



AITECE Ltd (Australia)

Association for International Teaching Educational
and Curriculum Exchange

Newsletter Issue 14, May 2008

Teacher Program News

Greetings All,

Thanks once again to Brian and his helpers for another issue of our Newsletter.

Currently there are 9 teachers from Australia and New Zealand with AITECE in China and over the coming 2 semesters we are looking forward to welcoming new applicants. In February this year **Heather and Dennis Attrill** left China (reluctantly) after 12 months at Chongqing Technical and Business University, and **Stan Cusack** is home from Hwa Nan College in Fuzhou. After his semester break here in Australia **Greg McCann** returned in February to a new location, **Tongren City**. We wish Greg every happiness as he once again establishes another AITECE connection with a University in China.

We welcomed home and thanked **Greg McEnally, Sandra Power** and **Anne Ting** at a **Debriefing Ceremony** before our lunch and meeting in November 2007 at Balmain.

Former AITECE teachers continue to meet when they can to keep the AITECE spirit alive. Eleven of us recently enjoyed a Banquet together in Chinatown, Sydney, to celebrate the Year of the Rat.

Visit of Hugh and William

On Sunday March 16, eighteen AITECE teachers and friends were able to gather at Marsfield for the event of the visit of **Hugh MacMahon, AITECE Manager**, and **William Byrne** from the **AITECE HK office**. All agreed it was a very enjoyable occasion and many stories were shared. Both Hugh and William gave us their thanks and encouragement to continue the impressive 'Down Under' contribution of the past 20 years since AITECE began. William's words spelt out the need to help the young people of China, who, despite the media exposure of their country (China is becoming a successful 'giant' in the world of business and economy), belong to a country that seemingly has an economy that is booming, but is the fourth poorest in the world.

As the present Teacher Coordinator I encourage all to continue our efforts in furthering the work of AITECE. **AITECE brochures** are available on request. Currently we are arranging our own **Australian AITECE website**. Meanwhile interested parties can be referred to the HK website: **www.aitece.com** for contact details.

Margaret Walsh

AITECE (Australia) Teacher Coordinator



Hugh, Sandra & Patricia

Marsfield—16th March 2008



Host Michael Dredge



William & Margaret

China Remembered

When I think about what I may have contributed to the Chinese people I have met in my years in their country, I hope that it has brought some joy and peace somewhere, somehow. This hope is one of the things that unites teachers from AITECE in a vision of life where we share what we have been given materially or spiritually with people of another culture particularly those most deprived of those great possessions.

There is another side to this experience which I like to contemplate and it is an answer to the question "What has China done for me?" The answer is deep and wide. I would like to offer some observations that come to me when I look back at the contribution that Chinese people have made to me since my first entry to China in 1993.

"Internationality" is a keyword now when we talk about what we do and why we do it. To leave behind the super-saturated materialistic life in Australia and to enter China was a revelation and a gain for my soul and a growth for my spirit. With new knowledge came new understanding, a new friendship, new values. The travel, a simple way of living, sharing and being accepted opened doors and eyes. These serendipitous experiences slowly worked their goodness.



Ray O'Donoghue with students
at Urumqi, 1993

It is quite difficult to answer the perennial question "Why did you go to China?" but I just offer one word as a simple reply - empathy. This may not have been obvious to me in the beginning but over the years this is the gift that I was given slowly. This was particularly so in meetings with migrants, lepers, farmers, the unemployed and others for whom development was a strange word.



Laurie Needham & Ray O'Donoghue
at Guilin in the 1990s

There are so many other valued gifts the Chinese in and out of that country have given me. It is for this reason that I hope to return there while health is strong.

Ray O'Donoghue

*Ray taught in Urumqi, Macau, Huzhou,
Shanghai, Deqing commencing in 1993*



EDITORIAL

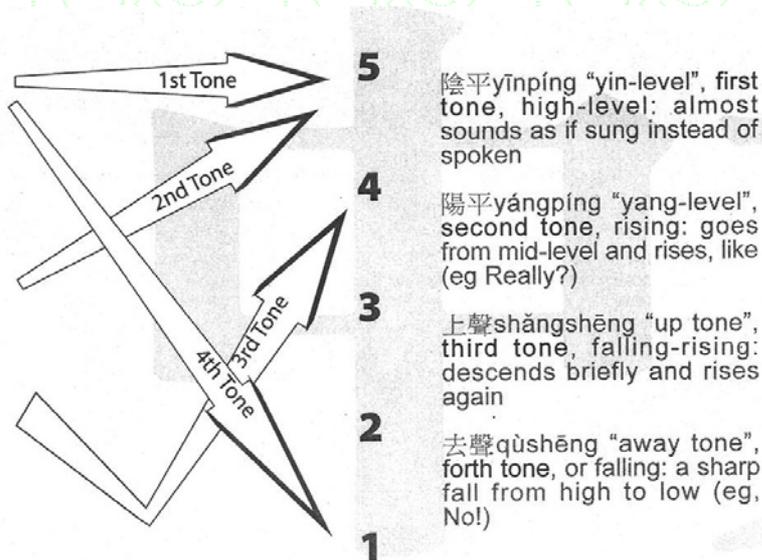
Even a cursory review of our lives will reveal that the journey has taken a course which, in many respects, was far from predictable. Yet, with hindsight, certain turning-points can be recognised – being in a particular place, meeting particular people or maybe a casual word ... As we move down the arches of the years, the interplay between our plans and the promptings that stem from some external source works to reshape, in some degree, the same carefully-laid plans. As for looking ahead, we're always wondering what's around the corner.

In a particular way, a decision to teach English in China is a turning point which opens up a new range of experiences. These, forged in an alien land through mutual respect, enrich the stuff of life. The good teacher must also be a good learner. The relational-bridges between teachers and their students are built solidly day-by-day by honest endeavour, understanding and a sense of humour: they persist in a way that surpasses understanding.

Brian Jeffers, Editor

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Learning Chinese



媽 mā, mother

麻 má, hemp

馬 mǎ, horse

罵 mà, scold

The "ma" example is a very common way of illustrating the tonal differences. Sentences can be formed using the same sounds with different tones, such as 媽罵馬 mā mà mǎ, "mother scolds the horse".

As with the invention of the Chinese characters by Cangjie, there is a mythical story behind these tones. Ling Lun, an official of Huangdi ("The Yellow Emperor") discovered a way to imitate the sounds of the male and female Phoenix birds with hollow bamboo pipes – he related them to the foundational tones of Chinese.

Tones can be notori-

ously difficult to master for non-native speakers. Since changing the tone often means changing the meaning, this area can sometimes be quite confusing. For example, 請問 qǐng wèn, "please ask", and 親吻 qīn wěn "passionately kiss", sound very similar. So if you were walking down the street and tried to say to a passing Chinese "I want to ask you a question (qǐng wèn) for a moment", but actually said "I want to qīn wěn you for a moment", you would be saying "I want to passionately kiss you for a moment" instead! With practice and persistence however, it is an achievable goal.

All varieties of Chinese are tonal. This means that the same word can have different meanings depending on its tone. Mandarin has four tones, as well as a neutral tone. This means that the meaning of the term depends on the tone it is said in—using the wrong tones can make your utterances either unintelligible, or change their intended meaning entirely, sometimes in odd ways.



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