

## Sichuan and Chongqing May 2015

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キーワード：不思議な壺、杜甫の詩、成都と薄熙来事件、蜜蜂

要約：成都と重慶への旅のテーマは、四川省の不思議な壺、杜甫の詩、王立軍と薄熙来、重慶市内の探検、養蜂家に会うことである。イギリスの友人に貰った独特な壺（西漢時代のもの）は羌族博物館で同形のものを見つけた。成都郊外の杜甫草堂博物館に行き杜甫を偲び、成都では薄熙来事件の発端となった王立軍が亡命を求め駆け込んだアメリカ総領事館に立ち寄った。重慶では、郊外に住む養蜂家を訪ねた。彼が飼っているのは、覆面布がなくても扱える中国蜜蜂（日本蜜蜂と同種）である。

This time I visited Chengdu and Chongqing. Here is a map of China which

was on a wall in one of the Hotels. In the middle of the map is Sichuan 四川 and



Chongqing 重庆 Together they have a population about the same as that of Japan.

The various themes of this trip were

1.The mystery pot from Sichuan



2. Poetry - the Du Fu Thatched Cottage 杜甫草堂
3. Politics - the Wang Lijun incident
4. Chongqing University, Shapingba, Ciqikou and exploration of the city
5. Meeting with a beekeeper in Yubei, Xinglong
6. Conclusions

I completed a last make-up class in Toyohashi, translating Haiku into English, on the Thursday afternoon (that was civilized!) ..... and at 5.23 the next morning caught the first train from Nagoya station to the airport. In the afternoon I arrived at Chengdu and headed for Kuan Zhai Xiangzi 宽窄巷子 It is a kind of tourist area built on the site of an old palace. The famous youth hostel there turned out to be derelict, and being rebuilt...but I had to stay there because I had to deliver some books from Kuzuya sensei and I had arranged for them to be collected there. The next day I delivered the books to

Han Qi 's student Di Xiaofei 邸笑飞, English name April, and enjoyed having coffee with her and her son Evan aged 2. She helped me a lot by telephoning to Dai Qifu in Chongqing (I didn't have a phone) and also advised me on museums to look for information relating to the pot. One friend in a big city does indeed make all the difference.

1. It is an interesting pot ..... two spouts, two ears and four eyes ( I thought) ....I had attempted to make some little glass vases in the same style but smaller ,in Yoko Kitta's furnaces at Seto Akazu, and with her help made some vases which we use now in England. A potter friend in Seto Kamishinano said the pot was certainly a fake 偽物. And the archaeologist at the Idojiri Archaeological Museum ( 井戸尻考古館 ) in Nagano ken also said it was a fake. Most close friends in Japan agree it must be a fake.

The pot was given to me by Sandy Gordon Cumming who died in 2004. He was a civilised man, Old Etonian, Kings Scholar there, Classicist and collector of camellias and Chinese pots. He left the collection of pots to somebody else (who sold them) but this one she didn't want because it didn't look very Chinese and so it came to me. Recently in Paris my wife spotted two similar pots in the Cernuschi Museum. There was a description in the catalogue which said that they came from Sichuan.

In Chengdu I went to the Sichuan Museum ( nothing there ) and then walked across the city ( a long walk ) to the Sichuan University Museum 四川大学博物馆 where they had a collection of similar pots.



双耳罐  
 时代：西汉（B.C.206~A.D.23）  
 地点：岷江上游  
**Pottery Jar with Double Ears**  
**Western Han Dynasty**  
**Upper Reaches of Minjiang River**

The next day I took a bus to the Maoxian Qiangzu Bowuguan 茂县羌族博物馆 in the mountains two hours north of Chengdu. They are very wild mountains, and I wasn't able to learn much about the Qiang people while I was there because I couldn't access the Internet on my iPad this time. In the museum, they had some more pots like mine, though whether the Qiang people made them or not I don't know. It was a long time ago. It seems that the eyes derive

from sheep's horns. I originally thought they just might be bee's eyes, which was wishful thinking on my part. Since then at Aidai, Matsuoka Masako sensei - she has a study office opposite mine - has lent me her book about the Qiang people 羌族 or in Japanese チャン族. She knows a lot about them!

