



CAECC STAFF AND STUDENTS CELEBRATE THE NATIONAL MULTICULTURAL FESTIVAL

ALMA NEWS MARCH 2015

Association for
Learning
MANDARIN
汉语
in Australia Inc

澳大利亞學漢語協會

COMMEMORATING LEARNING AND TEACHING CHINESE

Dear families and educators of children attending the Chinese Australian Early Childhood Centre (CAECC) and other members and friends of the Association for Learning Mandarin in Australia, a sincere welcome to this first 2015 edition of the ALMA News.

The primary focus of this newsletter is to share, honor and thank a vast array of friends who are involved in the teaching, promotion and learning of Chinese in the ACT. While some are overseas at this time, we would like to share these memories and journeys with you. This edition attempts to connect the generations, the young and old, the beginner to the experienced and the near to the far. Articles within this edition embody some of the experiences of our toddlers, primary school students, undergraduate, graduate students and staff all connected to CAECC, Mawson Primary School and ANU.

We also have an extremely special contribution all the way from Vietnam by Alison Keys, former ALMA committee member and mother of Max and Harry, former students of CAECC, and their new sister Emily. This article forms an important part of ALMA's new alumni initiative where our friends from all over the world can keep in touch and connected via this newsletter.

ALMA is also especially delighted and honored to have a contribution from Professor John Minford from ANU, one of the world's most distinguished foreign translators of Chinese classical texts including 'The Story of the Stone' 《红罗蒙》 and 'The Book of Changes', 《易经》. Professor Minford has been studying Chinese for nearly five decades. He took his first steps on the path to learning Chinese literature at Oxford University in 1966 and obtained his PhD from ANU a few years later.

Professor Minford has become a deep inspiration for learners of Classical Chinese around the globe, contributing to thousands of learners of all nationalities being forever entangled with a passion for incorporating Classical Chinese literature, culture and philosophy into their daily lives. In his article in this newsletter, Professor Minford shares his words from a 'Farewell Lecture' that he gave in late 2010 before departing for a two-and-a-half-year stay in Hong Kong. Although never published, the text of the lecture still reflects his thoughts today and conveys something of why he believes the study of Chinese literature and philosophy

should always inform and enrich the study of the Chinese language.

We commence the newsletter from the perspective of the ACT's littlest ones from CAECC and Mawson Primary school. The CAECC was once again involved in Canberra's annual multicultural festival in February. A large contingent of children from the centre, along with their parents and older siblings, took part in the children's parade. CAECC educators organized costumes, musical instruments and decorative fans for the children to wear, play and carry respectively as they cheerfully marched the designated distance. Educators proudly accompanied them carrying the centre's banner. The weather became inclement just as the parade started, but this did not dampen spirits. It was a memorable event, as depicted in the photos above and below. ALMA thanks the ACT government for its support through a Participation (Multicultural) Grants 2014/5, which made it possible for us to experience and contribute to the festival.

Glynnis-anne Buckley, ALMA News Editor



CAECC Preschoolers before the main cultural procession.



NEWS FROM VIETNAM BY ALISON KEYS

HAPPY NEW YEAR 新年快乐 Chúc mừng năm mới!

We've been in Vietnam for almost a year now, and Max (Shi-min) and Harry (Jingjing) have settled well into their new school and life here, making many new friends from around the world at the United Nations International School. At the same time, they do miss Canberra and often speak fondly of CAECC, Mawson Primary and their old friends – and they know that they will be catching up with many of them when we return in 2 ½ years' time, as well as during forthcoming holidays back home

The boys have been studying Vietnamese at school and have been making some progress. Max is a bit shy about trying out his Vietnamese, but Harry has no qualms about ordering himself his favorite foods such as sugar cane juice and baguettes filled with scrambled egg, or walking up to strangers and saying in Vietnamese 'hello, my name is Harry, I'm five years old'. One of Max's greatest achievements, however, was mastering chopsticks on our second day here, when he realized that was the only way he was going to be able to eat the delicious bowl of chicken phở (pronounced 'fur') in front of him.

