

Needham Research Institute Newsletter

李約瑟研究所通訊

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Newsletter edited by Susan Bennett

Continuing Needham's Legacy: A Word from the New Director

It is fast approaching the first anniversary of my taking up the post of Director of the Needham Research Institute. During the past eleven months I have become increasingly aware of just how unique this Institute is. I feel tremendous respect and admiration for Dr. Joseph Needham and his many generous and farsighted supporters who established such a magnificent institution to promote "the study and general knowledge of the history of science and technology of the countries of Eastern Asia". It has been my very good fortune to have had a long association with the Institute which began with my year as a visiting scholar (1994-1995), then as a doctoral student (1995-2000), a postdoctoral researcher (2003-2004) and as a contributor to the non-ferrous metallurgy volume in the *Science and Civilisation in China (SCC)* series. I know from personal experience how important the Institute and its facilities are for the study of science and civilization in East Asia

As the new Director, I have a clear understanding of the Institute's mission as well as the substantial challenges which lie ahead. It is essential for us to carry on Dr. Needham's legacy. *SCC* has transformed western perceptions of civilizations in East Asia, and laid a cornerstone for mutual understanding and appreciation between East and West. The NRI has a continuing crucial role to play in promoting East-West intellectual interactions and in fostering young scholars of different national and cultural backgrounds.

Under my able and energetic predecessors, the past two decades have seen the Institute develop and build on its strengths. We shall continue its successful research programs and activities, such as the publication of *SCC* and the monograph series, the fellowship programs, the consistent expansion of its library collections, as well as the well-received Friday text-reading seminars.



*Professor Jianjun Mei
in his office at the NRI*

I shall put particular emphasis on the development of joint projects and collaborative programs. There are promising signs for the development of significant research projects in the UK and elsewhere in Europe and China. Active collaboration in research with other eminent institutions will further promote the standing of the NRI internationally.

The NRI greatly values its close relationship with the departments of Cambridge University, and is always happy to explore effective ways of participating in and contributing to its academic activities. The NRI is also playing an active role in broadening and strengthening connections between the University and academic institutions in East Asia.

The great success of the *SCC* project has demonstrated how powerful and impressive a good cause can be. Money follows good causes. With consistent and significant contributions to the progress of academic research and to our knowledge of world history and cultures, the NRI is in a good position to attract research funds and capital donations to increase its endowment.

I look forward to many fruitful years here working with my highly experienced and dedicated team, and to building further upon the magnificent legacy bequeathed by our Founder.

HONOURS

We are delighted to announce the following awards:

NRI Trustee Professor Roel Sterckx was elected to the Fellowship of the British Academy in 2013.

NRI Honorary Associate Mr Alistair Michie was awarded the "Friendship Award" by the Chinese government in 2013.

New Fellowship Opportunities

The Jing Brand Scholarships in Chinese Science

Following his visit to the Institute as a member of the CEC delegation, reported on elsewhere in this newsletter, Mr. WU Shaoxun (*right, centre of the group*), philanthropist and Chairman of the Jing Brand Co., Ltd. decided to establish the Jing Brand Scholarship in Chinese Science and Civilisation at the Needham Research Institute. These scholarships will be of immense benefit to young scholars in the field, and we are most grateful to Mr. Wu for his great generosity in supporting the work of the Institute.

At the invitation of Mr. Wu Shaoxun, the Director traveled to Daye, Hubei and visited the Jing Brand Co. Ltd. in September, and was given a tour of the company.



