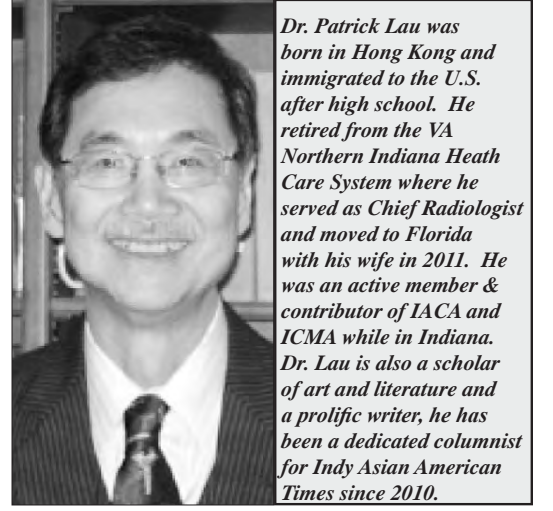


Children’s Museum Indianapolis--Take Me There: China

The Great Wall Of China

“There in the mist, enormous, majestic, silent and terrible, stood the Great Wall of China. Solitarily, with the indifference of nature herself, it crept up the mountain side and slipped down to the depth of the valley.” -W. Somerset Maugham



Dr. Patrick Lau was born in Hong Kong and immigrated to the U.S. after high school. He retired from the VA Northern Indiana Health Care System where he served as Chief Radiologist and moved to Florida with his wife in 2011. He was an active member & contributor of IACA and ICMA while in Indiana. Dr. Lau is also a scholar of art and literature and a prolific writer, he has been a dedicated columnist for Indy Asian American Times since 2010.



BY DR. PATRICK LAU

The Great Wall of China 中國長城 is the most colossal engineering project ever undertaken; it is the most acclaimed attainment of human ingenuity. And it is the longest ancient architectural grandeur and fortification as well as the oldest remaining man-made construction. It is the most identifiable symbol of China. Besides being one of the wonders of the world, The Great Wall was listed as a World Heritage by the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization in 1987.

The best-preserved sections of the Great Wall we see today were primarily built during the Ming dynasty (1368-1644); most pre-Ming-Dynasty Great Wall has vanished or is poorly preserved. It was more sophisticatedly constructed with rocks, bricks and mortar. (Researcher Bingjian Zhang, PhD discovered that the ancient mortar consisted of slaked lime and sticky rice flour, an organic-inorganic composite material: the inorganic component is calcium carbonate, and the organic component is amylopectin from the sticky rice ‘soup’. This composite mortar bound the bricks together exceedingly tight.) There were thousands of watchtowers, beacon towers to send signals, and blockhouses to house soldiers.

Generally speaking, The Great Wall extends from the east at Shanhaiguan 山海關 in Hebei province 河北省 to the west at Jiayuguan 嘉峪關 in Gansu province 甘肅省, across barren deserts, beautiful grasslands, rugged mountains and broad plateaus. It is not a continuous wall, but a series of overlapping walls, encompassing side walls, circular walls, and parallel walls. And there are sections without wall but lofty mountains or wide rivers creating a natural barrier. The State Administration of Cultural Heritage and the State Bureau of Surveying and Mapping previously announced that its total length was 5,500 miles. On June 5, 2012, the State Administration of Cultural Heritage proclaimed that the Great Wall is a 13,170-mile network of walls. New sections were discovered as recently as 2012. The average height of the Great Wall is 25 feet; and at the tallest section is about 46 feet. It averages 15 to 30 feet in thickness at the base, sloping to 12 feet at the top.

Throughout the dynasties, numerous Chinese people settled in the remote regions along the Great Wall, cultivating farmlands, building houses, roads and canals. The Great Wall functioned as an artery facilitating the transport of a large number of soldiers, civilians, goods and equipment across the country; it also served as trading routes. These undertakings enormously enhanced commerce and cultural exchanges with citizens of those areas as well as the southern, central and western portions of Asia, eventually leading to the development of the Silk Road, which reached as far west as Rome and Persia. The Silk Road provided the opportunity of the Chinese citizens to experience different cultural backgrounds, philosophies, and beliefs, such as Buddhism.

