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PROFILES

The China Chip

One Man's Enduring Innovation and The Gain of a Nation

SOCIETY

Building Bonds with Kenya



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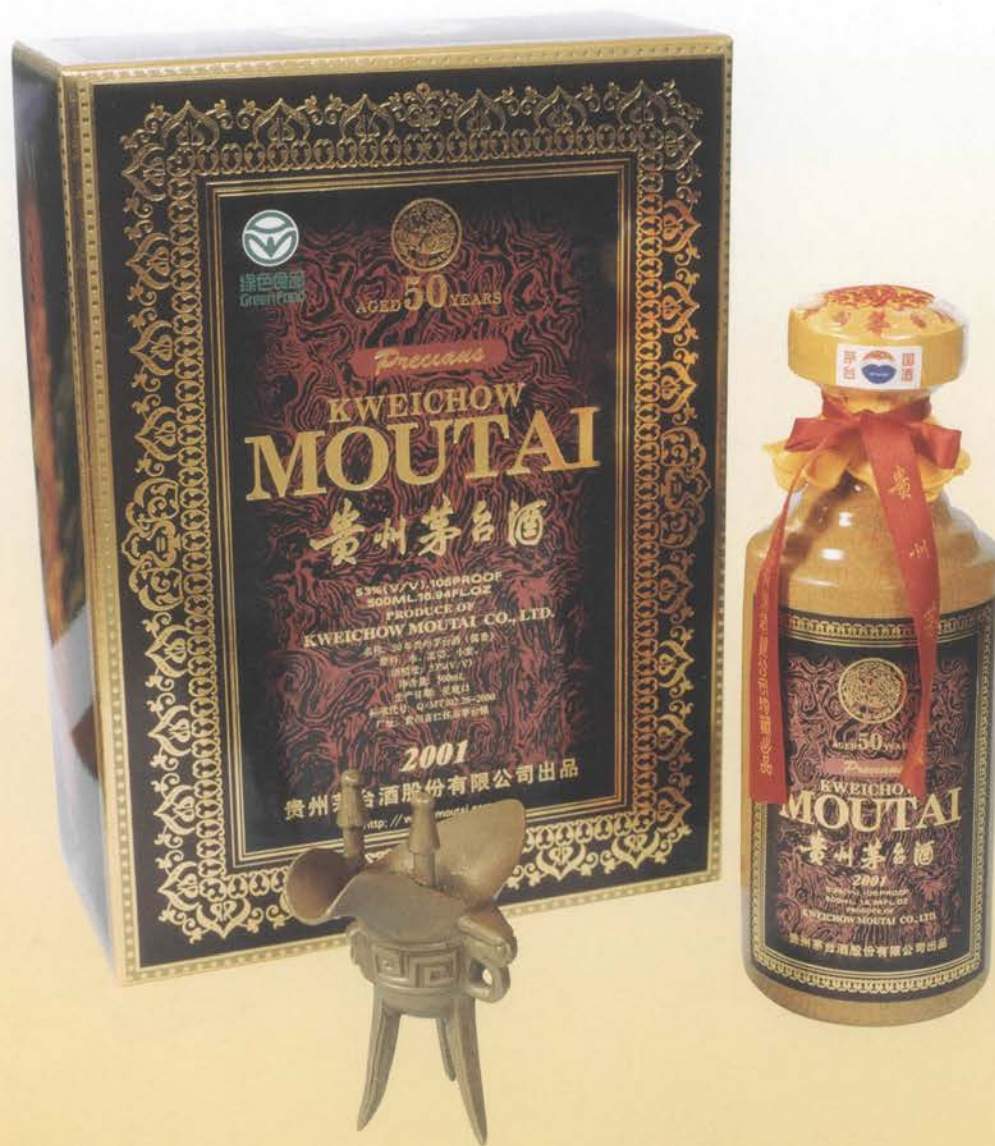


CHINA PICTORIAL FEATURES

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China's Fifth WTO Anniversary

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Index To *China Pictorial* 2006

CONTENTS

No.

Front Cover

Irina Moldovan from Moldova sings a Chinese song..	1
Suolang Wangmu, a renowned Tibetan singer	2
A member of Olympic security force	3
Guo Degang at a performance	4
A still of the Kunqu Opera, <i>The Peony Pavillion</i>	5
Shaolin Abbot Shi Yongxin leads a temple ceremony	6
<i>One Dream</i> , sculptured by Chinese artist Deng Gang	7
A performance of “Ansai Waist Drum”	8
Tennis teammates Zheng Jie and Yan Zi	9
On Mt. Qomolangma, a local Tibetan woman collects litter	10
Huizai gazes into the distance at a Tang Dynasty pagoda in Xinjiang	11
Miss World Kenya with Chinese child actors	12

Snapshot

Snapshot	1-12
----------------	------

Sino-Foreign Interact

Sino-Foreign Interact	-12
-----------------------------	-----

China Pictorial Features

Chinese Language Learning Expands Globally	1
Qinghai-Tibet Railway Spans Roof of the World	2
To Nurture a Nation—Advancing Agriculture	3
To Move a Nation —In Honor of the Everyday Heroes	4
China Moves to Protect Intangible Cultural Heritage	5
China Promotes a New Model for Rural Areas	6
The Golden Route—A Train Ride Like No Other	7
The Powerhouse Province—Zhejiang Soaring	8
Binhai New Area Moves to Fiscal Fore	9

CONTENTS

No.

A Nation Challenged —To Protect Air, Water and Earth	10
A Convergence of Nations	11
China’s Fifth WTO Anniversary	12

Profiles

Tibet’s First Air Hostess —A Favorite Daughter Returns to Lhasa	1
The Mountain Mailman	2
Man of Letters Guards Cultural Legacy	3
A Special Ballerina Finds Her Way	4
The Pathfinder of Printing—Wang Xuan	5
The Young Abbot Shi Yongxin of the Shaolin Temple	6
They Are the “Yimou Girls”	7
Luo Zhewen: A Lifetime Dedicated to the Great Wall	8
Hyper-Hot Duo Burns up International Courts	9
Flying Spectacles Man	10
Businesswoman Brings Benefits to both her Nations	11
One Man’s Enduring Innovation and the Gain of a Nation	12

FOREIGNERS IN CHINA

Frederique Darragon’s Himalayan Mission	1
Mastering the Martial and Martial Arts of China	2
When in China—Westerners Will Do As	3
A Frenchman in China	4
A Mother’s Special Education in China	5
French Students Work Towards the Beijing Olympic Games	6
An American Professor in China	7
Foreign Friends Try out Ancient Chengdu Customs ...	8
World Choir Games Unite Young People	9
African Disciples Study Chinese Acrobatics	10

CONTENTS**No.**

An Indian at Home in China	11
From Harvard to Huangbaiyu	12

China Charged-Up

3-D Animation Industry Takes Off	1
Sporting the Sino Slopes	2
Cosplayers Co-Op Fantasy and Fiction	3
A New Generation Rises to Literary Fame	4
China Signs In and Blogs On	5
Gym Trend Muscles into Culture and Business	6
China Goes CRBT Crazy	8
The Chinese Valentine's Day	9
South Korean TV Shows Draw Big Numbers	10
New Age of Venerable Occupations	11
The Rise of Chinese Children	12

Society

Former Jewish Refugees Revisit Shanghai	1
Walking Tall	1
Beijing's Beloved Living Artifacts	
– Venerable Trees of an Ancient City	1
Seniors Seize the Day	2
Spring Festival Set to Soar as Ban Lifted	2
China Aids International Effort to Beat Bird Flu	3
Video Nation—China Changes Channels	3
City of Ambition	3
Keeping the City Alive	4
Preserving China's Ethnic Bloodline	4
Cross Talk Bridges the Ages	4
Family Life in China	5
Time-Honored Brands of Beijing	5
Rural Schools Welcome more Students	5
The Villages in the City	6
The Way of Wedding	
– Couples Consider Cost and Customization	6
The Freedom of Self-Drive	6
“Ping-Pong Diplomacy” Revisited	6

CONTENTS**No.**

Blossoming Business	7
Dayingjie Village-Rural Rejuvenation Realized	7
China Moves to Strengthen IPR Protection	7
The Children of Beslan Rest	7
“No Car Day” Seeks to Push out the Pollution	8
Beijing's Emergency Response System	8
The Culture of the Lop Nur People	8
Reapers of Rice Take to the Camera	9
A Case Study in Sustainable Development	9
The Return of the Gotheborg	10
Picture-Story Books: From Childhood Diversion	
to Artistic Collectable	10
Chongqing Endures the Sweltering	
Summer of 2006	11
First Direct Air Ambulance Traverses the Straits	11
Youthful Dreams Beget Dread	
in Oppression by Debt	12
Noble Homes of Past Royalty	
Remain in Reverence	12
Building Bonds with Kenya	12

Series: Olympiad News

New Mascots Introduced to China and the World	1
Prelude to the Games—A City's Spirit in View	2
Beijing Cops Gear up for Olympics	3
Students Take up Spirit of the Games	4
Corps Jump Abroad	
Accelerating Beijing Bandwagon	5
The Opening Extravaganza	
–Zhang Yimou Set to Wow the World	6
Artists Compete in Support of the Games	7
Building the “Bird's Nest”	8
The Fourth Annual Festival Sparks Olympic Spirit	9
Signs of the Games to Come	10
Qingdao Regatta Scores High	
in Advance of the Games	11
Olympic Organizers Test and Perfect for 2008	12

CONTENTS**No.****CONTENTS****No.**

Shanghai Hosts 2006 Special Olympics Invitational Games	12
--	----

Travel

The Isle of Melody	1
Saving Shantang Street	1
Jiaxin: A City of Color and Movement	1
Exiting Xanadu—On the Road to Daxu	2
A Stroll from Past to Present —A Visit to Jinli Ancient Street	2
A Village Pure-Hemu	2
Mount Huashan	3
On the Road to Daxu (Second of a two-part report)....	3
Living Long—The Land of Bama	3
Lost Loulan—An Ancient Kingdom Revealed	4
The Temple of Chongsheng	4
A Reflection of Moscow—The City of Harbin	5
Lanzhou's Leather Rafters	5
On the Road to Basha—A Miao Village	5
The Stone Archways of Longchang County	6
Tongling Canyon: The Once Hidden Natural Beauty	6
The Pu'er Tea Rally —Off-Road to the Remote Kunlu	7
Ceremonies and Sutras on Qinghai Lake	8
Journeying to Grand Jiuzhai	8
The Mystery of Mountains on the Central Plains	8
The Ancestral Halls of Shunde City	9
The Home of Regong Art	9
Colorful Ethnic Life	9
Traversing the Karakoram Highway to Karakul Lake	9
Tourism Trends to Countryside	10
Yin Ruins Added to World Cultural Heritage List	10
Baotong Temple	10
The Miao Thanksgiving	11
The Mystic Folk Art of <i>Shehuo</i>	11

Sizzling Sichuan Province of Abundance	11
A Village in Name —Zhang Guying's Descendants Carry on	11
An Urban Park of Another Sort	12
Bullfighting of the Dong Ethnic Group	12
The Red Beach of Liaoning	12

Economy

Pricy Global Brands Expand with China	1
Suifenhe: A Golden Passage Between China and Russia	1
Western Hypermarkets Take Hold	2
China-Mongolia Cooperation Drives Frontier City	2
The Golden Path —Traversing the Mercantile Mountains	3
China Wines Cultivate Culture and Commerce	3
Transnational Ties Strengthen Across Treacherous Terrain	4
Auto Nation —An Industry Hits Hyper Speed in Hybrid Mode ...	4
Food and Fantasy—Dining Does Drama	4
The Business of Beauty	5
A Place Called ZHAM	5
France-Sino Clothing Industries in Sync	5
Tradition and Transactions by the Holy Mountain	6
Sino Coffee Comes on Strong	7
To Capture the Cartoon Cash	7
Silk Road Thrives at China-Myanmar Border	7
Sino-India Border Trade Resumed	8
A Business of Art	8
A Provincial Push—The Liaoning Linkage	9
A Visit to the Sino-Vietnam Trade Fair	9
The Pioneering Pingxiang Border Trading Post	10
A Vital Place Called Xinjiang	10
Air Show China 2006 Set to Soar	10
The Canton Fair Reflecting a Changing Society of Business	11

CONTENTS

Retail Goes Big, Bold, and Beyond	11
Restaurant Tycoon Thinks Big, Bold and Beautiful	12
Foreign Car Makers Accelerate New-Model Launches in China	12

Culture

Foreign Talents Take to Chinese Stage	1
The Chinese Impression	1
Painter Cen Qi and the Art of Happiness	1
Kung Fu Capital: Beijing's Wireless Wushu	1
The Rise of a Tibetan Singer	2
Artist Wang Dongling	2
First in Fashion—Chinese Designer Mark Cheung	2
Painting the Abstract Symphony—Zhang Guiming	3
A Master's Hand—Creation and Cause	3
The Venerated Craft of Tie-Dyeing	3
The Venerable Master Remembered —Painter Liu Haisu	3
The Etched Art of Han Tianheng	4
The Palace of the Rolling Dragon	4
Enrollment Expands at Nation's Art Schools	5
A Venerated Art of Cloth and Color	5
The Life and Work of Painter Lin Ximing	5
Italy and China Signal Increasing Cooperation	5
Acrobatic <i>Swan Lake</i>	6
<i>Twelve Mukamu</i> —An Uygur Epic Spans the Ages	6
Hunan Institute of Science and Technology	6
The Sculpture of Wu Weishan	6
English Study Still on the Up	7
Yangjiabu Village: A Place of Wood Block New-Year Painting	7
Professor Wu Yongliang's Work on Southeast Asian Themes	7
Changzhou International School	7
The Spirit of the Drum (Chinese Intangible Heritages)	8

No.**CONTENTS****No.**

The Sculpture of Yu Qingcheng	8
The <i>Hutong</i> Watchers	8
Landscape Painter He Shuifa	8
<i>The Banquet</i> or <i>The Armor</i> —China's Filmgoers Await Battling Blockbusters ...	9
Thangthong Gyalpo and the Seven Maidens (Chinese Intangible Heritages)	9
The Natural State—A Grand Gift of Guangxi	9
Pebble of a Film Makes a Big Splash	10
Festival of Water (Chinese Intangible Heritages)	10
The Painted Epic of Liang Pingbo	10
In Modern Mode—New Wave Art Rises	10
The Masterful Art of Face Changing (Chinese Intangible Heritages)	11
The Miao Ethnic Group Relishes in <i>Lusheng</i> Fair	11
A Taste of India	11
Molding Temperament with Brush and Ink	11
Especially <i>Errenzhuan</i>	12
A Poetic Casting of Ink and Wash	12

Services

ENTERTAINMENT NEWS	1-12
FOR YOUR INFORMATION —Calendar of Cultural and Art Events	1-12
CHINESE AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE	
Mountain Climbing	1
Red Autumn Leaves	2
Buying Train Tickets	3
Going to the Library	4
Visiting Beijing Again	5
Going to the Seaside	6
Subway	7
Each to His Own Taste	8
Studying Chinese	9
How Many People Are There in Your Family?	10
What Are You Going to Do Tomorrow?	11
When Did They Come?	12

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Director and Editor-in-Chief:
Wang Jingfang
社长兼总编辑: 王景芳

Members of the Editorial Board:
Wang Jingfang, Wang Jiyu,
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编委会: 王景芳、王继雨、赵军、
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Managing Editor: Luo Xianrong
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English Coordinator: Liu Dayong
英文定稿: 刘大勇

Editorial Consultant: Lowell E. Bennett

Directors of the Editorial Department:
Wang Yufan, Xu Xun, Zhang Rong
编辑部主任: 王寓帆、徐迅、张荣
Telephone: 010-68412601/88417432
Fax: 010-68412667

Editors and Translators:
Liu Dayong, Angela Lu, Liu Hanle, Yin Xing,
Wang Yongqiang, Wang Yufan, Yi Jia, Zhang
Rong, Zhao Yue, Wang Linze and Xu Xun
本期编辑: 刘大勇、曹晓莎、白文娟、
刘海荣、赵月、王永强、王霖则、于佳、
张荣、赵月、王琳叶、徐迅

Operation: Yin Jingling
版务: 尹景玲

Art Supervisor: Lu Tong
艺术总监: 路通

Designers: Zeng Xiaoshu, Bai Wenjuan
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Yu Jia
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The Global Economic Engine China's Fifth WTO Anniversary

At the "Retrospect and Prospect: China's Fifth WTO Anniversary" International Symposium held last September, Director General of the World Trade Organization (WTO) Pascal Lamy rated with an "A+" China's overall performance over the five years since the nation entered the WTO.

Lamy said that China's WTO partnership reinforced international multi-lateral trading systems, and that in terms of fulfilling WTO commitments China set a strong example for other nations.

December 11, 2006, marks the fifth anniversary of China's entry to the WTO. In the years since joining, the nation has become not only a beneficiary, but also a driver of the multilateral trading system. The Chinese government's strategic decision in entering the WTO promoted domestic reform and economic development, while concurrently providing a broad market for the rest of the world and promoting the expanding global economy.



PROFILES

SOCIETY

ECONOMY

TRAVEL

- 20 **The China Chip**
 One Man's Enduring Innovation and the Gain of a Nation
- 24 **FOREIGNERS IN CHINA**
From Harvard to Hinterland
 Speaking the Common Language of Friendship in Northeast China

- 28 **The Mortgage as Master**
 Youthful Dreams Beget Dread in Oppression by Debt
- 32 **Not a Forbidden City**
 Noble Homes of Past Royalty Remain in Reverence
- 36 **Building Bonds with Kenya**

- 04 **Snapshot**
- 06 **Sino-Foreign Interact**
- 58 **The Elegant Entrepreneur**
 Restaurant Tycoon Thinks Big, Bold and Beautiful
- 62 **Revvng Up**
 Foreign Car Makers Accelerate New-Model Launches in China

- 40 **Treasure of Terrain**
 An Urban Park of Another Sort
- 46 **Bullfighting of the Dong Ethnic Group**
- 48 **Red Beach**

CULTURE

SERVICES

SERIES

CHINA CHARGED-UP

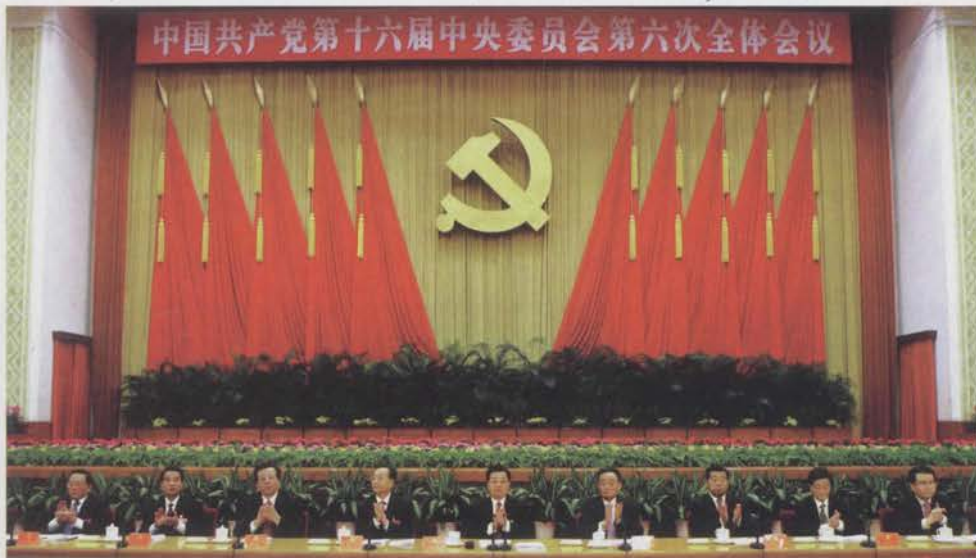
- 70 **CHINESE INTANGIBLE HERITAGES**
 — LEGACY LIVES ON
The Cause of Comedy
 High-Energy Theatrical Folk Art Transcends Class and Culture
- 74 **A Poetic Casting of Ink and Wash**

- 78 **FOR YOUR INFORMATION**
- 79 **ENTERTAINMENT NEWS**
- 80 **CHINESE AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE**
When Did They Come?

- 50 **OLYMPIAD NEWS.**
Fine Tuning the Machine
 Olympic Organizers Test and Perfect for 2008
- 54 **Touching Hearts and Spirit**
 Shanghai Hosts 2006 Special Olympics Invitational Games

- 65 **Faces of the Future**
 The Rise of China's Children

Front cover:
 Miss World Kenya with Chinese child actors on the Launch of Kenya's Tourism Marketing Campaign on November 3, 2006. by Xu Xun



The 6th Plenary Session of the 16th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China was held on October 8-11. Those present included state leaders Hu Jintao, Wu Bangguo, Wen Jiabao, Jia Qinglin, Zeng Qinghong, Huang Ju, Wu Guanzheng, Li Changchun, and Luo Gan. by Li Xueren/Xinhua

Key Words

Striving for Harmony

On October 8 China officially adopted the *Resolution on Major Issues Regarding the Building of a Harmonious Socialist Society*. Ambitious multiple goals are to promote public welfare, establish a fair and just society and achieve sustainable development of the economy and society as a whole. This goes beyond what China has already achieved, enabling 1.3 billion citizens to meet their basic needs of life while maintaining an expanding economy.

Sino-African Cooperation

On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations between China and Egypt, the first African country to inaugurate such a tie with China, the Beijing Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) and its third Ministerial Conference were held on November 3-5. This was the highest-level and the largest-scale meeting between Chinese and African leaders since the forum was jointly established by China and African countries in 2000. During the summit, a high-level dialogue and

exchange of ideas was carried out between leaders and business people, and the 2nd China-Africa Entrepreneur Conference also took place.

Focusing on the theme of friendship, peace, cooperation and development, Chinese and African leaders reviewed developments and achievements resulting from ongoing China-Africa cooperation. Their aim was to ensure the development of a strategic partnership, blueprint the two sides' pragmatic cooperation for the future, and exchange views on important international affairs. China's representatives proposed concepts and initiatives intended to strengthen Sino-African relations, and offered specific suggestions on how to encourage greater development in African nations.