The Exploring China-Ancient Chinese Military Engineering Scholarships



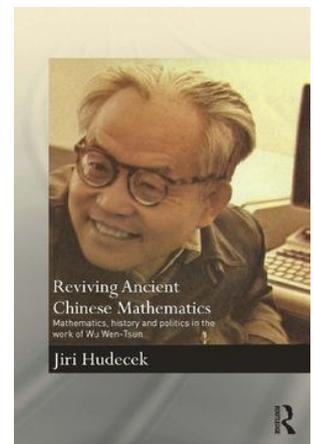
Following the visit of the China Entrepreneur Club, we are delighted to report that in September 2014 Mrs CHENG Wen (*left*) of the Beijing Xingzhi Exploring Culture Communication Co., Ltd. and the Director signed an agreement to jointly set up the ‘Exploring China–Ancient Chinese Military Engineering Scholarships’ to be held at the Needham Research Institute. These fellowships will support young scholars from Chinese-speaking countries and regions to carry out research projects relating to pre-modern Chinese military engineering. For further details of the scholarships, please see our website.

The Lloyd-Dan David Fellowship

It is with great pleasure that we report that Professor Sir Geoffrey Lloyd, former Chairman of the Trust and Senior Scholar in Residence at the Needham Research Institute, was in 2013 awarded the prestigious Dan David Prize for his contribution to our understanding of the modern legacy of the ancient world. Sir Geoffrey has most generously established the Lloyd-Dan David Fellowship at the Institute. After a long process of selection organized in collaboration with the Cambridge Centre for Research in the Arts, Social Science and Humanities (CRASSH), it was decided to award the first three-year postdoctoral fellowship to Dr. Dmitri Livitin. Dr. Livitin will work at CRASSH during the first year of his fellowship tenure, and will then move to the NRI for the following two years. His research focus is on cultural comparatism.

New Publication

We are pleased to announce the publication of the 13th volume in our Needham Research Institute monograph series. *Reviving Ancient Chinese Mathematics* (Routledge, 2014) is a study of the life of one of modern China’s most admired scientific figures, the mathematician Wu Wen-Tsun. The author, Dr. Jiri Hudecek, spent 4 years at the Institute while studying for his PhD at Cambridge. Further details can be found at:



<http://www.routledge.com/books/details/9780415702966/>

Library News

It has been another busy year for the Library, with increasing numbers of visitors and acquisitions. We continue to receive donations from many individuals, and would like to express our thanks to all who have supported the Library in this way. Special mention goes to Professor ZHENG Jinsheng for his donation of 30 volumes of books on Chinese medicine, and also to Mrs. Lesley Bernal, widow of the late Martin Bernal, for a further consignment of works on modern Chinese books to add to our existing Bernal collection.

In early September I spent 10 days in China. I went to Nanjing – taking my first trip on a high-speed train in China - to visit our SBFT partner for this year, Nanjing University of Information Science and Technology, and Nanjing Agriculture University. I then spent a week in Beijing, buying books and visiting academic institutions.

John Moffett, Librarian

The China Entrepreneur Club (CEC) visit

The visit of the CEC delegation, under the leadership of Ms. Maggie CHENG (*right*) took place on 10th May 2014. Various activities were arranged, including an exhibition, an introductory talk, two academic lectures and a tea party. The visit proved to be a most enjoyable event for all concerned, and the Institute was grateful to receive donations and pledges from several guests. As well as the two scholarship programmes reported on Page 2, Mr. DONG Jingtao of the Hebei Yinsha Commercial Factoring Co., Ltd. made a donation and a pledge was also received from Mr. WU Jianping and Ms. ZHANG Li of the Tianjian Group of China Co. Ltd.



The Lee Foundation, Singapore Benefaction

The great support of Dr. S. T. Lee and the Lee Foundation, Singapore has continued this year, with a further generous donation in May 2014. This was in recognition of the crucial role which the Institute plays in promoting East-West intellectual interactions. We remain extremely grateful to the Lee Foundation, Singapore for their continuing support of our world-renowned library.

Fellows and Visiting Scholars

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

Independent Schools Foundation Fellow: Wu Huiyi; *The Soon-Young Kim Fellow in the History of East Asian Science and Technology*: Lee Jung 09.2013-08.2014 (Seoul National University); *Sino-British Fellowship Trust Fellow*: Li Dahai 05-08.2014 (Shaanxi Normal University); *Li Foundation Fellows*: Zhou Chang 10.2013-03.2014 (Xi'an University of Posts & Telecommunications), Liu Xiao 04-09.2014 (Institute for the History of Natural Science, CAS).

