Welcome from William Kirby,  
New Director of the Fairbank Center

China is perhaps the most dynamically changing place on earth. Harvard’s Fairbank Center is dedicated to the study of China in all its dimensions: the literature, art, and history of a great and evolving civilization as well as the society, politics, and popular culture of a new and rising country. China’s historical and contemporary geography, whether studied by maps or satellites, or viewed from Beijing, Taipei, and Lhasa; China’s private wealth and its public health; its economy and its environment.

One center cannot of course do all of this, but it can bring together those who can. Harvard is fortunate to have faculty across the humanities, social sciences, and sciences who study China, joined by colleagues in our schools of Law, Government, Medicine, Public Health, Design, Divinity, and Business. We welcome, and gain strength from, colleagues in colleges and universities from Boston to Berkeley. And we have scholarly friends and partners around the world: from Beijing, Nanjing, Shanghai, and Guangzhou; to Taipei, Hong Kong, Tokyo, and Seoul; to Berlin, London, Lund, and Moscow.

We sponsor multiple ongoing workshops, conferences, and meetings that are open to students, faculty, and the broader public. Our 11 regular workshops this year include those that study gender, religion, business, governance, and the humanities, broadly conceived. Our recently arrived colleague, Professor Henrietta Harrison, has organized a new workshop on Twentieth Century China. The Director’s Seminar, which I have the honor to lead, will feature the work of Harvard faculty colleagues across our departments and disciplines.

Special events this autumn include a conference on rural-urban cleavages in China, organized by Professor Martin Whyte (October 6–8); the annual Neuhauser Memorial Lecture, with Ambassador Morton Abramowitz (October 26); a conference on poverty alleviation efforts in Tibet, convened by Dr. Arthur Holcombe (December 9); and what promises to be an extraordinary, international conference commemorating the ninetieth birthday of the late Professor Benjamin Schwartz, a scholar of great breadth, depth, and humanity. The Benjamin Schwartz conference will take place at East China Normal University in Shanghai (December 16–18), and is organized by Professors Zhu Zhenghui, Xu Jilin, Elizabeth Perry, and Merle Goldman. For further information on these meetings, see the subsequent pages of this Newsletter and subscribe to the online Asia Bulletin (www.fas.harvard.edu/~asiactr/events.html).

In this as in past years, we welcome an outstanding cadre of postdoctoral fellows, visiting scholars, and visiting fellows who will enliven our sessions and will have the opportunity to present their own work over the course of the year. Full information about these scholars is contained in the special booklet titled Postdoctoral Fellows and Visiting Scholars, 2006-2007, which can be found on the Center’s website (www.fas.harvard.edu/~fairbank) or in our front office, room S138 of the CGIS South Building.

Let me invite you to two gatherings for all students, faculty, and affiliates: the Annual Fall Reception on Thursday, October 19, at 5 pm, and the Asia Center Holiday Party on Monday, December 11 at 5 pm. The more important invitation, however is this: to come, early and often, to our seminars at 1730 Cambridge Street, and to join your fellow students, colleagues, and friends in learning about China.

William C. Kirby  
Geisinger Professor of History and Director
Welcome to Henrietta Harrison

A new faculty member who has an office at the Fairbank Center is Henrietta Harrison, recently named professor of history. Actually, Henrietta is not totally new to Harvard, because she took her MA here, RSEA 1992, and she was a visiting professor in the history department in 2004–2005. She received her D. Phil from St. Anthony’s College of the University of Oxford in 1996, and has been teaching at the University of Leeds. She has published three books; the most recent is The Man Awakened from Dreams: One Man’s Life in a North China Village, 1857–1942 (Stanford University Press, 2004). The book draws upon the diaries of a north China scholar increasingly marginalized by the great changes taking place with the dawning of the 20th century. The Harvard Gazette described the book in this way: “This gritty vignette of a downwardly mobile Confucian literatus, estranged from the society of his day, offers a window on two great 20th century Chinese themes: the decline of the countryside in the shadow of urbanization, and the demise of Confucianism concomitant with the rise of ‘modern’ ideas.”

If you ask what she’s doing now, she’ll tell you about her fourth book, which will be a study of Catholic villages in Shanxi from the 18th century to the present. It will describe rural religious activities, and will try to determine the long-term impact of Western missionaries on the Chinese countryside. Beginning this semester, she is also co-organizing, along with Rebecca Nedostup of Boston College, a new seminar series entitled Twentieth Century China. It will cover China and Taiwan in the late Qing, Republican, and Maoist periods. The organizers plan to invite speakers who take a wide range of differing approaches.

