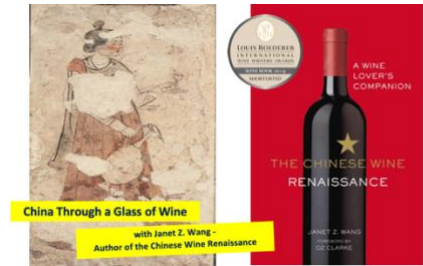


Janet Wang – China Through a Glass of Wine



Online Confucius Institute at The Open University and LSBU Confucius
Institute for Traditional Chinese Medicine , 06-July-2022

Biographical note

Janet Wang is the author of 'The Chinese Wine Renaissance' (published by Penguin Randomhouse and shortlisted for Louis Roederer's Wine Book of the Year 2019). She is an acclaimed bilingual speaker and writer on Chinese wines. Janet contributes to various wine and general interest publications and has appeared on British national TV & radio (BBC and Channel 4) to present Chinese wine and culture. Janet graduated from the University of Cambridge followed by a ten-year stint in investment banking in London. She started writing and communicating about Chinese wine and culture in 2012. Twitter/Facebook/Instagram: @JZWinepeek

Edited transcript

So today I'm going to talk about the culture and history of Chinese wine, mainly because when I first started to drink wine, I learned a lot from European wine producers, and I remember back in 2008, 2009, I had some conversations with wine producers from Bordeaux and they said our wines are selling super well in China. They couldn't get enough of it. But is it going to last? Is it just a phenomenon of Chinese people becoming very rich, and they want to buy Bordeaux wines as a trophy product to display in their highly exposed, spotlighted cabinet? Or would this be a phenomenon that is going to last? Is it a stable market, or is it just a speculative market? And I remember saying, I think this is going to be a long-term trend, because China actually has a very long history and cultural heritage when it comes to alcoholic beverages. So, when Professor Xu said, we talk about wine in Europe, which is mainly made from grapes, but in Chinese, the closest word we have is Geo. So Geo

is an umbrella term for alcoholic beverages. It could be grain-based, it could be rice-wine, it could be spirits or it could be grape-based. So, it's a very large category and for that we've had thousands of years of history. So today I want to show you a very quick tour of the culture and historical backdrop to this current phenomenon, this current obsession and interest in wine in China.

At the moment, if we're going to talk about who has the oldest and who has the most historical wine, the oldest wine found anywhere in the world is actually in China, and it dates back over 9000 years ago in this area that we sometimes referred to as the cradle of Chinese civilization in this area called Jiahu Neolithic site.

And in some of the chemical tests done in on the contents of the jars found here they found evidence of not just rice-wine making, but actually, potentially, wild grape wines. It could also be hawthorn, and it could be a mixture. It could be a blended alcoholic beverage made from grapes and hawthorn and honey. They found all sorts of evidence of not just grain-based winemaking but actually of fruit-wine making.

So that is the earliest archaeological finding. But if we look at historical books, where do we first come across the mention of wine? And that would date to the *Book of Odes*. This is a collection of poetry, of hymns, which were gathered in different parts of China and it dates all the way from first millennium BC to the AD. It's a huge collection of very early Chinese poetry and songs and hymns. In this particular poem - it's very interesting - it talks about that an agricultural year in terms of which month people will be engaged in what sort of activities. It mentions that in the sixth month - and by sixth month according to this type of Chinese ancient Chinese calendar, they're talking about August - they say that during August time, wild grapes are eaten. So we know that wild grapes were grown in China and eaten as a fruit. But note: it's *eaten*, it's not made into wine and it's wild. It's not like in Europe it wasn't domesticated, it wasn't grown to produce fruit and wine. So, during August wild grapes are eaten, but then it goes on to say in the tenth month we harvest the rice. And with this rice we do make wine, right? So, it says in the tenth month the rice is harvested and it's used to make spring wine. Spring wine is what you make after the rice harvest and you store it till spring holidays, springtime which would now be equivalent to our Chinese New Year time, so a very early part of the year. This 'spring wine', we give it to the elderly to drink so to wish the 'bushy eyebrowed one' a long life. So this wine is precious and it's given

as a sign of respect to the elderly in the village, in the community, to wish them a good life. So, what this poem actually shows you is that this connection with wine and its health-giving properties were already known back then because it was considered to be health-giving. That's why you give to the elderly to wish them a long life.

