Brush Talks

Vol. 1 No. 1 Winter/Spring 2016

A Journal of China

THE INAUGURAL ISSUE

Brush Talks: A Journal of China

Vol. 1 | No. 1 | Winter/Spring 2016

Brush Talks publishes compelling nonfiction, along with photographs and occasional poetry, about China. We publish two issues per year and accept unsolicited submissions on a rolling basis. For more information, please visit www.brushtalks.com.

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Cover image: *Luo xia gu wu tu* (落霞孤鹜图) by Tang Bohu

Because I had only my writing brush and ink slab
to converse with, I call it Brush Talks.

SHEN KUO 沈括

(1031–1095)

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Editor's Note

Welcome to the first issue of *Brush Talks*. As our mission statement says, our aim is to share with our readers compelling nonfiction, photographs, and occasional poetry about China. The name of the journal comes from Shen Kuo, an official and scholar of the Song dynasty. His knowledge was expansive and eclectic, spanning subjects from astronomy to literature to zoology. In later life, Shen retired to a large estate in Jiangsu that he named "Dream Brook," where he wrote his masterpiece, *Brush Talks from Dream Brook* (梦溪笔谈 , sometimes translated as *Dream Brook Essays*). He was said to have remarked, "Because I had only my writing brush and ink slab to converse with, I call it *Brush Talks*." As a modern-day *Brush Talks*, we strive to examine an equally wide range of subjects related to China as well as to include a diversity of voices in that endeavor.

A bit of explanation is also in order about the format of *Brush Talks*. It is published only in electronic form (at least for now) and only as a PDF. The former stems from cost constraints, but the latter is a deliberate choice. A PDF document allows for a precise and uniform layout. And while dazzling effects can be created on the Web, our vision for *Brush Talks* is a bit more traditional. Its more conventional look is by design: generous margins and the display of just one photograph per page, for example, are intended to allow the reader a slow and contemplative experience. *Brush Talks* is for *xian ren* (闲人) everywhere, those who feel that a day roaming one's garden, drinking tea, and reading is time well spent.

So we invite you to get comfortable, pour that cup of tea, and linger over the following pages. A heartfelt thanks to our contributors, whose work, we think you'll agree, makes our inaugural issue worth lingering over.

Brian Kuhl

Contributors

Molly Gleeson spent five years teaching English in China, living in Chongqing, Gansu Province, and Jiangsu Province. Back in the U.S. for the last three years, Molly now resides in Bloomington, Indiana. Her work has appeared in the *Sun* and the *Apeiron Review*, among other publications. Her website is www.mollygleeson.com.

Nick Sinclair is a photographer based in the UK who has worked for numerous publications and agencies. The National Portrait Gallery in London has exhibited his work and holds many of his portraits in its permanent collection. In 2007, he received a travel bursary from the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust, enabling him to visit China. His website is www.nicksinclair.com.

Emily Strauss has written poetry since she was in college, and her poems have been anthologized and published online in the U.S., Macao, Hong Kong, Malaysia, and Australia. She lived and worked as an ESL teacher and trainer of teachers in China for eight years, in Chengdu, Suzhou, Zhuhai, and Macao. She is now semi-retired and lives in California.

C. E. Wheeler has been working in China since 2007. He was formerly a managing editor and lead writer for a monthly magazine and weekly newspaper in Hangzhou. He has been a freelance writer and editor for many years. *When Thunder Comes* is the title of a book he is writing about the Doolittle Raid, the introduction to which appears in these pages.

Yuan Changming (袁昌明) grew up in rural China, began to learn English at 19, and published monographs on translation before moving to Canada. His poetry has appeared in *The Best Canadian Poetry* and *Threepenny Review*, among other publications. Currently, he edits *Poetry Pacific* with Allen Yuan in Vancouver. The journal can be found at poetrypacific.blogspot.ca.

Zhang Yanjun (张燕军) was born in Shandong Province and now resides in Hangzhou, where he is a researcher and lecturer at the Institute of International and Comparative Education at Zhejiang Normal University.

Zhou Cheng (周呈) is originally from Hangzhou and now lives in Ontario, Canada, where she attended Queen's University as a graduate student.

The Monks of Ta'er Si

by Molly Gleeson

The Tibetan Buddhist monks chewed pink bubblegum. All four of them were under the age of 25, and all four of them giggled about my pretty young friend Zhang Meng. Their shaven heads glistened in the sunlight, and billowing robes of maroon and yellow flapped in the wind from the windows. We were traveling by bus to Ta'er Tibetan Monastery outside of Xining, Qinghai Province, China. Surrounded by barren brown rolling hills, ramshackle buildings and farms pockmarked the landscape. The sun rose high in the sky and blazed down on the barrenness with the relentlessness of a young child tearing through brightly wrapped Christmas gifts. The altitude was also high, and I could feel the thin, clean air filter through my lungs.

This was my fourth year in China as an English teacher, and this trip to Qinghai Province was a brief escape from my small, exhausting, and provincial city of Xifeng in nearby Gansu Province. I had read about Ta'er Si (also known as Kumbum Monastery in Tibetan) in a guidebook, and I was excited to see the place. I was also intrigued with Tibetan Buddhism in general because it represented a kind of peace for me, and I was badly in need of some peace.

It was our good fortune to see the young monks at the bus stop, and to ask them which bus to take. Only one of them spoke Chinese, and none of them spoke English. They whispered Tibetan among themselves. And giggled. We laughed, too, so delighted were we to find the right bus and to sit near our intriguing fellow passengers. They were no less interested in us—a foreigner traveling with a beautiful young Chinese woman, with her long, curly black hair and broad, inviting face. Zhang Meng's enthusiasm for life was infectious, and she happily babbled away to her newfound friend, the one monk who understood

her. While the other monks played with their cell phones, he asked her a few questions about me — where I was from, what I was doing here — but mostly he answered Zhang Meng's questions. I watched the monks and the one who spoke Chinese chat with my friend. I was completely content to be silent.

