

# 外国人

# 看

XIAMEN—IN THE VIEWS  
OF FOREIGNERS

# 厦门

陈 奔 编译

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大  
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# 外国人看厦门

陈奔 编译

厦门大学出版社

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## 序

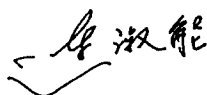
改革开放 20 年,中国社会的政治、经济、文化乃至价值观念发生了巨大变化。作为首批四大经济特区之一的厦门,在对外交流、招商引资和两个文明建设中更是勇当前锋,成绩斐然。如今,日新月异的厦门不仅为海内外华人所瞩目,也让生活、工作在厦门的外国人惊叹不已。一年一度的中国投资贸易洽谈会,融现代建筑与古朴风格为一体的美丽市容以及厦门人民自强不息,敢为天下先的前卫意识极大地提高了厦门在全国乃至全世界的知名度。为了让厦门更快地走向世界,也为了让世界更多地了解厦门,我院青年教师陈奔特编译《外国人看厦门》一书,希望通过外国人的眼光和思维方式透视改革开放给中国尤其是厦门带来的巨大的变化。

该书汇集了 20 余位生活在厦门的外国人的精心佳作。作者分别来自美、英、法、加、新、菲等十余个国家,涉及教师、外交家、商人、专家及留学生等多种行业。全书采用英汉对照形式,立意新颖、语言规范,具有时代性、代表性、趣味性和可思性。字里行间无不蕴含着作者对中国改革开放巨大成就的高度赞扬和对中国人民的深厚情感。赞美之余,他们也对厦门今后的发展提出了客观、中肯的意见和建议。作为作客厦门的外国人,这种精神实在难能可贵。

“他山之石,可以攻玉”。众多外国人撰文评价厦门,此类译著在厦门尚属首次。译文准确、流畅,充分起到翻译的桥梁作用。该书既是外国人了解厦门的一个窗口,又不失为一本适合具有高、中

级英语水平者不可多得的英语读物。书中中肯的意见和建议也将对我市各级决策部门的具体工作带来裨益和启迪。在隆重纪念厦门经济特区建立 20 周年之际,该书的出版和发行无疑将对厦门乃至整个闽南地区的进一步改革开放产生重大的现实意义。

厦门大学  
外文学学院院长

Handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read '徐俊' (Xu Jun).

2001 年 1 月于厦门

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# The Xiamen Experiences

Andrew Johns

*Overall life here is not quite what I had expected it to be and, according to an American friend of mine who has travelled extensively throughout China, is more comfortable than anywhere else in China. I hope that in the years to come Xiamen does not lose its beauty and relaxed lifestyle in the quest for greater economic prosperity.*

Before coming to Xiamen I really didn't know what to expect. The only previous experience of Chinese culture had been that of Taipei, where a high-paced, high-stress lifestyle is the norm. As I was flying into Xiamen I therefore felt a little apprehensive, mentally preparing myself for the possibility of overcrowding, high pollution and pressure. However, as soon as I landed and was on the way from the airport to the school where I was to stay, I realised that Xiamen was quite different from those other Asian cities that I had been to. Something about the relaxed nature of its people made me realise that life here would not match the "dog-eat-dog" reality that is so much a part of larger Asian cities.

In talking about life in Xiamen I would like to draw upon my

own experiences so far, looking at those places and people that have stuck in my mind.

After I had been in Xiamen for about one month a Chinese friend of mine took me for a tour of Gulangyu. At around the middle of the morning, we climbed a small hill and came to a large, deserted old mansion which, so I am told, was the British High Commission. At one point it must have been quite magnificent, with its large, ornate rooms and garden. Even now its ivy covered walls still hold a certain charm. As I stood there I tried to imagine what it must have been like for the people who lived there all those years ago, when the colonial powers still held so much power. What must it have been like for the local inhabitants to have so many foreigners taking up residence there?

Roughly a week later I spoke to an American friend of mine who told me that he had been there himself with a couple of Chinese friends. However they had refused to take him inside, claiming that the house was haunted by the ghosts of people who had suffered at the hands of the Japanese during World War Two.

