

# CHINA INSIGHT

Fostering U.S.-China Cultural and Business Harmony

FREE

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## Made in China: Students' Perspectives

By Abbie Bauman, Bowie Hall, Erin Hunt and Kirsten Olson

Earlier this year, we were a few of the 16 students from the University of Minnesota who had the opportunity to travel to Beijing, Shanghai, and Tianjin as part of a study abroad course entitled "Made in China." The course, led by Seth Werner of the Carlson School of Management and guest lecturers from Tsinghua University, was designed to explore China's growing economic importance and answer the question of why so much of what is purchased around the world is made in China. While these topics were of primary concern to the several students in business related majors, all of us were influenced to study in China by the chance to enjoy the culture, learn the history, and see the monuments—from the Great Wall to the new Olympic stadium. Beyond our curricular material, we observed ambitious, hardworking students; abundant foreign investment; and a uniquely harmonious society.

During one of several field trips, a visit to a clothing manufacturer in Tianjin, we learned about more than just the production of several brands of apparel. Touring the production facility, we passed through rows of sewing, ironing and packaging stations where employees were dutifully working yet more than willing to say hello and display their talents.

"The workers seem very happy; they must be paid well," one student commented to the company representative guiding the tour.

"Yes, our company must pay well," the woman responded, "to attract them to work here. Many Chinese people are seeking other kinds of work."

"Oh? What kind of work do they want?"

"Professional jobs in technology, engineering, business and management—I think the same careers Americans want."

We think she's right, and judging from the Chinese students whom we met, they will excel in such careers. During our stay at Tsinghua University, an institution known as the "MIT of China" for its academic rigor, we were fortunate to befriend several incredibly talented and dedicated students. They generally devoted the vast majority of their time to their studies, seldom participating in many extracurricular activities or taking part-time employment. Some even chose to study in their dormitory's bright stairwells after their room lights' power was shut off at 11:00 p.m. Such work ethic is impressive, even by standards of top American universities, and has served to attract numerous multinational corporations to China.

For example, we visited the Beijing research office of Schlumberger, the global petroleum research and services company. As the company's representatives (Chinese as well as expatriates from the United States and Europe) explained, Schlumberger was attracted to China by a growing pool of highly-educated engineers and scientists—

some of the best in the world. So too were dozens of other multinational corporations whose offices we saw at new research parks and technology centers. It appears that Chinese people are indeed excelling in some of the most sought after careers.

While some companies have moved into China to take advantage of its talent pool, others have moved in to capitalize in its growing economy. McDonald's, for example, provided an interesting example of how companies have adapted their products and services in order to succeed in a unique market.

On our visits to a McDonald's near Tsinghua, not only were we "lovin' it," but



University of Minnesota students in Shanghai

Beijing's citizens were lovin' it too. There were burgers, there were fries, and there were

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## Midwest-China Association holds quarterly meeting in Minneapolis



Tony Lorusso, Director of the Minnesota Trade Office

On July 20, 2006, the Midwest US-China Association (MWCA) held its quarterly meeting at Dorsey & Whitney LLP in Minneapolis. The Minnesota Trade Office, in cooperation with Dorsey & Whitney LLP, invited Minnesota companies, organizations, and individuals with an interest in strengthening the state's relationship with China to attend the meeting.

This was the first time MWCA held a meeting outside of its host city of Chicago. Former U.S. Senator and MWCA Chairman

Adlai Stevenson and Vice Chairman Bob Holden, former Governor of Missouri, chaired the meeting. Via video-conference, the 40+ participants who are actively engaged in promoting U.S. – China relations in Minnesota were joined by the participants in the Chicago office and the Detroit office. Walter Mondale, Former Vice President of the United States, gave a brief speech. Tony Lorusso, Director of the Minnesota Trade Office, reported, in detail, about the relationship, development and initiatives between Minnesota and China. Representatives from other Midwest states (Wisconsin, Illinois, Missouri, Iowa, Ohio and Indiana) also reported their China-related trade and invest-



Former Vice President Walter Mondale speaks at the Quarterly meeting

ment initiatives. At this point, it looks like Minnesota and Illinois (especially Chicago) are ahead of other states. But MWCA stressed it will be a strong selling point for China if all the Midwest states are viewed

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# Chi and feng shui lecture

By Phil Lee, Staff Writer



Professor Lin Yun at Twin Cities feng shui lecture

On Aug. 25 on the University of Minnesota East Bank campus, Professor Lin Yun gave a talk in Mandarin on "Chi, Feng Shui and Life." Lin Yun is founder of the Yun Lin Temple in Berkeley, California, part of the Tantric Buddhism Black Sect. His talk was translated into English by Ms. Shena Huang, from Los Angeles. His visit to the Twin Cities coincided with a 2-day weekend workshop at College of St. Catherine's in St. Paul hosted by Carole Hyder, President of the local Feng Shui association.

