

(Translation of) Notes from Travels in Australia¹

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Since 2006, the Hanzhong City Museum and the Chinese Academy of Sciences Institute of Soil and Water Conservation, together with Australia's CSIRO and the University of NSW have carried out a cooperative project on "The Application of 3S Technology to the preservation of historical relics in the Hanzhong region". The project attracted financial support from the Australia-China Council and the Shaanxi Bureau of Cultural Relics. In addition to Australians visiting Hanzhong as part of the interchange, there was also opportunity for us to visit Australia.

China has become a great country, so to go abroad on a visit would seem to be a simple thing to do. However, what we set out to make was a formal visit, and not an ordinary visit for a scenic tour. For our cooperative exchange and project development we needed also to work together and a visit was essential to this work. Moreover, when you travel, the number of places you can visit is always too few and the time is always too short, and as the experience is different for different people there will always be some regrets. Nevertheless we must thank David Jupp and Brian Lees for their careful preparation and planning, so that everything went with great efficiency and without a hitch. We also had many contacts with Australians which has led to the following random thoughts which I have jotted down.

Thinking of the "Guests of the Golden Mountain"

The "Guests of the Golden Mountain" refers to the period in the second half of the 19th Century following the discovery of gold² when people came (to Australia) from every continent to pan for gold and make their fortune. Among them were Chinese people, predominantly from Guangdong and Fujian. It has been said that in the last days of the Qing, the government was corrupt, there was social disorder, many people were living in poverty and the Empire of the Great Qing was terminally ill. Workers from the lower rungs of society were moving to the South Seas to find employment and some were already going to Australia. Bendigo is a small city about 150 km northwest of Melbourne, in the latter part of the 19th Century, following the discovery of gold, it became known as the "Great Gold Mountain". Naturally, the gold attracted miners from all over the world, among them being Chinese people from the "Four Counties" (Taishan, Kaiping, Enping and Xinhui)³. They made the journey by sea to reach the southern hemisphere, and left by foot from Melbourne to head for the "New Golden Mountain", dreaming of making a fortune and leaving behind a history of great hardship.

¹ The Chinese document written by Director Feng is attached to this translation for reference. The translation was made by David Jupp with advice and help from Li Lingtao. It should be regarded as a draft.

² The New Golden Mountain was in the Victorian gold fields; the Old Golden Mountain was in California.

³ In south China, Guangdong Province, close to both the Pearl River Delta and Macao.

Among the arrangements made in Australia was a visit to the [Bendigo] Golden Dragon Museum. This was in an area where there had been a large concentration of Chinese people [during this period]. The Museum Exhibits include a great deal of the culture associated with Chinese miners, including a poem written in 1858 (the eighth year of the Xianfeng period), which attracted my special interest:

The poem goes:

“The disconsolate people can do nothing, as their points of reference sink.
Heaven and earth are suffering; disaster stalks the rat, ox, snake and horse.
In Chuan, Chu, Qian and Xiang increasing misfortune, Min and Gan flee to Gui and Yue.
The monkey, sheep, chicken and dog take up arms, east and west, north and south fall apart.
The horse leaves, the ox sleeps, the dog fights the chicken, and China becomes confused.
The children of Wo occupy Lu, the heavens are dark and foreboding.
The mountains and rivers break up in disarray, but the Yangtze [still] protects half of the country.”⁴

Because what was exhibited was just one piece of the whole work and the author did not sign it, I have been unable to find out more about the content of this poem. Out of the poem it is possible to make out that the writer was physically in a foreign land, and had seen the “guests of the Golden Mountains” being mistreated by the authorities and European immigrants, while China's lands were being invaded and in his mother land everywhere is desolation, which he expressed in poetry. The author was in a foreign land and his livelihood was uncertain, but he was still able while in the southern hemisphere to think about the situation of his country to the north and his writings overflowed with concern for his country and people. One cannot but admire his patriotic feelings.

The New Gold Mountain was washed with the tears of the Chinese “Guests of the Golden Mountain”. At the time, the Qing Dynasty was decadent and incompetent, and the great powers waited for opportunity to intervene. A weak country has no diplomatic influence in another country, and so what status could people from such a country have? The Australian government at that time also pursued a policy of racial discrimination, which was an important factor in this state of affairs. [But among the people who came were leaders determined to change the situation]. After New China⁵ was formed, immigrants from the Four Counties, such as the Lei family⁶, took on the role of representation based on a multi-cultural principle so that they merged well with the surrounding society, and their social status slowly improved. In recent times, Bendigo and Tianshui in Gansu Province have formed a twin-city relationship.