"They're going to study at Ta'er Si," Zhang Meng translated for me. "They were studying at another monastery. They travel all over China to study."

"Where were they before this?" I asked.

"Hunan Province. There is a monastery there as well," Zhang Meng explained.

"Wow. They've traveled a long way," I said.

I learned, too, that they had spent most of the day at an Internet bar.

The bus, with its scarcity of passengers, was a Spartan specimen of transportation, with hard seats covered in brown Naugahyde, the back of them supported by rounded metal "hold" bars. The floor was dusty, and the whole thing smelled like maybe sheep had spent some time traveling in it. The few passengers carried odd assortments of packages — large burlap bags tied with twine, old suitcases. They took the bumps of the road with equanimity, and companionably collided with their seatmates.

We pulled into a dirty little town an hour later. We then discovered that we would need to walk over a mile to get to the monastery. The monks were fast walkers; I trailed behind with Zhang Meng. We raced to keep up with them. The main thoroughfare to the monastery was being completely torn up, with tractors and diggers sitting in the ditch in the middle of it. We walked on dirt paths along the construction site. The street was lined with little shops, about half the size of a one-car garage, open to passersby. They were full of the trappings of the

Buddhist life — wooden prayer beads and prayer books covered with fake leather, the black suede boots monks wear under their maroon and yellow robes, cloth for the robes, and pointy hats with yellow fringe falling off the top of them. Our monks stopped to shop, examining the goods, but in the end bought nothing. I thought they would speak warmly with the shopkeepers, but they said not a word. We trudged on.

The street was also lined on either side with workshops for bronze statuary to be sold to the monastery. Gods and goddesses with their wide black eyes stared at us as we passed by. I was especially intrigued with one statue of *Guanyin*, the Goddess of Mercy, with her many hands to help people in need. Her bronze arms and hands with carefully painted red nails were raised up, as if in prayer, the wrists relaxed and her hands pointing away from her oval-shaped head. I myself asked her for help as I walked past her.

Ta'er Monastery had a large painted edifice that towered over its visitors and the plaza in front of it. The wooden front piece of the entrance was a riot of color — pinks, reds, greens, and blues on a roof that curled at its end points. There was a set of seven stupas lined up in front of the entrance, painted white at the bottom and a salmon color at the rounded tops. Groups of Chinese visitors stood outside the monastery, talking quietly. Mostly, I heard the wind wrapping itself around the stone and wood structure that was the entrance, and not much else. I could smell cedar incense burning in front of the temples on the other side of the entrance. A few Chinese tourists sheepishly asked our monks for pictures. The monks acquiesced graciously, but posed stone-faced next to the smiling tourists.

According to the online Travel China Guide, Ta'er Si was built in 1577 in order to commemorate Tsong Khapa, the founder of the Yellow Hat Sect of Tibetan Buddhism, who was born near the monastery. The monastery stretches across thirty-six acres, surrounded by bare and

dusty mountains on all sides. It is made up of fifty-two different halls, although Zhang Meng and I only saw a few of them. Ta'er Monastery is a sacred place — the present-day Dalai Lama and Panchen Lama once studied there.

Our monks waited for us while we bought tickets; they, of course, got in free. They told us that they would give us a tour before going to their teacher. I took a deep breath to prepare myself. The sun blazed down on us. Zhang Meng and I followed our new friends to a nearby building. We had to wait to enter since it was the main prayer hall and Ta'er monks were at prayer. We could hear the chanting — a deep, earthy sound resonating throughout the grounds. The chanting seemed to be over a hundred voices raised together, and then, a gentle clang of a bell.

Prayer time soon ended, and the monks led us inside. It took a moment for my eyes to adjust to the dark, and to the heavy smell of incense and sweat. The room was vast, interspersed with carpeted pillars. Pillows littered the floor, and a few monks reclined on them, resting after prayer time. They turned to stare at us as we entered. We kept to the outskirts of the room, decorated with bronze and yak butter statues and lit only with votive candles. As guests, we weren't allowed to take pictures, but one of our monks took Zhang Meng's camera from her and snapped away. No one would chastise a monk, after all.

We moved on to another building. As my friend bent down to look at a statue in a glass case, her shirt separated from her jeans, exposing part of her back. The monks noticed it too, and giggled again. At one temple, a group of Chinese tourists were bowing and kneeling before a bronze bodhisattva. I noticed our monks watching them, bemused smiles on their faces. The Chinese aren't known for their reverence, after all.

We rested quietly on the stairs of one temple. For the first time in

China, I felt at peace. The monks didn't seem to want anything from me. They didn't stare or hover or ask me a slew of questions. They didn't care about me much at all, and frankly, it was a relief. The city I was coming from was a desperate, demanding place where I couldn't walk anywhere or do anything without an audience. My teaching job was hard as well, watching young high school students suffer through a strict and confining curriculum, not to mention the lack of electricity and heat in the school building. I had been disappointed in friendships; I had been disappointed in love. I was a wreck, and this strange, windy, lonely place and these quiet monks offered me great solace.

Our monks let us take pictures of them, and then they left us to study. Zhang Meng hadn't thought to bring water, so we rushed through the monastery to the exit, where we could buy some.

On the bus back, Zhang Meng exchanged text messages with one of the monks.

"He says he misses me. Is he a monk?" she asked me. I laughed my head off. "Is he a REAL monk?" she added.

"I think he's a real MAN," I told her.

