

## 1. World

In many respects, the world stage is not so different from any other theatrical stage, were it not for its size and complexity. At least, it may be said that what is prepared through and supported by the activity of the back stage is no less important than what is performed on the front stage, where the limelight gives the action its full glory. So it is for modern popular or important world events. The 2010 Shanghai World Exhibition is no exception. Historians will most probably scrutinize and narrate what kind of various hurdles had to be jumped over before the project started to get off the ground, so to say, until its full realization. Without entering into the discussions held “on the back stage” during these years of preparation, two articles of this section will try to answer some questions. In the first, Wei Chuxiong, from the University of Macau, reflects on the reasons why the city of Shanghai had been chosen to host the first ever World Expo organized by and in China. It is common knowledge to say that it was the result of a century long expectation. But meanwhile the city’s recent history, from the Old Shanghai to the New one, had transformed the place into an ideal site to meet the world. The second article, by Yuki Ooi, of Nazan University, Japan, opens some vistas on the expectation just mentioned. The author narrates with great detail how China participated to the World’s Colombian Exposition of 1893, Chicago: not by an official and Imperial Delegation, but through the private initiative of some Chinese Chicagoans immigrants who wanted to assert their ‘Chinese’ awareness in their new home.

280 words The Editor

## 2. Society

Speaking or writing about the Universal Exhibitions, their history, their evolution and henceforth their categories, it is always tempting to make some comparisons. The gist of them would only be to underline that each new exhibition has always been conceived to be, let us say, always more impressive than their forerunners. The 2010 Shanghai World Expo organizers would have difficulty to resist the temptation. Yet, with a motto such as “Better City, Better Life”, this exposition is treading on some uncharted ground, that concerns not only China but similarly the world at large. Specialists already know that in a few years time, the world population of city dwellers will be greater than that of the rural inhabitants everywhere, and particularly in China. What does that fact entail for the future of the global community? Two articles in this section offer some reflections on that line. Lu Hanlong, from the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences, takes his point of departure from the meaning of the motto, as expressed in Chinese: “City Makes Life Better”, and starts to evaluate the import of such a statement. The question is all the more stringent in contemporary China that economic policies in the development of the country have had difficulty to keep a balance between urban China and rural China. This explains today’s predicament of millions of “peasant workers” dwelling in the cities for employment without having there any legal *hukou* or civil registration. The second article, from a report by the East-West Center in Honolulu, Hawaii (2008) and entitled “The Urban Transformation in Asia: Some Policy Implications”, examines first the challenges of urbanization in Asia as far as strategies and institutions are concerned. A second section would underline the evolving role of civil society in this transformation process.

294 words The Editor

## 3. Arts and Letters

The articles in this issue’s Art and Letters refer to God’s mysterious presence and ways, as reflected in the life and the works of artists. The one by Chen Yaowang narrates the initially tragic but eventually delightful story of 張充仁 Zhang Chongren (1907-1998), today commemorated as a patriotic modern sculptor in a Shanghai museum, but who started life as an orphan and who later achieved international popularity in Hergé’s *Adventures of Tintin*. Hergé (pen-name for artist

George Remi, 1907-1983), established a long-life friendship with the then struggling Chinese art student in Belgium and was so taken by him that he successfully transposed young Zhang's fascinating personality into that of the cartoon character "Tchang" in *The Blue Lotus* episode of Tintin. What is less known is Zhang's master-pupil relation with his childhood mentor, Ma Xiangbo, and it is this new aspect of the story that makes Zhang Chongren's life even more extraordinary. The article by Peter Knott is a meditation on the way good poetry, painting and music may convey the mystery of God. As a Jesuit himself, Knott is responsive to the poetry of the Jesuit Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844-1889), one of the greatest English poets of all time, as well as to that of George Herbert (1593-1633). In painting he reflects on the power of traditional Chinese and Western landscapes to convey a sense of the divine, while music, the most intuitive of the three arts discussed, can capture a sense of the great spiritual currents inside and outside ourselves.

