

Huang Ping 黄萍

Huang Ping (黄萍, surname Huang) is a British citizen of Chinese origin living in the United Kingdom.¹

According to a biographical article published in 2021 by Chinese state media and reproduced by a Chinese state body at which Huang later had a formal role (AFROC, see below), Huang arrived in the UK in 2005.² According to a second biographical article published by a branch of the same state body, prior to this, Huang had lived and worked – as a software designer for a well-known magazine – in the United States, having arrived there in 1990 to study computer science.³

The Zhejiang UK Association (ZJUKA)

In 2009, Huang met Li Xuelin (李雪林, now Lady Xuelin Bates) and together, “with the encouragement of the Chinese embassy in the UK”, they set up the Zhejiang UK Association (ZJUKA) in order to “make greater contributions to the motherland” in general,⁴ and specifically to link Zhejiangese people in the UK together and to support Zhejiang’s development, the Chinese province being in need of “help and assistance from overseas Chinese people in science and technology, economy, finance and human capital”.⁵



(Left to right): David Cameron, Huang Ping and Lady Xuelin Bates. Date unknown.

Source:

<https://web.archive.org/web/20220114104851/https://wechinaanywhere.wordpress.com/portfolio/xuelin/>

ZJUKA organised annual ‘Sino-British Golden Era Chinese New Year Dinners’ in Parliament, ‘talent exchange’ events, and cultural events intended to “showcase China’s charm and elegance to the British public”.⁶

ZJUKA’s constitution, which is published on its website, states that its “key missions” include: “responsibility for receiving Zhejiang [provincial] or [central] Chinese government groups visiting the UK”, “supporting the economic construction of Zhejiang” and

¹ https://find-and-update.company-information.service.gov.uk/officers/n_bnk7Bk-owjFH8aqvzPan6SQ-4/appointments

² <https://archive.vn/IYUeB#selection-163.9-163.11> The original source is the *People’s Daily Overseas* edition, and is at this link cited by the All-China Federation of Returned Overseas Chinese, at which Huang held a formal role and which is discussed further in the present report.

³ <https://archive.vn/8CLOE#selection-501.0-517.219>

⁴ <https://archive.vn/IYUeB#selection-163.9-163.11>

⁵ <https://archive.vn/8CLOE#selection-501.0-517.219>

⁶ <https://archive.vn/IYUeB#selection-163.9-163.11>

“encouraging senior talents in the UK to participate in various national, provincial and municipal talent attraction programs”.⁷ These excerpts were translated from Mandarin.

Until 2018 (from 2009), the ZJUKA constitution also stated that ZJUKA’s mission was to “Matchmake between Zhejiang provincial government, enterprises and companies at home and abroad; provide consulting and intermediary services for Zhejiang government and enterprises; provide consulting, planning and communicating services for overseas students founding high-tech enterprises, cooperation projects in Zhejiang.”⁸ This excerpt was not translated from Chinese: prior to 2018, ZJUKA’s website hosted an English version of its constitution. So, prior to 2018, ZJUKA publicly stated that it worked for the Chinese state.

According to ZJUKA’s website, ZJUKA was in 2012 appointed by Zhejiang’s government and provincial CCP committee as the “UK Liaison Office” for Chinese businessman looking to return to Zhejiang.⁹

It must of course be noted that, under previous governments (Coalition and Conservative), activities such as this were vigorously promoted. Indeed, in 2019 and 2020, Huang was involved in organising Chinese New Year celebrations at No.10 Downing Street.¹⁰ In these activities ZJUKA had the Chinese embassy’s “approval” (使馆... 的肯定) and sought to “tell China stories well” (讲好中国故事). This latter phrase is widely understood by experts as a slogan for external propaganda under Xi Jinping.¹¹



Huang was chosen to lead Chinese New Year celebrations alongside then-PM Boris Johnson at Downing Street in February 2020. The Chinese ambassador was also present.

Source:
<https://web.archive.org/web/20220520202559/http://zjuka.org.uk/2020/02/29/c994d3632f/>

⁷ <https://archive.vn/YUz0q>

⁸ <https://web.archive.org/web/20170517031045/http://zjuka.org.uk/constitution/>

⁹ <https://web.archive.org/web/20230424055543/http://zjuka.org.uk/intro/>

¹⁰ <https://archive.vn/IYUeB#selection-163.9-163.11>

¹¹ See, for example, <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/cff/2022/01/12/telling-chinas-story-well-or-speaking-in-tongues-narrative-communication-challenges-in-chinas-public-diplomacy/> and https://web.archive.org/web/20230316140029/https://chinamediaproject.org/the_ccp_dictionary/telling-chinas-story-well/

ZJUKA’s legal persona is a limited company, Zhejiang UK Business Ltd. This company has been dormant since its incorporation in April 2017.¹²

China Chamber of International Commerce (CCOIC)

As part of her leadership of ZJUKA – Huang was re-elected as ZJUKA President for her third consecutive term in June 2023¹³ – Huang signed an agreement for ZJUKA to act as “liaison office” (联络处) for the China Chamber of International Commerce’s (CCOIC, 中国国际商会) Zhejiang branch, according to ZJUKA’s website.¹⁴ Huang agreed to serve as CCOIC representative at a conference announcing the office.¹⁵



A picture of this plaque features on ZJUKA’s website.

