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OLD TIME & BLUEGRASS IN CHINA

C.1918

The first American banjo accompanies a missionary to western China.

1979

John Denver plays "Take Me Home Country Roads" for Deng Xiaoping at the Kennedy Center.

1993

Solo old time clawhammer banjo was played on stage by a journalist at a US-sponsored event. "Say Darlin' Say" was performed, with a couple of other songs. People probably were expecting something else.

1997

Abigail Washburn comes to China for the first time, living in Chengdu.

2000+2001

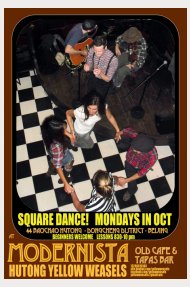
The Blue Mountain Ramblers play USDA events in Beijing and Shanghai. Read about it here and also here.

2003

Jerry Liu (banjo) and Tom Peng (mandolin) are introduced to bluegrass, and move south, meeting Paul Meredith and playing regularly in Hangzhou and Shanghai.

EARLY 2010'S

Beijing sees the formation of the Redbucks, The Randy Abel Stable, The Ring Road Ramblers, Sourpuss, The Honky Tonk Angels, The Hutong Yellow Weasels, and the organization of the Beijing Pickers jam. In Shanghai, Tom Peng's Newgrass gets off the ground and the original Nomads is formed.

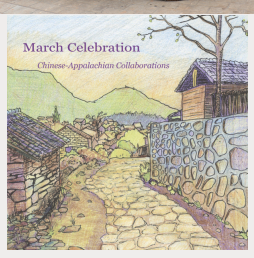


2011 + 2013

Michael Ismerio visits China for the first time, teaching Kirk Kenney fiddle his first fiddle lessons.

2016-2017

During a year-long US State Dept Grant, The Hutong Yellow Weasels bring over Phil Jamieson and Jenny and the Hog Drovers, a band of Warren Wilson college students, who collaborated with Yunnan band Manhu to record an album, Erynn Marshall and Carl Jones tour China.



2016

Andy Cahan releases Happy Thunder.

2020

Wu Fei and Abigail Washburn release their first album.

2020

Nomads reforms.

2023

The Shanghai Monday Jam starts upstairs in the Pottery Workshop. Changyou songwriting workshops evolve out of jams at the Shanghai American Center.

2024

Cathy Fink, Marcy Marxer and Chao Tian release their trio album.

NOW

You came to China and jammed with us.

Infographic by Kirk Kenney