New construction in Shaoyang City, Hunan Province. IC

Sound

Combating Terror with Rational Sanctions

The first meeting of the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism opened in the Moroccan capital of Rabat on October 30. The director of the Department of Arms Control of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China stated that the international community should move to more effectively put in place measures to prevent and combat nuclear terrorism. China resists terrorism in all forms and manifestations and representatives suggested that prudence should be exercised in the imposition of economic and financial sanctions. If imposed, such sanctions should strictly conform to international law and regulations of the nation concerned to prevent normal financial activities from being hindered, and the scope of sanctions should not be broadened indiscriminately.

Macro Controls for Sustainable Expansion

During a recent press conference held by the State Council Information Office, the spokesman of the National Bureau of Statistics revealed that the GDP of China in the first three quarters of this year was 14.15 trillion yuan, a year-on-year increase of 10.7 percent, and in September investment in urban areas expanded by 23.6 percent.

The spokesman also reported that commencing this year, the Chinese government began to implement a series of macro control policies to cool down the nation's hyper-fast economic growth. The growth of partial economic indexes slowed since the third quarter, and a more optimal situation was realized.

Numbers

Ranked Third

The *World Investment Report 2006* issued by the United Nations Conference on

Trade and Development reveals that China absorbed foreign capital of \$72.4 billion in 2005, ranking third after Great Britain and the US. The pace of expansion is on a par with 2004, with \$61 billion foreign direct investment.

The report also put a spotlight on China's multinational corporations. By the end of June 2006, more than 9,900 overseas Chinese enterprises were established in 170 nations around the world.

Third Largest Trade Partner of Africa

Trade between China and African nations is expected to exceed \$50 billion in 2006, a Ministry of Commerce official recently revealed. Sino-Africa trade has been steadily gaining momentum in recent years, and China has surpassed Great Britain to become the third largest trading partner with Africa, after France and the US. Today China maintains commercial relationship with more

than 50 countries and regions on the African continent. In 2005, China and African bilateral trade totalled \$39.74 billion, 10 times that of 1995, and up 35 percent from just a year earlier.

22.5 Percent

Beijing Summit on Facilitating Project Contracting and International Engineering Contracting announced that the average annual growth rate of China's construction industry averaged 22.5 percent from 2001 to 2005. In 2005, national construction industry turnover exceeded 3,455 billion yuan, an increase of 19.1 percent over the same period of the prior year. Final payment upon the full completion projects reached about 2,207 billion yuan, up 8.9 percent from the same period of the previous year.

An ever-increasing number of overseas construction projects are being launched, and the total volume of new contracts now stands at about \$40 billion in just the nine months from January to September of 2006.

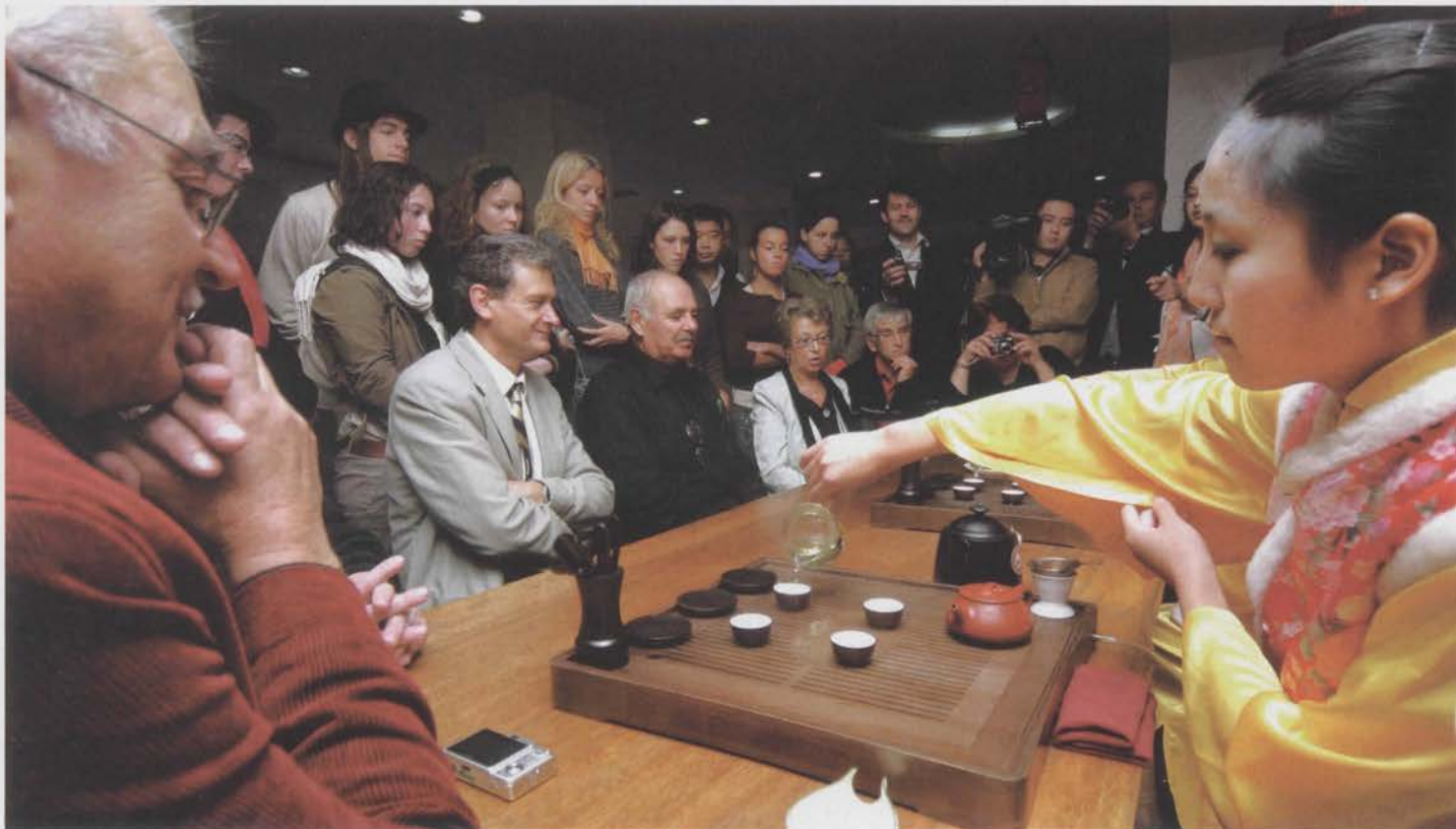
Policy Express

Anti-Money Laundering Law

The 24th Meeting of the Standing Committee of the 10th National People's Congress (NPC) made formal the *Anti-Money Laundering Law*. The law entitles agencies of administrative departments which are legally required to fight against money laundering to have the right of supervision as well as inspection. New measures are intended to enable departments to fully perform their duties. The law offers a legal basis for checking the resource and flow of suspicious money, taking proper measures to prevent transactions of questionable funds, and stopping suspect funds from flowing out of the country.



The Beijing Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) and its third Ministerial Conference were held on November 3-5. IC



October 27, 2006: Twenty-three teachers and students from France savor tea and discuss tea culture with local residents in Xuchang City, Henan Province. by Niu Shupe/CFP

Economy

Sino-Euro Copter Effort Jointly Develops New Model

At a recent press conference, representatives of China Aviation Industry Cooperation (AVIC) II and the Eurocopter Group summarized the latest production developments of the co-manufactured and co-designed EC175/Z15, an advanced mid-sized helicopter.

The Eurocopter Group, China's largest foreign partner in the manufacturing of helicopters, revealed that development of the EC175/Z15 is proceeding at a rapid pace in France, as jointly carried out by a team of Chinese and European engineers. Intended to satisfy the need for a Chinese mid-sized helicopter and the similar requirements of Eurocopter, this is the first cooperative project carried out by the two firms. The first flight of the new chopper is set for 2009.

China Loans to ASEAN Tops 50 Billion Yuan

The Export-Import Bank of China recently announced that loans provided to ASEAN nations since the bank's founding total more than 50 billion yuan. These loans have gone to fund projects like power plants in Indonesia, shipbuilding and sugar factories in Vietnam, and textile factories in Thailand, plus more than 30 other projects in Singapore.

The Export-Import Bank of China is now a key channel of policy financing for China's mechanic, electronic and high-tech exporters. The bank has also funded Chinese firms in support of their overseas investment projects.

Friendship

Poverty Fighting Nobel Prize Winner in Beijing

At Peking University on October 22, Nobel Peace Prize winner Professor Muham-

mad Yunus delivered a speech detailing the experience of his bank, Grameen Bank, in the application of micro-credit financing in combating poverty. Yunus's financing concept and the development mode of Grameen were successfully applied in varying developing countries, including China. The bank's micro-credit practice has also played an important role in poverty-relief work in Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

French Savor Tea in Xuchang

The Sino-France Friendship Exchange Program, sponsored by China Soong Ching Ling Foundation, kicked off in Xuchang City, Henan Province, on October 27. Among other events, 23 teachers and students from France savored tea and discussed Chinese tea culture with Xuchang residents. The shared activity was billed as the "Ceremony for Tea—Savoring Tea—Appreciating Tea—Purchasing Tea—Discussing Tea—Toasting Tea." Emphasis was placed on the concept that "Tea is the national drink."

Culture

A Night of Africa

During "A Night of Africa," October 25, 2006, performance troupes from five African nations debuted in Beijing. Egypt's Nile Song and Dance Assemble and a South African troupe delivered to their Beijing audiences a colorful performance full of African flavor. Accompanied by musicians and the unique sound of their ancient traditional Egyptian instruments, the Nile Song and Dance Assemble in particular brought to Beijing the splendid form of African folk music, song and dance. The South African troupe performed a living theatre billed as *The Beauty of Art*, displaying their unique local multi-cultural music and dance.

China Tibetan Culture Week in Austria

During the 2006 China Tibetan Culture Week, on October 24 the Tibetan musical drama "Wunderbar Home" was staged in Mozart's hometown, Salzburg, Austria. This is the third Austria visit for the song and dance-

driven drama, following prior tours to Linz and Vienna, respectively. Since its start on October 18, the 2006 China Tibetan Culture Week has presented more than 20 exchange performances to Austrian audiences.

First staged in Australia in 2001, to date the China Tibetan Culture Week has taken place in Hong Kong and beyond China's borders, in nations such as New Zealand, Canada, Belgium, Thailand, Denmark and Italy.

Intel and Ministry of Education Cooperate

On November 1, Craig Barrett, CEO of Intel, and Wu Qidi, vice minister of the Ministry of Education, PRC, jointly launched the "Better Our Future Educational Program" to promote education in China. Intel announced that it would support the training of one million Chinese elementary school teachers, fund 100 joint projects in China's institutes of higher learning, and establish labs for 100 institutes of higher learning.

Inception of the program is the product of a strategic cooperation between Intel and the Ministry of Education over the past three years, and is emblematic of a deepened cooperation between the two in the field of education.

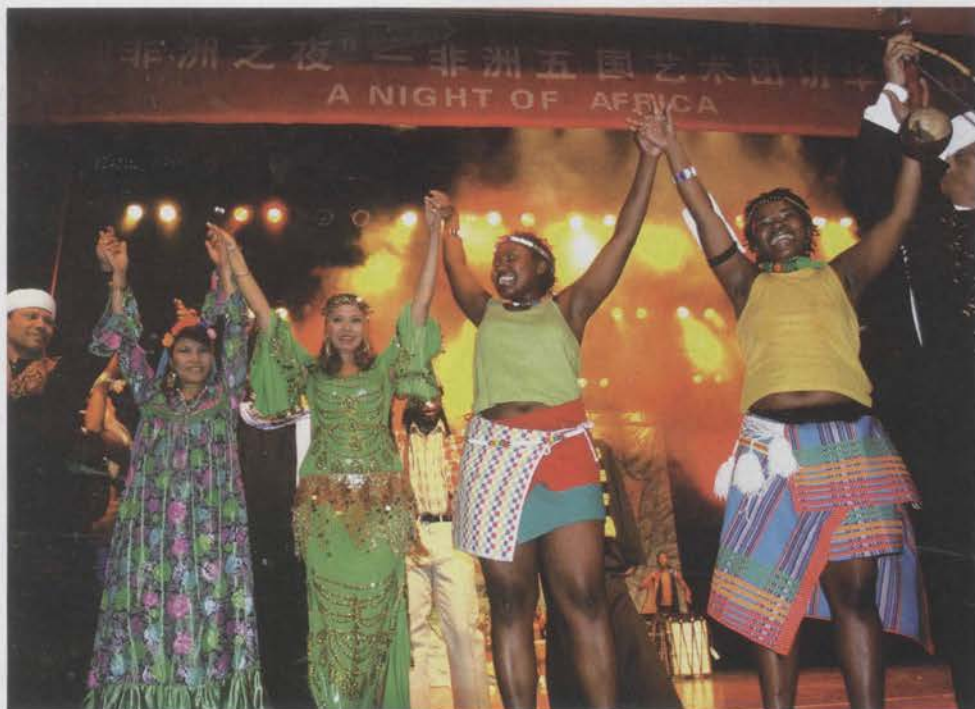
Science and Technology

China-UK Anti-HIV/AIDS Program Realizes Goals

After six years targeting a population of 129,000 people in 83 counties and districts within 37 cities and prefectures in Sichuan and Yunnan Provinces, directors recently announced the completion of China-UK HIV/AIDS Prevention and Care Project.

Commenced in June 2000, the project was conceived to focus on the high-risk regions of Yunnan and Sichuan. General goals included the development of replicable models of HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment and care for high risk and vulnerable groups, while developing informed national policies and practices. Partially supported by technology and funds provided by the British government, the project is considered by China and UK experts to have achieved its anticipated aims.

It was also announced that the next phase of the China-UK project would soon be launched. Supported by 300 million pounds provided by the UK, the project will expand its reach to seven provinces.



October 25, 2006: "A Night of Africa" debuts in Beijing. by Lu Xu/CFP



October 22, 2006: Nobel Peace Prize winner Muhammad Yunus delivers a speech at Peking University and is named "Honorary Professor." by Zhou Wei/CFP

The Global Economic Engine

■ Text by Zhang Rong



A worker inspects cars arriving from China at the Valparaiso Port, 85 miles (137km) northwest of Santiago, Chile. Chile and China signed a free trade agreement in November 2005, the first such agreement with a Latin American country. by Eliseo Fernandez

China's Fifth WTO Anniversary



At the “Retrospect and Prospect: China’s Fifth WTO Anniversary” International Symposium held last September, Director General of the World Trade Organization (WTO) Pascal Lamy rated with an “A+” China’s overall performance over the five years since the nation entered the WTO.

Lamy said that China’s WTO partnership reinforced international multilateral trading systems, and that in terms of fulfilling WTO commitments China set a strong example for other nations.

December 11, 2006, marks the fifth anniversary of China’s entry to the WTO. In the years since joining, the nation has become not only a beneficiary, but also a driver of the multilateral trading system. The Chinese government’s strategic decision in entering the WTO promoted domestic reform and economic development, while concurrently providing a broad market for the rest of the world and promoting the expanding global economy.

Promoting Opening-Up and Reform

China’s WTO entry has actively promoted the nation’s opening-up, accelerated the transition of government functions, and helped eliminate mechanical abuses.

Firstly, the further reduction of tariff and non-tariff barriers boosted the opening scale of the Chinese market. And as the market opens wider, China’s import volume has expanded rapidly. In the last five years, China imported cargo from around the world valued at nearly \$2.4 trillion, realizing an annual growth rate of 28 percent.

Secondly, in line with its WTO commitments, China revised laws and optimized its legal system, greatly improving the social and investment environment. In the last five years, more than 2,000 laws and regulations were revised, and more than 800 restrictive regulations were abolished. Of those, efforts made in the field of intellectual property rights have enabled the Chinese legal system respective IPR to reach and exceed the standards instituted by WTO’s protection agreements on trade-related IPR issues.

Driving Foreign Trade and Growth

By seizing opportunities offered by the transfer of global manufacturing in the 1990s, China became a major beneficiary. After its

entry to the WTO, the improvement in the environment of international trade delivered a wealth of business opportunities, while attracting an increasing amount of foreign investment. Within the short period from 2001 to 2005, China’s foreign trade volume in cargo expanded from \$509.6 billion to \$1.4221 trillion, its global ranking rising from the sixth to the third; and its trade volume in service jumped from \$71.9 billion to \$166.5 billion, its global ranking from the eleventh to the seventh. In the first eight months of this year, China’s foreign trade volume in cargo increased by 23.9 percent over the same period of last year, with a 25.9 percent in export and a 21.6 percent in import.

The rapid expansion in foreign trade has also pushed forward the development of China’s national economy. The nation’s GDP rose from 10.9655 trillion yuan (\$1.3248 trillion) in 2001 to 18.3085 trillion yuan (\$2.235 trillion) in 2005, running at an annual increase rate of 9.5 percent. In 2005, China became the fourth largest economy in the world, and its per capita GDP reached \$1,702.

Integrating into the Global Economy

Since China’s entry to the WTO, Chinese commodities quality has fundamentally met standards based on international criteria, and the service industry as a whole has worked to follow international practices. As the micro-foundation of the national economy, operationally Chinese enterprises have increasingly moved closer to the international track.

Of particular note, since its WTO entry China has opened its field of service trade at an unprecedented scale. Of the 160-plus service trade sectors classified in accordance with WTO rules, 104 opened in China—a level close to the average (108) of developed nations. In many other important sectors, including finance, China has strictly fulfilled its partnership commitments and offered a wealth of market access opportunities. Overseas banks, securities firms, and insurance institutions have flooded into China, conducting financial business through various modes like joint ventures, sole investment, and equity participation.



A ceremony participant waits for a ship to launch in Shanghai on July 9, 2004. This liner, capable of carrying 8,500 TEU containers, believed to be the largest of its kind in the world, embarked on its maiden voyage from China’s financial hub to North America.

Consider the sector of commercial circulation. By the end of 2005 a total of 1,341 foreign-funded commercial enterprises, along with 5,657 retail outlets, had been established, and more than one-fourth of chain supermarkets in China were foreign-funded.

At a meeting with WTO Director General Pascal Lamy, Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao said that since China joined the WTO in December 2001, the nation had been honoring its commitments to the WTO and adjusting its foreign trade policies in line with the WTO rules.

"Over the past five years, China has lowered its average tariff by a large margin and widely opened up the service trade to foreign countries," said Wen. "China's entry to the WTO not only brings benefits to the nation itself, but also contributes to the development of world trade and the global economy." As the transition period following China's entry to the WTO comes to an end, in the face of new challenges, China will firmly adhere to opening up, seeking further development as well as mutual benefits and a win-win situation with the rest of the world.



Two young women walk past company listings outside of HSBC (Hong Kong Shanghai Banking Corp) tower in Shanghai. Some 42 foreign companies have already established their regional or global research and development centers in this city. by Liu Jin

Three Changes in Foreign Trade

Xu Dezhi, a 67-year-old retiree, was recently presented with a dilemma: The newly-founded Guangdong Chamber of Commerce for Import and Export (GCCIE) invited him to preside over its work, while his children hoped that he could stay at home to enjoy a carefree life in his later years. With

dozens of years experience in the field of foreign trade, Xu could not resist and decided to accept the GCCIE's invitation.

"Great changes have taken place in today's situation of foreign trade," he said. "As a senior worker in this field, I could not pass up this opportunity."

At present, enterprises authorized to en-

gage in import and export business in Guangdong Province amount to nearly 45,000, compared to only about 10 before the introduction of reform and opening-up policies, of which more than 10,000 enterprises are new to the field. "Under the even more complex circumstance of the international trade after China's WTO entry, younger private enterprises require high-credit and a reliable organization to provide support for their import and export business, while safeguarding their interests and rights," says Xu.



Workers at a textile factory in Xunhua County, northwestern China's Qinghai Province. by Simon Zo

The most remarkable change in China after China's entry to the WTO was the soaring rates of foreign trade volume, which increased from a mere \$500 billion in 2001 to \$1.4 trillion in 2005. The figure is expected to top \$1.5 trillion this year, about three times that of the year China joined the WTO. Chai Haitao, head of the Research Institute for Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation under the Ministry of Commerce, summarized up three significant developments in China's foreign trade.



Change in Product Composition

In the 1980s, China's foreign trade mainly focused on light-industry products and textiles. In the 1990s, trade mostly depended on the support of electrical and mechanical products. At present, the export volume of electrical and mechanical products has accounted for 55 percent of the nation's total. After China's entry to the WTO, its foreign trade product composition has seen a further

Change in Trading Body

State-owned import and export companies are no longer the only players in China's foreign trade. Presently, less than one-fifth of exports and about one-fourth of the nation's total import trade are conducted by state-owned corporations, while more than 58 percent of the foreign trade volume are achieved by foreign-funded enterprises. According to the list of the 2005 China Top 200



Workers inspect Lenovo laptop computers on the production line at the company's Shanghai factory. IC

change. The import and export of hi-tech products, characterized by IT products, expanded at a rapid pace, and hi-tech export volume accounted for 30 percent of the nation's total.

Change in Trade Form

In recent years, the proportion of China's processing trade has risen to 55 percent of the nation's total export volume, and the large majority of the processing trade was achieved by foreign-funded enterprises. It was the country's low cost and favorable infrastructures that attracted overseas corporations to shift the processing links of their manufacturing chains to China. Recent statistics revealed by the Industry Department of the Ministry of Commerce show that laptops and mobile phones remain the two leading products among China's export commodities.

in Foreign Trade, 70 percent of the firms were foreign-funded enterprises, and the proportion of private enterprises rose to 21 percent, exceeding that of state-owned enterprises.