We've been trying to keep up some Mandarin for the boys, but it's an uphill battle, limited to the Mandarin I use at home with them – and that is only for a very short time each day as they are off on the school bus at 7:30am, and although they get home at either 4 or 5pm (depending on whether they have after school activities) I don't usually get home from work until around 6pm. But from the next school year (late August) it looks like Mandarin may be offered, following high demand from parents. It'll be great to have some external support for our efforts.

For me personally, it's been fascinating seeing the similarities between Chinese and Vietnamese, and my Mandarin knowledge has been enormously useful helping me with tones, and in learning Vietnamese vocabulary (even if the sounds end up being a bit different).

To close, here are a couple of photos of the kids: one of the boys in Australian green and gold for the school's UN day event late last year, and one in their sports uniforms along with their little sister Emily (Shi-lin) - who has recently turned 1, and who we have every intention of sending to CAECC on our return!

THANK YOU

ALMA WOULD LIKE TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO THANK ALL THE EDUCATORS OF CHINESE PAST AND PRESENT FOR ALL THEIR HARD WORK AND DEDICATION OVER THE YEARS. WITHOUT YOUR PASSION AND COMMITMENT, GENERATIONS OF CANBERRA STUDENTS MAY NOT HAVE HAD THE CHANCE TO LEARN AND EXPLORE SUCH A WONDERFUL RICH CULTURE, LANGUAGE AND TRADITION.

真心地感谢大家



TRANSITIONING FROM CAECC TO MAWSON PRIMARY SCHOOL

By ALMA President Kelly McGorm

When invited to write an article about the transition of the children from the CAECC to Mawson Primary School (MPS), I thought I had better seek an expert opinion in the first place. I interviewed Niamh, our 6 year old who is now in year 1L (Ms Wenyan Liu’s class), over dinner this evening. I asked who her favourite teachers were and she said “Amy and Pei and... everyone actually”. I then asked her what she remembered enjoying about nursery and she reflected: “I liked the morning and afternoon teas and playing with my friends”.

Niamh’s best friends at MPS are those she made at the CAECC. Even though they may not always be in the same class each year, they seem to find each other at recess and lunch time and chase each other around after school. At swimming lessons recently, we ran into one of her other CAECC friends who went to a different primary school two years ago. Within minutes the girls were laughing and chatting excitedly as if they’d never been apart. The friendships formed at the Centre seem to be incredibly strong.

Two years ago we made the decision to keep Niamh at the CAECC for her regular three days childcare and to send her to the local Mawson Preschool on the remaining two days a week. We very much wanted to maintain Niamh in the nursery to maximize her exposure to the Mandarin language, but we also wanted her to experience a different style of learning, be more familiar with the MPS environment and make new friends in case she did not have any of her nursery friends in her class. That said, with the CAECC located on the MPS grounds, both our girls have felt very much at ease within this environment. Before even attending MPS, they both often used the school’s playgrounds as we live close by.

One advantage of sending our youngest, Maeve, to the preschool this year is that one of the Mandarin teachers, Yang Laoshi, is teaching the preschoolers Mandarin on alternate Wednesdays. Quite often the kindergarten teachers will relieve the preschool teacher, Ms Friend, for a day, and Maeve relishes the fact that she is being taught by one of the teachers from the “big school”. This exposure helps the children become familiar with some of the MPS teachers as they transition into fulltime schooling.

One comment I would make is the children who attend CAECC tend to be more advanced than children new to MPS who have no Mandarin background. Niamh often made the comment last year that her MIP (Mandarin Immersion Program) day was “boring”. This year we’ve heard no such statement, so I suspect the non-Mandarin speaking children quickly catch up! Ideally we would like to see MPS switch the MIP from two days offered in year three to two days from Kindergarten, rather than only one, but there are obviously

resource and logistical issues around this. To ensure Niamh is able keep up her Mandarin (as we have absolutely no background), we also send her to “Mandarin for Kids” classes organised by LCF Fun Languages Canberra after school on Monday evenings. The classes are very small and tailored to the children’s level, and they are indeed fun!

Obviously the decision to send your child to MPS or elsewhere is entirely down to where you live, what your priorities are, and what works for your child and your family. We are extremely pleased with Niamh’s education at MPS. However, we are even more delighted with the spirit that the school fosters and how it embraces multiculturalism and diversity. It is a strengths-based school which celebrates individual child achievements, no matter how seemingly small, so they are constantly striving and encouraged to do well in their own way.

