

Needham Research Institute Newsletter

李約瑟研究所通訊

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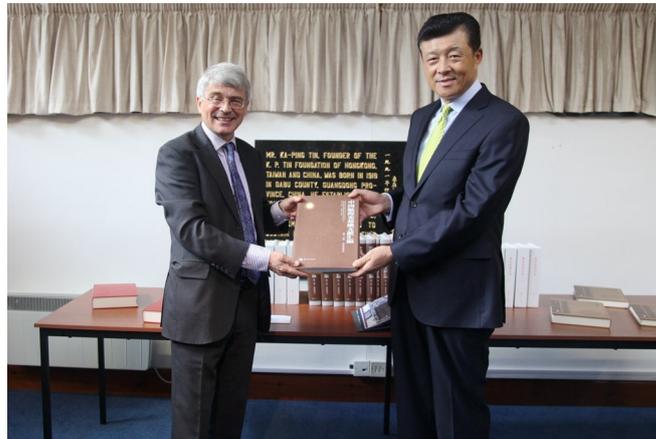
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Newsletter edited by Susan Bennett

Professor Christopher Cullen's Retirement as Director of the Needham Research Institute

After more than a decade as Director of the Needham Research Institute, Professor Christopher Cullen retired from his post at the end of December 2013. The Institute has much to thank Christopher for, and its position today as a leading centre for research in the history of East Asian science, technology and medicine, is in no small part due to the energy and dedication which he brought to the post.



Photograph: Embassy of P. R. China in the UK

Christopher's association with the Institute dates back to 1977, when he was awarded a Stipendiary Research Fellowship at Clare Hall. In 1990 he took on the responsibility of organising the 6th International Conference on the History of Science in China, held at Robinson College in August of that year. In 1991, whilst employed as a lecturer at SOAS, he was appointed Deputy Director and travelled up from London on Fridays to work at the Institute. More and more of his time and energy went into managing the affairs of the Institute, and this was exemplified by the immense amount of work he put into the Dragon's Ascent multi-media project between 1997 and 2001. It was the success of this project which enabled the Institute to fund a full-time Directorship, and Christopher was appointed to the post in 2003.

During his tenure as full-time Director, Christopher concentrated his energy on research activities, developing contacts internationally, and fundraising, which led, for instance, to the establishment of the Soon-Young Kim and Independent Schools Foundation post-doctoral fellowships. The improved financial footing of the Institute is due to Christopher's great efforts towards helping to secure its future.

As Chairman of the Publications Board, Christopher shepherded 10 volumes of *Science and Civilisation in China* through the highly complex publication process, bringing the long-awaited completion of Joseph Needham's grand project within sight. He also initiated the Monograph Series, and has seen 12 volumes through to publication.

During his time as Director, Christopher had the honour of welcoming many leading figures to the Institute, and the photograph above shows him with H.E. Ambassador Mr. Liu Xiaoming on his most recent visit in October 2013. To mark the occasion of Christopher's retirement, and to express their thanks, Trustees hosted a splendid dinner at Clare College in December 2013, and honoured him with the title of *Director Emeritus*. This was followed a few days later by an informal party at the Institute for staff, scholars and friends. We all wish Christopher well with his on-going research and all his future endeavours.

Appointment of New Director

Following a long selection process, on 22 February 2013 the Board of Trustees appointed Professor MEI Jianjun as Director from 1st January 2014, in succession to Professor Christopher Cullen. Professor Mei specialises in the history of metallurgy in China, and cultural interactions between China and the West. He joins us from the University of Science and Technology, Beijing, where he was Director of the Institute of Historical Metallurgy and Materials.

Visit of H.E. Ambassador Liu Xiaoming



Photograph: *Embassy of P. R. China in the UK*

On Friday 18th October 2013, His Excellency Mr. Liu Xiaoming, Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to the UK, visited the Institute on the occasion of the presentation of a gift of Chinese research materials to the Library. These resources, specifically requested by the Library, included books and access to electronic resources essential for conducting research into the history of science in China. The donation was the result of a project with the Institute initiated by Mr. Xiang Xiaowei, Minister Counsellor of Cultural Affairs at the Embassy, funded by the Ministry of Culture of the People's Republic of China, with the advice and support of the National Library of China.

In his speech, Ambassador Liu spoke warmly of Dr. Needham's contributions to the world's understanding of China's rich scientific and technological heritage and Sino-British relations, as well as the role of the Institute and its Library in continuing his work. He expressed his hope that the Institute would "not only examine ancient China, but more importantly, focus on what is happening in today's China... [to] open new frontiers as well as build on the foundations created by Dr. Needham. I believe this would be the best way to make his legacy last and show our respect for him."

The donation of some 160 volumes of Chinese books, mainly important reports of recent archaeological investigations in China, are currently on display in the Director's office, awaiting integration into our collection.

