



MISSIONARY KIDS
and
THE CANADIAN SCHOOL IN WEST CHINA

NOW: Who, Where, What.

THEN: “Those were the days...”

SPRING 2012
(FALL “down under”)

No. 29

Editor: Robert Kilborn (Killy)
Exec liste p 9

(Mish Kid definition: If your parents were missionaries in China and/or if you attended the Canadian School in Chengdu, you are a Mish Kid-1. Misk Kids 2 & 3 are related to Mish Kids-1)

GREETINGS



The dragon is a symbol of power and superior control. It is not evil. The dragon is a good symbol. It also represents change and mobility. Dragons seem to be a change year, and usually from bad to good. In general, in the dragon years, the world economy does a little better.

People born in the dragon years (1926, 1938, 1940, 1952 etc every 12 years) are imaginative and full of energy. Dragon people double their efforts in whatever they do. Their natural talent should stand out with good results. They're passionate in all

they do and they do things in a grand fashion. They are most successful when working alone. This can come across as arrogance or conceit. Dragons have tempers that can flare fast. Dragons will give into love but won't give up their independence. Because sometimes they have vengeful tempers, their partners need to be tough-skinned! Dragons prefer leading to being led. Jobs that allow them to express their creativity are choices.

Just a small sampling of the many interpretation and projections found on surfing the net.



NOW

CHENGDU, MY HOME

The Chinese Feelings Across the Pacific

Chief Editor: *Zhang Biao*
Deputy Chief Editor: *Xiang Suzhen*
Editorial Committee: *Zhang Biao,*

Xiang Suzhen, others in Chinese, and Donald and Elizabeth Willmott, Michael Crook, Marion Walker (Walmsley).

Chief Advisor: *Zhang Bio.*

Advisors : *Chinese and Donald/Elizabeth Willmott*

Text: *Xiang Suzhen*

Design: *Chinese*

English Translation: *Zhang Yingming*

English Polishing: *Michael Crook.*

Photo Contributors: *list of Mish Kids.*

Physical: *soft cover, 28 x 21 x 2 cm (11.25 x 8.25 x 0.75 inches), 320 pages.*

Weight 1.32 Kg

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Zhang Biao is a distinguished poet, calligrapher, editor and benefactor. He is dedicated to Suzhen's inspiration. His strong support in many fields, including financial, helped immeasurably to assure the outcome of exhibits and this book.

In his "Forward" for the book he outlines the long story which led to the book's production. In his conclusion is this poem he composed:

*Each photo is imbued with deepest feeling,
A hundred pictures bring the old town back,
A myriad scenes transcending time revealing
History's woven just with white and black!*

*Today begins tomorrow's undertaking,
A modern epic set to ancient song.
Now dreams of old have set our hearts a
burning,
Our hot blood coursing dyes the rainbow long!*

"Yes, the past is past. The future is for us to create."

Xiang Suzhen needs no introduction to Mish Kids. Following Bob Edmonds suggestion, she initiated the Old Photo Project, enrolled many volunteers and dedicated her life in developing the exhibits held in Beijing, in 2008. In 2010 she found a home for permanent display in Xinchang town near Chengdu and continued into the

publishing of this astounding record. Her speech in the book and at the alumni reunion in 2010 (newsletter #26 Fall 2010) summaries the work entailed. She has been lauded in many places, including in the book and this newsletter. She also pointed out: "*The reason we did all this is because we all think that in the last century your ancestors gave up their comfortable life in Canada and came to China as volunteers to help us. Today we have an obligation to also work as volunteers to reveal the history that should not be forgotten. We love to contribute to the friendship of our two countries and we will try our best to keep working.*"

Zhang Yiingming, (Lao Zhang to most of us) is a quiet, unassuming individual and a skilled translator who has supported Suzhen's project in so many ways it would be difficult to list them all here. He too, was at the alumni reunion in 2010 and presented a power point presentation on the missionary movement that reflected his keen interest in research. He has been a continual translator for Suzhen, personally in conversations and for all the letters and documents to and from the Mish Kids and others who have been involved. His translation from Chinese to English in this book is admirable and so much appreciated by all of us.

