



Apr – Jun 2026 Issue 166
China Council Quarterly

4110 SE Hawthorne Blvd. #128, Portland OR 97214
www.nwchina.org

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear NWCC Members,

Happy Year of the Horse! Not only that, but Year of the Fire Horse! May this new lunar year yield many new opportunities for you in bold risks taken and major goals achieved, harnessing the rare high energy that occurs only once every 60 years in the Chinese zodiac.



This issue of the *China Council Quarterly* is only too happy to welcome in this boldness. On page 2 you'll see a recap of the NWCC's presence at the annual Chinese New Year Cultural Fair at the Oregon Convention Center, with our horse logo proudly on display. How nice that our logo gets to match the Chinese zodiac animal, if only every 12 years! Also, be sure to check out Willow Zheng's spring lineup of Mandarin language classes as they will be starting this week. I have studied with her before and thoroughly enjoy the energy and humor she brings to her instruction.

Page 3 is my review of our March Movie Chat selection, *All In This Tea*. All I will say here is that this is probably one of the best movies we've ever watched because there's so much to learn about the nuances of tea production in China; not only about environmental factors, but about its history as well as China's general business climate. It was also just very well filmed in general. I came away from this movie with a whole new appreciation of the world of tea and now look forward to TeaFestPDX in June.

I'm very excited about the top of Page 4. I hope you'll join me online (YouTube) on May 14th for a book talk presented at UW by Michelle T. King, author of *Chop Fry Watch Learn: Fu Pei-Mei and the Making of Modern Chinese Food*, a biography of the "Julia Child of Chinese cooking" whose highly successful culinary career taught generations of women how to cook. I can't wait to read the book and learn about how the overall legacy of this enterprising and resourceful Taiwanese housewife continues to reverberate throughout her country and beyond, as well as start exploring her recipes! There's also an exciting article by former NWCC president Jim Mockford about the rapid construction of the Jen-Hsun Huang and Lori Mills Huang Collaborative Innovation Complex at Oregon State

University in Corvallis, which can be watched live online. I'm sure some of us on the Board of Directors will make it down there once finished, which is actually scheduled for this fall. How appropriate in this dynamic lunar year!

You can then get caught up on some of the latest events in town with our partner organizations, such as Jin Ren and their Albina Mandarin Immersion Program's Taiwan Research Residency, which their 8th graders have departed for this week. We look forward to their return and presentation of their research projects on June 1, which is always a joy to see. Please visit page 5 for that along with a listing of other community events related to Chinese culture.

Then for a marvelous book review about a bold historical figure on pages 6-7: our own Dr. Jeffrey Kinkley examines *A Chinese Reformer in Exile: Kang Youwei and the Chinese Empire Reform Association in North America, 1899-1911*. On the heels of a memorable book talk at Reed College by co-author and NWCC founder Jane Leung Larson, this review of "how...one of China's most visionary and charismatic leaders in the later 19th century, emerged from political defeat and exile in 1898 to inspire and organize a surprisingly successful global network of political societies among the Chinese diaspora" provides further insight into the life of a reformer who sought to strengthen his country.

Page 8 features a brief mention of U.S. President Trump and Chinese President Xi, who will be meeting in May as the former travels to China for a two-day visit, to be followed by a reciprocal visit to Washington this fall. We can only hope that their meetings will prove fruitful in encouraging stability for U.S-China relations and peace in the world in general. But at least this will be the first time in 10 years that a U.S. president has visited China.

Finally, on page 9 you'll see the latest lineup for our Movie Chat program. A variety of selections await your viewing and I hope you can join at least one of our monthly Zoom chats this year as we review the selection of the month. I am always open to your suggestions for movies and enjoy accommodating a diverse range of genres in order to satisfy everyone. This year we've already covered snow leopards, cross-cultural love, and artisanal tea production!

Well, we're now into the second quarter of 2026 and still barely into spring! As the year progresses we'll look forward to hopefully seeing you at one of our upcoming events. In the meantime, please enjoy the flowers and warm weather of this season.

