

Read the first issue of the  
Alumni Newsletter for  
Rhodes China!

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## Rhodes China Alumni Newsletter



Dear Friends of the Rhodes Trust,

This is the first issue of the Alumni Newsletter for Rhodes China. The newsletter will be published once or twice a year, providing updates about Scholars from the China constituency and about alumni events happening in China. Its central aim is to strengthen and better connect the Rhodes community in China. Please reach out to us - we can't wait to hear from you!

Sent out by the Rhodes Trust on behalf of Rhodes China Alumni.



### **Section I: Greetings**

#### **A Word from the Warden**

I am delighted to contribute to this historic publication, the inaugural alumni newsletter for the Chinese

Rhodes Scholar community. Many thanks to Chief Editor Naying Ren (China & Linacre, 2016) and to all our contributors.

The launch of the Rhodes Scholarships in China in 2016 was an important landmark on our journey, as the world's oldest international graduate fellowship, to becoming a truly global scholarship. All of us at the Rhodes Trust are deeply grateful to the wonderful people who made this possible: our generous donors and friends, National Secretaries, the Director of the Rhodes Scholarships in China, and our selection committee members.

To all of our current and alumni Chinese Rhodes Scholars: you have already made your mark in just four short years. You have embraced the Oxford experience, excelled academically, and contributed to the vibrancy of the Rhodes experience, launching new traditions like Spring Festival, organising Scholar trips to China, and much more. You have also supported one another through good times and challenging times, building a warm and loving community.

Thank you for being wonderful role models for the generations of Chinese Rhodes Scholars who will follow in your footsteps. I look forward to watching your alumni community grow!

Warmly,

Dr. Elizabeth Kiss  
Warden of Rhodes House

## **Section II: News and Updates**

### **The Inaugural Rhodes China Alumni Event and Sailing Dinner on June 6, 2020**

The Inaugural Rhodes China Alumni Event and Sailing Dinner was held on June 6, 2020 at Canada House, Beijing with the support of Rhodes Trustee Emeritus Dominic Barton (British Columbia & Brasenose 1984), the National Secretaries of the Rhodes Scholarships for China, Dr. Diana Fu (Manitoba & Linacre 2006) and Mark Jia (New Jersey & Merton 2011), and Naying Ren (China & Linacre 2016). Fourteen attendees including Rhodes Scholars and Friends gathered for this special

occasion despite the pandemic. Warden Elizabeth and the National Secretaries Diana and Mark sent videos to congratulate us on the success of the event and bid the Scholars-Elect an early farewell. During dinner, memories of Oxford and experience regarding studying in Oxford were shared, along with discussions around the current COVID-19 pandemic and its impact. Scholars-Elect took the chance to ask about life in Oxford, and Rhodes Scholars and Friends shared their views on the future of the Rhodes Scholarship in China.



### **Chinese Scholar Fireside Chat on May 14, 2020**

Four Chinese Rhodes Scholars, Naying Ren (China & Linacre 2016), Chunying Zhang (China & Lady Margaret Hall 2016), Xilin Jiang (China & University 2017) and Yuhan Li (China & Magdalen 2018) shared their personal experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic at this fireside chat event facilitated by Serena Dai (Hong Kong & St. Catherine's 2016). Joined by Scholar Alumni and Current Scholars located all over the world, these Scholars shared their experiences from different perspectives: Naying as an NGO worker and activist, Chunying as a journalist, Xilin as a member of the data modeling team for the Chinese CDC, and Yuhan as an MPhil student studying the wildlife trade in China. The audience raised many questions worth lengthy discussion, and the Chinese Scholars shared their observations and thoughts on how China and the rest of the world was affected by the COVID-19 pandemic – from government policy, NGO response, and community action to media reporting during a crisis and how different people viewed wildlife consumption and trade before and after COVID-19.

### **Chinese Scholar Zoom Chat on April 12, 2020**

Twenty-five Chinese Scholars located in different places all over the world got together on Zoom to check in with each other and share their thoughts and expertise on COVID-19's impact on today's world. This was the first time alumni, Current Scholars, and Scholars Elect "met" outside of Oxford and chatted in Chinese about how they were affected by COVID-19, and what their thoughts were on the current situation. Scholars from a STEM background shared their knowledge about COVID-19 and infectious disease while Scholars who specialized in social sciences led discussions about the impact of COVID-19 on citizen-government relationships and the balance between fighting COVID-19 and protecting citizen rights. In addition, Scholars with a law background shared their views regarding legal discussions around COVID-19, and topics like the responsibility of the media and NGOs were shared.

