

## People's Republic of China: Standing Tall at 60 Year Mark

By Derrick Fu, SEAS '12

Imagine you are in Beijing, planning the biggest celebration in the People's Republic of China (PRC) history. What are some things you might want to include?

To help you out, I've included a checklist of some things might need. Oh, and don't worry about the budget – it's on Hu.\*

- Bouncers – A parade of 8,000 military personnel from the land, naval and air force, Second Artillery Corps, Armed Police, army reserves and militia units; all with a minimum height of 175 cm (approximately 5'9") for men and 163 cm (5'4") for women, with another 200,000 soldiers and civilians to keep things under control. Check.

- Music – 1,300-strong military band; 2,100-strong adult choir; and 300-strong children's choir. Check.

- Entertainment – thirty-six formations and six performing groups involving 100,000 citizens; thirty-four floats featuring renowned Chinese celebrities and

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Courtesy of Jack Ji / <http://www.flickr.com/photos/gangji/>

October 1 marked PRC's 60th anniversary. An extravagant display of beauty, unity and power was captured for the entire world to see.

### About the Weatherhead East Asian Institute:



Since its establishment in 1949, Columbia University's Weatherhead East Asian Institute has been a major center for research, teaching, and publishing on modern and contemporary Asia. The Institute's mission is to train new generations of experts in the Asian humanities, social sciences, and the professions and to enhance understanding of East Asia in the wider community.

## A New Home for the Museum of Chinese in America

By Katy Marshall, CC '12

As one enters the inaugural exhibit of the newly reopened Museum of Chinese in America (MOCA), it is almost difficult to fathom how the Chinese-American community endured such an arduous history. The museum, once on Mulberry Street, reopened on September 22nd at 215 Centre Street, bordering the trendy Soho neighborhood. The first room in the exhibit is lined with biographies of successful Chinese-Americans from Michelle Kwan to Maxine Hong Kingston. Its noted ar-

MOCA was founded in 1980 as an institution dedicated to preserving the history of the Chinatown neighborhood.

chitect, Maya Lin, is herself a Chinese-American famous for designing the Vietnam War Memorial.

Turning the corner, how-

ever, the mood is disparate; a cast iron sign from a fish-processing machine boasts "Iron Chink," derogatory caricatures of Chinese immigrants in old comic strips abound, and a wooden panel engraved with Chinese characters represents the despondent poems carved in the barracks at San Francisco's Angel Island.

It is impossible to ignore the challenges that Chinese immigrants once faced, and perhaps continue to face in their struggle to assimilate into American life. The museum

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# People's Republic of China Standing Tall at 60 Year Mark

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heroes, representing China's mainland provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions; a performance by 83,000 primary and middle-school students; and one of the world's most spectacular and extravagant fireworks show to date. Check.

- Decorations – fifty-six 13.6-meter-tall 'National Unity Polls' symbolizing each of China's diverse ethnic groups; sixty red lanterns; 10,000+ doves; and 50,000 balloons. Check.

- Security – 151 warplane fly-overs, fifty new types of weapons including new unmanned surveillance aircraft, Armed Police armored vehicles, upgraded missiles, pre-warning planes, and radar systems. Check.

The facts and numbers are absolutely mind-boggling; the occasion – the 60th Anniversary of the People's Republic of China.

On October 1, cities across China and around the world celebrated this momentous occasion. For the first time in history, its flag was flown on the lawn across the White House on the Ellipse, next to the American flag, while the Empire State Building adorned China's signature red and gold throughout the evening.

The celebration, which included a military parade reminiscent of anniversaries of the past, marked Chairman Mao Zedong's famous "The Chinese People Have Stood Up" speech, given atop Tiananmen Square exactly 60 years earlier. The speech proudly proclaimed the establishment of the People's Republic of China and its new government.

This time around, the message is the same. Only now, it is stronger and louder.

So loud and strong that people are actually listening.

Although China has yet to reach the economic strength

and technological sophistication of nations like the United States, flawless demonstrations of grandeur man-power and force have become two trademarks; last seen at the Olympic games in Beijing.

Few other countries, if any, are economically, socially and politically sound enough to pull off such a showing, and even fewer are willing and bold enough to follow through.