The other thing that is fascinating is also the Bronze Age of China. Actually, it went hand in hand with this wine, wine culture, because the earliest bronzes were made for rituals and to pay respect to ancestors and for worship. And so we have this incredible Bronze Age that flourished alongside the emergence of rituals and religion and worship and also wine-making. Because wine was given at the temples, served to ancestors along with food. A lot of the bronzes that you will see around museums, if you pay attention to what it says on the label, very often it will say it is ritual wine ware. They come in all sorts of shapes and sizes, because for rituals you have to heat the wine certain way, you have to present the wine in certain cauldrons, and it has to be served and drunk in in very specific ware. So, you have a lot of different sizes and shapes, and that's certainly spurred on the height of the Bronze Age in China.

The other interesting thing where we draw parallels between East and West is this period called *The Contention of a Hundred Schools* in China. This was a period of time round about 770 to 221 BC where China was essentially governed by fiefdoms and dukedoms all vying for power and influence and trying to work towards unification. This was a period where scholars and philosophers were in high demand for their thoughts, for their stratagems and for their services to these different warring kingdoms and dukedoms. There was a flourish of ideas, of philosophy, for example, *The Art of War* by Sun Tzu and Confucianism, Legalism, Taoism, all of these schools of thoughts were becoming much more theorized by different schools of thinkers and the hundred schools of thought emerge at round about the same time as Greece was also experiencing this height of philosophical discourses. What's very interesting is that a lot of the conversation around philosophy, around learning, were inspired by discussions about wine. For example, what's the purpose of wine? You can imagine in those days that food is a very precious commodity. So, when you grow rice, of course, the most important thing is to feed the population, right? So, is wine-making necessary for an age where commodities are so rare, precious and labour is also precious? I would like to introduce you to three schools and talk about their influence and their opinions about wine. The first one most related to wine making with grains is the

'Agriculturalist', known in Chinese as 农家 – 'nóng jiā'. Nóng jiā had a very distinctive feeling that grains and rice should be used for food, and therefore, if you're going to make wine, you have to fulfil two criteria: one is that the duke, or whoever is in charge, needs to make sure that everybody can eat first. If you are going to pay ritual respect to your god and ancestors at the temple you must make sure that your people are first fed properly. So this sign of abundance actually went hand-in-hand with a sign of power. Right? A dukedom that can lay on a spread of wine at the temple is a stronger power. So, it's a show of power which was used by the dukes and the kings. The second thing that you need to make sure is that the wine is not consumed just for pleasure or to get drunk, because, again, of its precious nature and because of its first role as something to pay respect for your ancestors. So, it's not something that should be drunk for pleasure essentially.

And the second school is the 'Medics', 医家 – yī jiā. They also promoted this concept of not overdoing it. As you saw in the earlier poem, we have already made that connection between wine and health, so the Medics also said wine is actually good for you, it helps the blood circulation and in moderation it's good for the flow of chi. So, there are certain benefits, and in fact, traditional Chinese medicine will often be delivered in the form of wine, medicinal ingredients will be either infused or fermented with a base wine, and people will take it as a tonic? So, there's a very close link between medicine, Chinese traditional medicine, and wine culture, and that link is again being laid down a bit more formally by the school of the Medics. But again, they also promote this concept that wine must be consumed in moderation.