## Section III: Scholar Updates

### 1. General Updates

#### Graduations:

- Yali Peng (China & Linacre 2019) graduated from the MSc in Criminology.
- Jackson Zhao (China & Green Templeton 2019) will graduate from the MSc in Environmental Change and Management.
- Zixuan Fu (China & Lady Margaret Hall 2019) will graduate from the MSc in Political Theory Research.
- Yan Chen (China & St. John's 2019) will graduate from the MSt in Comparative Literature and Critical Translation.

#### Going Down:

- Xiao Mao (China & Brasenose 2018) and Yuhan Li (China & Magdalen 2018) attended the virtual Going Down Dinner this year.

#### Moving:

- Yifan Hou (China & St. Hilda's 2018) moved from Oxford, UK to Shenzhen, China.
- Thomas Qitong Cao (China & Balliol 2018) moved

from Oxford, UK to Palo Alto, California, USA.

- Diana Fu (National Co-Secretary) was on sabbatical leave at Sciences Po, Paris. She enjoyed learning about social movements in France and eating escargots.
- Mark Jia (National Co-Secretary) just completed a clerkship on the U.S. Supreme Court. He is happily (and temporarily) unemployed.

## 2. Latest Scholar Achievements

### New Publications

- Ni Xu (China & Brasenose 2017) published an article at *CNS Drugs* as the corresponding author
- Xu, N., Huggon, B., & Saunders, K. E. (2020). *Cognitive impairment in patients with bipolar disorder: impact of pharmacological treatment*. *CNS drugs*, 1-18.
- Xiao Mao (China & Brasenose 2018) published two articles in the *Chinese Journal of International Law*:
  - X. Mao, 'Letter to the Journal: Self-Defence and Attribution of Armed Attacks in the Context of Anti-Terrorism' (2020) *Chinese Journal of International Law*
  - X. Mao, 'The Function of Amicus Curiae Participation by Legal Scholars: The Al-Bashir Appeal Case at the International Criminal Court as an Illustration ' (2019) *Chinese Journal of International Law*
- Yuhan Li (China & Magdalen 2018) wrote several blog posts analysing [wildlife trade policy in China](#) and its implications for [zoonotic diseases](#), and was cited by [the Guardian](#). She is also leading a UNEP-WCMC research project, exploring public attitudes towards wildlife consumption in China, DRC, Gabon, ROC and UK, and delivering effective pathways to successful zoonotic risk reduction and wildlife conservation.

### New Awards

- Thomas Qitong Cao (China & Balliol 2018) began his PhD in Political Economics at Stanford's Graduate School of Business, where he received the Jaedicke Merit Award for academic accomplishments.
- Zixuan Fu (China & Lady Margaret Hall 2019) and

her team won the Most Innovative Solution at the Policy Hackathon Oxford, World Economic Forum Global Shapers (22nd - 25th May, 2020). She led a policy proposal on COVID-19-related homelessness issues with the Oxford City Council.

- Yan Chen (China & St. John's 2019) was awarded a 2019-20 [Tilted Axis Mentorship](#) for an Emerging Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic Literary Translator by the National Centre for Writing in Norwich, UK. She is working on translations of contemporary Chinese fiction into English under the tutelage of esteemed translator Jeremy Tiang.

### **New Jobs and Promotions**

- Chenzhuo Gong (China & Linacre 2016) was promoted to senior business analyst at Baidu's Smart Living Group.
- Chunying Zhang (China & Lady Margaret Hall 2016) joined Bloomberg News, Global Business Team, covering China auto market from Shanghai.
- Naying Ren (China & Linacre 2016) was promoted to Director of Project Development at the Beijing LGBT Center.
- Yuxuan Chen (China & Queen's 2017) works as a research assistant at the Enterprise Research Institute, Development Research Center of the State Council (DRC).
- Yifan Hou (China & St. Hilda's 2018) assumed a professorship at Shenzhen University. She is the youngest-ever Professor in Shenzhen University's history.