Source in footnote.

CCOIC is run by the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade (CCPIT, 中国国际贸易促进委员会).¹⁶ Its formal role is to lobby for Chinese business interests.

UKCT could find no definitive CCOIC/CCPIT account or definition of the obligations of the liaison office established by ZJUKA and Huang. CCOIC/CCPIT describes the obligations of another such office as to: provide liaison services for visiting Chinese groups; provide “contact and coordination services”; collect and feed back economic, trade and business information from the relevant region; promote their corresponding Chinese home region’s (Zhejiang in this case) policies, investment opportunities; and provide legal services for enterprises from that region.¹⁷

The All-China Federation of Returned Overseas Chinese (AFROC)

In 2018, Huang attended a meeting of the Tenth Committee of the All-China Federation of Returned Overseas Chinese (AFROC, 第十次全国归侨侨眷代表大会), the state body that has published two biographical articles about Huang (see top).¹⁸

AFROC is a formal component of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), a national consultative forum overseen and managed as a “United Front

¹² See <https://find-and-update.company-information.service.gov.uk/company/10727362/filing-history> and <https://web.archive.org/web/20230424055543/http://zjuka.org.uk/constitution/>

¹³ <https://archive.vn/8jCKi#selection-521.1-529.60>

¹⁴ <https://archive.vn/fuqtZ>

¹⁵ <https://archive.vn/fuqtZ>

¹⁶ <https://web.archive.org/web/20230621212055/https://www.ccpit.org/dept/group/guojishanghui/>

¹⁷ <https://archive.vn/7RjsY#selection-580.0-704.0>

¹⁸ <https://archive.is/AQuuf#selection-1115.13-1115.24>

organisation” (统一战线的组织) by the United Front Work Department (UFWD) of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP).¹⁹

An American research centre has translated AFROC’s 2022 budget. It contains a description of AFROC’s purpose and resources. Its “departmental responsibilities” include to “guide the vast number of returned overseas Chinese and their families (归侨侨眷) and our overseas compatriots (海外侨胞) to actively participate in and support the economic construction of their ancestral homeland. We must strengthen ties with overseas Chinese (华侨华人) in business and industry, science and technology (S&T), societies, and important people.” AFROC’s 2022 budget was equivalent to nearly £19 million.²⁰

In 2018, Huang and others were described as ‘overseas Chinese special guests’ (海外侨胞特邀嘉宾) of AFROC,²¹ and more formally listed on the AFROC website as “overseas members” (海外委员) of the Tenth Committee, which ran from 2018 to 2023, who were “recruited” (聘请) by the wider AFROC National Congress.²²

AFROC’s formal 2018-2023 constitution provides no detailed explanation of the rights or responsibilities of “overseas members”, except to state that such overseas members must be “enthusiastic about AFROC’s cause” (热心侨联事业). The constitution also distinguishes them from “honorary members” (荣誉委员).²³

The constitution states that AFROC must be “guided by Marxism-Leninism, Mao Zedong thought, Deng Xiaoping Thought [etc....] hold high the banner of socialism and patriotism, comprehensively implement the basic theory, line and strategy of the CCP, [etc....] expand overseas work and the work of the overseas Chinese, gather the hearts of the overseas Chinese, pool their wisdom, utilise their strength, safeguard their interests [etc...] actively participate in politics, promote Chinese culture [etc...] promote the reunification of the motherland [etc. etc.]”.²⁴

As an event aimed at ‘Overseas Chinese’ (华侨华人), the 2018 AFROC conference was organised and overseen by the UFWD, which has been directly responsible for all Overseas Chinese Affairs Work (华侨华人事务工作, sometimes referred to as *qiaowu* (侨务) or the *qiaowu* system²⁵) since 2018.²⁶

The 2018 AFROC conference was presided over partly by Xi, with a banner around the conference chamber that read: "Closely unite around the Party Central Committee with Comrade Xi Jinping as the core, adhere to the guidance of Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism

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<https://web.archive.org/web/20190721120450/http://www.cppcc.gov.cn/2011/09/14/ART11315989621567844.shtml>

²⁰ <https://cset.georgetown.edu/publication/overseas-chinese-federation-budget-2022/>

²¹ https://web.archive.org/web/20230114101236/http://www.gov.cn/xinwen/2018-08/29/content_5317466.htm

²² <https://archive.vn/ZIbHH>

²³ <https://archive.vn/QRnOL>

²⁴ <https://archive.vn/QRnOL>

²⁵ See, for example, James Jiann Hua To, *Qiaowu: Extra-Territorial Policies for the Overseas Chinese*, 2014