And yīn yáng jiā - 阴阳家 - is very interesting. It's the school of Yin-Yang. You might have heard of Ying-Yang. It's about opposites, it's about antithetic forces. But actually, Ying-Yang is also about this tension between opposites and this symbiotic relationship, that the Ying lives in the Yang and the Yang lives in the Ying. Recently, the School of Yin-Yang has found its way into modern winemaking even in Europe, what we now know as biodynamic winemaking, for example, there are actually a lot of parallels between European biodynamic winemaking, which is a form of sustainable winemaking that looks after the vineyard and the winery in a holistic way. So, there are lots of parallel between this holistic way of vineyard management with this ancient school of Chinese Yin-Yang philosophy, which is to look at balance. We talk about balancing the wine, we we don't want too much alcohol, not

too much sugar, not too much acid. It needs to be balanced. The balance comes from this tension between sugar between acids, between alcohol, between tannins. How do you manage that tension and balance? And you can trace that balance all the way to what you do in the vineyard. This holistic way of looking at how you plant the vines, how you manage the biodiversity in the vineyard, is becoming very much at the forefront of modern-day winemaking around the world. I find that really fascinating. And in fact, some of the wine producers in China are looking at biodynamic winemaking but with a Chinese twist on it drawing on this kind of ancient philosophy and wisdom from the School of Ying-Yang.

And then there are the other two very important schools during this period of philosophical thought: one is the school of 'Mohism' (阴阳家 - mò jiā) and the school of 'Legalism' (法家 - fa jiā). These two schools are perhaps the two with the least interest in wine. Mohism very openly expressed distaste and disdain towards ritual and ceremony, because Mohism, the school of Mohism, feels that, during this period, any ritualistic display is very affected is a waste of resources. So they had no interest in wine as well in its ceremonial role, right? So Mohists did not have a lot of good things to say about wine because they considered it quite wasteful and ostentatious when it's used for rituals.

And Legalism likewise. A lot of the prohibition on wine, on alcohol, came from the Legalism school because their view is that wine is something that gets people drunk and hot-blooded and so people who are against the government will be plotting in the tavern with the help of alcohol. They will get into a frenzy and plot rebellion, so it's very disruptive for society. So, Legalism also had a lot of negative things to say. In the Qing dynasty, for example, when Legalism was essentially the central governing philosophy, winemaking and wine consumption among the general public were actually prohibited and sometimes the sentence was death, so it's pretty rigorous in that clampdown on uncontrolled alcohol and winemaking, as well as wine drinking.

But I think what we really want to talk about is the wine! The impact of wine culture on some of the most lasting legacies of Chinese philosophy, and for that we must talk about Confucianism (儒家 - rú jiā). Confucius himself actually did enjoy a bit of wine, but very interestingly, he said several things about wine. The first and foremost thing he said was that you shouldn't drink wine that was directly purchased from the market, i.e. a commercial wine that was produced purely for commercial purposes. For him, wine is so precious it should first and foremost serve a ceremonial role. You should first pay respect to

your ancestors with wine and then afterwards, after the ceremony, after the ritual, after you have paid your due respects, then you could drink a little bit. For Confucianism, as you probably know, ritual and decorum were very much at the core of the philosophy. So, being a precious commodity wine is something not to be taken lightly or as a commercial product. He also said when you're drinking socially there's an order of proceedings: you first give the wine to the elders after you pay respects to heaven, earth and the ancestors. Then you give it to the elders to drink first, and when they've had enough and they've left, then you can relax and drink more socially and you should only leave after the elders have left. So again, it's that constant reminder that in everything you do, even if you're enjoying wine, there is a protocol to be followed that should never be forgotten. And the third thing he said was there's no right amount. Some people say Confucius says you should only drink three cups of wine, but actually he said there's no set limit. All you need to bear in mind that you should not overextend your limit. You shouldn't make a fool of yourself basically, you need to know your limit and stay within that limit. Other than that, you just drink however much you can.

