staff

John M. Wong, Executive Director

Jan Vreeland, Membership Coordinator

Willow Zheng, Mandarin Teacher

Shireen Farrahi, Newsletter Editor