The June 2006 issue of the widely read Nanfang zhoumo (Southern Weekend) published an article in Chinese titled “Only The Man Who Deeply Understands History and Can Predict the Future, Ma Ruode’ (this is Rod’s Chinese name). The article was by Rod’s former protege Ding Xueliang, now a professor at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology. In the article, Ding recalls how Rod helped him get to Harvard in the mid-1980s, and the many intellectual insights he received. In gratitude, Ding dedicated his 2004 book of memoirs to Rod. Ding mentions that some forecasts about China’s future economic growth that Rod published in The Economist in 1980, have now come true. The article is illustrated with a cartoon (we still haven’t figured out all of the symbolism) which is reproduced here. It should be emphasized that this caricature does not resemble Rod, except it is true that he can often be found sitting in a chair and reading a book titled Zhongguo (China), as in this cartoon.
New Class of Fairbank Center Postdoctoral Fellows, Visiting Scholars, and Visiting Fellows

This year the Center issued a special booklet introducing all of the scholars in the class of 2006–2007 and describing their research interests. The booklet is available at the Center’s office, room S138, in CGIS South Building, and the information is also available on the Center’s web site.

Briefly, this year’s postdoctoral fellows are:

Lee Haiyan, An Wang Post-doctoral Fellow, haiyan.lee@colorado.edu
Liu Yu, An Wang Post-doctoral Fellow, yl187@columbia.edu
Eugenio Menegon, An Wang Post-doctoral Fellow, emenegon@bu.edu
Liu Hwa-jen, Taiwan Studies Post-doctoral Fellow, hj_liu@berkeley.edu
He Zhaozhi, Harvard-Yenching Library Postdoctoral Fellow, zhaohuizhe@pku.edu.cn
M. Taylor Fravel, Chinese International Relations Postdoctoral Fellow, fravel@mit.edu

They are joined by seven visiting scholars /fellows:

Chou Chuing Prudence, National Cheng-Chi University, iaezpc@nccu.edu.tw
Prem Shankar Jha, premjha@touchtelindia.net
Lee Nam Ju, Sungkonghoe University, njlee7@hotmail.com

To obtain a booklet by mail, interested parties may contact the Center. To view the information online, visit www.fas.harvard.edu/~fairbank/fellowships/postdocs_new.html (for postdocs) or www.fas.harvard.edu/~fairbank/affiliation/visiting_scholars_new.html (for visiting scholars and fellows).

New Shum Fellows Announced

Two awards were made for the Desmond and Whitney Shum Fellowship. This program was begun 2005, and awards for the second year were made in the spring of 2006. The winners receive $20,000 each to be used to fund a year of research in China. The two winners for the 2006–2007 academic year are Liu Jundai and Lawrence Zhang.

Liu Jundai is a PhD candidate in the field of sociology, working with her advisor Martin Whyte. The topic of her research is “State in the Market Transition and its Social Reaction: Land Acquisition in Contemporary Rural China.” She will be investigating how the state has been acquiring land and the reactions of those involved in land transfer, from rural peasants to the entrepreneurs. Sometimes one benefits and one is angry, but sometimes both benefit. She will affiliate with the Center for Studies on Social Conflicts, Institute of Rural Development, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, and will work with the noted professor Yu Jianrong.

Lawrence Zhang is a PhD candidate and a student of Philip Kuhn. The topic of his work is “Redefining Worth: Sale of Government Offices in Qing China.” His research is related to the idea that by selling degrees, the Qing was showing that it could respond to market conditions in that the merchants who bought the degrees were more able to participate in the economic restructuring going on at that time than were the scholars who had been trained under the classical curriculum. Lawrence will affiliate with the First Historical Archives in Beijing, and will travel to other locations as well.
Rethinking the Rural-Urban Cleavage in Contemporary China

Organized by Professor Martin Whyte, this conference will be held on 6, 7, and 8 October 2006 in the Belfer Case Study Room (room S020) in the CGIS South Building at 1730 Cambridge Street. The conference is jointly sponsored by the American Council of Learned Societies with the Chiang Ching-kuo Foundation and by the Fairbank Center, the Asia Center, and the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs at Harvard University.

The conventional view about inequality trends in contemporary China is that during the Mao era, Chinese socialism was highly egalitarian, but that the economic reforms launched by Deng Xiaoping in 1978 have produced steadily increasing social inequality. However, China’s most extreme social cleavage, between rural and urban residents, does not fit this conventional scenario. During China’s socialist period, a distinctive set of institutions (particularly the hukou system of household registration and migration restrictions and the strong financial preferences granted to urban work units) effectively bound China’s rural residents to the soil, creating something akin to socialist serfdom, while the rural-urban gap in incomes, access to opportunities, customs, and ways of life widened sharply. Reform-era changes have loosened the restrictions on the social and geographical mobility of Chinese villagers, creating tens of millions of “floating population” migrants. However, in many respects the rural-urban gap in China remains huge compared to other societies, and in some respects rural-urban inequality and discrimination against rural residents have increased.