I love this because, as I was saying earlier, there were a lot of different ritual ware and drinking ware around this time for wine, so based on your social status, there are specific drinking cups that you could use. This is, I find, a very funny Confucius saying because usually he says something wise, but on this occasion, he was like: 'this 'gu' [ritual drinking vessel] doesn't like a gu from before, when things were made properly to the rightful standards. This gu looks terrible. It doesn't look like a gu. What's going on?' This is Confucius expressing outrage at a drinking vessel that, to his mind, was not made correctly to the right form.

In stark contrast, we have Daoism and Taoism (道家 - dào jiā) and Daoism says the pleasure of drinking is not in choosing the right cup. Taoism promoted a much more freer expression of self and for them drinking alcohol is a process for you to get closer to truth and to heaven because once you're relaxed by wine, you're more creative, you're more likely to be honest and open, and that makes us, as humans, become better beings. We are elevated to a realm that's closer to the heavenly realm. So, Taoism promoted drinking and even drunkenness because drunkenness to them is a state of release and truth. There's a really interesting story told by Zhuang Zi, who is one of the very famous Daoists. He told the story of a drunkard who was completely oblivious to his condition, so some of his friends put him

onto the back of a horse-cart to be dragged away to his house. And on this journey the drunkard falls off this cart. Zhuang Zi said, actually, if he was sober and awake and he fell off this cart, he would have died. It would have been a terrible accident, but because he was drunk and completely unaware of his danger, his body was loose, his muscles and bones were all very loose, so on impact he was just a loose pile and he just got himself up and dusted himself off and walked home. So, he said, therefore drunkenness is a protective state so why not drink to oblivion, because that's when you're safest, that's when you're protected. So that's a very interesting story to illustrate how the Taoists thought about wine. And, indeed, Taoism promoted this concept that actually the drunkard enjoys all the divine faculties: he might look incoherent to mortal eyes, but in fact all his divine faculties are switched on and engaged. Throughout Chinese history we've always had this dualism between Confucianism, where we talk about social etiquette and form and decorum, and that's still very important and very evident even to this day, but also there's also this strand where Chinese culture has always promoted this openness that's promoted through drinking wine. So, openness between people or the creative process that's enhanced by drinking. So, throughout history we've had a lot of scholars and artists who strive to be in this state of slight drunkenness, mild drunkenness that doesn't impede with the creative process, but allows them to freely express themselves or find divine inspiration through drink.

So, now let's go back a little bit to talk about grape wine, which is what we are more familiar with in Europe. A lot of people will be surprised to realize that grape-winemaking in China dates back to the Silk Road. And that's two century BC. So there's a two-thousand-year history of grape-winemaking and for that we have to thank Emperor Han Wudi, because he commissioned the envoy Zhang Qian to go westwards to find out what's beyond China's borders and to find partners and coalitions to prevent wars and establish some kind of an exchange of trade and of culture. And we also have to thank Sima Qian, the historian, for recording some of the things that were exchanged as a result of Zhang Qian's voyage.

This is a record from Sima Qian's *Records of the Grand Historian* and he said that around Dayuan - a region in Ferghana in Uzbekistan today - and he said: around this area the envoy took back specimens of grape and the emperor was delighted, and he planted the grapes. And the emperor actually brought in winemakers from the western region to teach him how to make grape-wine. So, Emperor Han Wudi is the first recorded winemaker of China.

This brought grape-wine into the court of Han, but at the time, because grape was still a very precious and rare and exotic commodity, it was the preserve of the elite, of the palace. Common people would have had no access to grape wine at all.

What is also interesting is in *The Book of Han*, they mentioned that wealthy people around the western region in Ferghana not only did they make wine, but they also cellared wine. A lot of these good wines could be kept for over ten years over a decade. This is interesting, this tells us that people were already aware of this concept of aging wine. Wine was age-worthy already during that time over 2000 years ago. The concept of rich people laying down wine in the cellar was already a thing. I find that quite fascinating.