According to Zhang Lichuan, head of the Statistics Division of the General Administration of Customs, after China's entry to the WTO, foreign-funded and private enterprises, compared to state-owned and collective enterprises, have shown a stronger capability of adaptation and more vigorous dynamics of growth. In 2005, the import and export volume of foreign-funded enterprises amounted to 58.5 percent of the nation's total, up by 7.7 percentage points over 2001, and that of private enterprises reached \$167.4 billion, up by 18.2 times over 2001, accounting to 11.8 percent of the nation's total, compared to only 1.7 percent in 2001.



Chairman of the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China (ICBC) Jiang Jianqing (right) holds a photo of the opening share price of ICBC, presented by Hong Kong Exchange Chairman Ronald Arculli (left), during a ceremony marking ICBC's trading debut at the Hong Kong Stock Exchange on October 27, 2006. by Paul Yeung

Fiscally Fit Home-Based and Foreign Banks Prepare for Sino Expansion

In the office of Mike Yeung, head of Personal Financial Services for HSBC China (Hong Kong Shanghai Banking Corporation), there hangs a map of China. Illustrated on the map in vivid color is HSBC's strategy for handling personal financial services across the country.

"I show the map to nearly all the journalists who come here for an interview," Yeung says. "It clearly illustrates HSBC China's overall plan for the provision of personal financial service in the country. Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou and Shenzhen, highlighted in red, are currently our most important Chinese markets. These cities already have established branches and centers for providing HSBC Premier services, and we are going to open more branches, sub-branches and Premier centers next year."

Yeung explains that Xiamen, Qingdao, Dalian, Tianjin and a few other cities that are marked in yellow are important targets for market development in 2006. According to the plan, by the end of 2006, HSBC will establish Premier centers in those cities. "By

the end of 2006, when the Renminbi business is completely open to foreign banks, our scope of business will be greatly enlarged."

December 2006 will be a groundbreaking month for China's banking industry. In accordance with conditions laid down during China's WTO entry, the country's financial market will be open to foreign banks from this point forward. The lifting of all restrictions will allow overseas financial institutions to provide an all-round service to Chinese nationals.

Overseas Entry Drives Change

Eleven years have passed since the Asian Development Bank became the first foreign shareholder of a Chinese bank by buying into China Everbright. Since then foreign investors have become increasingly important strategic investors, involved in the operation and management of banks at a local level, and their participation is changing the environment of China's banking industry.

By the end of October 2005, in line with conditions laid down for China's WTO entry, 238 representative offices of 173 banks from 40 countries had been established in 23 cities across China. The general assets of foreign banks in China had reached \$84.5 billion; accounting for some 2 percent of the country's overall total. Areas for cooperation had moved out from the highly attractive credit card business to insurance, financial services, private banking and business funding.

Competition Spurs Banking Development

On October 27, 2006, the capital market in Hong Kong and Chinese mainland saw the listing of the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China, following state-owned Construction Bank of China and Bank of China. Representing the largest financing source in the world in 2006, the move drew attention worldwide. Perhaps more importantly, the listing of A and H shares of the largest commercial bank in China on the market represents a profound development in the banking industry in China.

Over the past five years, China's domestic commercial banks have been actively engaged in attracting foreign capital, employing the expertise, experience, technology and technical know-how of foreign counterparts to enhance their own risk control and capital-generating capability. In the face of stiff foreign competition, banking operations, shareholding systems and corporate governance have all been radically overhauled, and major reforms were carried out in the area of agricultural banking. In the face of foreign pressure, domestic commercial banks still have significant opportunities for growth. They retain the advantages of extensive banking networks, strong capital support, nationwide local customer bases and a profound understanding of local markets. These advantages will ensure that local banks still have the upper hand when foreign banks enter the domestic market in force.

citibank
100
YEARS
IN CHINA
百年在中国

Local residents stand beside a billboard for Citibank at a ceremony in Shanghai to mark the inauguration of Citibank's foreign currency services to Chinese customers on March 21, 2002. Citibank became the first foreign bank to offer banking services to Chinese customers after China's entry to the World Trade Organization (WTO) in December of 2001.



Gas Station Competition

Back in the days before electric lighting, in a clever marketing ploy, Mobil sent nearly all the families of Shanghai a free fully-fueled kerosene lamp. The lamps were a significant improvement over candles, and when their lamps ran out of fuel, local people began queuing to purchase more kerosene. In the 1930s kerosene lamps in China thus became known as "Mobil lamps."

That was another era, but Mobil is still well remembered for its ingenious method of penetrating the Chinese market. Today, Mobil gasoline stations can be seen in many Chinese cities, and Mobil products have become part of everyday Chinese life.

In line with China's WTO entry, the Chinese retail market for finished gasoline products opened to foreign companies on December 11, 2004. In the very beginning, BP, Exxon Mobil, Shell and other international companies operated in China in the form of partnerships. "We want Chinese consumers to know that Shell has arrived and started to offer services," says a Shell spokesman. "Though we don't have many gasoline stations right now, the point is that we have arrived."

BP is the foreign company with the most gasoline stations in China. The company already had a substantial share in the finished gasoline terminal retail market in China two years ago. Gary Dirks, BP regional president in China said that the joint company of BP and PetroChina would change the present operational model for gasoline stations in China. Notably, BP and PetroChina plan to tap the market for convenience stores in gasoline stations, and will provide many more added services. BP has been working actively to change the gasoline station concept, offering gasoline product services, convenience store services and more.

Concurrently, CNPC (China National Petroleum Corporation) and Sinopec (China Petroleum & Chemical Corporation), two traditional forces in this market, have also begun following European and American operational models. More non-gasoline services



June 29, 2005: A Chinese worker stands in front of a petrochemical facility, a joint venture of Sinopec and BP, in Shanghai.



March 17, 2006: A Chinese attendant serves customers at a PetroChina petrol station in Beijing.
by Claro Cortes IV

were offered in their gasoline stations. In addition to sponsoring Formula One and jointly introducing auto-restaurants with McDonald's, they have also started work on sales channels and outlet establishments.

Cooperating with financial institutions, CNPC brought pay-by-card system to more than 8,000 gas stations throughout China. In addition, CNPC and the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China jointly issued Peony-BP and PetroChina, the first credit card that can be swiped in Chinese gasoline stations. The card has all the functions of a Peony card, and when cardholders add gasoline for their vehicles and swipe the card at any of 17,000 CNPC gas stations throughout the country, they receive a cash discount or discount in other forms.

Sinopec doesn't lag behind. It offers a value added service, known as "Thanks Amidst Oil." As the first customer loyalty cultivation plan of the company, it provides one point award for every liter of gasoline purchased at its gasoline stations through swiping cards. Different points may be exchanged for varying gifts. The special promotion helped increase the number of card users to 8 million in more than 13,000 Sinopec gasoline stations throughout the country.

In an already dynamic market, industrial experts believe that the pace of change may appreciably accelerate by the end of 2006. There are a total of 90,000 gasoline stations nationwide. Among these, CNPC accounts for 17,000, Sinopec 30,000, and the balance belongs to the private sector. Once the multinational giants win rights to wholesale, import and export of finished oil products in China, their low-cost finished oil products together with their highly effective logistics system will produce a positive trend for non-state-owned gasoline stations. The number of foreign brand gasoline stations is expected to increase largely due to the joining of the non-state-owned gasoline stations.



October 19, 2006: A storekeeper awaits customers at a retail market in Beijing. by Claro Cortes IV

Retail Strong for International Players



"IKEA is going to move," Liu, a journalist in Beijing told her husband, Deng Jun. "The old store at Madian will close on the 10th this month." Deng, not so excited about the news, replied, "It is going to move away from us, and then it will not be so convenient for us to visit the store."

Much of the furniture in the young couple's apartment was purchased from IKEA. Like many young people who favor IKEA,

they would visit the store whenever they needed furniture or small household adornments. But the store moved away on April 12, 2006.

Ian Duffy, CEO of IKEA Asia Pacific, said that since IKEA entered China seven years ago, the company's China sales realized an annual increase of 30 to 40 percent. For IKEA, China has become one of its fastest growing markets in the world. Located in Wangjing, the largest residential quarter of Beijing, with a population of 300,000, IKEA's new store spans three times the floor space as the former unit. Ian Duffy said that IKEA's prospects in China look strong. He revealed that in the next six years IKEA would enter 10 more cities in China, and the number of sales venues would increase to 10.

Some 10 years ago the first Yaohan store opened in Pudong, Shanghai. Since then foreign retail stores have assertively expanded into the Chinese market. Foreign retail giants, such as Carrefour, Wal-mart, Auchan, Metro and Lotus, have become household names in China. The more important fact is that they all have enjoyed good economic performance in the Chinese market.

Paris-based French retail giant Carrefour was among the first foreign retailers to come to China. The World Top 500 company opened 46 supermarkets in 23 Chinese cities during its ten-year expansion in China. The retailer plans to open 150 additional units in coming years.

Another giant, Wal-mart, also listed as a World Top 500 company, successfully opened its first shopping plaza and membership store in Shenzhen in south China in 1996. Since then it has opened a total of 43 supermarkets in Beijing, Dalian, Jinan, Kunming and other 13 Chinese cities. Plans are to increase the number to 100 in the next few years.

The retail outlets of other well-known overseas brand names such as Auchan, Lotus, B & Q, Metro and others can be seen throughout China.

Thanks to sound economic development in China, the retail trade in China as a whole has enjoyed strong performance. Statistics



The Xinjiekou Outlet of Gome Electrical Appliances in Nanjing. by Dong Jinlin/CFP



Staff prepare to hit the streets on their bicycles to advertise the French retail giant Carrefour's Tongzhou store in Beijing on October 28, 2006. Carrefour currently operates 77 supermarkets in China, and plans to open another 12 in 2006.

from the China General Merchandise Association reveal that the nation realized a gross sales of 252.33 billion yuan in 2004, a 17.7 percent increase over the previous year; and in the same year, the gross sum of retail reached 199.25 billion yuan, a 16.9 percent increase. The figures indicate that the profit-making mode of China retail enterprises still works, and operational effectiveness and ability to profit have experienced a moderate increase.

According to economic forecasts, retail trade in China will experience an annual increase of 8 to 10 percent during the period from 2005 to 2010. Perhaps, to foreign as well as local retail enterprises, multilayer cooperation on the basis of ordered competition will bring about a win-win result for both, and will thus promote a sound and ordered expansion in China's retail segment. ■



Deng Zhonghan participated in the closing bell ceremony at the NASDAQ Exchange on July 27, 2006.

The China Chip.

Text by Ye Zi

One Man's Enduring Innovation and the Gain of a Nation



The four founders of Vimicro at the Great Wall on October 1, 1999, a time of beginning.

“While studying at Berkeley I also worked at IBM. Wherever I was, I always tried to give one-hundred percent,” says Deng. As a senior research fellow at IBM, Deng’s specialty was CMOS GSI (Grand Scale Integration). While there he was awarded several patents and won an IBM Invention Award.

Rebuke to Recognition

In 1999, Deng Zhonghan returned to China and co-founded Vimicro. He headed up the “Starlight China Chip Project,” leading his team in the research, development and industrialization of the Starlight series multimedia digital chip. Chip design is one of the core technologies used for mobile phones, digital cameras and high definition television (HDTV).

Within a small storehouse in “China’s Silicon Valley,” the Zhongguancun area of Beijing, Deng and three associates founded Vimicro. A portion of the startup’s venture capital was supplied by the Ministry of Information Industry, which in 1999 began an incubation program to provide seed money to IT operations in China. The balance of the

Just six years ago, China produced no multimedia digital chips. Today, the “Starlight China Chip,” developed by Beijing-based chip manufacturer Vimicro Corporation, holding full intellectual property rights, ranks number one in the global market. The founder and CEO of Vimicro is 38-year-old Dr. Deng Zhonghan.

financing came from the founders.

A Silicon Valley-style chip innovator, Vimicro started off lean and mean. To save money, the offices were not heated. One of the founders, Zhang Hui, who now serves as vice chairman, recalls that he often worked with his hands chapped by the cold. Conversely, prior to returning to China, Pixim, founded by Deng in Silicon Valley, was facing a bright future, with its market value exceeding US\$150 million. In speaking to his giving up on what could have been an easy future, Deng says, “The ultimate goal of my studies abroad was to learn and return to China.”

In March 2001, Vimicro completed development of the Starlight I chip, and consumer electronics giant Philips became one of the firm’s customers.

Discussing the history of their undertaking, Deng speaks with passion. “At the beginning, it was really tough. In 2001, three of our founders went to promote the sale of our chips in Japan. At Sony a manager interrupted our introduction and said, ‘We, Sony, are the originator of this field. If you want to learn something, go to our exhibitions and look at our products. I’m sorry, I still have a

Born in Jiangsu Province in 1968, Deng Zhonghan entered the University of Science and Technology of China in 1987. He later obtained his Ph.D. in electrical engineering, as well as master’s degrees in economics and physics, from the University of California at Berkeley. In 1997, he founded the Silicon Valley-based microchip maker Pixim, Inc., and served as chairman of the board.



Deng Zhonghan embodies the new generation of Chinese innovators.



Deng Zhonghan wins the 2005 China Top Ten Science and Technology Persons Award. CFP

meeting. I'm busy.' The appointment was set to last one hour, but the manager left us after five minutes."

In 2005, Deng finally realized his dream. Starlight China Chip was adopted by Sony for use in some of their laptop models. "Eventually leading the originator, we finally staked out a place for ourselves. This story is now a spiritual treasure at Vimicro. It still inspires us."

Now Number One

In recent years, Starlight China Chip has recorded successive breakthroughs in the field of core technology. The chip is commonly chosen by top international firms like Samsung, Philips, HP, and Lenovo. It is in demand in 16 countries and regions, including the United States, Japan, South Korea and some European markets. Starlight accounts

for 60 percent of the market share of computer image input chips—the world's leader.

Today Vimicro runs joint laboratories with Tsinghua University and Microsoft. Meanwhile, the firm has established strategic cooperations with Samsung, Philips, HP and many other companies. Thus Vimicro has developed a distribution network throughout the world, and 75 percent of company revenues are derived from the international market.

The "China Chip Project" also won first prize in the National Science and Technology Advancement Awards, sponsored by the State Council, with the award personally given to Deng by Chinese President Hu Jintao in March 2005. Last year, on November 15, Vimicro was listed on the US NASDAQ Stock Exchange, and soon after Premier Wen Jiabao directed that further development of

the "Starlight China Chip" project should be carried out, while persevering in independent invention.

According to an officer with the Ministry of Information Industry, the Starlight multimedia chip promotes not only China's status in the field of core technology, but also furthers the development of related industries.

Now a visiting professor at Tsinghua University and a member of the Standing Committee of the Chinese Association of Science and Technology, Deng also serves as a jury expert of the National 863 Project.

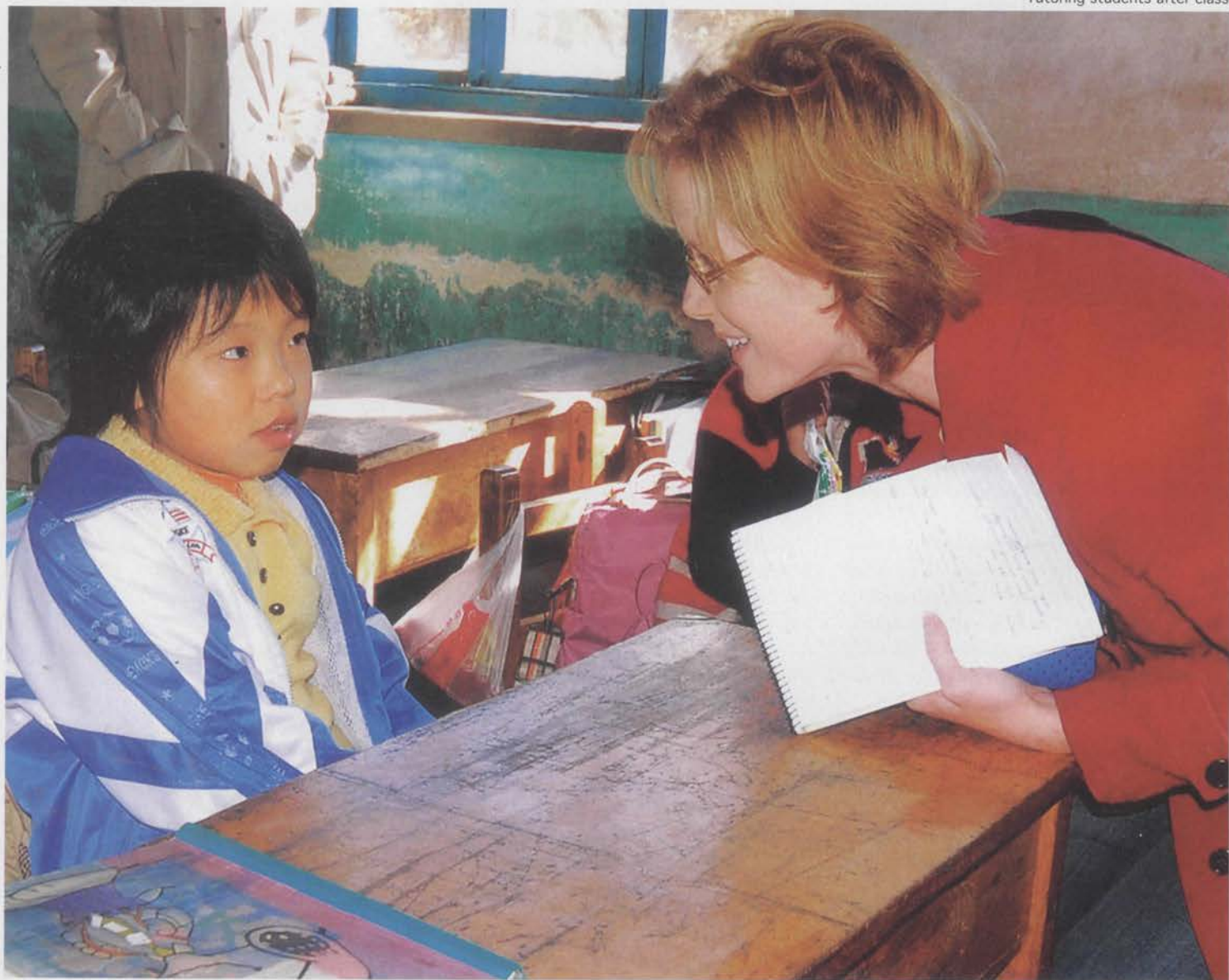
According to Deng, currently all "China Chips" manufactured are the intellectual property of China. ■

From Harvard to Hinterland

Speaking the Common Language of Friendship in Northeast China

■ Text by Wang Yongqiang and Yao Nian
Photographs by Chen Chengcheng

Tutoring students after class.



In early 2006 a young American woman with a ready and perfect smile, Shannon May, came to Huangbaiyu, in China's northeast Liaoning Province. A Harvard graduate, now studying for her doctoral degree at the University of California, she became an English teacher at a local primary school in the small mountain village.

Before Shannon showed up on the scene, most of her students struggled with English, lagging behind other area schools. Now the average overall English score at the school ranks second in the township.

She lives in a rented farmhouse, and has adapted to the local food that previously may have been too salty or too spicy for her. When there is a wedding or funeral in the village, like the native villagers she would pay her respect with a gift, usually money.

In addition to serving as an English teacher, Shannon is fulfilling an assignment issued by a US IT firm, Intel, to conduct research into rural development in China. The Sustainable Development Demonstration Village, a joint project of the China-US Center for Sustainable Development and the Municipal Government of Benxi, is underway in the village. In fact, Shannon volunteers her time to teach the kids English free of charge.

Shannon teaches in a humble classroom, of which the exterior wall surfacing sometimes sheaves off. In winter when this happened she and her students used thick folded paper to fill the gaps between the glass and window frames.

Benefiting from Shannon's teaching, 12-year-old Wang Shicheng scored 80 of a possible 100 on his English examination, where previously he might have only scored about 30. Shannon's graduate thesis at Harvard was on rural education. She has said to her colleagues that the countryside would decide the fate of China, and education would decide the fate of the countryside. During her stay, an important objective was to try to help her students comprehend abstract concepts, which in days past would have been difficult for them to grasp.

Student Wang Shicheng says that when Shannon teaches a word, for example, "basin," she will hold up the object and point to it when pronouncing the word. So he is quick to correctly recall the word. Wang says if he is required to write a composition on her, he will say Shannon is a beautiful aunt, and the two wardrobes she wears in the winter—one



Preparing lessons at home.

Attending a project briefing at the Huangbaiyu Sustainable Development Demonstration Village Project.



gray, one black—are beautiful, too. “Shannon is our friend,” Wang says, “and she plays games with us. Once we had a snowball fight, and the number of boys was less than the girls, so Shannon joined with us. We defeated the girls in the end.”

Shannon cooks for herself and is often seen with blades of grass in hair. She lives in a rented farmhouse, and there her books account for most of her belongings. In addi-

tion to English books, she also keeps some Chinese volumes, such as the *Chinese Cookbook* and *How to Prepare Chinese Dishes*. She keeps few cosmetics, only very simple and common lotions. Though still trying to adapt to Chinese cuisine, she says she relishes in the tasting of new dishes.

Villagers say that Shannon is welcome at every wedding without invitation and, according to Chinese tradition, she presents her

share of money as a congratulation gift to the newlyweds. She would take photos of the newlyweds, and at her own expense had those developed and sent to the couples. Sometimes she would take the stage and serve as hostess. At first, the locals were awed by her, but as time went by they came to love her.

Shannon likes to pose for photos with others. Each time she encountered those who would back away because of their shabby



Autumn 2006: Shannon and Zhe celebrate their wedding in the small mountain village of Huangbaiyu.


clothes or shyness, she would ask them to remain with her as a part of the group photo. She said that people she had met in the village were very kind—perhaps the kindest she had encountered in China.

Shannon will end her mission near the end of 2006. When interviewed by this reporter, she had already begun to pack her luggage. But before she left that small mountain village in northeast China, she married

her boyfriend, Zhe, in a traditional Chinese wedding ceremony.

