

## FEATURE

# John Leighton Stuart

*The last U.S. ambassador to China  
before 1949*

By Stanton Jue

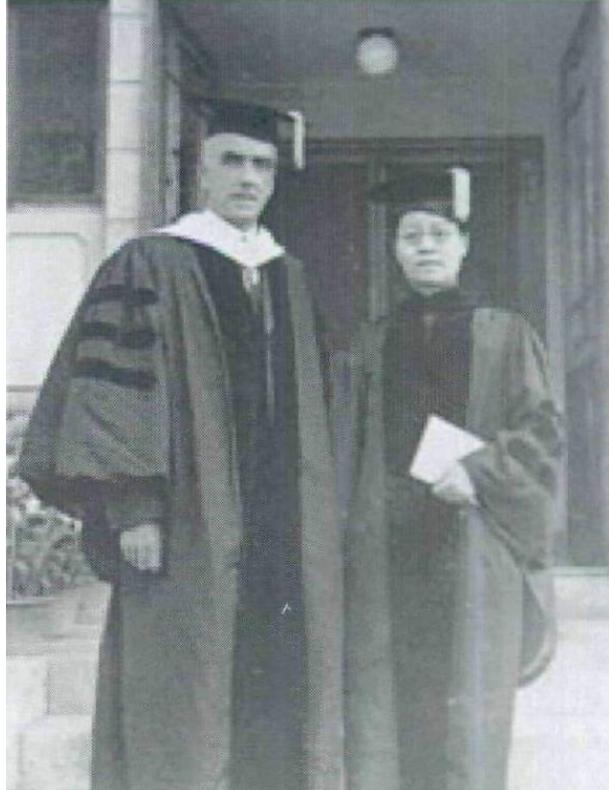
John Leighton Stuart was born in China. His last wish was to be buried in his beloved China, in Hangzhou where he was born. For many years, transfer of his ashes back to China was impossible because of politics.

When Xi Jinping visited the U.S. in 2006, he played an important role in getting this resolved. Xi is now recognized as the 5th generation Chinese leader. But the problem of "how" remained. Airport security would have trouble with a canister of ashes. After some discussions, it was decided to send the urn of ashes to current American Ambassador Randt in Peijing in the diplomatic pouch. Question? Who say Americans don't go in for "guanxi"?

Dr. Stuart was our last American Ambassador to China before the PRC government was formally established. He was a transformational figure in contemporary US-China relations—a Christian, a missionary and an educator (president of Yenching University).

An anecdotal comment: Some 25 years ago, Xi Jinping's father, Xi Zhong-zun was a senior member of a PRC delegation visiting Washington. When he mentioned that he had read a Chinese translation of Herman Wouk's "Winds of War", this provided an opportunity to arrange for some one who lived in Watergate to host a Jewish Sabbath Eve dinner for the author to include Xi. This was an amazing feat. Xi impressed the group with his intellectual rigor and understanding of the issues outside the narrow, rigid ideological box.

Standing in front of Stuart's grave in a Hangzhou cemetery. Ambassador Randt said



*John Leighton Stuart with Wu Yi-Fang of Ginling  
College, Nanjing, Jiangsu, China, 1936*

"Stuart's legacy is in the almost 70,000 Chinese students studying in the United States today, and in the thousands of American students at Chinese universities." Frankly, just the fact that this is happening today gives enormous hope for a better future between our two countries, and Dr. Stuart would have been very pleased.

The burial began with a surprising burst of music "Amazing Grace" and "The Star Spangled Banner" from a CD hidden among the mourning bouquets of flowers. It ended with the officials and a group of gray-haired students from

Yenda bowing three times to his grave. "Did you hear the music?" Jonathan Kuo, a former Yenda student, asked with a little mischief. We brought it. We decided it was better not ask permission and just play it.

Any questions? Our two countries have come a long way. Both Chinese and Americans have now learned how to play the game together.

*Portions of the article was excerpted from "US diplomat's ashes now at home in China" - an AP report  
By CARA ANNA from Hangzhou, China, on  
Monday, Nov. 17, 2008*