And then fast-forward to a little bit after the collapse of the Han dynasty. A very important period for wine culture in China was around The Three Kingdoms and Sui dynasty time. In this period people began to draw parallels between the state of drunkenness and the state of self-preservation because during this time the court was very corrupt, very treacherous. So, a lot of scholars found solace, found safety in essentially a hermit-like living; they would retreat from public service into nature. They would become gentlemen farmers and they would make their own wine, get their friends around and drink, and then they would write or produce poetry and music and writing to express their dissatisfaction with the state of the world. We've got a lot of writing and poetry from this period from disillusioned scholars, the most famous of which are called the 'Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove' (竹林七贤 - zhú lín qī xián) because they would drunk drink themselves silly, but then they would come up with incredible poetry and writings for posterity. For example, one very famous writer of this time called Táo Yuān Míng, he said: 'After thousands of autumns and tenfold as many years, who would care for your glory and shame? I only regret this life is too brief to drink wine to my heart's content.' That's the sort of feeling a lot of people had around this time. I'll just go quite quickly through some of the other legacies of Chinese culture that had a close relationship with wine. For example, one of the most famous pieces of calligraphy of China produced by Wang Xi Zhi was written as a preface to a drinking game: all these scholars you see, they sat by a river and they would float a cup of wine down the stream. Whoever picked up the wine had to drink it and then write a poem on the spot. So that was the drinking game they were playing. Very, very classy! So this piece of calligraphy was

produced as a preface to that collection of poems of this afternoon of drinking.

And then we of course have very famous Tang dynasty poets, for example Li Bai and Du Fu who said, 'Li Bai drinks wine and out pour a hundred poems', and Li Bai said, 'yes, if I have a golden chalice, I must make sure it's not empty'.

I will just demonstrate one particular poem from Li Bai which I thought was interesting.

Earlier I said during the Han dynasty, grape-wine was very precious. It was only enjoyed by the elite and the nobility. But by the Tang Dynasty wine was sufficiently popular among the general public that it was enjoyed in the taverns by the general public. So, this poem in particular talked about grape-wine. Li Bai is talking about an unfiltered grape-wine that is very green, that sort of duck-head green. I still fail to think what sort of grape produced that sort of colour, but it was a type of green-coloured grape-wine, and he was imagining if the whole entire Han River would turn into wine, or the lees and sediments would turn the river into a mountain. That's the sort of sentiment that he was expressing. But what I find interesting is today, as you know, unfiltered natural wines are becoming quite trendy again so it could be closer to the sort of wine that he was drinking back in the Tang dynasty, which is a type of unfiltered wine with lees and sediments.

Here's another Tang dynasty calligrapher. I don't think many of us, even if we're Chinese, can read that really. So don't worry if you find it illegible. This is a particular style called the cursive style of calligraphy and Zhang Xu is perhaps one of the most famous calligraphers associated with this style. He's most famous for getting completely drunk. In the old days, men didn't cut their hair, so they all had long hair, rolled up and pinned to a sort of a top hat. If you're wearing a hat, you're sort of a gentleman and therefore you would never dream of exposing your long hair without a hat in front of nobles. But Zhang Xu was famous for letting his hair loose and using it as a calligraphy brush. He would dip his hair in ink after he'd drunk. It didn't matter if there were noblemen present, he would use his head to write calligraphy on the ground or anywhere. And apparently, when he woke up he would go, 'Oh, did some divine presence come here and produce this amazing calligraphy? This is not the hand of man, it's the hand of God.' It's a way to praise his own calligraphy. So, he's certainly also very colourful character.

And we must talk about women, right? Do women enjoy wine as well? And the answer will be yes. Lady Yang is a very famous beauty of China during the Tang Dynasty and Li Bai, the poet, wrote several poems praising her beauty, and in particular one preface to a collection

of Li Bai's poems, describes the reason why he produced the poem, and it was an occasion when Lady Yang was entertaining the Emperor. The emperor wanted her to play music and dance, and he wanted some new lyrics set to the song that she would sing and perform. So he summoned Li Bai to produce some new lyrics on the spot. So this was describing the scene that Lady Yang - slightly intoxicated - was holding a wine glass with treasures and the grape-wine of Liangzhou. So here you get a specific reference to Liangzhou wine from China. Liangzhou is in Shanxi province and it was famous for producing high quality wines. So she led the songs and the emperor was also joining her with his jade flute. So, it's a beautiful scene of the emperor playing music while Lady Yang is drinking and singing songs that have just been composed by Li Bai. It's a very, very lovely scene for us to imagine.