Dedication of the S.T. Lee Wing on 26th February 2013



As reported in Newsletter 9 (2012), in recognition of generous support given to the Institute over many years by Dr. S.T. Lee and the Lee Foundation of Singapore, the Trustees voted to name one of the Institute's three wings as The S.T. Lee Wing. The ceremony to unveil the dedicatory plaque at the entrance to the wing was held on February 26th 2013. The unveiling was performed by His Excellency the Singapore High Commissioner, Mr. T. Jasudasan. Also present were members of the Trustees, Sir John Boyd (Chairman), Mr Stephen Keynes, Lady Pamela Youde, Professor Sir Geoffrey Lloyd, Ms Elizabeth Wright, Professor Liu Dun, as well as Institute staff and visiting scholars. A workshop on the theme of "Asian Biopoleis" was held in conjunction with the unveiling, reported on page 4 of this newsletter. The Institute is extremely grateful to Dr. Lee and the Lee Foundation for their continued very generous support to the Institute, in particular our Library.

Comparing Ancient Worlds: Greece and China Conference in honour of Professor Sir Geoffrey Lloyd's 80th Birthday



The international conference 'Comparing Ancient Worlds: Greece and China', in celebration of Professor Sir Geoffrey Lloyd's 80th birthday, was held at the NRI on 24th - 26th January 2013. The

conference was organised by Cambridge PhD students Qiaosheng Dong and Jenny Zhao, with generous support from the Chiang Ching-kuo Foundation, the Needham Research Institute, Cambridge University Faculty of Classics, the Centre for Research in the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities (CRASSH), and Cambridge University Press. This conference provided a welcome opportunity for international scholars at the forefront of research in classics, sinology and cross-cultural comparisons to exchange ideas, and for younger scholars and students to participate in the discussions.

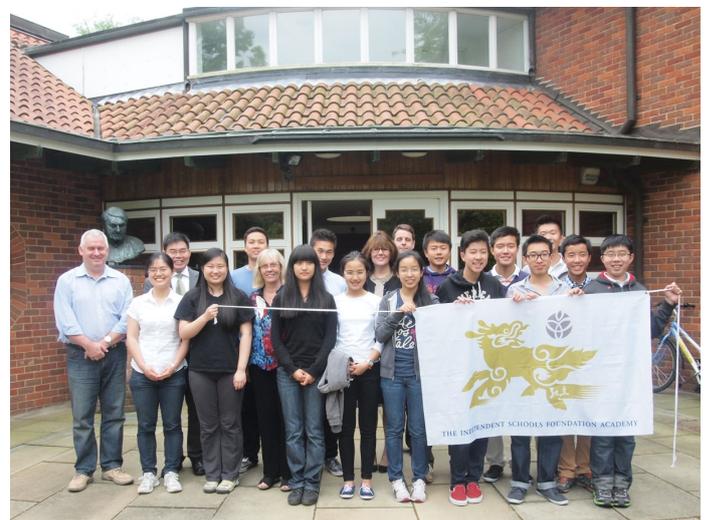
The conference opened with a review of the progress made in the field and its challenges by Walter Scheidel (Stanford), followed by Michael Nylan (Berkeley) on libraries and manuscript culture in Western Han Chang'an and Alexandria. Ian Johnston (independent scholar), Richard King (Bern) and Lisa Raphals (UC Riverside) offered papers on comparative philosophy, on the School of Names, freedom in Zhuangzi and some Stoics, and scales of nature in Zhuangzi and Aristotle respectively. In the area of medicine and history of science, Shigehisa Kuriyama (Harvard) presented on the mystery of presence, while Vivienne Lo (UCL) and Eleanor Re'em (Cambridge) spoke about aphrodisiacs in the ancient worlds. Yiqun Zhou (Stanford) compared Helen and the Chinese *femmes fatales* in her paper. These well-attended main sessions were followed by two public lectures at CRASSH to allow the participation of a wider public. Nathan Sivin (UPenn) gave a talk entitled 'why some comparisons make more difference than others', while Christopher Cullen usefully summed up the themes of the conference and offered his personal insights. Following a lively roundtable session, Michael Loewe drew the conference to a close with some inspiring concluding remarks.

The conference proved to be an extremely stimulating and rewarding occasion, providing a much needed platform for leading scholars to address important questions in comparative studies and to share their findings across the various disciplines. Papers from the conference together with additional contributions are expected to be published by CUP in 2015 in a volume provisionally titled *Ancient Greece and China Compared*.