The title of the book is 'The Qiang People of Sichuan. Before and after the Wenchuan Earthquake(汶川大地震) of 2008.' by 松岡正子

It is an excellent account of the Qiang people. The book is written in Chinese, Japanese and English and has many photographs all of them interesting. There are 320,000 Qiang people and about 30,000 were killed in the earthquake. They are related to the Tibetans and have their own language and phonetic writing system. They live in fortress villages famous for tall stone towers (diaolou) some 5 or six storeys high, the floors connected by single plank ladders. Everywhere there are white stones. Their religion is a kind of shamanism and they communicate with the mountain gods through the white stones, and also the white stones protect the houses against evil spirits. They continue to dress in the traditional way. Many of the villages are inaccessible. It is very cold in winter. And the people are very poor. These days, those who can, go and work in the city....So actually they are very much a threatened community. There is a section at the end of her book about the earthquake and its aftermath.

But there are no pots like mine in the book. There may have been some in the museum, but they don't seem to be a part of Qiang life these days.

2. I moved to another hostel in Chengdu called THE LOFT in a former printing factory ( a 'cool ' place with nice art work - cool is Shuai 帅 in Chinese) ..... and the following day visited the Dufu Thatched Cottage 杜甫草堂 . It has a beautiful garden ..... lots of bamboo clumps ..... and fine bonsai ..... not too many mosquitoes yet.



I have a good book on Dufu's poetry in Japan. It is called:

A Little Primer of Du Fu by David Hawkes. A Renditions Paperback, first published by Oxford University Press in 1967 later by the Chinese University of Hong Kong in 1990.

This book is a treasure because it contains not only the poetry in Chinese with the translation into English but also a line by line commentary by David Hawkes. I wish all books of Chinese poetry were like this. It is also the best introduction I have read to the T'ang dynasty period. After I finish at Aichi University I would like to spend my time in England studying Du Fu's poetry.

I really liked this bicycle that I found at the back of the garden of the 杜甫草堂 .





3. And on my last day in Chengdu, I visited the American Consulate (outside) which is like a fortress. This is where the chief of police of Chongqing, Wang Lijun 王立军 fled ..... after the murder of the Englishman Neil Heywood by Bo Xilai's 薄熙來 wife Gu Kailai 谷开来 on November 4th, 2011 ..... in Chongqing. (if indeed this is what happened) ...!



Bo Xilai 薄熙來 had been a very successful Mayor of Dalian. He had welcomed foreign investors to the city, and Dalian had prospered. Later he had been Minister of Commerce in Beijing and a member of the Politburo. His last post was as Secretary of the Communist Party's Chongqing branch. He had a lot of style and was considered a strong contender for the succession in 2012 ..... (see below)

4. The next day I went by bullet train to Chongqing. It takes about two hours with the train travelling at just under 200 kph most of the way. Chongqing city has a population of 8 million, and the population of all of Chongqing Metropolitan area is 32 million (mostly living in high density blocks). I based myself near to Chongqing University 重庆大学 in Shapingba 沙坪坝

later in Ciqikou 磁器口. It is a mountainous city with a complex underground and bus system, everybody trying to work it out on their mobile phones as they go. The city is situated at the junction of the Jialing 嘉陵 and Yangtze 长江 rivers, and there is a Three Gorges Museum (not very informative) at Chaotianmen. It was the Kuomintang capital during the war and I visited a park on a mountainside full of Kuomintang prisons 歌乐山烈士陵园. My friend at the university was Dai Qifu 代启福, originally from the Nationalities University in Beijing. He is of Yi nationality and has been researching conditions in the lead and zinc mines in the northern part of Liangshan and his friend (for me a new friend) was a historian called Zhang Hua 张花 who is of Miao nationality and comes from Hunan province. He knew about Staunton and Macartney so I hope he can help me and maybe I can help him in the future.

5. The next day I went to see a beekeeper in the north of Chong Qing in the country. Dai Qifu had found his address on the Internet. I took the underground nearly to the end of the line, then caught a taxi. The taxi driver had a phone. The beekeeper was called Jiang Jinhai 蒋金海 and he lived on the 11 th floor of an old block with no lift. I climbed up to his flat. He was worried about his English or rather my Chinese, so he rang up the City Office for help, and help in the form of a charming couple and a car arrived. Emerald the interpreter had studied in Beijing, and driving the car was Wang Zili who had worked for the police before joining the City Office ( under Wang Lijun

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who was head of the Police force at that time).The beekeeper kept Cerana bees (中鋒 in Chinese 日本蜜蜂 in Japanese .... which

are both Cerana) in the countryside of Xinglong 兴隆 north of Chongqing. It was beautiful countryside.



The last picture shows the grid on the entrance to a hive to stop the queen from escaping. The worker bees can go in and out but the queen is too large. There is some mud blocking a hole on the left to stop her squeasing out there.

He had about 25 home made hives in each farmhouse and he went round them twice a week in a little truck making sure they didn't swarm and taking off honey. He makes all the hives himself, only one storey and sells the honey in the market. I bought a pot of honey from him which turned out to be delicious. I wished I had got more.