And here we have another very famous poem about grape-wine, but here the sentiment is completely different because Lady Yang occupied the height of Tang dynasty when within the palace walls it was all luxury and enjoyment, whereas this is a scene of the frontier soldiers who are protecting the realms on the borders. But what's interesting is that we also know that grape-wine at this time was also given to frontier soldiers as a reward and to motivate them, to motivate the army. But here the poet talks about imagining a soldier who's looking at this fine grape-wine, but there's no time to enjoy it because the horn, the sound of war, was beckoning. So he says, don't mock me if I lay wasted and drunk on the battlefield for since the time of old, how many return from the frontiers of war? It paints a drastically different scene to what we've just seen earlier in the palace. All of these are Tang poetries, but it gives us a really insightful glimpses into the life and society of the Tang dynasty, or around the subject of wine.

After the height of Tang poetry, we go to the Song dynasty, where the lyrical style of poetry became prominent. One of the most famous poets and a sort of a gourmand and politician of the age was Su Shi. He talked about glassware from the South Seas being used for wine of Liangzhou. Earlier we heard Liangzhou wine is a premium wine in China at this time. He talked about the glassware from South Seas, so, we know that in the Song Dynasty people were very particular about using the right glassware for the right type of wine since the age of old. But glass is interesting and by South Seas what he means is actually that these glasses are imported, it's from beyond the realms, it's from the southern seas. So, this is imported glassware which was used to go with the premium wines from Liangzhou.

And then wine also become part of the Yuan dynasty opera scene. By this time, people were

going to theatres to see plays performed in the vernacular tongue. Here it's quite similar to what we have in terms of musical theatre: there's acting, there's acrobats, it's a great show for the whole family, but a lot of people would also drink wine while they're enjoying Yuan opera. So Yuan opera becomes prolific and because it was a Mongol-ruled era, grape-wines were also having a renaissance during this period because a lot of the Western grape-wines were making their way into China via the Mongol Empire as tributes too, so all the big cities around China at this time would be filled with this drinking and theatre-going culture.

I would just quickly mention that also during this period there was an interesting book written about agricultural practices. It talked about the fact that grape vines need to be buried, and this is what we still do in China today in the modern age. Vineyards in northern China, because of the cold winters, the cold, dry conditions in the winters, the wines need to be pushed down into the ground and buried with earth. It's a very labour-intensive process. This is a picture taken near the Gobi desert near Ningxia. Later you will have a wine to taste from this region. This is still done, but what's interesting is that this was already mentioned in the Yuan dynasty agriculture book that wine - grape-wine - needs to be buried, which partly explains why China never really became a huge grape-wine producing country because of this type of labour-intensive operation involved. Grain-wine has always been the predominant type of alcohol for China.

Here is a famous picture of some well-known characters who, who are collectively known as the 'The Eight Immortals of Wine'. This is a picture depicting them enjoying wine. Here you see certain type of wine ware. And this is a gourd where people would go on outings with a, with a cane and a gourd. Usually, the gourd is to carry water for hydration. But for these guys it's always filled with wine. And the idea is that if you met someone that you really get on with, you need to be able to have something to toast or even to become brothers on the spot, and if you're going to become sworn brothers on the spot, you need to have some wine to drink to celebrate. So the gourd is also used to carry wine by some of these immortals.

So, finally, I want to talk a little bit about this link with medicine, again, because we're here in the Institute for TCM and also this is a good opportunity to introduce Li Shi Zhen, who wrote one of the most important Chinese books on medicine called *The Compendium of Materia Medica*, and he mentioned that there were three types of grape-wines made in China at this time.