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An excerpt from the opening panel at the first (2008) exhibition: *Our goal in holding this exhibition has been to make the Chinese people, especially the people of Sichuan, remember and never forget the Canadians who lived and worked here, and made contributions to us. We shall continue to spread the strong feelings toward China felt by these missionaries, and to extol friendship between Canada and China.*

* * * * *

We could spend pages applauding the list of "others", e.g. the photographer who produced such magnificent exhibits, from ancient photos, to Don and Liz Willmott who

collected photos from many sources, and many long hours sorting and scanning many photographs, members of the editorial committee, the designers, the advisors, the translators. On and on!

We may have wondered why someone in Chengdu planned an exhibit of some kind. *We now know Suzhen.* She literally dedicated her life towards what we have today. It was her initiative from Bob Edmonds idea. It was her dedication and recruiting others who shared her conviction, who have produced outstanding exhibits and this extraordinary historical book.

“THE BOOK”

Ed: This book defines eloquently the dedication, lives and legacy of our grandparents, parents, their Chinese associates and friends. Its focus renews many memories of our upbringing and our personal legacy as Mish Kids as well as many others who were part of West China Mission movement. It is a challenge to review such a complex photo album, with many captions of the photos of the history which each illustrates. Two articles in the book recount its beginnings as the Old Photo Project and the many difficulties encountered. One by Zhang Biao in the Forward and Suzhen in a conclusion. (Suzhen’s is similar to the one she gave at the reunion in 2010). We plan to devote considerable space in this edition to highlight some of the circumstances leading to its publication but also the celebrations of its opening, including comments from Mish Kids who attended.

The Old Photo Project has been extraordinary successful. Now in book format it is already being recognized as a remarkable record and historical account.

Title Page

This book is dedicated to the Canadians who served West China more than 100 years. We Chinese people will never forget the international friends who have helped us

The Embassy of Canada to China welcomes the publication of the book CHENGDU, MY HOME, a collection of historical photos which reflect the sincere affection of a past generation of Canadians and Chinese. It is also an important contribution to further promoting Sino-Canadian friendship by illustrating an important episode in the history of that friendship. The Embassy would like to express Canada’s thanks to all those who made the publication of this book possible.

There were two celebrations for the opening of “The Book”, one in Beijing on April 21, and one in Xianchang, (near Chengdu) the permanent home of the Old Photo displays, on April 26.

The first celebration was in the Hall of China Radio International in Beijing. Present at the Beijing celebration was the Canadian Ambassador to China, representatives from Sichuan Culture and Art Press, China Radio International, The Peoples’ Government of Dayi County, China Society for Peoples’ Friendship Studies, a renowned Photographer, Xiang Suzhen initiator of the Old Photo Project, Zhang Yingming and others.

The master of the ceremony was Zhang Biao. Isabel Brown (Crook) gave the opening address, translated by her son Michael. (unfortunately a copy of Isabel’s opening speech was not available)

Mr. David Mulrone.

Canadian Ambassador to China

I am very happy to be here today at this Opening of Old Photo Exhibition and Book Launch, *Chengdu, My Home...* Starting over 100 years ago, a group of Canadian came to Sichuan, China. Together they opened the first dispensary in western China, founded the West China Union University and spread western medical and health knowledge.

Due to their deep emotional ties to China, not only did they take on Chinese names, they also gave Chinese names to their children and

grandchildren that were born in Sichuan. Their contributions should be remembered. These old photos also remind us of the bonds of friendship and cooperation that can be forged between different societies. Therefore I think it is very important to exhibit these old photos and make the publication of this book possible.

Canada is a long-term friend of China...The strengths of our two countries complement each other in many ways...Cooperation in health is an area where our two countries are working closely together...But really, our cooperation goes back a century to the groundwork that was laid by this earlier generation of Canadians and their friends and partners in Sichuan.

I would like to thank the Sichuan Provincial Government and China Radio International for their support and organizing this event. I want to especially thank the Old Photo Project Team for their hard work in making the publication of this book possible.