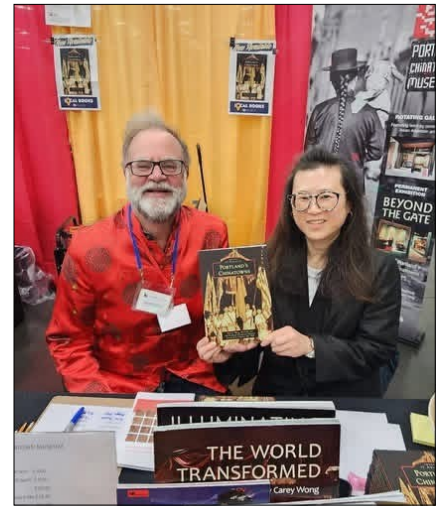
–Shireen Farrahi

2026 YEAR OF THE HORSE CHINESE NEW YEAR CULTURAL FAIR

The NWCC once again turned up in Lunar New Year style at the annual Chinese New Year Cultural Fair, held at the Oregon Convention Center. With 2026 being the Year of the Horse, we were especially proud of our horse logo, resplendent on a vibrant yellow background! It was also delightful to see the hall festooned with unique horse decorations such as the balloon sculpture at right.



As always, the exhibition hall was pulsing with a dizzying array of spectacles, including stage performances (bottom left), lion dancers, a dancing golden dragon procession, and martial arts demonstrations. There were also numerous food, vendor, and organization booths, including our own, at bottom right. NWCC board members and friends spent time interacting with visitors at the booth, spreading word about the mission of the Northwest China Council.



An unexpected bonus was the appearance at the nearby Portland Chinatown Museum booth of author Dr. Kristin Wong, who in 2025 published her new book about the history of Chinatowns in Portland, titled “Portland’s Chinatowns.” She’s pictured at right with NWCC former president Jim Mockford, who bought a copy and had her sign it. More info about the book [here](#). It is also available for purchase at the [Portland Chinatown Museum](#).

One of the most important aspects of this annual celebration is that for one day it unites so many of the Portland Metro area’s Chinese and China-related organizations and people under one roof, making it easy to gauge the strength and impact of the local Chinese community. No matter one’s level of participation in this event, just attending it is a very rewarding and enriching experience.



SPRING 2026 MANDARIN CLASSES BEGIN APRIL 2, 2026

Foundations of Mandarin Beginning Mandarin I
Beginning Mandarin II Beginning Mandarin III Intermediate Mandarin I
Intermediate Mandarin II Advanced Mandarin

10 weeks of these Mandarin Chinese language classes are being taught this spring by Willow Zheng, a native Mandarin speaker with 27 years’ experience teaching Mandarin as a second language. Classes are being held online via Zoom teleconference. If you’re interested in joining classes this spring, please visit the NWCC website [here](#).



MARCH 2026 MOVIE CHAT: ALL IN THIS TEA

Our monthly Movie Chat on March 30 drew much enthusiastic feedback as viewers gathered on Zoom to discuss the 2007 documentary *All In This Tea*. Available for viewing on Kanopy, this hourlong cinematic delight by internationally renowned independent filmmaker Les Blank explores the origins of the artisanal tea market in rural China through tea importer David Lee Hoffman's quest for the ideal cup of handmade tea, having left the world of "insipid tea bags in America" behind.



Time is spent examining the environmental factors that determine the final quality of a batch of tea, known as *terroir*, which is also a key concept in the production of wine and several other agricultural items. Specific conditions such as climate, soil type, and other plants growing nearby all figure strongly in the flavor of a batch of tea. The value of organic growing methods is also acknowledged, as Hoffman emphasizes soil health, paying special tribute to the humble earthworm for the vital role it plays in maintaining the latter while lamenting the prevalence of pesticides in mainstream tea production. Various kinds of Chinese tea were featured throughout the program, such as green, oolong, and Pu-erh.