²⁶ <https://www.aspi.org.au/report/party-speaks-you> and <https://jamestown.org/program/reorganizing-the-united-front-work-department-new-structures-for-a-new-era-of-diaspora-and-religious-affairs-work/> and <https://archive.vn/4Zqeg>

with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era, unite the vast number of overseas Chinese and overseas Chinese, and strive for the realization of the Chinese dream of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation!”²⁷

In 2023, Huang returned to China to attend the 10th World Conference for Friendship of Overseas Chinese Associations (第十届世界华侨华人社团联谊大会) as a delegate representing British ‘Overseas Chinese’.²⁸ The event was co-organised by AFROC and the UFWD,²⁹ and video record of it is hosted on the UFWD website.³⁰ At this ‘World Conference’, Huang was pictured (see below) with Chen Xu (陈旭, centre), deputy head of the UFWD.



Huang in China alongside
UFWD minister Chen Xu.

Source in footnote.

This was not Huang’s first meeting with very highly ranked CCP cadres involved in Overseas Chinese Affairs Work. In February 2018, Huang took part in a meeting held in London with Tan Tianxing (谭天星), then deputy director of the Overseas Chinese Affairs Office and shortly to be appointed a UFWD minister. At the meeting, Tan explained priorities of Xi Jinping’s ‘New Era’ of Overseas Chinese Affairs Work to attendees.³¹

Talent fairs

In 2016, ZJUKA organised what it called the “Zhejiang (UK) Overseas High-level Talent Fair”. According to ZJUKA’s website, the event was organised by the ZJUKA along with the Zhejiang CCP committee and Zhejiang government and its aim was to induce academics and students involved in innovative research or entrepreneurship to go to Zhejiang. The venue was Imperial College London, and advertising materials published by ZJUKA openly refer to China’s ‘Thousand Talents Plan’ (千人计划).³²

²⁷ See <https://archive.is/AQuuf> and <https://web.archive.org/web/20231115215414/https://sinoustimes.com/contents/70/26305.html>

²⁸ <https://archive.vn/PHxFC>

²⁹ <https://archive.vn/9GONY>

³⁰ <https://archive.vn/udyuo>

³¹ <https://archive.li/4RbXu>

³² <https://web.archive.org/web/20161210154450/http://zjuka.org.uk/2016-zjuk-talents/> Please note that this archive link has a fault, whereby it redirects to a non-functioning archive link after loading. This redirection can be paused using the ‘cancel loading’ feature of most browsers.

The event was repeated in 2017 and 2018, when material published by ZJUKA promoted a company called Hangzhou iLidar (杭州爱莱达科技有限公司), founded by scientists from the Chinese Academy of Scientists. Material published by ZJUKA stated that the company was looking for talented professionals to help it develop vehicle-mounted lidar, video surveillance lidar specifically for military, armed police and security uses, and “Drone + Laser’ aerial high-speed networking systems.” Another company promoted was looking for talents to join its “civil-military fusion industrial park” (军民融合产业园).³³

Imperial College London’s Data Science Institute (DSI)

According to its website, the DSI at Imperial College London (‘Imperial’) is “is dedicated to advancing research and building community in the exciting interdisciplinary field of data science, the integrative fusion of mathematics, statistics, and computer science applied to address basic and practical problems in the sciences (natural, life, and social), engineering, and society writ broadly.”³⁴ Its aims are described as follows:

- “To act as a focal point for coordinating data science research at Imperial College through cross-disciplinary collaboration.
- To train and educate the new generation of data scientists.
- To develop data management and analysis technologies and services that support research.
- To translate data science into innovation collaborating with partners in industry and the public sector, and to support commercialisation.
- To promote data science and its applications outside academia and to influence policy makers.”

Huang is listed on the website of the DSI as “Events Manager and Executive Manager for China collaborations”. She has also been described by Imperial as “the project manager responsible for all the collaborations between the DSI and China” (in 2020).³⁵

According to one of the biographical articles published by AFROC, Huang was appointed to this role in 2018.³⁶

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Huang Ping did not respond to a request for comment from UKCT.

Since that time, the Data Science Institute has engaged itself in several collaborative relationships with Chinese entities. UKCT has sent a Freedom of Information request to Imperial regarding these and Huang’s role and will publish an update and additional information about this matter in due course.

³³ <https://web.archive.org/web/20200315004508/http://zjuka.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/ZhejiangTalent2018-file2-project.pdf> (2018) and

<https://web.archive.org/web/20170515070133/http://zjuka.org.uk/2017/04/23/talent-london-2017/> (2017)

³⁴ <https://web.archive.org/web/20230325182308/https://www.imperial.ac.uk/data-science/about-the-institute/>

³⁵ <https://web.archive.org/web/20201028211113/https://www.imperial.ac.uk/news/202893/data-science-summer-school-goes-online/>

³⁶ <https://archive.vn/8CLOE#selection-501.0-517.219>