The sky was changing from a dull orange to a dusty blue as we headed back to Xining. The passengers leaned against each other. Zhang Meng and I returned to silence, and I embraced it. ☯

Portfolio

Zhou Cheng (周呈)

Zhou Cheng recently completed a master's degree in education (focusing on educational assessment and evaluation) at Queen's University in Canada. Her move to Kingston, Ontario, was the first time she had been out of China. As she put it, "I came to a completely new country, a new city and immersed myself into a different educational, cultural and social environment which was a big change. Too many challenges once made me anxious." One of her hobbies helped her find balance and adjust to her new surroundings: photography. As she walked around campus and the city at large, she brought her camera with her, capturing scenes that caught her attention — whether for their beauty or novelty. Some of those scenes are depicted in the photographs on the following pages, all taken between 2013 and 2015.


@ Kingston


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#GOFRESH
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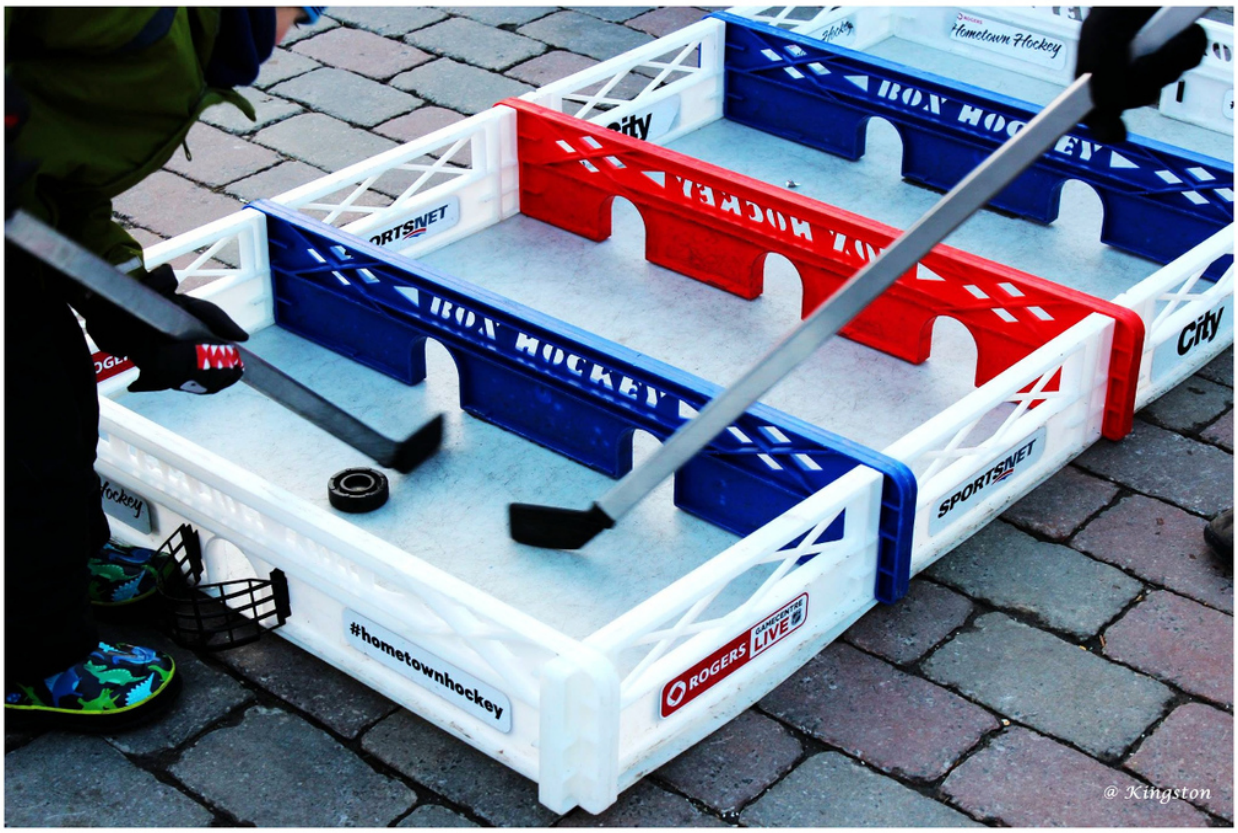
Queen's Theological Hall
@ Kingston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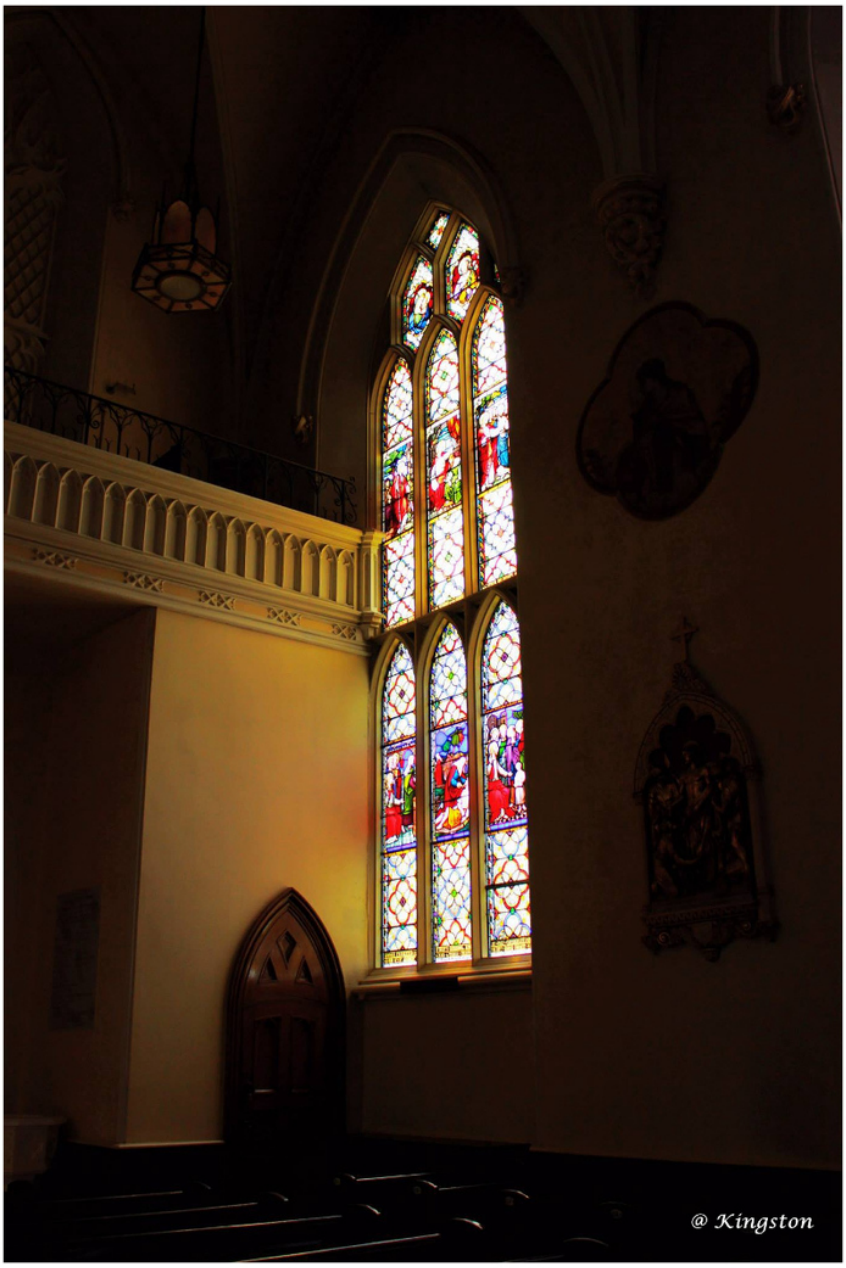
@ Kingston

