

Chinese Voice 19 June 1997 issue

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EDITORIAL by Steven Young

HONG KONG

A beauty goes home

At the stroke of midnight on 30 June 1997 Hong Kong will revert to China ending 150 years of control by a colonial power. For nearly all concerned, the change will bring mixed emotions: all Chinese people will be pleased to see a part of China seized under an unequal treaty revert to the motherland; at the same time, all except the blind would acknowledge that a great city has been created under British rule. Hong Kong is a great city not just because of its magnificent buildings, shops, restaurants, roads, underground railway, airport and harbour, but also because it is a world-class centre of banking, commerce and transport. More than that, it is great because it has been a "dream teaming" of Chinese enterprise, energy and hard work with the western traditions of personal freedom and the rule of law.

Let us be quite clear how Britain got Hong Kong. Some one hundred and fifty years ago, Britain as the premier world power forced China to accept opium instead of silver as payment for the tea, silk and other products it wanted from China. The Chinese could see that the opium was ruining a whole generation of its people and resisted this evil trade. It fought the Opium Wars and lost. As well as other indignities, Britain took Hong Kong as the spoils of this war, dressing up a seizure as a 150 year lease.

Today, the child of this British rape is one of the most beautiful and accomplished of off-springs. Soon she will be going home to her Chinese family. Already many of her mainland cousins are vying for the right to "marry" her. It remains to be seen whether she will make a successful match (as everyone hopes) or whether she will be fought over by ugly suitors who in the process may not only smash the glass slippers but maim the bride.

Nancy Goddard CNZM

by Steven Young

NANCY WAI-LAN KWOK GODDARD was recently made a Companion of the NZ Order of Merit (CNZM), one of the highest possible NZ honours just one step short of being created a Knight or Dame. What has this diminutive (4ft 11 inch) woman of 75 years done which motivated the Queen, acting on the advice of the Government, to recognise her in this way?

Nancy was one of 10 remarkable Kwok children who grew in the 1940s and 50s, in the family of a Chinese fruiterer/ships' providedore. Their very number gave them a "critical mass" which allowed them to grow up supporting each other throughout their lifetime. A sister Molly was to become deputy-Mayor of Lower Hutt, a brother Frank was to become an ear, nose and throat specialist; other sisters did well in other fields.

Nancy was the eldest girl born in New Zealand and (very unusually for that era) was sent off by her parents to Victoria University to study Education. On the very first fateful day at University she met George Goddard who soon introduced her to the modern history of China which she, until then, knew little about, and the revolution which was under way there. He was soon to become a leftist trade union leader and a member of the Communist Party. Nancy married him, joined the Communist Party and together they help found the New Zealand-China Friendship Society which strongly and vocally advocated friendship between Communist China and New Zealand during the depths of the Cold War. Over 30 years the Goddards and the Security Intelligence Service became well acquainted. All this tended to put Nancy under a bit of pressure among her family, friends and the local Chinese community.

Nancy's vindication came when the NZ Government officially recognised mainland China in 1978 and allowed an Embassy to be established. Since then of course, the NZ Government has been seeking to strengthen its relationship with China whose economy has been doing rather well lately.

While keeping up with her political activities, Nancy found work at the District Court helping young, particularly Maori, people who got into trouble. This and the interest of her children in Maori culture lead her to join in at the Ngati Poneke Marae where, during her involvement over 15 years, she became a kaumatua (elder). One of her sons is now the Maori Education adviser at the Ministry of Education.

Today, the NZ Government having made its peace with her, she continues with the work she has been doing for 50 remarkable years: building support for China in New Zealand, and building on a relationship with the local Maori people: a woman well ahead of her time who just kept working for what she always believed to be right.

8 Chinese Movies at Festival

Pocket previews by Steven Young

This year's 26th Wellington Film Festival includes the following eight Chinese films:

A QUEER STORY, Hong Kong 1996. Directed by Shue Kei, starring Jordon Chan & George Lam. A young gay hairdresser's life with an older gay marriage counsellor.

COMRADES, ALMOST A LOVE STORY (Tian Mi Mi) Hong Kong 1996. Directed by Peter Ho-Sun Chan starring Maggie Cheung. Two mainland immigrants who should be falling in love are committed to others.

EAST PALACE, WEST PALACE (Dong Gong, Xi Gong) China 1996. Directed by Zhang Yuan. Homophobic Beijing cop arrests a gay man in the public toilets next to the Forbidden City and is tempted - seen as representing repressive authority and dissent. Blacklisted in China.

FLOATING LIFE Australia 1996. Directed by Clara Law. Immigrant Chinese family generations in Australia.

GOODBYE SOUTH GOODBYE Nanguo Zaijian. Taiwan/Japan 1996. Directed by Hou Hsiao-hsien. A road movie about gangsters and scams in Taiwan.

HAPPY TOGETHER (Cheun gwong tsa sit) Hong Kong 1997. Directed etc Wong Kar-wai. Two gay Hong Kongers in Argentina in a film where the sex is incidental to a story of loss, regret, love, hate and happiness.

THE KING OF MASKS Bian Lian. China Hong Kong 1996. Family entertainment. A girl sold to a street entertainer proves she is as worthy as a boy to keep up a storytelling tradition in pre-revolutionary China.

RAINCLOUDS OVER WUSHAN (Wushan yunyu) China 1995. The lives of three people expecting things to improve, intersect: a young policeman has to deal with the alleged rape of a hotel clerk by a river signalman - with Prince on the soundtrack!

Look in the official festival fliers for dates and times.