### **Fighting the World's Fight in the Age of COVID-19**

- Chinese scholars have been actively engaged in meeting challenges posed by COVID-19. For what they have been doing, please check out the article in Chinese [here](#).
- [Naying Ren](#), [Xilin Jiang](#) and [Jackson Zhao](#) were featured in Rhodes House's #PowerofCommunity social media campaign on Rhodes Scholar responses to COVID-19.

### **3. Volunteering for Rhodes China**

Many Scholars have volunteered for Rhodes China. We want to highlight two new efforts this year:

### **The Publicity & Outreach Team 2020**

The 2020 Publicity & Outreach Team was formed in May 2020, led by Yan Chen (China & St. John's 2019) with team members including Yuhan Li (China & Magdalen 2018), Jackson Zhao (China & Green Templeton 2019), Yan Yan (China & Brasenose 2020), and Xiaorui Zhou (China & Pembroke 2020). The Publicity & Outreach Team aims to ensure that the Rhodes Scholarships reaches a broader and more diverse pool of prospective applicants, especially those from less represented universities and backgrounds, through publishing high-quality Chinese-language content on Rhodes China's official social media channels on WeChat and Weibo.

### **The Alumni Team 2020**

To build a stronger alumni community for Rhodes China, since April, Naying Ren (China & Linacre 2016) has volunteered in organizing alumni events, including the Chinese Scholar Zoom Chat and the Inaugural Rhodes China Alumni Event and Sailing Dinner. Since June, Naying has led the Alumni Newsletter team in editing and publishing the first issue of our Alumni Newsletter. For details about the newsletter team, see Acknowledgements.

**Please reach out to us if you want to join either team as a volunteer!**



### **4. Alumni Interview Project**

The Alumni Interview Project, co-organized by the Publicity & Outreach Team and the Alumni Team, seeks to connect scholars across generations through

interviewing alumni about their time at Oxford and reflections and experiences after leaving Oxford.

The Alumni Interview Project will be published as a series. Please follow the Rhodes China WeChat for upcoming installments.

We recently published the two interviews:

In early July, Xiaorui Zhou (China & Pembroke 2020) interviewed senior Rhodes Scholar, Michael Szonyi (Ontario & Merton 1990), Director of the Fairbank Center for Chinese Studies and Frank Wenhsiung Wu Memorial Professor of Chinese History at Harvard University, social historian of late imperial and modern China. To read the interview in Chinese on the Rhodes China WeChat, see [here](#). Or read the blog in English on the [Rhodes Scholar Blog!](#)

On June 27, Yifan Hou (China & St. Hilda's 2018) had a conversation with Jackson Zhao (China & Green Templeton 2019). As a world-renowned chess grandmaster, Yifan served as a commentator for multiple international competitions in 2019 and 2020. She recently joined Shenzhen University as the youngest Professor in the University's [history](#). To read the interview in Chinese on the Rhodes China WeChat, see [here](#).

## 5. Report from Current Scholars

Report from Jackson Zhao (China & Green Templeton 2019):

The last year has marked a U-shape experience for Current Scholars. The first half is uplifting. From last September to late February, the new 2019 Chinese Scholars were warmly welcomed by the lovely Rhodes community. The academic year started with a constituency dinner hosted by Xilin Jiang (China & University 2017), who awed everyone present with his fabulous cooking skills. Many Chinese Scholars have contributed towards the fight against the pandemic in their own ways and were featured in Rhodes House's [Global Map of Scholars Working on COVID-19](#).

Collectively, Chinese Scholars donated a shipment of face masks to Rhodes House in March for the most

vulnerable members of the community and organised an online webinar in April to share the situation and lived experiences in China during the pandemic with members of the global scholar community. We hope that life will gradually go back to normal soon in the future, when current and new scholars will be able to gather at Oxford!

## **6. Introduction of 2020 Scholars-Elect**

### **Jun Gao**

Jun Gao recently graduated from the Global Environment Program at Tsinghua University and won the Outstanding Graduate Award of Beijing. She was a visiting student at Oxford as one of ten 2018 Yinghua Scholars. Dedicated to pursuing a career as an environmental researcher and advocate in China, she has conducted research at top universities, the governmental agency and NGOs, presented at the UNFCCC COP24, cooperated with UNICEF to tackle SDGs and built arsenic-reduction facilities for rural communities. She is also an accomplished rhythmic gymnast. She hopes to combine her knowledge of environmental science and economics to better promote sustainable development.