Niamh still delights in dropping and collecting Maeve from CAECC to see the educators and maybe catch a bit of afternoon tea! Maeve enjoys playing in the playground after school with the big kids. Having attended the CAECC and the Mawson Primary School, both our children feel safe, supported and happy. As the saying goes, “it takes a village to raise a child”, and the Mawson Primary School and CAECC community are that ‘village’ for which we are very grateful.



PREVIOUS CAECC GRADUATE WINS PRESTIGIOUS ANU PRIZE

Amanda Maclean (pictured below in Japan), a graduate of CAECC and MPS, has been awarded an ANU Liu Ts’un-yan and Liu Chiang Szu-yung Prize for Traditional Chinese Studies for 2014. These prizes are awarded each year to students enrolled in a Bachelor degree at the ANU College of Asia and the Pacific who show outstanding achievement through their contribution to the intellectual life of one or more of the courses which make up traditional Chinese studies and attain one of the five highest marks for any of these courses.



Amanda's parents, Ian and Minh Maclean, are very proud of Amanda's achievement and would like to thank ALMA and CAECC for the part it played in her development. Amanda attended CAECC in the mid-1990s before enrolling at Mawson Primary in 1997.

MAWSON PRIMARY SCHOOL

By the Deputy Principal Mr Rohan Evans

Multicultural Festival

Mawson Primary sent two of its outstanding teachers, Wen Liu and Constance Chen, to the multicultural festival to promote bilingual education at Mawson Primary.



Mawson Primary School is one of only three primary schools in the ACT to offer students the opportunity for intensive language studies. The school offers Mandarin, an important non-English language for Australians, thus promoting language acquisition and the understanding of Chinese culture.

No previous knowledge of Mandarin is required. Students are not expected to have access to Mandarin speakers for support outside of school hours. The Program is designed for students with a wide range of ability levels. All children from Kindergarten to Year 6 learn Mandarin in one of three programs:

- Languages Other Than English (LOTE) classes. Up to 1.5 hours students focus on the development of their speaking, listening, reading and writing skills.
- Mandarin Immersion Program (MIP) -
 - In 2015, students in Kindergarten, Year 1 and Year 2 are able to participate in the ONE DAY MIP.
 - In Years 3-6 students are able to participate in a TWO DAY Mandarin MIP.

These MIP programs challenge student learning by providing a high level of instruction in Mandarin and the opportunity for students to gain a deeper understanding of Chinese language and culture. MIP includes the teaching of some elements of the Australian Curriculum.

Mawson Primary recently celebrated the Chinese New Year with a special assembly where the Mandarin classes performed songs and dances for the whole school.

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## AFTER-SCHOOL CHINESE PROGRAMS

### FCCCI Chinese School

- 3.30-5.30pm Monday to Friday during school term time.
- St Vincent's Primary School, Aranda

Formal teaching/learning will be broken into small sessions with short breaks in between. Teachers will be present to supervise students before formal class from 3.10pm and after class until 6pm. Children attending Aranda Primary School can be escorted to class at 3pm by an FCCCI teaching assistant.

Numbers are limited to 20 per day. Fees are \$12 per day, or \$10 per day for those who attend 3 or more days in a week.

For more information and to enroll, email [linxiaoli@hotmail.com](mailto:linxiaoli@hotmail.com) or phone 0413 288 021.

For more information about the FCCCI Chinese School see <http://www.fccchineseschool.act.edu.au/>

### Mandarin for Fun playgroup

In term two, Mandarin for Fun will offer a class on Saturday morning every second week. Fees are \$10 per child (\$3 for extra child).

This group will be held in West Belconnen. It is particularly suitable for non-Chinese background families with an interest in learning Mandarin. The learning is full of fun with storytelling, songs, rhymes and games.

Numbers are limited to 10 families.

For more information contact Lucia on 0410 981 788 or email [mandarinforfun@gmail.com](mailto:mandarinforfun@gmail.com)

### Mandarin for Kids

These classes, run by LCF Fun Languages – Canberra, are held on Monday afternoons from 3:15pm in the Environmental Centre at Mawson Primary Schools. Siblings receive a 10% discount.

