



# LOS ANGELES - GUANGZHOU MONITOR

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## Experiencing the roof of the world

By Katherine Whitman and  
Jeffrey Cheung

A well known travel writer, Pico Iyer, recently wrote, "All of us travel in space in order to travel in mind...but many of the best trips involve what is really a journey in time. We move across centuries when moving across borders". The 19 members of the Mount St. Mary's - Los Angeles Guangzhou Sister City travel study group that visited Tibet in March would wholeheartedly agree with this observation.

The group, led by Katherine Whitman and Jeffrey Cheung, began their 13 day journey in Beijing and Shanghai where words like "new", "dynamic", "fast paced" spring to mind. However immediately after landing at Lhasa's new airport, life became slower quieter and more peaceful. Instantly one is struck by the vastness of the land, the monumental mountains, the paucity of people and the presence of prayer flags everywhere. Traditional Tibetan prayer flags are colorful squares of fabric with Buddhist symbols and sutras printed on them. These are strung together and hung outside temples and homes. As the flags blow in the wind the messages inscribed on them go out to all who see them.

In Tibetan the name Lhasa means the Holy Land. From almost every part of the city the Potala Place is visible. This citadel with its 1,000 rooms was both

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From left: George Totten, Bee Lavery, Marcia Hobbs, Camellia and Jeffrey Cheung at the festival

## First Sister Cities Festival Celebrates Pride and Unity

By Bee Canterbury Laavery

It was a day of fun and food and fabulous entertainment at the first Sister Cities Festival held in the Gardens of the Page Museum, adjacent to the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Sunday May 22, from 12:00 noon until 8:00 p.m.

Los Angeles-Guangzhou Sister City Association sponsored a booth and participated in the "The Salute to Los Angeles" Festival. Guangzhou Municipal Government contributed the introductory materials of Guangzhou and its tourism industry, together with a huge beautifully

designed banner. Organized by Councilman Tom La Bonge, 4th District, Sister City Program President for the City of Los Angeles, the 21 Sister Cities and each country's Consulate General. Theme of the event was "Pride and Unity in Diversity."

People in costumes of various countries mingled with the capacity crowd in a celebration of cultural pride and creativity. The stage featuring musicians and dancers from many different countries and each Consul General or representative from each country was introduced to the multi-cultured

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# Katherine Whitman Awarded Member of 2004

By Jeffrey Cheung

Katherine Whitman, Vice President of LAGSCA was awarded "Member of 2004" at LAGSCA 2005 Annual Banquet for the distinguished contributions she has made to the association. In addition to the award, Katherine received from Los Angeles City Councilman Dennis Zine a Certificate of Appreciation issued by Mayor James Hahn.

As a professor of economics at Mount St. Mary's College, Katherine began her long term commitment to LAGSCA in 1987 when she joined a delegation of educators to Guangzhou sponsored by LAGSCA. In the past two decades, she has traveled to China nearly 50 times, and has been invited by numerous Chinese organizations to give lectures and seminars in many cities. In addition to the education programs, Katherine provides consulting services to Chinese and American companies that have an interest in doing business with each other.

Katherine has contributed tremendously to our Lawrence Liu Scholarship program. To many of our scholars from Guangzhou, Katherine is a dear friend, a great helper and a wonderful host. In the past decade,



Irving Karp (left) and Jeffrey Cheung (right) present the award to Katherine Whitman

she has hosted our Lawrence Liu Scholars at her home on Thanksgiving to give them an opportunity to experience the celebration of a traditional American holiday which has become one the most memorable highlights during their entire stay in the US.

I am proud of having the opportunity to work with Katherine on many of the LAGSCA programs, and I wholeheartedly congratulate her on receiving this award, a well deserved honor.

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the home of the Dalai Lama and the administrative center of a theocratic Tibet. Our intrepid group was delighted to find a small refreshment room after ascending the 13 stories. The view from the roof is breathtaking. The blue of the Tibetan sky is unique and unforgettable.

The weather in March is surprisingly pleasant with midday highs in the 60's, but evenings can go below freezing. Because there is little work to be done in the rural areas in the winter this is a time of pilgrimage to many of the holy places. Most sacred of all is the Jokhang Temple which is located in the center of Lhasa. The square in front of the temple was filled with supplicants prostrating themselves or filing around the temple in a clockwise fashion. Because we were the only western group in Lhasa we were the only ones in the temple at the time designated for foreigners. For Katherine and Jeffrey who visited the temple with the LAGSCA delegation in July 2004, the difference in the experience was overwhelming. To be alone and unhurried made the visit even more meaningful.

All the members of the group came away with a deep impression of the spirituality of the Tibetan people and in the importance their culture has for them. One person observed that although the people were materially poor they seemed so very happy and at ease, especially the children. Although traveling in Tibet is arduous there was a reluctance to leave.

The contrast between Tibet and Guangzhou defies description. We landed at Guangzhou's dramatic new airport and were whisked back into the 21st Century realities of noise, traffic jams and a hectic pace of life.