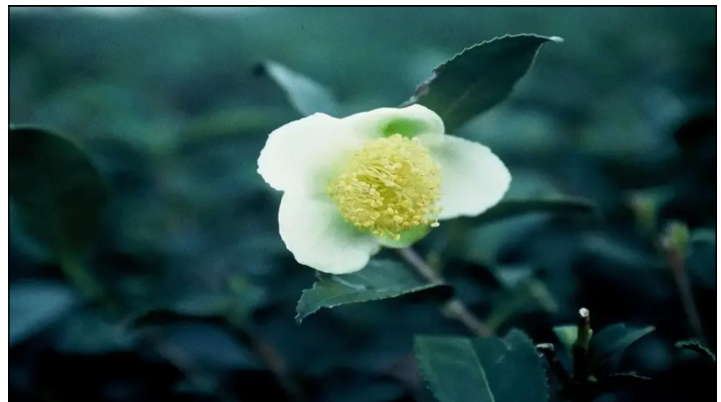
In addition, we learned some fascinating things about the history of tea. For example, Buddhist monks drink tea in order to stay awake during meditation. This custom originated from the 5th-century monk Bodhidharma, who was so furious after falling asleep while meditating that he plucked out his eyelids and tossed them onto the ground, from which the very first tea plants sprouted. We were also introduced to the antics of Robert Fortune, a Scottish explorer in the 1800s who stole tea plants to smuggle into India for British cultivation, dressing as a mandarin to escape detection. Most of the plants did not adapt to the climate of NW India, but technology and knowledge brought over did help to later establish tea in Assam and Sri Lanka.



The complexities of cross-cultural business negotiations are also explored. We witnessed Hoffman navigate gingerly the worlds of traditional Chinese business practices, governmental regulations, and language barriers, all in the name of introducing loose leaf tea from individual growers to the U.S. He said that he had even been arrested a number of times by authorities who didn't understand that he was simply trying to buy tea. We saw how much a challenge it was for Hoffman to blaze a new trail of business practices as he tried to coax local officials into letting him purchase bags of tea directly from growers. However, we now know that his efforts and that of other innovative tea importers met ultimately with success, for the Chinese artisanal tea market is flourishing today, both in China and globally.

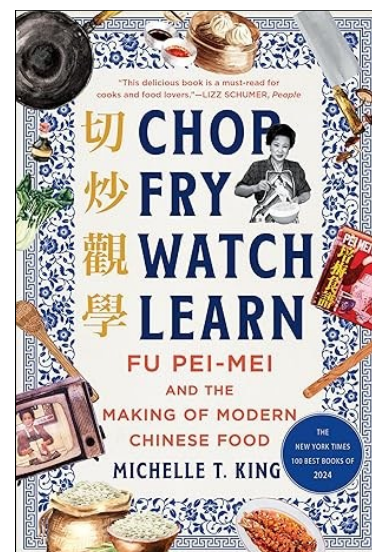
I found this documentary to be so inspiring that I will now seek to refine my own tea consumption habits, reducing the amount of tea bags from major producers I purchase in favor of loose leaf teas from artisanal sources and buying organic where possible, plus upgrading my tea ware.

So, if you haven't yet, please watch "[All In This Tea](#)" which is still on Kanopy, accessible through a public library account or university affiliation. By the way, TeaFestPDX will be taking place on Saturday, June 27, at the World Forestry Center! Details [here](#). Who knows what kinds of tea (Chinese and otherwise) are just waiting to be discovered by us?
-Shireen Farrahi



BOOK TALK: CHOP FRY WATCH LEARN

Are you familiar with the culinary stardom of legendary Taiwanese chef Fu Pei-Mei (1931-2004)? If so - or just want to learn more - you won't want to miss this book talk on May 14. Sponsored by the UW Taiwan Studies Program with funding from the Chiang Ching-kuo Foundation, *Chop Fry Watch Learn: Fu Pei-Mei and the Making of Modern Chinese Food* was named one of the best books of 2024 by the New York Times and NPR plus received the support of a National Endowment for the Humanities Public Scholars Fellowship. Author Michelle T. King, a history professor at University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, will examine the life of this "Julia Child of Chinese cooking", whose career resulted in continuous appearances on television for 40 years, dozens of bestselling Chinese cookbooks, and other major achievements. King describes how Fu's life enables us to see Chinese food as both an inheritance of tradition and a truly modern creation, influenced by the historical phenomena of the postwar era, as a generation of middle-class, female home cooks navigated the tremendous postwar transformations taking place across the world. You may attend in person at UW or online via YouTube.