Contact Sarah Mak @ 0431252768 or Email [sarah.mak@lcfclubs.com.au](mailto:sarah.mak@lcfclubs.com.au)

## APOLOGIA: Student, Teacher, and Student Still

By Professor John Minford  
ANU

As a student I received so much from my teachers. They treated a confused and ignorant young man with infinite kindness and compassion. I pay them homage. David Hawkes shared with me over more than forty years his passion for literature and for the creative shamanism of translation. Liu Ts'un-yan shared with me, with gentle patience, his wisdom, his humour and his vast learning, even when I hardly understood what he was talking or writing about, and was struggling to read his miniscule handwriting; he taught me that the philosophy of Taoism is there to help men and women lead better lives, to be more real; that breathing calmly and deeply is the cure for many ills; that the most important distinction (indeed perhaps the only one) is the one between real and false, between *zhen* and *jia* 真假; he believed that the reading of their literature is one of the keys to the soul of the Chinese people.

Above all, what both of my teachers demonstrated, in their teaching and in their writing, what they expressed in their friendship, is this: that the true destiny of a university, its finest tradition, is to be a friendly studio of the heart-and-mind, to provide a bubbling crucible, a creative environment in which the pursuit of beauty, art and truth can take root and flourish.

I myself became a teacher, and fate continued to be extraordinarily kind to me. I acquired a new band of teachers - my students! I have received so much in such abundance over the years, from a wonderful succession of students, young men and women, in China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, New Zealand and most recently and most poignantly in Australia. I have been blessed and honoured by their friendship, I have been privileged to share in their eager quest for knowledge and truth, touched by their vulnerability in that often wearisome quest, by their generosity of spirit despite the pressures of worldly demands and constraints. That for me

has been the great joy of my profession. Hermann Hesse puts it well, speaking of that Castalian Professor, the Magister Ludi: 'He discovered the pleasure it gives to transplant the fruits of the mind into other minds and see them being transformed into entirely new shapes and emanations - in other words, the joy of teaching!' (*Glass Bead Game*, translated by Richard and Clara Winston, p. 238).

The least we can and should do as teachers is to recognise our great good fortune, to try to reciprocate, to pay tribute to the warmth and purity and strength of that youthful energy, and to offer in absolute humility such small fruits as we have managed to gather along the way. This friendship across the generations is what the Chinese have celebrated over the centuries as *Wangnianjiao* 忘年交. This is the Tao of Friendship, the *communio spiritus*, the live Communion of Spirit that quickens our exchanges that should inform our campuses. This is to know the Sound, 知音, to listen to the music of each other's minds.

In the words of the great late-Ming scholar and philosopher, Li Zhuowu (1527-1602, 李卓吾), we are all of us, teachers, students, friends, family, striving together to be more real. Each of us is working to become a person, 成一個人, to achieve some sort of fulfilment, some sort of self-realization. We are all engaged in the adventure of self-discovery, aided and nourished in that adventure by the daily surprises brought us by the discovery of each other.

It has become my stronger and stronger conviction that the Chinese tradition - Chinese philosophy, Chinese literature, Chinese art, music, theatre, but above all the living, inner tradition of self-knowledge and serenity that is called Taoism, the Chinese Way - as part of the world's great humanistic heritage, can and should nourish us all on that quest. For it to do so, we must make it ours. For we are all human. The simple Chinese saying puts it so well: 人同此心, 心同此理.

We all have this same heart-and-mind; and the heart-and-mind has the same reason. We must be bold, we must all

take part in the timeless game so well described by Hermann Hesse:

I hear music,  
I see men of the past and future,  
I see wise men and poets  
Scholars and artists  
Harmoniously building  
The hundred-gated  
Cathedral of Mind.

## INTRODUCING THE CHINA CENTRE AT ANU

By Dr Mark Strange, Head of  
Department of Asian Studies,  
School of Culture, History and  
Language, ANU

The China Centre in the ANU's Department of East Asian Studies is a national leader in training students of Chinese Studies. It offers a wide range of Chinese language courses. The program of courses in Mandarin Chinese forms a graded four-year course of study, which takes students from *ab initio* to advanced levels. The Centre also offers two courses of 'Advanced Readings in Chinese', focusing on different genres of modern Chinese literature, which are designed for students who have studied for a year or more in China as well as for heritage speakers. Further courses in translation or interpreting are aimed at those with a high level of proficiency, and especially at students who foresee a career that might use both Chinese and English. The use of placement tests accommodates students of all learning backgrounds and helps to match them to the courses most suitable for their starting levels.