In her farewell letter, Shannon fondly wrote of the friends she had made and the experiences she had enjoyed. “From you I have learned to make dumplings, heat *kang* (brick bed), gather wild vegetables, farm and drink,” she wrote to her village friends. “These and my experience as an English teacher in the village will be a highlight of

my life. To share my wedding is to celebrate the one year we shared together.”

She has promised to provide a total of 37,500 yuan in grants for middle school graduates in the village. The program will begin next year and will continue five years. Each year a selected middle school graduate in the village will receive an annual grant of 2,500 yuan for three years, so that he or she can continue their high school education. 



According to the local tradition, before the wedding ceremony a member of the bride's family first must comb her hair.



Shannon's kitchen.



Prospective homebuyers. by Yang Duoduo/CFP

The Mortgage As Master

Youthful Dreams Beget Dread
In Oppression by Debt

■ Text by Wang Shuo

Li Ping, 28, is perhaps the perfect representation of China's newly minted and newly burdened breed of Yups (Young Urban Professionals) striving to make their way successfully up the parallel ladders of career and society in cities like the nation's capital.

In 1997, Li graduated from his hometown high school in Shanxi Province and went on to university in Beijing. Like many other youngsters, he fell in love with the capital and considered the city an ideal place to

pursue his dreams. Four years after graduation, he joined the professional white collar staff of a publishing house. Then it seemed his 5,000-yuan monthly salary would allow him a life of contentment and security, with no money worries. And it did. Laying out 1,000 yuan a month for rent, most of what cash remained he was able to either save or blow on enjoying his spare time. This essentially worry-free existence lasted about three years—until he met a beautiful young woman and fell in love.





Considering a real estate marketing billboard in Wuhan.

After a year of dating they decided to marry. And it was at that moment of decision that Li Ping began to worry. It is the traditional Chinese way: A new marriage calls for a new home. After discussing the matter with his parents, Li decided to resolve the issue of housing before the planning of a wedding. So in January 2005 he started down the arduous path to home ownership.

Fortunately, parents on both sides of the pending marriage supported the couple with a collective total of 500,000 yuan, which was added to Li's own savings of 70,000 yuan. But after a few weeks of looking into the seemingly countless housing projects across Beijing, he was disheartened to discover that what he thought a considerable sum was far from enough to purchase the sort of home he

ing and deliberation, they settled on a 135-square-meter condominium for 1.07 million yuan, supplemented by a loan of 500,000 yuan to be paid back in 20 years at 3,500 yuan a month.

On September 7, 2005, Li Ping signed the purchase contract, and so began the two-decade-long process of mortgage repayment.

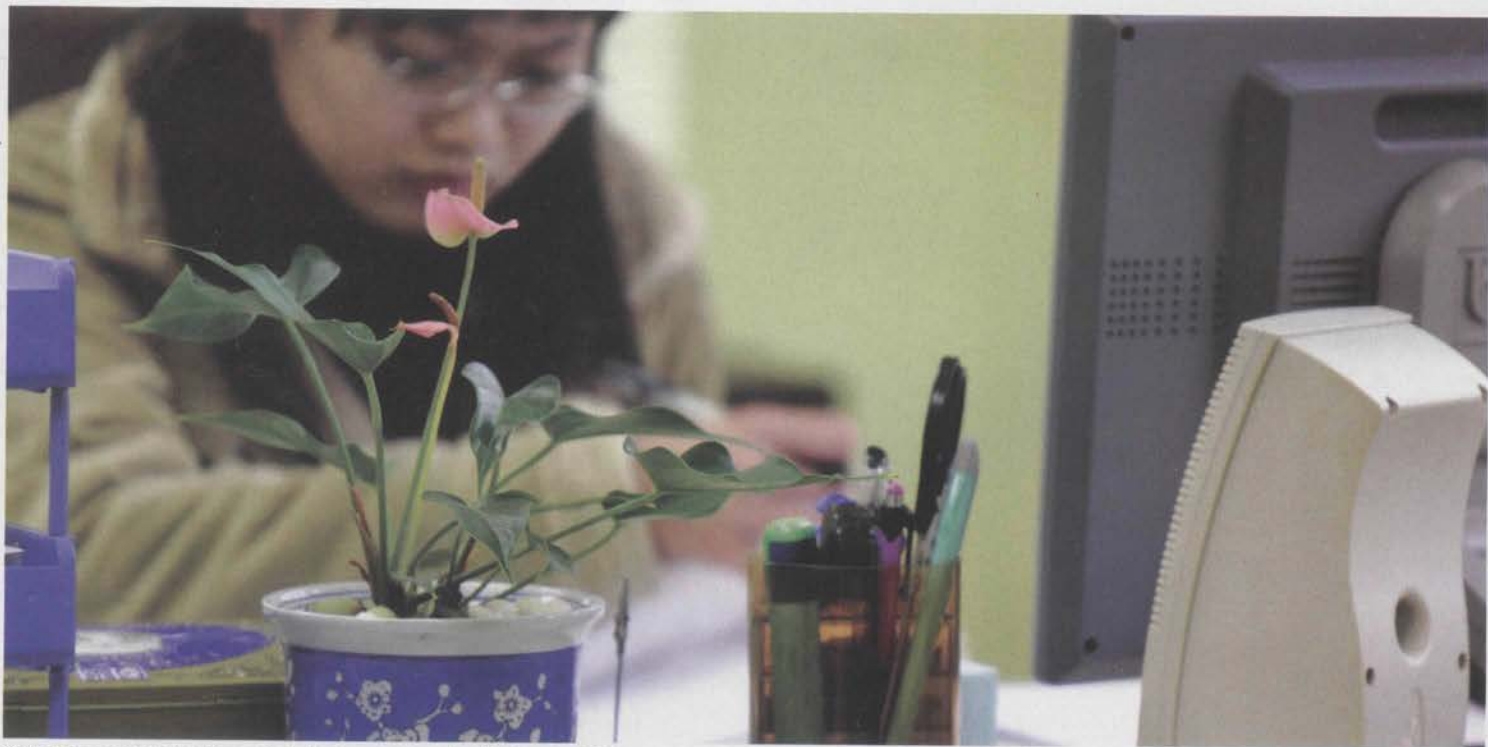
In Beijing alone, in the first 11 months of 2005, some 254,000 homes were purchased, 10 percent fewer than during the same period of 2004. This drop was attributed to the rise in interest rates and the institution of the macro-control policy.

Of the ever-increasing number of home buyers, many find themselves in the same position as Li Ping. They possess a certain financial capability, but an overlarge propor-

of these young adults, the cause of their situation is also largely attributed to high housing prices, which are directly or indirectly set by real estate developers, banks, and speculators.

But there are alternatives; upscale homes are not the only option for those on the hunt for housing. Inexpensive apartments are plentiful and the pre-owned market is booming. Housing developers do not push people to sign the purchase contract, and banks do not drive anybody into a mortgage loan. Unfortunately, when given the option of accepting a moderate house at an affordable price or an extravagant place at a high cost, those destined to become loan laborers choose the latter.

Many who make this choice share some



Young homeowners work to satisfy their mortgage. by Wu Luming/CFP

and his bride desired.

Considering Beijing's traffic conditions, Li hoped to buy a home close to his downtown office; and since the parents of both couples did not live in Beijing and would later relocate to the city to be with their children, the couple needed a large house. However, the average price for places they liked ran about 10,000 yuan per square meter. After six months of fruitless house-hunting Li was at wit's end, so the couple decided to buy a more expensive home with the aid of a bank-supplied mortgage. After much hand wring-

tion of their income goes to satisfy their mortgage obligation. Some in the media have taken to referring to this particular financially-burdened segment of society as "Loan Laborers" (as in their hours at work go primarily to satisfy the demands of their mortgage).

Cause and Effect

Recently compiled demographic numbers reveal that in China the so-called "loan labor" segment now numbers about 20 million. Besides the humble financial status

common characteristics. They are young, with fairly high incomes, a higher-than-average level of expense, and a certain sense of vanity. Their tastes and pursuit of a quality lifestyle exceeds the capacity of their salary. So their consuming eyes drift to top-grade condominiums and garden villas. Neglecting the Chinese traditional philosophy of "acting according to one's capability," they tend to unrealistically compare themselves to others and follow their sense of vanity, rather than common sense. Unfortunately, in the course of pursuing their desire for expen-

sive homes and cars, some in this younger generation—many of whom are the product of doting parents—often draft their entire family into the loan labor ranks.

The Limited Lifestyle

According to many such loan laborers, their lifestyles can be delineated to “before” and “after” the purchase of a home.

After executing the contract with the housing developer, Li Ping began to otherwise live in a more economical way. He would take the subway and forgo the taxi; when practical he would take the bus and forgo the subway; and when walking was possible, he would forgo the bus. Excepting special circumstances, he would eat his meals

their home, while the large majority felt a sense of “ever-increasing burden,” and many simply regretted their decision.

After graduating from university in 2003, Zhang Li landed a job as a journalist, earning 4,000 yuan a month. In April 2005, she bought a home of her own, but the monthly mortgage payment consumes about three-fourths of her salary. “In the first several months, I could hardly adapt to this,” Zhang says. “On the 20th of every month, I had to take a thick envelope of money to the bank, and what remained was so little. This sometimes led me into debt. After purchasing that house, I desperately tried to contribute more articles, and gradually I developed chronic anxiety.”

many Yups who previously enjoyed a relatively content lifestyle have become cash poor. The large majority of these people are about 30 years of age, well-educated, and striving to advance their careers and lifestyle in large cities. It is their education, competence, and ambition that will create their future. But for a comparably large house, they in effect became the offsite laborers of banks and land developers, and what awaits them is a lowering quality of life and increasing stress. And that’s not all. As these young people struggle down the long road of loan repayment while trying to allocate capital to the needs of life, they must still plan on satisfying the obligation of supporting aging parents.



A “loan laborer” repays his mortgage via ATM. by Cao Zhizheng/CFP

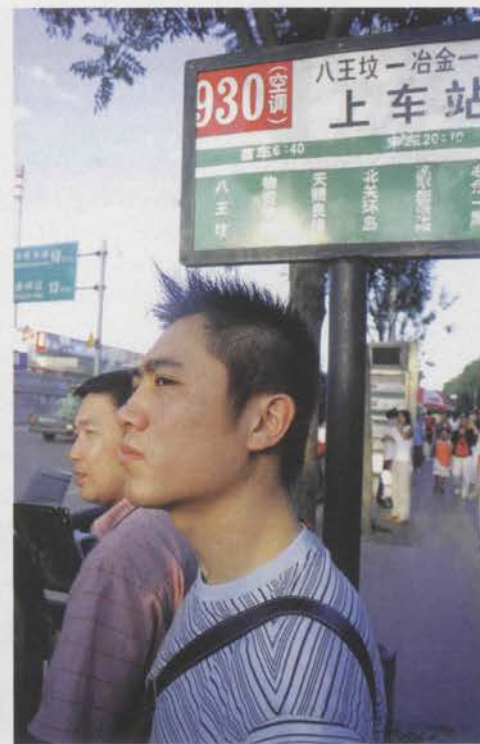
at home. And when dining out, he would eat only fast food. He neither accepted dinner invitations nor invited others for meals. Today all his home illumination is produced by energy-saving lights and the brightness of his computer screen is adjusted to the dimmest setting. But despite all these economic precautions, his previous optimism has been replaced by “depression, worry, and perplexity,” Li says.

According to a survey of mortgage holders, less than 30 percent said they were happier after the loan-dependent purchase of

Like Zhang Li, many other loan laborers are afflicted with mental stress, and a recent survey reveals that most of those with home mortgages are worried to varying degrees. More than 30 percent of mortgage holders have become slaves to that loan. They don’t travel or enjoy even marginal-priced recreational excursion; they live in dread of an interest rate hike, sickness, and unemployment.

A Frugal Future

Due to being burdened by bank loans,



Buses are the required, if not always the preferred, mode of transportation for “loan laborers.” by Wu Ning/CFP

To prepare for the further advancement of his career, Li Ping took a part-time post-graduate program. The work-to-school lifestyle exhausted him, but due to his mortgage obligations, he could not cut back on hours at his relatively well-paid job to devote more attention to school.

“Finally, you find that you spend all your life struggling simply for a house,” said Zhang Li. “All your ideals and pursuits are sacrificed, and what we can contribute to our aging parents will be much less.”

Not a Forbidden City

Noble Homes of Past Royalty Remain in Reverence

■ Text by Wang Linye

Photographs by Wang Linye and Gao Qiao

A ramble through the *hutongs* in Beijing will sometimes lead one to a large red wooden gate with golden metalwork. During a colorful period of Chinese history, these traditional portals accented the surrounding small gray gates of the more typical courtyard dwellings (*siheyuan*). These were once the mansions of princes born to a ruling dynasty centuries ago.

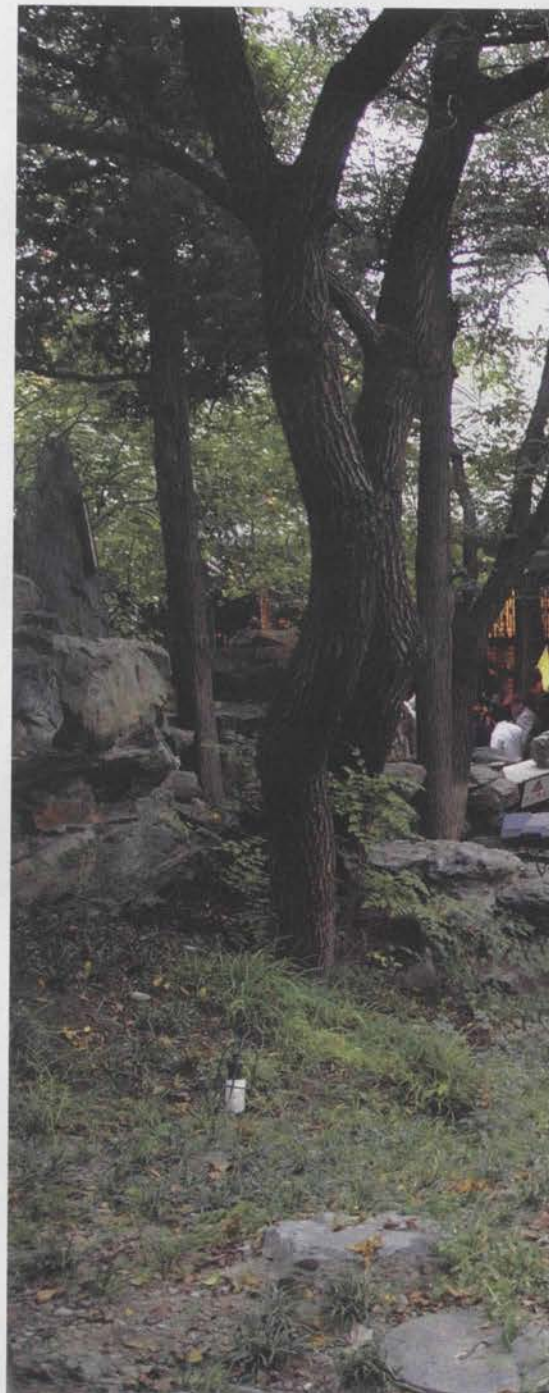
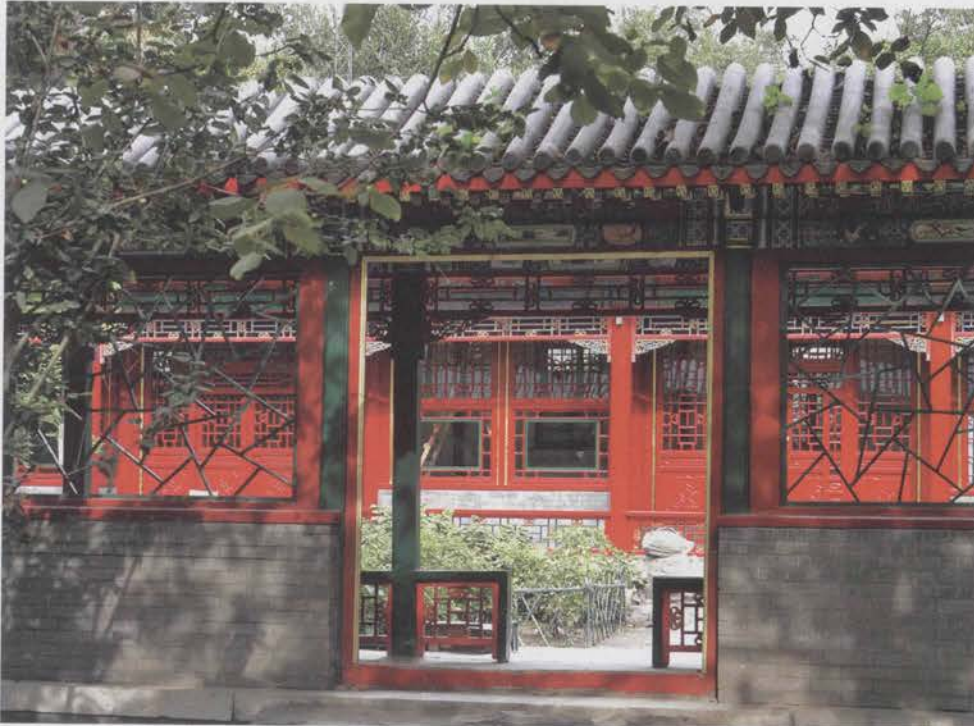
Such a mansion is known as a “wangfu” in Chinese. “They are something between the Forbidden City and the ordinary courtyard

dwellings, and bear features of both,” says Shi Shuqing, a researcher with the National Museum of China.

A Two-Dynasty History

One of Beijing’s main shopping districts, the famous Wangfujing Street was named after the 10 *wangfus* built in the area during the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644). But today nothing remains of these structures. The remaining *wangfus* in Beijing were all built in

The Garden of Prince Gong’s Mansion. by Wang Xiaoming/CFP



the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911). At the prime of the Qing Dynasty, there were more than 50 *wangfus* in downtown Beijing. Because of rampant demolishing and reconstruction, only 22 remain today, scattered among the *hutongs* around Shichahai and Beihai Lakes, two of the capital's many modern nightlife districts.

A *wangfu*, the size of which varied according to the rank of its owner, was traditionally built with living quarters and garden. The difference between the Forbidden City, an emperor's palace, and a prince's com-

pound lies mainly in the number, height and size of buildings in the palace. The color of a roof was part of the architectural art, as well as a symbol of feudal ranking. Roofs on the princes' mansions could only be covered with green glazed tiles, while golden glazed tiles shine in Forbidden City. Among other restrictions, patterns of a dragon head were not allowed on a prince's mansion.

The gardens of *wangfus* were as important as the living quarters. They combined the magnificence of royal palaces in North China and the elegance of Suzhou gardens

in South China.

A Structure of Status

Beijing is a far-famed historical and cultural city. The *wangfus*, with their history dating back more than 300 years, are a key part of the city. According to Wang Daocheng, expert on history of Qing Dynasty, *wangfus* were a product of the life of nobility of Qing Dynasty, and also of the culture and political system of the time, thus they

Visitors can still taste the glory of *wangfu* of its old days.





In the garden of Prince Gong's Mansion, a guide in costume of the Qing Dynasty explains history to visitors.

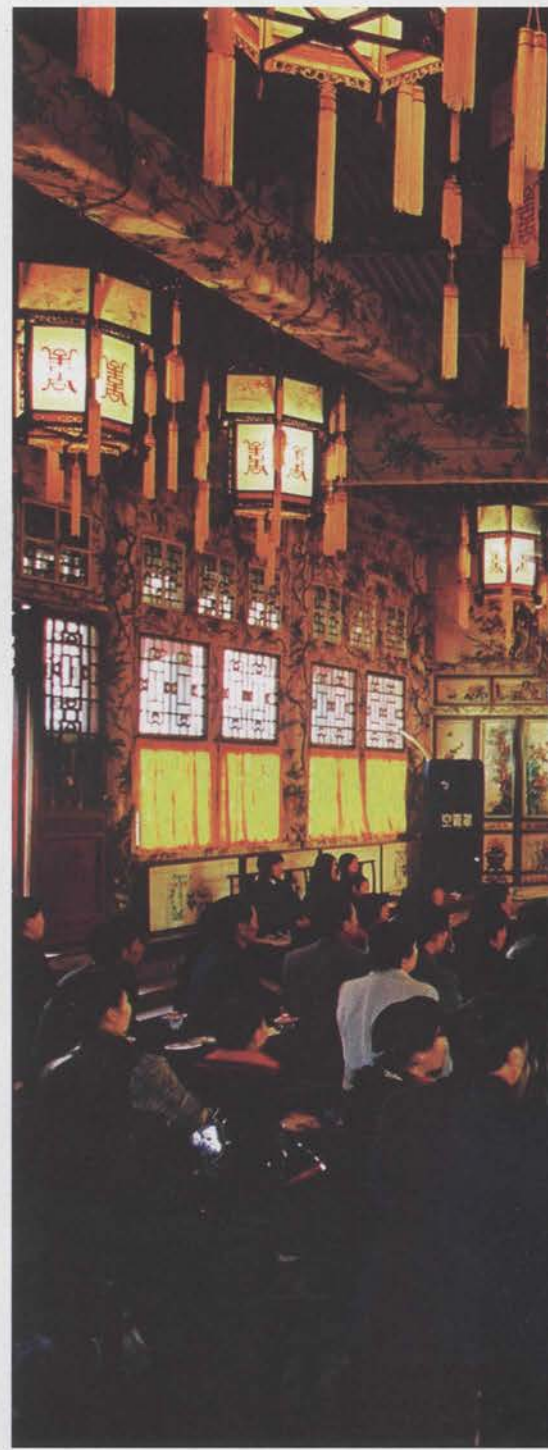


In front of Prince Chun's Mansion, pedicab drivers also serve as visitors' guides.

have very high historical value. Meanwhile, they provide valuable material evidence of architectural art, so also have important architectural value. Moreover, in literal circles, scholars studying intensively on the classical literary masterpiece *Dream of Red Chamber* consider the garden of Prince Gong's Mansion to be the chief source of Daguan-yuan (Grand View Garden) in the novel.