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From: **Marion Walmsley (Walker)**

April 21: (Beijing) This morning we had VIP treatment at Radio International. We were given corsages and filled the front row. The master of ceremonies was Zhang Biao of the World Painting and Calligraphy Institute (Beijing). We were then invited to go up on the stage and participate in the colourful Ribbon Cutting. This was the opening Ceremony of the *Old Photo Exhibit, The Chinese Feelings Across the Pacific* and the Book Launch of *Chengdu, My Home*.

Following the ribbon cutting we were all presented with colourful gift boxes. Each box contained a carved gourd or “calabash” (*an evergreen tree bearing fruit in form of a gourd, the shell of which may be used as a vessel for water or other*). Our names in Chinese were carved on the gourd, created by a distinguished Calabash carver, Zhang Zize. We then went to a room where the photo panels were exhibited. We then went to a delicious lunch.

April 22, Sunday, we fly to Chengdu and take the bus from the airport to Dali County.

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On April 26 the second celebration was held. The setting was in Chengdu. Accounts of the setting and the affair come from **Malcolm Reed Mish Kid-1** and **Sandra Anderson, Mish Kid-2** (Marion’s daughter).

Malcolm: The setting of the photo exhibition and book launch in Chengdu took place in the Kuan Xiangzi section of Chengdu. Several old streets built by a Manchu garrison after an uprising in 1789 had been recently renovated and turned into a busy entertainment district. The group visited the locale after dinner the evening before the book launch and discovered that many of the [photo] panels of the exhibit were mounted, and lit, along a wall facing the entrance square. A large number of people were dancing to recorded music in the square, and a quick visit to the adjacent narrow street with its shops and restaurants was intriguing. The next morning we arrived at the square to discover that a stage and rows of seating had been set up. We waited for a time for the dignitaries to arrive, again looking at the panels facing the Square. When the dignitaries arrived we found our seats. As usual there were many speeches, introduced by portentous recorded music, e.g. the theme from the Magnificent Seven. They included long speeches from Philippe Rheault, Canadian Consul General, duly translated either way as required, including one from Bill Willmott. After the conclusions of the speeches...we learned that a large number of photo panels had been mounted on walls deep within the Kuan Xiangzi complex. We found them and of course had seen them already in Beijing and in Xinchang. But I found them particularly striking and meaningfully mounted in the open air with ordinary people stopping to look at them. Then we had an excellent lunch at one of the old mansions now converted into a restaurant.

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Sandra: This was the third tour back to China for Mish Kids...We represented 9 missionary families. The impeccably managed tour brought the travellers to many outstanding banquets and receptions in celebration of the publishing of the book *Chengdu, My Home* a beautifully designed compilation of the “Old Photo Show” which has its permanent exhibit in Dayi County, just outside Chengdu. A colourful and overwhelming greeting when we arrived in Xianchang town include lion and dragon dancers, colourful drummers and a home crowd of smiling faces. It was an emotional experience for the group. The elegant traditional Chinese style resort was an exquisite setting for the permanent gallery...Hundreds of old photos taken by the missionaries were wonderfully displayed, Then we were hosted at the new Library where we were each given a copy of *Chengdu, My Home*.

This was the formal opening of the public outdoor exhibit of the “Old Photo Show”, which included eloquent speeches by Bill Willmott and Xiang Suzhen, founder of the project. And an exciting ribbon cutting accompanied by dramatic music and colourful exploding tickers (many tiny pieces of different metallic paper came exploding out of two cylinders. (Ed modern fire crackers). For us it was quite a display, with loud movie music playing!). This final public showing of the photos in lanes and courtyards of a wonderfully rebuilt ancient town in downtown Chengdu, brought a sense of permanence to the important contributions of our ancestors in this part of China so long ago. It was a visit of tremendous thanks from many levels of government, sponsors, volunteers, and citizens of China. Suzhen and Yingming (*Lao Zhang*), liaison and interpreter...were tireless in their gracious effort to accommodate us.....The story of a shared history between two friendly countries has come a long way from the photo albums of Canadians to the streets of Chengdu.

Billy Willmott gave the opening speech. The following are excerpts from it. He opened with recognition of those attending:

Canadian Consul General Phillippe Rheault. Distinguished poet, calligrapher, editor and benefactor, Mr Zhang Biao.