In addition to Modern Mandarin Chinese courses, the Centre also offers instruction in Cantonese, from beginner to intermediate levels. This is informed by a belief that the Chinese identity, past and present, is characterised above all by diversity, including linguistic diversity. For the same reason, there is the most extensive program in Classical and Literary Chinese courses to be found in Australia. The China Centre is committed to the idea that Literary Chinese is crucial to understanding both past and present, to gaining a full

understanding of the modern language, and to laying a foundation for the study of Chinese history and literature.

Undergraduate and postgraduate training offered within the China Centre further aims to apply the study of language to a close practical and theoretical examination of the traditions of the Chinese region and its contemporary developments: language instruction cannot be separated from the cultural contexts from which languages emerged. The China Centre therefore offers a range of foundational courses on Chinese culture, history, literature, philosophy, and social studies. The result is a fully integrated curriculum of language and non-language studies. A graduate course on Sinological research methods is also available.

In addition to the resources offered in Canberra, undergraduate and graduate students are encouraged through funding incentives to spend time in China, Taiwan or Hong Kong. In-country courses range from one semester to one year. The Year-in-China Program in particular helps to develop advanced linguistic and cultural knowledge. The Centre's graduate students also have rich opportunities to conduct fieldwork in their regions of interest. These in-country programs underpin the Centre's and the Department's central commitment to exploring Chinese variegated cultures through its languages.



Ink Plum by Wang Mian (1287-1359), Painter and Poet of the Yuan Dynasty.

The China Centre's teaching agendas extend beyond the classroom. They are

supplemented in a number of ways. The ANU's libraries have extensive holdings on China and in Chinese languages; they contain a number of rare collections relating to the region, which students of all levels are encouraged to use. The China Centre collaborates with the China Institute and the Centre on China in the World to enable vibrant offerings of public lectures and seminars, international research workshops, exhibitions and film screenings, cultural events, and social activities. A student-run China Club, supported by the Department of East Asian Studies, is another important venue for exploring shared intellectual and cultural interests, and a way of ensuring that student's classroom learning finds an outlet for applied use.

## Chinese Literature

Convened by Prof John Minford, this course explores the extraordinarily rich tradition of Chinese literature from its beginnings to the end of the Tang dynasty (tenth century, CE). It observes the spirit in which the Chinese have written and read, the ways in which they have commented on, creatively borrowed from, quoted and adapted their own literary heritage.

Lectures run every Thursday from 11am -1pm in Seminar Room 1, The China in the World Building. They are part of the undergraduate course labeled ASIA 2003, offered by the Department of East Asian Studies, ANU College of Asia and the Pacific and are concurrently run as an open seminar series hosted by the Australian Centre on China in the World.

## SINCERE THOUGHTS (心得)

### On Professor Minford's Chinese Literature Course

By Luman Ren, Undergraduate  
Scholar at ANU

'The Way that can be told of is not an Unvarying Way' (道可道, 非恒道), said the great philosopher Lao Tzu.

Tao Te Ching, translated by Arthur  
Waley

In essence, this is what Professor Minford's course on classical Chinese literature is about. What he tries to profess throughout the course is the Dao – a way of reading Chinese classics, a passage to the hearts and minds of its authors and translators, and an approach towards understanding Chinese literary tradition and culture itself.

Professor Minford does not speak of the Dao directly, for he knows too well that true enlightenment cannot be achieved through words. Instead, he brings with him the great Chinese tradition of storytelling. To be more precise, he tells a thousand year old story of finding the one who knows the sound (知音).

It may be one author's tribute to another across centuries, like the admiration Pu Songling had for Zuo Qiuming's Zuo Commentary. It may also be literary motifs found throughout time. Just compare Zhuangzi's dream of the butterfly to The Story of the Stone! Moreover, Professor Minford kindly shares personal stories between him and his tutor and father-in-law David Hawkes, and between David Hawkes and his tutor Arthur Waley.

