

CHINA CROSSROADS

Monday, March 31st, 2025, 19:30 – 21:00

Book Talk and Update on Redefining Diplomacy One Village at a Time: 30 Years in Rural China

Brian Linden

Author of [One Village at a Time](#) (2022)

Co-Founder

The Linden Centre

Heritage Hotel in Rural China

Center for Cultural Exchange and Preservation

WhiteSpace | Jianing Building 5F | 500 Yanan Xi Lu
200rmb admission with drink | FREE for members
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Typically, we think of diplomacy occurring between important government dignitaries and being dictated by strict protocol and rules of engagement. Brian's story, however, beginning as a student in the 1980s to picking up everything and moving his family to a small town in China's rural Yunnan Province to establish a successful social enterprise, plays an equally important role in relations and mutual understanding between the US, China, and the world. During this time of geopolitical tensions, Brian's book, [Redefining Diplomacy: One Village at a Time](#) divergently shares stories from his forty years of interaction with China. His views of this country unfurl in a narrative form that adds historical substance and nuance to the readers' understanding of China.

[Brian Linden](#) is a Chicago native who began working in China as a CBS cameraman in 1984. In that time, he was involved in interviews with Chinese leaders (including Deng Xiaoping) and also played the leading role in a feature-length movie produced by the Beijing Film Studio. He completed graduate studies at the University of Illinois, the Hopkins-Nanjing Center, and Stanford. He worked on education investment and development projects in over 75 countries before returning to China in 2004 to become the first foreigner to preserve and redevelop a nationally protected structure -- now known as The Linden Centre. The Linden Centre now has seven similar projects throughout China. Each focuses on the preservation of the existing important historical structures while incorporating the villagers in the planning and management of the final product -- a heritage hotel. Consistently among the top-ranked in all of China, the hotels serve as the social enterprise component of Linden's business, which allows them to focus on the preservation of the social and cultural resources or "software" of the surrounding areas. Their model has been praised by the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the U.S. Secretary of State, and hundreds of media and scholarly articles.

[China Crossroads](#) hosts talks on all topics related to China, including business, foreign policy, and other areas as they relate to China, the idea being that China is both already a "crossroads" of the world and itself at a "crossroads" in terms of its future global influence. For more information, contact Frank Tsai at editor@shanghai-review.org.