Thursday, May 14, 3:30-5 PM. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

JEN-HSUN HUANG AND LORI MILLS HUANG COLLABORATIVE INNOVATION COMPLEX

Just four years ago in 2023 as I served as president of the NWCC and worked to plan virtual programs during the Covid-19 pandemic, we received the very good news that the Oregon State University Foundation was presented a gift of \$50 million from Jen-Hsun Huang, founder and CEO of NVIDIA, and his wife Lori (who met at students at OSU), for the creation of the Jen-Hsun and Lori Mills Huang Collaborative Innovation Complex to be constructed on the OSU campus with an opening date in 2026.



The groundbreaking ceremony in 2024 was attended by Oregon Governor Tina Kotek, OSU President Jayathi Murthy, and the Huangs, who with the entire "Beaver Nation", many Oregonians, and the outside world are watching construction proceed this year. If you would like to join us in watching this development underway please see this [website](#) and construction [web cam](#). OSU also received a \$50 million gift for this project from the Wayne and Gladys Valley

Foundation and \$72 million in capital bonds for the building's construction from the Oregon State Legislature to build what will contain the latest and most powerful supercomputers to support team-based research in AI, materials science, robotics, and emerging technologies. The NWCC attended the Linus Pauling Institute's Open House and Linus Pauling Birthday celebration at OSU while planning our 2024 lecture hosted by Oswego Heritage Council "Linus Pauling

in Portland, China and Beyond" by Chris Petersen, Editor of *Visions of Linus Pauling* (World Scientific Publishing, 2022) and we are looking forward to organizing future lectures about the great scientists and technologists who called Oregon home as they became known for their contributions to the world. Maybe some of these future speakers are students now!



Oregon State
University

- Jim Mockford

JIN REN UPDATE

The Albina Mandarin Immersion Program 8th graders leave for their Taiwan Research Residency this week! Please join Jin Ren for a gallery walk of their research projects and a celebration of their hard work on June 1 at 5:30 PM at Harriet Tubman Middle School. All are welcome!

Jin Ren is also very pleased to support two Albina MIP 11th graders on a four-week study trip to Shanghai in June. We couldn't make trips like this happen for Jefferson students without the generous support of the Lila Lily Foundation. The first seniors from the Albina MIP program are graduating this year and the program continues to grow and thrive, bringing the Pacific Rim to students in NE Portland. You can donate to support access to high quality tutors or travel scholarships at <https://jinren.org>.



Jin Ren 金仁 is a parent-run nonprofit 501(c)3 supporting the Martin Luther King Jr. Elementary Harriet Tubman Middle School and Jefferson High School Mandarin Immersion Program (MIP).

We provide cross-cultural learning opportunities and language education support for MIP students and families at MLK Jr. Elementary, Harriet Tubman Middle School, and Jefferson High School. We are supported through donations, grants, and fundraising activities.

COMMUNITY EVENT ANNOUNCEMENTS

Lan Su Chinese Garden: *Mulan*, the Magnolia Festival, is currently taking place through 4/26. Wander through stunning floral displays, discover the flower's lasting meaning in Chinese art and literature, and enjoy seasonal tours and hands-on activities for all ages. *Garden Tea Tastings with Hannah Ma* explores Chinese tea culture through intimate tastings featuring rotating seasonal teas and traditional brewing techniques, taking place the weekends of 3/21-5/31. [Click](#) for more on Lan Su events.



Portland Chinatown Museum: Be sure to stop in to enjoy [Symbols of the New Year](#), which is a series of paintings by Frances Maihwa Li, currently on display in the main open area for spring 2026. Frances (1944–2021) was a Shanghai-born artist who trained in Taiwan with traditional masters in the subjects of botanical arrangements and landscape painting - core subjects of Chinese art. *Symbols of the New Year* reflects her lifelong dedication to helping her community understand the rich symbolism of the Chinese New Year. Click [here](#) for general info on the museum.