### **Yan (Ryan) Yan**

Yan Yan recently graduated from Nanjing University with a BSc in Applied Psychology. She was a visiting student in experimental psychology at Oxford. Outside of academics, Yan has contributed to LGBTQ equality and taught underprivileged adolescents. She also edited a campus literature magazine and served as a translator and interpreter. Yan is interested in the neuroscience of mood and anxiety disorders and hopes to become a clinical psychologist dedicated to psychopathology research that is socially informative.

### **Xiaorui Zhou**

Xiaorui Zhou recently graduated with highest honours from a Dual BA Programme between the National University of Singapore and Sciences Po. She received the NTUC gold medal for top student in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences and the Sung Kah Kay Memorial Prize for best exemplifying scholarship in the NUS University Scholars' Programme. Her thesis, 'Homebound Women', received the Wong Lin Ken Memorial Prize for best thesis. This is her second year

running Project Initium, a free humanities camp she co-founded in 2019 for high school graduates from rural counties in the Southwest. She aspires to be a scholar and writer of modern China, with much to tell the world.

### **Yuan Zhang**

Yuan Zhang received a Bachelor's degree in Architecture and a Master's degree in Global Affairs from Tsinghua University. She studied Chinese classical space, gardens, and landscape for her undergraduate and graduate capstone projects, both of which received awards for top 1% theses at Tsinghua. Yuan also led several design projects focused on improving living conditions of transient populations. Yuan's ambition is to become an interdisciplinary scholar in architecture and anthropology. She will read the MPhil in Social Anthropology at Oxford.

## **Section IV: Publicity and Outreach**

### **The Publicity & Outreach Team for Rhodes China 2020 Highlights:**

- On June 8, National Co-Secretary Professor Diana Fu hosted an [online webinar](#) via the University of Toronto for prospect applicants worldwide, with 2019 Scholar Yan Chen as a panelist. Over 200 students across the world tuned in. For recap, read [here](#) or watch [here](#).
- Rhodes China WeChat account received 31,144 reads and attracted 570 more followers from late May to mid July. The total number of followers passed 10,000 – a landmark achievement.
- Rhodes China Weibo has established partnerships the University of Oxford's official account and Zhishi Fenzi. The number of Weibo followers increased by 400 over the past month.
- The team has published eight articles since late May, including [the application call](#), [global scholars' response to Covid-19](#), Warden Kiss's [statement](#) on the Black Lives Matter movement, a [recap](#) of National Co-Secretary Dr. Diana Fu's online info session, in-depth interviews with [Michael Szonyi](#) and [Yifan Hou](#), and [the upcoming Asian Rhodes Scholars webinar](#).
- The team has reached out to 26 universities to reach underrepresented regions and universities in

China. 9 of them have published the Rhodes Scholarship application call on their respective websites or social media platforms.

## Section V: Resources

### Upcoming Rhodes House Event

From Asia to Oxford, then the World: Rhodes Scholars Making a Difference during COVID-19 and Beyond.

Thursday 23 July 2020, 12:00 British Standard Time  
/19:00 China Standard Time

### Register here

A Chinese-language invitation to the webinar can be found [here](#). This year's applications for the Rhodes Scholarships for China will close at 23:59 on 12 October, 2020. For a Chinese-language version of the Application Call on WeChat, see [here](#). Please share both links widely with any potential applicants for the Scholarships you might know!

### Upcoming Rhodes China Events

BLM, Postcolonialism and the Invisibility of the Asian

Online Event, Closed Group Discussion for Chinese Scholars

Sunday, August 9, 8-10 pm China Standard Time

### Register Here

### Jobs and Opportunities

Please contact us if you have any jobs or other opportunities that you want to share with the Rhodes China community, or if you want to provide mentorship to Scholars from the Chinese constituency.



## Contact Us

If you want to get in touch and get involved, please contact:

Editor-in-Chief, Naying Ren [rennaying@gmail.com](mailto:rennaying@gmail.com).

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