Writer and editor, initiator and leading spirit. Ms Xiang Suzhen.

Translator, supporter and expediter, Mr Zhang Yingming. (*Lao Zhang*).

The entire creative team who worked together diligently and selflessly to realize this book— Wang Xiaomei, Zou Xiaogong.

Ladies, gentlemen, friends, Zao Shang Hao
(*Good Morning*)

It is an honour for me to speak at this ceremony... For all of us it is a deeply humbling experience to find friends in China who are dedicated to recording for posterity the lives and work of the Canadian missionaries in Sichuan – our ancestors – and preserving images of the old China in which they lived and worked. It is seven years since this project was first conceived by Xiang Suzhen, who brought together a team with varied skills but moved by a common spirit. (*He mentions it included several Canadians*)’ The project included successes over seven years...the Old Photo exhibition in Beijing and Dujiangyan in 2008 and the permanent exhibition in Xinchang, 2010. And now the project culminates in this splendid book we celebrate today....

The team met huge problems at every stage, as you will see when you read the elegant forward by Zhang Biao and the postscript by Xiang Suzhen. The team faced these problems with determination, with unwavering persistence, and above all with great courage. For these they have earned our congratulations and thanks.

I am especially happy that the Canadian Embassy has given its enthusiastic support to this project, recognizing its important contribution to friendship between our two peoples.

I was born in Chengdu, it is my home. My

parents, who spent 30+ years in China and 20+ years in Chengdu, were both teachers... Their aim was to educate the future leaders of China, giving them practical skills that would not separate them from the people, as Chinese traditional education did, making them an educated elite who deigned to dirty their hands with practical work.

My father taught Educational Philosophy at the West China Union University, and later became Dean of Studies.

China is indeed our home as it is for many of us here. And so we are delighted that this book records the contributions of the Canadian missionaries in Sichuan. In area of health, they not only built hospitals but founded a medical school to train Chinese doctors and nurses. In education they not only built high schools but helped found a university in Chengdu. The Canadians took the initiative to bring together four missions to found the first university in Western China. And it was the first university to admit women students.

They also organized campaigns and worked to rid Sichuan of the horrors of foot-binding, illiteracy and the exploitation of women.

So we welcome this book with immense gratitude. It is a beautiful book, and the team deserves to take pride in it publication.

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The following are comments on the significance of this project.

From: **Marion Walmsley (Waker):**

For the third time, the Old Photo Group in Chengdu has invited Canadian guests to China. This time to celebrate not only the rededication of the Old Photo Show but also the launching of the beautiful album produced by the Old Photo Group, *Chengdu, My Home*. Again all expenses in China were paid by the group, supported by the dignitaries who have become aware of this remarkable story.

The ten days were filled not only with joy and banquets but with many speeches by

these important dignitaries as it appears that this was an auspicious and important occasion. Not only was the Communist Government of Sichuan allowing public speaking about efforts of foreigners, it was actually encouraging VIPs to attend meetings, speak about the work of the missionaries/volunteers and allowing public displays of pictures, some of them 100 years old, of foreigners working in China, This is new. We, the Canadian School Alumni, should be aware of the importance of this event. This change in the wind, this movement to move past the negative ideas of missionary evangelism, this reaching out to Canada. Here are two suggestions:

1. In this beautiful book, *Chengdu, My Home* we now have a tangible representation of the Old Photo Show and what these long-ago events mean to the people of China. To honour that effort, we should consider making it available to as many people and institutions in Canada as possible.

2. The key people, Xiang Suzhen,(and her daughter Mei Mei), Zhang Yingming, (Lao Zhang) and Zhang Biao (foremost supporter) should be invited to Canada for a celebration of their efforts in a venue that promotes their contribution.....