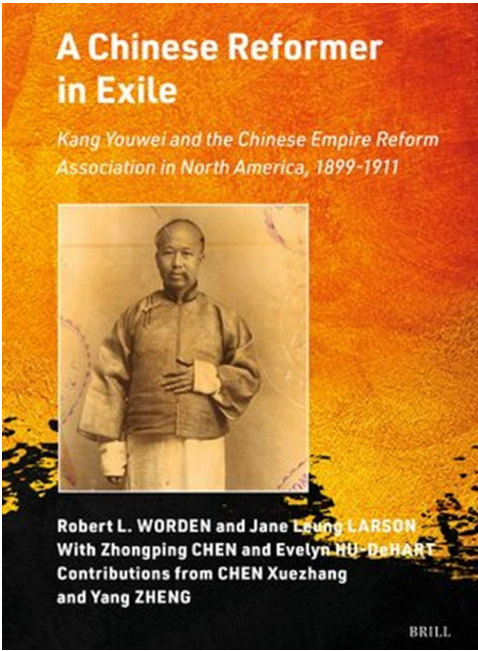
First Saturday PDX: The April 4, 2026 [program](#), *Painting in Ming Dynasty Suzhou*, will be presented by Ann Wetherell, Ph.D. She will talk about some of the best known scholar artists of Suzhou, especially Shen Zhou and Wen Zhengming, how their paintings functioned within their personal networks, and the subsequent commodification of Confucian painting to meet the demands of a burgeoning market.



Portland Art Museum: The [Portland Art Museum](#) is featuring *Heaven and Earth: Chinese Art from the Collections* through November 30, 2026. Included with general admission, this exhibit showcases powerful works of art across the museum's collections, spanning creative practices in China through several millennia. The variety of works provide various perspectives on how we make meaning of the world and the diversity and creativity of Chinese artists and makers. More info on this exhibit [here](#).



A Chinese Reformer in Exile: Kang Youwei and the Chinese Empire Reform Association in North America, 1899-1911 by Robert L. Worden and Jane Leung Larson, with Zhongping Chen and Evelyn Hu-DeHart and Contributions from Chen Xuezhong and Yang Zheng. Brill, 2025



This book is the story of how Kang Youwei, one of China's most visionary and charismatic leaders in the later 19th century, emerged from political defeat and exile in 1898 to inspire and organize a surprisingly successful global network of political societies among the Chinese diaspora. Kang's lifelong mission, which he shared with his adherents, was to transform and strengthen the Chinese motherland without overthrowing its monarchy. Ethnically Chinese businessmen and professionals in British Columbia and the American West provided the founding financial and organizational resources for the network, even in that era when the US enforced Chinese Exclusion laws. The organization's original Chinese name was the Baohuanghui or "Protect the Emperor Association," reflecting its aim of restoring, as a constitutional monarch, the Guangxu Emperor whom the Empress Dowager had put under palace arrest while she countermanded the tsunami of modernizing edicts he had promulgated during his 1898 "Hundred Days' Reform." Kang Youwei and his younger colleague Liang Qichao, the major intellects behind the reformist throne, had to flee China to avoid execution by the conservative faction ("obscurantists" was the term of art). Even abroad, in exile, Kang and Liang faced opposition not only from credentialed diplomats and secret assassins of the reigning Qing dynasty, but also from competing networks of more radical enemies of the Qing like Sun Yat-sen, who wanted

to overthrow the monarchy and replace it with a republic forthwith. Kang's constitutional monarchists largely prevailed over the republicans in global fundraising until the later years of the 19-aughts. Meanwhile Liang Qichao and Sun Yat-sen published competing visions for a new China in their respective Japan-based journals. By late 1911, accelerating public discontent and anti-Manchu sentiment, together with fissiparous developments that arose from the Qing's own military modernization and newly established provincial representative assemblies fueled a crisis of loyalty that led to the overthrow of the dynasty and a protracted era of national disunity.