Other medium to long term visitors: Martin Hofmann 11.2013-03.2014 (Heidelberg University); Karen Lai 10-12.2013 (University of New South Wales); Han Qi 02-03.2014 (IHNS, CAS); Wang Xiao 04-10.2014 (Shanghai Jiaotong University); Sasaki Chikara 05-06.2014 (University of CAS, Beijing); Yin Jie 06-11.2014 (Shanxi University); Elizabeth Woo Li 09-12.2014; Hung Kuang-chi 10-12.2014 (National Taiwan University); Sun Yongping 10.2014-09.2015 (Inner Mongolia Normal University); Tomoko Kitagawa 10-11.2014. *The following also visited for up to two weeks*: Gregory Blue, Iwo Amelung, Margaret Pearson, Donald Wagner, Hu Danian, Vimalin Rujivacharakul and Togo Tsukahara.

The Møller Centre, Churchill College: CITIC Bank Visit



The NRI and the Møller Center have reached an agreement to cooperate on a small program of visits for the benefit of both sides. The Institute has agreed to accept visits of delegations from the Møller Center, the first of which took place on 7th June, when we welcomed a group from the CITIC Bank Senior Management Programme (*left*). Two further visits have since taken place.

Conferences, Seminars and Workshops

Multiplying Horizons on the Cross-cultural Circulation of Scientific Knowledge: 'East Asia' and Beyond (13th-20th century), 21st February 2014

Co-organized by Wu Huiyi (NRI/ISF Post-Doctoral Fellow) and Lee Jung (Soon-Young Kim Post-Doctoral Fellow), this workshop involved presentations by five early career researchers (PhD candidates and Post-Doctoral fellows) associated with the NRI, each one followed by comments from three senior scholars. The speakers included Wu Huiyi, Lee Jung, Regina Hubner, Mujeeb Khan, and Aleksandra Kobiljski, while comments were provided by Professor Sir Geoffrey Lloyd, Dr. Catherine Jami and Dr. Joseph McDermott. A further 14 scholars from Cambridge and beyond joined the workshop. Presentations embraced the global circulation of medical and botanical knowledge and industrial technology, highlighting that the history of science in East Asia must be understood in a global context, in terms of the region's multifaceted and ever-evolving relationship with other regions and traditions.

Reflecting on the Nature(s) and Use(s) of Pre-modern Chinese Texts: Cambridge Graduate Conference in Chinese Studies, 6th—7th March 2014

Organised in conjunction with the School of Arts and Humanities and Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, University of Cambridge, this 2-day conference provided an arena for advanced postgraduates to discuss their ongoing research, and to reflect on the nature(s) and use(s) of their core materials. Twelve presenters from Cambridge, Oxford and London introduced their work, with particular emphasis on his/her approach to and/or understanding of the materials in question. Topics presented spanned from the early period (before the 5th century BC) to the late imperial era (19th century), touching upon history, philology, literature, art, religion, and ritual studies. Each panel was followed by an extensive Q&A session. The conference concluded with a keynote speech by the eminent Sinologist, Dr. Michael Loewe, who reflected on his long experience of the study of early China.

New Horizons in Modern Japanese History of Technology, 29th May 2014



Organised by Aleksandra Kobiljski, (D. Kim Foundation Post-Doctoral Fellow), this small workshop brought together early-career and established scholars interested in the history of technology in Japan to discuss work in progress on the role of technology in transforming Japan into an industrial power during the 19th and 20th centuries. Four scholars presented their current research, Professor Aaron Moore (Arizona State University) and Drs. Ruselle Meade (University of Manchester), Lee Jung (NRI) and Aleksandra Kobiljski, with discussion and comment provided by Professors Tsukahara Togo (University of Kobe) and Francesca Bray (University of Edinburgh). All works discussed paid particular attention not only to the discourse about technology but also to the materiality of the encounter with technology, broadly defined. The success of the workshop has led to a plan to make this an annual event at the NRI.