One Tree That Makes a Whole Forest

by Yuan Changming (袁昌明)

Instead of reaching deep
Into the ground, you hung all your roots
On your twigs in the wild open, trying
To absorb both air and light directly
As well as darkness and cold
Ready to connect to soil and water
Growing from a single tree into a huge forest

That's the secret of banyan
The secret about growth

When Thunder Comes

by C. E. Wheeler

On April 18, 1942, an avenging thunder hit Tokyo and rolled on mightily to China, leaving in its wake jubilation and desolation. That thunderous shock was delivered by the eighty legendary Doolittle Raiders. On December 7, 1941, the Japanese had struck at Pearl Harbor dealing America a stunning blow, but within a month a daring counterstrike was coalescing. By mid-January, Lt. Col. James H. Doolittle was selected to execute the plan for psychological payback. Doolittle, who came out of retirement in 1940 to help America prepare for the possibility of war, was an accomplished aviator and highly qualified military pilot. With the ingenuity and determination that exemplified America's war effort, just 132 days since Pearl Harbor, the intrepid Doolittle Raiders successfully hit targets across Japan. America had responded, and by steadfastly assisting the Raiders, many Chinese civilian allies would subsequently be called on to make the ䷲ ultimate sacrifice; in approximately 150 days, it is estimated that over 250,000 Chinese were killed in retaliation for helping rescue the Doolittle Raiders, and two months later three of the captured Raiders were executed. *When Thunder Comes* tells the story of the Raiders and the rescuers.

> ䷲ (*I Ching* hexagram 51, 震 *zhèn*)
> Thunder means getting through successfully: when thunder comes there is alarm, then the mirth of laughing talk. Thunder startling for a hundred miles does not cause loss of serious devotion. . . . By serious devotion it is possible to safeguard the heritage and the land, thus acting in a role of sacred leadership.[1]

1. Thomas Cleary, trans., *I Ching: The Book of Changes* (Boston: Shambhala, 1992), 113–14.

As the bombers arrived over China, thousands of Chinese civilians, who had endured years of Japanese occupation and internal discord, unexpectedly heard what sounded like rumbling thunder. In Dasha Village on Nantian Island, Sanmen County, Zhejiang Province, newlyweds Zhao Xiaobao and her husband Ma Liangshui thought it was strange to hear thunder at that time of year.

> Zhao Xiaobao said, "I heard some sound like thunder. We quickly realized it was an airplane. The Japanese were in the area, so everyone ran to the mountain. After a while, nothing had happened so we returned home. In the pigsty I found four Americans crouched. We figured the Americans must have helped the Chinese." The couple gave the crew of plane #15 the leftovers of their wedding feast, as they were recently married. Zhao Xiaobao remembered Sgt. Edward Saylor's immensely satisfied smile. In 1992, as part of the celebration of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Doolittle Raid, Zhao Xiaobao was a member of the group of Chinese rescuers who visited America; she recognized Edward Saylor immediately and embraced him, saying afterwards, "When I went to America, after fifty years I had gone from a newlywed to an old lady."[2]

This story is repeated throughout the region as the valiant Doolittle Raiders, dropping into the shadowy unknown, were initially aided by ordinary people whose lives in turn were changed forever. As stated in the ancient *I Ching*, life is change, and tremendous change came to each person whose life-path intersected with the Raiders, many dying just days later while some were fortunate enough to live long, fruitful lives. This story seeks to weave a narrative tapestry from the vital filaments of

2. *Quzhou shi zhi* [Quzhou city book] (Hangzhou: Zhejiang People's Press, 2003). Translated by Huang Hongbo and C. E. Wheeler.

a range of interconnected tales.