Through this simple act of storytelling, a stream of literary and philosophical continuity is vividly presented before one's eyes. And one is left at the centre of such a stream, overwhelmed by a sense of enlightenment, tranquility and, later, a hint of familiarity. Then, one immediately recognizes that what one has learned from the stories has always been buried deeply in one's own heart and mind. To let this feeling out, and to join the stream of continuity, is the *Dao*.

# CAECC MANDARIN TEACHERS CORNER

## HOW TO INCORPORATE MUSIC INTO BILINGUAL TEACHING

BY LING FROM THE  
PRESCHOOL ROOM

I am very happy and proud to be working at the CAECC bilingual early learning centre. There are great opportunities for me to combine my expertise in music, dance and education to teach children bilingually. Both children and their parents are very enthusiastic and eager to learn Chinese. I often hear parents ask us questions like “What kind of environment can help children learn Chinese in the family”? “Why do children learning to speak, sing and dance Chinese learn easier than adults”? Based on my practical experience in teaching music to bilingual children I would therefore like to share with you how I cultivate interest in learning Chinese.



Children are curious, active, fun and imaginative, so through the CAECC learning program I use a variety of methods to scaffold the children's innate learning abilities and attract children's attention. For instance, telling a story in Chinese, listening and watching Chinese programs on the computer, setting up games and role-play within small groups, and, especially, singing songs in Chinese and dancing. As we know, being active and having fun is second nature to a child. Therefore, according to this characteristic, we wholeheartedly sing Chinese songs with dance like movements to fully

mobilize the enthusiasm of the children, so as to inspire the children's physical and mental pleasure within a relaxed environment. For instance, when learning body parts (hands, head, arms, fingers and so on), we put the Chinese words into a sentence like, Clap your hands. Shake your head. Raise your arms. Wiggle your fingers and your shoulders. We speak and do the actions at the same time. Then later on we sing the song ‘Heads & Shoulders’. This has a positive influence on the classroom atmosphere creating a more vibrant environment.

Children are very good at music, listening for sounds and discover-ing changes in the natural environment. So we take children on a "nature walk". Children might discover the seasonal changes, and through this context we converse in Chinese as well as introducing some songs in Chinese like "Rainbow Song" "Colour Song" and "Natural Walk Songs".



In ‘game’ play time, we speak our native language to explain a game’s rules so children can easily comprehend the whole meaning. For example, children like to play the game 老狼老狼几点了-- "What’s the time Mr Wolf" very much. By singing and dancing in a game like this, the children's interest in inspired.



It is also important to incorporate music, song and dance into daily routines, such as hand washing, or nappy changing. We may chant, Are you feeling comfortable? 你感到舒服吗? Lets go together for nappy

changing! 我们一起去换尿片! Can you show me where your nappy box is?, Let’s go together and sing our favourite song.

We respect the child’s choice in spoken language, but also respect each child’s learning, so in our teaching plan we design musical activities that engage the child in a unique multicultural experience.

CAECC holds an annual end of year concert that displays some of this refreshing engagement undertaken throughout the year. We believe this builds resilience, confidence and self-awareness.

Finally I would like express that teaching children to be bilingual is the ideal educational strategy for toddlers and preschools. I believe their experiences from an early age will benefit their whole lives positively.



## A PERSPECTIVE OF THE ALMA TUTORING PROJECT

By Yi Long



I was motivated to start tutoring with ALMA by a need to have some local friends and to improve my English. In March 2012, I was an international student from China studying Finance in ANU. I did not have any casual or part-time jobs and most of my classmates were from China, so I thought voluntary work might be the easiest way to make some local friends. I was not very confident with my English, so I just focused on how a language exchange could make use of my advantages. Fortunately, I found information about the Mandarin tutoring project on ALMA’s website.

If truth be told, I was insecure about entering a new phase of my life being involved in regular communication with local people. If I remember correctly, it was my first application for a position with an organization managed by English speakers. I submitted my application online and received some emails quickly from the coordinator, Mandy Scott, who invited me to participate in the Mandarin Tutoring Training Workshop where I met my first learner (student) Fred.

The language exchange with Fred was almost my first experience to develop a relationship with a local friend in my spare time. Although he was a Chinese Australian who can speak Mandarin very well, we could help each other a lot. He was a PhD student majoring in social science and his research on international students required him to read Chinese articles. In return, he helped me a lot with my IELTS writing. With Fred's help, I successfully achieved enough IELTS points for migration purpose at the beginning of 2013. The experience with Fred made me feel more confident in the way a language exchange can lead to more local friends.