More than three centuries have passed.

Wangfus have incurred some damage over time, but they remain in use as schools, hospitals, residential areas and more. Among these, the best preserved may be Prince Gong's Mansion. Renowned historiogeographer Hou Renzhi says, "One Prince Gong's Mansion, half of the history of Qing Dynasty." Built in 1776, Prince Gong's Mansion has passed to three different owners. Two are illustrious figures of the Qing Dy-



nasty: One is Emperor Qianlong's favorite courtier He Shen, the other is Prince Gong, alternatively known as Yixin, Minister of Legislation during Emperor Tongzhi's reign. Hence the name of the mansion.

Preserving the Palace

On December 5, 2005, a reconstruction



The Grand Theater inside Prince Gong's Mansion. CFP


of Prince Gong's Mansion of the largest scale in history began, with a total investment of 270 million yuan. Meanwhile, the country's first museum on *wangfus* is also being assembled inside, and is due to open before the 2008 Olympics in Beijing.

Historical documentation on *wangfus* is rare, having been lost over time. Nevertheless, *wangfus* are treasure houses of art. Their original princely owners, who had time and

money to spare, were often enthusiastic art collectors. Unfortunately, most of the precious jade artifacts, furniture and paintings that they collected were lost. But these are today being sought by the government.

According to Wang Daocheng, an expert on history of Qing Dynasty, we must incorporate the protection of *wangfus* into the system of building up Beijing as a historic and cultural city. Related laws and statutes should

be made to ensure the protection.

Today, 600 years have passed. *Wangfus* in Beijing still tell us the story of Ming and Qing Dynasties, from golden age to downfall. They show us colorful historic sceneries. If we protect and make proper use of these structures, they may well tell stories for a thousand years to come. 

Building Bonds With Kenya

Text and photographs
by Xu Xun



Mwai Kibaki, President of Kenya, delivers a speech upon the Launch of Kenya's Tourism Marketing Campaign to invite more Chinese people to visit his country.

The winner, Huang Chengzi, the first runner-up, Liu Zijiao, and the second runner-up, Qiu Ye, of the Miss Chinese Comos Pageant 2006 could not have imagined that one day they would be associated with the nation of Kenya, let alone be the country's tourism image ambassadors. But so this has come to be.

In reflection of the operative theme "Friendship, Peace, Cooperation and Development," of the Beijing Summit of Sino-African Cooperation Forum, on November 3, one day before the opening of the event, the Launch of Kenya's Tourism Marketing Campaign was held at the Beijing Prime Hotel. To promote Kenya's tourism and friendship between the two nations, the newly crowned Miss Chinese Comos Pageant 2006 of the Phoenix TV Huang Chengzi, first runner-up Liu Zijiao and second runner-up Qiu Ye, together with Miss World Kenya and



Miss Tourism Kenya, were designated as Kenya Tourism Image Ambassadors. Mwai Kibaki, President of Kenya, who was in Beijing for the summit, also attended the ceremony.

Located in the east of Africa, the Republic of Kenya is one of the oldest known regions to be inhabited by humans. Fossils of human skulls dating back 2.5 million years ago were unearthed from this land.

China and Kenya established diplomatic

relationships on December 14, 1963. In recent years, the bilateral trade volume has steadily expanded. According to statistics from Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China, in the first six months of 2006, trade volume between the two countries reached \$253.02 million.

Tourism is a pillar industry of Kenya. Attractions include national parks, lakes in Nairobi, Tsavo, Amboseli, Nakuru, Masai Mara, the East African Rift Valley, Mount



Three Miss Chinese Comos Pageant 2006, together with Miss World Kenya and Miss Tourism Kenya, attend the launch ceremony as Kenya Tourism Image Ambassadors.



The first runner-up, 22-year-old Liu Zijiao, dances with a Kenyan artist from the Folk Dance Assemblé in Nairobi, capital of Kenya.

Kenya, and sea beaches of Mombasa.

At the launch celebration, the head of the Kenya Tourism Administration Bureau presented silk ribbons to the three Miss Chinese Comos Pageant 2006 winners. Kenya's tourism department made Miss Chinese Comos Pageant 2006 the tourism ambassadors of their country. Kenya's move shows its confidence and effort in expanding the share of outbound tourism market of China. Since there is a "Overseas Tour" of annual Miss Chinese Comos Pageant, Kenya Tourism Administration Bureau especially issued invitations, hoping that the overseas tour of Miss Chinese Comos Pageant 2007 will be in Kenya for the contestants to experience the exotic Kenya flavor and charming people. Huang Chengzi, Liu Zijiao, and Qiu Ye, along with Miss World Kenya and Miss Tourism Kenya, will also go to Kenya to promote cultural exchange and tourism of the two countries.

After the launch ceremony, Huang Chengzi, Liu Zijiao, and Qiu Ye accepted an interview from a *China Pictorial* reporter. From Chengdu City, the 19-year-old winner, Huang Chengzi, says to *China Pictorial* that a country with beautiful natural scenery and rich resources, Kenya combines perfectly the wilderness and modernism. She wishes to ride camels on Kenya's sea beaches.

The second runner-up, 19-year-old Qiu Ye from Chongqing Municipality, says that as an image ambassador of Kenya, she would like to present this beautiful country to Chinese tourists. "Kenya people are also very willing to learn more about China. As Miss Chinese Comos Pageant 2006, the three of us would like to be act as a mirror for Kenya people to better understand China. I am sure our visit to Kenya will be a special experi-




Posing for a picture with Chinese child actors.



Mwai Kibaki, President of Kenya, announces the opening of the Launch of Kenya's Tourism Marketing Campaign.

ence," says Qiu.

The first runner-up, 22-year-old Liu Zijiao, who lives in Australia, tells the reporter that just before the interview, she was learning the Kenyan language so that she could welcome the girls of Kenya, and they were learning the Chinese language to welcome her. "It is our honor to be part of the effort to promote Sino-Africa relationship. In the past, I often think of wild animals when talking about Africa. However, actually there are a lot more unknown things which need to be explored in this continent. We should do more to learn about Africa. A newly explored tourism market, Kenya wishes to promote more exchanges with China and the space for Sino-Africa communication is huge," says Liu. 



Huang Chengzi (right), Liu Zijiao (middle) and Qiu Ye (left).

Treasure of Terrain

An Urban Park of Another Sort

■ *Text by Zhang Rong*



On the occasion of the Second International Geoparks Conference held in Belfast, Northern Ireland, on September 18, 2006, the Beijing Fangshan International Geopark (BFIG) joined the World Geopark Network of UNESCO. Jointly developed by Fangshan District of Beijing and Laishui and Laiyuan Counties of Hebei Province, BFIG was highly praised by visiting experts for its rich geologic resources, beautiful natural environment, advantageous geographical location and favorable biological diversity. Today Beijing is the world's only capital city to have within its shared borders a UNESCO-recognized world geopark facility.

Gift of Geography

About 50 kilometers southwest of downtown Beijing, BFIG is located at the meeting point of the Taihang and Yanshan Mountains. The designated area shares the earth of Fangshan District of Beijing, and Laishui and Laiyuan Counties of Baoding City, Hebei Province. The 954-square-kilometer geopark spans an area of 490 square kilometers in Beijing, and 464 square kilometers in Hebei. The principal area of the geopark is 131 kilometers, running from east to west, and 76 kilometers running from south to north.

The site comprises one World Cultural Heritage site, four national geoparks, three national forest parks, six national priority

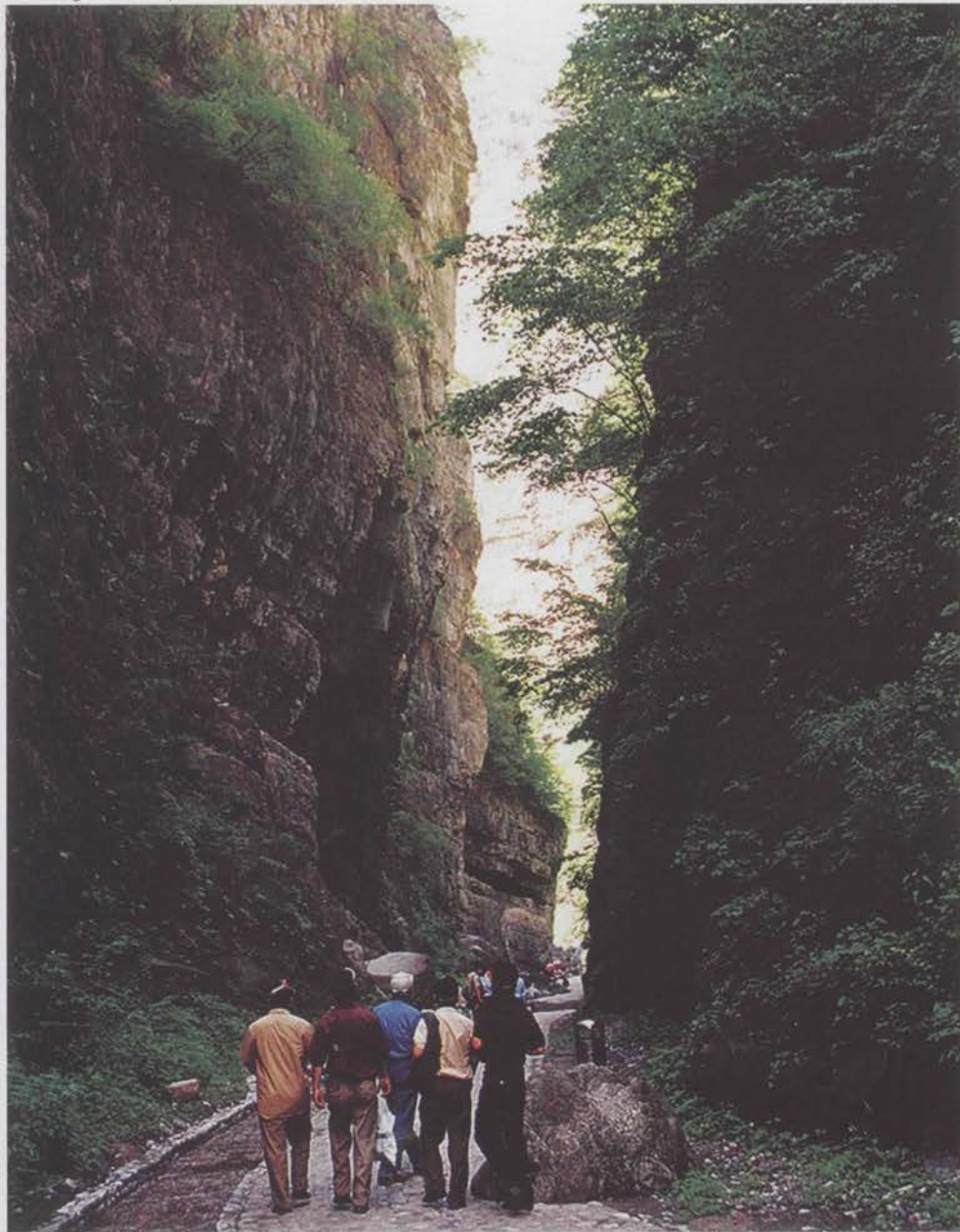
protected cultural relics, and two national key scenic spots. Typical of Northern China's karst landforms, here are underground dissolved cavern networks, granite and marble landforms, fossils of ancient humans and extinct plants and animals. These elements of nature evidence ecological evolution over the past several hundred million years.

A Record Most Rare

BFIG comprises eight districts: Peking Man Site at Zhoukoudian, Shihua Karst Caves Sight-Seeing Area; Shidu Karst Canyon Tourism Spots; Shangfang Mountain-Yunju Temple Religious Culture Site; Shenglian Mountain Sight-Seeing Area; Baihua Mountain-Baicao Bank Eco-Tourism Spot; Yesanpo Tourism Area in Laishui County; and Baishi Mountain Tourism Area.

The only site in the world to have been the ancient homeland of three distinctly different phases of developing humans, the Peking Man Site at Zhoukoudian holds human fossils dating back 500 thousand, 100 thousand and 18 thousand years. These represent a relatively complete array of human evolution.

Baili Gorge at Yesanpo.



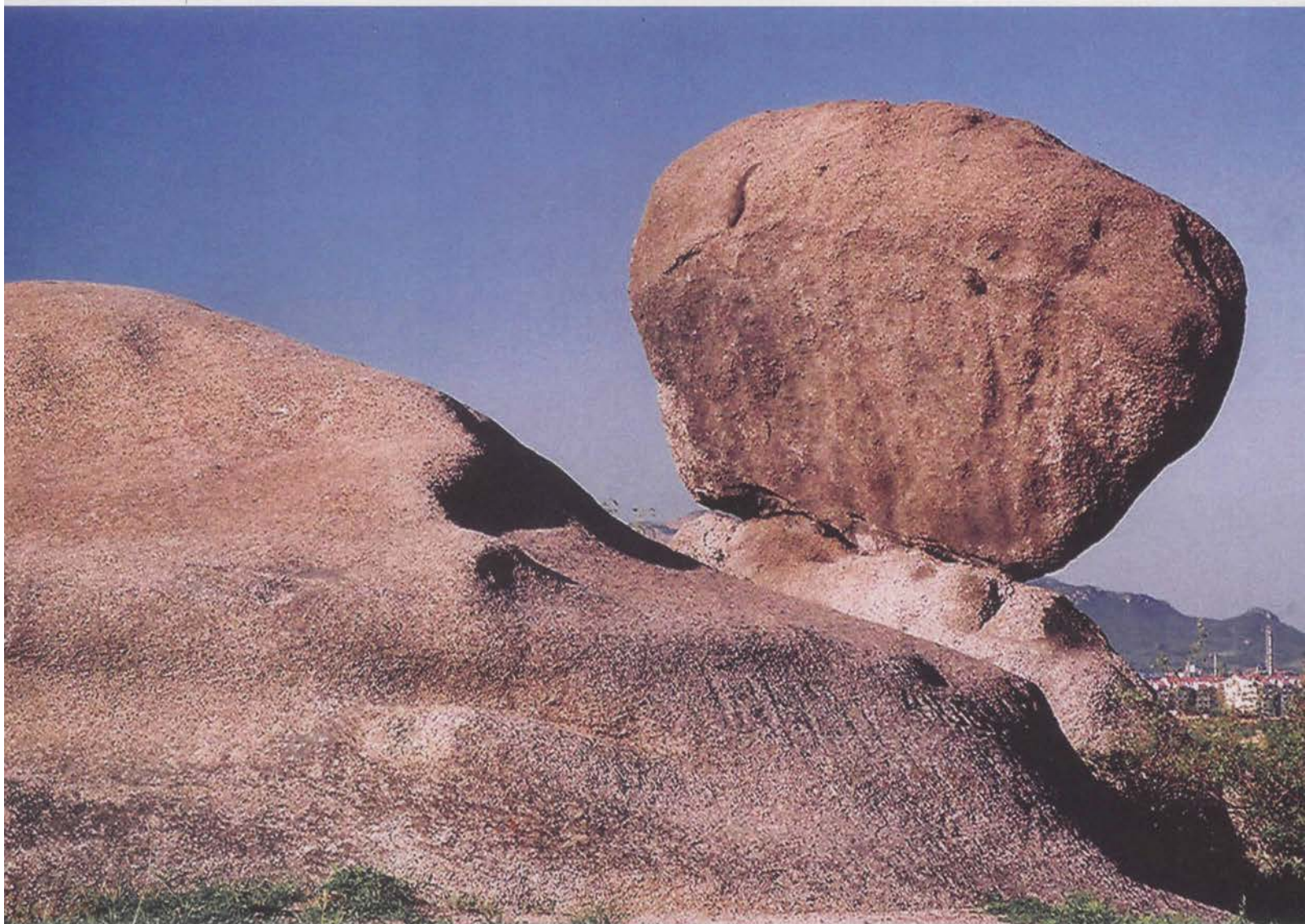
Volvox Stromatolites.



Tazhuang (Pagoda-Shaped) Mountain.







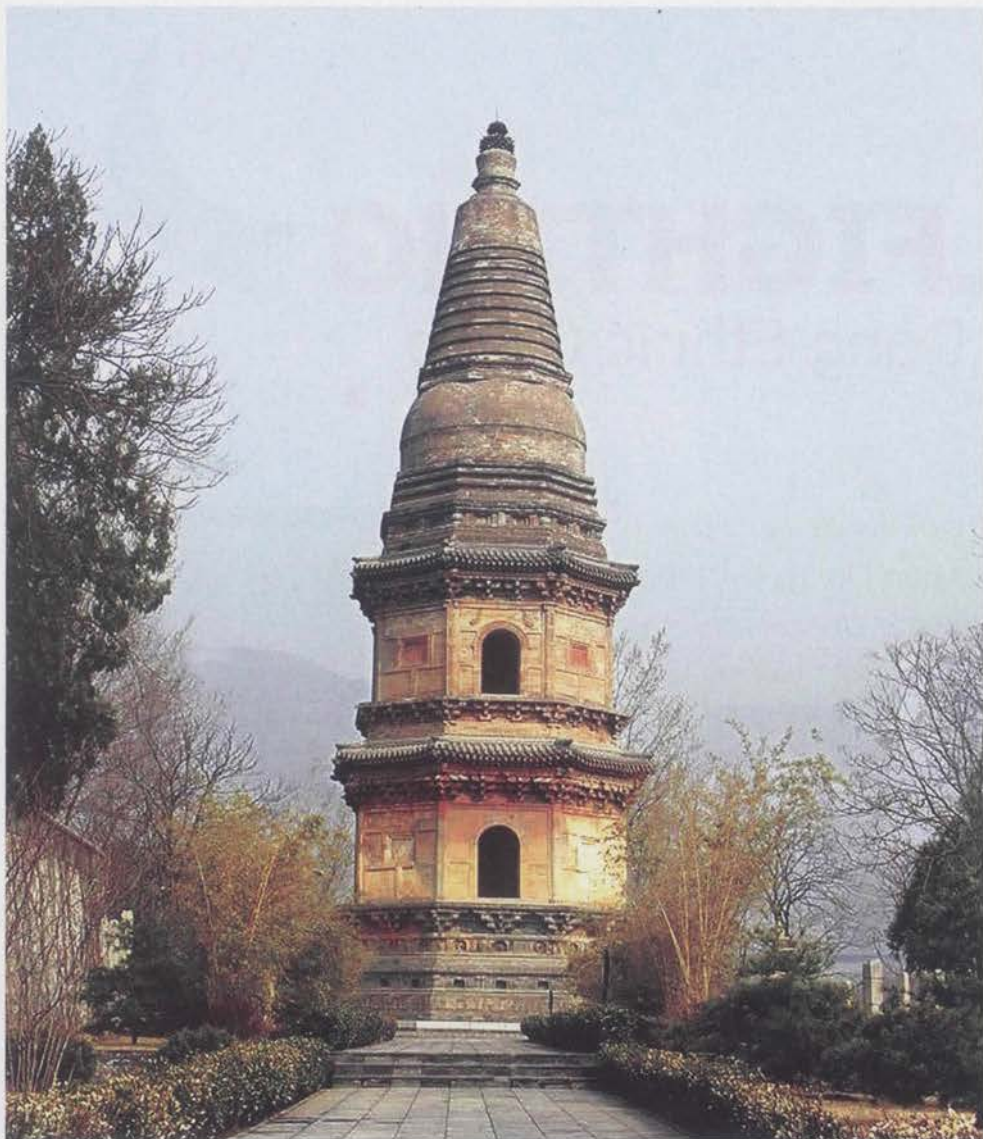
Mushroom Rock.



An exhibition hall of ape men at Zhoukoudian. by An Dong/CFP.

BFIG, home to rare relics representing the evolution of ancient humans and extinct plants and animals, now serves as a valuable research base of palaeoanthropology, Paleolithic archaeology and Quaternary Geology. In 2005, UNESCO expert W. Eder praised BFIG as an invaluable site incorporating touchable evolutions of geology, ancient extinct lives and human culture.

Shihua Karst Caves Sight-Seeing Area includes five complexes: Shihua Cave; Yinhu Cave; Kongshui Cave; Qingfeng Cave; and Jimao Cave. A typical karst cave of semi-dry and semi-humid region, Shihua Cave is endowed with a vast variety of chemical deposits. Within its walls Yuenai Rock was first discovered in China. Yinhu Cave, formed by calcite crystals, is considered a national treasure. Together with more than 100 other caves, they compose the largest karst cave



Yunju Temple. by Li Yang/CFP

group in North China. And the karst cave formation in northern China is a research base for neotectonic movement, once serving as home for ancient humans.


With eroded structural landforms as its main feature, the Shidu Karst Canyon Tourism Spots are endowed with flourishing forests, a well-developed canyon and steep peaks. At the bottom of the canyon is a riverbed with permanent flows. Along the river's sharp turns, broad and level sand banks have been formed.

A typical ancient karst landform, Shangfang Mountain features karrens, ablation funnels and buttes on the surface, while underground sinkholes, quaquaversal karst caves, layers of karst caves, pinch-and-swell form karst caves. Etched on rocks, paper and wooden boards, three special kinds of Buddhist scriptures in Yunju Temple have been listed

for application among the UNESCO's World Cultural Heritage. Presently, more than 10,000 scripture-engraved rocks dating to the Liao and Jin Dynasties are still kept in the crypt under the South Tower of the temple. Meanwhile, the Cangjing Cave on Shijing Hill houses 4,000 such rocks of Sui and Tang Dynasties.