One is through natural fermentation, which is how European wines are made. Another way is to ferment it with an 'inducer'. An inducer is what we add to rice wine. If you've had saké, if you're more familiar with saké, you might have heard of something called 'koji'. Koji is a complex that kickstarts the fermentation process for rice because rice is not like fruit, rice doesn't have as much sugar, so it needs a process to convert the starch in rice into fermentable sugar, and then the fermentation process can take place, converting the sugar into alcohol. With grapes this is easy because grapes contain a lot of natural sugars, so it can easily ferment naturally. But with rice we usually need this intermediate step of adding an inducer. The fact that China was fermenting grape-wine with an inducer is a sign that wine by this time had become such a native product that some of the more native methods of making wine have also made their way into grape-wine production. The third way is distillation, which is making brandy - and we've got brandy from China to taste later as well. So, these are the three ways of creating grape-based alcohol. And again, he said drinking in moderation is great for your chi and your blood etcetera, but heavy drinking will lead to disaster. But of course, we'd expect that from a doctor.

Here, I just want to quickly suggest to you that next time you go to a museum, maybe have a look in the China Gallery, you might find that down the dynasties a lot of these wares would have a connection with wine, but they also have influences from the West, so these are things which were found along the Silk Road and you can see there are heavily influenced by Persia. These were all imported into China through the Silk Road via Persia. So, quite a lot of Western influences. And here we can see a lady holding one of these wine pitchers and a glass, a wineglass. This is a Tang dynasty mural so it's clear that when they drink grape-wine there's associated glassware to go with it. And here we have a red 'in-glaze' stemmed wine cup. You can certainly identify the shape of more than glassware, but what's interesting is this thing called the red in-glaze, which depicts what goes into the cup, i.e. red wine: it's glazed into it to show you what the what the cup is used for.

So now we're starting to see more collision of culture through Marco Polo meeting Kubla Khan. In his diary Marco Polo mentioned this area around Dayuan that produced grape-wine; the finest grape-wine of the age was produced in Shanxi Province in Dayuan and was shipped all over China.

And then fast-forward again into the era of Qing dynasty under the reign of Kang Xi. What was interesting was Kang Xi was very open-minded, very curious about Western science and

culture and philosophy. He had a court of Jesuit missionaries, and one of the Jesuit missionaries came from Bordeaux and was advising Kang Xi on mathematics. Kang Xi had a bout of illness, and this Jesuit missionary from Bordeaux said, 'why don't you try having a glass of wine with your meal every day?' So Kang Xi took that advice and drank a glass of wine, we think maybe from Bordeaux. He drank a glass of wine every day for the rest of his life with his dinner, and he was the longest reigning emperor of China. So again, you know, back to this health connection. This is why when you go to China, even today, a lot of Chinese people would ask which wine is more healthy? Is it white wine or red wine or spirits? When they buy wine, especially for their parents or for their elder elders, they would ask which wine is the more health-giving one. And that's because of this very long history of association between wine and health and medicine.

So today we're going to taste a brandy from *Changyu*. Changyu was founded in 1892, this year is there 130th anniversary year. Changyu was founded during this period called the 'Westernization Movement', at the very end of the Qing dynasty. The Qing dynasty at that point was getting a lot of onslaught from all sorts of colonial powers, Western imperial powers, and it was a rude awakening at that point for the Chinese people to realize. actually, we have been too introspective for too long and the way to strengthen the country and to rescue the country was through learning from the West, however unpalatable in might be at that time we must learn science and industry and technology. This westernization movement was very short-lived, because by then it was too little, too late, but some of the lasting legacies of this period involved certain importation of technology, and one of the lasting legacies is this winery, founded in Shandong Province in 1892. And fast-forward again: the reform and opening-up really heralded in the new modern era of winemaking in China so *Great Wall, Dynasty* - you've probably heard of these brands, they're still household brands along with Changyu, they are still the top three largest wine companies in China. Changyu is the oldest but Great Wall and Dynasty were both founded at the end of the 70s, 80s as part of this reform and opening-up initiative to get more collaboration and co-investment into Chinese industries. Now when we talk about the Chinese wine industry, we're really talking about this moment onwards.