The Doolittle Raiders' mission stands as one of the great heroic tales of World War II. On April 18, 1942, Doolittle led his squadron of sixteen B-25B Mitchell bombers in an attack on Japan. The task force was spotted and the Raiders were forced to launch ten hours early. Between 8:20 and 9:19 a.m., all the planes took off from the deck of the U.S.S. Hornet. Although the planes had been modified, their fuel would almost certainly be exhausted before reaching China due to this earlier-than-expected launch. The Raiders began arriving over their targets six hours later. The plan was for the planes to continue on to China, where they would be guided by radio beacons to secure airports in Zhejiang Province, refueled, and fly on to Chongqing (then known as Chungking, where the Chinese capital had been relocated from Nanjing), with Quzhou airport in Zhejiang being the primary target airport. Due to the need for utmost secrecy, Vice Admiral William F. Halsey alerted neither the American forces operating in the area nor the allied Chinese forces, as previously planned. The B25s did not have radios, so even after successfully bombing their targets, each pilot courageously ventured onward.

The Doolittle Raiders picked up a rare tailwind exiting Japan, and all bombers but plane #8, which landed in Russia, reached the coast of China. Due to the lack of contact with the ground, and because they were running out of fuel, the crews had to bail out or land either in the water or on land. Lt. Donald Smith, the pilot of plane #15, was able to safely ditch just offshore from Nantian Island, and the pilot of plane #2, Lt. Travis Hoover, successfully landed in a farm field. The other crews, however, had to bail out over dark mountainous terrain or perilously ditch in the ocean.

Three men died when their planes crash-landed: Leland Faktor (the engineer/gunner on plane #3), William Dieter (bombardier), and

Donald Fitzmaurice (engineer/gunner) of plane #6. Eight men were captured: Dean Hallmark, Robert Meder, Chase Nielsen, (plane #6); and William Farrow, Robert Hite, George Barr, Jacob DeShazer, and Harold Spatz (plane #16). Lieutenant Farrow, Sergeant Spatz, and Lieutenant Hallmark were executed by the Japanese on October 15, 1942. Lieutenant Meder died in prison of malnutrition eighteen months after the raid.

The remaining men, many of whom were injured when they landed or bailed out, raced towards secure areas. During their heroic journeys of survival, the Raiders were assisted by innumerable people. Thousands of Chinese cheered and feted the airmen who had parachuted into their midst.

In Hu Town, Zhejiang Province, one group of Raiders played a game of basketball against the local high school team. The game took place at the Houtang High School playground, and over one thousand people were in attendance. The final score was 42 to 40 and the local team won the game. Zhao Xiaobao, the newlywed from Dasha Village, helped save the lives of the crew of plane #15, which included Dr. Thomas White, who later saved the life of Ted Lawson — pilot of plane #7 and author of *Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo*. When the Japanese came to search Zhao Xiaobao's home, she and her husband hid the crew behind the wall, and after several days the men were smuggled aboard a sampan and off the island. The Japanese began searching for the Raiders immediately after they arrived in China. By sedan chair, rickshaw, car, truck, boat, rail, and finally returning to the air, Doolittle's Raiders made their way to Quzhou, Chongqing, and on to Kunming, where some were evacuated over "The Hump" to India, Cairo, Europe, and home to Washington, but many of the Raiders remained in Indochina and several others served in Europe.

What happened to those people who rescued Doolittle's aircrews?

In many articles written about the Doolittle Raid, the role of the Chinese people is generalized, stating simply that the crews crashed into a rice paddy, or in the ocean, and they were aided by local Chinese people. Neither the names of many of the Chinese people nor the geographical locations of their landing sites and crash sites were known at the time. But the Doolittle Raiders, their families, and biographers knew and remained extremely grateful to the Chinese who assisted in their safe escape.

The audacious Doolittle Raid forced the Japanese to realize they were not invulnerable. The Japanese military recalled troops to protect Japan and moved out to extend their defense perimeter. Although Doolittle's Raid caused minimal damage on the ground, it monumentally impacted the mindset of Japan's military leaders. This change in the Japanese military planning resulted in the decisive Battle of Midway and the tide of the war shifted. As Doolittle later wrote,

> The psychological results, it was hoped, would be the recalling of combat equipment from other theaters for home defense thus effecting relief in those theaters, the development of a fear complex in Japan, improved relationships with our Allies, and a favorable reaction on the American people.[3]

President Roosevelt later facetiously announced the attack was launched from the legendary Shangri-La. The Japanese could never have guessed the attack had been carrier-based, so they assumed Doolittle's attacking squadron must have been launched from airfields in China. The enraged Japanese learned that Doolittle's Raiders were assisted by the Chinese people. Over one hundred thousand soldiers poured into the Zhejiang–Jiangxi area, including some of the same divisions

3. James Doolittle, "Halsey-Doolittle Raid, April 1942," (General Doolittle's Report on Japanese Raid, July 9, 1942, to the War Department, Headquarters of the Army Air Force). Taken from a letter dated June 5, 1942.