The celebration was designed with large international viewership in mind, but was more for China to showcase its growing force and presence to its population of 1.3 billion people. The military parade, which called for soldiers to train up to ten hours per day for the year leading up to this October 1st anniversary, also debuted the Special Forces, as well as the female soldiers from the three services of the Chinese People's Liberation Army.

Although the celebration was interpreted by many as a warning to the world, for China, it not only served as a benchmark of its extraordinary growth, but as a message for peace.

China's economic prowess has been the main focal point of a growing movement towards international awareness of China's recent changes. Other statistics, such as China's illiteracy rate in the 15-45 age group, showing a sharp decrease from 80%, when the PRC was founded, to less than 4%, today, also signify China's push and investment in its future.

China understands the new economic, educational, environmental, militarist and social responsibilities it faces, and its 60th anniversary celebration signifies its commitment to both its people and the world.

China is ready. China has stood up.

*\*China's President Hu Jintao*

# Picture Perfect in China's Century

By Gavin Newton-Tanzer,  
CC'12

When one has only lived within a single culture, it's easy to take things for granted; the goals one should pursue, the means by which one should pursue them, and the feelings one will have upon success become a formula for a picture-perfect life. And it was just that life, the golden

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representation of the 20th century banker, lawyer, or doctor, that would have been my future had I not—impulsively and perhaps unfairly—been shaken from that stability. Before I knew it, I was sitting on a plane to China.

I have never once looked back, and the adventures and mishaps that were my first experience in Beijing have shaped my life in unforgettable ways. Beyond that, these experiences have brought to my attention the bigger picture: a world order that has truly begun to evolve, and a new foundation that is being set by two behemoths, one growing, one injured, that one

day must come to terms with each other. However, this new global economic, social, or political structure is not going to suddenly be determined over a treaty, or established by any sort of handshake nor government promise. Rather, this change must be affected by young leaders, who bring with their maturity the promise of positive and mutually beneficial relations between China and the United States.

If anything, it is the absolute, unilateral certainty of China and the United States' increasing interdependence that has created this phenomenon. In China, English is a mandatory second language, and in the US, Chinese language education is growing at an incredible rate. Chinese students have been studying in the US for years, and now, US students have begun to reciprocate, exploring Chinese universities in summer and academic year programs. Unlike any boom in the past, there is no secret as to where success lies, and no fear that the opportunities are going to be immediately monopolized. There is simply too much potential, too many opportunities, and so, the only question that remains now is who is willing, who dares, to join in and participate.

Global China Connection, an organization founded at Columbia University last fall, has devoted much of its efforts overseas to interactions with thousands of students from China's top universities, bridging them together with students from top universities in the United

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# A New Home for the Museum of Chinese in America

Courtesy of Wallyg <http://www.flickr.com/photos/wallyg/>



Courtesy of the SFGate / Maya Lin Studio

Left: MOCA's old space in a former public school building. Above: MOCA's new space bordering the trendy SoHo neighborhood.

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too was challenged by the scope of its exhibit “With a Single Step: Stories in the Making of America,” the first in its new space—a space six times larger than its previous Mulberry Street location— as well as the first to address a larger transnational Chinese-American history.

MOCA was founded in 1980 as an institution dedicated to preserving the history of the Chinatown neighborhood. However, as the Chinese population in New York has doubled since 1990 and relations with China have risen to the forefront of American foreign policy, the museum began to see its role expand to chronicling national Chinese-American history and the history of interaction between the two nations. In 2005, a grant from the Carnegie Corporation, made possible through a \$20 million donation from Mayor Michael Bloomberg, broached the possibility of moving to a new space.

The warm and inviting new exhibition space, replete with bilingual placards in English and Mandarin, is a testament to both the storied history of Chinese immigration to America and the continued interchange between the two nations. The exhibit itself exposes a conversation between the integration of Chinese into American society and Americans' complex and evolving perceptions of China

and its émigrés. Similar to the “hyphenated” existences of many other immigrant groups, for Chinese immigrants the desire for assimilation and success is juxtaposed against the need for cultural continuity. The exhibit poignantly exposes this paradox in its comparison of the mainstream Chop Suey Circuit and La Choy's demystification of Chinese cuisine, with traveling Chinese operas in the United States,

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the celebration of Chinese New Year and the formation of Chinatowns across the country. A display on the development

of the Chinese laundry portrays a proud community determined to achieve economic autonomy in spite of linguistic and cultural barriers.