My second learner (student) arrived before I expected. On the last day of 2012, I received an email from an elderly gentleman called Peter, who was introduced by Mandy again. Peter was my first local friend who gave me a better understanding of typical local life. He was born in Australia and had retired from a government job. Each time he drove me to a cafe in an interesting place in Canberra, such as a museum, a gallery or somewhere with a beautiful view. It was Peter who helped me to know this city in depth. Peter also played a significant role in my job seeking. After getting permanent residency, I tried to push myself to get into an accounting career. Peter helped me to check every sentence on my resume and always gave me advice on my applications. Peter's help secured my first professional job as an administrator in a small company.

Peter was good at writing Chinese characters and he was passionate about learning Chinese idioms. We often talked a lot about old Chinese stories. The way I helped Peter with his Mandarin was very casual, because he just learned Chinese according to his interests. So what I needed to do was to just to explain his questions and discuss some interesting

topics. Peter and I became very close friends. It was not just a relationship of language exchange. I often visited Peter's house to chat and have lunch. I also learned how to cook some Australian dishes from his wife Helen.

In August 2014, I got to know Alex through ALMA. He was from England and working in a small shop in Canberra. His Mandarin was excellent because he had a wife from Taiwan. The way I helped with his Mandarin was very flexible: we just chatted together and sometimes I helped him to check his practice on Translation. Alex works very hard on his Chinese. He reads Chinese articles daily and keeps a diary to remember new words and phrases.

Alex is an expert in hiking, and this inspired my interest and passion to travel. He took me to many interesting places around Canberra with natural beauty. We have been to Murrumbidgee River, Gibraltar Falls, and some mountains in Namadgi National park. I enjoyed listening to his amazing stories about hiking. Under his influence, I became eager to do some road trips into New South Wales. I must say that I am very lucky to have Alex as a very close friend, not just the relationship between a tutor and a learner.

From July 2014, I took part in an accounting internship. I met Alex regularly during the internship to get help with my English for the workplace and ideas for applications for jobs and interviews. Alex is like a brother; we talked about everything from work to life, from science to politics. In this way, I quickly acquired more knowledge about different cultures and real life.

I would also like to thank Glynnis-anne Buckley (Anna), although she would be embarrassed to be mentioned in this article. She has been the most cheerful storyteller, invaluable mentor and close friend during the past few years.

In conclusion, I grew up with ALMA. I have been doing voluntary tutoring since 2012 with the change of my status, from a foreigner to a permanent resident, from studying to working. I thank ALMA and particularly Dr Mandy Scott at ANU for the opportunities to meet many good local friends who gave me invaluable help during my different stages of life and who have encouraged and supported me.

## ALMA MANDARIN COMMUNITY TUTORING PROJECT

This project brings together fluent speakers of Mandarin and other members of the ACT community who wish to improve their knowledge of Mandarin and/or understanding of Chinese culture. The project began in 2001 and has resulted in more than 600 Mandarin speakers meeting over 500 people learning Mandarin.

Mandarin speakers volunteer an hour or so a week to help others learn Chinese. In return they can practice their English skills, make local friends, and learn more about language teaching and learning.

Tutors and students make their own arrangements to meet, usually on a one-to-one basis, at a time and place which suits their particular circumstances.

Feedback from participants has been very positive. Follow-up evaluations over the years indicate that most participants see the project as an exchange from which both sides benefit. As seen from the previous item, real friendships have been made, and much intercultural understanding gained.

For more information about the project, see <http://learningmandarin.weebly.com/mandarin-community-tutoring.html>

Or contact [canberraalma@gmail.com](mailto:canberraalma@gmail.com)

## OTHER OPPORTUNITIES TO HEAR AND PRACTICE CHINESE

### Community Radio

ALMA and Mandarin for Fun host a weekly half hour radio program on Fridays from 6.30-7pm on community radio 2XX (98.3FM). The program includes children's songs or rhymes and a story. Recordings of children speaking or singing in Mandarin sent in by parents and teachers can be broadcast. There are also possibilities for children to broadcast live from the studio.