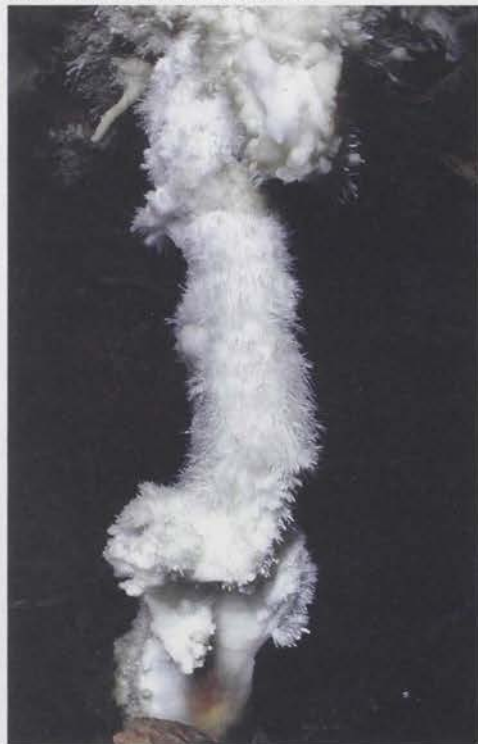
The Yesanpo Tourism Area in Laishui County, Baishi Mountain Tourism Area and Shidu Karst Canyon Tourism Spots in Fangshan District belong to the same geologic and geomorphic unit. Shixuan Gorge in Yesanpo, 23 kilometers long, is famous for its 10 cliffs in various shapes. Baishi Mountain in total is of a two-layer structure. The granite mass exhibits a leveling off of ridges and peaks, and through the millenniums of efflorescence, erosion and corrosion, grand marble ridges and peaks have been shaped.

Traces of rare faunas and floras, as well as ancient humans are also present in the geopark. From the archaic rocks to quaternary deposit, the geopark has experienced an integrated earth history. From stromatolites of the early lives to today's mammals, the geopark witnessed evolution of species over the course of hundreds of millions of years.

It is a rarity in the world that evolutions of geology, biology, ancient humans and ancient civilizations are embodied so systematically and are so well integrated within in a single place. And so the Beijing Fangshan International Geopark is regarded as a precious record of the Earth's evolving ecosphere. 



Silver Fox at Yinhu (Silver Fox) Cave.



BULLFIGHTING

Of the Dong Ethnic Group

■ Text by Zhao Yue

The Year 2006 marks the 50th anniversary of the founding of Qiandongnan Miao and Dong Autonomous Prefecture. Established in 1956, and designated by the United Nations as one of the two Ethnic Group Culture Protection Zones in China, the prefecture accommodates more than one million Dong, nearly half the population of this fascinating people in China.



Follow up to victory. CFP

In the Dong Autonomous Prefecture, bullfighting is a celebrated event and a very popular form of entertainment among the native Dong people. Amid a scene full of ethnic color and energy, neighboring villagers meet to compete in the broad open space selected as the venue. And the games begin.

Qiandongnan has its own distinct history of bullfighting comprised of particular customs. Unlike the Western style of bullfighting, in which a matador takes on a charging bull, Qiandongnan bullfighting is literally that: Two bulls fighting. In many parts of the prefecture, bullfights take place each month. A grand event, the native people typically take a break from their farming to enjoy the bovine competition.

Most of the fighting bulls are supported by a village collectively, but some large and wealthier families are able to raise and support their own animal contenders. Purchased for a handsome sum, these animals are pampered and free from farm work. The bovine youngsters begin their fight training at the age of five or six, receiving punishment when losing and being granted awards when winning. A good fighting bull may continue his sporting career for up to 16 years. To beef up and gain strength, two weeks before a contest a fighting bull will be fed plenty of glu-

A hard-fought match up. by Wu Dongjun/CFP

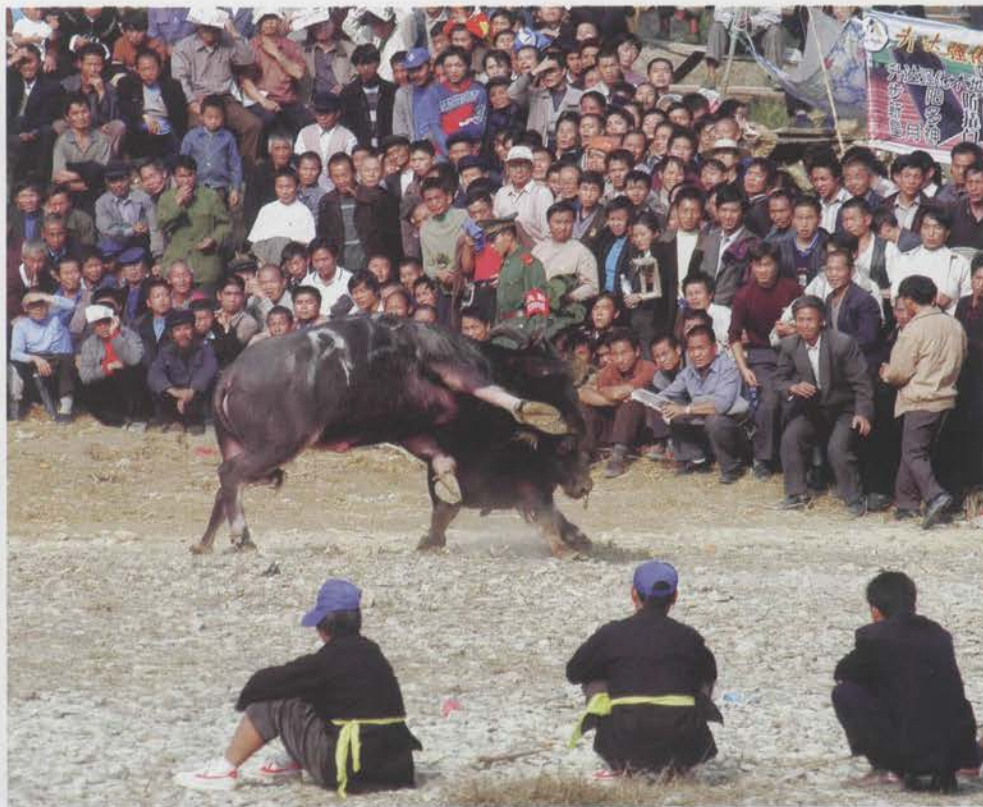


tinous rice and raw eggs. Very often, a bullfight is considered not only a contest between the animals, but also a friendly competition between villages.

In the past, when a fight was announced, bull owners would seek out their rivals on their own. If the inviting party and the invited party agreed to a fight, the competition would begin. However, back then some bulls would fail to be matched with opponents and could only be taken home to await the next match. That was then. Today the width of a bull's horns is measured and by this method all fighters are slotted and classified in preparation for a match. Then within their respec-



Battling bovines at rest. by Chen Gengsheng/CFP



Large audiences turn out for the big fight. by Wu Dongjun/CFP



tive category the owners draw lots to determine their rival.

Before the fight begins, some bulls are fed with rice wine to bolster their courage and strength. If a bull remains undefeated for an entire year, he is designated as the "overlord." And when it comes time for another fight, the villagers will hold a sign over the honored beast that reads "Overlord."

After three rounds of blasting firecrackers, the two bulls of contending villages stride down from two sides of a hill into the huge open space. Young people from the two competing villages lead the bulls, holding their ropes while putting dance moves into their walk to further energize the atmosphere. After some preparation, the handlers release their bulls. Very often, with heads lowered the two bulls will immediately rush each other, colliding with great force and a tremendous slamming of heads and horns. Together with the audiences' applause and cheers, that booming sound adds to the myriad noises within the hills. The bulls themselves typically fight hard to not yield a single step.

If one bull loses the field and takes flight, the contest becomes even more exciting, as the victor chases after. If a winner is not decided for too long a time, the owners may wield bamboo whips and ropes lassoed to

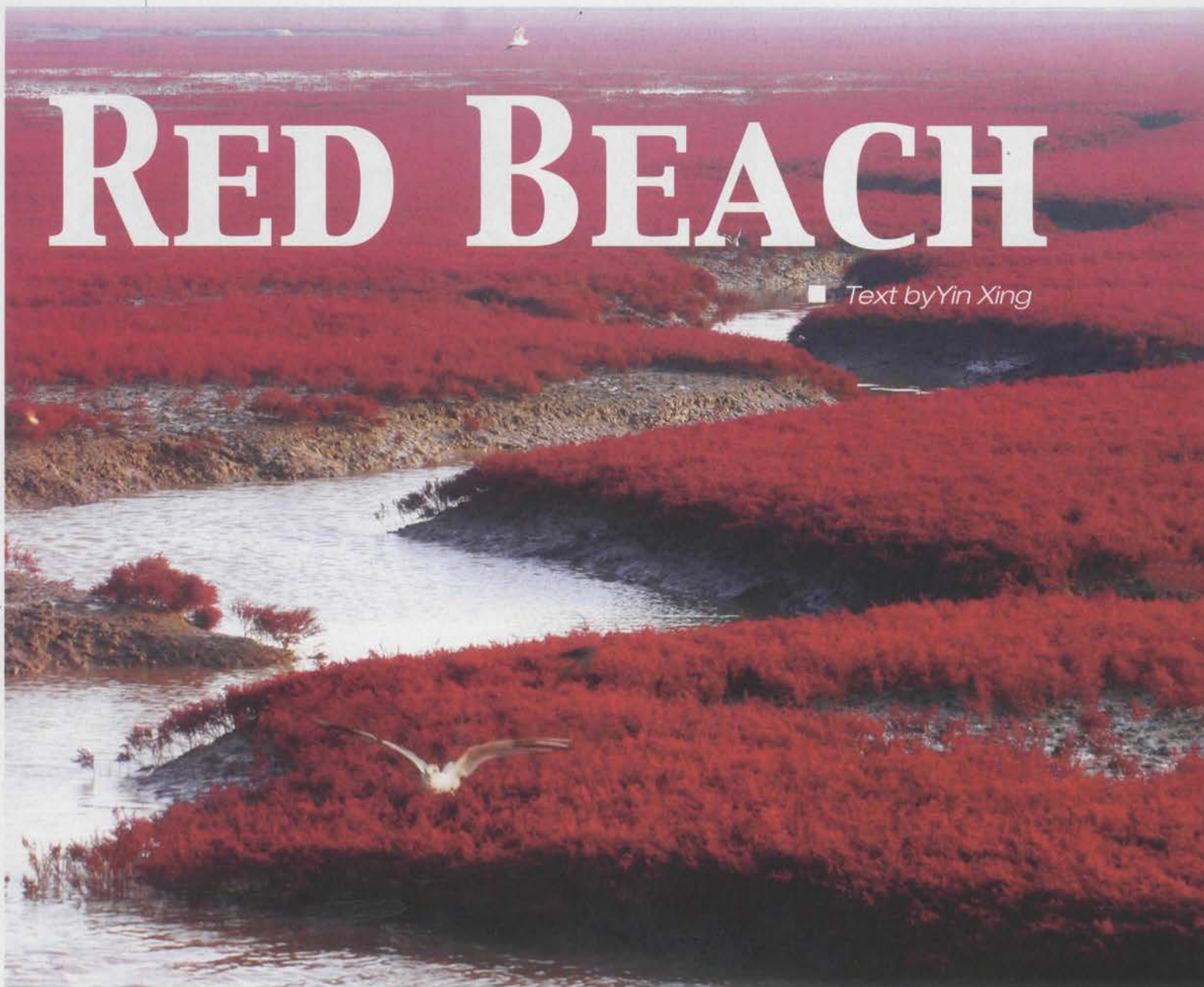
horns and rear legs to separate the angry animals.

There are otherwise amusing moments during the games. Some bulls may seem timid, at first reluctant to take the field, behaving as if they wish to escape. However, when irritated these seemingly cowardly bulls may transform with amazingly violent disposition and decimate their rivals. And some very small bulls show no fear and exert their utmost strength in battle with larger foes. Although they may be wounded and badly bloodied, they will not turn from the field. For their spirit, these smaller and tougher bulls are often generously pampered and rewarded by their keepers—even if they lose. 🇨🇳



RED BEACH

■ Text by Yin Xing



Red Beach. IC

Squab snipes with black wings and long legs on the Red Beach. IC



At the mention of the word “beach,” one typically thinks of boundless soft golden sand shimmering in the sunlight. But along the curvaceous northeastern coast of China, there is a beach of a different hue.

Located at Quanhe Township in Dawa County of Panjin City, Liaoning Province, the Red Beach Scenic Area spans an area of 100 square kilometers. Benefiting from the world’s largest and best-preserved wetland, Liaohe Delta Wetland, Red Beach is the largest reed marsh in the world. Perfectly combining natural sights and human structures, the scenic area serves as a major eco-tourism attraction.



attract the most birdwatchers. In the area are a total of more than 800 red-crowned cranes, of only 2,500 in the world. About 5,000 Saunders's Gulls fly free here, of 7,000 in the world. In March, when the weather gradually warms, loud and sonorous birdcalls resound over the blue sea and across the azure sky. Hundreds of thousands of birds flap their wings, fly, land and in general form a grand and magnificent spectacle.

A Coast of Red

Beautiful and unique, the wandering seashore here is not of golden sand, nor a forest of reefs, but a stretch of tidal flat, red, like a red carpet leading to the sea.

This carpet is twined with seepweed, a sort of red herb growing alongside the seacoast. Tenacious of life, it resists salt and alkali, flood and saturation. Said to be the only plant growing on saline-alkaline soil, it breaks from the soil in April. It sprouts light red and gradually darkens. Then in October when the weather becomes cooler, it turns from red to purple, thus forming the spectacle of red beach.


Seepweed is actually not rare in the world, while the red beach is the only one. Bedload plunged by Liaohe River depositing here and soaked by tide forms the environment suitable for growing of seepweed. The gorgeous herbs grow within the area of 6,000 hectares and dye the entire extension into red.

A Crab Caught

On Red Beach there are an amazing number of crabs. Small crabs can be seen everywhere on the beach. But "fishing" for crabs on Red Beach is actually "entwining" rather than fishing. A bamboo pole and a thread, at the end of which is tied a turnbuckle compose all instruments of fishing for crabs.

The technique is not complicated. Firstly one puts the turnbuckle onto the tidal flat, and then arouses a crab with the thread. When the crab is stirred up, one waits for the chance to entwine the thread on its claws. When the angry crab tightly grasps the thread, one fleetly lifts the thread, and pulls in the crab.

Red Beach is the fruit of harmonious coexistence between humans and nature. In the past, the locals cut seepweed only when the sea iced up in freezing winter, using it for firewood. In recent years, with people's increasing consciousness of protecting wet-

land, the seepweed is well protected as the natural vegetation of wetland. Meanwhile, it is exploited and made use of as a kind of tourism resource. A view observatory and other tourist facilities are built on the beach. With its fame growing fast, each fall the area welcomes many tourists. 



Reed Garden on Red Beach. by Pan Songgang/CFP

A Sea of Reed

In Reed Garden, one of the highlights of the Red Beach Scenic Area, visitors can see boundless weltering reeds everywhere; a sort of sea of reeds. The scenic area is situated at Liaohe Delta, where Daliao, Raoyang and Panjin Rivers, and some 20 other rivers empty into the sea. Thus the area enjoys exceptional advantage for the growth of reeds, as well as serving as home for myriad and vast flocks of birds.

Inhabiting this place are 253 different breeds of birds. Among these, the red-crowned crane and Saunders's Gull are most abundant



Fine Tuning the Machine

Olympic Organizers Test and Perfect

Volunteers at the Great Wall. by Wang Ying/CFP



■ Text by Lu Anqi

for 2008



September 29, 2006: About 10,000 jogged on the Olympic Keep Fit Road in Shenyang following Olympic medalist Wang Junxia. by Zhang Wenkui/CFP

On Oct. 20, 2006, the Olympic-themed gala, the Splendid Ceremony Xi'an, was held in Xi'an, the city at the eastern-most starting point of the ancient Silk Road. Many international stars of sports and entertainment attended the event, including 10 Chinese Olympic gold medalists, headed up by men's 110-meter hurdles champion Liu Xiang. Gala performers exceeded 3,500 in number, and an additional 1,000 staff members provided support. They were all there to pleasure the eyes and ears of the more than 40,000 spectators who showed up.

Managed by the Beiao Culture and Sports Company, the event producers handling the opening ceremony of the 2008 Olympic Games, and directed by the task-force overseeing the opening and closing ceremonies for the Games, the gala was considered a warm-up for the 2008 opening ceremony.

Subsequent this exercise and two previous test events last autumn, Beijing is improving and refining both hardware and software systems before additional tests in 2007.

Scope of Project

According to BOCOG, the Beijing Games will take place within a total of 37 competition and 76 training venues. Among the 37 competition venues, 31 are located in Beijing, with another six located in the cities of Qingdao (hosting the sailing regatta), Hong Kong (equestrian events), Tianjin, Shanghai, Shenyang and Qinhuangdao.

In the official host city, Beijing, of the 31 competition venues, 12 are being newly built especially for the Games, 11 existing facilities are being expanded and renovated, and eight are temporary. At the time this publication went to press, venues of the first two categories and five of the temporary facilities remained under construction.

In addition to the sporting venues, work is proceeding according to schedule on the National Conference Center, Digital Beijing Building, Olympic Village, Media Village and Olympic Forest Park. Construction of the newly built "Bird Nest," the main stadium venue, has entered the later stage. Its steel structural trusses were removed last Sep-

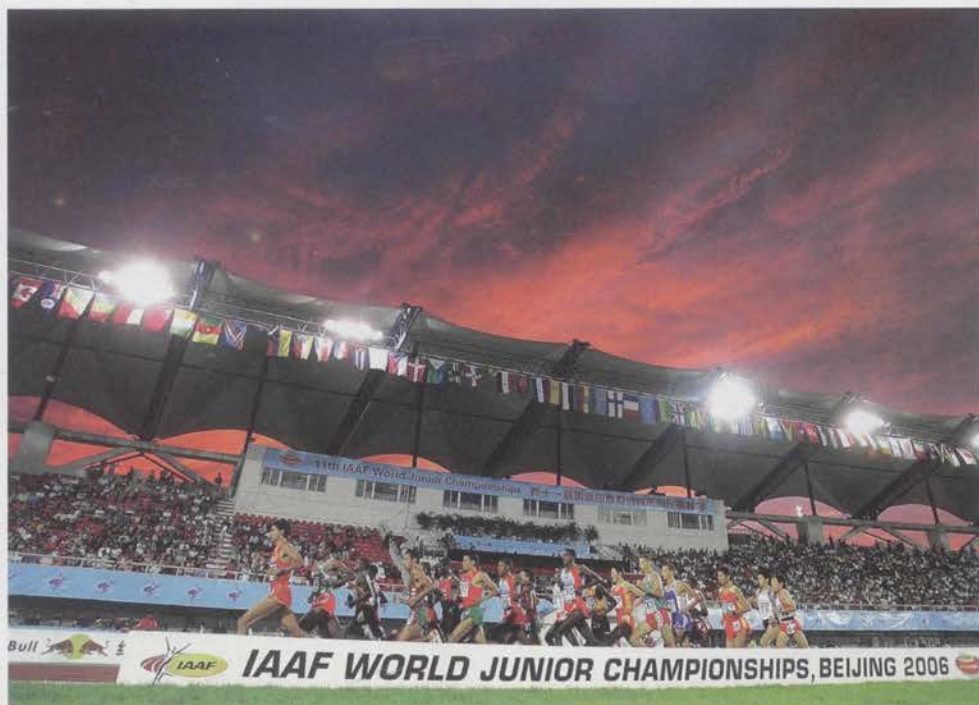
tember. The major portion of the steel infrastructure for the National Aquatics Center, dubbed as the "Water Cube," was completed and the soap bubble-like membrane exterior is being applied. Renovation work on eight training facilities also commenced. Wang Gang, executive deputy director of the Office of the Beijing 2008 Project Construction Headquarters, said that major work on

all Beijing venues would be completed by the end of 2006.

In co-host cities, the Qinhuangdao Olympic Sports Center is complete; and major facilities of the Qingdao Olympic Sailing Center are functioning and have already put to real-time use. The entire sailing center project, including its Olympic Village, is expected to be completed by June 2007.



The "Water Cube" receives its exterior membrane. IC



The 11th IAAF World Junior Championships held from August 15 to 20, 2006 at the Beijing Chaoyang Sports Center, one of the exercises conducted in advance of the 2008 Games. Andy Lyons/Getty Images

Competitive Completion

Total construction of all Olympic venues and facilities will be wrapped up by the end of 2007, according to BOCOG.

Following last autumn's test events at the renovated Beijing Chaoyang Sports Center, Beijing Fengtai Softball Field, and the newly-built Qingdao Olympic Sailing Center, Beijing plans to hold more than 40 such trial runs to troubleshoot and perfect operations, event organization, structure and mechanics.

Kicked off in September 2003, the Beijing Olympic marketing plan now enjoys the financial and operational support of 11 IOC partners, as well as 11 Beijing 2008 partners, nine sole sponsors, five sole providers and one provider. At the time this publication went to press, the number of official Olympic franchise retail outlets operating across the nation numbered 248.

To ensure adequate service industry support, BOCOG has inked contracts with 112 hotels, has begun to implement food safety guidelines, and has designated 21 hospitals and a drug testing center as health care and anti-doping facilities.

Message and Mass

A nationwide Olympic education program that began in early 2006 has reached 400 million students attending 350,000 primary and middle schools. Since the start of 2006, China's mainstream media has also dramatically ramped up coverage in prime time news slots, and on the main pages of newspapers, magazines and websites. Virtually every possible piece of news concerning the Olympics has been highlighted, from the intro of the mascots, to the design of the torch and the inception and selection of song and dance arrangements for Olympic volunteers.

Specific press coverage included the worldwide soliciting of a master plan for the opening and closing ceremonies, the two-year countdown to the opening of the Games, news on venue construction, test events, IOC and other international experts' visits and marketing schemes.

The recruitment of volunteers for the Games and Paralympics generated a big buzz in Beijing. By the end of the second day after the recruitment announcement went public, 40,000 had registered, and more than 149,100 people eventually showed up seek-



Tang Dynasty (618-907) Women's Polo, a performance at the Splendid Ceremony Xi'an, October 20, 2006. by Qin Miao/CFP

ing information. By September 28, 2006, the number of registered applicants in Beijing surpassed 210,000.