responsible for the 1937 Nanjing Massacre. For the people of Zhejiang and Jiangxi, the ghastly retribution was cataclysmic and epic in its scope. In order to destroy airfields and search for the Raiders and their rescuers, soldiers carried out the "Three Alls" strategy of the Japanese military in China: Loot All, Burn All, and Kill All. Known in Chinese as *sānguāng zhèngcè* and in Japanese as *sankō sakusen*, the Japanese used this line of attack to punish the farmers, fishermen, soldiers, and militia — young and old — who may have helped Doolittle's people evade discovery and capture. Wherever Doolittle's men passed, they left behind pennies, bullets, buttons, and other tokens, and some of these items were tracked down by the methodical Japanese. The dark, wretched toll was an estimated 250,000 people massacred in the most terrifying means possible: battles, rape, bludgeoning, fire, torture, plague, and pestilence. The airfields were utterly destroyed, and dozens of towns and villages were laid waste. Thousands of Chinese people died for every Doolittle Raider who was rescued. Most dishonorable of all, when the Japanese units withdrew in mid-August, they seeded the area, once again, with all manner of disease vectors created by the infamous Unit 731, the biological and chemical warfare unit of Japan's Imperial Army, including cholera, typhoid, plague, anthrax, dysentery, and glanders. This was done as an expedient punishment. The Japanese had previously field-tested their evil biological weaponry on Ningbo, Quzhou, and other areas in China. The effects of these and other biological warfare attacks are still felt today in the region, especially around Jinhua in the "rotten leg villages," named for the outbreaks of glanders and anthrax and the putrefying lesions which are indicators of the diseases. Several survivors of these attacks are still alive, and in May 2010 I was blessed with the opportunity to meet some biological warfare survivors and others connected to the Raiders' rescue.

The Qing Ming Festival (清 *qing*–clear and 明 *ming*–bright) is a

traditional holiday for families to travel home to clean their ancestors' tombs and honor the dead. The festival is translated as Tomb Sweeping Day. Qing Ming occurs on the 15th day after the spring equinox. In 2010, the holiday coincided with Easter Sunday in America, and, for me, the simultaneous commemoration of ancestral respect and resurrection stirred intense emotions, as on that day I visited a hidden cave and former military facility near Quzhou where dozens of the Raiders regrouped and were aided. Quzhou was the pilots' objective airport. My wife and I were led to this historic location by my friend and guide Mr. Zheng Wieyong, who is a local expert on Quzhou's World War II history. I was given the honor of going first, since, according to Mr. Zheng, I was the first American to visit this cave since World War II. The remarkable power of that honor hit me as we posed for photos outside the entrance. I was humbled by the thought that my curiosity had set me on a path where now I was linked to the heroic Doolittle Raiders. As we walked around the area, Mr. Zheng pointed out a concrete slab where he said the Raiders played basketball and relaxed in the shade of the large trees still standing there. Mr. Zheng suggested I take a brick from one of the demolished dormitory buildings where the Raiders had been sheltered. I keep one of those bricks on my desk to remind me of that day.

We then visited the nearby gravesite of Cpl. Leland Faktor who was the first man to die on the Doolittle Raid. On the way there, we met Mr. Wang, an eighty-two-year-old farmer who was carrying a hoe and fresh bamboo roots, and his bright face lit up when he saw us approaching. The presence of a foreigner so far off the beaten path is rare, and at first Mr. Wang was a bit inhibited, but he quickly warmed up when we asked him about the location of Corporal Faktor's grave. Mr. Wang was a young boy when the burial took place and he attended the graveside services. Mr. Faktor's body was recovered by Doolittle's

men and evacuated to the Quzhou area. The services were conducted by American missionary John Birch, who, after being recommended by Doolittle to the American military command, lost his life while assisting the war effort in China. Corporal Faktor's remains were repatriated, but according to Mr. Wang some smaller bones remained interred in the Quzhou area grave. My wife and I placed flowers on the grave; I recited the Lord's Prayer and saluted Corporal Faktor's sacrifice. The grave is on a small hill overlooking a rather serene field with homes about a quarter mile away. Mr. Wang was a delightful man, and after we vigorously shook hands, Mr. Zheng, my wife, and I went into the city of Quzhou.

Mr. Zheng showed us the remnants of the Quzhou city wall, where the defenders of the city held out for days against Japanese chemical attacks and superior numbers, all the while being bombed repeatedly, during the Japanese Army's Zhejiang–Jiangxi campaign from mid-May 1942 to early September of that year, after which the Japanese forces spread biological pathogens. One of the fallout shelters, where several Raiders hid during bombardments, is still intact near the site of the former Quzhou military airport. We then met with and interviewed numerous survivors of the Japanese biological warfare campaign against the civilian population. These wonderful old people meet each Qing Ming Festival to commemorate their lost loved ones. They meet at the restored courtyard home which was the epicenter of the first Japanese biological attack. I was overcome with emotions as I listened to Mr. Chen, a retired English teacher, recount how his little sister suffered and died from plague from the fleas dropped by the Japanese onto Quzhou. He then rolled up his pant legs to show me his physical biological warfare scars. His gentle smile while performing such a personal act in public shined like a beacon to those dozen or so survivors gathered around us. Without thinking, I placed my arm gently on his shoulder as

he led me through the exhibits of the Quzhou Biological Warfare Museum. Time and again, the resolute nature of Chinese people shines through the clouds of adversity. As we assembled in the courtyard for photographs, I looked around at the kind elderly faces and was struck by the resilience of the Chinese in times of great hardship. They each shook my hand and thanked me for coming to visit them, and asked that I tell the story of sacrifices they and thousands of others made during the long, shared struggle of World War II. The remarkable events surrounding the Doolittle mission and the subsequent help offered to the Raiders vividly illustrate the intertwined wartime destinies of China and America.

I first heard of the Doolittle Raiders when I was a little boy. During World War II, my father, Ronald Earl Wheeler, was a tail gunner and flight mechanic on a United States Navy PV-1 Patrol Bomber. He received the Distinguished Flying Cross for his squadron's bombing mission over Japan, and he received two additional stars for subsequent valor, along with the Air Medal five times. In my dad's box of memories he has a yellowed clipping from the local newspaper stating his mission was one of the first to bomb Japan after Doolittle's Raid. My dad, five uncles, and one grandfather served with distinction in World War II, and all of them returned home. General Doolittle, who was promoted from lieutenant colonel to brigadier general the day after the Raid, and his men were always spoken of with deep respect and admiration around our home, and in China the Raiders and Flying Tigers are spoken of with utmost respect. My wife's family is from southern China, and they grew up listening to stories of the Flying Tigers and other dashing Americans who assisted China in World War II.