For more information see:

<http://learningmandarin.weebly.com/weebly-radio-show.html>

or email [mandarinforfun@gmail.com](mailto:mandarinforfun@gmail.com)

## Piano Lessons

Available in Mandarin or Cantonese. Students of all ages welcome at the Gungahlin home studio of a teacher trained at the ANU School of Music (BMus) and the University of California, Los Angeles (PhD) with 20 years' experience in piano performance. Lessons tailored to the needs of individual students.

Rates: 30 minutes: \$32, 45 minutes: \$48, 60 minutes: \$64

Interested? Phone 0433 567 114 or email [jinbo.huang@anu.edu.au](mailto:jinbo.huang@anu.edu.au) to arrange a free consultation / trial lesson.

## Chinese Phoenix Scout Group

A chance to participate in a bilingual program that encourages children and young adults to grow through adventure by experiencing new challenges, making new friends, building confidence, taking responsibility for themselves, and being provided with opportunities to explore their own abilities and interests

For more information, contact Joanne on 6140 3437 or see <http://phoenixscout.org>

## LEARNING MANDARIN: HELPFUL WEBSITES

Children and parents of CAECC and other ALMA members have different levels of proficiency in Mandarin, from native speakers to complete beginners. For those who want to develop their Mandarin skills, for their own benefit and/or to help their children, there are now many websites that can help. Some provide online help for paid subscribers, others are free and some a mixture of free and subscription content.

Some useful links are listed on the ALMA website (see the 'Learning Mandarin Online' page). A Google search will produce many more options.

One website that provides a mixture of free and subscription content is <http://www.fluentu.com/chinese/>

It is worth signing up for their free emails, Facebook posts and tweets on Twitter.

## NEW ALMA MEMBERS

We welcome the following new members:

### Family memberships

Amelia Tandy, Teresa McFarlane, Juan Juan Zhu, Lily Ang, Pearl Bamford, Ena Lowe, Smithamol Sreesan, Kate Biddington, Nha-Linh Thai

### Individual memberships

Anthony Smart



## Exhibitions

### Between - Picturing 1950-1960s Taiwan

間：臺灣五六十年代面影

Tuesday 6 January - Friday 3 April 2015 9:00am-5:00pm, Monday to Friday



Politics has had complex effects on the cultural life of Taiwan in the twentieth century. These forty-four works, curated from the collection of the National Museum of History (Taipei), offer subtle observations of Taiwan in the 1950s and 1960s, from the perspectives of fifteen artists and photographers, as fresh and curious witnesses to lives in flux.

For more details, visit

[http://ciw.anu.edu.au/events/gallery/between\\_1950-60\\_Taiwan/](http://ciw.anu.edu.au/events/gallery/between_1950-60_Taiwan/)



## Public Lectures

The ANU China Seminar Series is a fortnightly seminar at which invited guests present their latest research on China and the Sinophone world. It aims at a broad audience.

The seminar series provides an arena in which to discuss China in its widest sense, to acquaint people with a range of China-related research that might otherwise lie outside their scope of contact, and to offer a social setting for discussion of matters of mutual interest.

Seminars are generally held on alternate Thursdays during the semester, from 4:00 pm to 5:30 pm.

This seminar series is supported by the China Institute, the Research School of Asia and the Pacific, and the Australian Centre on China in the World at The Australian National University.

For more information and list of seminars see:

<http://chinainstitute.anu.edu.au/events/seminarseries.php>

## Classical and Literary Chinese Reading Group

The Classical and Literary Chinese Reading Group meets at 3.00pm–5.00pm on Fridays in the Library of the Centre on China in the World.

All are welcome, though the group aims above all to cater to the interests of staff and graduate students. Participants supply texts in Classical or Literary Chinese for the group to translate. The final aim is to produce, over a number of weeks, a high-quality translation of a text, and to acquire as precise a sense as possible of its linguistic structures, not merely to gain a sketch overview of its content.

Contact [mark.strange@anu.edu.au](mailto:mark.strange@anu.edu.au)



## CONTRIBUTIONS TO ALMA NEWS AND UPDATES WELCOME

NOTE: Decisions on publication remain at the discretion of the editor.

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For more information about ALMA and to see past ALMA newsletters visit our website at

<http://learningmandarin.weebly.com/>