The American reaction to the influx of Chinese immigrants is also complex. At times, it has come in forms of prejudice from “yellow fever” and Sax Rohmer's “Fu Manchu” to the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and the Red Scare. In other periods, this bias has been reversed entirely, such as when China became a tactical ally in World War II and later, a valuable economic partner. The exhibit also carefully points out that the American and European exploitation of China in the 1800s directly contributed to the deplorable conditions that caused so many to leave.

A cultural gem, the revitalized MOCA is certainly worth a visit on the weekend, and is complimented perfectly by a dim sum meal in Chinatown. The museum displays its abundance of primary sources by creatively using its exhibition space; television monitors play interviews, diaries of Chinese laundry owners are laid out on tables and turn of the century photographs of immigrant families are hung from the ceiling as mobiles. The Museum of Chinese in America is a testament to the array of opportunities that New York City has to offer, and provides invaluable insight into Chinese-American life.

# Picture Perfect in China's Century



Courtesy of Gavin Newton-Tanzer

This past summer, a GCC conference in Beijing addressed the continuing evolution of China's economy, society, and government in wake of the global financial crisis and respective government stimulus initiatives.

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States, Canada, and England. Now, everywhere, everyone is asking these same questions, but the traditional answers just don't work. We are no longer in a society or social structure in which grades or institutional reputations can stand as adequate measures for future success. The skills that will be necessary in this new century are of a more experiential kind, of networking and innovation, all of which are only becoming more pronounced against a backdrop of failing long-trusted systems and work methods that are too sluggish to learn and to adapt.

However, this development isn't to be lamented, but rather, should be hailed as a chance to begin again. This is exactly what will facilitate growth, for as Chinese and American business, social, and government entities increasingly need to interact, it will be up to a new generation, capable of cross-cultural understanding, communication, and development, to take the lead. Nevertheless, these are skills

that are cultivated through use, not taught, and as there are no standard paths to the other side of the world, there's no choice but for each to muster the courage to create their own.

Everyone's experience will be unique, and while this will be admittedly disturbing for those accustomed to a life of stability, at the same time, it means this next century will be an adventure, full of excitement and refreshingly new. Instead of watching and waiting, this is a time to take action, and if the world can learn to work together and cooperate through us, these next hundred years could represent global golden age in ways we can't even imagine.

*Gavin Newton-Tanzer is president of Global China Connection (GCC 全球中国联接), a student-run non-profit organization dedicated to building bridges between China and the international community. For more information, visit [www.globalchinaconnection.com](http://www.globalchinaconnection.com).*

## Upcoming Events at the Weatherhead East Asian Institute

**MONDAY, OCTOBER 26**

### Lecture Series: The Global Financial Crisis: Responses from East and South East Asia

"The Great Crash of 2008 and China

Ross Garnaut, Professional Fellow at the University of Melbourne, former Australian Ambassador to China

4:30 PM - 6:00 PM, IAB 918

*Co-Sponsored by Columbia University's APEC Study Center*

**TUESDAY, OCTOBER 27**

### Modern Tibetan Studies Program Film Screening

"Amanisahan": Women and Ethnicity:

The Uighur Nation Through its Musical Tradition

Directed by Wang Xinjun

7:10 PM - 9:30 PM

Kent Hall, Rm. 522D

**WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 28**

### Brown Bag Lecture Series

"Hong Kong: Social Transformations"

"Hong Kong's Sinking and

Shrinking Middle Class in a Rising Asia"

Helen Siu, Professor of Anthropology, Yale University

12:00 PM - 1:30 PM, 918 IAB

**THURSDAY, October 29**

### Brown Bag Lecture Series

"China and Energy Security in Central Asia"

Pan Guang, Director and Professor of the Shanghai Center for International Studies and the Academic Director of the Institute of Eurasian Studies at the Shanghai Academy of Social Science

12:00 PM - 1:30 PM, IAB 1219

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## ABOUT SOUNDINGS

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