What was unusual in this lecture is a prefacing of the art of feng shui. Professor Lin Yun discussed the role of Chi, life's force, also known as Ling particles. Using simple diagrams, he explained that Chi is a real omnipotent force, even though it has still not been fully explained by medical science. For example Buddhist meditation is a



way to increase one's Chi. For the neophyte, he also pointed out the several Chinese in the audience who are qualified to give private Chi enhancement sessions, based upon their individual personality, so it is important to choose wisely.

Comparing typical American feng shui practitioners, he also showed that both the typically tangible and more important intangible aspects. He also presented a case study; showing a custom house with a fantastic view designed by an architect that won architectural awards in newspapers and magazines. Professor Lin Yun showed why it had bad feng shui, predicting bad things may happen to its owner and family. With a simple placement of a large mirror at the front entry, he explained in depth what this does to the human psych and the possible tragedies in store for its owners if this is not done.

About 50 people attended this informative and at times humorous talk, two thirds were Americans and one third part of the local affiliate of the Yun Lin Temple, named Yun Shi Jing She, in Minnesota. Local contacts are Mason Chen 651-631-0017 and University of Minnesota professor Shih-pau Yen (yen@umn.edu) and his wife Iness Yen 651-636-6217.

**Editor's Note:** Due to space limitations, additional references, Web links, and supplementary materials can be found on the China Insight Web site at <http://www.chinainsight.info>.

Feng shui and tai chi were both discussed in China Insight articles last year.

## Birth Rate from Page 12



Photo Credit: © Rick Albertson

girl and a boy, whereas 10% preferred girls (most of these were women under 25 who lived in urban areas).

It is not clear how much these demographic changes are due to the one child policy, they add. Many countries are seeing decreases in fertility rates, and neighbouring east Asian countries have some of the lowest total fertility rates in the world. Thus the fertility rate may have continued to fall even without the policy.

Likewise many other Asian countries that have declining birth rates and traditional preferences for male babies are seeing serious sex imbalances. Even without the policy, sex selective abortion would be likely to con-

tinue, although it would probably be less common.

This can only be solved by a change in attitudes towards female offspring. The finding that many younger women in urban areas now express a preference for girls provides evidence that attitudes may be changing.

These findings have clear implications for decisions about future population policy. A relaxation in the policy could be considered in the near future. It is unlikely that a baby boom would result, and such a change in policy might help to correct the abnormal sex ratio, they conclude.

An accompanying editorial discusses the impact of this policy on China's economy. ■

To view full paper: <http://press.psprings.co.uk/bmj/august/res371.pdf>  
To view full editorial: <http://press.psprings.co.uk/bmj/august/edit361.pdf>

Family size, fertility preferences, and sex ratio in China in the era of the one child family policy: results from national family planning and reproductive health survey *BMJ* Volume 333, pp 371-3

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## Made in China from Page 1

Chinese vegetable sides and taro root deserts. Gone were the typical families-on-the-go commonly seen near the golden arches around America, replaced by leisurely diners in a more casual atmosphere. Appreciating the altered menu, trendy music and vast dining space lined with posters of Chinese athletes, customers in Beijing seemed to be seeking a casual place in which to spend time with one another. McDonald's was sure to accommodate the tradition of close personal relationships which we learned to be important in China.

Another way in which we perceived the importance of relationships between citizens is portrayed through their respect and courtesy for us and for one another. One might think that with the high population density throughout much of China would come a certain degree of chaos. However, from our observations, such a notion is far from reality. Nearly all of the people we encountered on streets, in taxicabs, in stores, at monuments, and almost anywhere were extremely courteous—a quality which brings cohesion despite concentration of population and activity.

The best example to illustrate this point is the traffic situation. We were initially startled by seemingly unorganized driving marked by frequent horn honking and swift lane changes. But we soon learned that Chinese drivers generally don't honk their horns in anger, but in polite attempts to warn pedestrians, bikers and other automobiles of their presence and intentions. People in every walk, ride or drive of life could easily transport themselves because they were attentive and respectful of other travelers. Like clockwork, from the crowded transportation networks of China's largest cities emerged a harmonious system thanks to what we see

as common courtesy among millions of people. We observed this quality in several aspects of Chinese lifestyle—from driving to shopping to dining—and believe it is something from which visitors can surely learn.

There is, of course, much more than we can offer here which can be learned through travel and study in China. Our experience far exceeded our expectations of exploring Chinese business and culture, and was rewarding beyond our academic efforts and time commitments. We strongly encourage Americans to build bonds of citizen diplomacy and understanding with Chinese people, both in China and the United States. In this theme, we will soon reunite with many our friends from Tsinghua University who have chosen to pursue graduate studies at the University of Minnesota. We hope that their experiences in the United States will be as rewarding as ours were in China. ■

## LET US HEAR FROM YOU

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Write a Letter to the Editor

## Advertising from Page 11

China has 340 million television households, including more than 100 million cable households and 25 million digital satellite households. Although TV still represents the largest piece of the advertising pie, one cannot ignore that China's internet users grew 18 percent last year to reach 111 million. ■

Source: Klako Group