Independent Schools Foundation (ISF) Academy Summer Study Program, 23rd June—11th July 2014

Following the success of the Summer Study Program in 2013, 3 members of staff from the ISF returned with 8 students in June. Under the academic guidance of our ISF Fellow, Dr. Wu Huiyi, the students produced an impressive range of projects, from the development of the Chinese flute to fashion along the Silk Road. In addition, the students contributed daily to the work of the Library, helping to measure and count our extensive collection of traditional Chinese thread-bound volumes. The visit was a great success and we look forward to welcoming a new crop of students here next summer. Readers can find out more about the ISF at: <http://www.isf.edu.hk/en>



Ho Peng Yoke (1926—2014)



At the Needham Research Institute, 1990

Professor Ho Peng Yoke – Scholar, Administrator, Philanthropist, SCC Collaborator and NRI Director Emeritus – passed away on October 18th. He will be remembered for his abundance of wisdom, erudition, generosity and kindness by all of us here who were fortunate to have known him and to have been the beneficiaries of these and his many other qualities.

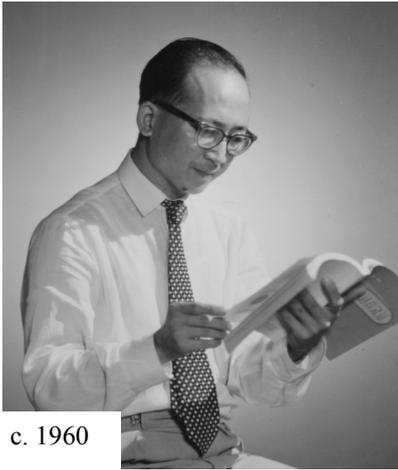
Born on 4th April 1926 in Ipoh, Malaysia, Peng Yoke's talent emerged from a fractured yet multi-faceted education. Well versed in Classical Chinese, courtesy of his father, and fluent in Japanese, he received a scholarship at the end of WWII to study physics at Raffles College, Singapore. After achieving 1st class honours (1950) and an M.Sc. (1951) at the now renamed University of Malaya, Singapore, he went on to complete a Ph.D (1959) in the history of science, a groundbreaking investigation of early Chinese astronomical records. First a Lecturer in Physics, then (1960-64) Reader in History of Science at the same institution, he moved to become Professor of Chinese Studies (1964-1973) at the University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur. His career took him finally to Australia, where, from 1973 to his "retirement" in 1989, he was Foundation Professor and first Chairman of the School of Modern Asian Studies at Griffith University, Queensland.

Peng Yoke's first contacts with Joseph Needham came in Oct. 1953, when Rayson Huang approached Needham about "an historical survey of Chinese Science" to be undertaken by Peng Yoke as part of his Ph.D groundwork. It was this correspondence that led to the adoption of topic in this field for his Ph.D. And thus was Peng Yoke drawn into Needham's orbit, becoming one of his core collaborators in the SCC project, a life-long friend and provider of support to Needham in ways he could never have envisaged back then! Their first paper together, on ancient Chinese records of comets, was published in 1957. Peng Yoke then made two lengthy sojourns in Cambridge, one of nearly 2 years (1958-59) and another of 6 months (1968), working closely with Needham carrying out a pioneering survey of a huge corpus of Taoist works and other sources on Chinese alchemy. The fruits of these labours contributed to several volumes of SCC and many other publications. Though he was listed as "collaborator" (his name romanised as Ho Ping-Yü) on these volumes, the debt owed to him can be gauged from the comment by Needham, buried on the first page of the *Author's Note* to the magnificent Volume 5, Part 7: The Gunpowder Epic, that "Ho Ping-Yü.... has the great merit of having written the first draft of it."