In the third century B.C. Emperor Qin Shi Huang 秦始皇 (c. 259-201 B.C.) conquered all the kingdoms of the Warring State Period 戰國時期 (475-221 BC), ruling over an empire and initiating a unified government in China. He commanded to build a wall to defend the country from incursions of the horse-riding nomadic “barbarians”, such as the Huns and the Mongols from the north. The labor force consisted of millions of people including soldiers, criminals, prisoners as well as forcibly-conscripted peasants. It is estimated that up to a million people died from epidemics, other illnesses, accidents, hunger and physical exhaustion. The deceased were buried under and within the Great Wall. The original Great Wall was made mainly of dirt and stones. Slabs of stone were used to construct the bases and sides of the wall, and it was filled in with compact dirt, rocks and rubble. Watch towers were built at regular intervals above the wall.

Nevertheless, The Great Wall did not serve its purpose as an impenetrable line of defense against the Mongolian and Manchu armies from the north. The Mongols could forcefully break through sections of the walls. They conquered China to establish the Yuan dynasty (1271-1368). In 1644, Manchurian overthrew the Ming dynasty to establish the Qing Dynasty (1644-1912).

The Great Wall resolutely endures throughout centuries; it also witnesses the rise and fall of various dynasties in the Chinese history. Some scholars assert that the Great Wall signifies the conservatism and isolationism of China in the past; the Chinese officials attempted to shut out the cultures and influence of foreign countries. Ironically, the original objective of the Great Wall was to preclude foreigners to enter China; nowadays, it entices millions of foreign tourists to visit the country.

文天祥：南方瘴癘地，白馬東北來。長城掃瘴，淚落強徘徊。

BY LILY JIA TRANSLATED BY ECHO LU

On January 9th, 2016, Children’s Museum Indianapolis was experiencing a very crowded day during their operation hours. Especially on the 2nd level where the Take Me There: China is located, children and their families were excitedly exploring the Chinese culture performances and experiencing lifestyles of modern-day and ancient traditions of China.

At the time our reporter arrived at the exhibition, two artists were performing the Chinese Tea Art. Matt was one of the two performers; he was holding a teapot with a spout about 30 inches long, playing with it like it was just a daily tool that we use everyday. Matt and his partner Christa’s performance won a warm applause, if you don’t know much about Chinese Tea Art, you would think they are performing Chinese Martial Art.

Employees in the museum also said their mission is to use art, science and culture to help children learn and think, hoping they can make positive impacts to children and families.

The Take Me There: China exhibition opened in 2014 and will open to the public for a total of 4 years. It is worth to pay a visit.



Children participated in the fun “art” of pouring tea

Our reporter noticed that two American reporters were holding a TV camera closely to the performance all time, making sure they don’t miss any second of it. After a conversation, our reporter learned that these two reporters were from CCTV-America. One of the reporters Nina said her job is to report Chinese Culture development in American, as the Chinese Luna New Year is approaching. During her research she found out about the Take Me There: China exhibition happening in the Children’s Museum Indianapolis, which would be a perfect place to find valuable stories for her assignment.



IAAT reporter Lily Jia interviewing CCTV-US

The Museum’s Director of Public & Media Relations Kimberly Harms told our reporter that the Take Me There: China is the second largest project of the museum after they successfully ran the Egyptian exhibition. The Chinese pavilion has a total area of 13,000 square feet, and the exhibition features traditional Chinese medicine, Chinese calligraphy, Chinese restaurants, residential units, supermarkets, and even high-speed rail. Visitors could board a modern Chinese airplane and fly over the Great Wall, the Forbidden City, and other iconic Chinese sites; find out their zodiac sign; try using chopsticks; and discover the challenges China’s conservationists face as they try to save the panda.