I didn't get around to seeing the botanical gardens until around a month and a half after I had arrived. Really, I should have visited them earlier. Part of the enjoyment I derived from the visit relates to the fact that I went during the middle of the week rather than on the weekend. The sheer beauty of the gardens combined with the relative lack of people there made for an excellent escape from the city. What makes this place even more remarkable is its close proximity to the city. From the main gate its only a short walk to Zhongshan Road.

While there I met two of the most trusting people I have ever

met. I met them at a tea house where a friend and I were taking a short break. While we were sitting drinking our tea and discussing what to do next, we were approached by three middle-aged women who asked me if I would mind taking a photo for them. Now this in itself is not an unusual request, however in this case they wanted me to use my own camera to take several photos for them and then to send them to their hometown in Guangdong. Not entirely sure how to react I did as they requested. They then left me their address (in Chinese, which I couldn't read!), gave me RMB 20 Yuan to cover the printing costs and then went on their way. I can't help but think someone up there is using this situation as a test of my "moral fibre".

Overall life here is not quite what I had expected it to be and, according to an American friend of mine who has travelled extensively throughout China, is more comfortable than anywhere else in China. I hope that in the years to come Xiamen does not lose its beauty and relaxed lifestyle in the quest for greater economic prosperity.

# Life In Xiamen

Benita B. Valeriana

*I have learned to like and love the City of Xiamen and its people. I shall forever cherish this extraordinary and very interesting experience.*

I first arrived in Xiamen in October 1994. The purpose of my trip was two folds. Firstly, I was instructed by my office in Manila to accompany the Speaker of the Philippine Congress Mr. Jose De Venecia in his official visit to Xiamen. The second reason was for me to prepare the opening of the Philippine Consulate General in this city.

It was a very interesting time for me since Xiamen is a well-known city in the Philippine. It used to be known as Amoy. The city where Filipino-Chinese immigrants have embarked for their trip to the Philippines. Also in view of my previous assignment in Hongkong, I have had the chance to visit the Special Economic Zone (SEZ) in Guangdong. This made the trip to Xiamen all the more interesting and educational.

The local officials in Xiamen received me warmly and offered all available assistance to me during my first trip. I was also assisted

by Filipino-Chinese residents in the city. They were more than eager to help me find a suitable office space for the Consulate. Their assistance made a very big difference because it made me feel welcomed making the atmosphere of my trip very cordial and warm.

After one week in Xiamen, I was able to successfully accomplish my mission. The trip of Mr. De Vencia was a success and in less than five days, I was able to conclude, in principle, negotiations for the lease of our present Chancery (Consulate Office) at Lianhua. I returned to Hongkong after the conclusion of my mission.

While in Hongkong, the process for opening the Philippine Consulate in Xiamen was taking place. By January 1995, I was accredited by the Chinese Government as Philippine Consul General in Xiamen. This is a rare opportunity and honor for me since I was chosen among so many other officials to open the Office. In addition, this Consulate is the only one in Fujian Province and located out the Capital City of Fuzhou.

I finally reported for duty in Xiamen on 15 February, 1995 and the office was officially opened on 28 February, 1995 with top ranking Xiamen and Fujian Provincial officials attending the opening ceremony. I received the same warm and cordial welcome from the people of this city as I had during my first trip.

Today, after almost one year, I have learned to like and love the City of Xiamen and its people. I shall forever cherish this extraordinary and very interesting experience.

## Xiamen Impressions

Bill Aho

*A nice blend exists between old and new. Charming old facades face modern skyscrapers. One could call Xiamen a kind of halfway-house. It is not so refined and polished as HongKong, yet not so harsh as many places in the interior of China. I like the "man zou" feel of this place.*

Merrilie and I have lived in Xiamen now for seven months. Long enough for surface reflections to enter our minds, but hardly long enough to catch the inner pulse of this famous port city. The language disadvantages of a foreigner living here are lessened to some degree by the abundant use of English among the educated. Our Mandarin is limited and Amoy street talk is incomprehensible after merchants get past the prices of commodities. I can only survey the surface with my eyes, which really is only a sample and reflection of the real truth. So, what do I see?