⁴ Obviously there are many allegorical and historical references in this poem that are hard (especially for someone who is not Chinese) to interpret and harder to translate. It is mostly about China and the hard times that had befallen the country at that time. It was in a period after the humiliating first Opium War (1839-1842) and was near the end of the combined disasters of the Taiping rebellion (1851-1862) and the second opium war (1856-1860). The rough translation only provides a “flavour” of the original language and may not be true to the original or possibly to its intent.

⁵ The Republic of China, founded in 1912.

⁶ Descendants of the Lei family created the Golden Dragon Museum and associated cultural displays.

To represent the years that Chinese people have lived in the [Bendigo] area, Chinese descendants of the Lei family have built the Golden Dragon Museum, the Garden of Joy and other facilities. At the Museum I saw the museum name written in calligraphy by Qian Juntao, a famous artist who is 85 years old. I enjoyed seeing the contribution made by the Tianshui government to the wonderful Dragon collection. In the street facing the Garden of Joy I saw a painting of a band that is based on a Dunhuang mural, as well as the eight immortals so well known to China's sons and daughters. In the middle of the Chinese Garden there is a long corridor, and in the corridor I saw Ke Wenhui's (Kevin Hui?) calligraphy and several poems, which reflect on the state of mind and status of present day Chinese people [in Australia].

First Quatrain from the Garden of Joy

“A peaceful mind can soar on a crane, through distant skies with scattered clouds.
In a place of hardy (ever) green trees, the spring breeze uncovers past mistakes.
The earth is confining, the inner world boundless.
In time beauty appears, a foreign land can also be one's home.”

In another poem, the happiness of Chinese people at the change in their social position is displayed:

Second Quatrain from the Garden of Joy

“Quests came from a far land beyond the clouds, walking through Australia at ease.
Bright grasslands told of a broad land and deep forests darken the sky.
Villages formed from its dreams, a special island in the middle of the sea.
Bendigo is filled with spring scenes, the lion dances and the dragon jumps.”

“Thoughts of the New Gold Mountain” to write on the Garden of Joy's wall.
Ke Wenhui, Summer 1998

This pair of Quatrains⁷, is filled with deep meanings involving Chan meditation, and expresses ideas such as “good thoughts uncover past mistakes” and “one’s house can also be one's home”. Clearly, Australia is multi-cultural, merging cultures and customs from all over the world, strong and weak cultures are equally acceptable, and can all find a way to develop [together] in this land. Past and present “Guests of the Golden Mountain” represent the vast changes in Chinese peoples’ social status and influence in local society. China’s new warmth helps me to appreciate the charm of Australia's multi-culturalism, and the progress of humans. After all, if the country is poor, the people are also poor.

Translation of a document by Feng Suiping
Visit occurred in September 2008

⁷ poems with four lines each with two groups of 5 characters

Additional Footnote:

Some attempts to identify the references in the poem may be interesting:

川	Chuān	Sichuan
楚	Chǔ	Hubei
黔	Qián	Guizhou
湘	Xiāng	Hunan
闽	Mǐn	Fujian
赣	Gàn	Jiangxi
桂	Guì	Guilin (Guangxi)
粤	Yuè	Guangdong
倭	Wō	Japan

The first group (up to the old character for Japan, 倭) comprises references to most of the southern Chinese provinces. These were generally ravaged by the Taiping rebels inland and English gunboats both along the coast and up into the major rivers.

澳游纪行 冯岁平

从 2006 年开始，我所在的单位——汉中市博物馆与中国科学院水土保持研究所、澳大利亚澳大利亚联邦科学工业组织 (CSIRO)、新南威尔士大学达成了“3S 技术在汉中名胜古迹保护利用中的应用”的合作项目，并分别得到澳中理事会 (Australia-China Council) 和陕西省文物局的立项支持。所以很自然地有你来我往式的交流，我也拥有了赴澳交流考察的机会。