Beijing has undergone rapid economic and social development during preparations for the 2008 Games. In 2005, the total output value in Beijing increased by 11.8 percent over the previous year, and per capita GDP reached a record \$5,457. Transportation in the city has improved with the construction of many new facilities. Six new roads were installed to accommodate traffic to and from Olympic venues, and another 25 roads and three metro lines are under construction. The number of blue-sky days in Beijing is now averaging 64.1 percent of the year, a 15.7 percent increase over the year 2000. Foliage green coverage in the city is now at 50.5 percent, realizing the goal set for 2008 two years ahead of schedule. ■

Beijing Olympic Update

Official Name of Mascots Now "Fuwa"

The English translation of the name for the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games mascots has officially changed to "Fuwa," from the previous "Friendlies."

BOCOG Appoints More Advisors for Opening and Closing Ceremonies

The second group of advisors appointed to consult on the opening and closing ceremonies of the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games includes He Zhenliang, honorary chairman of China's Olympic Committee and IOC member, Wu Zuqiang, well-known Chinese music educator, composer and former dean of the Central Conservatory of Music, Ang Lee, the renowned film director, and Zeng Qinghuai, honorary director of the China Cultural City Limited. Of particular note, legendary 73-year-old American composer and musician Quincy Jones also joined the effort.

WADA President Visits Beijing

Visiting World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) President Richard William Duncan Pound and BOCOG officers held discussions on bilateral cooperation in anti-doping issues on October 10, 2006. The visiting president expressed his satisfaction with China's anti-doping efforts thus far, saying that China had already achieved established goals.

Forum on Sport Education and Culture

From October 22 to 24, 2006, the 5th World Forum on Sport, Olympic Education and Culture took place in Beijing under the theme "Sport and a World of Harmony: The Role of Olympic Education and Culture." Exchanging views on challenges as well as opportunities, some 700 experts in the field of sports, culture and education from more than 150 countries attended the meet.



A festive opening ceremony of the 2006 Special Olympics Shanghai Invitational Games is held upon the Shanghai Grand Stage. by Qian Weizhong



Athletes from China and beyond play together.
by Qian Weizhong

Touching Hearts and Spirit

Shanghai Hosts 2006 Special Olympics Invitational Games

■ *Text by Zhao Yue*

The 2007 Special Olympics World Summer Games, the largest Special Olympics yet and the first to be held in Asia, will take place in Shanghai from October 2 to October 11. In a sort of trial run rehearsal, in October 2006, Shanghai hosted the 2006 Special Olympics Shanghai Invitational Games.

In 1968, Eunice Kennedy Shriver, sister of the late US President John F. Kennedy, first established the Special Olympics, an international organization dedicated to encouraging individuals with intellectual disabilities to participate in sports. Different from the participants of Olympic Games and Paralympic Games, athletes of the Special Olympics are mentally-disadvantaged, with an estimated intellectual functioning level (IQ) below 70. Thus, rather than strict competition, the Games focus more on participation and sharing.

The Shanghai Scene

The first day this reporter arrived in Shanghai to cover this event, she witnessed the Host Town Program in Caoyang of Putuo District. The Host Town Program is a unique element of the Special Olympic Games. Before the opening of the Games, usually three

or four days in advance, communities and families throughout the host city open their homes to receive participants of the Special Olympics, enabling a better understanding between athletes, local residents and the host city.

In the accompaniment of Shanghai volunteers, the US delegation visited the Beluga House and Underwater World in Changfeng Park. Observing the tropical fish swimming around them and the performance of the *Little Mermaid*, many athletes seemed unable to tear themselves away. Departing Changfeng Park, the athletes visited commercial streets for sight-seeing and shopping, and were dazzled by the endless array of colorful commodities and the bustling streets.

In the evening, groups from organizations and volunteers in Caoyang offered their American guests a reception party billed as "Sunshine, Integration, and Joy." Dressed in gorgeous cheongsams and led by their lead singer, 86-year-old Zhao Aiying, the Old Grandma Choir of Caoyang first sang a cheerful Chinese song. Then the choir announced, "Now we are going to present you an English song." The guests were greatly surprised and the hall fell into silence. Hearing the melody, the US delegation could not help but dance to the rhythms. Zhao told this re-

porter that to prepare this English song, this choir, with their members of average age above 60, devoted two weeks to practice.

"We Are Friends"

"Run...run..." There air was full of clapping and loud talking in Shanghai's Luwan Sports Stadium, for there the Shanghai Special Olympic basketball team was warming up. Li Xiangxin, the 24-year-old basketball coach, only began his training of people with intellectual disabilities this year. "Now our team has altogether 12 members. Although I am only in charge of this team for three months, I feel like a long-time friend with my team members," says Li. He explains that compared to ordinary people, athletes with intellectual disabilities can also be weaker in terms of physical ability, endurance, and comprehension. Thus, it takes more time and energy for coaches to provide instructions and analyze the basketball playing strategy.

Moreover, ways of communicating are of great importance in training these athletes. "Sometimes they will lose their tempers, get angry, and even quit the training when I criticize them on their work. At this time, we adopt different methods for different members," Li is quite experienced, "For some



Going through the paces at a special education school in Pudong, Shanghai. by Tan Guanghua

members with higher IQ, he may feel that the coach is unhappy, judging by my facial expressions and words. However, for some members at a lower IQ level, we also have to coax them to back to the field.”

“They may be not as good as ordinary people in terms of intelligence, but they are absolutely no worse than anyone in respect of their aspiration for victory and their desire to be involved in sports,” Li says. Li’s 22-year-old team member Chen Ming says that although their training is tough, he would like to try his best. He also expresses his desire to become a basketball player like Yao Ming.

A Special Service Team

There is a special team comprised of people from all walks of life in Shanghai. Dressed in orange-colored T-shirts and wearing smiles while they work, they are the volunteers of the Special Olympics Shanghai Invitational Games.

“They (people of intellectual disabilities) are more like a group of kids that will never grow up. You really need to open your heart to make friends with them,” says 21-year-old Zhu Yili, junior student of the German



Trumpeting a welcome to the Russian delegation. by Qian Weizhong

Language Department of Shanghai Industry and Commerce Foreign Language College, and one of the volunteers for receiving the Austria delegation.

The task of Chen Lian, 22, at the invitational games is to accompany athletes from Changning District and Qixin School in

Putuo District. “The strength used to push a wheel chair should be carefully adjusted, better to communicate with the athlete beforehand, and extra attention should be paid when turning a corner.” Talking about her experience at the invitational games, Chen says that once she was assigned to escort an athlete suffering from brain paralysis. “Because of his illness, the athlete was very small. I always pushed his wheel chair to the even and smooth parts of the roads, for fear of making him feel uncomfortable.”

Tang Hao, a major volunteer interpreter from Caoyang, Putuo District at the invitational games, was still a university student while working as a volunteer for the APEC event held in Shanghai. Learning that professional interpreters were needed for the US delegation, Tang feels that it is her duty to be part of the work. “A team member’s cousin is about to marry in the United States, but because she is here in Shanghai for the event, she asked me to use a brush to write “happiness” in the Chinese character and mail it to her cousin in the US. I entrusted this task to one of my friends who is good at calligraphy and later gave the work to her. Seeing this, the team member was so happy that she hugged me for a long time. Although she doesn’t say anything, her hug has sent me her thanks,” says Tang. Tang’s father was also an interpreter before he retired, and he asked to be a volunteer interpreter for the invitational games. 🇨🇳



Assisting an athlete with walking difficulties. by Qian Weizhong

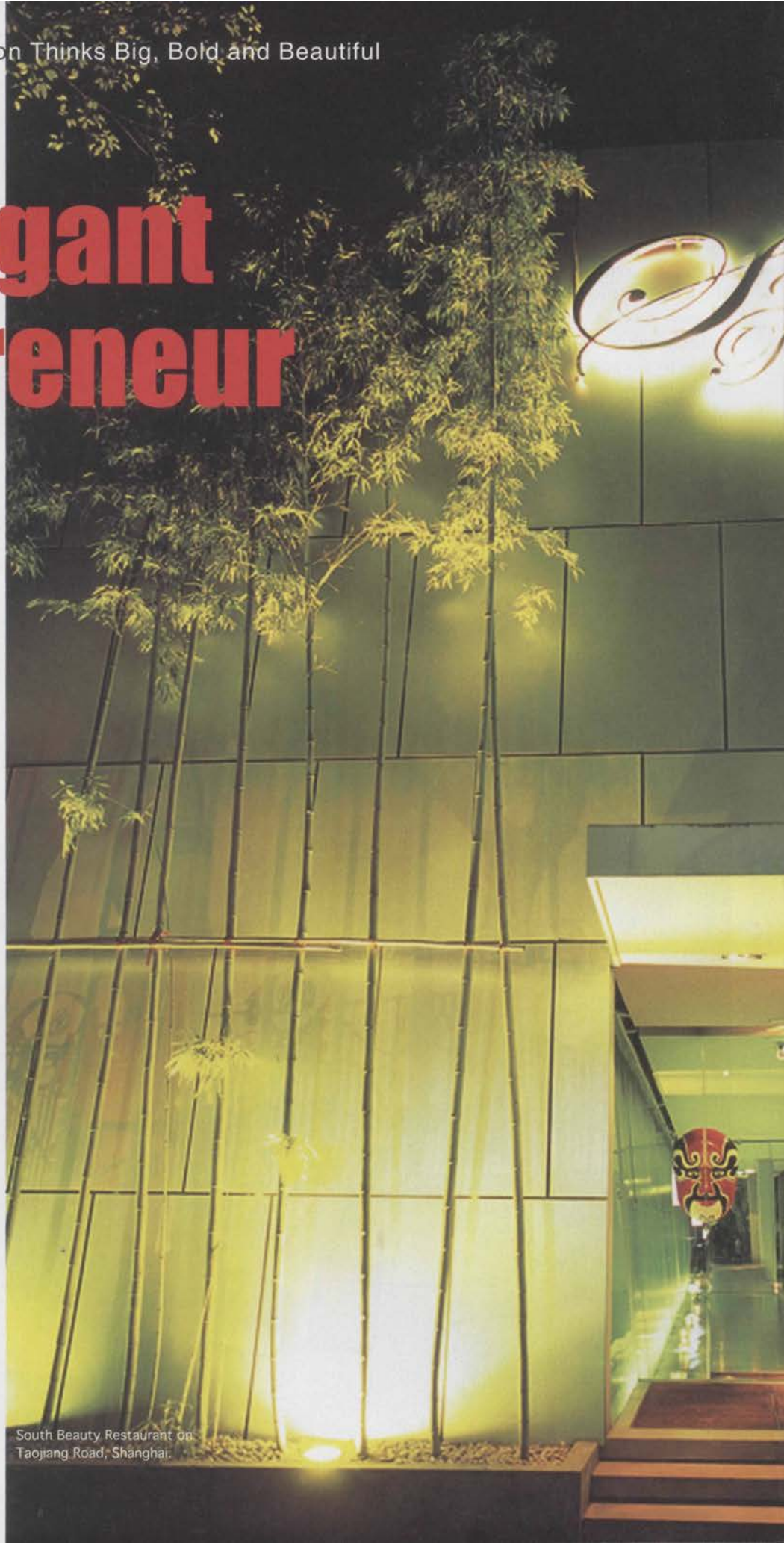
The Elegant Entrepreneur

Restaurant Tycoon Thinks Big, Bold and Beautiful

■ *Text by Yin Xing*



Zhang Lan.



South Beauty Restaurant on Taojiang Road, Shanghai.

South
Beauty

An expanding economy, big business deals done at dinner and increasing individual income are factors driving up the number of progressively more cosmopolitan fine dining houses across the urban landscape of China. Pioneering the segment on a grand scale is a female entrepreneur who started from scratch and today directs an expanding chain of top-tier food and beverage operations—just one of which is a 300-million-yuan, 5,000-square-meter ultra-upscale unit located in Beijing's new LG Twin Towers complex.

Background of South Beauty

The daughter of scholarly parents, in 1988 Zhang Lan began her overseas study in Canada. Upon her return to China in 1991, with about next to nothing in startup capital, she leapt into the restaurant business. By 2000 she had opened her first South Beauty, naming the restaurant in reflective honor of the provinces along the southern banks of the

Yangtze River, a region particularly renowned for beautiful women, exquisite scenery and wonderful cuisine.

Zhang now oversees 21 of the fine dining units: 13 in Beijing; six in Shanghai; one in Chengdu; and another in Hong Kong. The total business employs more than 3,000 people, and revenues approach about a half-billion yuan per year. Annually, South Beauty Group invests more than 100 million yuan in expansion.

While in Canada Zhang expended much brain power in considering how best to combine her homeland's style of Chinese cuisine and culture with an advanced western managerial model. "I decided that China's time-honored history of culinary art might best be passed down by adopting a modern operating style," said Zhang Lan.

Method of the Mix

Her business melding of East-West proved successful. Today, in several of China's metropolises—and soon within other international urban centers—diners can sam-



Accent. CFP



Dining.

ple a sense and a taste of the region when they step into a slickly refined South Beauty.

Besides developing an ambience of bold elegance and a menu comprising innovative and traditional regional dishes, Zhang's objective was to form a "human-oriented" model at the core of her presentation. "When customers come into our restaurant, we'd like them to feel comfortable, while relishing in not only the cuisine, but also the holistic environment. Their eyes should first be pleased,

then the stomach," Zhang says.

Most of the upscale decor within the South Beauty restaurants is the creative product of internationally renowned designers. Diners may feel as if they are a part of a gallery scene, viewing exquisite original art within a Southern China motif, while enjoying finely prepared meals.

"Down to the smallest element, we select only first-class ingredients, like sauce, vinegar and cooking oil. Procedures for the



South Beauty executive team.





A South Beauty unit in Hong Kong.

cooking of every course are closely monitored to guarantee quality. We also attach great importance to nutritional balance and healthy foods," Zhang said.

Overseas South Beauty units are in negotiation for locations at New York's Times Square, Tokyo's Ginza District, and Paris's Champs Elysees. And management has just announced plans to open units in Singapore and Italy. "On the day the Olympic Games opens in 2008, I would like to see 100 South Beauties in the world to celebrate with my country," Zhang said.

Soulful Success

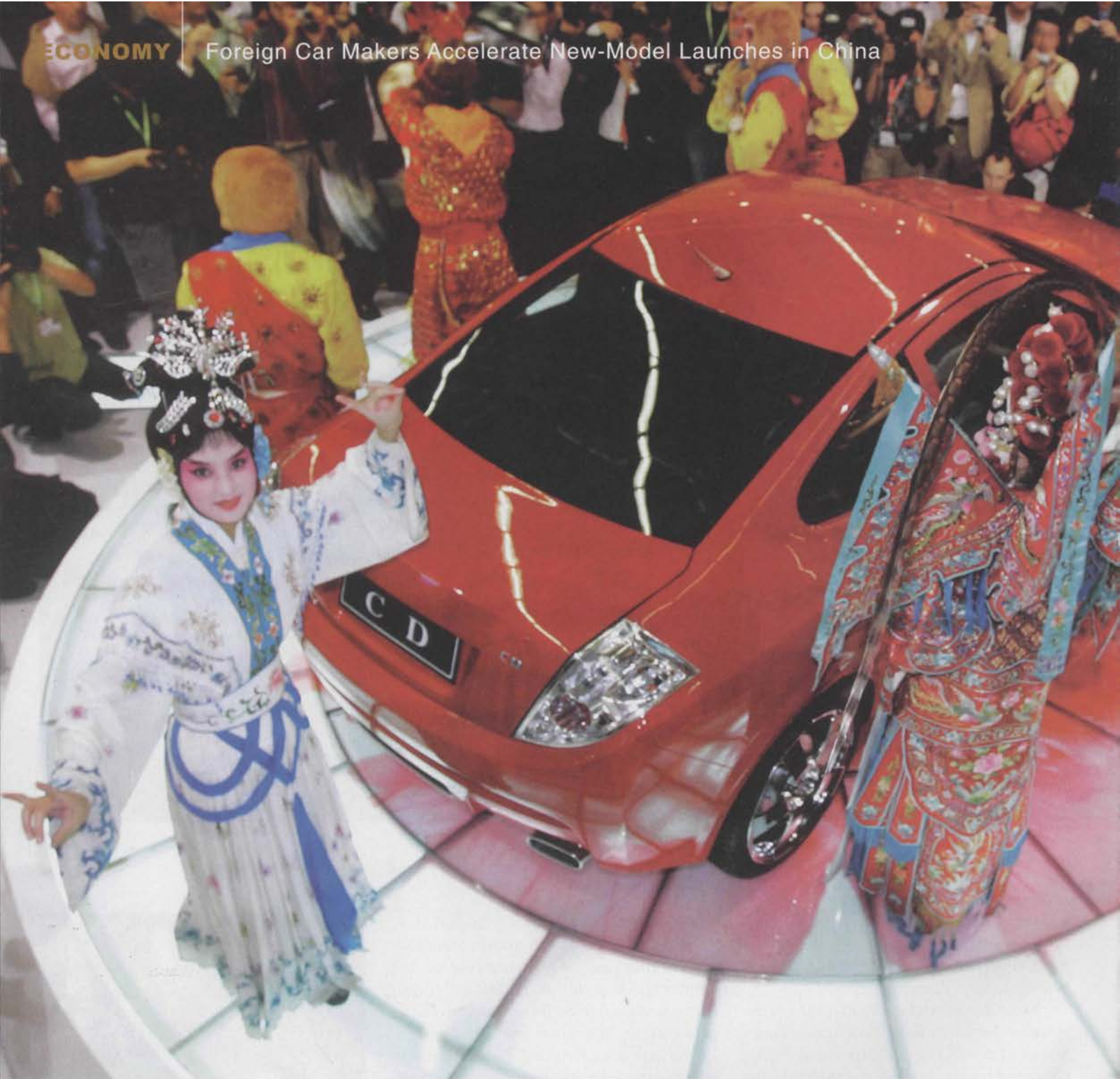
In Zhang's view, for a business person to be "human-centered," one must extend the philosophy beyond customers. During the 2003 SARS outbreak, heavy losses were inflicted upon China's restaurant industry as a

whole, and many shut down or laid off staff. The South Beauty operations lost more than one million yuan, but Zhang kept all her employees on at full salary, and at her own expense she supplied them with preventive medications. When the crisis had passed, Zhang gave to each manager a golden pen to commemorate their team effort in the overcoming of the hard times.

Operating 21 restaurants and supporting thousands of employees, one might think that Zhang would be overworked. But, she says, she keeps a schedule perhaps more rounded than most white collar workers. "My day usually consists of eight hours of sleep, eight hours in the office, three hours of social activities, one hour of gym, and four hours of entertainment. Work is to bring a good life. It is to put the cart before the horse if our jobs interfere with our lives," said Zhang. ■



Preparation.



Traditional Beijing Opera performers with a Geely Chinese Dragon sports car. by Wolfgang Rattay/Reuters

Revving Up

■ Text by Zhao Yue

Foreign Car Makers Accelerate New-Model Launches in China



models in the Chinese and international markets has become routine, as lately evidenced by the recent appearance of the Swift from Chang'an Suzuki and the Audi A6L.

Beijing Benz Daimler Chrysler Automotive Co., Ltd. (BBDC) recently commenced operations at a factory located in the Beijing Yizhuang Economic and Technological Development Zone. First-phase construction comprises about 210,000 square meters, with a potential production capacity of 100,000 cars per year. Mercedes-Benz, Chrysler and Mitsubishi models will be manufactured at the site. The construction of Guangzhou Honda's second factory in Zengcheng County, Guangdong Province, was also completed in the latter half of 2006. According to Honda, the potential first-phase production rate at the plant is 120,000 cars per year, providing Guangzhou Honda with a potential annual production capacity of 360,000 cars.

Constantly Competitive

Launching models in the Chinese and world markets simultaneously is a strategically astute move on the part of foreign automobile manufacturers striving to improve their share of the rapidly expanding and increasingly competitive Chinese market. Shanghai Volkswagen is one of the leading proponents of this practice, relying on advanced technology to underpin its strong market position.

Other car makers followed Volkswagen's lead. With the launch of its latest and highly popular Accord model in China two years ago, Guangzhou Honda's fortunes have risen dramatically in a period that has come to be known as the "Honda Phenomenon." Beijing Hyundai sold 52,000 Sonatas in the first year of production, and quickly shifted 150,000 Elantras in the company's second, more recent global launch.

Economic Evolution

Less than a decade ago many popular car models in China were outdated or obsolete in overseas markets. European, Japanese and North American models from the 1980s and early 1990s filled the roads. However, even at that time, some shrewd international car manufacturers began to increase their long-term investment in China, importing the latest technology and techniques with the goal of one day launching new models in China and the world simultaneously, as well as engendering improvements in areas such as car maintenance and customer service.

A global launch strategy now makes economic sense considering the size and potential of the Chinese market, better manufacturing conditions and a more demanding and brand-savvy level of Chinese car buyer. The decision to go global has been driven by the changing market conditions and the strategic acumen of foreign manufacturers looking to cash in on rising car sales, low cost labor, technological and infrastructure de-

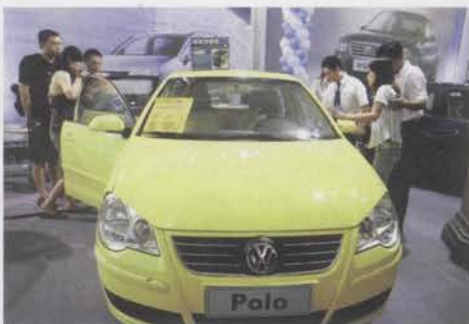
A Chinese car buyer checks out the Mercedes-Benz on display at an auto show in Beijing. AFP



A few years back a Polo model manufactured by Shanghai Volkswagen became the first foreign brand car to be launched concurrently in China and the global market. Identical in appearance to its international counterpart, and assembled using the same manufacturing process applied in Germany, the car caused quite a stir in the Chinese car industry and among consumers. Today, however, the simultaneous launch of foreign



A worker cleans the interior of a car on display in Shanghai. by Liu Jin/AFP



A newly-launched Polo draws attention. by Luo Wei/CFP

velopments and a more mature consumer market.