While researching the materials for this story, I felt I had a profound obligation to properly honor the Doolittle Raiders, their Chinese rescuers, and the nameless thousands who perished in the horrendous

summer of 1942. I lived in Zhejiang Province for several years, and more than any other commonality between Chinese and Americans, during World War II and now, I find there is an unbroken bond between the indomitable Chinese and the unconventional American spirits. This interwoven story of America and China has been unfolding for over a century; the tale of the Raiders and their rescuers stands as a shining example of our alliances. The Chinese side of this daring story has not been widely revealed due to many factors. This brief account is intended to tell their story to reveal the splendid nature of untold Chinese people who answered the call when thunder came. ☯

Memories

by Emily Strauss

I remember now — all of it:
a mother squats to talk to her child,
old man wearing a tattered undershirt
dozes over a pile of rotten mangoes,
cobbler poises his hacksaw to slice
off the old high heel, no delicate
move there, school boys in their white
shirts, black trousers, heavy book bags
and spiked hair, people staring at
everything, water buffalo grazing
at the edge of the road, the rubbish in
wicker baskets, the mold of humidity
coating every stone wall black.

But I don't remember
the sounds of monkeys and parrots
drifting down from the botanical garden
on the peak in the early morning
calm, an eerie jungle noise
among the skyscrapers of Hong Kong.

Interview and Portfolio

Nick Sinclair

Nick Sinclair is a professional photographer from the UK who spent several months in China documenting the men and women who bike through communities collecting recycling products for a living. A book entitled Megacycle *resulted from the photographs, some of which appear on the following pages. (More pictures from the book can be found at www.nicksinclair.com.) To put them in context, we recently conducted an e-mail interview with him about his photographic journey; a slightly edited version is below.*

BT: What were the circumstances leading to the project? Where did you travel in China and when?

NS: My visit to China was made possible as a result of a travel bursary from the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust. Each year the WCMT invites themed applications for to pay for travel. My trip took me along much of China's most industrial Eastern region from Hong Kong to Beijing.

BT: How did you get the idea for the project and what were you hoping to accomplish when you set out?

NS: In 2007, the year I won my award, the WCMT applications were invited on the theme of climate change. I had recently been studying about the environment, so this fitted well with my existing interest in the way mankind impacts upon the environment. The irony of encouraging more people to travel on planes to research climate change was not lost on me.

The year 2007 was pretty much the peak of the Chinese boom. China was manufacturing and exporting cheap goods to the developed world and was rapidly changing from an agrarian to an urban society, with millions of workers migrating to the cities. There was much discussion of the environmental impact of such rapid and large-scale change, largely offset by the narrative that this change was creating wealth and opportunity in China and beyond. There was much giddy talk that a vast new middle class would soon become the market for sophisticated Western brands and services. This was the boom that was not going to bust. In many ways the process that was taking place mirrored the Industrial Revolution which turned Britain and Europe into the kind of economies we are today.

There are basically two schools of thought when it comes to protecting the environment. On the one hand, there are people who believe that governments have to intervene, to protect our shared environmental resources. Clean air and beaches do not look after themselves. On the other side of the argument is the view that a properly liberalized market free from regulation will be more responsive and adaptable than anything government can do and that environmental values will have their place like any other resource. So, for example, tourists will stop coming to a dirty beach, so business stakeholders will see the benefit in investing in the environment. This is a kind of enlightened self-interest argument. Needless to say, business prefers the second approach and during both booms and recessions the argument frequently surfaces that too much intervention will slow the economy and make things worse.

In China, during my visit I encountered countless people who made their living from collecting recyclable materials, discarded by wealthier people. They sold the materials they collected to recycling depots and on the face of it this would appear to demonstrate how well the market

provides opportunity for all, an income for those who are prepared to work and protection for the environment by ensuring that materials are recycled. My project set out to gain some deeper understanding of the way that on-street recycling worked. What quickly became clear was that the market system did not form a robust system to protect either the workers or the environment. There were many reasons for this, some much more obvious than others. The financial margins are so slight, that you have to be incredibly poor to even contemplate this as a way of life. These workers do not go home to the suburbs to enjoy a nice supper after work and kiss the kids goodnight. More likely, they are miles and even years from their families, they work almost relentlessly, and live hand to mouth. Even when things are going well, they are not going that well. This work doesn't provide a future for themselves or their children. They don't have access to proper medicine, housing, or decent schools for their children. They are a caste beneath, largely despised and overlooked. Most telling of all, the market which is supposed to protect, actually makes things worse. Many of the recyclers have signs which ask for such things as old computers and machines, i.e., premium recyclable goods, and yet when you look at what they have collected, it is largely low-value paper and card. On-street recycling is like a pyramid scheme. When there were only a few participants, they could collect reasonably promising items. The idea of this spread rapidly and more and more people were drawn in, creating more competition. So much so, that recyclers end up paying to buy some of the materials they then sell on. Every pressure on their income is downward and the system is entirely reliant on a desperate underclass who will constantly accept less.

The other tragedy about relying on a system where the poor clean up after the rich, is that degraded environments tend to impact on the poor hardest, as they tend to live and work in the most damaged and polluted areas.

BT: How did you find your subjects? And how did you approach taking photos of them? Did you ask permission or shoot from a distance with a zoom lens, for example? And how about communication — did you use a translator or know any Chinese?