The book under review began with a 1972 Georgetown University Ph.D. dissertation on the subject by Robert L. Worden. As newly discovered historical sources and research articles regarding the Baohuanghui surfaced in subsequent years, Jane Leung Larson joined Worden in creating an internet website to foster global sharing of these materials. Among the new primary sources were the correspondence, records, and photographs once kept by Larson's grandfather Tom Leung (TAN Liang in Mandarin), the first of Kang Youwei's Guangzhou-area students to emigrate to America, where he became a prosperous herbalist in Los Angeles and then a confidant and travel companion for his former mentor in North America. The current 970-page open access volume from Brill thus presents state-of-the art scholarship and documentation. Although collectively sourced and curated, the book reads as a seamless narrative composed in a uniform and neutral historical voice seemingly showing "neither fear nor favor" toward its subjects: Kang Youwei himself, Tom Leung and other loyalists, their adversaries, and fair-weather friends, some of whom harbored private motives. The present volume reproduces numerous photographs of the relevant personalities, artifacts, and major documents. Detailed appendices include a Baohuanghui timeline, an annotated list of over 200 known Reform Association chapters and schools across the globe, a Kang family tree, and a glossary of Chinese characters, some of which also appear in the footnotes for on-the-spot clarification. In the main text, succinct essays illuminating the meaning of Kang Youwei's exile, his personal background, and his role in the Hundred Days' Reform are followed by eleven thematic and chronological chapters plus conclusion that detail Kang's and his Reform Association's diverse activities from 1899 to 1911. A tireless world traveler, missionary for Chinese reform, and periodic organizer not only of political initiatives but also business enterprises to help fund them, Kang "logged approximately 180,000

BOOK REVIEW: *A CHINESE REFORMER IN EXILE* (CONT.)

miles during his fifteen-year exile” (p. 8). He journeyed through all the major European countries but Russia (for a time he lived on an island near Stockholm) and visited the Middle East, Japan, South Asia, Southeast Asia, and Hong Kong, where he helped found a multinational commercial corporation. That is in addition to his lectures and pep talks for Baohuanghui chapters in Canada, Mexico, and the US. Even outside his occasional periods of seclusion, contemplation, and convalescence, Kang Youwei continued his intellectual and creative activities. He composed travelogues, letters, and poems in his fine Chinese calligraphy; educated himself about Western business and civic institutions; and worked on his own literary vision of Utopia, the Datongshu (Ta-t’ung-shu, Book of the Great Commonwealth, or One World Philosophy). Kang Youwei advocated against Chinese Exclusion activities in North America and on behalf of women’s participation in civic affairs, although personally he enjoyed the old institution of plural marriage. He was a brilliant man of boundless curiosity, but one with a penchant for micromanagement, as of Reform Association investments in constructing a streetcar system in Torreón, Mexico and running a posh Chinese