250 words César Guillén Nuñez

#### 4. History and Culture

If there was a time when various traditions and their cultures were in mutual encounter in the capital of the Chinese Empire, historians would probably agree that it was during the Tang dynasty at Chang'an (Xi'an). Trade, commerce and politics based on military might along the branches of the "Silk Road" were not alien to this process, although no such gathering as an 'exhibition' had ever been held among the many foreign dwellers residing in the imperial city. Having as a background these glorious times, this section presents first a study related to the early introduction of the Christian faith in China. Its author, Zong Yiyun, from the Shanghai Library, examines how the Christian theological tenets of the Church of the East (in the West erroneously qualified as Nestorian) of these times have been kept all along the Song and Yuan dynasties. To testify for these tenets is, of course, the Xi'an Fu Stele, erected in 781, buried under persecution around 845 but rediscovered later between 1623 and 1625, and studied then by some Jesuit missionaries. On this line of Christian adaptation to Chinese traditional values, the second article by Zhao Jianmin, from the Beijing Institute for the Study of Christianity and Culture, presents what he calls a "faith paradigm shift in the transforming Chinese society". To answer present ethical needs, the author suggests a revival based on the central and traditional value of "loyal piety".

236 words The Editor

#### 5. Thought and Humanism

World festive events, nowadays globally broadcast everywhere in the world, are commonly better known for their entertaining value than for anything else. Occasionally, it also happens that the entertainment has been mixed with some unforeseen happy or dramatic circumstances. The 2010 World Exhibition, currently held in Shanghai, will not in this regard be an exception, at least for the millions of visitors expected to be welcomed on its premises. Besides, such a huge entertaining enterprise will certainly not be deprived, from now on and later, of various evaluations, be they on the economic, social or political level, not to speak of the image that the event is intended to give to China in the world. Without picking up again the Exhibition's motto as a lead, this section nevertheless offers two kind of thoughts related to some ethical values that would enhance the specificity of the 2010 World Expo. In the first, Chen Xinhan, from Shanghai University, shares his views on what he calls the "Volunteer's Spirit" that he has noticed in so many persons of the staff, young and adult, whose presence makes the visit of the pavilions such a pleasant, though long, 'promenade'. And speaking of these many pavilions, of various kinds and importance, Li Tiangang, from Fudan University, suggests in the second article, what he presents like a world 'confluence' in Shanghai: would the present international community and China through the 2010 Universal Exhibition grow deeper in mutual appreciation and understanding?

243 words The Editor

## 6. Debates and Features

In the midst of the events that, week after week, make headlines on the global stage, some leave lingering questions that claim for better understanding or quicker solutions. This quarterly journal considers important to offer in this section reflections that could supplement in this regard the mass of information received by other and more frequent means. Take for instance the recent media “tsunami” related to a number of Catholic misbehaving clerics and the silence of the relevant authorities that has surrounded them for so long. On the contrary, in an other corner of the world, consider the positive evolution of the tension in the Taiwan straits that has for half a century remained a stumbling block for the advancement of peace in the region. Their influence is not of the same nature, yet they deserve understanding and appropriate proceeding for a solution to be implemented. As to the first debate, Bernard Doering, from the University of Notre Dame, Indiana, presents a useful analysis made, years ago, by the renown Catholic philosopher and political thinker Jacques Maritain (1882–1973), about the distinction he sees to be done between the “Person” of the Church and its “Personnel”. “Concern for the truth and careful attention to the sacred mystery of the Church make it necessary for us to speak bluntly, ignoring the veils of modest reverence which traditional good form required that we draw over the mistakes and the errors” of Churchmen [...]”, wrote Maritain. — As far as the tension in the Taiwan straits is concerned, He Xi, a free lance writer, proposes to place in perspective the recent past of the issue and what the present promising evolution could generate in the future.

281 words The Editor