The Foreign Affairs Office graciously let us borrow Liu Liu (Alice), our 2004 Laurence Liu scholar, for a wonderful day of sightseeing, cultural exchange and a tour of a joint venture motor cycle factory. Old friends from the Foreign Affairs Office and the Guangzhou Public Relations Association joined us for an elegant farewell banquet.

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crowd. Representing LAGSCA, the students of Hope Stars Chinese School performed traditional Chinese dance.

LAGSCA was honored by the attendance of the Chinese Consulate General Representatives, Xu Chaoyou, Deputy Consul General, and Lai Bo, Political and Press Consul who were invited to the center stage and introduced by Councilman LaBonge.

Climax of the day was Board Member Robert Donin holding the winning ticket for two roundtrip tickets to Paris, France, contributed by Air France for the Los Angeles-Bordeaux Sister City. He plans to treat his Mother by taking her with him sometime this fall.

Vice Chairman Irving Karp, President Jeffrey Cheung and his always helpful Camilla, staffed the booth along with board members Frank Zagar, Robert Donin, George Totten (in a beautiful Chinese jacket) Marcia Hobbs and Bee Lavery.

# A Remembrance of Lilia Huiying Li

by George Oakley Totten III

It is with a heavy heart that I respond to the request to announce the passing last November 7th of Lilia Huiying Li, my wife of 38 years and a founding member of LAGSA. In 1981, Lilia and I, together with the now late Mrs. Caroline Ahmanson and the late Lawrence Liu, as well as other founding members of LAGSA, succeeded in establishing sister city relationship with Guangzhou, then still widely referred to as Canton. Having lived in Hong Kong since 1947, Lilia was very helpful, since she knew Cantonese as well as Mandarin. In fact she was asked by the first Consul General to the West Coast, stationed in San Francisco, to interpret his Mandarin speeches into Cantonese, when he visited LA, to the local Chinese, who were mainly Cantonese speaking.

Born in Hunan as the daughter of a Christian pastor, Lilia Li managed to get an education, which she continued in Hong Kong. In 1956 she led a group of Hong Kong businesswomen to China, when the new government held a conference to woo back Chinese businessmen who had left China prior to 1949. Her speech was so outstanding that Mao Zedong himself invited her for a personal meeting. He asked her to report on the new China, relying on her own eyes and not on what others were saying. Thus, she began a most productive career of writing mostly in Chinese hundreds of articles and half dozen books. Later



Lilia and George Totten in Chinese costumes

she became a reporter at the United Nations.

At a US-China Peoples Friendship Association meeting in Chicago in 1975, I met her, and a year later, we were married. She moved to Los Angeles where I was teaching Political Science, specializing on East Asia, at USC. She began teaching there part-time, on the position of women in

China. She also established her own China Seminar, which was conducted mostly in Chinese, promoting US-China friendship and how to reach a peaceful solution to the question of the status of Taiwan. Together we made a number of trips to China, especially to Guangzhou as part of our contribution to the success of the goals of LAGSCA.

## Building of the new Guangzhou Airport Highlight of the LAGSCA New Year party

In celebration of the opening of the new Baiyun International Airport in Guangzhou, the Ralph M. Parsons Company of Pasadena presented an entertaining and educational slide presentation and description of the design and building of the \$2 Billion dollar new airport in Guangzhou, China, at the Los Angeles-Guangzhou Sister City Association Chinese New Year's party. The annual event was held at the Ocean Seafood Restaurant, Sunday, February 20, 2005.



James Singer, VP of Parsons, spoke at LAGSCA banquet

Mr. James Singer, Senior Vice President, Aviation Division Manager, and Mr. Ben Lao, Vice President of Airport Planning, Architecture and Design Management, the Parsons Company returned from Asia especially for the annual Los Angeles Guangzhou Sister City Association 's Twenty-fourth annual Chinese New Year Celebration of the Year of the Rooster.

A highlight of the New Year's party was the winning of the free trip to China, courtesy of Ms. Annie Ye, General Manager of China

Southern Airlines Los Angeles Office, and our long time friends Bernard Clever, Director of Sales and Product Development for North America. The winning raffle ticket was won by La Verne Thorpe of Detroit who was in Los Angeles visiting her mother, Amanda Wash, a member of LAGSCA since its beginning and a Sister Cities International Board Member. This will be the first trip for the Mother and Daughter who will travel together to Guangzhou, Shanghai, Beijing and Xian.

"We are both thrilled to be visiting China for the first time and we are looking forward to meeting old friends in Guangzhou who have visited Los Angeles over the years," Amanda Wash stated in thanking China Southern Airlines and the Guangzhou Sister City Association.

President Jeffrey Cheung gave his annual report on the activities of LAGSCA which included the visit of the Los Angeles delegation to Guangzhou led by Councilman Tom La Bonge in June, 2004, for the opening of the Baiyun Airport.



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*A Remembrance of Caroline L. Ahmanson*



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