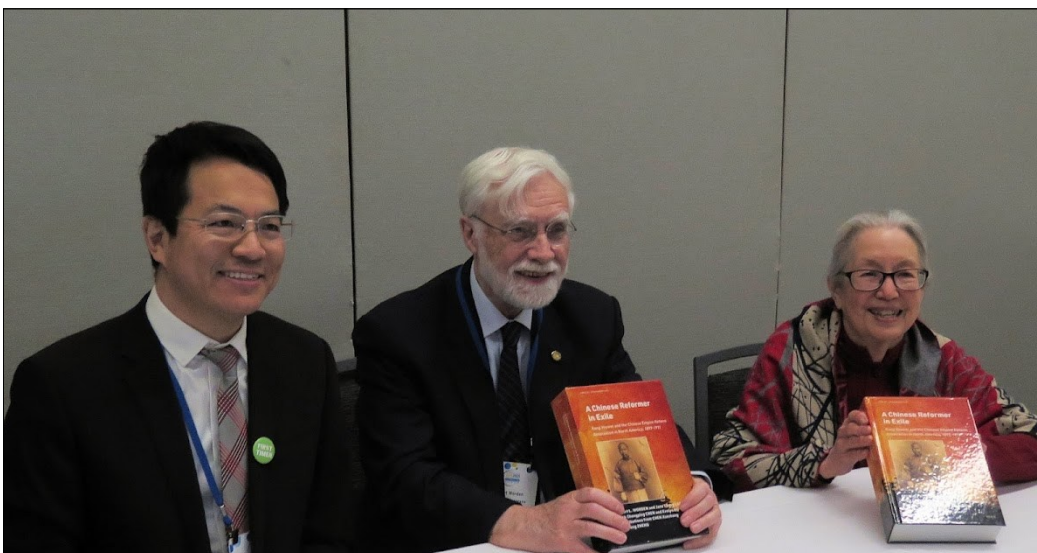


restaurant in Chicago’s downtown theater district. He feuded with Tom Leung about the latter enterprise, though ultimately the two men reconciled. Other Reform Association adherents ran Chinese-language newspapers that outlived the movement. Kang himself more or less authorized a sketchy scheme to train a military force on US soil for combat in China and a plot to assassinate the Empress Dowager, even as he continued to direct mundane matters like the design and production of Reform Association membership badges. *A Chinese Reformer in Exile* is authoritative on the full range of Kang Youwei’s overseas interventions in Chinese and global history. It also stimulates our imagination of historical paths not taken.

-Dr. Jeffrey Kinkley is a Courtesy Professor at Portland State University and a former Northwest China Council board member. He is professor emeritus of Chinese history at St. John’s University in New York City.

A Chinese Reformer in Exile: Kang Youwei and the Chinese Empire Reform Association in North America is a Brill Open Access book that may be downloaded [here](#).

Kang Youwei is pictured at top, Liang Qichao at bottom



L-R: Kang scholar Wan Zhaoyuan, Robert Worden, Jane Leung Larson



Calligraphy of Kang Youwei

PRESIDENT TRUMP TO VISIT CHINESE PRESIDENT XI JINPING IN MAY

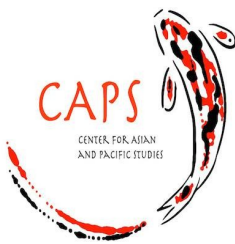
U.S. President Donald Trump will be visiting Chinese President Xi Jinping in Beijing on May 14-15, marking the first trip by a U.S. president to China in 10 years. This trip had originally been scheduled for March 31 to April 2 but was postponed due to the current U.S.-Israel war against Iran. Then in the fall of 2026 Xi and First Lady Peng Liyuan, pictured bottom right, will make a reciprocal visit to Washington.

Topics for discussion will likely include trade as well as international conflicts. Specific issues such as ongoing U.S. support for Taiwan and U.S. tariffs on Chinese imports will most certainly be covered. A “Board of Trade” might soon be formed by the Chinese and U.S. governments to manage trade and economic matters. The U.S. war against Iran is also sure to be addressed, as Iran is a major trading partner for China, the world’s biggest crude oil importer.

Whatever the outcome of these meetings this year, we can only hope that cooperation will increase between the two countries, giving way to enhanced diplomatic ties, greater economic opportunities, more people-to-people and cultural collaborations and exchanges, and a more stable relationship that will help to ensure future global peace.



THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS



MOVIE CHATS

Spring 2026 will see three movies in bloom, listed below, for the Movie Chat program! Please visit the NWCC website for more event details, including movie links. See you at the Chats!

April 27: *Plague at the Golden Gate* (2022, Kanopy) - This documentary recounts how the 1900 outbreak of bubonic plague unleashed fear and anti-Asian sentiment in San Francisco. Explore the relationship between the medical community, the city’s major players and the Chinese-American community in the race to save the city from this epidemic.

May 18: *Angel of Nanjing* (2015, Kanopy) - In honor of Mental Health Awareness Month in the U.S., this movie tells the story of the heroic lifesaving campaign of blue-collar worker Chen Si, who with no formal training has patrolled the Yangtze River Bridge in Nanjing since 2003, preventing nearly 500 people from jumping to their deaths.

June 29: *Leap* (2020, Kanopy) - This sweeping biographical film follows China’s women’s national volleyball team coach Lang Ping from her days as a star athlete in the 1980s to her return as head coach decades later, leading her team to Olympic gold in 1984 and 2016...and national admiration.

Then, please save the dates for the following Chats in Summer 2026:

July 27: *Window to America*

Aug 31: *Ip Man*

Sept 28: *Art College 1994*



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 7:30pm on usually the last Monday of each month on Zoom 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.

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



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