Jenny Jingyi Zhao, Trinity Hall Cambridge

Independent Schools Foundation (ISF) Academy Summer Study Program

The first Summer Study Program jointly undertaken by the ISF Academy, Hong Kong, and the NRI took place here during the summer. Thirteen ISF secondary school students, accompanied by 3 teachers, spent 2 weeks researching topics chosen by the students under the supervision and guidance of ISF and NRI staff, in particular Dr. Wu Huiyi, our 3-year ISF Academy Fellow, who joined us in 2013. On the final day, students made short oral presentations and answered questions on their topics. The attitude and achievements of the students was most impressive, and it was agreed that this was a rewarding experience for all. We look forward to welcoming a new crop of students here in the summer of 2014. Readers can find out more about the ISF at: <http://www.isf.edu.hk/en>



Library News

Thanks to the very generous support provided by the Lee Foundation of Singapore, new mobile shelving was installed early in the year in the Engine Room (see photo). This has more than doubled the space available there for housing our journal collection. I'd like to thank the army of visiting scholars here at the time who worked with me to move all the journals off the old shelving!

Thanks to additional funding secured for the Library, we have also begun assisting Cambridge University Library in the purchase of Chinese electronic resources essential for conducting research in our field. As well as the very generous donation of Chinese books from Ministry of Culture of the PRC mentioned on p. 2, the Library continues to receive donations of individual titles from scholars from around the world. We are, as always, extremely grateful for their generosity.

During the summer I spent several days in the historic city of Xi'an, visiting the Institute for Historical Environment and Socio-economic Development in Northwest China, Shaanxi Normal University, our Sino-British Fellowship Trust (SBFT) partner for this year. I also took the opportunity to do some book shopping in Beijing, and to attend a conference in Guiyang, Guizhou Province.

John Moffett, Librarian



Seminars and Workshops

Asian Biopoleis and Beyond

As mentioned on Page 2, a workshop on the theme of "Asian Biopoleis and Beyond" was held at the Institute on the 26th and 27th Feb., 2013. Organized jointly by the NRI and Professor Gregory Clancey of the National University of Singapore, all the speakers are currently based at NUS, taking part in the 'Asian Biopoleis' project led by Professor Clancey. Talks included, "The Currency of Racial Difference: Globalized Biomedical Knowledge Production and the Generative Value of an 'Asian' Dataset" (Margaret Tan); "The Bioinformatic Basis of Pan-Asianism" (Philip Cho); "City of Life: Re-reading Geddes's 'biopolis' through Initial Reflections on Sociality in Singapore's Biopolis" (Birgit Buergi); "The Human Proteome and the Chinese Liver" (Gregory Clancey); and "From Bear to Bile: The Commodification of Animal Tissue in Traditional Chinese Medicine" (Liz Chee).

Shifts in time measurement, time perception and time use in Japan from the pre-modern to the modern era

Co-hosted with the Department of East Asian Studies, the workshop 'Shifts in time measurement, time perception and time use in Japan from the pre-modern to the modern era' took place here on 24 June 2013. It was jointly organised by Brigitte Steger, Gerhard Leinss, and Katja Schmidt-pott, who have been working on the history of time in Japan for several years. There were talks on the temporal infrastructure in pre-modern Japan, the Japanese calendar reform of 1873, the import of Western clocks to Japan after the Meiji Restoration, the use of stopwatches in international sports competitions, and the emergence of modern time discipline in Japan. It was attended by a dozen or so guests from Cambridge, Oxford and London, who enriched the discussion with their stimulating questions and comments.

Fellows and Visiting Scholars

Amongst many visitors to the Institute, we have had the pleasure of hosting the following:

The Soon-Young Kim Fellow in the History of East Asian Science and Technology: Lee Jung 09.2013-08.2014 (Seoul National University); **US Mellon Fellows:** Stacey Van Vleet 01-03.2013 (Columbia University); Megan Greene 04-07.2013 (Kansas University); **Li Foundation Fellows:** Liu Wei 10.2012-07.2013 (China Science and Technology Museum, Beijing); Chen Kunlong 11.2012-11.2013 (University of Science and Technology Beijing (USTB)); **Independent Schools Foundation Fellow:** Dr. Wu Huiyi 10.2013-2016.

Other medium to long term visitors: Gerhard Leinss (Cambridge University) 08.2012-09.2014; Aleksandra Majstorac-Kobiljski (D. Kim Fellowship holder) 01.2013-2014; Yi Ggodme (Sangji University, Korea); Ahn Sang-Hyeon (Korea Astronomy and Space Science Institute); Tomoko Kitagawa; Regina Huebner (Cambridge University); Bu Fengxian (Shaanxi Normal University); Zhang Yan (Shanxi University); Mei Jianjun (USTB); Chen Hsiu-fen (National Chengchi University, Taiwan); Margaret Pearson (Professor Emerita, Skidmore College); Liu Dun (Chinese Academy of Science); Huang Xing (USTB); Liu Jie (Shanxi University).