The modern Chinese airplane at the exhibition

Nina found a lot of valuable sources for her story here. Besides that, she has been following Mrs. Gao Jianhua’s family’s story, they have been living in the city for years. Her focus of the family is about how four family members grown up in two totally different cultural backgrounds trying very hard to continue and pass on their Chinese heritage. Nina also did a long interview with the two daughters from Gao’s family, learning how they think about Chinese culture and what roles Chinese culture has been playing in their daily live. Nina’s project will air on CCTV 9 when it is finished.

Mr. Gao Jianhua told our reporter that what the Children’s Museum has done is very important and helpful for American born Chinese kids.

Photo by Lily Jia

PERSPECTIVE FISH TALE (2)



Dr. Benny Ko is a native of Hong Kong. He is a retired radiologist and a long time residence of Indianapolis since the 1960’s. Dr. Ko is a frequent traveler and a very passionate hiker. He also serves as the lead organizer of the IACA hiking club. Dr. Ko enjoys sharing his adventures to others!

BY DR. BENNY KO

“East is East and West is West and never the twain shall meet...” so goes Kipling’s famous ballad.

Well, not unless we are talking about the quest for the perfect fish.

In part 1 of this two-part write-up, I spoke of a near-perfect sushi lunch at Sushi Yasuda in New York City. My friend Chaky from Canada immediately fired off a protest note that read, “How about our fish and chips dinner in Exeter a couple of months ago?”

Yes, when the fish is immaculate in quality and masterfully prepared, East and West do meet on common ground sometimes.

First, bear with me this stale English joke of the quintessential American tourist ordering fish and chips in a formal London dining establishment, only to be told that he might have “arrived” at the wrong part of town for it.

Indeed, Fish and chips is a blue-collar legacy, and historically, a harbor front one where fish could always be found reliably fresh and abundant.

First, we have the diaspora Jews to thank, expelled from Spain in the 16th century, they sought refuge on the shores of the British Isles and brought with them, the deep-fried fish. I admit I do not know whether the recipe is Hispanic or Jewish in origin, or possibly common to both on the Iberian Peninsula. In Japan, tempura, a deep-fry cuisine genre perfected to an art, is definitely a distant cousin of fish and chips, transmitted east by the Portuguese via Goa, Macau, then finally arriving at Japan. As a “nanban mono” (an item of the Southern Barbarians), its full discussion would be another story for another day.

The secret ingredients of good fish and chips are not complicated and yet challenging to assemble, and they are fresh fish, young potatoes and a good batter. The rest is simply a testimony to the skill and experience of the cook. Notice I refrain using the term chef, not out of disrespect, but just as I would not call a fiddler a violinist; “chef” sounded dissonant and pretentious to the roots of fish and chips. A successful fish and chips shop is measured by its sale volume. If you see a long line in the shop, or even better, outside, go for it.

Chaky and I were recently in Exeter, United Kingdom and stayed in a bed-and-breakfast ran by a

nice and engaging landlady. As the place was quite far out in the countryside, she reminded us to have dinner in town unless we wanted to settle for fish and chips at a shop along the way. In the morning, we drove past the place going into town, it was nondescript and bare, hardly inspiring. Then, on our way back in the early evening, we saw cars parked, bumper to bumper, along the entire street block and customers were scurrying in and out of the place like bees do to a hive. It seemed to have come alive. I convinced Chaky to let me out to join the long line, and he went a block away to find parking. He scurried back just in time to place our orders together.

I think we each had the haddock, topped off by a home-made fishcake. All were lightly salted and sprinkled with a few drops of vinegar before being wrapped up and boxed. It was a take-out place with no seating in the shop, so our next challenge was to find a place to enjoy this “working men’s feast.” We walked on and eventually found a small neighborhood park where a couple of benches were available to sit on. They were placed there to allow spectators to watch lawn croquet. Indeed, an elderly couple were there playing a game as we sat down. Alas, good entertainment it did not make, the little old man was nowhere a match for his lady.