Having been a resident of China for the past nine years, my eyes have grown accustomed to crowded streets and bustling farmers markets. I no longer cover my mouth and gasp at the near misses and hopscotch antics of pedestrians dodging their way across

streets, weaving and darting cyclists and cold-faced taxi drivers greedy for a centimeter's advantage.

The common street hazards of broken pavement and open drain grates have lost their shock appeal. I see the progress now. No Chinese City is what it was nine years ago and Xiamen is no exception. I saw, for example, the waterfront area of Xiamen transformed from a grungy mess to a beautiful park in just one month. Now I can safely make my way from the bus stop through the underpass and enjoy a pleasant harbor view from clean and tidy surroundings.

On several occasions we have viewed the sea on the circle road from a bike seat or motor vehicle. One of our first impressions was to see how carefully the shoreline was preserved and manicured. Sculptures, steps and walkways seem to never end. It is rare in the world to see such an expansive beach-park so well prepared and cared for.

There are peculiarities here that I have not experienced before. The natives have developed a lively twist for getting rid of moon cakes. On the eve of the Mid Autumn festival, I gamboled my way to a nice cache of dried noodles, soap and shampoo that I am still digging into. The tea culture is more evident on the back streets of Xiamen than anywhere else I have been. It is quite common to observe a tiny tea set actually in use on the street. I am a little amazed by this, since, for westerners, a cup of tea or coffee is just that, not a tiny taste or whiff. Tea paraphernalia shops can be found on every block. Truly, Xiamen teas!

Other cities in China have their food specialties and Xiamen is no exception. The most obvious are the abundant varieties of seafood. Kept alive and fresh in tubs and tanks in front of many

restaurants until the exact moment of selection, they come to your table almost still wiggling and breathing. Fresh seafood indeed!

We arrived in the fall, a month before Typhoon Dan invaded. Two aspects of this catastrophic event amazed me. First, the power of the wind that mowed down the glory of Xiamen, her beautiful trees. I had never witnessed nature wreck such havoc on itself before. The tangle of branches and downed trees made the streets barely passable on foot. It was shocking and sad. The second marvel was the people's response. Like industrious ants, the hour the wind had died, workers began to open the streets. Amazingly, uprooted trees were pushed and pulled back into their holes by hand and with machines. Most are rooted again and flourishing in the spring sun. Xiamen people have resilience and love their trees.

In general, this is a comfortable place to live in. The weather is accommodating and for the most part the people are friendly. I have suffered my losses along with other moral folk. The buyer must still be wary. I bought a bag of oranges the other day from a shrewd fruit salesman for twice the standard price simply because I wasn't paying attention to market values. Valuables must be kept under lock and key and even then, a clever thief can run off with a bike. I speak from experience.

Gulangyu is a special place. We always enjoy our visits there. 'Swimming' with the fish at the under sea world and walking with the birds in the aviary has enriched my appreciation of God's creativity. The Xiamen philharmonic performances have pleasantly and ameliorated the cultural side of my nature. The islet is a quaint and quiet place for spiritual refreshment.

Xiamen University where we teach is under construction these



days. Next year will mark her 80th birthday. Four of the five new buildings already have new red tile roofs installed. Their handsome facades that will match the old stately stone originals are slowly emerging from beneath bamboo scaffolding. There is hardly a building on campus that has escaped renovation. Even the central lake is getting a new shoreline. I'm glad we have been here to witness this "before" and "after" scene.

Last of all, but surely not least, we have found a vibrant church here in Xiamen. Regular meetings and Holiday concerts attract locals and foreigners alike. Don't be late, however, or all seats will be taken. Preparing for holidays seems important to local congregations. At one church I noticed Christmas decorations still on display in April. Deflated Christmas balloons were, however, in desperate need of resurrection power. Maybe that was the point. Easter is coming when all the churches in the whole world celebrate new life.

I like the mixture of old and new here. The narrow back streets and alleys where there is barely room for two to pass have a quaint "old China" charm. The water parks and open space save the city from becoming a modern asphalt jungle. A nice blend exists between old and new. Charming old facades face modern skyscrapers. One could call Xiamen a kind of halfway-house. It is not so refined and polished as HongKong, yet not so harsh as many places in the interior of China. I like the "man zou" feel of this place.