So today you can see wine is made almost across China. All these green spots that you can see on this map are vineyards in China and the size of the green dots are the relative size of the vineyard. What's interesting is the green colour, or these green parts. They are

European variety grapes, so these areas would make wines that are very relatable to the international palette, they're made with European grapes. The little red dots you can see, they are sort of experimental vineyards, producing wine with indigenous Chinese grapes, so they're not very commercialized yet, but we can probably expect to see some of them coming into the international market within a decade or so. So that's quite exciting to watch out for.

The reason I'm quite passionate about wine is that despite the fact that today we only have a little bit of time, we can still go through the entire history of China almost and can talk about philosophy, the famous people who have made a dent in Chinese history, we can talk about a lot of subjects around this topic of wine, and wine is something that can inspire us to travel to all these very beautiful places. Even a lot of Chinese people have never been to regions like this and suddenly, through the wine industry, wine, tourism and these beautiful areas are making their debut in China and to the worldwide audience as well. Just some more pictures for you to enjoy and hopefully you'll also be inspired to travel. So, this is interesting. This is the so-called 'Land of the Shangri-La', and now it's an official appellation for wine, there's an appellation now called *Shangri-La*.

And the other thing I think is very interesting, we talked about Dayuan earlier, Dayuan was mentioned several times, Shanxi Province which used to make wines in China. Here what's interesting is the loess plateau. As you may know, China has the largest loess plateau in the world and some of these vineyards are on top of these high-altitude loess plateaux. Loess is a type of interesting soil for winemaking because loess is very loose, very fine so what that does is the vine can set roots very quickly because of the loose structure. When we drink European wine, a lot of the time we praise the old vines of Europe because Europe has such an ancient history of winemaking; a lot of vineyards can boast the age of their vines. And why is having old vines interesting? It's because they have deep roots. A hundred-year-old vine has a very complex root structure and the idea is that because of the complex and deep roots, they absorb nutrients from different layers of the soil, so they can get a lot of interesting qualities through the roots and represent that character, that complex character into the wine that you drink. But what's interesting is with a loess plateau is the roots can set quite deep, quite quickly. So a lot of these loess plateau wines in China are displaying complexity and interest which are almost ahead of its years. It could be quite a young vine, but it's displaying rather complex features, so that's very interesting. If you ever get the

chance to try wines from China, also try to find out the soil and the climatic terrain conditions because that I think in the future is what will set Chinese wine apart from every other wine from other regions because when we taste the wine from a certain place, we want to taste what it says about that place, what it says about the terrain, the soil and the climate. We don't want to taste a copycat of Bordeaux or a copycat of New Zealand or whatever. We are hoping that within a decade, Chinese wine will start to develop its own character and to showcase different parts of China and different types of soil and climates as well.

So, in conclusion, I would just like to say that China is actually a new 'Old World' wine region. We talk about Old World and New World, but these days people say, 'yeah, but how about places like Georgia or Greece, you know, where do they fit in?' They're quite new in the sense that for the average wine drinker we don't know that much about Georgian wines or Greek wine, but from a historical perspective they would lay claim to some of the oldest winemaking traditions and China kind of falls into that category as well. Although winemaking China has not been always smooth and continuous, we can argue right now that it's coming back, it's rediscovering itself as a culture and also to learn from the international community of winemaking, so it is quite a new phenomenon, but it's certainly a revival as opposed to something completely new to China.

So, I think I'll stop there. This is just a little bit more about the book, which is more about history and culture, so if you're interested to learn a bit more about China, but maybe through a slightly different angle and perspective, perhaps this might be interesting. And that's me. Thank you very much.

[END OF TRANSCRIPT]