NS: After initially not noticing them, it became apparent that there were recyclers everywhere. They are so common that they had become invisible. They ring their bells or call out for goods and once you tune in you can find them all over. They are shy and discrete so many want to be left alone, but for others their curiosity matched mine. I don't use a zoom and generally talked with them, sometimes with the help of a Chinese speaker, but more often than not with signs and gestures.

BT: What can you tell us about the technical aspects of the photos or the cameras and equipment you used? What worked best for the kinds of shots you were taking and/or the effect you were looking for?

NS: I try and take pictures which capture how things look to me. So these days I use available light and photograph in color. For most things I like a 35mm lens on a full-frame digital SLR. A 35mm lens gives a field of view most similar to the human eye and it means if the situation demands a closer view, you have to get closer. I don't use any photo tricks or retouching and only minimal color correction. I learned photography with film and I think it is important that the image is captured as is and not reworked. For me photographs are a record of the moment and veracity is lost if they are meddled with ad nauseam.

BT: I know you went to a number of cities and you must have seen and talked to dozens of recyclers. Are there any who stand out to you? Or did anything memorable happen to you on your travels?

NS: I was very touched by many of the people I met. They were dignified and in spite of being dealt a pretty tough hand, they were happy and on good terms with their lives. I don't speak Chinese, nor they English for the most part, so communication was very basic in most instances. I was conscious that there was little about me that made much sense to them. I obviously wasn't a policeman or an official, but exactly what I was up too was clearly a mystery. I decided early on that I wanted a souvenir of my travels and decided that I wanted to buy one of the bicycle bells from one of the recyclers. It was a very difficult request to explain and I struggled to find someone who understood and who was prepared to sell his bicycle bell. We had what was in essence a long game of charades and then a haggle, with a large excited audience. My new friend thought it was the funniest thing ever and that I was the funniest thing ever. I don't know if I paid a day's work, a week's work, or a month's work for the bell, but it lives on my desk and I will never part with it.

BT: What did you learn about the lives of the recyclers that surprised/shocked/impressed you?

NS: They are happy. We in the West are very prone to believing that we will be happy in the future, that our happiness is conditional on an acquisition, promotion, or whatever else. The impression I got was that they were very good at appreciating their life for what it was. They laughed and smiled a lot.

BT: Do you remember any of the going rates at the time for any of the recycled material? If so, how do they compare to today?

NS: I don't remember, but I think the income gained for a full day's work would be the equivalent of a couple of dollars–? This is another fail with the market system for protecting the poor and the environment. Not only does rural poverty provide a desperate workforce which ensures competition and an oversupply of workers, but recession and global forces ensure that commodity prices are vulnerable to external forces. Since the commodity boom, resource prices have crashed. Recycled material prices must now be a fraction of what they were during my visit.

BT: Did certain cities provide better markets than others (that you're aware of)? I know your trip was during the year preceding the 2008 Summer Olympics. Did you make it to Beijing? If so, do you know how the construction for the Olympics affected the market there?

NS: I didn't really see much difference between recycling in mainland cities. I saw some of the construction of the Olympic Summer Games in Beijing. Many of the low-rise districts were being cleared for new development. I don't have evidence, but the feeling I got was that poorer populations were being cleared to make way for apartments and shopping malls for wealthier populations.

BT: Have you been back to China since this project? What are your thoughts about the project and the people you met, looking back today almost a decade later?

NS: I haven't been back. It's rather alarming to count the years since. Life moves on for us all at rather a pace. I do hope that their resourcefulness, energy, and positivity has enabled my recycling friends to find a way ahead for themselves. ☯

All photographs from *Megacycle* were taken between November 2007 and January 2008.

The sign reads: "Recycling: refrigerators, air conditioners, TVs, hot water heaters, used electric bikes, etc."

A bell used by recyclers to announce their arrival to residents as they ride through neighborhoods.

A hand-held scale used by many recyclers.

Mourning Mr. Wang Guozhen on April 26[1]

by Zhang Yanjun (张燕军)

Shocked at your death, thousands of people are deep in sorrow. My dear Mr. Wang, please listen to the words from my heart when you passed away.

You have surging poetry feelings for you are broad-minded enough to accommodate people around the world!

Reading your poems informs me of the encouraging ideas you offer and reminds me of the bitterness you suffer. Understanding your rebirth while May is drawing near, your readers will never be confused.

You cherished life even facing countless difficulties. You sought boldness and unconstraint even when you could not feel happy!

You cared about the world, however asked for nothing in pursuit of answering life's dilemmas.

In your poetry, the main characters wandered like you under the moon with tears glistening in eyes, or drank like you in the soft wind for regret and sorrow in love!

Seeing the sophora flowers exuding fragrance, you feel happy and peaceful; however, you do not know how brilliant and meaningful your life is when gone with the wind.

Mr. Wang, please pray from heaven for our peace and health, and for the world's development as bright as the rising sun!

1. Wang Guozhen was a poet who died on April 26, 2015. See www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wang_Guozhen.

四二六忆念汪先生[1]

张燕军

惊闻噩耗，万众感伤。先生有知，听诉衷肠。

先生诗情，恣肆汪洋。胸襟宽广，容纳四方！

读诗忆君，思君所想。走向五月，跨越迷惘。

热爱生命，直面沧桑。纵不快乐，仍求豪放！

君之情愫，系于四方。不期回报，求解彷徨。

月下踯躅，斑驳泪光。薄酒柔风，为爱惆怅！

眼神到处，槐花吐香。恬淡静远，生命辉煌。

先生有知，福佑安康。祈我中华，红日大光！

1. 诗人汪国真于2015年4月16日辞世，详情请见zh.wikipedia.org/wiki/汪国真 .