In 1989, Peng Yoke accepted Needham's invitation to become Director of the Institute, a task he took on without salary. As his successor as Director of the Institute, Professor Christopher Cullen has written: "Without his support it is by no means certain that the NRI could have made the transition to being a permanent institution with an active intellectual life" after the retirement of its great founder. Peng Yoke brought all his personal qualities and extensive contacts to bear to steer the Institute through choppy waters, providing a bottomless well of wisdom and encouragement to the small staff here. He would fly over from Australia two or three times a year, often with his wife Lucy, and spend several weeks here, during which the Institute would ring with the familiar sound of his infectious laughter.

Peng Yoke published more than 20 books and 150 articles on subjects ranging from astronomy to gunpowder, divination to alchemy and also on cross-cultural contacts. He wrote highly technical and detailed studies, text-books, and works for a more popular audience. Effortlessly bridging the worlds of traditional Chinese learning, modern science and the humanities, he was happy working alone or in collaboration, giving of his erudition freely, whether in the great volumes of SCC or to his students and colleagues with whom he co-authored so many books and papers. He was a skilled administrator, with a light touch and the wisdom to identify talented people and to give them the space to do their job; he was always on hand to provide advice when it was needed. Here in Cambridge he leaves us with happy memories and grateful hearts. Our deepest condolences go out to his widow, Lucy, and their five children.

Tributes to Ho Peng Yoke (1926—2014)



c. 1960

I knew and worked closely with Peng Yoke for many years, and I feel a strong sense of personal loss at his passing. He was a modest and kind man, who wore his great learning lightly and was always willing to serve the cause of scholarship by hard work in the common interest - quite a lot of it behind the scenes, and hence not always fully acknowledged. Without his unstinting contributions over many years, the Needham enterprise would have achieved significantly less in a number of important areas. And I do not know what would have happened to the Institute if he had not been willing to serve for over a decade as unpaid Director, which involved him having to spend long periods separated from his family in Australia.

Professor Christopher Cullen, Director Emeritus, NRI

惊悉贵研究所前所长何丙郁先生仙逝，不胜震悼！兹特代表上海交通大学科学史与科学文化研究院全体师生，向何先生家属及贵研究所，表示诚挚慰问。何先生学问深湛，智慧圆融，方期悠然颐养，嘉惠学林，遽归道山，同仁无不痛惜。尚此敬祈，节哀珍重！

Professor Jiang Xiaoyuan, Shanghai Jiaotong University

何丙郁教授为李约瑟研究所的发展和科技史研究事业也做出了独特的巨大贡献，为中西文化交流铺路搭桥奉献了毕生精力。他学贯中西，治学严谨，忠厚仁义，和蔼可亲，温良恭俭，克己奉公，是吾侪和中国科技史界的楷模。

Professor Wan Fubin, Guangxi Minzu University

惊悉何先生仙逝，晚辈心情无比悲痛。这几天，何先生的容颜笑貌一直浮现在眼前。我们这些崇拜和景仰何先生的人、受过何先生恩泽的人，时时都在想念他老人家，今后也会永远怀念他老人家。愿他老人家的在天之灵继续带领一代代后人前行、继续保佑我们的科学史事业蓬勃发展。

*Professor Wang Qianjin
Institute for the History of Natural Science*



*Shanghai, August 1984. L-R: Xie Xide, H.T. Huang, Ho Peng Yoke, Joseph Needham, Cao Tianqin
[Photo by Lucy Ho]*

We are overwhelmed at the loss of Peng-Yoke, one of our dearest friends. He was so incredibly supportive all the time he was associated with the NRI, which he helped to keep afloat and even to flourish in very difficult circumstances. His determination and resilience were just fantastic - a model that served as an ideal for me. And apart from all those administrative battles, I shared so many wonderful conversations with him about intellectual matters. We shall miss him dearly.

*Professor Sir Geoffrey Lloyd
Former Chairman, NRI*

先生一生为中国科技史研究之国际化，为自然科学史研究所与大陆科学史事业之发展殚精竭虑，鞠躬尽瘁，其功勋彪炳，为世人仰止。

*Professor Zhang Baichun, Director,
Institute for the History of Natural Science*



*With Joseph Needham at the NRI in 1990
[Photo by Kenneth Robinson]*