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Self-Promotion Saturday: Introductions

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By this point, some of our readers may be wondering who the China Beat writers are, or rather wondering who is involved beside the few names that ring a bell. I want to take a few minutes to introduce everyone—briefly, since this is an accomplished group, and full introductions might run rather long.

As several commentators have already noted, we have a healthy contingent of contributors from the University of California, Irvine. UCI is my own home, and other Orange County-based contributors include Ken Pomeranz (who has produced ambitious works of comparative history, such as The Great Divergence, as well as co-authoring a popularly-focused book on the way commodities circulate across borders, The World That Trade Created), Jeff Wasserstrom (who tells me he is proudest at the moment of finally breaking into the in-flight magazine racket—since he loves the notion of a captive airborne audience), Nicole Barnes (who before arriving in Irvine was involved in the lively East Asia outreach program at the University of Colorado), and Yong Chen (who recently curated an exhibit of menus from American Chinese restaurants and continues to track the links between food and culture).

Our Southern California crew also includes Yan Yunxiang, whose anthropological looks at McDonald’s influence in China have garnered a great deal of attention. Two other anthropologists contributing to the blog are Robert Weller (who has worked on religion, civil society, popular unrest, and recently published a path-breaking book on environmental issues) and Susan Brownell (who, currently in Beijing to study the Olympics, brings to the table her first-hand experience as a gold medalist in the 1986 Chinese National College Games which was the basis for her first book, Training the Body for China).

Paul Katz, our Taiwan-based correspondent, has worked extensively on Chinese religion. His publications include a volume he co-edited that links that topic to the very topical subject of Taiwanese identities.

Some of our contributors have a great deal of practice with the web and media issues. Jeremiah Jenne keeps the popular blog, Jottings from the Granite Studio, while Tom Mullaney made forays into the blogosphere regularly last summer with entries, such as this one, on a Stanford site and is gearing up to try his hand at podcasts for China Beat. David Porter, who teaches comparative literature, is behind Clavis Sinica, and Tim Weston writes regularly on contemporary Chinese media and media coverage, as he did in China’s Transformations, and is currently researching the history of journalism in China.

We also have several contributors with backgrounds in journalism, travel writing, and/or reportage. Susie Jakes is the former Beijing correspondent for Time Magazine, Angilee Shah is the former editor of the UCLA online press review AsiaMedia, Leslie T. Chang worked for the Wall Street Journal in China and is the author of the forthcoming Factory Girls, and Peter Hessler is the author of the bestsellers Oracle Bones and River Town.

–Kate Merkel-Hess
China Beat editor