Perhaps we can find a Canadian sponsor, someone who understands the need to promote Canada-China relations and who can underwrite some of our activities. (Ed: the Exec Group is arranging getting books and distributing them See page 9)

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From **Don Willmott:**

What the recent CS guests witnessed during their trip to China was not just a third exhibition of our cherished photographs. At the time of the first two invitations to exhibitions The Old Photo Project team was not able to find a willing host either in Chengdu itself or at the University. That is because it is totally an independent volunteer group. As Zhang Biao explains in the book, *Chengdu, My Home*, no government or institutional representative had ever

experienced a group of volunteers seeking to work jointly with them. Official individuals were enthusiastic, but they could not act alone. The 2008 Beijing exhibition was done without sponsorship of any kind, in a sense illegally.

This time, not only has a high quality book been published that has been enthusiastically received by the public, but the Project exhibited photos and book has finally been recognized on a wide scale by government officials and agencies. This represents a “sea change” in China. What happened was not even possible last October.

Zhang Biao writes in the forward to The Book that in 2008 the Old Photo Project could not get either sponsorship or help from any organization, because this was only a volunteer one.

We have made history on two fronts. The past of our ancestors has been officially accepted and celebrated. Secondly, a group of volunteers has worked successfully outside the traditional Chinese framework to bring about something they cared about. It is extraordinary that volunteers, without the customary official backing, have done what our Old Photo Project volunteers have done. They have broken through the up-to-now government monopoly of public information and control of visitors and tourists. They deserve to be celebrated here in a manner that reflects this accomplishment, most of which has happened since the 2010 visit.

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LETTERS

From: **Joan Rackham (Good)**

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416-385-8039 jegood@sympatiiico.ca

August 2011

Trying to decide how much to write about myself (Ed in response to a request that she send us an up-date on her time since CS). Decided to tell most of it and you can cut some or all of it. Yes, I have been to the Chinese meal these last few years but have

not gone to the (hospitality) room after. There are so many people there (at the meal) it is easy to miss the ones you know.

I, along with many CS'ers graduated from Victoria College. I spent a summer working at Jasper Park Lodge and met my future husband there. We had four boys, each in a different province, moving about every two years in the early stage. I have seven grand children, all are in University except the youngest in Grade 12. All sons live in Ontario, but not Toronto.

Later, I was resolutions chair for the Canadian Federation of University Women. Then President of the North York University Women's Club, President of UCW of St Georges United Church, President of ladies curling section of Bayview Gold and Curling Club, and recently chair of Outreach at Eglinton at St Georges Church and am still involved with other church activities. Also in a community choir for a number of years. Done a lot of travelling including one of the early trips to the Antarctic. Four bicycle trips to Europe and many other trips too. Enjoy reading, but sporting days are over now but continue to be involved in many things. Perhaps not much of a life, but I am still alive and kicking.

(Ed. “Not much a life”?? Thanks Joan for sharing this.

😊 😊 😊 😊 😊 😊

From: **Billy Willmott**

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April 2012

What a wonderful week we had in China! Such a positive experience from start to finish. Looked after so well, welcomed so enthusiastically, especially in Xinchang, such positive things said about our parents and grandparents' lives of service, such good food, such a fine bunch of people to travel with. Thank you all.

Back in Christchurch (earthquake Feb 2011) and faced with all the problems I put out of my mind for a week. Our neighbours

are moving out of their houses one by one and by the end of this month there will be only three houses occupied along our street, eerie feeling for us, probably the last to leave some time early next year, Streets blocked all over the city as sewers and mains are repaired, still so many vacant lots where houses used to stand especially in the city centre. Hard to settle to any tasks, but Di has already written three garden articles for the local daily. We go to a meeting tonight to discuss how we can pursue our campaign to keep this area of the city as a city-to-see park along the river. Wish us luck!

Best wishes to all of you and no need to answer—my in-box still has 199 unread messages and 412 others I haven't dealt with. Cheers, Billy.



From: **Rebecca Terry**

2347 Birch Bay Lynden Rd, Custer WA 98240 USA
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January 3 2012

Grandchildren are holding at 21, great grandchildren count up to 22, and growing. Even one great-great grand child. I take no credit for that—they don't ask me. In our household we are four generations. Business is booming, as we try to figure out how to handle the increase. We make 4 trips to Seattle-Tacoma weekly delivering yogurt and Guernsey milk to more than 55 markets. Life is good. Becky

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ED Relatives of the Hartwell's (George E is the author of *Granary of Heaven*), were visiting in Chengdu and Lao Zhang was asked to escort them. We are hoping to get letters from them on their experiences etc.

