

SPEAKERS' CORNER



What's the Story?

A Complaint is a Gift

In the first week of May we were staying at a 5 star hotel in Beijing. On our last evening a group of us were trying to have a farewell drink together. After waiting 30 minutes for the drinks, half of them were wrong.

When we finally received all the correct drinks we suggested that maybe they should be 'on the house'. The duty manager quickly agreed and probably hoped that would be the end of it!

However, the next morning when we were about to check out, we collared the Hotel's VP General Manager and told him about our experience. He listened attentively and thanked us for our feedback.

As we said our goodbyes, he told us about a book he had been given some years earlier called: ["A complaint is a gift"](#) by Janelle Barlow & Claus Moller.

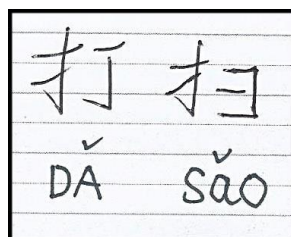
It had taught him never to be offended by a complaint but to welcome them.

How else could he learn?



Clean Sweep - Da Sao

We found central Beijing generally open, green and clean. We were very impressed. We were lucky that the air was good for our stay. Remember, this is a city with 23 million people, 9 million cars and the equivalent bikes and mopeds. So how do they keep their city so litter free?



They use people power. Now there's nothing unusual about meeting a person sweeping a pavement, but when did you last drive through a busy road junction and come across a road sweeper slap bang in the middle of the moving traffic? What nerves he must have had. We admired his spirit and the results he achieved.

It reminded us that however small the action it can help to make a big difference.



You are my Sunshine - Knee shur wah deh young quong

We could never have imagined that when we went to China we would visit a school where the children (6-11 year olds) would greet us with a drum roll and welcome.

The classes were large (65) and the energy and enthusiasm those children had totally enthralled us. When we asked them what they wanted to be when they grew up the answers sounded familiar – an astronaut, a singer, a footballer, a nurse.

One of our group, Paula from Santa Barbara, told them: “When I was a little girl, I thought if I kept on digging in my garden, I would eventually dig through to China”. They laughed.

We finished a delightful hour by singing them “You are my sunshine” in Chinese. We had rehearsed with our tour guide Iowa

Here’s the first two lines of that tune in phonetic Chinese.

Knee shur wah deh young quong, we ee deh young quong
You are my sunshine, my only sunshine

Knee jong wah kwai leh, dong tien hoon an.
You make me happy, when skies are grey.

So if you want to get through to people you must speak their language.

Good luck with your stories, presentations and pitches in 2016

Barry Graham & Sally Clare