In the cool evening air and under waning light, the paper box that housed our dinner was torn open. It let off a column of steam that momentarily obscured what it was that we were reaching for, but by then we were too famish to care. The fish was still piping hot despite the duration from its purchase, no doubt owing the good insulation to a superior batter. It was crispy and golden brown on the surface but the deeper portion was putty in consistency. Our fish, a haddock, is a white-flesh species that came out of the North Atlantic. Its flesh was firm and flaky, both an indicator of freshness. When it first entered my mouth, the flavor was mild until I began chewing. Then, the morsel morphed into a juicy pulp of briny delight that titillated me to take another bite even before the first was swallowed. I don’t believe we did much speaking during the meal. In a matter of minutes, our task was reduced to finding a trash bin to dispose the empty boxes and wrapping papers.

Looking back, the only thing that might have enhanced the experience could be a bottle of good Chardonnay. But that is almost snobbishness doing my talking. Chaky later checked out the place’s rating on TripAdvisor, it has received 4 stars out of a possible five.

Fish and Chips on Alphonston Road, the mile-long name of the place, earned the honor by excellence. That dining experience is equal in delight but vastly different in circumstance as compared to its oriental sister, Sushi Yasuda.

On some nights, the two haddocks still manage to swim their way into my dream.

Back Home Again Indiana A Treat from Frederic Chiu



Renowned Pianist Frederic Chiu

The American Pianists Association is sponsoring a great and internationally renowned pianist back to Indianapolis for a performance on Jan 31.

“Back” because Frederic Chiu was born and grew up in Indianapolis, the elder son of Dr. Victor Chiu and his wife Loretta.

To those who are not familiar with Frederic, he is an international acclaimed artist and has made many recordings.

He will play a brunch concert at The Columbia Club (Monument Circle).

It is expected to be a sell-out event, anyone interested should order their tickets as soon as possible.

Tickets could be ordered on-line: http://www.indyartsguide.org/wap/event/detail/441932876/Grand_Encounters_Frederic_Chui

Indiana Association of Chinese-Americans and Asian Art Society

Year of the Monkey Chinese New Year Banquet Celebration



Date: Saturday, February 6th, 2016

Time: 5:30 PM Registration & Tea

6:00 PM Annual Meeting and Recognitions, 6:30 PM Dinner Served

Place: Szechwan Garden Restaurant (3649 Lafayette Road, Indianapolis, IN 46254)

Price: \$28 for Members & guests of IACA Life-Time Members (inclusive tea & juice/soda)

\$35 for nonmembers, \$15 for all children under 10 years old (inclusive tea & juice/soda)

RSVP: RSVP and Checks must be received by Feb 1st, 2016 at IACA P.O. BOX 3888, Carmel, IN 46082-0018. Reservations are non-refundable

Enjoy: Lion Dance, Chinese & Joy Orchestra Performances, Hung-Bao for Children, Raffle Prizes

Questions? Contact Eileen Tsai (eileen.tsai@mrm.com) and Marilyn Jacob (jakesjag@aol.com)

Year of the Monkey 2016 Banquet Menu

錦綉大拼盤	Appetizers Platter Combination	魚肚蟹肉羹	Crab Meat Seafood Soup
廣東烤鴨	Cantonese Roasted Duck	清蒸海上鮮	Steamed Flounder
黑椒牛柳粒	Black Pepper Steak	薑蔥龍蝦	Ginger Scallion Lobster
揚州獅子頭	Yang Zhou Lion-Head Meatballs	冬菇唐白菜	Mushroom Bok Choy Greens
核桃蝦	Walnuts Prawns	揚州炒飯	Yang Zhou Fried Rice
長壽伊麵	Pan Fried Long Life E-Mein Noodle	甜點水菓	Dessert (Pastry) & Fruit

Please return this portion with your RSVP, along with your check:

Name of your party _____ Total Number of People in your party _____

Please renew your membership for 2016: \$30 per family, \$20 per person. Please send update or correction on your member information if needed. Please join now and be included in our new 2016 IACA directory and all social activities. Thank you and look forward to having a joyful and successful year 2016 with you.