We also plan to continue more excerpts from his accounts on his trip to Chengdu, fascinating stories. If readers would like more accounts of various early aspects of missionary or Mish Kids-1 lives feel free to ask. Numerous resources are available.

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“Octos”: *(new arrivals in italics)*

Noreen Anderson (Nolan), Vivian Anderson (Wilson), Marjorie Beaton (Fotheringham), Neil Bell, Muriel Brown (Milne), Bruce Dickenson, Steve Endicott, Bill Gentry, John Gentry, Doris Hibbard, (Rundle), Bill Hibbard, Frances Kilborn (Hilliard), Jean Kilborn (Hooper), Robert Kilborn, Anne Kennard, Gwen Kitchen (Heatherington), Kathleen Lautenschlager (Haun), Evelyn Leonard, August Lovegren, Norman Lovegren, Joan Rackhan (Good), Newton Reed, Foster Stockwell, Mary Struthers (McKim), Tom Torrence, Kay Veals (Wray), Omar Walmsley, Edith Walker (Woodbridge), Enid Walmsley (Sills), *Marion Walmsley (Walker)*, John Wilford, Dick Willmott, Donald Willmott, Joy Willmott.

(Any one else &/or corrections?).

Be thankful that wrinkles don't hurt.

“Nonas”:

Rowell Bowles, Julia Brown (Baker), Isabel Brown (Crook), Alice Carscallen (Griffith), Charles Carscallen, Bessie Dayfoot, David Hibbard, Barbara Jones (Good), Muriel Kitchen (Tonge), Charlotte Small (Dafoe).

(Any others &/or corrections?).

Lady, 104 was asked “What is the best thing about being 104”. Reply: “No peer pressure.”



† **OUT OF SIGHT, NOT OUT OF MIND**

Lillian Jane Marie Taylor

January 8, 1921 – September 26, 2011

(The following is a letter from her sister, Dorothy Davies). I received your newsletter from her mail and wanted you know that she had died. She loved going to the China dinner, but was too sick to go this year. We have lots of her letters and diaries to go through about her time in China. I don't know if there are too many people left who knew Lillian now. She certainly enjoyed that time of her life and was still writing letters to a

Chinese doctor in Chengdu. Thank you for the newsletter. Dorothy.

69 McRae Dr., Toronto On M4G 1S3.

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FYI

Orders for reprints, books, pamphlets, CD, DVD:
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N2H 3H2; email rm.kilborn@sympatico.ca
519-744-6325. Please submit full name, address,
and contact number, ie phone or email

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– **Chengdu, My Home:** (price around \$20.00 to be finalized soon), Canadian post \$10.00 to \$12.00 (Plan to list names before ordering from China, so a delay can be expected until list feasible length)

– **Old Photo Show.** 2008 opening of first exhibit. Pamphlet & DVD of experiences and pictures by Mish Kids who attended. Free

– **60th CS Anniversary** as celebrated in 1969. Reunion speeches and program. Free

– **West China Union University**, by Lewis C Walmsley. Photocopy of book. \$15.00 + postage (This is complete book in photocopy format. Cost covers printing and loose leave binding.

– **The Canadian School in West China** (the “Red Book”). (2) donated copies. FCFS. Postage.

– **Granary of Heaven** George E Hartwell. Three (3) copies. One donated by Edith (Walker) Woodbridge. Two from book dealer. Two signed copies. Postage \$10.00 to \$12.00. Purchased books \$31.00. Donated book free. FCFS.

– **Wood Block Prints** by Beatrice Kitchen. A collection of her prints which she created. Loose leaf binder and CD. \$25.00 + postage

– **Canadian School 100th.** CD with script. \$8.00.



Photos Courtesy of Zhang Yingming (“Lao Zhang”)



David Mulrone Canadian Ambassador to China



Zhang Biao at Beijing



Xiang Suzhen in Beijing



Beijing audience



Celebration in Chengdu



Celebration in Xinchang



Group in Xinchang



Admiring old Photos