While in Chongqing I also went to Nanshan 南山 where the Englishman Neil Heywood was murdered. It involved taking the underground to Nanping 南坪 a suburb across the river from Central Chongqing, then a bus 384 up the mountain. I expected Nanping to be a small place with a bus station, but it is a city of a million people in about 100 tower blocks all new. Actually from the Internet on a friend's phone there are 840,000 people in Nanping .... I wondered how many people live in one tower block?

The mountain behind with a resort on the top was surprisingly high. It was a bit cooler up there, and I guess in summer there is some good hiking, but there didn't seem to be any signs. The hotel was called the Nanshan Lijing Jiari Jiudian 南山丽景假日酒店 but there was a road block at the entrance and I decided that I had gone far enough. Chinese politics is very theatrical. Everybody enjoys a good scandal and this one had a murder thrown in. It seemed like a plot to eliminate one of the contenders for the succession. But

there are scandals in other countries, and the more I read about this one, the less interesting I found it! It was nevertheless the big issue in Chongqing, indeed in all of China that everybody talked about in whispers! But now the world has moved on. Actually my interest was in the astonishing tower blocks in Nanping and the height of the mountain, and going up it in bus number 384.

The following day I took the train back to Chengdu in order to catch my flight back to Nagoya the following day. At the airport I had a close shave because somebody took my bag off the bus by mistake, and I was left with his. But fortunately he realised in time, and after about half-an-hour brought mine back. Nothing vital was in it (there was a bee net unused as the bees had been very quiet .... and some Honey .... but my kit for recharging iPad and camera and phone would have been hard to replace quickly). On the plane next to me was an Australian from Sydney who had been visiting his daughter in Sichuan. She is a vet working for Animal Asia which rescues moon bears 月の和熊 being kept in China for their bile which is used in Chinese medicine .... last year on the way back from 夜叉ヶ池 in Gifu I had seen a moon bear ..... The plane took off an hour late and I only just caught the onward flight to Nagoya. The Chinese girls in Shanghai Pudong were brilliant, opening all the security doors and hurrying about ten of us through ... just in time ... My neighbour on the plane from Shanghai was an Aidai graduate student from Urumqi who had been studying economics at Kurumamichi since April with Prof. Li Chunli ..... it is a small world.

6. Conclusions

It is always very nice to get back safely to Japan after a 'holiday' like this.

\*China is in the middle of a massive social experiment - that is a very journalistic thing to say, but the one child family is beginning to bring quite positive results. I met a student in Chengdu. She and her friend wanted to speak English. Her father was a judge in Shenyang and her mother worked for a gas company. They had just sent her to a language course in Oxford. With two incomes supporting one child, quite a lot is possible. It is why many Chinese students can come to Japan. Countries that cannot control their populations will always have a lot of poor people.

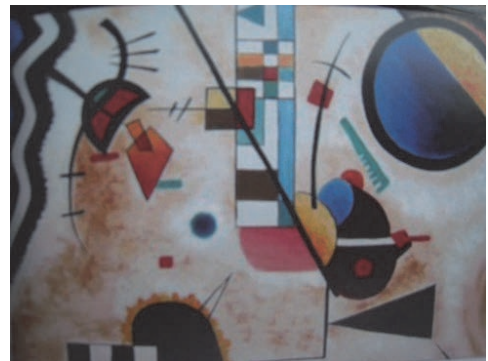
\*I was very impressed by the high density living in the Nanping 南坪 suburb of Chongqing - 100 very high tower blocks on a small piece of land. This, combined with

modern communications (iPhones and tablets etc) and convenient underground stations and fast intercity trains ..... makes for a totally new way of life and it is not all bad! Up in an apartment on the 33rd floor it is quiet and you can lead your own civilised life. Then you can go down in the lift to ground level where there are always lots of people and plenty going on, and you can find your friends without travelling very far.

\*The hotpot 火锅 Chongqing was truly hot. I could hardly breathe. Afterwards the pineapple from Hainan was most welcome. I enjoyed my visit to the Graduate school building in Chongqing University. It was a nice old-fashioned place. And I am very grateful to Dai Qifu for looking after me in that incredible city. I am also grateful to Di Xiaofei for taking care of me in Chengdu, and to my guardian angels in Sasashima and Beijing who make little adventures like this possible,



I took this photograph of a girl painting bamboos in the Baihuatan Park 百花潭公园 in Chengdu.



And this Kandinsky picture comes out of the magazine of the Art Academy in Chengdu. It seems people in China like modern Western Art.