China is a land full of promise for foreign car manufacturers, highly alluring to companies accustomed to operating primarily in saturated markets. Experts predict that Chinese car sales will grow 12 percent annually over the next 10 years. Considering

the big upside, industry insiders know it is essential that car manufacturers, both domestic and foreign, continually strive for improvements in quality, efficiency and technological integration, while employing both short and long-term strategic awareness to stay ahead of the competition. The demands of Chinese consumers are moving closer to those of their European and North American counterparts, and regional differences in consumer awareness are becoming far less pronounced than in years gone by.

Customers Reap Rewards

For car buyers, the participation of foreign manufacturers in the Chinese market and global launching is undoubtedly a good thing, driving up quality and levels of sophistication, and driving down prices. After localiza-

tion, some globally launched models will be sold in China at a reduced price due to lower production costs, and it is hoped that the over-inflated car prices present in China today will eventually become a thing of the past.

For the growing numbers of Chinese drivers, a wider range of better, cheaper cars resulting from globalization looks like a good deal. ■



Strolling with Grandfather, things look pretty good to this "Little Empress."

Faces of the Future

The Rise of China's Children

■ *Text and photos by
Daniel Allen /
Lowell Bennett*

Just 20 years ago, 80 percent of the Chinese population survived on less than a dollar a day. The most these families wished for was to keep enough food on the table.

No longer. The great pace of societal advancement in recent decades has allowed vast and increasing numbers of the nation's citizens to reach for and seize new opportunities. Greater freedom and increased affluence have brought significant lifestyle changes. For the young people of China, fast change and progress has indeed presented some challenges, but these adjustments are far outweighed by advantages and benefits that would have boggled the minds of elder generations—and does.

More than half of China's 1.3 billion citizens are less than 24 years of age. In this era of dramatic and accelerating societal advancement, it is the likes, dislikes, hopes, fears and dreams of these young people that will ultimately mold the China of tomorrow. And like never before in history, today the children of China reap the benefits of social change.

In general terms, in that most fundamental measure of a nation's progress, nutritional status has improved considerably over the last decade, with rates of malnutrition decreasing sharply. Last May the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) declared that China had already achieved the target of a 50 percent reduction in its number of underweight children.

But rising prosperity does present an adverse byproduct downside. A major con-



Carefree among friends, Yueqing, Zhejiang Province. by Lowell Bennett

At the Forbidden City, Beijing. by Lowell Bennett



cern among health experts today is the rising obesity level among Chinese children. A recent survey found that 10 percent of children are now clinically overweight, with an expected 8 percent rise per year. Like many Western countries, the blame goes to high-fat, fast-food diets, too much TV, obsessive computer gaming, and not enough exercise.

Fueled largely by an increasingly energetic media, the growing sums Chinese parents lavish on a single child has led some to lament a spoiled generation. Thus the term "little emperor," meaning a self-centered Chinese child pampered at every turn by dotting parents. Some among earlier generations believe a love of money and material possessions may be eclipsing more important societal priorities for the nation's youngest.

The increasingly pronounced demographic skewing of the Chinese population is a further concern. By 2020, the number of people over age 60 will number more than

240 million, or 12 percent of the population. Caring for the elderly is a mounting burden which both society and government must share in a way that doesn't limit progress or strangle aspirations.

Ensuring Education

Thanks to efforts by both the Chinese government and society at large, education of the young has realized significant progress over the last 20 years. Since the 1980s the government has heavily subsidized normal and vocational education, including education for minorities. In recent years China has established a comprehensive educational fund-raising system, with financial support from national and local government supplemented by funds collected through other channels.

While standards of schooling in China's affluent, eastern and southern urban areas are

usually high, kids from poorer, agricultural and migrant worker backgrounds have traditionally been less well educated. However, times are changing. At the end of 2005 the government announced it would be investing more than US\$15 billion to pay for compulsory education in rural areas, thereby ensuring a free nine-year education for every child. Before the start of the 2006 spring semester, the Chinese government invested more than US\$450 million to cover the school fees of kids living in 12 western provinces, including Sichuan and Yunnan.

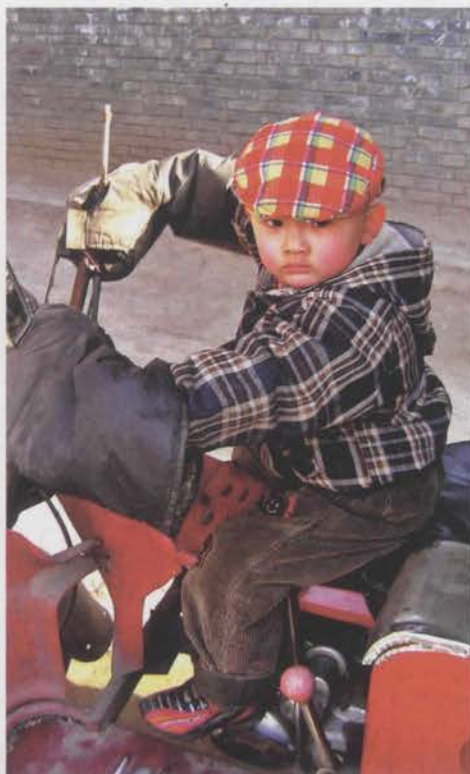
In the past, children who accompanied their migrant parents to the city were often charged school fees much higher than those charged by rural schools. But today the amended *Compulsory Education Law*, which went into effect in September, includes a new provision ensuring the right to a free education for migrant workers' children, irrespec-



A happy calligrapher, Lanting Garden, Zhejiang Province. by Lowell Bennett



Getting air in Xidan District, Beijing, by Lowell Bennett



Wang Hui, Pingyao, Shaanxi Province. by Daniel Allen.



Oh, the noise, Beijing. by Daniel Allen

tive of where they are living. Now, if migrant families are living and working in locations other than where they are registered, local governments must pay their educational expenses. The measure affects no small number of kids. According to the Ministry of Education, by the end of 2004 more than 6.4 million rural children of compulsory education age were living in cities with their parents.

Heralding Health


China's young are not only becoming better educated, they are also healthier. In terms of macro-level trends, China has the health profile of a middle-income country, with the general health of the population steadily improving. Quality healthcare is gradually becoming more widely available, and thanks to a well-developed welfare system, more than 95 percent of China's children are now vaccinated against a full range of infectious diseases.

Since the implementation of China's immunization program in the 1980s, carried out with the approval of the World Health Organization (WHO), the incidence of infectious diseases in children has sharply declined, with polio now totally eliminated. Commensurate with this advance, the child mor-

tality rate in China has also dropped dramatically. The mortality rate for infants fell from 50.2 per thousand in the early 1990s to 32.2 per thousand in 2000, while that for children under five fell from 61 per thousand to 39.7 per thousand over the same period.

Future Fulfilled

Thanks to increased investment and more enlightened policy making, the number of teenagers graduating high school and going on to higher education continues to increase. And at all levels more and more kids are getting the opportunity to study, even in the poorest of rural areas. To underpin the fast-paced economic growth that China is currently enjoying, the government and the nation's citizens are well aware that a healthy, educated and skilled workforce is an invaluable resource.

With sensible planning, investment and guidance, China's kids will mature to move the nation forward. Before they assume their role as adults, however, many are enjoying a childhood quality of life beyond the wildest dreams of prior generations. 

The Cause of Comedy

High-Energy Theatrical Folk Art
Transcends Class and Culture

■ Text by Zhang Rong

Popular Chinese actor Zhao Benshan performs *errenzhan* with the noted Chinese singer Song Zuying. by Wang Jiang/CFP

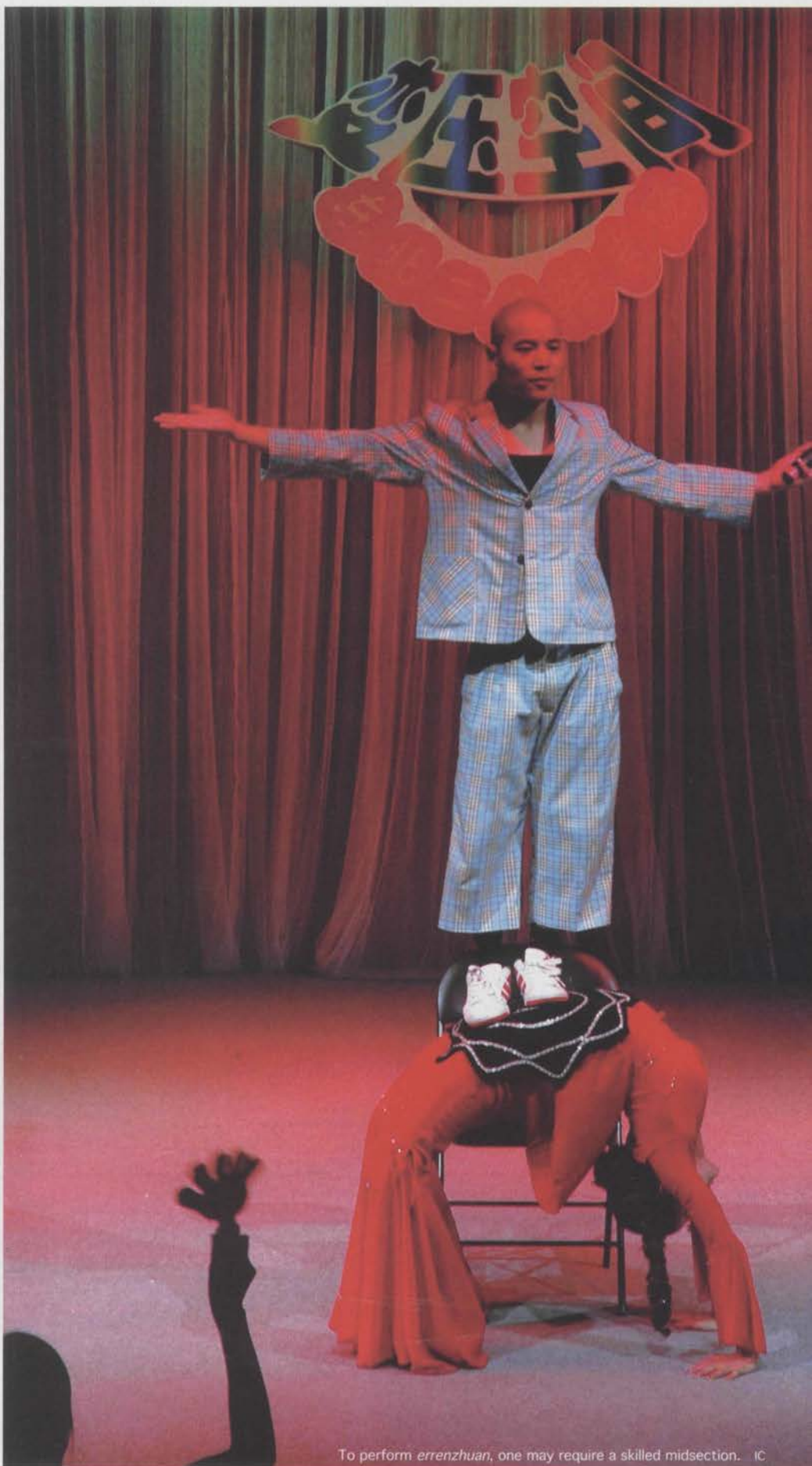


Enacted upon makeshift stages assembled in village squares, performed within expansive urban theaters, and honored within the Great Hall of the People in the nation's capital, *errenzhuan*, the two-character style of song, dance and comic spoken word that originated in Northeast China is now a highly popular form of theatrical art across the country. Taking this art form beyond China's borders, the well known Chinese actor Zhao Benshan, a major promoter of *errenzhuan*, in October of 2006 announced that from February 21 to March 6, 2007, his troop would tour North America, hitting cities like New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Chicago, Atlanta and Vancouver. And they hope to take the stage at the Academy Awards.

For the citizens of Northeast China, there is no more familiar theatrical art form than *errenzhuan*. *Errenzhuan*, also known as *bengbeng*, originated in the northeastern provinces of Liaoning, Jilin and Heilongjiang, and the form remains a mainstay entertainment in the region, especially in rural areas. *Errenzhuan* is a vigorous form of performance art, typically embodied by a singing and dancing duo. Three primary presentations typically include, a male actor playing the clown and a female, in a standard role known as the *dan*, singing and dancing in an interjecting style. A singing and dancing solo performer is known as the *danchutou*, while that of an actor assuming various roles and singing is the *lachangxi*. Besides the three elements of song, dance and high-energy on-stage dialogues, many practitioners of *errenzhuan* are experts in flourishing such devices as the handkerchief and fan.

A Theatrical Evolution

Errenzhuan dates back about 300 years, and records of the art began to be noted in 1822, the second year of the reign of Emperor Daoguang of the Qing Dynasty, when the dramatic art of *bengbeng* first appeared



To perform *errenzhuan*, one may require a skilled midsection. IC





Errenzhuan is especially popular in rural areas. CFP

at a temple fair in Huaide County, Jilin Province. In the early days, there were no women *bengbeng* performers; female characters were portrayed by male actors. It was after the founding of the People's Republic in 1949 that the name *errenzhuan* came into use. Since the reform and opening up, *errenzhuan* has developed further in many aspects. Dulcimer, lute, percussion instruments, gong and cymbal were added as accompanying instruments. More recently added theatrical devices include flowery umbrellas, scarves and long silks. In recent decades, stage costumes improved and were customized in accordance with characterizations, stage lighting came into play to better project a certain develop ambience, and overall production values were greatly advanced.

Errenzhuan typically features nine vocal techniques and 18 melodies, and over time various vocal art forms of northeastern China came together as a single stage show, including *yangko* (dance). There is a local

folk saying that declares most would rather take in an *errenzhuan* performance than enjoy a meal.


Perpetuating Performance

Errenzhuan is considered to be an incarnation of the working people's aspiration for artistic beauty. However, it was only in the last decade that *errenzhuan* became popular throughout the rest of the nation. According to artist Wen Zhanlin, in Cangtu County of Tieling City, Liaoning Province, considered the cradle of *errenzhuan*, there were more than 200 *errenzhuan* folk performers before liberation.

To further develop and support the true form of *errenzhuan*, proponents of the local arts are devoted to memorializing the history and theory of *errenzhuan*. An ongoing comprehensive effort includes developing scripts, compiling written and audio-visual archives,



Errenzhuan actors perform for a foreign audience in Shanghai. by Liu Bingsheng/CFP

and establishing training bases and research institutions. Over the past years, *errenzhuan* competitions were held to encourage exchange and cooperation among performers, and outstanding actors continue to emerge. In Zhao Benshan's words, "The greatest contribution of *errenzhuan* is the happiness the art brings to average people. This is the most important thing." 



Feng Yuan.

A Poetic Casting of Ink and Wash

—A Review of Feng Yuan's Wash Paintings

■ Text by Xu Encun



In the history of painting and the broader world of art, the term "modern consciousness" to some extent means "development." A trend to modern consciousness brings new change, the conception of unique qualities and a breaking away from obsolete traditions. The breakthrough may be limited to a certain sub-genre at inception, but with accumulating change across a broad spectrum a qualitative change may occur. It was in accordance with this general premise that Feng Yuan's new and unique style of wash painting came to be.

Since the 1980s, Feng, while respecting tradition, has endeavored to enter into a broad reality in transcending narrow-minded indifference and simplicity. In his work one can

perceive the painter making full use of the flexibility of ink to return his form of artistic expression to the essence of traditional Chinese culture, while establishing his particular style and language.

His paintings, *March of Volunteers*, *Shames of Motherland in 100 Years*, *History*, *Creation*, *Bewilderment*, *Sounds of Nature*, *Soul of the Han*, to name just a few, are evidence of his refined expressive abilities within the scope of given materials and within the limited space. Perhaps most impressive is that the traditional formula of ink and wash becomes less important in his work, and instead there is a melding of the spiritual and the poetic. Through his mediums, this amalgamation emanates a spontaneous

strength and collisional power.

His brush flows freely as an extension of his mind. In *Bewilderment*, the hardship of the spiritual emancipation of human beings and their philosophical quest for the future are expressed through heavy and harsh lines and a black and changing smoke wash. Ink is splashed to project an exaggerated theme.

Feng has established his own artistic style and taste integrating features of traditional Chinese ink painting with aspects of Western art. These qualities are especially evident in his work based on historical subjects. Maintaining the beauty of forms, the composition of black and white and the flexibility of traditional ink and wash, he melds





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Music: Jessye Norman in China

World-class soprano Jessye Norman recently gave her first concert in China at the Shanghai Grand Stage. Norman, a premier artist in the world of opera, follows to China the Three Tenors,

Domingo, Pavarotti, and Carceras. Her charming stage presence and powerful voice drew wild applause from her Shanghai audience.



World-class soprano Jessye Norman gives her first concert in China at the Shanghai Grand Stage. CFP

TV: Marriage of the Fairy Princess



Yang Zi and Huang Shengyi, portraying the hero and heroine in the new series, *Marriage of the Fairy Princess*. IC

The love story of Dong Yong and the seventh fairy maiden is known to virtually every household in China, and has many times been depicted in film and TV. Production of a new TV series, *Marriage of the Fairy Princess*, is underway, with shooting in Anqing, Anhui Province, hometown of the Huangmei Opera. The hero and heroine are portrayed by Yang Zi and Huang Shengyi, respectively, with the other six fairy maidens portrayed by popular actresses from the Chinese mainland, Hong Kong and Taiwan. The series is expected to begin airing on CCTV 8 next year.

刘德华

安圣基

范冰冰



A Battle of Wits. CFP

Film: A Battle of Wits

A Battle of Wits, produced with a US\$16-million joint investment provided by four companies on the Chinese mainland, in Japan, South Korea and Hong Kong, has hit the cinemas. The plot depicts the world of 2,300 years ago, during China's Warring States period (475-221B.C). The Kingdom of Zhao, with 100,000 men at arms, launches an attack on the Kingdom of Liang, mostly holding 4,000 enfeebled women and children. Leaping to the defense of the cowed people of Liang is Ge Li, a warrior of the Mo-Tsu tribe, a

people renowned for their fighting skills. Depicting the tale of "a lonely knight-errant battling 100,000 enemies," the film boasts a strong cast drawn from around Asia. Headliners include Hong Kong actor Andy Lau, Taiwan actor Nicholas Wu, South Korean actor Choi Si Won, and Wang Zhiwen and Fan Bingbing of the Chinese mainland.

Shénme Shíhòu Láidě
什么时候来的
When Did They Come

Gāo Yīfēi Zǎofàn chī le ma
高一飞：早饭吃了没？

Mǎ Lì Hái méiyǒu ne Ō duì le nǐ de dìtú néng bù néng jiè
马力：还没有呢。哦，对了，你的地图，能不能借

wǒ yòng yí xià
我用一下？

Gāo Yīfēi Xíng a dào wǒ fángjiān qù ná ba Zěnme nǐ yào chūqù?
高一飞：行啊，到我房间去拿吧。怎么，你要出去？

Mǎ Lì Wǒ yào péi wǒ bà mā qù lìshǐ bó wù guǎn
马力：我要陪我爸妈去历史博物馆。

Gāo Yīfēi Nǐ fù mǔ qīn lái le?
高一飞：你父母亲来了？

Mǎ Lì Shì a shàng gè xīngqī lái de
马力：是啊。上个星期来的。

Gāo Yīfēi Shì cóng Ào dà lì yà lái de ma?
高一飞：是从澳大利亚来的吗？

Mǎ Lì Bú shì Tā men xiān qù le Xiānggǎng rán hòu qù le Běi jīng shàng
马力：不是。他们先去了香港，然后去了北京，上

ge xīngqī cóng Běi jīng zuò huǒ chē lái de
个星期从北京坐火车来的。

教材《当代中文》由国家汉办提供

Cultural Notes

The Laba Festival, a celebration originating from ancient sacrificial rites, takes place on the eighth day of the twelfth lunar month. The people of China have traditionally attached great importance to agriculture, and across the land such grand ceremonies have long been a part of life, with bountiful harvests celebrated as a blessing from nature. After formal ceremonies come to a close, families and neighbors may feast upon congee, a sort of porridge made with newly reaped millets and grains, long a staple dish across the nation.

There are eight main ingredients and eight supplementary ingredients in traditional laba congee. Eight is voiced like "ba" in the Mandarin language, and the number is thought to be auspicious.

Below briefly retold is a famous tale associated with both the Laba Festival and congee.

Long ago an old couple and a young couple lived happily together as a family. The elders did all the housework and forbade the younger people from performing any chores, for fear the young would tire and lose their beauty. Thus the carefree young couple led a life of ease, with everything provided for them ... until the old couple died.

After eating up all the food that had been stored in the house, the young couple sold the home. Alas, not being thrifty, soon all their money was gone and they were forced to take refuge in a rundown abandoned grain shed. Winter set upon them, the two became cold and their food dwindled to nothing. Then, on the eighth day of the twelfth lunar month, when they

English Translation

CHINESE

Gao Yifei: Have you had breakfast?

Ma Li: Not yet. Oh, could you lend me your map?

Gao Yifei: Yes. You can come to my room to get it. So, you're going out?

Ma Li: I'm going to accompany my parents to the History Museum.

Gao Yifei: Your parents are here?

Ma Li: Yes, they came last week.

Gao Yifei: Did they come from Australia?

Ma Li: No, they first went to Hong Kong and then to Beijing.

Last week they came from Beijing by train.

Text extracted from *Contemporary Chinese*, project of the National Office for Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language (NOTCFL) of the People's Republic of China.

could bear the hunger no longer, they scrounged up a bit of grain from the four corners of the shed and managed to cook a pot of congee. Finally, when the grain was soft, moist, smelling sweet and ready to eat, with their mouths watering in anticipation, they lifted their spoons to quivering lips ... and a gust of wind blew down shed and they were crushed to death.

And so it was that when parents wished to impress upon their kids the hazards of slothfulness, they might cook up a pot of congee, and tell the sad tale of the lazy couple as their children filled their little stomachs.

Extracted from *Legends of Ten Chinese Traditional Festivals*, published by Dolphin Books

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