中国的强大，使得出国旅游考察似乎有点轻而易举，但我们此行到底还是访问，并非一般旅游者那样游山玩水。除过交流合作心得、制订开展计划外，参观也必不可少。虽然参观是一件永远遗憾的事儿，因为参观的地方总是有限的，参观的时间总是受制的，参观的内容也因人而异，但我应该感谢我尊敬的朋友贾大韦 [David Jupp] 和李布朗 [Brian Lees]，正是他们的事先联系，精密安排，使我们高效率地不走回头路，也几乎与澳洲人是最亲密的接触，随之写下这些随想。

“金山客”的心声

“金山客”指的是 19 世纪后半期新金山发现后，从四面八方的淘金客，其中以中国广东、福建沿海来者居多。

话说在晚清时期，政府腐败，社会混乱，民不聊生，大清帝国的肌肤生疽。生活在底层的人们为了生计纷纷下南洋，也有相当部分前往澳洲。本迪戈 (Bendigo) 是墨尔本西北 150 公里的小镇，是 19 世纪中期后新发现的金山，因而被称为大金山。当然黄金的诱惑力，勾引了全球的淘金汉，其中包括四邑华人 (台山、开平、恩平、新会)。他们不远万里涉洋来到南半球，从墨尔本再徒步几十公里前往“新金山”，向往着淘金的美梦，也留下了一段段血泪史。

在贾大韦 [David Jupp] 事先精密的安排下，我参观了金龙博物馆 (Golden Dragon Museum)。这里是当时华人最集中的聚居区。博物馆陈列着众多华人淘金时的文物，一首写于 1858 年 (咸丰八年) 的诗，却引起了特别的兴趣。

诗写道：

惆怅生民又奈何，月落星沉三耗度。
天青地毒一齐罹，鼠牛蛇马灾犹小。
川楚黔湘祸益多，更有闽赣填桂粤。
猴羊鸡犬尽兵戈，分南分北分东西。
马走牛眠犬斗鸡，氈风半溷神话土。
倭子强占古鲁齐，日月茫茫天黯淡。
江山分裂陆沉迷，幸赖长江存半壁。

由于展示的只是部分，这首诗全部内容我已无法得知，亦未署作者。从诗中看出，作者身在异乡，目睹“金山客”备受当局以及欧洲移民蹂躏的惨状，又联想到华夏大地列强入侵，祖国河山满目疮痍的状况，从而有感抒发。此时的作者身居异域，自己的生计可能都成问题，却能在南半球想到北半球祖国的命运，读来充满浓郁的忧国忧民的感情，让人不由得钦佩他们的爱国情怀。

新金山带着华人“金山客”的血泪史，当时清朝腐朽无能，列强虎视眈眈，弱国无外交，弱国的子民在异国他乡岂能有高的待遇和地位。那时的澳洲当局也存在着种族歧视政策，自然这是形成这种状况的主要原因。新中国成立之后，以雷氏为代表的四邑移民，在多元文化的大背景下，很好地融入了当地社会，据说其社会地位日渐提升，本迪戈市也与我国的甘肃天水市建立了友好城市关系。在当年的华人聚集区，建立了金龙博物馆、怡园等，在博物馆我看到了由著名艺术家钱君匋在85岁时所书的馆名，观赏了天水市人民政府捐赠的最长龙的那一部分，在隔街相望的怡园，我也看到了依据敦煌壁画所塑的乐队，当然还有华夏儿女所熟知的八仙。在怡园的中式园林建筑的走廊中，我看到的柯文辉先生所书写的几首诗，最能反映现在的华人在当地社会里的心境与地位。

怡园五绝之一

禅心骑鹤去，游子袖云锦。
苍木枝疏处，春风悟昨非。
地球原不大，心海自无疆。
岁月惊鸿去，他乡亦故乡。

怡园之二，柯文辉

这两首五言绝句，怀着浓浓的禅意，表达了“春风悟昨非”和“他乡亦故乡”的心情。在另一首诗中，同样表达了华人在当地社会地位变化所带来的喜人情感：

万里穿云客，澳洲自在行。
草明惊地阔，林暗扫天澄。
村落渊翁梦，海山怀特文。
金城春色满，狮舞映龙腾。

新金山抒怀，怡园题壁。
柯文辉，一九九八之夏。

是的，澳大利亚属于多元文化，融纳着四面八方的文化风格，强势文化也好，弱势文化也行，均在这里可以找到适合发展的土壤。“金山客”的今昔，固然反映出华人在当地社会地位和影响的巨变，祖国强大的温暖，却我更看到了澳洲多元文化的魅力，看到了人类社会的进步，毕竟国穷人也穷！