“Rethinking the Rural-Urban Cleavage in Contemporary China” is dedicated to exploring multiple puzzles regarding China’s rural-urban cleavage. For example: What were the origins of the sharp rural-urban cleavage that developed in China during the Mao era? Why have market reforms and the loosening of migration restrictions not done more to close the rural-urban status gap? How do urban residents, urban migrants, and rural residents experience and deal with the structures of inequality and discrimination in which they live? How does China’s contemporary rural-urban cleavage look in comparative perspective? What is the nature of the debate within China in recent years on the rights and treatment of migrants and rural residents? What experiments are underway to try to abolish the status barriers between rural and urban residents, and how effective have those experiments been? What are the prospects that contemporary China’s rural-urban caste-like cleavage can eventually be eliminated? An international group of top researchers on these issues will assemble at the Fairbank Center to explore these questions.
Change in the Tibet Autonomous Region: Progress and Emerging Issues from an Insider Perspective

This conference will be held on Saturday 9 December 2006 in room S050 of CGIS South Building at 1730 Cambridge Street. The conference is being organized by Arthur Holcombe, president of the Tibet Poverty Alleviation Fund. Funding for the conference is coming from the Fairbank Center, the Harvard University Asia Center, and the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs, and the American Council of Learned Societies.

The conference will focus on Tibetan macroeconomic and sectoral policies, programs, and issues. For example, panels will be held on recent demographic and socioeconomic trends; the significance for urban and rural development of recent macroeconomic trends; recent socioeconomic trends at the village level; the current situation in rural agriculture and animal husbandry; the situation regarding education, nutrition and hygiene; and environmental protection. The conference will help to form a view of what daily life is like for the majority of Tibetans. It will also assess the quality and amount of aid that Tibet is receiving from various sources. As with all Fairbank Center events, this conference is free and open to the public.

International Conference to Commemorate the Late Benjamin Schwartz’s Ninetieth Birthday

The conference will be held 16 to 18 December 2006 at East China Normal University in Shanghai. The principal organizers on the China side are Zhu Zhenghui and Xu Jilin. On the Harvard side they are Elizabeth Perry and Merle Goldman. The conference is supported in part by the Fairbank Center.

Benjamin Schwartz (1916–1999) was a beloved member of the Fairbank Center from 1955 until his death. He became a grandfather figure to many younger scholars and visiting academics because of his thoughtful wisdom and joy in engaging in scholarly debates with graduate students and fellow faculty members. He was an intellectual historian and a philosopher of wide learning, drawing easily on examples from European or Asian sources to illustrate his points. He was regularly found at the “Fairbank Center table” in the cafeteria of Coolidge Hall, both stimulating and guiding the conversation of those present. Translations of his writings in Chinese, Japanese, and Korean have helped Asian scholars appreciate his learned observations. Both the organizers of the conference on the Chinese side spent time visiting Harvard and conducting research here. Many Harvard faculty members who knew Schwartz well will attend the conference.

Abramowitz to Speak at Annual Neuhauser Lecture

This year’s speaker at the 15th Annual Charles Neuhauser Memorial Lecture will be Ambassador Morton Abramowitz. Based on his lifetime of high-level diplomatic experience, Abramowitz will speak on The Asias I Have Known: Changing Policy Perspectives. The talk will be held on Thursday 26 October 2006 in the Belfer Case Study Room (S020) of CGIS South Building at 1730 Cambridge Street. The talk will begin at 4 pm, when the speaker will be introduced by William Kirby, director of the Fairbank Center. The talk will be followed by a reception just outside the lecture hall, to which all audience members are invited.


He is author, co-author, or editor of seven books. His earliest, with Richard Moorsteen, is Remaking China Policy (Harvard University Press, 1971). His most recent, co-authored with Stephen Bosworth, is Chasing the Sun: Rethinking East Asian Policy (The Century Foundation, 2006). The book’s publisher describes it by saying: “Even as East Asian leaders often tell Americans they want a continued US presence for security purposes, they also fear an American effort to ‘contain’ China … creating dangerous tensions that ultimately would threaten the region’s golden goose—China’s powerful economic growth engine. Others, like some Japanese, would welcome a conclusion by the United States that a powerful China ultimately threatens American interests. The book answers how, in light of East Asia’s growing power and influence, the United States can retain influence commensurate with its interests. The transformation of the region requires us to ask whether some longstanding perspectives are still relevant, as well as what changes are needed in American policy.”

Ambassador Morton Abramowitz